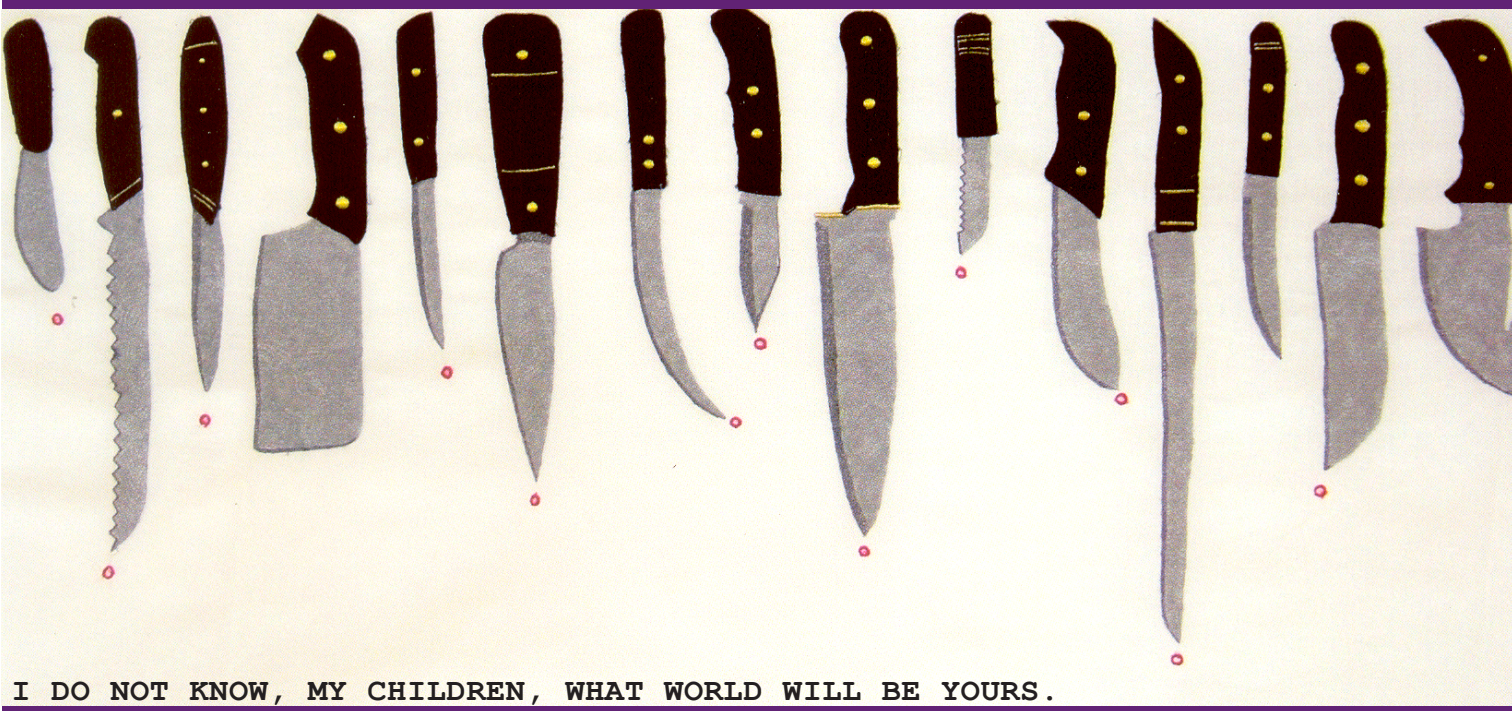
LITERATURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS



Proceedings of the

Twenty-second International Conference on Literature and Psychoanalysis

Cordoba (Spain) | June 29 > July 4 | 2005

Edited by **Frederico Pereira**

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(with the first line of the poem '*Letter to My Children on the Shootings of Goya*'
from Jorge de Sena, a Portuguese poet)

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LITERATURE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

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Contents

P A P E R S

Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on Literature and Psychoanalysis: 3-8

Shakespeare and trauma of war in *Macbeth*

JOANNA MONTGOMERY BYLES (*)

As a dramatist of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Shakespeare's representations of the culture of war and the enactment of traumatic experience can suggest an understanding that on the collective level, the lack of inhibition of the aggressive impulses, owing to which war-killing was required and sanctioned by the state, presented important and complex psychological, political and moral problems. Such problems continue, but with added ferocity and complexity, to characterize our own times.

Shakespeare's attitude to war, as far as it can be analysed from his plays, particularly his English History plays, varies a great deal, and is often ambiguous and skeptical. Indeed the plays contain many strategies of ambiguity that make us realize the impossibility of simple solutions to certain complex problems. These plays contain many different ideas about war and the psychological and moral complexities of war, so that I do not think it is possible, much less desirable, to derive a coherent Shakespearean view of this problematic subject matter. The holding of contradictory ideas, views and feelings, and the overlap between them, is itself typically Shakespearean. Indeed Shakespeare's complexity is always undermining his themes as Norman Rabkin pointed out long ago, in other words, there is a considerable subversiveness in many of Shakespeare's historical dramas. Certain themes recur especially that of civil war and military honour. Indeed Shakespeare seems very much aware not only of the heroism and courage of his famous protagonists such as Henry Percy, known as Hotspur, and Prince Hal who becomes King Henry the Fifth in 1413, but also of their weaknesses: Hotspur values the ideals of chivalry more than life itself, and Prince Hal is an unscrupulous politician, but he also carries with him the guilt of his father's usurpation and involvement in the murder of King Richard the Second. Towards the end of his career, Shakespeare's dramatization of *Macbeth*, based like his other histories, on *Holinshed's* (1587) Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, can be thought of as the culmination of his exploration of the effect on the psyche of the trauma and experience of killing in war, its destructive violence and cruelty, as well as the fear, anxiety and suffering it causes.

Our own knowledge of how traumatic events have affected the psychological functioning and adaptation of the victims of war has developed gradually from Freud's early formulations of "war neurosis" in World War One, also known as shell-shock, to the World War Two concept of Combat Stress, to our present ideas of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Shell-shock was a medical term that

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came from the need to find a suitable name for the number of cases of functional nervous incapacity which were continually occurring among the fighting units during World War One. Although there are some references in history to hysteria among soldiers, there is little evidence of shell-shock in wars previous to the first world war. This is not extraordinary considering the massive use of high explosives and the mechanized violence developed in that war were virtually unknown in conflicts before 1914.

The charging of the enemy with guilt by which the superego of the State mobilizes the individual's superego seems to be of fundamental importance in escaping the sense of guilt which war provokes in those engaged in the killing; yet, for some individuals, the mobilization of superego activities can still involve self-punitive mechanisms even though most of the individual's guilt has been projected onto the enemy in the name of his/her own group, nation or leader. We know that this guilt can become a problem during wartime and especially at the end of a war, leading to various degrees of misery and mental illness. For some, the trauma of killing an enemy and a stranger cannot be truly mourned, and in this incomplete mourning there remains a blank space, an irretrievable act or event to be lived through over and over again. The long-term consequences of killing, and seeing others being killed in war can shatter the self and the meaning of self. The paradoxical permissive and prohibitive superego has much to answer for here.

Facing up to the act of killing in war and the long-term reactions of psychological, physiological and emotional disturbances has eventually led to the concept of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which has been generally defined as a "serious psychological reaction that develops in some people following experience of overwhelmingly frightening or traumatic events". Traumatic events usually include "combat, assault, natural disaster, accident or torture." all of which are life-threatening. (Internet, PTSD General Information, Brochure 1). The psychological reaction that develops in these individuals stimulates in them feelings of fear, sadness, anger and guilt. These symptoms have been divided into three separate categories under the headings: intrusive imagery, avoidance/numbing and arousal symptoms.

Intrusive symptoms relate to frequent and repetitive memories and images of the traumatic events which may "intrude into the lives of the individuals" (Internet, Brochure 2). This intrusion can happen during the day, but especially at night in dreams. These distressful memories of the past event usually occur suddenly and without obvious cause, and often take the form of flashbacks. They are accompanied by intense emotions such as grief, guilt, fear, anger/rage. At times they are so vivid that the individual believes that the trauma is re-occurring and a kind of physiological reactivity such as sweating, heart racing emerges. Intrusive symptoms such as these are generally considered as key elements in the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; however, they are not sufficient for a complete and successful diagnosis to take place.

The second group of symptoms is referred to as "avoidance and numbing" and these represent the attempts to block out unpleasant memories and feelings. Since the traumatic memories are very disturbing and unpleasant, the traumatized person usually avoids situations, people or events which remind him/her of the causal event. They also avoid conversations that may bring to the surface feelings and thoughts associated with the trauma. In some instances, the individual becomes "numb" and loses any interest in social or any other sort of activity. They withdraw into themselves in an attempt to shut out painful memories and feelings. This withdrawal into themselves obviously affects their relationships and emotional contacts with others. Feelings of detachment from family members and friends, an inability to feel any kind of emotion for someone once close to them is part of the syndrome.

The third group of symptoms are described as "arousal or hyper-arousal" (Internet, Brochure 3). A traumatic event usually causes individuals to "feel at risk of further traumatization" and also to fear the repetition of the pain of the past experience. This makes them feel "jumpy and constantly on guard" so that they often make exaggerated startle responses and may show extreme watchfulness at times when this is not necessary. Furthermore, their sleep is usually difficult and disturbed by horrible images of the traumatic experience they have gone through. These constant re-visitations of the haunted memories of the past result in concentration and memory problems and these, in combination with other symptoms,

may cause them problems at work and may alienate them from their families and friends. They usually feel angry and are in conflict with themselves as well as with others around them.

MACBETH AS A DRAMATIZATION OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER:

Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's most violent plays, in it he dramatizes the psychological symptoms which are the response to having killed. The violent killing to start with is off-stage, for example there is the reported carnage of the battle Macbeth wins with his "brandish'd steel, / Which smok'd with bloody execution" having "unseamed" his opponent from "the nave to th'chops, / And fixed his head upon our battlements." (I.ii.15. Arden Muir. 1980, All further quotations from this edition). Both Banquo and Macbeth are represented as merciless killers in battle, as reported by the Captain when describing them in action redoubling their blows upon the foe as if "they meant to bathe in reeking wounds / Or memorize another Golgotha." (I.ii.40-41) The imagery prepares us for the "bloody butcher of Scotland" Macbeth becomes at the end of the play.

The murder of Duncan is the central act of the drama. The anticipation of this horrific deed is initiated by the hallucinatory dagger whose "blade and dudgeon" has "gouts of blood" on it (II.i.45). After the murder, Shakespeare continues to emphasize the symptoms of the trauma of the killing by the use of intrusive imagery dramatized by Macbeth's dazed horror, anguish and guilt as well as Lady Macbeth's cruel defiance: "A little water clears us of this deed." (II.i.66) But Macbeth fears he has damned himself; he cannot say Amen, it sticks in his throat. His mutism around the word "amen" is an expression of the psychic trauma he has inflicted upon himself.

Macb. I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"
Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.
Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen?"
I had most need of blessing and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.
Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad. (II.ii.26 ff)

But the madness she speaks of is no metaphor; it is the psychic trauma of guilt projected now onto his hands, his "hangman's hands;": "What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes." and his terrified self-revulsion: "To know my deed, "'twere best not know myself." (11.ii.72) Then there is his painfully remorseful reply to the insistent knocking at the gate: "Wake Duncan with thy knocking: I would thou couldst!" (II.ii.73) Yet another symptom of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is Macbeth's realization that he has robbed himself of that precious necessity of nature, sleep. In his state of extreme anxiety he imagines he hears a voice cry, "Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep." (II.ii.26) The whole scene is an impressive representation of the grief, guilt, anger and rage and the horrendous memories that are symptomatic of PTSD. Shakespeare's dramatization of the terrifying and powerfully traumatic effect of guilt on the perpetrators of a violently murderous act is profoundly disturbing.

As an example of the intrusive imagery of PTSD, the hallucinatory nature of Macbeth's enormous blood guiltiness in the banquet scene is very powerful and mostly achieved through the blood imagery: "... the time has been / That, when the brains were out, the man would die, / And there an end; but now, they rise again, / With twenty mortal murthers on their crowns / And push us from our stools." (III.iv.77-81)

The spectrally intrusive presence of the violently murdered Banquo could be seen as a PTSD symptom in the form of a dramatized flash-back to the actual traumatic event arranged by Macbeth, registering the physiological effects in the form of the "startle effect", sweating and pallor, as well as

anger and rage. Lady Macbeth derides him as being "unmanned by fear; she warns the assembled Lords, "I pray you speak not; he grows worse and worse; / Questions enrage him." (II.iv.119-120)

By the end of this violent and intensely disturbing scene, Macbeth is exhausted: "It will have blood, they say: blood will have blood." And "the secret'st man of blood" has lost his sense of time, yet another symptom of the intense stress he has been under: "What is the night?" and the reply comes from an equally exhausted Lady Macbeth, "Almost at odds with morning, which is which." (III.iv.124, 126-127).

As has been frequently stated by various critics, Lady Macbeth plays a crucial role in initially motivating Macbeth to murder Duncan. Indeed Duncan would not have been murdered in his bed had husband and wife not both planned it together. When he falters, "We will proceed no further in this business" (I.vi.31) she urges him on; when she is unable to kill the King because he looks like her father, "Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had don't." (II.i.12-13) Macbeth follows through with their plan, alone. After the deed, we feel deeply disturbed by her unnatural instincts, her scornful words about her own hands that have "gild the faces of the grooms," with Duncan's blood: "My hands are of your colour; but I shame / To wear a heart so white." (II.ii.64-65) She is bent on covering up the killing driven by her own ambitious desires.

The psychic impact of this murderous action against one who is her guest and her husband's kin, is yet to come; but when it does, we see the full panoply of symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder dramatized: intrusive imagery, flash-backs, grief, guilt, anger, and nightmares. As the doctor says, she suffers from "a great perturbation in nature" (V.i.10) and he admits "This disease is beyond my practice." (V.i.54) He is unable to reframe the painful memories that are the cause of her nightmares. What she needs is for the doctor to establish a therapeutic relationship with her and her terrifying inner world.

> "Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One - two - why then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky.... Yet, who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him?" V.i.33-34
>
> "What will these hands ne'er be clean? No more of that, my lord, no more o' that! You mar all with this starting." V.i.40-43
>
> "Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand, Oh, oh, oh!" (V.i.47-48)
>
> "To bed, to bed! There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand! What's done can't be undone. To bed, to bed!" (V.i.61-63)

In her sleep-walking and talking, Lady Macbeth re-visits or re-runs the murderous events she has enacted either directly or indirectly, and she relives the associated emotions of fear, grief, helplessness and guilt. However, in her nightmare world, the remembering of the violent traumatic events of the past in which she is still deeply involved, does not help her. Healing of her traumatized psyche does not occur. Shortly after this episode, she takes her own life. The Doctor had it the wrong way round when he said, "More needs she the divine than the physician" (V.i.69). Of course, from a religious point of view, the Doctor is right, she does need forgiveness; however, her greatest human need is for psychological help and understanding. Shortly after the sleep-walking scene, Macbeth questions the power of medical practice to cure a mind overwhelmed by traumatic events: Macbeth asks the physician:

> Can't thou not minister to a mind diseased,
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart? (V.iii.40-45)

The Doctor's reply, "Therein the patient must minister to himself." (V.iii.46-47) maddens the traumatized, guilt-ridden Macbeth as he defiantly rejects the sort of help he himself so desperately needs:

> "Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it!" (V.iv.47)

After the atrocious killing of Macduff's family, including the most repugnant act of killing in the play, child-murder, Shakespeare dramatizes the extreme psychic trauma of the multiple murderer. Angus expresses the general view of Macbeth's depravity:

> Some say he is mad. Others, that lesser hate him,
> Do call it valiant fury. But for certain
> He cannot buckle his distempered cause
> Within the belt of rule / Now does he feel
> His secret murders sticking on his hands (V.iii.17)

Macbeth himself admits his mind is "full of scorpions," a most terrifying example of intrusive imagery, and that he has "supped full of horrors" that life signifies nothing, and, as we have just seen, he is terrifyingly aware that there is no known way to "cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff / Which weighs upon the heart" (V.ii.40). His only relief is to prepare for more killing and with a desperate readiness he puts on his armour for the crucial battle of his life: that against Macduff. But there are moments when Macbeth is affectless, showing the PTSD of numbness. For example, just before he hears that the Queen is dead there is a cry of women offstage, to which he responds:

> I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
> The time has been my sense would have cooled
> to hear a night-shriek, (V.v.10)

In *Macbeth* Shakespeare dramatizes the terrifying and powerful effect of psychic trauma caused by the guilt of perpetrating violently murderous and atrocious acts. In the end we see what Shakespeare emphasizes is not only a question of what the Macbeths did to others, it is also a question of what they did to themselves.

Unfortunately, so far, the concept of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder being a consequence of killing may or may not impact killing in wars and it has not been used as an argument against the socially sanctioned activity of war at the national or international level. However, many anti-war groups are aware of this argument, including the thousands of veterans, most recently those who have served in Viet-Nam, the Gulf War and Iraq, who endure the effect of PTSD in their every-day lives.

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Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on Literature and Psychoanalysis: 9-15

Don Quixote rides again: Illusion and delusion in Conrad's *Lord Jim: A Tale*

JORGE SACIDO ROMERO (*)

"'You are an incorrigible, hopeless Don Quixote. That's what you are.'" (Conrad, 1946b, 44) Fifteen-year-old Konrad Korzeniowski (Joseph Conrad) heard these admonitory words from the lips of his tutor, a Krakowian college student instructed by his maternal uncle (Tadeusz Bobrowski) to convince his nephew to give up his wish to be a seaman. The link between young Conrad's desire to become a sailor and the renowned knight of La Mancha is not a casual one. In his writings, Conrad generalises the particular case of his vocation for the sea by focusing on romances of adventure as the main cause prompting young men to join the maritime profession. Thus, for instance, in the autobiographical work in which the words of his dear tutor are quoted (*A Personal Record*), Conrad refers to Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea* as his "first introduction to the sea in literature." (1946b, 72) In "Tales of the Sea" (1898) – an earlier piece written when he was already engaged in the composition of *Lord Jim: A Tale* – Conrad speaks of how Frederick Marryat and James Fenimore Cooper, the creators of sea fiction, "influenced so many lives and gave to so many the initial impulse towards a glorious or a useful career". (1949, 56) Later essays like "Well Done" (1918) or "Geography and Some Explorers" (1924) highlight the role played by romances and books of exploration in triggering young men's desire for a life of adventure at sea, Conrad's included. In the latter he calls Núñez de Balboa, Tasman, Torres, Cook or Franklin "the first grown-up friends of my early boyhood", their nautical feats having been an inspiration for him. (Conrad, 1955, 10) In "Well Done," the imaginative nature of the force impelling young boys to follow the sea is clearly underlined: "Chance or desire (*mostly desire*) had set them apart, often in their very childhood, and what is to be remarked is that from the very nature of things this early appeal, this early desire, had to be of an imaginative kind." (Conrad, 1949, 184, emphasis mine)

Conrad uses quite systematically the word "illusion" to refer to the frame of mind in which the youngster leaves home for the sea. This state of purely narcissistic exultation derives from an identification with a hero in an adventure book.[1] The prototypical youngster in Conrad's works assumes the image

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[1] The notion of "identification" is used everywhere in psychoanalytical theory to refer to the process at work in the formation of the "ego". Suffice it to recall the way Jacques Lacan defines the mirror stage in his famous essay: "We have only to understand the mirror stage *as an identification* […]: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image". (1977, 2) For a technical definition of "identification" See Laplanche and Pontalis. (1985, 205-208)

of the indestructible hero of adventure books and expects to continue to be one in the real context of the maritime profession in which the adventurous circumstances he had read about are to be reproduced. This is the realm of "fantasy-making" to use Freud's term in his essay on the two principles of mental functioning. (1957, 42) In it, the reality principle is suspended and the mind works by following the pleasure principle alone. Mediating restrictions – all the components of the reality principle, from physical limitations to the rules imposed by society – are not operative, so much so that the actual self and the ideal (omnipotent, perfect, heroic) become one.

In *Lord Jim: A Tale* (1900), the title-hero's maritime vocation and his early days on board ships bear the characteristic marks of Conradian illusion.[2] The third person narrator (who speaks in the initial chapters of the novel and introduces the narrative of the hero's last days much later in the text) gives the following account of how Jim, living in his father's remote parsonage, declared his intention to follow the sea:

> when after a course of light holiday literature his vocation for the sea declared itself, he was sent at once to the 'training-ship for officers of the mercantile marine.' […] He could see the ships departing, the broad-beamed ferries constantly on the move, the little boats floating far below his feet, with the hazy splendour of the sea in the distance, and the hope of a stirring life in the world of adventure.
>
> On the lower deck in the babel of two hundred voices he would forget himself, and beforehand live in his mind the sea-life of light literature. He saw himself saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line; or as a lonely castaway, barefooted and half naked, walking on uncovered reefs in search of shell-fish to stave off starvation. He confronted savages on tropical shores, quelled mutinies on the high seas, and in a small boat upon the ocean kept up the hearts of despairing men – always an example of devotion to duty, and as unflinching as a hero in a book. (Conrad, 1946c, 5-6)

However, the model of formation of the seaman derived from Conrad's texts establishes a second stage ("initiation") in which the overlapping of reality with the fantasies of illusion is to be surmounted and (if anything) confined to the private realm of daydreaming and/or evocation where it is kept from interfering with professional obligations and the rest of real-life restrictions. In a section of *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906) titled "Initiation" Conrad gives an account of the major turning-point in his sea career. He was working as third mate on board a ship when they came across a Danish brig about to sink in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Conrad was appointed commanding officer of one of the two boats sent in rescue of the nine Danish sailors and recalls his reaction on seeing the state of exhaustion and helplessness of these brave men:

> The cynical indifference of the sea to the merits of human suffering and courage, laid bare in this ridiculous, panic-tainted performance extorted from the dire extremity of nine good and honourable seamen, revolted me. I saw the duplicity of the sea's most tender mood. […] I had looked coolly at the life of my choice. Its illusions were gone, but its fascination remained. I had become a seaman at last. (1946a, 141-42)

"Initiation" means, therefore, the acceptance of the mediation of the reality principle: that is, the discordance between the imaginative mind and the external world, the falsity of one's own heroic indestructibility, the indifference of the sea to men's efforts and fantasy projections, and the necessity to abide by the laws of the craft. The youngster must trade the immediate identification with the book hero for the identification with the model of seaman invested with the features of the law. Heroic grandeur disengaged

[2] In connection with this see Bruss (1979), Mitchell (1986), Hampson (1992, 116-136), Cox (1973) and Watt (1980, 342-43).

from the real circumstances of the profession must be substituted by what Conrad calls in "Well Done" "seamen's primitive virtues": alertness, self-confidence, responsibility, endurance, courage, hardihood, self-possession and sobriety (to name just a few). (1949, 192) This is the passage from what Freud, in his monographic essay on narcissism, calls the "ideal ego" to the "ego-ideal", a terminological distinction that Lacan establishes in a more systematic way in *Seminar I.* (Freud, 1952, 407; Lacan, 1988, 129-142) The youngster internalises the norm of the craft and finds compensatory satisfaction in the (for the most part, yet not completely) unadventurous, prosaic life at sea. Thus, he becomes what Conrad calls in the same section of *The Mirror of the Sea*, "a real seaman": that is, a seaman of the reality principle.

But, as the third-person narrator at the beginning of Chapter 2 of the novel tells us, Jim found no compensation in sea life, "whose only reward is in the perfect love of the work." (1946c, 10)[3] He remains attached to his identification with the literary ideal of his dreams, and when the opportunity to act heroically comes on board the steamer *Patna*, he fails and is looked upon as a criminal coward (he had joined his fellow officers in their defection from the steamer carrying eight hundred Muslim pilgrims and a native crew). To Jim's disgrace, the ship is rescued and towed safely to an Eastern port by a French steamer. A court of inquiry is held to look into the case and Jim is the only officer giving evidence before the court.

