debaters with their biases about the form and content of education, in the manner of an old-fashioned and reductionistic sociology of knowledge; instead, he treats the various ideals of individual and general culture as ideologically autonomous concepts that might attract individuals and groups from a wide range of different political outlooks and professional interests. This method produces a picture of the debate that appreciates its extraordinary complexity, but it also allows Ringer to track the most important areas of agreement and continuity in these national discussions and therefore to *explain* the reforms that actually resulted from them. His commitment to a form of "robust causalism," which includes the consideration of the "reasons" of good arguments as well as the "rational interpretation" of "beliefs and actions," makes his history an important rejoinder to recent varieties of cultural history that are suspicious of both causality and explanation.

Ringer discusses the familiar argument between the "modernists," who wished to update the classical curriculum by adding modern languages and literatures and science to the secondary curriculum, and the "ancients," for whom Latin and Greek provided the indispensable foundation for "general culture," a code term for the distinctively exclusive education given to the bourgeois elite of late nineteenth-century French society. However, he shows the extent to which all but the most radical modernists largely shared the conviction that the business of higher education was to produce an elite of some kind, though they preferred one based more on merit and schooled in more modern forms of knowledge. He is therefore able to demonstrate forcefully that the educational reforms of the period 1898–1902 largely continued the traditional practice of "classing" rather than "ranking" individuals in the manner of a true meritocracy.

For all the modernist rhetoric about the virtues of science and scientific method, the tentative nature of the reforms produced a vague and ultimately ideological notion of a scientific world view that was more closely attached to a republican and laic notion of politics than to laboratory science and scientific modes of verification. Unfortunately, Ringer does not consider here the influence that this "positivism" might have had on the natural sciences in France in this era, but he does consider at some length how this ideological concept of science affected work and thinking in the human sciences. To counter the universalist and timeless notion of truth held by their "classicist" enemies, the modernists touted the relativizing power of historical analysis in sociology, literature, and, of course, history writing itself. In placing a premium on historical rather than absolute truths, the modernists not only helped initiate a revolution in method that has been more or less permanent; they also, not incidentally, justified their own efforts to reform the laws and institutions of contemporary French society.

It is with subtle dialectics like these that Ringer works his explanatory magic. His book is not only the clearest summary available of the origins of modern French educational reform, it also presents an original account of French academic culture and contains, as a bonus, much thoughtful analysis of the classic documents in the educational debates.

ROBERT NYE

Eugene Webb. *The Self Between: From Freud to the New Social Psychology of France*. xii + 268 pp., figs., bibl., index. Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 1993. $35.

"Among the European countries, France has hitherto shown itself the least disposed to welcome psycho-analysis," complained Freud in 1914. "In Paris itself," he continued, "a conviction still seems to reign . . . that everything good in psycho-analysis is a repetition of Janet's views with insignificant modifications, and that everything else is bad" ("On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," *Standard Edition*, Vol. 14, pp. 32–33). While the dispute with Pierre Janet was the most rancorous, even Freud's early French supporters highlighted the uncredited debt of psychoanalysis to other notable French neurologists. The ill-reception accorded psychoanalysis only intensified with World War I, and it was not until the first translations of Freud appeared in the 1920s that psychoanalysis began to gain some currency in literary circles. The Société Psychoanalytique de Paris was founded in 1926, but it remained a marginal group until the 1960s owing to internal fractiousness and external hostility from the greater medical profession. The widespread cultural infatuation with psychoanalysis that seized France after the social

upheavals of May 1968 has been perceptively analyzed by Sherry Turkle with an emphasis on the role of Jacques Lacan and his structuralist, linguistic "reinvention" of psychoanalysis (*Psychoanalytic Politics: Jacques Lacan and Freud's French Revolution* [Basic, 1978]).

Eugene Webb, professor of comparative literature and comparative religion at the University of Washington, focuses on psychoanalytic and social psychology trends in France since then, particularly contributions from those in the Lacanian tradition (François Roustang, Marie Balmary, and Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen) and the proponents of *la psychologie interdividuelle* (René Girard and Jean-Michel Oughourlian). The choice of these two schools serves to emphasize what Webb identifies as a dominant concern in French humanities of the past twenty years: the relation between the self-reflexive subject and society. The interpersonal psychiatry that grew out of this concern downplays the role of Freudian innate, biological appetites (notably the "libido") and instead emphasizes socially determined "desires" as the engine of ego development and pathology.

To these ends, Webb provides extensive surveys of the work of the above analysts and philosophers, whose writings (aside from those of Girard) are probably not well known in the United States. Roustang has questioned the contradictory demands of psychoanalysis that the subject's critical self-reflexivity develop through uncritical submission to the analyst and psychoanalysis in the process of "transference." Furthermore, Roustang underscores the persistent difficulty Freud and his followers have had in distinguishing transference from "suggestion," which Freud had learned from a century of French explorations of mesmerism, imitation, and hypnosis.

Webb dedicates the greater part of the book to reviewing the work of Girard and his followers, who have depicted this force of imitation, or "mimesis," as the glue linking the individual to the "other" and generating all the primordial psychological desires that both bind and divide society. Webb details three applications of this theory of mimetic desire, or "universal mimesis," as Oughourlian has termed it: ego psychology, social psychology, and theology. The last seems to interest Webb most, and he underscores a growing French intellectual preoccupation with religion and morality.

Readers interested in the philosophy of being, post-Lacanian psychoanalysis, and psychoanalytic biblical hermeneutics will find *The Self Between* a valuable synthesis of current French tendencies, particularly of the Girardian school. Many historical issues remain unexplored, however. Webb several times evokes nineteenth-century French social theorists such as Gabriel Tarde and Gustave Le Bon, whom Freud and the Girardians mention, but he does not elucidate this particularly rich history of French concerns with automatism, mesmerism, "moral contagion," "crowd suggestibility," and imitation. This filiation of psychological and sociological theories might reveal the "new social psychology" to be, in fact, the psychoanalytically informed reinvention of long-standing French preoccupations and just the latest contribution to the gallicization of Freudianism.

This brings us to another question left unanswered: Why has psychoanalytic thought taken this particular turn toward social psychology in France of the 1970s and 1980s? Webb cites the cultural disappointments of 1968 as sparking a new introspectiveness and turn to psychoanalysis (as Turkle also proposed), but he provides no specific examination of the social forces that might explain the tendencies he observes—a renewed concern with social cohesion, values, and religion. What role might the gradual disillusionment with the Socialist government in the 1980s, the rise of the far right, mounting concerns about immigrants, and anxieties over European unification, for example, play in shaping these popular and intellectual trends? The reader is left to speculate on these and other social influences on French social psychology.

VERNON A. ROSARIO II

Sharon R. Kaufman. *The Healer's Tale: Transforming Medicine and Culture.* (Life Course Studies.) x + 354 pp., illus., app., index. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993. $27.50.

In the last decade, historians have successfully explored various aspects of the transition to modern, "scientific" medicine. We have learned about institutional changes, scrutinized the development of medical philanthropy, and charted the therapeutic transition generated by the shift from rational, monistic pathologies to empirically oriented