



**Writing and Madness:
Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis (Meridian:
Crossing Aesthetics (Stanford, Calif.))**

Shoshana Felman, Martha Noel Evans

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Writing and Madness is Shoshana Felman's most influential work of literary theory and criticism. Exploring the relations between literature, philosophy, and psychoanalysis through brilliant studies of Balzac, Nerval, Flaubert, and James, as well as Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida, this book seeks the specificity of literature in its relation to what culture excludes under the label "madness." Why and how do literary writers reclaim the discourse of the madman, and how does this reclaiming reveal something essential about the relation between literature and power, as well as between literature and knowledge?

Every literary text continues to communicate with madness—with what has been excluded, decreed abnormal, unacceptable, or senseless—by dramatizing a dynamically revitalized relation between sense and nonsense, reason and unreason, the readable and the unreadable. This revelation of the irreducibility of the relation between the readable and the unreadable constitutes what the author calls *la chose littéraire*—the literary thing.

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