On the quite night right before the local steamer *Patna* runs against an unidentified derelict in the Arabian Sea, Jim, on the bridge, is given over to his illusion of heroic adventure and divine omnipotence. "At such times," the third-person narrator tells us, "his thoughts would be full of valorous deeds: he loved these dreams and the success of his imaginary achievements. They were the best parts of life, its secret *truth*, its hidden *reality*. […] They carried his soul away with them and made it *drunk with the divine philtre* of an unbounded confidence in itself." (Conrad, 1946c, 20. Emphases mine) Later on, Captain Charlie Marlow, telling the story of his anxiety-ridden involvement in Jim's case to an audience of white men, sketches the process of formation of a normative subject of the craft in terms similar to those used by Conrad in the texts referred to above:

> "There is such magnificent vagueness in the expectations that had driven each of us to sea, such a glorious indefiniteness, such a beautiful greed of adventures that are their own and only reward! […] *In no other kind of life is the illusion more wide of reality* – in no other is the beginning *all* illusion – the disenchantment more swift – the subjection more complete." (1946c, 129. First emphasis mine)

The problem with Jim – what defines and determines his predicament throughout the novel, including the period spent as a commercial agent in the remote outpost in Patusan in the Island of Borneo – is his incapability in keeping the realm of illusion separate from that of reality which belies his heroic grandeur and with which he should come to terms. ("Initiation" ["disenchantment" *plus* "subjection" in Marlow's words above] never takes place in his case).

Jim's illusion throughout the narrative is, indeed, characterised by its excess, by his unmovable and irrepressible tendency of forcing the scenario of his heroic omnipotence upon the reality of facts and norms, of keeping the reality principle off the boundaries of the pleasure principle. It is this propensity to subsume reality under the sphere of illusion in spite of their non-coincidence what

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[3] For Conrad, the ship's routine must be worthy of a seaman's love: "He who loves the sea also loves the ship's routine." (1946a, 7) On the other hand, sea-life is not completely unadventurous: adventure may come to seamen, but, of course, in it is not the product of pure voluntarism as Jim thinks. As Conrad states in *The Mirror of the Sea* (referring once more to Don Quixote): "No adventure ever came to one for the asking. He who starts on a deliberate quest of adventure goes forth but to gather dead-sea fruit, unless, indeed, he be beloved of the gods and great amongst heroes, like that most excellent cavalier Don Quixote de la Mancha. By us ordinary mortals of a mediocre animus that is only too anxious to pass by wicked giants for so many honest windmills, adventures are like visiting angels. They come upon our complacency unawares." (Conrad, 1946a, 155-156)

makes Jim cross the dividing line (theoretically drawn by Freud and – more or less explicitly – by Conrad and Marlow) separating "illusion" from "delusion". "Illusion," Freud writes in *The Future of an Illusion*, is, like "delusion," "derived from human wishes." (Freud, 1989, 39) Yet, unlike delusion, which is by definition "in contradiction with reality" (as in Don Quixote's case), illusion "sets no store by verification" as "its relations with reality" are to be disregarded. (Freud, 1961, 39-40) Beuring this in mind, we should interpret the third-person narrator's words quoted above *literally*: for Jim, his "imaginary achievements" are the "hidden reality" of "life," more real than reality itself. Likewise, we would do well not to miss the connotation of intoxicated omnipotence as characteristic of his mental state in the narrator's phrase when he says that Jim's "soul" was "*drunk* with the *divine* philtre of an *unbounded* confidence in itself." (Conrad, 1946c, 20, emphases added) Indeed, Jim carries the logic of intoxicated omnipotence to its ultimate consequences when, failing to be up to his position of charismatic leader, he meets his death at the hands of the Patusani chief Doramin while uttering for the last time his famous refrain "Nothing can touch me." (Conrad, 1946c, 413)[4]

Certainly, the connection between the workings of Jim's mind/soul and the state of more or less immoderate drunkenness is a recurrent one in the novel. When Marlow (in his oral tale) advances Jim's future success (which would end up in failure, of which Marlow gives a written account to the "privileged man") he states: "'Felicity, felicity – how shall I say it? – is quaffed out of a golden cup in every latitude […] He was of the sort that would drink deep'". (Conrad, 1946c, 175)[5] A bit later, Marlow speaks about his concern of how Jim "'would go out'" in Patusan and says: "'He wouldn't let me forget how imaginative he was, and your imaginative people swing farther in any direction […] They do. They take to drink, too.'" (Conrad, 1946c, 224) Yet, the longest and most relevant instance of the connection between Jim's excessive imagination and drink as examples of delusive intoxication is the one found in Chapter 5 of the novel, which marks the beginning of Marlow's oral tale after four chapters of third-person narrative. Among Jim's fellow officers of the *Patna*, the chief engineer is the one that receives the greater attention in the text. He is a drunkard whose demeanour the third-person narrator had previously compared to "the imbecile gravity of a thinker evolving a system of philosophy from the hazy glimpse of a truth", just one instance of Conrad's view of pure intellectual speculation as useless and, even, pernicious. (Conrad, 1946c, 24)[6] Before the court of inquiry was held, the chief-engineer had been drinking for three full days at the end of which he ran into the street panic-stricken by horrid hallucinations, was sent to hospital and taken care of by one of the resident surgeons there. Marlow went to the hospital to visit a friend and had a conversation with the chief-engineer in order to know more about the affair of the *Patna*. On hearing the name of the ship he had defected, the engineer is startled and states that, because he is the possessor of outstanding powers of eyesight, he could see the ship sinking "full of reptiles," which were now the "[m]illions of pink toads" under his bed ready to attack him and which, at the end of the interview, do "trample" on him. (Conrad, 1946c, 51 and 54)[7] This hallucinating, delusive character is associated with the figure of a heroic cavalier akin

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[4] See Conrad (1946c, 23-24, 241, 246, 293 and 325) for other instances of this refrain-like phrase.

[5] Not knowing yet at this point the tragic outcome of the story, Marlow somehow tempers the connection between Jim's mind and intoxication by saying immediately afterwards: "I found him, if not exactly intoxicated, then at least flushed with the elixir at his lips." (Conrad, 1946c, 175)

[6] See also *A Personal Record* (1946a, 92); *Nostromo* (1947, 379); or Conrad's letter to Edward Garnett of March 15, 1895 (1983, 205).

[7] The "[m]illions of pink toads" the chief-engineer says are under his bed are, of course, the hallucinated counterpart of the eight hundred pilgrims on board, and their attack on him stands for his fear that they would start a row once they became aware of the danger. For Ian Watt, the reason why Conrad is giving such a detailed account of this meeting is that he is using "symbolic deciphering," a technique that is more demanding for the reader than the impressionistic "delayed decoding" used by Conrad in the famous passage of the sticks-that-happened-to-be-arrows in "Heart of Darkness." Watt does not go any further in his examination of the implications of Marlow's conversation with the engineer than simply stating that in the latter we find a pre-figuration of Jim's fears "that the pilgrims on the *Patna* might panic if the alarm were raised." (1980, 275)

to Don Quixote: "a long individual in a blue flannel coat, as dry as a chip and no stouter than a broomsitck, with dropping grey moustaches"; "a pretty notorious personality"; "[h]is lean bronzed head, with white moustaches, looked fine and calm on the pillow, like the head of a worn-out soldier with a childlike soul"; "his face [was that] of an old soldier, with its noble and calm outlines"; ending with the surgeon calling him "Noble-looking old boozer". (Conrad, 1946c, 40, 46, 50, 53, 55) Alcohol makes him both an omniscient observer and a terrified, helpless being. The same applies to Jim, but instead of alcohol, his intoxicants are romances of adventure. (Notice how Jim's reading material was introduced by a word that connotes 'body ingestion,' 'food or drug intake': "a *course* of light holiday literature" [Conrad, 1946c, 5. Emphasis mine]) Like the engineer, Jim also saw the *Patna* "going down, down, head first under me. …", as he tells Marlow. (Conrad, 1946c, 110) And, as Marlow is to witness in his interview with the youngster at the Marabar House, both Jim's omnipotence and his sense of helplessness before imminent disaster find their source in his forestalling imagination, in his pre-empting power of (quoting Marlow) "foresight" induced by his reading. (Conrad, 1946c, 95).[8] So, while Marlow saw Jim "penetrating deeper into the impossible world of romantic achievements", he did also become aware of how

> [h]is confounded imagination had evoked for him all the horrors of panic, the trampling rush, the pitiful screams, boats swamped […] the sudden swing upwards of the dark sky-line, the sudden tilt up of the vast plain of the sea, the swift rise, the brutal fling, the grasp of the abyss, the struggle without hope, the starlight closing over his head for ever like the vault of a tomb – the revolt of his young life – the black end. (Conrad, 1946c, 88 and 96)

Captain Marlow's interest and involvement in Jim's case derives from the mystifying anomaly that the youngster represents from the professional point of view as the latter's behaviour subverts the traditional patterns of normative subjectivity that ruled the seamen's practice. The keen interest of the resident surgeon in his alcoholic patient mirrors and prefigures Marlow's disorientation in his professional concern for Jim's case. This is the doctor's diagnosis as told to Marlow:

> "A curious case. D. T.'s of the worst kind. […] The head, ah! The head, of course, gone, but the curious part is there's some sort of method in his raving. I am trying to find out. Most unusual – that thread of *logic* in such a delirium. *Traditionally* he ought to see snakes, but he doesn't. *Good old tradition*'s at a discount nowadays. Eh! His – er – visions are batrachian. Ha! Ha! No seriously, I never remember being so interested in a case of jim-jams before. He ought to be dead, don't you know, after such a festive experiment." (*LJ* 55. Emphases mine)[9]

The doctor is interested in the workings of his patient's mind and tries to unravel the logic of his hallucinations, which do not fit the standard descriptions of traditional medical science that were part of his professional training. At the beginning of the following chapter of the novel – coming immediately after his brief encounter with the resident surgeon – Marlow states that all those who attended the inquiry and who were in any way related to sea (sailors and waterside businessmen) were driven there by an "interest" that "was purely psychological" (*LJ* 56). But, Marlow goes on saying, their expectations were frustrated by the way the judges conducted the examination, because the latter, constrained by the precepts of legal discourse, were simply interested in the objective facts ("the superficial how") and not in the psychological reasons ("the fundamental why") (*LJ* 56). Marlow's criticism of the judges

[8] See in particular see chapters 7-9 of the novel. (Conrad, 1946c, 77-111)

[9] Recent medical study on *delirium tremens*, states that snakes are the most frequent hallucinated animals along with cats and dogs. W. E. Platz, F. A. Oberlander and M. L. Seidel, "The Phenomenology of Perceptual Hallucinations in Alcohol-Induced *Delirium Tremens*," *Psychopathology*, 28/5 (1995), 247-255.

chimes in both with the third-person narrator's ironic comment on the uselessness of facts in Chapter 4 and with the resident surgeon's interest in the workings of chief engineer's mind:

> "the questions put to him [Jim] necessarily led him away from what to me, for instance, would have been the only truth worth knowing. You can't expect the constituted authorities to inquire into the state of a man's soul – or is it only of his liver?" (*LJ* 56-57)[10]

Like the surgeon, Marlow is interested in the psychological, mental side of the affair (in Jim's "soul") and not only in the purely factual, measurable, organic part ("his liver").[11] For the surgeon the chief engineer is the "'[m]ost extraordinary man I ever met – *medically*, of course'" (LJ 55. Emphasis mine). Like a researcher busy with a case-study, the doctor hopes to find some rational explanation for his anomalous hallucinations. Marlow's interest, however, goes beyond the doctor's scientific curiosity for the object of his professional concern, from which the latter maintains a clear distance (both scientific and ironic).[12] Jim's behaviour affects Marlow personally as a member of social group: it threatens to disrupt the whole set of values and patterns of conduct that seamen internalise and from which they obtain a sense of identity. While the doctor is "medically" concerned with "the logic in [… the chief engineer's] delirium," Marlow is "unconsciously" and "ardently" involved in Jim's case and comes face to face with what he dubs "a sort of profound and terrifying logic" at work in the youngster's mind that would lead the latter to an eventual suicidal act in Patusan (*LJ* 55, 50, 51 and 342).

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[10] "They [the three judges] wanted facts. Facts! They demanded facts for him [Jim], as if facts could explain anything!" (Conrad, 1946c, 29) This disavowal of the value of facts sounds rather odd in the lips a third-person narrator which, traditionally, was supposed to occupy the objective position of a view from nowhere specifically. It is important to add that such a statement is made in Chapter 4, at the end of which the third-person narrator gives the floor to Marlow, a first-person narrator subjectively involved in the story he is telling.

[11] Needless to comment on the connection between hepatic diseases and alcoholism.

[12] It may be argued however that the doctor's irony and laughter are a sign of nervousness and a symptom of the loss of his identity as derived from a scientific practice whose solidity is equally eroded by the engineer's atypical hallucinations.

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Don Quijote and the neuroscience of metafiction

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What is metafiction? Its original meaning was "a fiction that both creates an illusion and lays bare that illusion."[1] But the term has expanded and expanded to include any fiction that even mentions the idea of fiction. That can cover a lot of things, starting with the Iliad.[2]

I'd like to go back to the original idea. In my understanding, metafictions tell stories in which *the physical medium of the story becomes part of the story*. Among contemporary writers of fiction one could mention: my erstwhile colleagues John Barth, Donald Barthelme, and Ray Federman. Others are Borges, Calvino, Nabokov, Umberto Eco, John Fowles, Salman Rushdie, and on and on. Metafiction has become very popular in our questioning centuries, the twentieth and twenty-first. But, from previous times, one could point to Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste* or Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. The events of *Tristram Shandy* include the very copy of *Tristram Shandy* I am holding in my hand.

Metafictions lead to some of the more dizzying effects possible in literature. In Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, for example, one of the notebooks tells about a novelist trying to write a novel. A friend asks her to give him the first sentence, and the novelist rattles off the first sentence of *The Golden Notebook* itself.

Drama – metadrama – gets this effect in the metatheatrical tradition of Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* or *Henry IV*, and many of the absurdists like Genet or Ionesco or Weiss, in which characters point to the "play" they are acting in. In movies, you could also point to Woody Allen's *Purple Rose of Cairo* or Bergman's *Persona* or Alejandro Amenábar, *Abre los Ojos*, and especially Spike Jonze's 2002 movie *Adaptation*.

Adaptation shows us Charlie Kaufman (a real-life screenwriter) suffering from writer's block as he tries to write a movie based on a factual article about orchid stealing. But real-life Charlie Kaufman, who is a character in the movie, is outdone as a screenwriter by his devil-may-care twin brother Donald (who is totally fictitious, but played by the same actor, Nicolas Cage. who plays Charlie). (By the way, both real-life Charlie and fictitious Donald appear in the credits for the film.) In the course of the film, the writer who wrote the article comes to see the real-life orchid thief. As the plot develops, the

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[1] Waugh, 1984, 6; Gass, 1970.

[2] See for example a website that discusses the films of Peter Greenaway: http://www.btinternet.com/~paul.melia/meta1.html. Accessed September 13, 2005.

writers of the film become characters in the (fictional) film that they are writing and I am watching. *Adaptation*, writes its *New York Times* reviewer, A. O. Scott, "is ... a movie about its own nonexistence." Scott describes his reaction in terms like "panic," "frantic anxiety," or "paranoid."[3] Like Scott, I too feel dizzy and uncertain – and delighted at this toying with levels of reality. But why "panic"? Why "anxiety"?

A cute, short example of metafilm comes in the Marx Brothers' *Horse Feathers*. Groucho turns to the camera, that is, the audience – us – and comments on the movie he is in: "I've gotta stay here, but there's no reason you folks shouldn't go out in the lobby till this thing blows over."

You can create such an exotic effect even with criticism. One of my favorites in the world of metafiction occurs in a comical book by Charles Simmons called *Powdered Eggs*. *Powdered Eggs* includes a supposed review of *Powdered Eggs*. The reviewer concludes:

> There is even, in the last section of the book, a harsh mock review of the book itself, intended, I imagine, to disarm criticism. Well, it fails entirely. Many is the book reviewer, I suspect, who, like myself, will see in it his own distaste articulated. In fact, I am now quoting word for word from the same mock review.

You can even create the effect with a single sentence as in John Barth's famous exclamation, "Oh God comma I abhor self-consciousness."

But surely the genial grandaddy who sired all these effects, is that first and greatest of novels, whose 400th anniversary we celebrate this year, *Don Quijote*. *Don Quijote*, although it is the earliest of the great fictions, already plays metafictional games.

The book begins in uncertainty, for we are not sure where Don Quijote comes from or what his name is or, indeed, who is writing the book. What are we to believe? This fictional lunatic chooses the sobriquet "Knight of the Sad Countenance" – why? The book tells us it is not from a fictional impulse from his fictional brain, but because the (real?) writer of his history makes him do so (I.xix). Is this then a "real" history or just something the writer (whoever he may be) imposes?

The book turns fully metafictional when Part I (published in 1605) becomes a cause of events in Part II (published in 1615). In one chapter of Part II (II.iv), a roguish scholar starts toying with Don Quijote's fancies. The scholar tells us that the supposed author of Part I, the Moor Cide Hamete Benengeli will produce a Part II, which, of course, we are reading at that very moment. The fictional characters of Part II go on to discuss errors and distortions and even the sales figures of Part I.

The Don finds, as he proceeds through Part II, that the people he meets know about him and his goofy knight-errantry because so many people have read Part I. These readers – are they real readers or are they fictional readers? – these readers go on to have discussions and play tricks on the Don motivated by Part I.

There's more. Somebody named Avallaneda has written a false sequel to Part I (and there was in reality such a book). Don Quijote makes a point of discrediting it: its Don and Sancho are not at all like the "real" Don and Sancho. The "real" author of the novel (Benengeli? Cervantes?) then causes a reader of the fake *Don Quijote*, Part II, to swear an oath that the "real" Don and Sancho are not at all like the ones in the false novel (II.lxxii).

In short, Cervantes' metafiction puts the physical Part I into the fictional Part II and even has it cause events in Part II. Part II gives us a madman's illusions within the reality known to fictional readers within a fiction which is itself physically real because it is the book we are holding in our hands at that moment. You find that confusing? I can't imagine why.

As for me, I feel these metafictional effects as unsettling, disconcerting, slightly anxious-making – why? I feel somewhat a bit like A. O. Scott, the New York Times critic after seeing *Adaptation*: he

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[3] Scott, 2002.

felt “panic,” “frantic anxiety,” and “paranoid.” I don’t know that I feel “panic” or “frantic anxiety.” But I do feel edgy, a little nervous. Why?

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In all these metafictional works, I am getting that strange feeling Freud called “The Uncanny.” It is the feeling we get from reading stories about doubles, ghosts, or the undead. It is the vertigo we get when something familiar suddenly seems strange and unfamiliar.

Freud describes and explains one form of the “uncanny” this way: “An uncanny experience occurs... when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed.”[4] I think, then, that, when real books slide into the fictional stories they tell, we get an uncanny feeling because we lose our adult certainty that we can clearly separate the real from the unreal.

But why does the purely intellectual puzzle of metafiction make me slightly anxious? Why do I tense up? This is not just an intellectual puzzle. *Something is happening in my brain.* What is that something? (And the answer to that question is also the answer to the larger question of why this form of the uncanny, the return of an outgrown *belief*, a purely cognitive idea, should make us feel an emotion – anxiety.)

From a neurological point of view, the place to start is with the basic function of a brain. What is a brain for? Ultimately a brain has only one function: to move an organism through the world so that that organism can survive and reproduce. All the other fancier functions of the brain, its sensory perceptions, memory, and particularly the executive function in the frontal brain all serve that one purpose, moving us around.

Now, to move, to plan actions, we imagine situations. That is, if I want to push the copy of *Don Quijote* in front of me aside, I have to imagine where I want the copy of *Don Quijote* to be in order to tell my arms and legs to make the necessary moves. I have to imagine something that is not actually the case. Neuroscientists call this a “counterfactual.” I feed forward to my systems for planning motions the future position of the copy of *Don Quijote*, which is not what “is.” Our brains seek our survival and reproduction through goals that we must imagine ahead of time.

In general, we humans *simulate* in order to arrive at the best, the most appropriate physical actions. If I do X, then Y will happen. If I do A, then B will happen. I have to imagine X, Y, A, and B – because none is real. Each is a counterfactual. Then, if Y *feels* worse than B, I choose A. In short, we generate counterfactuals in order to see how they feel, and we select the one that feels best to us. Ultimately, emotions guide our choices. We act out what feels good and right. We obey Freud’s “pleasure principle” or “unpleasure principle.” We avoid unpleasure.

From a neurological point of view, we begin to test reality when we act or plan to act in response to a stimulus.[5] Let me quote some neuroscientists to back up that assertion.

“Perception,” according to Andy Clark, “is itself tangled up with specific possibilities of action – so tangled up, in fact, that the job of central cognition often ceases to exist.”[6] Another neuroscientist, Rodolfo Llinás, writes, “What I must stress here is that the brain’s understanding of anything, whether factual or abstract, arises from our manipulations of the external world, by our moving within the world and thus from our sensory-derived experience of it.”[7] And two specialists in frontal lobe function, Robert T. Knight and Marcia Grabowecky, say, “Reality checking involves a continual assessment of the relation between behavior and the environment.”[8]

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[4] Freud, 1917h, ch. III.

[5] Hobson, 1995, ch. 6; Chelazzi et al., 1998; Rolls, 1995; Knight and Grabowecky, 1995; Kahneman and Miller, 1986.

[6] Clark, 1997, 51.

[7] Llinás, 2001, 58-59.

[8] Knight and Grabowecky, 1995, 1360.

In short, without movement or the impulse to move or some plan to move, we need not check the reality of what we perceive, and *we don't*. If we can't act towards something, it's doesn't matter whether it's real or not real. It is a fiction, like Don Quijote riding Rosinante across the plains of Spain. I am not motor connected to Don Quijote or Sancho or any of it. I am not there. But I can act toward this book, this physical copy of *Don Quijote*, I can turn its pages, I can pick it up, I can put it down – it's real therefore.

And that is how you can go into that trance-like state that you enjoy when you are really "into" a movie. You cease to be aware of your body, you cease to be aware of your environment – and, in Coleridge's phrase, you willingly suspend your disbelief. That is, you you neither believe nor disbelieve because you have stopped testing the reality of the fiction because you know you cannot act on the fiction.

Now, ordinarily we are clear in our minds as to what is the fictional part of a story and what is part of the real world. But what happens in your brain when in Part II, Sancho and the Don start talking about how many copies Part I has sold? Now, you are motor connected to the book *Don Quijote*. You are turning its pages. In a spatial sense, you are with it. But suddenly, this physical book, the thing I am holding in my hand or looking at – acting toward – becomes a part of the unreal fiction that it represents, the thing I cannot act toward.

In a neurological sense, this shift between reality and unreality mobilizes your systems for attention. Our brains are so wired, as all animals' brains are wired, that whenever any new thing pops into our environment – you have to pay attention to it. It could be a threat or an opportunity for sex or maybe just food, and that's why you have to pay attention. What should I be doing about this new thing? How will I cope with this? This novelty, this confusion of the two levels, corresponds to what Freud described as "a signal of unpleasure" or a "signal of anxiety" that mobilizes your defenses, that is, your coping mechanisms.[9] In brain terms, you are calling on your dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, the highest part of your brain that initiates actions. You are asking the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex to set your brain both for non-action and action.[10]

That is, for a given piece of the world (the book), the executive function of your brain is getting two inconsistent signals. One says, Be ready to act. The other says, Don't act. In effect, you are grinding your mental gears, because you are in drive and neutral at the same time. And you will begin to feel uncomfortably uncertain about your own situation as well as Don Quijote's. This confusion of reality and unrealty in short, gives you the slightly anxious feeling that Freud called "the uncanny."

