

# Signifiante and wild Wesen. The Interpretation of the Wolfman by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Marc Richir

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## Abstract

Using the example of Freud's famous case of the „Wolfman“ this paper explicates the conflation between Lacan's theory of the signifier and Merleau-Ponty's notion of “rays of the world”, as found in a study of Marc Richir. In this analysis, Richir criticizes the pure symbolic interpretation subsequent to the psychoanalytic unconscious. Contrary to this, he shows, through Merleau-Ponty's ideas regarding Freud's case, a curious occurrence of phenomena beyond the symbolical grasp. This “play” of *Wesen* that over-determine one another is, for Richir, gateway to a “new style of eidetics” realized in his notion of wild *Wesen* which in terms of experience are essential for what he calls the “phenomenological unconscious”. Both registers of the unconscious, however, interact with one another as Merleau-Ponty points out. In Lacan we find the concept of “*signifiante*” as a different kind of a “slope of meaning”, which enables us to think of the “effects” of the unconscious not only as separated through a hiatus but as a tense diacritical field as pictured already by Merleau-Ponty – a methodological approach which László Tengelyi elaborated into a diacritical phenomenology.

## Keywords

Signifier, wild *Wesen*, *signifiante*, rays of the world, eidetics, unconscious, psychoanalysis, diacritical phenomenology

