

## ***Aboriginal Populations in the Mind* by Celia Brickman**

Amazon.com review by Prof. Michael Oppenheim, Department of Religion, Concordia University, Montreal, author of *Jewish Philosophy and Psychoanalysis: Narrating the Interhuman*

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This is one of the finest critical pieces on psychoanalysis that I have read. The argument is thoroughly convincing and the discussions are illuminating again and again. The author demonstrates that the notion of "the primitive" in Freud and in later psychoanalytic discourse is pervasive, significant and disturbing. The corresponding others (unconscious, neurotic, racial, colonized, criminal, religious, and the feminine) haunt Freud's social/historical, metapsychological, and clinical works. For example, many of the characteristics that Freud attributed to the female other (passivity; submissiveness; narcissism; masochism; lack of intellectual, moral and rational development; excessive emotional ambivalence; and difficult or restricted sexuality-p. 107) were also seen to apply to the other "primitives." In addition to discussions of Freud's works such as Totem and Taboo and Moses and Monotheism, there are important historical treatments of the language of the primitive in colonial, racial and anthropological discourses that impacted Freud as well as a variety of areas of European thought overall. Still, the author finds that the Freudian legacy is complex. He both made the primitive a universal feature of every person's psyche and reinforced European stereotypes about particular others. Certainly the need to renarrate Freud's insights is forcefully advanced. I strongly recommend this important and beautifully written book.