With any metafiction, I am in a somewhat spooky hall of mirrors. But *Don Quijote* goes even farther into this hall of mirrors than most metafictions. This novel builds on the very premise that metafictional uncertainties are playing with. And that, to me, makes for one of the brilliancies of this great novel.

That is, metafictions play with the fact that fictions are unreal and we are not going to act on them. But what is this book about? It's about a man who reads these stories about knights-errant and dragons and princesses and wicked enchanters, and he *does act on them. It's about a man who does act in response to fictions!* He believes they are not stories but histories. It's about a man who reads fictions but instead of not acting as an ordinary reader would not act, he puts armor on and tilts at windmills, he chases sheep, he steals a barber's basin for a helmet – he does all his other glorious antics. He *acts*.

In short, it's a book about a man who is a fictional character who denies he is a fictional character. It's about, therefore, a fictional man who is really a metafictional man, who even – sometimes – seems to know that he is metafictional, and that is why *Don Quijote* is such a wonderfully funny trick on readers like us.

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[9] Freud, 1926d, 92; 83.
[10] Passingham, 1993, 222-237.

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Uncanny fish in Plath and Hughes

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Sylvia Plath's 1960 poem "Mirror" builds up to the appearance of a terrible fish, an internalized counterpart of the watching consciousness under the dark pond of Ted Hughes's 1958 poem "Pike." Whereas Hughes's poem evokes the spirit of the place and the genetic residue of England's violent past, a version perhaps of Clarence's dream of the sea of fish-eaten victims of the Wars of the Roses in Shakespeare's history play *Richard III*, Plath's "Mirror" narrates a lifetime of interactions with a nameless, faceless woman and imagines aging as disfigurement. In Hughes's poem, pike are both weapons (cf. a "pike" as an instrument of warfare) and vital presences in the physical world that provide inspiration for his poetic vocation. In Plath's poem, a fish resides in the mirror, a monstrous figuration of coming to recognize oneself as an aging, vanishing façade. The poet speaks through the voice of her mirror.

Exploring timeless, primitive, ruthless fish, "Pike" chronicles a series of vignettes that, says Matthew Fisher, begin in plain diction, giving an objective, scientific description: "Pike, three inches long, perfect / Pike in all parts, green tigering the gold." The word "tigering" in the second line, *pace* Fisher, perhaps evokes William Blake's "Tiger, tiger, burning bright / In the forest of the night," an image of the destructive, devouring element of Creation. The green and gold in Hughes's first line may recall Ovid's description of the Golden Age, when "golden honey was trickling from the green oak"; and closer to home, the green and golden "Fern Hill" of Dylan Thomas. But Hughes's creation has stillness and horror at its core. Line three of "Pike" introduces the interpretive, poetic image "Killers from the egg," suggesting the poet's view of elegant death-by-design at the origin of life, a universe thriving on streamlined predation (Porter, 1974). These green and golden three-inch pike have "grandeur," for they are a "hundred feet long in their world," an example of the poet's putting his perspective inside a nonhuman microscope, submarine and animate. The three-inch pike knead quietly under water; their underjaws form "the malevolent aged grin," "hooked clamp and fangs / Not to be changed at this date," permanent expression of "A life subdued to its instrument" (lines 3-15), a weapon of death/eating. In this first vignette, three-inch pike "dance" on the pond surface among flies or move in "submarine delicacy and horror." They are beautiful and deadly, a species contained within their natural habitat.

Stanza five introduces a second vignette, this one indoors, enclosed behind the transparent walls of a figurative jungle with unusual inhabitants for a domestic aquarium – three pike. These are specified. One pike is three inches long; the other two are bit larger, a pecking order of inches. These

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three are subject to intimate observation: “Three we kept behind glass, / Jungled in weed: three inches, four, / And four and half: fed try to them – / Suddenly there were two. Finally one // With a sag belly and the grin it was born with. / And indeed they spare nobody” (lines 17-22). These fish seem at first to thrive in their enclosure, but then the fittest one survives the others. Though their devouring is brought close for our inspection, the wall of the aquarium provides what Fisher calls “a symbolic partition” effectively protecting the viewer from the savage encounter to be viewed (1989: 58).

A third vignette keeps us from mistakenly assuming the cannibalism demonstrated by the pike “behind glass” was a result of captivity; and it examines self-destructive devouring (Fisher, 1989: 58). Depicting a gory scene that may owe something to Coleridge’s “Christabel” (the green snake strangling the dove) and to Virginia Woolf’s *Between the Acts* (the gagged bullfrog), the second half of stanza six and the next stanza confront us with the corpses of mutually destructive pike in the wild. “Two, six pounds each, over two feet long, / High and dry and dead in the willow-herb – One jammed past its gills down the other’s gullet” (lines 23-26). This encounter with violent fish is close up; but it is on land, in a human frame of reference. We see the pike from a dry world, where the fish are “High and dry and dead in the willow-herb” (line 24).

But the eye of the outside fish has an iron stare – a fish-eyed, alien, blank, dead stare. Since the observer is alive and the objects of his inspection are dead, detachment remains between human and fish. The outer fish, its prey jammed down its throat, stares from a dead eye – “Though its film shrank in death” (line 28).

At this point, the poem shifts to subjective meditation, narrating in the first-person a fishing story in which the fishing line of the speaker connects him more deeply to the watery realm where fish swim. This part of the poem culminates in an uncanny effect operating along principles Freud set out in his 1919 essay “The ‘Uncanny’”: having set up one reality, the poem now invades it with another (see Freud, 1919, ed. Strachey, 250). Following the three vignettes described in various degrees of scientific, cautious detachment, the poem reaches into deep time: “A pond I fished, fifty yards across, / Whose lilies and muscular tench [i.e. carp] / Had outlasted every visible stone / Of the monastery that planted them – // Stilled legendary depth: / It was deep as England. It held / Pike too immense to stir, so immense and old / That past nightfall I dared not cast” (lines 29-36). The “fifty yards across” gives an objective sense of the size of the pond; the lilies and the tench that have outlasted monastery stones contrast the time dimension of the survival reach of the denizens of natural habitat against the ephemeral, medieval human institution of the monastery and its stone construction. The still, deep pond is so old, it is legendary, prehistoric yet rich in history, “as deep as England” (line 34). Its pike are imagined to be so big, deep and old, they disquiet the speaker, who dared not cast “past nightfall.” It is transgressive and dreadful to be alone in proximity to such huge fish; but the poet fishes on, his hair frozen as if in fear, waiting for “what might move, for what eye might move” (lines 38-39), as if expecting a visitation from the drowned or dream world of the ancient dead.

Instructing Leonard Baskin in 1959 on the woodcut illustration he wanted for this poem, Hughes stated that the pike are dead: “The skull of a pike would have been best, since the pike in the poem are not really the living. Maybe something like a skull, or even just a jawbone, would be most subtly explosive – illumine the undermeaning of the poem a bit and not overdefine the real pike in it” (unpublished letter to Leonard and Esther Baskin, written from Boston, January 1959 [London: British Library manuscript]). As in the poem’s repetition of the word “three,” suggesting a third realm, Hughes wants to both evoke and undermine reality: “not really the living.”

“Pike”’s final stanza merges the outer scene with the imagination of the speaker as the woods begin to float and the sound of the owls and the splashes on the pond grow frail on the ear in contrast to the dream freed from the darkness deeper than night’s darkness. This deep dark dream, says the poet, “rose slowly towards me, watching.” If one receives an image of the immense pike from prehistoric times rising, one can imagine a meeting of consciousnesses – the poet’s and the pike’s; the fisherman has stirred a deep fish in the pond. This suggests both the stirring of a live fish and a recalling of the dead. The effect might be a successful evocation of the animistic world in which, as in Celtic lore, each pool has a genius of the place, and provides an opening into the underworld, an idea implicit in

the pond of "legendary depth," "deep as England" (lines 33-34). A pond has a surface that reflects, with a deep world underneath it. This poem brings a submerged consciousness to the surface of awareness and reanimates the dead. This corresponds in two ways to Freud's claim that disquieting effects are produced by the return of superseded modes of thought. In "Pike," the scientific perspective of the first seven stanzas gives way to the animistic, pantheistic perspective of the last four stanzas; boundary-conscious, scientific voyeurism opens a line to Celtic animism, the spirit of the place and of the dead, as well as to the prehistoric, genetic residue of the origin of evolutionary life in water. "Pike"'s final two words, "me, watching," suggest ambiguously: I watched or sensed the presence of another consciousness as the immense, prehistoric pike rose toward me, watching me – I, the speaker was a watcher being watched; and, simultaneously, in so far as the immense old pike from legendary depths corresponds to an aspect of the mind of the speaker and to his genetic past, the "me, watching" is the "I" or "eye" of the poet's identification with his meditatively freed genetic, feral heritage, his vocation as a Merlin-like shaman casting a spell, and his survival as predator, his own iron-eyed awareness that by fishing he is partaking of what Sylvia Plath called (in "All the Dead Dears," 1957) "the gross eating game," feeding on corpses. Hughes's mesmeric accuracy in making a cast with a fly-line has been described by one of his friends as "Merlin-like" (MEMORIAL ADDRESS, WESTMINSTER ABBEY, London, 13 May 1999). Hughes himself remarked that what goes out with the hook comes back with the line.

The poem's final image of dream darkness "beneath night's darkness" raising a primitive watcher has a counterpart in Plath's fish rising menacingly in "Mirror" and the spooky ancestral figures in "All the Dead Dears": "From the mercury-backed glass / Mother, grandmother / Reach hag hands to haul me in, // And an image looms under the fishpond surface." Whereas Hughes's disquieting pike are external, environmental, cross-species genetic as well as part of the psyche of the poet, Plath's submerged presences are internal, psychological, familial. Hughes's pike are living and dead, and Plath's fish in the mirror show disfigurement and death as personal destiny. Hughes's pond with pike in its legendary depths seems to be refigured by Plath as a mirror in which ancestral imagoes claim the aging subject. Thus "Mirror" can be read as shrinking Hughes's mythic grandeur into an introspective psychodrama. If "Pike" is read as revisioning the image that "looms under the fishpond surface" in "All the Dead Dears" (1957); "Mirror" (1961) can be read as Plath's reply to "Pike" (1959).

Plath's "Mirror," confined to a psychic, imaginary realm, leaves out the dimension of reality Freud thought necessary for setting the conditions for an uncanny effect. Though Plath's poem demonstrates a disquieting theme of the mirror image as encroaching death, it remains less uncanny than "Pike" because by beginning with a speaking mirror, a` la Snow White, Plath's poem is already in a fantasy world before the terrible fish manifests itself (cf. Freud, 1919, ed. Strachey, 250). We have an intellectual confrontation with the otherness of the self but not a suspension between worlds.

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Mourning and creativity: Sylvia Plath's work

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I am divorcing daddy – Dybbuk! Dybbuk!
I have been doing it daily all my life ...

(Anne Sexton, "'Daddy!' 'Daddy!'")

O thou that sleepest, what is sleep? Sleep resembles death; oh, why not let thy work be such that after death thou mayst retain a resemblance to perfect life, rather than during life make thyself resemble the hapless dead by sleeping.

(From the manuscript of Leonardo da Vinci)

Sylvia Plath was persistently preoccupied with her father's death when she was eight years old, and her grief in losing him arose frequently: "Crying and crying with this terrible pain; it hurts, Father, it hurts, oh, Father I have never known; a father, even, they took from me" (*J*, p. 124). The traumatic loss of her father in her childhood had a great effect on Plath's subsequent development, and her father's death was possibly the most traumatic occasion in her life. She was psychologically injured by this fact. Object-relations theorist Susan Kavaler-Adler writes: "If the father fails the daughter as an adequate oedipal-stage father, or if he dies, the little girl may not be able to mourn him, to separate from him, and to internalize him as an integrated good enough object."[1] But does this hold true of Plath?

In "Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States," Melanie Klein (whose key concept is

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[1] Susan Kavaler-Adler, *The Compulsion to Create: A Psychoanalytic Study of Women Artists* (New York/London: Routledge, 1993, p. 73).

the "paranoid-schizoid position"[2]) claims that the work of mourning is a reliving of the early "depressive position."[3] I would like to quote Klein's account:

> My experience leads me to conclude that, while it is true that the characteristic feature of normal mourning is the individual's setting up the lost loved object inside himself, he is not doing so for the first time but, through the work of mourning, is reinstating that object as well as all his loved internal objects which he feels he has lost. He is therefore recovering what he had already attained in childhood. (*Love*, p. 362)

According to Klein's hypothesis, the loss of the present object in the external world brings with it the mourner's "unconscious phantasies" of having lost one's internal "good" objects as well. One is afflicted by the pain of the inner loss in addition to the outer loss. Every time grief arises, it "undermines the feeling of secure possession of the loved internal objects" (*Envy*, p. 77). If one reinstates the external loved object successfully, at the same time one can regain the loved internal objects. On the other hand, in mourning, one reinstates not only the actual lost objects but also one's original objects, the parental imagos, which make up one's inner world. When the actual person has died, one feels in

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[2] From Melanie Klein's point of view, in the "paranoid-schizoid position," the infant sees her/his mother (and the other people around it) through "phantasies" (Melanie Klein uses the word "phantasy" for unconscious fantasies to distinguish them from conscious fantasies and to clarify the definition of her theory) which are structured from external reality modified by the infant's own feelings. Out of the interaction between her/his feelings and her/his perception of the external and internal world, the infant creates "phantasies" in order to understand that world. For the infant, there is little distinction between "phantasies" and reality. On the basis of "introjective" and "projective" processes, the reality of the infant's internal world is structured by these "phantasies." In the "phantasies," the impulses of the infant are pre-Oedipal manifestations of the "life drive" and the "death drive." The former manifestations are often gratifying or beneficent, and produce a loving relationship with parts of the mother. The latter manifestations are often aggressive or envious, and produce a fear of annihilation.

In the first stage of the infant's life, in the "paranoid-schizoid position," the mother – first of all, her breast (called a "part-object" because the infant takes the breast for the whole of the mother at first) – needs to be split by the infant into "good" and "bad," ideal and persecuting. A "phantasy" of a loving and good breast/mother needs to be kept separate from "phantasies" of a dangerous and terrifying breast/mother which gives rise to anxiety. As a result of that, the breast/mother is experienced as a "good" object and a "bad" object in turn by the infant. At one time, the infant's aggressive and envious impulses are directed toward the "bad" breast/mother, and at another time, the infant's self-preservative impulses towards the "good" breast/mother. The infant does not recognize that the two feelings are directed to the same person. This is the stage before the infant connects these objects with the real and whole human being.

[3] The "depressive position" is another of Melanie Klein's key concepts. In the "depressive position," the "splitting" and "projection" of the infant decrease. As the infant feels that her/his ego is becoming stronger, s/he begins to recognize a whole object and relate herself/himself to this object. As the mother becomes a whole object, so the infant's ego becomes a whole ego. Conflicts inside the self are solved not by "splitting" and "projection," but by holding them within the self.

The infant begins to distinguish between what is "good" and what is "bad," and the mother turns out to be the object who can be at times good, at times bad, and who can be both loved and hated. The infant worries that her/his own destructive impulses have destroyed or will destroy the mother that s/he loves and depends on. As a result of this, the infant begins to feel loss, guilt and mourning acutely.

According to Klein, in the "paranoid-schizoid position," anxieties are related with fears of annihilation by the object. In the "depressive position," the main source of anxiety is for the object. When the infant makes contact with reality, s/he knows that s/he has destroyed the breast/mother (the external object) in "phantasy." The feelings of guilt and self-reproach arise from the sense that s/he has lost the mother through her/his own destructiveness. These feelings of guilt awaken in the infant the wish to reconstruct her in order to regain her. But at first the breast to the infant is the infant's whole world, and the infant also knows that s/he is too small and helpless to repair the damage to such a huge mother. The infant begins to discover her/his dependence on the mother. However, through the repetition of experiences of loss and "reparation," the "good" mother becomes better assimilated into the ego of the infant's self in "phantasy."

danger of losing one's original parents as well. The mourner attempts to reinstate the "good objects," and to reconstitute the parental imagos. I would like to quote another account of Klein's:

> It is by reinstating inside himself the "good" parents as well as the recently lost person, and by rebuilding his inner world, which was disintegrated and in danger, that he overcomes his grief, regains security, and achieves true harmony and peace. (*Love*, p. 368)

"The attempts to save the love object," writes Klein in "A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States," "to repair and restore it, attempts which in the state of depression are coupled with despair, since the ego doubts its capacity to achieve this restoration, are determining factors for all sublimations and the whole of the ego development" (*Love*, p. 270).

Borrowing Freud's insights, Klein reformulated his original idea which states that "an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss."[4] In "Mourning and Melancholia,"[5] Freud explains how the subject internalizes the lost object when the object is lost through death or absence. Freud focuses on the pathological aspects of failed mourning here, which is related to what he terms "melancholia." To counter Freud's norm, Jahan Ramazani contrasts Freud's "normal" mourning with the melancholic mourning of many modern poets and dilutes "Freud's overly rigid distinction between 'mourning' and 'melancholia' to a matter of emphases within mourning – while still allowing for the kind of 'melancholia' or 'depression' not occasioned by death."[6] Ramazani asserts that the concept of "melancholia" based on Freud's theory may help to clarify what he calls "Plath's sadomasochistic mourning" (he conflates the speakers in Plath's elegies with Plath herself). In the light of ambivalence towards the lost object, Freud's idea of "melancholia" verges on Klein's idea of "manic defence," which I shall explain later in this article. Both ideas deal with unsuccessful mourning which never ends. However, while Freud maintains that ambivalence caused by "melancholia" turns normal mourning into pathological mourning, Klein maintains that "manic defence" is not necessarily pathological.

After reading Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia," Sylvia Plath also applied Freud's essay's insights to her own case, not to her father but to her mother:

> An almost exact description of my feelings and reasons for suicide: a transferred murderous impulse from my mother onto myself: the "vampire" metaphor Freud uses, "draining the ego": that is exactly the feeling I have getting in the way of my writing: Mother's clutch. (*J*, p. 279)

Although Plath did not do self-analysis using Freud's idea of mourning and melancholia, she seems to have been much influenced by Freud's idea as we see from Plath's elegies.

Next, we will move to a consideration of the connection between mourning and creativity. Melanie Klein explored the basic conception of aesthetics and creativity first in her paper, "Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse" (*Love*, pp. 210-218). Klein comments on the sources of the creative impulse and the creative process in this paper, in which she describes it in relation to a destructive attack on or by persecutors in "phantasy" in the "depressive position." The creative effort is a subsequent attempt to restore the damage to external and internal objects. For Klein, creativity is regarded as a manifestation of "reparation." Further, in "Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States," Klein connects creativity with mourning:

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[4] Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" in James Strachey trans. *Standard Edition*, vol. 14 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1956, p. 159).

[5] Steven Gould Axelrod discusses the relationship between Freud's essay "Mourning and Melancholia" and Plath in his book, *Sylvia Plath: The World and the Cure of Words* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990, pp. 26-27).

[6] Jahan Ramazani, *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 29).

> We know that painful experiences of all kinds sometimes stimulate sublimations, or even bring out quite new gifts in some people, who may take to painting, writing or other productive activities under the stress of frustrations and hardships. [...] Such enrichment is in my view gained through processes similar to those steps in mourning. [...] That is to say, any pain caused by unhappy experiences, whatever their nature, has something in common with mourning. It reactivates the infantile depressive position; the encountering and overcoming of adversity of any kind entails mental work similar to mourning. (*Love*, p. 360)

Through painful experiences of all kinds which are similar to mourning, creativity is stimulated. This idea has been developed and revised by Klein's followers, among whom two of the best known theorists are Hanna Segal and Adrian Stokes, who transform Klein's insights into systematic aesthetic principles. The former's most famous paper on this theme is "A Psycho-Analytic Approach to Aesthetics." The latter's books include *Three Essays on The Painting of Our Time* and *The Invitation in Art*. Hanna Segal writes on Stokes' book:

> In *Invitation in Art* Adrian Stokes makes the, to me, very convincing point that part of the difficulty in art is that it is to satisfy both the longing for an ideal object and a self merged with it, with the need to restore a whole object realistically perceived, a separate mother not merged with the self. He suggests that the particular feeling of being drawn into and enveloped in a work of art has elements of the original pre-depressive merging with the ideal object.[7]

Developing Klein's conception, Segal explains the process through which an artist produces a work of art. In her paper "A Psycho-Analytic Approach to Aesthetics," Segal remarks that the work of art is an artist's way of reassembling the inner world, felt to have been destroyed by aggressive "phantasies" arising out of the "depressive position," and of recreating something that is felt to be a whole new world.

Segal refers to Marcel Proust as her instance of an artist who describes the creative process. According to Segal, Proust depicts how the process of mourning leads to an artist's wish to recover the lost world. The dead people represent his internal objects, and their loss reactivates the original loss of his parents. Segal comments: "Through the many volumes of his work the past is being recaptured; all his lost, destroyed and loved objects are being brought back to life: his parents, his grandmother, his beloved Albertine." Segal quotes Proust's words:

> And indeed it was not only Albertine, not only my grandmother, but many others still from whom I might well have assimilated a gesture or a word, but whom I could not even remember as distinct persons. A book is a vast graveyard where on most of the tombstones one can read no more the faded names.[8]

As a result of this, we can regard the characters of his novel as symbols of his own inner characters, and, collectively, as an image of his whole internal world. Segal points out that Proust insists that the lost past and the lost or dead object can be made into a work of art. He acknowledges his loss, mourns it and finally reinstates its object internally. And according to Segal, "on realizing the destruction of a whole world that had been his, he decides to write, to sacrifice himself to the re-creation of the dying and the dead."[9] Segal observes that Proust could fully experience "depressive" mourning:

> This gave him the possibility of insight into himself, and with it a sense of internal and external reality. Further, this reality sense enabled him to have and to maintain a relationship with other people through the medium of his art."[10]

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[7] Hanna Segal, *Dream, Phantasy and Art* (London/New York: Tavistock/Routledge, 1991, p. 98).
[8] Hanna Segal, "A Psycho-Analytical Approach to Aesthetics," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, (1952), vol. 33, p. 198.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 199.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

In the novels of Virginia Woolf as well, as Maud Ellmann claims, "the invasive presence of the dead weighs on the living."[11] Segal also comments as follows on the case of creating a tragedy:

> In creating a tragedy I suggest the success of the artist depends on his being able fully to acknowledge and express his depressive phantasies and anxieties. In expressing them he does work similar to the work of mourning in that he internally re-creates a harmonious world which is projected into his work of art.[12]

Segal concludes that creative activity is achieved through a process of mourning which is a reliving of the "depressive position" in which one realizes that the early lost objects are damaged. This gives rise to intense feelings of loss and guilt, and attempts to restore and recreate them outside and within the self.

Subsequently, a creative work lets the reader experience the writer's depression in which s/he has lost those whom s/he loves, and the writer's joy in which s/he has re-created and reinstated her/his loved objects to her/his internal world that seems to be whole and complete.

For Sylvia Plath, the grief from the loss of her father was profound. Whenever the mourning of the lost father was revived, every loss, every grief was experienced. It seems that the mourning of her father gave her a chance to move to the "depressive position." According to Melanie Klein, the early mourning in the "depressive position" is "revived whenever grief is experienced later in life" (*Love*, p. 344). We can recognize that Plath must have felt that what had been lost in her father's death was not only the person but some parts of her own self. It left a "hole" in her inner world (*LH*, p. 289). The fact gives us some clues to why she was so absorbed in writing. Since she acknowledged the loss, in her literary texts she had struggled to reinstate her father and her internal "good" objects in her inner world. It was to fill in the "hole," to close the wounds. Writing poetry was for her like the work of mourning. "Reparation" arising from the mourning of the loss was a constituent of the creative process. Plath thought of writing poetry as reparation not only for the loss of her beloved father but for her lost past with her father. Plath writes in her journal: "I rail and rage against the taking of my father, [...]. My villanelle was to my father; and the best one. I lust for the knowing of him" (*J*, p. 129). She attempted to restore the lost loved object by writing poetry. For Plath, it was a means of reinstating the lost loved object as well as the lost internal "good" objects. Thus, writing about her father not only enabled her to make contact with and reincorporate her lost father, but also to rebuild her shattered inner world. Therefore, her internalization and reinstatement of her lost father was the source of her creativity – for her, he was "the buried male muse" (*J*, p. 222). Her father leads her on to full participation in poetic life. To capture him, to give him permanent life, she must write poetry. By virtue of her art, she could give her father an eternal life in her literary texts.

Plath experienced a traumatic loss again when she was deserted by her husband, Ted Hughes, who served as father-figure displacement – her father "risen" from his grave "to be my mate" (*J*, p. 222). As a result, after that occasion, she produced a host of poems during a short period which later are called "October Poems," which many of her most famous and important poems were included: "Daddy," "Medusa," "Lady Lazarus," and "Ariel," for example. According to her letters to her mother and brother, Plath wrote "like mad" (*LH*, p. 466) and "the release" in her energy was "enormous" (*LH*, p. 467) during that period.

We can regard Plath's father as one of her muses. In particular, for her, her father was the "sea-god muse" (*J*, p. 244). Then why did Plath connect her father with the sea? We can find one of the clues in one of the episodes in her autobiographical sketch, "Ocean 1212-W" where she writes a memoir about her early childhood: the episode in which the heroine listens to her mother's reciting of the

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[11] *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*, ed. by Maud Ellmann (London/New York: Longman, 1994, p. 146).
[12] Hanna Segal, "A Psycho-Analytical Approach to Aesthetics," pp. 204-205.

poem, Matthew Arnold's "The Forsaken Merman," in which Plath's discovery of poetry's power is shown. In this poem, the merman laments because his mortal wife deserted him for the land and does not come back to the undersea world. Even though he calls for her return, she ignores him. One day, the merman goes to the land in order to search for his lost wife. At the end of the poem, the merman sings sadly:[13]

> There dwells a lov'd one,
> But cruel is she.
> She left lonely for ever
> The kings of the sea.[14]

Plath depicts her reaction to listening to her mother's recitation:[15]

> I saw the gooseflesh on my skin. I didn't know what made it. I was not cold. Had a ghost passed over? No, it was the poetry. A spark flew off Arnold and shook me, like a chill. I wanted to cry; I felt very odd. I had fallen into a new way of being happy. (*JP*, p. 118)

After this occasion, Plath began to write poems, hiding them in her mother's dinner napkin or beneath her butter plate. Arnold's poem made her both find where her lost father – for her, a husband-like figure – dwelt, and discovered the power of the poetry. This seems to be one of the reasons why Plath called the sea her "poetic heritage" (*LH*, p. 345). Through that experience, she seems to have realized that writing poetry is the process of mourning, rebuilding and internalizing "good" parts of her lost father in her self, and the means of reunion with him. For Plath, the sea is "a central metaphor for my childhood, my poems and the artist's subconscious" (*JP*, p. 222). She discovered how to transform her loss into artistic work. Since she acknowledged her loss and experienced the mourning for her father, she reinstated him internally through her art.

Moreover, at the end of "Ocean 1212-W," Plath writes:

> And this is how it stiffens, my vision of that seaside childhood. My father died, we moved inland. Whereon those nine first years of my life sealed themselves off like a ship in a bottle – beautiful, inaccessible, obsolete, a fine, white flying myth. (*JP*, p. 124)

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[13] In "Ocean 1212-W," Plath quotes the following passage from Matthew Arnold's Forsaken Merman":

> Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
> Where the winds are all asleep;
> Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;
> Where the salt weed sways in the stream;
> Where the sea-beasts rang'd all round
> Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
> Where the sea-snakes coil and twine
> Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
> Where great whales come sailing by,
> Sail and sail with unshut eye,
> Round the world for ever and aye.
> (*JP*, p. 118)

[14] Matthew Arnold, *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, ed. by Kenneth Allott, 2nd ed. by Miriam Allott (London: Longman, 1979, p. 105).

[15] The curious thing about that epiphany, as Plath tells it, is that it both reflects her own situations and inverts the genders. The mother recites to her daughter a poem about a father in a watery world, who misses an absent wife. In addition to that Plath finds her lost father there, what also matters is that it is her mother's voice that transmits the poem, and that the first poems were written for the mother to read. It looks like her muse was not all the father then, at least at the start.

Plath spent her early years close by the ocean, and this childhood place was marvelous to her partly because she could enjoy time with her father. The brief statement "My father died, we moved inland" is worth noting. Her vision of a seaside childhood congealed when her father died. Her early years were cut off from her life and enclosed "like a ship in a bottle." Clearly the change was caused by her father's death. I think that that is another reason why the memory of her father's death is strongly connected with the sea. Her fascination with death had sprung from her recognition that the source of her inspiration was her father.

In this article, in addition to the above explanation of the connection between mourning and creativity, I shall demonstrate the speakers' movement from the "paranoid-schizoid position" to the "depressive position" through their mourning of their fathers, and the difficulty of doing this, seen in some of Sylvia Plath's paternal elegies. The speakers have a tendency to keep going back to the "paranoid-schizoid position" in spite of all wanting to get to the "depressive position," to the successful mourning. For the poet, this is related to a "phantasy" that the dead father is inside the Jungian "earth mother's" body: under the ground and in the water, that is to say, the sea, the river, the lake and the pond. For the speakers in Plath's elegies, this maternal matrix is where they can reunite with their fathers and dream all the time in a foetus-like state. They are embraced by the warm outstretched arms of the "earth mother" – not their real mothers'. This is the world where they feel that they can solve the problems of "good" and "bad," inside and outside, subject and object, devoid of all anxieties and stress. It is close to death, but to borrow the speaker's words in "Flute Notes from a Reedy Pond" (*CP*, pp. 134-135), "This is not death, it is something safer." We can find these images in the poems such as "All the Dead Dears," "Full Fathom Five," "Electra on the Azalea Path," "The Colossus" and "Daddy." Because of the speakers' unsuccessful mourning, they result in being obsessed with a wish of watery death in order to reunite with their dead fathers. I wish also to reflect on Plath's speakers' fascination with sexual contact with their fathers in their "phantastic" world, which seems to be the influence of Freud. The father figure appears in Plath's texts as a husband, a beekeeper, a Colossus, a drowned man, a Greek king, and a Nazi.

To analyze the feelings towards her father, Sylvia Plath herself had read some psychoanalytic books – mainly the works of Freud, Jung, and one of Jung's followers, Erich Neumann. It seems that having undergone psychoanalysis triggered Plath's interest in them as well.[16] Elizabeth Butler Cullingford claims that Plath's relationship to Freud and to psychoanalysis is also that of a daughter to a father: "She seems never to have questioned the powerfully seductive and patriarchal claims of psychoanalysis itself."[17] We can say that it is due to the profound influence of Freudian doctrine on the post-war America Plath had lived in. The concept of the "earth mother" is established by Neumann, and the Electra complex, a term used by Jung for a female version of the Freudian concept of the Oedipus complex. Plath construed the speaker's sexual obsession with the father and her hatred of the mother within the pattern of the Electra complex. Plath thought that conflicts between mothers and daughters were potentially as rivalrous and oedipally based following Freud's idea. Though the Electra complex was disavowed by Freud in his paper, "Female Sexuality," Plath seems to have misread it because of her tendency to simplify Freud's insights like most readers who did not specialize in Freud's theories in 1950s and 1960s America (see Plath's comment on her poem "Daddy" which is referred to in the latter part of this article: "Here is a poem spoken by a girl with an Electra complex").

What I am dealing with is not Sylvia Plath herself but her representations in her poems. Adopting a mythical frame of reference is generally one way for the poet to distance her work from immediate

[16] Plath had undergone intensive courses of Freudian analysis with Dr. Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse.

[17] Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, "A Father's Prayer, A Daughter's Anger: W. B. Yeats and Sylvia Plath" in *Daughters and Fathers*, ed. by Lynda E. Boose and Betty S. Flowers (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, p. 245).

autobiographical sources of the poetry. Plath attempts to contain raw emotion within a mythical frame of reference. It functions as a container for her meaning about her personal experiences. I think that in this way Plath achieves distance from her experience. She explores mythical themes, one of which is the story of Demeter and Persephone, the mother and the daughter, and of Persephone and Hades, the daughter and the husband/ father.[18] I intend to use this story here as a pre-text for my analysis of Plath's works on the father-daughter relationship.

The content of the story is this. Persephone is picking poppies (or a narcissus[19]) among the cornflowers. A moment after she notices the beginning of her menstruation, the infernal god, Hades (or Zeus or Dionysus, one of whom may be her own father) abducts her to the underworld to his kingdom, rapes[20] and marries her. The underworld means marriage and death both for Persephone. She reigns there as the queen of the Dead. Demeter goes to seek her daughter. Before being released and going back to her mother, Persephone is persuaded to eat pomegranate seeds which signal her allegiance to her husband. Because of that, Persephone is doomed to descend to and live in the underworld for one part of the year – winter – each year.

Like Persephone, Plathian speakers want to experience love and death as one. Persephone can spend her time above and below the earth, experience both life and death. That is to say, she is both alive and dead. She is a symbol of death and rebirth. Furthermore, according to Erich Neumann, "Kore's [Persephone's] sojourn in Hades signifies not only rape by the male [...] but fascination by the male earth aspect, that is to say, by sexuality."[21] For Plathian speakers, it seems that the word "rape" is not as appropriate as the word "ravishment." Jungian critic Marion Woodman defines the two words thus:

> Rape suggests being seized and carried off by a masculine enemy through brutal sexual assault; ravishment suggests being seized and carried off by a masculine lover through ecstasy and rapture. Rape has to do with power; ravishment has to do with love.[22]

The pomegranate also has a sexual image represented in little red caves and significant seeds. Opening the pomegranate is sometimes construed symbolically as deflowering – because of the bright red color of its flesh, the pomegranate is a symbol of love and blood, and thus life and death.[23]

The Plathian Persephone's sexual union with Hades, however, also signifies the fantastic returning to the "earth mother's" womb. So, in addition to the model of husband and wife, the union represents the model of mother and foetus. In this state, she has two identities at the same time, because she seeks both lover and mother. The father's personality is fused with the dynamic aspects of the "earth mother." Plath describes Hades's posture as dual in this way. Plathian Persephone re-experiences an early symbiotic state where she feels nourished in a mother-infant cocoon of unity. She wants not

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[18] Sylvia Plath wrote "Two Sisters of Persephone" in which, however, we cannot find the figures of Demeter and Hades.

[19] In another version of the Persephone story, Persephone plays among the flowers including a "narcissus." In the Homeric "Hymn to Demeter," this "narcissus" is specially grown for Hades by Gaia, the Earth Mother:

> From its root there grew
> a hundred blooms which had a scent so sweet that all the wide heaven above and all the earth and all the salt swelling of the sea laughed aloud.
>
> (Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image* [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1993, pp. 370-372]).

[20] The word "rape" is originally derived from the Latin word, rapere, which means "to seize and carry off."

[21] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955, p. 308).

[22] Marion Woodman, *Addiction to Perfection: The Still Unravished Bride* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1982, p. 134).

[23] See Herder Freiburg, *The Herder Dictionary of Symbols: Symbols from Art, Archaeology, Mythology, Literature, and Religion* (Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications, 1986, p. 152).

only to be carried away and loved but also to be saved, taken care of and protected by him and the "earth mother" – she wants sexual love and maternal love simultaneously. He seems to be an androgynous mother-father because of the combination with the "earth mother." We can interpret this both oedipally and pre-oedipally. In classical versions of the myth, at the end of the story, Persephone's allegiance is split between mother and husband/father. However, the Plathian Persephone's allegiance is pledged to her husband partly because of his dual role as lover and mother as a result of the combination with the "earth mother," and partly because of her Electra complex. For Plathian Persephone, the actual mother is not necessary: in her elegies, Plath seldom emphasizes the mother-daughter relationship. Her treatment of the maternal bond motif differs from that of the original versions of the myth. Plath virtually deconstructs the traditional reading of the myth. The Plathian Persephone's experience is based on a paternal point of view, not of a maternal one. Plath's choosing to make Persephone satisfied with Hades is also a significant change from original versions of the myth. Plath offers a reading of Hades as lonely. For the Plathian Persephone, his living alone in the dark underworld seems to be a dismal kind of life, and Demeter is not an example to follow but one to avoid. In Plath's case, why does her treatment of the maternal-paternal bond motif differ from that of the original versions of the myth? One of the reasons seems to be that Plath is also a Freudian daughter in post-war America. Sometimes unconsciously and sometimes consciously, Plath uses Freudian motifs such as the Electra complex motif for her work. The Freudian family romance seems to be similar to the nineteenth-century family pattern. So we can connect this pattern with what Elaine Showalter has found in the lives of women writers, including the Brontës and Virginia Woolf: What happens frequently is "identification with, and dependence upon, the father; and either loss of, or alienation from, the mother."[24]

After this general introduction to Plath's adaptation of the Persephone/ Hades/Demeter myth, I want now to explore her use of it in *The Bell Jar*. Plath uses this myth in two ways. She narrates relations between archetypes of death and rebirth as well as between the sexes.

Firstly let us consider the Persephonian death/rebirth theme in *The Bell Jar*. For Plath, the bath is where death and rebirth happen repeatedly. In the novel, there is a bathing scene. The heroine Esther Greenwood thinks: "I never feel so much myself as when I'm in a hot bath" (*BJ*, p. 21). This has a connection with the imagery of a foetus in the womb water. As Esther takes a hot bath, she feels herself "growing pure again":

> The longer I lay there in the clear hot water the purer I felt, and when I stepped out at last and wrapped myself in one of the big, soft, white, hotel bath-towels I felt pure and sweet as a new baby. (*BJ*, p. 22)

The white bath-towels are like swaddling clothes.

On the other hand, the bath symbolizes a coffin as well. There has to be death before rebirth. It is a place where Esther attempts to kill herself by cutting her hand:

> When they asked some old Roman philosopher or other how he wanted to die, he said he would open his veins in a warm bath. I thought it would be easy, lying in the tub and seeing the redness flower from my wrists, flush after flush through the clear water, till I sank to sleep under a surface gaudy as poppies. (*BJ*, p. 156)

We have to notice the words, "sleep" and "poppies." Her deed is suicidal. The speaker desires a death which is like sleep. Sleep-inducing "poppies" reminds us of the story of Persephone. Poppies are what Persephone picked from among the cornflowers, when Hades carried her off.[25] And the blood symbolizes

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[24] Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton University Press, 1977; London: Virago Press, 1978, p. 61).

[25] See Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (Amsterdam/London: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1974, p. 372).

the beginning of the menstruation of Persephone or her defloration by Hades. In this scene, it seems that Esther links herself to Persephone, who wants to be taken away to the underworld where her father/ lover lives. Plath's poem, "Poppies in July" (*CP*, p. 203), also narrates the Persephone story:

> Little poppies, little hell flames,
> Do you do no harm? ...
>
> And it exhausts me to watch you
> Flickering like that, wrinkly and clear red, like the skin of a mouth.
>
> A mouth just bloodied.
> Little bloody skirts! ...
>
> Where are your opiates, your nauseous capsules?
>
> If I could bleed, or sleep! –
> If my mouth could marry a hurt like that!
>
> Or your liquors seep to me, in this glass capsule,
> Dulling and stilling.

The speaker calls poppies "little hell flames" which is related to Persephone's torch. The description of the poppies as the "bloodied" mouth and "little bloody skirts" implies the speaker's bleeding genitals, that is, her menstruation or defloration.[26] The speaker wants the poppies to send her to sleep, and wants the "opiates" – extracted from the seeds of poppies – to reduce her pain or let her sleep. Poppies are also related to forgetfulness, because they grow by the river Lethe (the meaning of which is originally "forgetfulness" in Greek), one of the rivers of the Underworld. One can forget the suffering of the real world with poppies.

In another of her "poppy" poems, "Poppies in October"[27] (*CP*, p. 240), Sylvia Plath depicts the poppies thus:

> Even the sun-clouds this morning cannot manage such skirts.
> Nor the woman in the ambulance
> Whose red heart blooms through her coat so astoundingly – ...
>
> O my God, what am I
> That these late mouths should cry open
> In a forest of frost, in a dawn of cornflowers.

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[26] Jan Montefiore's analysis of "Poppies in July" gave me a hint for my analysis:

> [The speaker's] vision of the blooms as bloodied mouths and "little bloody skirts" suggests that she is imagining a whorish lipsticked, perhaps bruised mouth, and bleeding genitals: menstruation, defloration or violent rape are evoked. (*Feminism and Poetry: Language, Experience, Identity in Women's Writing* [London/ New York: Pandora Press, 1987, p. 17])

According to Montefiore, the reading of the poem here, while seeing the poppies as alluding to a sexualized female body, reads the poem as being about violent sexual jealousy, reading the speaker's desire for the poppies" "liquor" – their colourless extract – as an intertextual reference to Iago's "Not poppy nor mandragora.... Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep/ Which thou ow'dst yesterday" (*Feminism and Poetry*, p. 17). To put this argument in biographical/psychoanalytic terms, this poem seems for Montefiore to be fantasizing a female rival in the act of sexual possession – or being possessed.

[27] October has special meaning for Sylvia Plath. It is the month of her birthday, and the month she entered the mental hospital in 1953. Besides, it is the month her father's leg was amputated because of his illness, which was a traumatic experience for Plath.

The first stanza evokes the speaker's bleeding genitals. The implication of "mouth" is same with the above poem, "Poppies in July." The speaker's bleeding genitals draw Hades's attention. The "forest of frost" represents the season of winter, and "cornflowers" Persephone's field where she picks poppies.

We can also find the Persephone story in another part in *The Bell Jar*. Before her last attempted suicide in her mother's cellar, Esther Greenwood visits her father's grave which she has never before seen. She bemoans her father's death:

> At the foot of the stone I arranged the rainy armful of azaleas[28] I had picked from a bush at the gateway of the graveyard. Then my legs folded under me, and I sat down in the sopping grass. I couldn't understand why I was crying so hard.
> Then I remembered that I had never cried for my father's death. [...]
> I laid my face to the smooth face of the marble and howled my loss into the cold salt rain. (*BJ*, p. 177)

The rain represents Esther's tears. It seems to be a symbolic form of bereavement. Melanie Klein explains tears:

> Through tears, the mourner not only expresses his feelings and thus eases tension, but, since in the unconscious they are equated with excrements, he also expels his "bad" feelings and his "bad" objects, and this adds to the relief obtained through crying. (*Love*, p. 359)

Through tears, Esther attempted to externalize her "bad" feelings and her "bad" objects, but it seems that her tears do not have the effect Klein expects them to have or, at least, that result is delayed because immediately after she visits her father's graveyard, she thinks, "I knew just how to go about it" (*BJ*, p. 177). Visiting her father's grave triggers her decision to die. The suicide attempt issues from a desire for reunion with the father. Esther goes down into her mother's cellar – "an underground chamber" where "a dim, undersea light filtered through the slits of the cellar windows" (*BJ*, p. 178). She squeezes her body into an "earth-bottomed crevice" (*BJ*, p. 179) there, and "crouched at the mouth of the darkness like a troll" and on her "knees, with bent head, crawled to the farthest wall" (*BJ*, p. 179). After she gulps down a bottle of sleeping pills, "[t]he silence drew off, baring the pebbles and shells and all the tatty wreckage of my life. Then, at the rim of vision, it gathered itself, and in one sweeping tide, rushed me to sleep" (*BJ*, p. 179). This scene is filled with sea imagery. This description represents Esther's process of returning to the state of a foetus that is sleeping embraced by the "earth mother" – the sea, the earth.

From the darkness into the light that "opened," Esther is "transported at enormous speed down a tunnel into the earth." Unconsciously she calls her mother: "through the thick, warm furry dark, a voice cried, "Mother!"" (*BJ*, pp. 180-181). Ironically, Esther's mother plays the role of Demeter, who brings her daughter back from the underworld. According to classical versions of the myth, Persephone refuses to cooperate with Hades in the underworld and longs for her mother. It is not unlikely that on the conscious level, Esther refuses her mother, but on the unconscious level, she longs for her.

Persephone story is also connected with "Berck-Plage" (*CP*, pp. 196-201), in which the images of the sea, the father, and the dead recur.

> A wedding-cake face in a paper frill.
> How superior he is now. ...
>
> And the bride flowers expend a freshness,
>
> And the soul is a bride
> In a still place, and the groom is red and forgetful, he is featureless.

[28] Biographically, Sylvia Plath's father's tomb is located in "Azalea Path" cemetery.

Anne Stevenson, who has written Plath's biography, analyzes the contents of this poem:

> The funeral has a sense of the bridal ("the soul is a bride") while "the coffin on its flowery cart [is] like a beautiful woman,/ A crest of breasts, eyelids and lips/ Storming the hilltop." The coffin, with its dead man and its woman of flowers (an image of Sylvia's father-love), goes down into the hole in the earth, "a naked mouth, red and awkward."[29]

The coffin goes to the underworld with the image of a wedding. The line, "a naked mouth, red and awkward" also suggests the Persephone story. Death day is both birthday and wedding day. In "Little Fugue" (*CP*, pp. 187-189) as well, "I survive the while,/ Arranging my morning./ .../ The clouds are a marriage dress, of that pallor." The speaker also arranges her mourning here.

Like the above poem, the theme of marriage with the father which is related to the Persephone story recurs in Sylvia Plath's literary texts. The poems whose themes are sexual reunion with the father are "Full Fathom Five," "Electra on Azalea Path," "The Beekeeper's Daughter" and "The Colossus." In some poems, the marriage is enacted and the others hint at it.

In "Full Fathom Five" (*CP*, pp. 92-93),[30] where a theme of bereavement appears, the drowned-father motif is used: the dead father is in the region beneath the water. The part of Ariel's song in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is used as the title.

> Full fathom five thy father lies;
> Of his bones are coral made:
> Those are pearls that were his eyes:
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.
> Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell: ...
> (l. i. 394-400)

As in "Nick and the Candlestick," the cave is made from the organic remains of "coral." "Pearls" as well as "coral" suggest death because they were once part of living organisms. I think that there is a connection between "Sea-nymphs" and river's nymphs in "Lorelei" in Sylvia Plath's mind. Both of them drag the human being under the water. This part is sung in the play, when one of the characters, Ferdinand, is convinced of his father's death. Judith Kroll comments on this aspect of the poem:

> It refers to the retelling of the speaker's life in obviously Shakespearean terms: her father, by dying, has undergone a "sea-change," becoming a sort of underworld king whose daughter, exiled from his kingdom, is condemned to life. The allusion both states that her father is dead and intimates that, like Ferdinand's father, he still lives.[31]

Full Fathom Five was another title for Plath's first published book, *The Colossus*:

> It [*Full Fathom Five*] relates more richly to my life and imagery than anything else I've dreamed up: has the background of *The Tempest*, the association of the sea, which is a central metaphor for my childhood, my poems and the artist's subconscious, of the father image – relating to my own father, the buried male muse and god-creator risen to be my mate in Ted, to the sea-father Neptune – and the pearls and coral highly-wrought to art: pearls sea-changed

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[29] Anne Stevenson, *Bitter Fame: A Life of Sylvia Plath* (London: Viking, 1989; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990, p. 250).

[30] According to Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath wrote "Full Fathom Five," reading one of Jacques-Yves Cousteau's books "about the submarine world" (*CP*, p. 287).

[31] Judith Kroll, *Chapters in a Mythology: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976, pp. 54-55).

> from the ubiquitous grit of sorrow and dull outine. [...] I shall begin by setting myself magic objects to write on: sea-bearded bodies – and begin thus, digging into the reaches of my deep submerged head, "and it's old and old it's sad and old it's sad and weary I go back to you, my cold father, my cold mad father, my cold mad feary father..." – so Joyce says, so the river flows to the paternal source of godhead. (*J*, pp. 222-223)

Thus, this muse-god father had lived in Plath's poetry. Another possible reason for Plath's using the motif of *The Tempest* is that she wanted to reveal the enclosed world of father and daughter – the world of Prospero and Miranda – where the wife/ mother is absent.

In "Full Fathom Five", we can find the vision of the Neptune-like man in the sea. On the surface of the sea appears an enigmatic old white-haired man: "Miles long/ Extend the radial sheaves/ Of your spread hair." The hair stretches out like a net, threatening to draw the speaker near. Later we are informed that this old man is the speaker's father. The father is as "cold" as "ice-mountains": he resembles glaciers. He also resembles "whirlpools": the daughter is pulled down towards the bottom of the sea, unable to escape. He is a kind of menace, retaining power over her. As Robyn Marsack has pointed out, "old man" is a slang for both father and husband.[32] The line, "Your shelled bed I remember," has a sexual image. The speaker's wish to return to the sea expresses the idea that to reunite with her dead father would be death:

> I walk dry on your kingdom's border
> Exiled to no good.
>
> Your shelled bed I remember.
> Father, this thick air is murderous.
> I would breathe water.

There is a hidden incest wish that strangles the speaker from within as she attempts to become her father's bride and to have her sexual wish in the unconscious. We can see that the fantasy of merger with the father leads to the speaker's death. It is a death marriage with the father. Jahan Ramazani explains that the poem's final stanza suggests "that perhaps an incestuous bond has caused his death and "Exiled" her from his kingdom."[33]

Here I would like to discuss in detail Sylvia Plath's other poems with the drowned-father theme. The speaker in "All the Dead Dears" (*CP*, pp. 70-71) can see her beloved father under the surface of the pond:

> From the mercury-backed glass
> Mother, grandmother, greatgrandmother
> Reach hag hands to haul me in,
> And an image looms under the fishpond surface
> Where the daft father went down
> With orange duck-feet winnowing his hair –[34]

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[32] Robyn Marsack, *Sylvia Plath* (Backingham/Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1992, p. 38).
[33] Jahan Ramazani, *Poetry of Mourning*, p. 268.
[34] Ilgrid Melander identifies important stanzas omitted in the final version:

> The poem was probably written as early as 1956 and was later included in the "Cambridge Manuscript." The most striking difference between the original version in "Cambridge Manuscript" and the final one in The Colossus is the omission of three stanzas: the early poem includes nine stanzas, the revision only six. [...] The fifth and sixth stanzas of this version, which were omitted in the final version, present the picture of a man, whom we recognize as the poet's father. I quote them in full:
>
> A man who used to clench
> Bees in his fist
> And out-rant the thundercrack,
> That one: not known enough: death's trench

The dead father lies looming below the surface of the water, where the mother, grandmother and great-grandmother would drag her below the watery surface after him. She ends this poem with the image of the speaker going "to lie/ Deadlocked with them, taking root as cradles rock." In this image, she slumbers in her mother's, grandmother's and great-grandmother's embrace, descending deeply under the water. In "A Life" (*CP*, pp. 149-150) as well, which depicts an egg-shaped glass paperweight and a woman who lives "like a foetus in a bottle," the motif of the drowned man figure appears: "Age and terror, like nurses, attend her,/ And a drowned man, complaining of the great cold,/ Crawls up out of the sea."

In another of Plath's drowned-father-theme poems, "Electra on the Azalea Path" (*CP*, pp. 116-117), the speaker's dominant obsession with the Electra complex and her yearning for her father is shown. Plath got the inspiration from this poem from a visit to her father's grave in the Azalea Path cemetery. In this poem, too, the dead father is in the underworld. The speaker is filled with feelings of loss, shocked by the sight of her father's grave. Her father's death is superimposed on the Greek Electra myth to reveal the daughter's relation to her father and mother. This poem depicts her father as Agamemnon, king of Mycenae and the leader of the Greek forces in the Trojan War; her mother as Clytemnestra; and herself as Electra. During the war, the ship cannot set sail because of a persistent calm. To obtain a favorable wind, Agamemnon obliges himself to obey an oracle and sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia. He sacrifices her to the perceived demands of the patriarchy. The daughter is treated as her father's possession. When Agamemnon returns, his wife, Clytemnestra, murders him in the bath in revenge for his killing Iphigenia. Later, Electra and her brother Orestes plot the assassination of their mother as their own revenge. Electra's plan to kill her mother and participation in matricide is motivated not only by revenge but also by an intense hatred of her mother. What is shown here is not closeness to the mother but a shift of allegiance to the father. The resurrection of the father is accomplished by his daughter. She supports the paternal law and upholds her father's sacrifice of Iphigenia to the demands of the patriarchy. Electra virtually chooses paternal identification, even though she is abandoned to her madness.[35]

Julia Kristeva writes about the issue of woman's place in patriarchal culture in her book, *About Chinese Women*: "That the father is made a symbolic power – that is, that he is dead, and thus elevated to the rank of a Name – is what gives meaning to her [Electra's] life, which will henceforth be an eternal vendetta."[36]

Luce Irigaray's idea that western culture is founded not on patricide, but on matricide is based

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Digs him into my quick:
At each move I confront his ready ghost

Glaring sunflower-eyed
From the glade of hives,
Antlered by a bramble-hat,
Berry-juice purpling his thumbs: o I'd
Run time aground before I met
His match. Luck's hard which falls to love

Such long gone darlings...
(*The Poetry of Sylvia Plath: A Study of Themes* [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1972, pp. 35-36])

The allusion to the father's relation to bees implies that the dead man beneath the surface of the water is assumed to be Plath's own father. These manuscript stanzas are clearly the description of her father shown in biographical details.

[35] One of Sylvia Plath's last poems, "Daddy," is also concerned with patriarchal authority. But the speaker is full of anti-patriarchal anger.

[36] Julia Kristeva, *About Chinese Women*, in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986, p. 152).

on this Electra myth.[37] Irigaray focuses on the patriarchal phase of the myth, which is built over the sacrifice of the mother and her daughters.

The poem re-presents the story of Electra:

> *The day your slack sail drank my sister's breath*
> *The flat sea purpled like that evil cloth*
> *My mother unrolled at your last homecoming.*
> I borrow the stilts of an old tragedy.
> The truth is, one late October, at my birth-cry
> A scorpion[38] stung its head, an ill-starred thing:
> My mother dreamed you face down in the sea.[39]
>
> The stony actors poise and pause for breath.
> I brought my love to bear, and then you died.
> It was the gangrene ate you to the bone
> My mother said; you died like any man.
> How shall I age into that state of mind?
> I am the ghost of an infamous suicide,
> My own blue razor rusting in my throat.
> O pardon the one who knocks for pardon at
> Your gate, father – your hound-bitch, daughter, friend.
> It was my love that did us both to death.
>
> [Plath's own emphasis.]

Here, although the speaker tries to combine her autobiographical facts with the Electra myth, she fails to do it effectively.[40] The speaker borrows "the stilts of an old tragedy" because she wants to idealize her father, imagine him as a powerful god, and devalue her mother as a betrayer, as a cause of his death. However, unlike Agamemnon, her father died like any man (he died of natural causes, gangrene); unlike Clytemnestra, her mother did not kill him. Her begging for pardon implies that she has a feeling of guilt for her father's death: her birth has portended her father's death. She assigns to herself guilt for her father's death, even though she says, in the opening stanza of this poem: "I had nothing to do with

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[37] See Luce Irigaray, "The Bodily Encounter with the Mother" in *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. by Margaret Whitford (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, pp. 34-45).

[38] This word might have to do with Sylvia Plath's own astrological sign, "the Scorpion." The element of the sign is "water."

[39] The line, "My mother dreamed you face down in the sea," reminds us of the description of one of Sylvia Plath's dreams in her journals:

> It was her [the mother's] daughter's fault partly. She had a dream: her daughter was all gaudy-dressed about to go out and be a chorus girl, a prostitute too, probably. [...] The husband, brought alive in dream to relive the curse of his old angers, slammed out of the house in rage that the daughter was going to be a chorus girl. The poor Mother runs along the sand beach [...]. The father had driven, in a fury, to spite her, off the road bridge and floating dead, face down and bloated, in the slosh of ocean water by the pillars of the country club. (*J*, p. 267)

The dream reveals Plath's obsession with the drowned and floating father figure, which is seen in poems such as "Full Fathom Five" and "Daddy." In addition to the image of a floating drowned father, her interpretation of the dream shows an intense sexual rivalry between mother and daughter as well:

> I have lost a father and his love early; feel angry at her because of this and feel she feels I killed him (her dream about me being a chorus girl and his driving off and drowning himself) (*J*, p. 278).

[40] This poem is superimposing the myth onto Plath's autobiography.

guilt or anything." After getting out from the underworld where she has hibernated, the speaker feels a sense of responsibility for her father's death. From a Kleinian perspective, in the "depressive position," since a loved father is felt to be destroyed by the speaker, she suffers from depressive feelings which lead to an intolerable feeling of guilt. This scene shows the speaker's move from the "paranoid-schizoid position" to the "depressive position" because of the appearance of her strong feelings of guilt.

The Plathian Electra's failed suicide attempt is shown in the latter part of the poem ("I am the ghost of an infamous suicide,/ My own blue razor rusting in my throat."). According to one of Melanie Klein's followers, John Bowlby, motives for attempting suicide can be understood as responses to the loss of an attachment figure. In his view, among motives that lead to suicide is a wish for reunion with the lost object and a desire for revenge against a dead person for having deserted oneself.[41] Bowlby's definition for the motives for suicide can be applied to the speaker. Killing herself to go to the underworld, the speaker wishes for reunion with the lost father.

If we superimpose this Electra myth on the description of the bees in Plath's "The Beekeeper's Daughter" (*CP*, p. 118), which is the next poem of "Electra on the Azalea Path," we see that Plath's choice of the Electra myth is appropriate, because, according to Robyn Marsack, "the royal tombs at Mycenae were in the shape of beehives, and of the best known of them is the Tomb of Clytemnestra,"[42] and there is a fierce feud between mother and daughter in this poem.

In the sexually symbolic, sinister "garden of mouthings," the poem "The Beekeeper's Daughter" presents the speaker's father as a priest-like[43] "maestro of the bee," and a mighty ruler, and the daughter as a passive "sister of a stone" – for Sylvia Plath, "stone" has an image of "foetus." The contrast between the two is obvious. There is an atmosphere of emotional incest in the womblike world of death:

> Hieratical in your frock coat, maestro of the bees,
> You move among the many-breasted hives,
>
> My heart under your foot, sister of a stone. ...
>
> The Golden Rain Tree drips its powders down. ...
> Here is a queenship no mother can contest –
>
> A fruit that's death to taste: dark flesh, dark parings. ...
>
> Father, bridegroom, in this Easter egg
> Under the coronal of sugar roses
>
> The queen bee marries the winter of your year.

The daughter is fascinated by the father who dominates the bee world. Moreover, the resistant daughter implicitly has an intense sexual desire for him. She calls her father "bridegroom." Besides, there is an intense sexual rivalry between mother and daughter ("Here is a queenship no mother can contest – "). Plath writes in her journals:

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[41] John Bowlby, *Loss* (London: Hogarth, 1969-1980, p. 304).

[42] Robyn Marsack, *Sylvia Plath*, p. 42.

[43] In Greece, the bee was considered a priestly creature (see Herder Freiburg, *The Herder Dictionary of Symbols: Symbols from Art, Archaeology, Mythology, Literature, and Religion* [Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications, 1986, p. 21]).

> A woman, I fight all women for my men. [...] There is no loyalty, even between mother and daughter. Both fight for the father, for the son, for the bed of mind and body. [...] And I cry so to be held by a man; some man, who is a father. (*J*, p. 101)[44]

Rose Karmel points out that the last line "the queen bee marries the winter of your year" conveys a hidden threat: "Addressed to the beekeeper as a sexual being, "Father, Bridegroom," the line reminds us that the mating of the queen with the drone leads to the drone's inevitable death."[45] I think instead that this line is related to the Persephone myth which decrees that Persephone has to stay in the underworld during winter. Persephone is doomed to stay there because she was raped by Hades, and ate the pomegranate[46] ("A fruit that's death to taste: dark flesh, dark parings"). Another rape by a god is suggested by reference to the laburnum tree, "Golden Rain" – Danae is raped by Zeus in a form of golden rain.

Bee and beehive imagery connected with the image of father[47] is significant in other poems as well: "Lament" (*CP*, pp. 315-316) and "Electra on Azalea Path." In "Lament," written in memory of Plath's father, the heroic, god-like father was struck down by a swarm of bees: "the sting of bees took away my father." In "Electra on Azalea Path," there is a suggestion of the speaker's entering the underworld:

> The day you died I went into the dirt,
> Into the lightless hibernaculum
> Where bees, striped black and gold, sleep out the blizzard
> Like hieratic stones, and the ground is hard
> It was good for twenty years, that wintering –

For Plath, "bee" is the recurrent symbol of the father. The words, "hibernaculum," "blizzard" and "wintering" imply that the season of the underworld is winter. As I have explained earlier, winter is the season Persephone tends to the underworld to reunite with her husband/ father. Ingrid Melander points out that the "bees" in this poem seem to be synonymous with "bumblebees," because they hibernate in the ground.[48]

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[44] We can find another case of a feud between the mother and the daughter over the father in *The Bell Jar*. There is a scene in which Esther Greenwood wakes up from the electric shock:

> An old metal floor lamp surfaced in my mind. One of the few relics of my father's study, it was surmounted by a copper bell which held the light bulb, and from which a frayed, tiger-coloured cord ran down the length of the metal stand to a socket in the wall.
> One day I'd decided to move this lamp from the side of my mother's bed to my desk at the other end of the room. The cord would be long enough, so I didn't unplug it. I closed both hands around the lamp and the fuzzy cord and gripped them tight.
> Then something leapt out of the lamp in a blue flash and shook me till my teeth rattled, and I tried to pull my hands off, but they were stuck, and I screamed, or a scream was torn from my throat, for I didn't recognize it, but heard it soar and quaver in the air like a violently disembodied spirit.
> Then my hands jerked free, and I fell back on to my mother's bed. A small hole, blackened as if with pencil lead, pitted the centre of my right palm. (*BJ*, p. 152)

In trying to move the lamp which is one of the relics of the father from the mother's bedside to her desk side, Esther receives a great shock by touching the lamp – the plug remains plugged in the mother's bedside. It is as if she receives punishment from the mother for stealing her mother's possession.

[45] Rose Karmel, "'A Self to Recover': Sylvia Plath's Bee Cycle Poems," *Modern Poetry Studies*, vol. 4., part 3 (Winter 1973, p. 310).

[46] In Sylvia Plath's "Maenad" in the sequence, "Poem for a Birthday," the berries in the line, "Feed me the berries of dark," is reminiscent of the pomegranate. I think that the speaker also wants to be taken away to the underworld to rejoin – wed – her father.

[47] Sylvia Plath's father, Otto Plath, was a professor of biology at Boston University, who was involved in his scholarly research on the ways of bumblebees and wrote *Bumblebees and Their Ways* in 1934. From this fact, it is easy to identify the beekeeper's daughter with Plath's alter-ego.

[48] Ingrid Melander, *The Poetry of Sylvia Plaths*, p. 90.

In "Wintering" (*CP*, pp. 217-219), which is one of Plath's bee poems, its complete deathlike space is lived by the speaker:

> This is the room I have never been in.
> This is the room I could never breathe in.
> The black bunched in there like a bat,
> No light
> But the torch and its faint
>
> Chinese yellow on appalling objects –
> Black asininity. Decay.
> Possession.
> It is they who own me.
> Neither cruel nor indifferent,
>
> Only ignorant.

Torch is Persephone's attribute. Anne Baring and Jules Cashford write: "The shining light of the torch in the dark underworld quickens the grain and the poppies she [Persephone] holds in her hand."[49] The etymology of Persephone's name is: "she who shines in the dark."[50]

The bee has often been considered to be symbol of the soul of the dead in Europe.[51] And the bee, which appears to die in winter and return in spring, is sometimes a symbol of the death and rebirth of Persephone.[52] It symbolizes death and immortality. Erich Neumann writes in his book, *The Great Mother*, the bee "was associated above all with Demeter, Artemis, and Persephone."[53]

Next we will move to another of Plath's poems, "The Colossus" (*CP*, pp. 129-130), which is also related to the drowned-father theme. The statue of the Colossus was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. In this poem, the speaker imagines her dead father as the Greek sun-god, and she struggles to repair the broken pieces of the huge statue of the Colossus who is now a floating drowned man. His fragments "are littered/ .../ In their old anarchy to the horizon-line." The daughter wants to bring her father's statue back to life. However, it is so huge that she as an "ant" cannot recover its original form. The speaker has worked to rebuild a grandiose but shattered Colossus for "thirty years." Frustrated, she is still in mourning. It is also an attempt for the speaker to reinstate her shattered internalized father. The speaker attempts to rebuild her destroyed inner world at the same time. She hopes that the fragments of her beloved father will be reassembled within her self. In the Kleinian point of view, putting the dispersed pieces of the father's body back together again is a process of "reparation." By restoring the external object, the inner world of the subject is correspondingly restored at the same time and it can possess the "good" object. In the poem, the speaker is attempting to "glue" not only the fragments of ruins of the vast disintegrating statue but also her shattered self together, hoping that they will return to life. However, since she cannot reinstate the external loved object successfully, she also cannot regain the loved internal object. The process of "reparation" is not successful. In Kleinian terminology, the scene is a dramatization of "manic defence" in manic-depressive states in unsuccessful mourning. "Manic defence" occurs because reparation is so slow and laborious a process. This defence is an in-between phenomenon, including elements of the "paranoid-schizoid position" and the "depressive position". It is a defence

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[49] Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess*, p. 368.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 369.
[51] Takashi Watanabe, *Mitsubachi No Bunkashi* (*The History of the Bee*) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1994, p. 45).
[52] See Herder Freiburg, *The Herder Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 21.
[53] Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*, p. 265.

against depressive anxiety, but once more employs mechanisms that are seen in the paranoid-schizoid position such as "splitting", "idealization," and "projective identification." Hanna Segal explains Klein's ideas:

> To protect itself from total despair the ego must have recourse to violent defence mechanisms. Those defence mechanisms which protect it from the feelings arising out of the loss of the good object form a system of manic defences. The essential features of manic defences are denial of psychic reality, omnipotent control and a partial regression to the paranoid position and its defences: splitting, idealization, denial, projective identification, etc. This regression strengthens the fear of persecution and that in turn leads to the strengthening of omnipotent control.[54]

The unsuccessful state of mourning – the "manic defence" state of mourning – makes the speaker feel ambivalently towards her dead father. The feeling is divided into two aspects: praise and contempt for him. Klein writes about the manifestation of this ambivalence seen in the "manic defence": "Idealization is an essential part of the manic position and is bound up with another important element of that position, namely denial" (*Love*, p. 349).

The speaker has to continue the endless, fruitless work of mourning:

> I shall never get you put together entirely,
> Pieced, glued, and properly jointed.
> Mule-bray, pig-grunt and bawdy cackles
> Proceed from your great lips.
> It's worse than a barnyard.
>
> Perhaps you consider yourself an oracle,
> Mouthpiece of the dead, or of some god or other.
> Thirty years now I have labored
> To dredge the silt from your throat.
> I am none the wiser.
>
> Scaling little ladders with gluepots and pails of Lysol
> I crawl like an ant in mourning
> Over the weedy acres of your brow
> To mend the immense skull-plates and clear
> The bald, white tumuli of your eyes.
>
> A blue sky out of the Oresteia
> Arches above us.

This poem tells the story of the speaker's Electra complex. She regards her father as the hero of the Oresteia. The law of the father dominates the daughter: "The sun rises under the pillar of your tongue". Like the speaker in the poem, "Electra on the Azalea Path," the speaker's psyche is made by a patriarchal culture. She devotes herself to the patriarch. For her, the father is "pithy and historical as the Roman Forum."

On the last stanza, Shelley Orgel suggests:

> She [the speaker] saves herself at the end. She says she is "married to a shadow"; she will no longer wait for "the scrape of a keel/ On the blank stones of the landing." Condensed in this

[54] Hanna Segal, "A Psycho-Analytical Approach to Aesthetics," p. 197.

is the wish to renounce a life of waiting faithfully and endlessly for her father to return from the dead.[55]

Does the speaker really save herself at the end? I think instead that what the speaker says ("My hours are married to shadow") suggests the Persephone story because the realm of "shadow" belongs to the underworld where Hades lives, that is, she knows she is destined to marry her lost father. I think that it is not a salvation as Orgel suggests. The speaker appears to choose death at the end. Her initial aggressive attitude disappears. She is obsessed with the death world where her father belongs.

The image of the "colossus" in the sea is first seen in Sylvia Plath's early poem called "Letter to a Purist" (*CP*, pp. 36-37).[56] The "grandiose colossus" "Stood astride/ The envious assaults of sea." In this poem as well, the speaker who mocks her father has an ambivalent feeling towards him. A figure in "Man in Black" (*CP*, pp. 119-120) is also related to death and the sea. In this poem, an enigmatic death-figure walks towards the end of land.[57] This man is shown as a "vortex." This means that he sucks in surrounding things. He draws everything towards him, including the speaker. She cannot turn away from him.[58] In her journals, Plath writes: "'Man In Black,' the only 'love' poem in my book" (*J*, p. 300).

The image of the father as a "colossus" recurs in other works. In one of Plath's short stories, "Among the Bumblebees," Alice Denway's father has been "a giant of a man"(*JP*, p. 259); "a king, high on a throne" (*JP*, p. 261): "When he laughed, it sounded as if all the waves of the ocean were breaking and roaring up the beach together. Alice worshipped her father because he was so powerful, and everybody did what he commanded because he knew best and never gave mistaken judgment" (*JP*, p. 259). He is "proud and arrogant among the bumblebees" (*JP*, p. 266). In "Sunday at the Mintons," Elizabeth Minton's brother is "a colossus astride the roaring sea" (*JP*, p. 158). In both stories, colossus-like fathers are also related to the sea.

"Little Fugue" (*CP*, pp. 187-189), one of Sylvia Plath's later elegies, is a poem about guilt and memory, which abandons the image of the heroic mythic father. It denies that the daughter should feel guilty: The guilt centers on the father. The daughter can say: "I am guilty of nothing."

Since the speaker is in a state of "manic reparation," she does not feel the mourning experience. Her attempt for restoration goes unrewarded. This poem represents the speaker's disintegrated inner world with her image which reduces to signs and fragments.

The word "Fugue" is a musical term: "a musical composition in which one or two themes are repeated or imitated by successively entering voices and contrapuntally developed in a continuous interweaving of the voice parts."[59] Another meaning of "fugue" is a form of temporary amnesia, "a disturbed state of consciousness in which the one affected seems to perform acts in full awareness but upon recovery cannot recollect the deeds."[60] Lynda K. Bundtzen articulates: "The two meanings of fugue come

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[55] Shelley Orgel, "Sylvia Plath: Fusion with the Victim and Suicide," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 43 (1974), p. 278.

[56] This poem suggests Sylvia Plath's own father with the line, "With one foot" – her father's leg was amputated during his illness.

[57] The father figure walks towards the sea in the first section of "Berck-Plage" (*CP*, pp. 196-201):

> The lines of the eye, scalded by these bald surfaces,
>
> Boomerang like anchored elastics, hurting the owner.
> Is it any wonder he puts on dark glasses?
>
> It is any wonder he affects a black cassock?
> Here he comes now, among the mackerel gatherers.

[58] In "Man in Black," his "dead/ Black coat, black shoes" and black hair imply Sylvia Plath's father. Plath writes: "The 'dead black' in my poem may be a transference from the visit to my father's grave a month earlier" (*J*, p. 300).

[59] *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1831-), X (1993), p. 471.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 471.

naturally together in Plath's world to represent the master mindlessness, the numb and passive psychological state of Plath's victims."[61] The speaker's psychological void is represented by the colorless black-and-white design of the images: "Black yew, white cloud"; "I like black statements./ The featurelessness of that cloud, now!/ White as an eye all over!" There is an image in which a pianist plays the black and white keys on a piano in the middle of the poem.

In this poem, aural and visual communication does not work. There is a confusion of the senses: "I see your voice/ Black and leafy ..." In the speaker's mind, the father was "Lopping the sausages," which are "Red, mottled, like cut necks." "This butchery," Jahan Ramazani argues, "is linked to the mutilation not only of his body (leaving him "one leg") but also of her mind (making her "lame in the memory")."[62]

> I survive the while,
> Arranging my morning.
> These are my fingers, this my baby.
> The clouds are a marriage dress, of that pallor.

In addition to "arranging" her "morning," she arranges her "mourning." I think that the line, "The clouds are a marriage dress," represents another version of the Persephone story because the speaker puts on the marriage dress, the marriage shroud, to get married with her dead father who is in the world of the dead.

Furthermore, Sylvia Plath portrays the speaker's failure in the work of mourning in one of her last elegies, "Daddy" (*CP*, pp. 222-224). The speaker has a tendency to both affirm and deny her father as an "ego-ideal."[63] She regresses to the infantile "paranoid-schizoid" position, oscillating between "good" father and "bad" father and turning her love and hatred against her lost father.

In this poem, the speaker regresses to the preverbal infantile "paranoid-schizoid position." She moves backward in time and a child's conception of the world is depicted. A woman who is thirty years old reverts to infant-talk.[64] She uses the rhythm of nursery rhyme – it brings to mind "There was an Old Woman who lived in a Shoe." Her use of language for this poem is regressive and repetitive. Steven G. Axelrod's writes:

> Plath's assault on the language of "daddy-poetry" has turned inward, on the language of her own poem, which teeters precariously on the edge of a preverbal abyss – represented by the eerie, keening "oo" sound with which a majority of the verses end.[65]

A. Alvarez, who describes "Daddy" as a love poem, connects the "oo" sound with a "cooing tenderness."[66]

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[61] Lynda K. Bundtzen, *Plath's Incarnations: Woman and the Creative Process* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991, p. 191).

[62] Jahan Ramazani, *Poetry of Mourning*, p. 275.

[63] In real life, throughout her life Sylvia Plath both adored and despised her father.

[64] Susan R. Van Dyne suggests that the child speaker dramatizes a woman writer's powerlessness: "it mirrors the cultural allegation that woman is child, and it gives form to her experience of being treated like one" (*Revising Life: Sylvia Plath's Ariel Poems* [Chapel Hill/ London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993, p. 48]). According to Alicia Ostriker, infantile language signals sexual trauma, revealing the power of sexual pain to infantilize, to thwart growth (*Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America* [London: The Women's Press, 1987, p. 237]. Ostriker picks up several poems whose languages are childish or infantile: T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men" and at the close of The Waste Land; Roethke's "Lost Son" poems; at the opening of Berryman's "Dream Songs"; and DuPlessis' "Medusa").

[65] Steven G. Axelrod, *Sylvia Plath*, p. 56.

[66] A. Alvarez, "Sylvia Plath" in Charles Newman ed., *The Art of Sylvia Plath: A Symposium* (London: Faber, 1970, p. 66).

In a reading prepared for BBC radio programme, Sylvia Plath explained "Daddy," revealing its mythical substructure and underlining that this poem is a fiction, not based on her life:

> Here is a poem spoken by a girl with an Electra complex. Her father died while she thought he was God. Her case is complicated by the fact that her father was also a Nazi and her mother very possibly part Jewish. In the daughter the two strains marry and paralyze each other – she has to act out the awful little allegory once over before she is free of it. (*CP*, p. 293)

Plath explains that this is a story in which the speaker feels the dilemma of hatred for her mother, and love for her father. But the focus is only on the speaker's father, and the father substitute – a woman can overcome her penis envy through gaining a man according to Freud. The mother is absent in this story.

The description of a fallen Colossus toppled over shows how great her father was:

> Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,
> Ghastly statue with one gray toe[67]
> Big as a Frisco seal
>
> And a head in the freakish Atlantic
> Where it pours bean green over blue
> In the waters off beautiful Nauset.

Though firstly Daddy appears as the God-like statue with his toe in the Pacific and his head in the Atlantic – he is bigger than the continent – but then he reappears as a devil, and finally a brutal Nazi hated by the daughter. The father which was to be restored changes into the persecutor. Melanie Klein remarks on the case in which hatred appears in the mourner:

> When hatred of the lost loved object in its various manifestations gets the upper hand in the mourner, this not only turns the loved lost person into a persecutor, but shakes the mourner's belief in his good inner objects as well. The shaken belief in the good objects disturbs most painfully the process of idealization, which is an essential intermediate step in mental development. (*Love*, p. 354)

The speaker's regressive self is intensely emotional, oscillating between love and hatred towards her father. She cannot let him go because she is helpless, but at the same time she cannot hold on to him because she believes that he persecutes her. The "manic defence" is based on this kind of "splitting" process. The "good" and "bad" aspects of the father are thus not integrated. That is why it is difficult for the speaker to promote separation and self-integration. Plath's explanation of "Electra complex" at the BBC programme obscures the speaker's divided emotions into love and hatred. Although the speaker has a will to accomplish her mourning, hatred cannot achieve "reparation." According to Melanie Klein, "[f]eeling incapable of saving and securely reinstating their loved objects inside themselves, they must turn away from them more than hitherto and therefore deny their love for them" (*Love*, p. 368). "Daddy" reveals an attack on the speaker's own internalized "bad" father, and subsequently a suicidal attack on her self.

Unable to complete the work of mourning for her father and to rebuild her lost father in her inner world successfully, the speaker makes and gets married with a father-substitute (husband) and attempts to regain her lost father.

> I made a model of you,
> A man in black with the Meinkampf look

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[67] "One gray toe" is supposed to be related to Sylvia Plath's obsession with the fact that her father's leg was amputated during his illness. See also "Letter to a Purist" which suggests her father with the line, "With one foot."

And a love of the rack and the screw.
And I said I do, I do.
So daddy, I'm finally through.
The black telephone's off at the root,
The voices just can't worm through.

"I do, I do" are the words as the marriage oath. The words, "I'm finally through," imply several meanings: What seems to be applicable here is that the speaker believes that she can forget her father by getting a father-substitute. "The black telephone's off at the root,/ The voices just can't worm through": tearing out the telephone line, the speaker destroys the voice of the father to get rid of the internalized father.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two –
The vampire who said he was you
And drank my blood for a year,
Seven years, if you want to know.
Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart
And the villagers never liked you.
They are dancing and stamping on you.
They always *knew* it was you.
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

However, later the speaker says she has also killed her father's substitute. The words, "I'm through" seem to mean that she believes she is finally released from both her father and her father-substitute, and is independent. The attitude of the speaker's contempt over them produces a "phantasy" that creates an illusion of triumph over them. According to Melanie Klein, "one of the ways in which hatred expresses itself in the situation of mourning is in feelings of triumph over the dead person" (*Love*, p. 354). She also explains that feelings of triumph have the effect of retarding the work of mourning. In the case of the speaker as well, it is not a successful reinstatement of her lost father. Actually she has not finished the work of mourning yet even though she declares "I'm through."

Jahan Ramazani comments on the role of the villagers:

> The end of "Daddy" resumes but revises another traditional elegiac device – the troop or chorus of mourners. Milton and Shelley had amplified their laments by representing them as group acts; Plath unites with a vengeance: the villagers "are dancing and stamping on you". Milton and Shelley had paralleled their laments with mourning rites for such fertility gods as Adonis and Orpheus; Plath also alludes to primitive ritual, but her tribe enacts death without hoping for resurrection.[68]

Similarly, the speaker in "Gulliver" (*CP*, p. 251) who is in the position of the Lilliputians "hate[s]" colossal Gulliver who "step[s] off seven leagues".

The speakers in Plath's early elegies attempt to perpetuate the name of the fathers in idealizing their dead fathers as potent heroic figures, mythic beings or gods with allusions to Greek tragedy (the father as an "ego-ideal"), and actively attempt to totalize or internalize their fathers and reinstate their distrusted inner worlds at the same time, turning rage inward. On the other hand, in Plath's later

[68] Johan Ramazani, *Poetry of Mourning*, p. 279.

elegies the speakers are not positively engaged in reinstating their fathers, but in directly attacking their fathers. Their process of reparation is so slow in the early elegies, and is so destructive in the later ones that in either case they cannot complete the work of mourning. Connecting Plath's later elegies with Plath herself, Susan Kavaler-Adler assumes that Plath's mourning of her father is pathological because of her "manic defence" against him.[69] According to Melanie Klein, however, "manic defence" is not necessarily pathological.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CP – Sylvia Plath, *Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath*, ed. by Ted Hughes (New York: Harper & Row, 1981).
Envy – Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* (London: Virago, 1988).
J – Sylvia Plath, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*, ed. by Karen V. Kukil (New York: Random House, 2000).
JP – Sylvia Plath, *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams and Other Prose Writings* (London: Faber, 1977; revised edition, 1979).
LH – Sylvia Plath, *Letters Home: Correspondence 1950-1963*, ed. by Aurelia Schober Plath (London: Faber, 1976).
Love – Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation* (London: Virago, 1988).

[69] See Susan Kavaler-Adler, *The Compulsion to Create*, p. 97.

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Mourning and melancholia in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

DONALD VANOUSE (*)

Literature has played an important part in the mourning of catastrophic events..., in the negotiation between the historical givens and the underlying and unconscious consequences of trauma.

(Linda Belau, xxv.)

Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) begins with a quotation from John Donne's "Meditation XVII." With the epigraph, Hemingway identifies the source of his title and defines the connections between human beings achieved through mourning: "No man is an island," Donne's argument begins, and he then provides an assertion of our connection to others: "never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for *thee*." Proper mourning expresses a recognition of the losses to our self in the death of another.

Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* depicts such connections to the dead and examines the emotional effects of incomplete mourning in terms that parallel Freud's own comments in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917; Hogarth Press, 1937).

Hemingway's novel of mourning concludes by depicting Robert Jordan, the American volunteer in Spain, as he prepares for his death. Jordan accepts the inevitability of this death and designs a ritual which expresses his commitment to his lover, Maria, and also contributes to the successful retreat of the members the guerrilla band (401-410). He provides a last effort of participation in their struggle against fascism and affirms his connection to the future of Spain. In Hemingway's parallel to Donne, Jordan's death while fighting as a volunteer in the Spanish Civil War is a loss suffered by the people of all the republican nations of the world to the fascist armies of Spain, Italy, and Germany. Speaking in 1938 of the deaths of such volunteers of the International Brigades, Hemingway said, "They die fighting for you" (*Hem on War* 293).

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The depiction of Jordan's life and death parallels the expression of mourning in Hemingway's eulogy of 1939, "On the American Dead in Spain" (Nelson 36-39). In both works, Hemingway praises the volunteers who died fighting to protect republican values. In an introduction to the "Eulogy" that he wrote after World War II, Hemingway scolded America for its failure to support these "premature antifascists" (Nelson 26). At another point, he explains this failure:

> The majority of the career diplomats of England, France, and the United States, are fascist, and it is they who supply the erroneous information on which their foreign offices and state departments act (*Hem on War* 293).

These failures in the diplomats led to the great bloodbath of the Second World War. Hemingway helps us to mourn the deaths of Jordan and the other volunteers because he affirms that they are, in fact, foreshadowings of our own losses.

Yet, many of the volunteers in the International Corps during the Spanish Civil War felt **betrayed** by Hemingway's depictions of literary and historical characters and events. Some of the veterans criticized the lack of political ideology in the central character, the literary self-indulgence of the love relationship between Jordan and Maria, and the negative depictions of several of the leaders of the Republican forces.

Pilar's narrative describing the massacre of civilian villagers provoked the sharpest criticism. According to Milton Wolff, many veterans felt that Hemingway had ignored fascist atrocities and betrayed loyalist soldiers who had been killed or wounded in Spain. Wolff also feared that Pilar's narrative would contribute to American anti-Communist sentiment against members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade (Nelson 14).

In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway is confronting the problem of a lost war. He had been a strong supporter of the Loyalists. He had helped to provide ambulances for the Republican forces and he had written a number of sympathetic journalistic reports (*Byline* 257-298). Martha Gellhorn, to whom Hemingway dedicated this novel, has written that during the Spanish Civil War "the Western Democracies had two commanding obligations: they must save their honor by assisting a young, attacked fellow democracy, and they must save their skin by fighting Hitler and Mussolini at once, in Spain, instead of waiting until later, when the cost in human suffering would be unimaginably greater" (17). Hemingway's novel was written after the democracies had failed to protect the Spanish Republic. Through examining mourning in this novel, Hemingway prepares for the continuing conflict with fascism and also engages his grief at the death of his own father.

Freud defines "Mourning" as "the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as fatherland, liberty, [or] an ideal..." ("Mourning" 125). These comments help to identify the range of Hemingway's concerns. In addition to mourning the deaths of friends and soldiers, and affirming emotional and political connections to the dead, Hemingway is "mourning" the loss of an environment of idealism in the Republic, the crushing of the efforts to resist Fascism, and even a kind of loss of Spain itself. One Loyalist in the novel observes, for example, "If the Republic lost it would be impossible for those who believed in it to live in Spain" (143). Freud's discussion of mourning devotes more space to issues in mourning the death of an individual object than to loss of an abstraction or ideal. Freud notes, however, that both kinds of loss impose a long process of emotional healing:

> Withdrawal of libido is not a process that can be accomplished in a moment but must certainly be, like grief, one in which progress is slow and gradual" ("Mourning" 137).

Mark Cousins, who also discusses the process of mourning the loss of an object, identifies this slow process in more detail:

> It [the mourned object] acts upon the subject as that which must be kept present, must be rescued again and again. If it went, what it threatens is not a loss that leads to mourning, but rather the loss of a loss that constructed a subject, which could lead to collapse. ("The Insistence of the Image", Belau 18)

The slow process of mourning protects the individual who has constructed the mourned object. The mourning subject is defending his own fragile self from collapse. This observation on the process/ value of mourning clarifies the criticism which Hemingway directs at actions by some of the Spanish Loyalists and their leaders. He is repeatedly "rescuing" the core of value in the Republic – that which he mourns – from those who do not seem to have protected those values. In Freudian terms, we might see those who criticized Hemingway for his "betrayal" as similarly engaged in protecting their own "lost ideal" which also defines them as bearers of grief.

Hemingway's "Eulogy for the American Dead in Spain" was first published in the *New Masses* in 1939, and then recorded for a tenth anniversary dinner on Lincoln's birthday in 1947. The eulogy asserts that the American dead have become a part of the people and the land of Spain: "Our dead live in the hearts and minds of the Spanish peasants [and] the Spanish workers..." and "our dead are a part of the Spanish earth." (Nelson 36-37) Nevertheless, the "Eulogy" includes a paragraph of rage at nazis "who may advance aided by traitors and cowards."

Brett Levinson argues that "both forgetting – in which the traumatic past is ignored – and vengeance – through which the traumatic past becomes an obsession – block the flow of history and the possibility of transition" (Belau xxvi). It seems that both Hemingway's novel and his "Eulogy" are attempts to mourn the losses in Spain in a form which will participate in the flow of history and strengthen the continuing fight against fascism. Although the "Causa" in Spain was lost by the time these works were published, the battles against the nazis in Europe were looming when Hemingway wrote about mourning the Loyalists and their ideals.

Herman Rappaport argues that "works of art must carry the burden of remembering and working through the trauma of the past" (Belau 233-250).

Hemingway's novel centers on Robert Jordan and the band of guerrillas blowing up a bridge as their part in a failed major offensive by the Republican forces. Jeffrey Meyers says that in the novel "Hemingway's judgment of all the Spanish and foreign politicians and commanders was influenced inevitably by his knowledge of their final fate" (Understanding 81). It is more important to the theme of the novel to see that Hemingway's depictions of such figures are explorations of the issues in mourning the loss of the Republic.

The characterizations of Pablo, La Passionaria, and Andre Marti probe the issues of such mourning. Milton Wolff observes that Hemingway's criticism of La Passionaria was offensive to many of the veterans who thought of her as "the heart of our fight against fascism" (Nelson 13). Wolff says that Hemingway shouldn't have included gossip about her sending her childen to safety in Russia because "all children were sent out of the country" (Nelson 13). Wolfe doesn't discuss two references to La Passionaria by Sardo's guerrillas when they are trapped on a mountain top, waiting for the air attack which will end their lives. In response to the crisis, a young guerrilla recites La Passionaria's maxim: "It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees" (269). Wolff himself identifies this slogan as one of "the banners we carried into battle" (Nelson 13). But the slogan does not encourage or console the doomed guerillas. One of them scoffs, "Can she help you now?" Then he adds, "we are on our bellies, not our knees." Later, when some journalists in Madrid are discussing La Passionaria's report that the fascists are "fighting among themselves near Segovia" (312), Karkov, Robert Jordan's friend, responds by saying merely, "That great face... That great voice" (313). Hemingway himself later said that he "decided not to write propaganda, but write just what I believe" (*Hem on War* 299). Jeffrey Meyers notes that La Passionaria became the President of the Spanish Communist Party in exile in Russia after the war (42). Perhaps this political role influenced both Hemingway and Wolff.

It is more important to the novel, however, that La Passionaria's rhetoric and physical presence contribute little to understanding the issues of loss and the need for mourning that Hemingway is examining.

Pablo, who leads the guerrilla band before Robert Jordan's arrival, is clearly struggling throughout the novel with emotional exhaustion and despair after two years of warfare. At their first meeting, for example, he drunkenly challenges Jordan, and some of the other guerrillas believe he should be shot (52-53). Most important, Pablo attempts to disrupt the plans for blowing up the bridge by stealing Jordan's detonators. In the middle of the night, he cuts the bags containing the explosive detonators and escapes

with them, taking one of the horses. Robert Gaidusek observes that the imagery of cutting the bags suggests that Pablo is acting out a desire to castrate Jordan (150-151). When he returns to the guerrilla camp without the detonators, Pablo is discredited and exhibits a "distressing self-abasement" (129). Pablo's conflicted motives and actions in the war have developed into a "morbid' melancholia" (125). Freud says "[I]n the clinical picture of melancholia, dissatisfaction with the self on moral grounds is far the most outstanding feature" (129) Freud further observes that "in melancholia, countless single conflicts in which love and hate wrestle together... are fought for the object...." He adds that "[T]raumatic experiences with the object may have stirred to activity something else that has been repressed" (138). When Pilar speaks to Pablo about his weeping at night, she suggests that he has lost all reference points for his behavior: "Nobody understands thee. Neither God nor thy mother... Nor I either" (353).

One of the strongest complaints about Hemingway's depiction of the war was the "notorious incident" which Pilar reports on the execution of Nationalists by the Spanish Loyalists. Milton Wolff says that Hemingway "wrote about no devils on the fascist side,"

> But it is Republican terrorism that gets described in detail, for many of the Vets, who were concerned with the novel's potential political impact, that decision was a betrayal (Nelson 25).

Wolff does not seem to recall the brutality that Hemingway reports in the rape of Maria and the murder of her Republican father by the fascists (61-62). Maria's grief at these brutalities underlies her need for the love of Robert Jordan. In Freud's terms, she is able to escape from "self-revilings" and achieve the capacity for a "new object of love" (125).

Pilar's report of the executions of the nazi villagers in Ronda seems to identify events that contribute to Pablo's melancholia. In Freud's terms, Pablo's leadership in the killing of the fascists suggests the denial of contradictory emotions which contributes to his melancholia. The killing is shared and sacramental when the peasants use their flails and scythes to execute fascists, but Pablo takes a role of leadership and "personally executes the *civiles* with shots to the head" (Gajdusek 146). These executions seem to be assertions of personal egotism and vengeance. Furthermore, by the end of the executions, Pablo is "deprived of his belief in the manliness and courage of the priest" (Gajdusek 149). In the character of Pablo, Hemingway explores the "conflicts of ambivalence" (Freud 138) which lead to a self-debasing melancholia. In that sense, Hemingway's characterization of Pablo seems to identify a source of the cowardice and betrayal which contributed to the loss of the Republic.

Another figure in whom Hemingway probes problems of mourning is the historical figure, Andre Marti, the French Commander of the International Forces. Wolff says that it was unnecessary for Hemingway to include Marti in the novel, and he suggests that Hemingway's "antagonism was personal" (Nelson 13). But, in fact, Marti's harsh military discipline seems to be another aspect of the struggle with loss and the problem of proper mourning.

For Whom the Bell Tolls centers upon a plan for a major attack by the Republican army. The plan has been detected, however, or it has been betrayed. When Robert Jordan sends two messengers to warn General Golz that the fascists seem to be prepared for the attack, the messengers are arrested by General Marti.

Gomez, one of Jordan's messengers, recognizes Marti from magazine articles about the celebrated leader. Hemingway's description begins with Marti's physical appearance but then shifts to issues of loss and manic melancholia:

> [Gomez] recognized his bushy eyebrows, his watery grey eyes... and he knew him for one of France's great modern revolutionary figures who had led the mutiny of the French Navy in the Black Sea. He knew this man would know where Golz's headquarters were [but] ... [h]e did not know what this man had become with time, disappointment, bitterness both domestic and political, and thwarted ambition and that to question him was one of the most dangerous things that any man could do (363).

After Marti has him arrested, Gomez asks, "What passes with that man?" In answer, "*Esta loco*, the guard said, "he is crazy" (364). The guard continues, "That old one kills more than the bubonic plague....

But he doesn't kill fascists like we do.... He kills rare things, Trotzkyites, Divagationers. Any type of rare beast" (364). Freud says, "the self torments of melancholics, which are without doubt pleasurable, signify, just like the corresponding phenomena in the obsessional neurosis, a gratification of the sadistic tendencies of hate" (*General Selection* 132). This sadistic melancholy, expressed in executing the rare beasts of betrayal found in his own army, also seems to indicate that Marti has become a paranoid: "dominated by a system of thought [which] must be constantly shown to explain everything" (D. W. Winnicott, *Playing*, 164).

Robert Jordan's experiences in the Civil War include a moment of grief that seems to parallel the sources of Marti's melancholy sadism. After Anselmo has been killed in the explosion of the bridge, Jordan experiences an emotional "letdown," and Hemingway adds,

> In him, too, was despair from the sorrow that soldiers turn to hatred in order that they may continue to be soldiers. Now it was over, he was lonely, detached and unelated and hated everyone he saw (389).

This is very far from the "deep and sound and selfless pride" which Jordan had experienced during the battle in the Sierras (206). Marti's suspicious despair is not simply an individual flaw, but a glimpse of an edgeless hatred which can emerge from loss in battle if there no recognition of a need for mourning.

References to the death by suicide of Robert Jordan's father extend throughout *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The first reference to his father begins with an odd, moment in the first conversation between Robert Jordan and Maria. She says, "I have been a republican for twenty years," and then adds, "My father was a Republican all his life.... It was for that they shot him.

Jordan replies that his father and grandfather were republicans all their lives. Then he delivers a joke that she does not see concerning the terminology of Spanish and American politics:

> "My grandfather was on the Republican national committee."
> And your father, she asks, "Is he still active in the Republic?"
> "No," he replies, "he shot himself."
> "To avoid being tortured," she asks.
> "Yes." Robert Jordan replies. "To avoid being tortured" (57).

The torture was apparently his life. Robert Jordan's father is clearly an analogue to Hemingway's own father. In his hotel in Madrid, Jordan himself learns how to carry cyanide so that he can kill himself if he is captured (208). Suicide remains a recurring possibility for him until the last moments of the novel when he chooses to risk capture by defending the retreat of Maria and the guerillas. Perhaps in depicting a character who carries his father's suicide with him always – and is able to choose another death – Hemingway achieves a kind of success in mourning the suicide of his own father.

For Whom The Bell Tolls appears to be a psychoanalytically informed examination of both the personal and the historical dimensions in mourning and melancholia.

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Joyce Tenneson: An aesthetics of aging (*)

ANCA CRISTOFOVICI (**)

Recall, reader if ever in the mountains a mist has caught you, through
which you could not see except as moles do through skin …

Dante, *Comedy*[1]

ARGUMENT: THE RELEASE FROM THE BODILY EGO

Many recent studies on visual culture highlight the representation of the body in photography as a signifier of social constructions. Photography however has always played an important part in the construction of the subject, a perspective that I suggest in what follows, one that combines analytical concepts with aspects of the phenomenology of perception, indispensable for the understanding of art works and of our relation to them.

By contrast with the overexposure of the body in commercial photography, photographers in the art field today represent the body as a visual metaphor for configurations of interiority engaged in subject construction. Their insistence on formal aspects (of composition and technique) displaces the focus from the physical to the psychic body so as to "capture" unstable phenomena of change, of conflict in the subject's relation to time. In Joyce Tenneson's photographs ordinary referents are obliterated to liberate space for other dimensions of the self. Instead of showing "old people", her photographs become carriers of optical distortions, signifiers of self-perception and self-representation. Rather than an instrument more or less adapted to the necessities of life, the body is shown as something concurrently solid, stable, and changing, movable. A paradox epitomized in the phrasing of the philosopher Marc

(*) This paper is an abridged and adapted version of a chapter in an unpublished manuscript devoted to photography, aging, and subject construction, entitled *Touching Surfaces: Photography and the Fabric of the Subject, in Time*.

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[1] This Dante fragment coming from Charles Singleton's prose version of the *Comedy* seems to me evocative of the «misty» visual effect in Tenneson's photographs, and also of her placing the lens of the camera much like a mole through the skin, to look at the human body from an interstice, as it were, between the inside and the outside. The fragment is quoted by James Merrill, who, on the subject of moles, comments: «Those moles, to resume, are just one filament in a web whose circumference is everywhere. They presently mesh with an apostrophe to the imagination, which also sees without using eyes.» (James Merrill, 1986, 89-90).

Richir as: "an inner statue, infinitely labile and moving, ephemeral and changing in its manifestations." (11)

An art photography perspective on aging – connected to time, movement, and change – neither documents nor sentimentalizes but, I would argue, contributes to a creative rethinking of aging. Significantly, I will not approach aging as a state (documented by the photographic image) but as a process of growth (that is, of subject construction, and of shaping, adapting subjectivity to new parameters). In this dynamics of change and becoming rather than a destructive agent, time is conceived of as a formative category and a source of creativity.

How can photography visualize aspects of aging that do not merely correspond in a documentary way to visible realities? How are such complex psychic structures as those related to aging translated into visual patterns? These are the questions underlying my presentation of Tenneson from the perspective of the release of "the bodily ego", inspired from Richard Wollheim's essay with that title[2]. Wollheim looks closer into Freud's striking phrase, to insist that a mental act is not only equated with a bodily state, but *with a process*. In Tenneson's photographs, as I will try to show, released from the "bodily ego", the figure creates the illusion of moving through different space levels, but also through layers of time, internal and cultural (owing to the classical iconography the photographs allude to). The present *captured* in the photograph becomes then not the trace of a moment in time (and of a state associated to it) that will no longer be – according to Roland Barthes's nostalgic approach of photography – but an accumulation of instants situated on different temporal places, a progression of states. In art photography, "the moment that was" (a unique moment in the past, corresponding to a vanishing point in linear perspective) is no longer a reference point. In such photographic works, the present is reconfigured in the choice of the models, the pose, the setting, and in the processing of the image (by the artist, technically, and by the viewer, perceptually). Similarly, the past is reconfigured, not as the reminiscence of something that "was", at a certain point in time, but as a dynamic of varied forms of memory, as a conjunction of mental and actual patterns.

In spite of the classical poses of her models, Tenneson does not show aging as a *moment* in one's life, but as a *process* that could be formalized by what Edouard Glissant calls, in a wider cultural context, "a poetics of relation." The release from the bodily ego – which liberates creative energies – is represented through a series of devices that insist on the dissolution of the figure. However, instead of effacing the traces of time (as they do in commercial photography), these devices explore physical limitations, as well as the creative potential of non-standard bodies. The powerful tactile effect in her photographs suggests internal or imaginative processes and conveys the keen attention with which Tenneson considers the shapes time takes, the patterns it creates.

Joyce Tenneson emerged in the world of art photography in the late 1970s. From her early reflections on images of the self, her photographs opened up in the late 1980s to a wide rage of transformative processes. One of her books is, in fact, entitled *Transformations* (1993). Tenneson's work has been described as ethereal, pensive, disturbing. Her photographs do not relate so much to what we see, as to forms of perception that trigger off inner examination. "To me," she declares, "the larger reality has always been internal reality, those emotions that are not visible to the naked eye" (*Exposures*, n. pag.). Caught in unusual postures or outspokenly posing to the camera, her models partake of a pictorial iconic dimension, which allows her to represent internal realities through apparent immobility. While the pose is classical, the pictorial devices she uses create an impression of movement. This is a paradox that I will analyze in what follows, as an equivalent of the tension between state and process, to underline photography's necessity to stabilize a segment in order to represent a process (the metonymical character of photography has been mostly discussed from the perspective of framing).

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[2] Richard Wollheim, «The Bodily Ego», *The Mind and Its Depths*, 64-77.

Tenneson's work has been openly and persistently devoted to various metamorphoses of the body in time, from childhood to old age. Vicki Goldberg sums up her concerns with the perception and representation of physical change as portraying "pregnancy, the heavy flesh of middle age, and emaciated old age with grace, acceptance, affection." (7)

The perspective Tenneson proposes in her photographs relies precisely on the problematic question of beauty, inherent in such transformations of the body. Unlike other contemporary photographers, such as Cindy Sherman, or Duane Michals, whose work figures aging in clear opposition to the standards circulated in the media, Tenneson's photographs radiate an unusual canonic beauty. Working within several kinds of stereotypes – from religious and secular art history models, to clichés of the beauty industry – she creates an aesthetic based on the uncanny perception of visual models that disturbs our habits of seeing. In different ways than documentary photography, her images suggest that art photography can redefine such notions as visibility, the visible, or vision. Accordingly, her incorporation of categories conventionally perceived as "negative" challenges the very aesthetic models she implies[3]. Her association of aging with aesthetics, I will suggest, can be instrumental in understanding how we think of time structures, and integrate corporeal experience to our fables of identity.

1. WHAT WE SEE

Nude figures partially covered by thin transparent cloths, representing men and women of different ages, shown in individual or group compositions. They are placed on painterly backgrounds and mostly devoid of any concrete references. The body is both exposed and concealed through screens of various textures (gauze, veils, drapery). In "Three Women" (1987), for instance, the gauze evokes a shroud, or, organic tissue, placenta. Other photographs feel like mist. To obtain this effect, Tenneson uses devices such as netting, or powdering, special lighting, and a particular printing technique she developed. Mono-tonal, bleached, dusky, her color work plays down the sharp tonal contrasts and glamour of current color photographs to create an illusion of depth.

"Carol and Mirror" (1987), for instance, shows – in profile – a woman of rounded, full shapes and gray hair (details differing from the conventional aesthetics of contemporary nudity). A round mirror in her hand, she is placed against a vaguely painted background that creates a particular depth of field. Her extending arm discretely protects her nudity; so does her long hair covering her back, and the white cloth unfolding down her waist. Her posture reveals modest pride. The painted arch on the background of the photograph – half of which seems to draw a geometric link between her gaze and the mirror – conveys a sense of harmony between the actual image and the image of herself in the mirror that the woman is looking at (one which we do not see and so have to imagine). The older woman is not *made* beautiful. Instead, through this visual dynamic she is brought into an optical field that highlights the "grace, acceptance, affection" pointed out by Goldberg. Affection, I would like to insist, is an essential factor in the aesthetics of aging that I locate in Tennesons's work, but also in that of other contemporary photographers, such as Geneviève Cadieux, Jacqueline Hayden, or Hervé Guibert. For Tenneson, the aesthetic is not an intrinsic quality, but a relational aspect. The "poetics of relation" in her work evolves from the relationship between photographer and model, but also from

[3] Such incorporation of negative aesthetic categories into one's artistic idiom might be associated to what Christopher Bollas calls "genera", the counterpart of "trauma", which can be integrated to the elaboration of one's idiom in creative ways. "Psychic Genera," *Being a Character. Psychoanalysis & Self Experience*, pp. 66-100.

For a more detailed discussion of this aspect in relation to the work of other contemporary photographers, cf. Anca Cristofovici, «Touching Surfaces: Photography, Aging, and an Aesthetics of Change,» in *Figuring Age: Women, Bodies, Generations*, pp. 268-296.

the model's relationship with her or his various age-selves, with that of canons of beauty. With discretion, the pose of the figure in "Carol and Mirror" evokes a body memory of multi-layered past of private and cultural reminiscences, of changing paradigms of beauty.

In some photographs, Tenneson figures the process of aging as a generational continuum. In "Man and Two Women" (1989), for instance, the position of the hands, the drapery, the curving geometry of the composition create a sense of reciprocal holding. In others, such as "Peter Holding William" (1986), or "Old Man and Deanna" (1986) characters of opposite ages represent allegories of growth or epitomize a dialogue between different-age selves (Deanna is actually a model Tenneson has followed in her bodily and emotional progress over time).

Although "captured" on a lyrical mode, there is something disconcerting in the beauty of these non-conventional figures, an impression that we also get from the photographs of young women, which are equally unsettling and for which Tenneson uses the same aesthetic devices. This impression comes, I would advance, from a slight out-of-focus effect in these photographs that does not result from the manipulation of the time exposure, in other words, one that is not a blur. While the body is unmoving, statuesque, movement unfolds from thin fabric or lighting effects. The unease produced by bringing together sensuality with the immobility of the body, suggestive of the tension between Eros and Thanatos, enhances the uncanny connotation of beauty when it is fixed in the photographic image (as, for instance, in "Suzanne", 1986).

FIGURE 1
Carol and Mirror (1987)

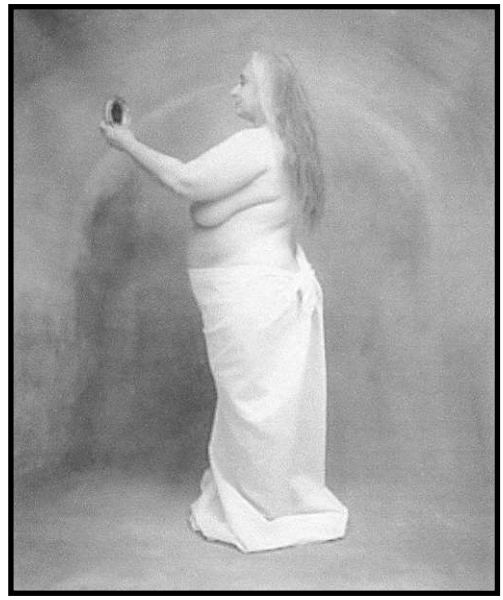
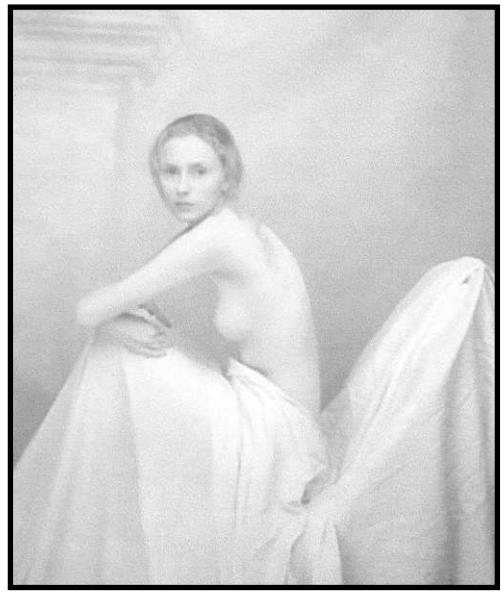


FIGURE 2
Old Man and Deanna (1986)

FIGURE 3
Suzanne (1986)



2. MOVEMENT AND IMMOBILITY: "THE INNER STATUE"

Photography has been related to death in ambivalent ways since its early development and sometimes, in fact, for mere technical reasons. Before double or multiple exposure started being used intentionally to create varied effects, with a few exceptions (spirit photographs among the most illustrious), in the early days of photography, unfocused images were considered a flaw. Resulting from the model's movement during the process of the picture taking (quite a long one at the time), the soft contours, that we find so appealing today, provoked great dissatisfaction, mainly in the case of portraiture. Nineteenth-century photographers were faced with a conundrum concerning the inverse proportion between the speed of exposure and the natural air of the picture. As Geoffrey Batchen notes in his book *Burning with Desire. The Conception of Photography*, some critics objected that the effort to maintain the pose "made the subject's face look like that of a corpse." (208) It seems indeed that the emaciated figures of Julia Margaret Cameron were mostly due to the model's exhaustion from the strain of the pose, their melancholic attitude having been provoked by the length of the exposure. Ironically, a prop was invented at the time to help photographers create more natural effects. This contraption was supporting the models' head to prevent them from moving. Clearly, for a more lifelike effect, the figure had to be frozen. As Batchen justly remarks: "This device transformed the lived time of the body into the stasis of an embalmed effigy. In other words, photography insisted that if one wanted to appear lifelike in a photograph, one first had to act as if dead." (208)

It is a "melancholy truth", in Duane Michals's most appropriate phrase, that in photograph beauty cannot be fixed as an ideal iconic form but only as a momentary state, as the impression of a shape. And that the dazzling sight of beauty is reminiscent in its immobility of the dazzling sight of death. Even while Tenneson's photographs of younger women show the frailty of beauty, they are unsettling in that a pleasing sight of the human figure can be experienced as false or unreal because of excessive perfection. However, her skill consists precisely in displacing the viewer's attention from the surface to interior spaces: stripped off its everyday references, covered with cloth, or seen through foggy screens, the nude body itself becomes a signifier of interiority, enigmatic in its economy of movement. Nudity is for Tenneson "a kind of window on the psyche, the inner self." (*Transformations*, 91) It can be associated, I would suggest, to that "inner statue", evoked by Richir[4], in which all ephemeral perceptions add up, like layers of thin fabric.

A particular tension nourishes Tenneson's photographs. While the allusions to art models or the constructed poses give a statuesque character to the figures, the "dissolving" techniques deconstruct it by degrees. The effects she uses convey a range of affects that integrate conventional and non-conventional forms of beauty into a continuum of subject perception. Round, emaciated, wrinkled, or too smooth bodies become touching precisely because of the dynamics between immobility and movement, between varied emotions associated to the changing body and the images we can have of it.

3. AESTHETICS AND COSMETICS

Tenneson bridges up two opposite senses of "beauty" as well as two versions of photographic aesthetic: that of conventional beauty, with its set of commercial rhetoric, and that of art history canons. However, her figures slightly step out from canons. Despite its apparent transparency, her way

[4] It would be interesting to look closer into the possibility of reconsiedering Winnicott's understanding of the psychological dynamics between the «true self» and «the false selves», with Richir's philosophical (and paradoxical) understanding of the corporeal as «inner statue, infinitely labile and moving». D. W. Winnicott, «Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self».

of thinking beauty unveils hidden twists. In the dissolving contours, in the purified setting of her photographs we read a hesitation of the form, as if the ambivalence of beauty opened up the surface of the image like a scar. If she conjures the aesthetic within the area of common place to show "that even lovely women have inner lives" as Goldberg puts it (8), she also reveals what can be repulsive in canonized forms, namely how, fixed into stereotypes, beauty can become a dead form (or, a form of death). Transgressing the boundaries between the two approaches of beauty allows her to explore the transformations of the individual body along with conventional ways of representing it, in time.

It should be mentioned that Tenneson also works for the beauty industry and her commercial work does not, in fact, diverge technically too much from her fine art work. Yet, her commercial work rarely has the "psychological edge" of her art photographs, that strangeness which her clients outspokenly avoid.[5] Ironically, however, her commercial work (commissioned portraiture, fashion, advertising) addresses the "religion" of beauty, which carries the promise, as a *Vogue* ad informs us "to erase time, alter perception, create a new reality"[6] (which is, actually, what her art photographs do). Two modes of understanding the performing self (the cosmetic and the aesthetic) are at work in the two fields, the difference being that between an external and an internal perspective. Where commercial photography shows idealized states in normalized bodies, the pictorial performances in series such as *Exposures* (1986), or *Tranformations* (1993) incorporate various realities of the body as expressions of the becoming self.[7]

4. PERFORMING CORPO-REALITIES

In some of the photographs, Tenneson touches a threshold of photographic representation by making a special use of light. The veils, which she covered her figures with, are turned into bodies of light in her series significantly entitled "Light Writings" (from *Transformations*). Here figures are surrounded by light materialized as thunder, auras, or luminescent globes. Effacing the contours of the figure is another way of releasing the body from a particular state, integrating it into a process represented in the fix image. In transgressing current canons of beauty she directs the gaze elsewhere, not – or not only – inwards, in the sense of deliberately visualizing particular states, but into areas of transition, of processing emotions, of formalizing them.

In this series, light sublimates the body to create new aesthetic configurations at the limit between the figurative and the abstract (as for instance in "Woman in Light Hat", *Illuminations*[8]). In locating light as shapely as possible, Tenneson illuminates graphically the imaginative extensions of our lives. She transforms the battlefield of the destructive effects of light on the skin (one that the cosmetic industry is fiercely contending with) into a creative field in which different textures create intriguing optical realities. Skin is "raw material" in Tenneson's phrasing: "I love when light passes onto

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[5] "Clients want something pleasant and beautiful," she notes, "a little bit unusual but not too strange," and mentions a client "asking nervously before the session: 'Remember, no death or dying, nothing disturbing…'." *Transformations*, 109; 112.

[6] I refer here to an advertisement for the cosmetic product Magic by Perspectives that represents a woman holding a ball of light in her palms. Magic is presented as «an extraordinary new concept that optically transforms the skin». *Vogue UK*, May 2000. A commentary of the rhetoric of this text is beyond the scope of this paper!

[7] It is interesting to note that, unlike her most recent series representing elderly figures, *Wise Women* (2002) and *Amazing Men* (2004), Tenneson's earlier work does make distinctions along gender or age lines. And it is perhaps why, while her cultural argument in the former is significant, the latter's aesthetic argument is more powerful and more convincing.

[8] Tenneson creates this effect by using light as an actual instrument of figuration. A optic fiber laser wand, which she manipulates very much like a flash light during the capturing of the image, allows her to literally «draw with light» (the hat on the woman's head, or a ball in another's hands are actual figures shaped by light).

skin," she notes, "transforming it. The play between, is it skin, is it stone, is it fabric, is it light? – when they meld into each other, fascinates me." (Dunas, 102). Through apparent corporeal dematerialization, Tenneson figures aging as transformation of matter and thus gives momentum to fugitive perceptions of the self.

In the depredations of time (difficult to locate, or to accept) and in the instruments we have devised to escape them – photography among others – Tenneson finds sources of energy. In spite of her elegiac formal approach, rather than resisting or rejecting the alterations of time, she shows her models interacting with them (and with one another). Hence her shifting the illusion of controlling time that commercial photographs are based on, to more creative, generative time patterns. The gauze or mist that covers up the body becomes a trope for skins we shed, for layers of experience we accumulate, which add up in the transformative configurations of the self.

And so, photography is not – I hope to have shown – the record of one state corresponding to one moment in the past (as mythologized by the twentieth-century discourse on visual culture), but a configuration of moments, the record of a process, the performance of the self in the making. The immobility of Tenneson's figures is but a segment stabilized from a continuum. What I retain from her photographs is that while it is important to expose the body as a site of social, cultural, or personal inscriptions, within an aesthetics of the corporeal understood as a larger metaphor for subject construction, the physical appearance "caught" in a photograph can be involved in exploring the possibilities of change. Instead of being a passive medium that records experience, the body is shown as an agent in the processing of experience. This is a powerful argument that we find, under the form of various aesthetic propositions, in the photographic art field of the past three decades.

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The waters of the mind: Rhetorical patterns of fluidity in Woolf, William James, Bergson and Freud

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At the beginning of the 20th century, modernist writers such as Joyce, Proust, Mann and Virginia Woolf rejected the traditional realist novel as an inadequate form of capturing the complexity and mutability of reality and human experience. The conventions, strategies and techniques that the modernist novel adopted were closely connected with the great transformations that Europe underwent at a philosophical, political, technological and artistic level, and they owed specifically a lot to the new ideas on the human mind that were spreading across Europe and America. Henri Bergson, William James and Sigmund Freud were among the chief creators of this modern psychology, and their writings, together with Woolf's, constitute attempts to give a novel account of the workings of the mind.

Leaving aside the question of direct influence and knowledge of each other's ideas[1], and taking into consideration the great differences that exist between these authors's systems of thought, the aim of this article is to shed some light on Woolf's metaphorical recreation of the human mind by means of a rhetorical pattern articulated around the notions of container and content, surface and depth, fluidity and change, dissolution and unboundedness, notions that also appear in Bergson's, James's and Freud's descriptions of the mind. A brief reference to feminist theory is obligatory, given the central role it has played in the interpretation of Woolf's writing. Adopting an open and fluid notion of intertextuality,

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[1] Apparently Woolf did not read Freud for herself until 1939, though that is hard to believe since Freud's works began to be translated by James Strachey and his wife Alix in the 1920's, and to be published by the Hogarth Press. Furthermore several Bloomsbury members trained as psychoanalysts, and Melanie Klein delivered her 1925 lectures at 50 Gordon Square, the home of Adrian and Karin Stephen. Freud and Woolf met in January 1939. In any case and without a shadow of doubt, Woolf must have been familiar with Freud's works and theories, which were much discussed in the Bloomsbury group. As regards Bergson's and James's relation, they began a correspondence in 1902 that lasted until James's death in 1910. Though it seems that at the beginning of their careers the similarities between their works were more due to coincidence than to influence, later they must have taken ideas from each other.

this article follows certain poststructural practices that defend a blurring of boundaries between disciplines and genres, and an eclectic dialogue between all linguistic constructions, especially from a purely textual and rhetorical point of view.

In any discussion on modernism – both as a wide philosophical current or as a concrete literary movement – the question of the new approaches to the human mind, human subjectivity and human consciousness is bound to appear. Those approaches took the form of a critique or questioning of old conceptions of the self – as we actually see in Freud, James and Bergson[2] – and as Sheehan sustains, a rejection of the humanist orthodox certainty about what it means to be human. According to Freud, the first "two great outrages" (562) upon humanity's "naïve self-love" (562) were the Copernican discovery that the earth was not the centre of the universe and the Darwinian affirmation of the human descent from the animal world. And now

> man's craving for grandiosity is [...] suffering the third and most bitter blow from present-day psychological research which is endeavouring to prove to the ego of each one of us that he is not even master in his own house, but that he must remain content with the veriest scraps of information about what is going on unconsciously in his own mind. We psycho-analysts were neither the first nor the only ones to propose to mankind that they should look inward; but it appears to be our lot to advocate it most insistently (562).

As Dekoven says, quoting Eugene Lunn's enumeration of modernist features, one of them is "the demise of subjectivity conceived as unified, integrated, self-consistent" (175)[3]. And Eysteinsson also defends that one of the modernist paradigms is the crisis of the subject – the "modernist destruction of bourgeois identity" (28) –, which can be observed in "a modernist preoccupation with human consciousness (as opposed to a mimetic concern with the human environment and social conditions)". That leads to "the use of the stream of consciousness technique", to "a radical inward turn" and to an "exploration of the human psyche" (26).

Those are exactly the features that Woolf found in Dorothy Richardson's novels, and that she herself adopted, transformed and improved. Richardson was the first English novelist to consistently use the stream of consciousness method[4], as she was "concerned with states of being and not with states of doing" (Woolf, *Essays*, 52). Thus the reader "is not provided with a story; he is invited to embed himself in Miriam Henderson's consciousness; [...] to follow these impressions as they flicker through Miriam's mind, waking incongruously other thoughts" (*Essays*, 16). Richardson, however, partly fails, since "we still find ourselves distressingly near the surface" (16), and Woolf proposes instead "to be rid of realism, to penetrate without its help into the regions beneath it" (17), as she makes clear in her famous essays – and declarations of principles – "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" and "Modern Ficion". She rejects the method of the Edwardian writers, whom she calls "materialists", since "they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body" (158). On the contrary, the modern

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[2] Many of the theories and ideas of the three of them can be related, in one way or another, to what Urdanoz believes to be the general common characteristics of 20th century philosophical currents: antipositivism; a dynamic and evolutive approach to life and the world; relativism and historicism; an anthropocentrism that places the human being as the centre of the universe; irrationalism and pluralism.

[3] Dekoven seems to connect this change in the approach to subjectivity with the shift in gender relations that took place at the turn of the century, and which led to an "ambivalence toward powerful femininity that itself forged many of Modernism's most characteristic formal innovations" (174).

[4] Showalter considers Richardson to be the most consistent representative of the female aestheticism that was developed by the last generation of Victorian woman novelists. According to Showalter, this new female aesthetics applied feminist ideology to language, literature, perceptions and values, and thus, Richardson's subject became female consciousness. Richardson "saw shapelessness as the natural expression of female empathy, and pattern as the sign of male one-sidedness" (256) and by means of the stream-of-consciousness technique, tried to present "the multiplicity and variety of associations held simultaneously in the female mode of perception" (260).

novelist is a "spiritualist", for whom "the point of interest, lies very likely in the dark places of psychology" (162).

The attempt to reproduce in the novel what happens in those "dark places of psychology" led to an emphasis on subjectivity, to the dissolution of the boundaries between the objective and the subjective, and to the rejection of the single and omniscient narrator and of fixed narrative points of view. In his celebrated book *Mimesis*, dealing with the representation of reality in Western literature, Auerbach devotes his last chapter to Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, and uses this novel to illustrate the new modernist narrative techniques. He explains how in the literature of the past "there was hardly any attempt to render the flow and the play of consciousness adrift in the current of changing impressions" (535). Woolf's writing aims at rendering "the continuous rumination of consciousness in its natural and purposeless freedom" (538), since she wants "to fathom a more genuine, a deeper, and indeed a more real reality" (540).

Freud, Bergson and James did also want to deal with the very essence of human life and that led them, as it led Woolf, to the world of psychological phenomena. Indeed Woolf's wish to penetrate into "the source beneath the surface, the very oyster within the shell" (*Essays*, 15), her interest for what is hidden beneath the mind's superficial manifestations is linked to Freud's discovery of the unconscious, of a world in the individual of unseen material that lies under the obvious and the visible, an idea that utterly transformed art and culture in the early 20th century.

This new vision implied a conception of the mind as a three-dimensional space divided into two basic levels, "the upper" and "the under" (Woolf, *Essays*, 163), the surface on top and the room behind it. Woolf frequently refers to the mind as a container and thoughts, ideas, sensations, dreams as the elements contained in it: life as "a bowl that one fills and fills and fills" (*Moments*, 75) and herself as "the container" of feelings (78), in "A Sketch of the Past"; "her mind was like her room, in which lights advanced and retreated, came pirouetting and stepping delicately" (*Stories*, 92), in "The Lady in the Looking-Glass"; words making a "pattern on the floor of the child's mind" (64) and the mind as "a pool of thought, a deep basin of reality" (203), in *To the Lighthouse*; "the pool of our consciousness" (*Books*, 141), in her essay "More Dostoevsky"; "the walls" (19) and "the lake" (26) of the characters's minds, in *The Waves*; or "the mind's sandy floor" (147), in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Freud very elaborately mapped the divided geography of the mind, and in his lecture on resistance and repression, he explicitly describes the mental apparatus in spatial terms:

> The unconscious system may therefore be compared to a large ante-room, in which the various mental excitations are crowding upon one another, like individual beings. Adjoining there is a second, smaller appartment, a sort of reception-room, in which consciousness resides. But on the threshold between the two there stands a personage with the office of door-keeper, who examines the varios mental excitations, censors them, and denies them admittance to the reception-room when he disapproves of them (566).

His topographical conception of the mind is also based on the surface-depth dichotomy: "consciousness is the *superficies* of the mental apparatus" (700) and the vast region below the surface is divided into the unconscious and preconscious layers. This dichotomy between what lies under and what is upper, and the relations, movements and exchanges that are established between those different mental levels are essential to understand Freud's rhetorical descriptions of the mind. For example, his seventh lecture, on manifest content and latent thoughts, is completely structured around this idea. He explains how "our method is to allow other substitute-ideas, from which we are able to divine that which lies hidden, to emerge into consciousness" (489); that those substitute-ideas are a means "of bringing into consciousness the unconscious thoughts underlying the dream" (490); and that "resistances invariably confront us when we try to penetrate to the hidden unconscious thought" (490).

This topography of the psyche, which is related to Freud's three basic personality structures, id, ego and superego, is adopted by Woolf in her essay "The Leaning Tower", from 1940, where she makes a explicit reference to "Dr. Freud" (*Essays*, 175). Woolf talks about "unconsciousness" as the "state" at which "the under mind works at top speed while the upper mind drowses" (163). She explains how

most interesting perceptions "swam to the surface, apparently of their own accord; and remained in memory," while "what was unimportant sunk into forgetfulness" (163), and she defends that writers should achieve "a whole state of mind, a mind no longer crippled, evasive, divided" (175), so that they sink into unconsciousness and tranquillity and are able to deal with what is beneath the surface.

If we pay attention to both authors's words and proposals, we find the idea of the constant movement of mental contents. Freud's conception of mental processes very clearly depends on the already discussed topographical perspective, but also on the dynamic one: "Psycho-analysis has departed a step further from the descriptive psychology of consciousness [...] Up till now, it differed from academic (descriptive) psychology mainly by reason of its dynamic conception of mental processes; now we have to add that it professes to consider mental topography also" (431). We have seen that as Freud tries to clarify the mental "dynamics"[5], he describes an interaction of submerged and emerging elements and forces, of material slipping back and forth between the conscious, preconscious and unconscious. Woolf's metaphors of the mind as "pool", "basin" or "lake", Freud's metaphor of the "iceberg" or Woolf's account of perceptions as "swimming" and "sinking", revolve around the element of water, the symbol of mutability and fluidity *par excellence*, which Gaston Bachelard, in *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, defines as the transitory element. In "A Sketch of the Past", Woolf reveals how her life stands upon her first memory, that of being in bed in the nursery at St Ives and hearing the waves breaking (*Moments*, 75). Certainly, water as a semantic field and as a rhetorical notion determines and haunts her imagination and vision of reality throughout all her works[6].

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud elaborates a mental world structured around the surface-depth dichotomy and the fluid movement of elements in the "waters of the mind". He talks about "two trains of thought" that "meet", "the former on the surface, the latter covered up" (304) and about "dreams that show an accelerated flow of ideas" (336). The "recollection" of "the affective impulses prevailing in dream-thoughts" is compared to how "the bowl of a fountain collects the water that flows into it. From this point the dream-thoughts flow along the following channels" (330). "Annoyance" is said to draw "reinforcement from springs that flow far beneath the surface, and so swells to a stream of hostile impulses" (329). Or we get to know how in the forgetting of dreams, "directing ideas immediately exert their influence, and henceforth determine the flow of the involuntary ideas" (348)[7].

This last example shows to what extent Freud's mental dynamics constitute what Bloom has called a "civil war within the psyche" (*Canon*, 377), a battle for supremacy between different forces. Words such as "conflict", "forces", "opposition", "battle" and "struggle" appear once and again in Freud's language and they are symptomatic of Freud's vision of the mind as a space in which mutable entities are engaged in a dynamic and usually conflicting relationship: he explains how "a stubborn conflict is going on in the patient between libidinal desires and sexual repression" (624); talks about the "normal struggle between conflicting impulses" (624) and about the "battle of the repression" (627);

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[5] By using constantly this word or derived ones, Freud makes clear that his conception of all mental processes is a "dynamic" one: "the dynamic conception of resistance" (491), "how this discharge through the dream is effected dynamically" (496), "the dynamics of the process of recovery" (634) or "the dynamic relations within the mind" (708).

[6] As Poole puts it, "water is Virginia's central symbol. [...] there is scarcely a page of her novels where the sea, or water, does not make a fleeting appearance, as if her imagination was rocked on the swell of an invisible current of water which ran ceaselessly through her thinking" (259). Poole quotes Marie-Paule Vigne's estimation that water occupies across all her novels a 48% (about 4,500 words) against 52% (4,850) for all the other elements together.

[7] Notice how Freud's articulation of the mind as a space in which thoughts, ideas and dreams are living entities in constant movement resembles Woolf's: "In one day thousands of ideas have coursed through your brains; thousands of emotions have met, collided, and disappeared in astonishing disorder" (*Essays*, 86); words "twisting about to make Heaven knows what pattern on the floor of the child's mind" (*Lighthouse*, 64); or "the idea sunk back again" (*Lighthouse*, 202).

makes reference to "how, as each individual resistance is being mastered, a violent battle goes on in the soul of the patient – a normal mental struggle between two tendencies on the same ground" (627); or asserts that "the transference is thus the battlefield where all contending forces must meet" (634).

Freud saw then the mind as irreducibly divided, whereas Woolf proposes in "The Leaning Tower", "a fusion of the two minds, the upper and the under" (*Essays*, 173), a figuration which resembles Bergson's and James's conception of consciouness as an ever changing, mutable and protean stream, flow or continuum[8]. Let us remember William James's famous words in *The Principles of Psychology*:

> Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" is the metaphor by which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life* (155).

James defends that "within each personal consciousness, thought is always changing" (146) and "is sensibly continuous" (146). Both James and Bergson go against Locke's and Hume's vision of thought as composed of independent and discrete elements juxtaposed alongside of each other. Notice how the following sentences by Bergson, taken from *Creative Evolution*, astonishingly resemble the quoted paragraph by James, since both examples are based on the idea of the flow of mental elements: "Each of them is borne by the fluid mass of our whole psychical existence. [...] Now, states thus defined cannot be regarded as distinct elements. They continue each other in an endless flow. [...] a flux of fleeting shades merging into each other" (3). And later on, we find that "we perceive duration as a stream against which we cannot go" (38).

So, it is precisely this inner flowing stream that leads Bergson to formulate in *Time and Free Will*, his first major work, his famous notion of *durée*, which stands for psychological time or inner duration and which doesn't lend itself to any logical, quantitative or intellectual analysis: "Pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states" (100).

According to Kumar, *la durée* becomes the distinguishing feature of the stream of consciousness novel. Following Bergson's principles, modernist writers present it as something incapable of measurement and not to be captured by conventional and spatialized representations of time. Woolf abandons indeed the conventional plot and the conception of time as a linear sequence of events, and by means of an extremely lyrical and evocative language, rich in suggestive and beautiful images of transitoriness and openness, based on a fluid and scattering syntax, she articulates her great novels *To the Lighthouse*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Between the Acts* and especially *The Waves* around the rhythm of her characters's thoughts, sensations, perceptions and feelings, which constitute this stream of consciousness, this fluid *durée*[9].

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[8] In Freud, unlike in Bergson and James, we do not find the idea of all mental contents constituting a single stream that flows, though he does describe the different elements in the mind as flowing along the different levels and systems. That is why the expressions "flow of ideas" and "stream of thoughts" appear in his writings and why we find paragraphs like the following one: "During the day there is a continuous stream flowing [...] toward the motility end; this current ceases at night, and can no longer block the flow of the current of excitation in the opposite direction" (354).

[9] For Auerbach, the "elaboration of the contrast between 'exterior' and 'interior' time" (538) and "the technique of a multiple reflection of consciousness and of multiple time strata" (544) are key stylistic features of the new narrative. He makes reference to "the modern concept of interior time" (542), although he does not specify to which actual thinkers that idea is owed. What is most interesting for our purposes, is that in Auerbach's approach to modernist literature, the focus is on how writers's recreation of internal life depends on the notions of mobility, fluidity, internal time and depth, that is, the very same notions we are examining in this article: "The important point is that an insignificant exterior occurrence releases ideas and chains of ideas which cut loose from the present of the exterior occurrence and range freely through the depths of time" (540).

Woolf's characters undergo privileged "moments of beings", of revelation – it is the famous modernist epiphany, also present in Joyce –, in which the charater's senses are especially receptive and an intense connection between the profusion of outer sensations and consciousness is established. And since consciousness is a "stream" or a "river", characters figuratively sink in these moments into themselves, submerging or plunging into the waters of their minds. This leads very often to a dichotomy between private and submerged life and social and public surface life. We find such a moment in *To the Lighthouse*, when in the evening, Mrs. Ramsay is silent and alone. Then, "her life sank down for a moment" (72) and "beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep" (73). The moment of lyrical climax comes when the lighthouse's ray of light strokes "with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight" (75) and "waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind" (76). In a similar scene in *The Waves*, Bernard and Neville, in silence, allow the fin of their thought[10] to "sink back into the depths" and they think "with the unlimited time of the mind" (194). The "wide and dignified sweep of [their] mind" (194) contracts as they hear a clock tick.

These new ideas about the mind implied an entirely different conception of the self, which shifted from being built round a hard and changeless core, from being a monolithic, stable and seizable entity, and turned into a dynamic process and a heterogenous, unstable and elusive entity[11]. *The Waves* is probably Woolf's most experimental and daring novel in this sense. In it, Woolf "sets in parallel series the reflections of six characters, in such a way as to suggest the permeability or friability of selfhood" (Trotter, 94). The novel consists of a stream of continuous impressions; of the patterns of consciousness of six characters in which mental states flow into one another. In *The Waves*, we experience the "dissipation or streaming away of identity [...] its accumulation, accretion, acceleration, augmentation and sedimentation" (Trotter, 94), as Bernard explicitly conveys it: "I could not recover myself from that endless throwing away, dissipation, flooding forth without our willing it" (198).

We also find this challenge to the old stable ego in Woolf's memoirs "Reminiscences", "A Sketch of the Past" "22 Hyde Park Gate" and "Old Bloomsbury." These memoirs are an attempt at apprehending and recollecting an always elusive and mutable identity, a self that is continuously being re-shaped by the incessant dialogue between the past and the present, a dialogue which is crucial in Freud, James and Bergson.

In his chapter of *The Principles of Psychology* devoted to the perception of time, James asserts that "the knowledge of some other part of the stream, past or future, near or remote, is always mixed in with our knowledge of the present thing" (396-397). Without this simultaneous perception of past, present and future, consciousness could not be considered a stream: "These lingerings of old objects, these incomings of new, are the germs of memory and expectation, the retrospective and the prospective sense of time. They give that continuity to consciousness without which it could not be called a stream" (397).

Therefore when we try to capture the *present* moment of time – James refers to that process as "intuition" –, what we actually perceive is "the *specious* present" (398)[12], a non-static "prolonged present" – borrowing Stein's expresssion in *Composition as Explanation* – that ceaselessly fades into

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[10] This metaphor of thought – or inner self – as a fish appears once and again in Woolf's writings: "as if a fin rose in the wastes of silence; and then the fin, the thought, sinks back into the depths" (*Waves*, 194); her thought-fish "darted and sank, and flashed hither and thither" (*Room*, 7); "our self, who fish-like inhabits deep seas and plies among obscurities threading her way between the boles of giant weeds" (*Dalloway*, 172); "I see myself as a fish in a stream; deflected; held in place; but cannot describe the stream" (*Moments*, 93); "a world which one could slice with one's thoughts as a fish slices the water with his fin" (*Stories*, 47).

[11] As Moi says, for psychoanalysis the mind is "a multiplicity of structures that intersect to produce that unstable constellation the liberal humanists call the 'self'" (10). The label of "unstable constellation" would also apply to Woolf's, James's and Bergson's vision of the mind.

[12] He borrows this notion from Mr. E. R. Clay.

past and future. James asserts that "the unit of composition of our perception of time is a *duration*" (399) and that "awareness of *change* is thus the condition on which our perception of time's flow depends" (406). We see how Bergson and James articulate some of their ideas using exactly the same labels, namely those of "duration", "flow" and "intuition". As regards the melting relation between past and present, Bergson defends in *Creative Evolution* that "in reality, the past is preserved by itself; automatically. In its entirety, probably, it follows us at every instant; all that we have felt, thought and willed is there, leaning over the present which is about to join it" (4).

And though Freud's approach to the mind differed a lot from James's and Bergson's, he was the thinker who actually generalized the view that we never escape from our past and that most psychological problems go back to our childhood. In fact in her paper "22 Hyde Park Gate", delivered to the Freudian-inspired Memoir Club, Woolf tried to come to terms with her past life. However her compulsion to go inward and downward – as she says in her story "The Mark on the Wall", "I want to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard separate facts" (*Stories*, 43) – is even stronger in her autobiography "A Sketch of the Past," where she says that "the past only comes back when the present runs so smoothly that it is like the sliding surface of a deep river. Then one sees through the surface to the depths" (*Moments*, 114). In this example, and in the following one, we see how Woolf beautifully expresses the continuity between present and past through the metaphor of the flowing water: "I write this partly in order to recover my sense of the present by getting the past to shadow this broken surface. Let me then, like a child advancing with bare feet into a cold river, descend again into that stream" (*Moments*, 115).

This simultaneous co-presence of past and present is central to understand Woolf's method and articulation of her novels. Peach argues that *To the Lighthouse* is structured upon the way in which the past interrupts and disrupts the present, and upon the way in which the present interrupts the past: "*To the Lighthouse* exemplifies ideas about different levels of time co-existing and the way in which the past and the present relate to each other" (135). Hillis Miller defends a similar approach to *Mrs. Dalloway*, though in this case that continuity between past and present is very clearly situated within the characters's minds: "The present, for them, is the perpetual repetition of the past" (184)[13].

And memory is the fundamental tool with which the merging between past and present may occur: "Storytelling, for Woolf," – Hillis Miller says – "is the repetition of the past in memory" (176). Only in memory the self becomes a flowing river of consciousness. Needless to say, memory as a mode of introspection became central in psychoanalysis, but Bergson goes even further, as he defends that "*the formation of memory is never posterior to the formation of perception; it is contemporaneous with it*" (*Mind-Energy*, 128). In Joyce's and Woolf's novels, boundaries between past, present and future blur, and Bergson's *mémoire involontaire*, non-utilitarian and non-intellectualized, becomes the aesthetic material of their art.

In *A Pluralistic Universe*, James devotes a chapter to "Bergson and his Critique of Intellectualism" and explains how Bergson's philosophy "was that had led me personally to renounce the intellectualist

[13] It is worth mentioning that throughout the exposition of his arguments, Miller makes extensive use of the same vocabulary and rhetorical structures whose recurrence we are rescuing out of Freud's, Bergson's, James's and Woolf's texts. Pay attention to his use of the words "continuity", "flow", "fluid" or "dissolution", and the underlying assumption of the movement between the two levels of surface and depth: "her dissolution of the usual boundaries between mind and world" (176); "if one descends deeply enough into any individual mind" (181); "the same images of unity, reconciliation, of communion well up spontaneously from the deep levels of the minds of all the major characters" (181); "deep below the surface, in some dark and remote cave of the spirit, each person's mind connects with all the other minds" (182); "ease with which images from their pasts rise within them to overwhelm them with a sense of immediate presence. [...] The remarkably immediate access the characters have to their pasts is one such continuity. [...] In another sense, the weight of all the past moments presses just beneath the surface of the present, ready in an instant to flow into consciousness [...] So fluid are the boundaries between past and present" (184).

method and the current notion that logic is an adequate measure of what can or cannot be" (225). The problem with concepts is that they "negate the inwardness of reality altogether" (246), since "our concepts are all discontinuous and fixed" (253), whereas "the essence of life is its continuously changing character" (253). James adopts Bergson's solution: "Dive back into the flux itself, then, Bergson tells us" (252).

Bergson categorically asserts in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* that materialism, rationalism and positivism only provide us with relative knowledge, and proposes instead that, if we want to attain absolute knowledge, reality must be seized from within, not by means of analysis, concepts or intellect, but by an intuitive identification with it: "I am in sympathy with those states, and [...] I insert myself in them by an effort of imagination" (2). As we have seen with James, the problem is that analysis operates on the immobile, whereas intution places itself in mobility, which is the very essence of life.

Woolf's rejection of intellectualism in favour of intuition is the very structuring principle of her narratives, and is embodied in the opposition between characters such as Charles Tansley, Mr. Ramsay, Dr. Holmes, William Bradshaw and Neville, with an analytical and cold spirit, and who only trust concepts, order and fact, and characters such as Septimus Warren Smith, Mrs. Ramsay, Lily Briscoe, Bernard, Orlando, Jacob or Mrs. Swithin, who, given their intense inner life, aesthetic sensibility and creative imagination, are capable of Bergson's *l'expérience intégrale*.

An opposition between an integrating, intuitive and flowing mode of thinking, which would be specifically female, and the abrupt, logical and dominant male mode of thinking, has been pointed out by much feminist criticism as one of the axes of Woolf's thinking. Water would be then the element intrinsically connected with female consciousness, as Poole defends: "The quality of the female mind is liquid. Water is the symbol which indicates, all though the pages of Virginia's novels, that she is thinking as a woman" (265). And in her essay "Professions for Women", she certainly depicts female imagination as a descent into the depths of a lake:

> The image that comes to my mind when I think of this girl is the image is the image of a fisherman lying sunk in dreams on the verge of a deep lake with a rod held our over the water. She was letting her imagination sweep unchecked round every rock and cranny of the world that lies submerged in the depths of our unconscious being. [...] The line raced through the girl's fingers. Her imagination had rushed away. It had sough the pools, the depths, the dark places where the largest fish slumber (*Moth*, 152).

Many feminist studies, such as Gilbert and Gubar's and Horner and Zlosnik's, have put the fluid element in relation with its opposite one, and have found in women's writing a constant tension between spatial images of enclosure and of escape, and a preoccupation with boundaries, fixity and fluidity. That would be explained as a response to real female imprisonment and marginal position with respect to the dominant discourse and culture, and hence Woolf's fluid imagery and syntax could be considered as devices employed for the rejection of the boundedness of woman's life within society and culture. Thus, many critics have interpreted the end of *The Voyage Out* – when after becoming engaged and hence having properly entered the patriarchal world, Rachel Vinrace falls ill and in her delirium she kind of retreats into the medium of water – as a rejection of social and patriarchal oppression and a return to the foetal state and the matrix of being: "She fell into a deep pool of sticky water [...] She saw nothing and heard nothing but [...] the sound of the sea rolling over her head. [...] she was [...] curled up at the bottom of the sea" (322).

The same argument would explain the spatial images of constraint with which Rachel dreams after she has been unpredictably kissed by Richard Dalloway, who has thus asserted his physical and sexual power: "She dreamt that she was walking down a long tunnel, which grew so narrow by degrees that she could touch the damp bricks on either side. At length the tunnel opened and became a vault; she found herself trapped in it" (68).

Nonetheless it is open to discussion that Woolf actually perceived the differences between the male and the female mode of thinking in such a clear-cut manner and that she saw water and fluidity

as intrinsically associated with women. Her notion of androgyny may be clarifying in this sense. Whereas some critics have seen it as a kind of wishful thinking (Poole) or even as "an escape from the confrontation with femaleness of maleness" (Showalter, 289), I would rather agree with Moi's position that androgyny is a result of Woolf's "sceptical attitude to the male-humanist concept of an essential human identity" (9). Following Derridean and Kristevan theory, Moi allies Woolf's 'deconstructive' form of writing with her wish to deconstruct the opposition between masculinity and femininity. Androgyny then "is not, as Showalter argues, a flight from gender identities, but a recognition of their falsifying metaphysical nature" (13). From a very similar theoretical perspective, Jacobus also analyses *A Room of One's Own* in terms of Woolf's subversive writing of plurality and rejection of boundaries, as opposed to the dominating phallic "I", representative of the Law. And what is most interesting is that Jacobus seems to somehow vinculate that quality in Woolf with a semantic camp of fluidity. Hence, Woolf's practice is basically one of dissolution: "Virginia Woolf dissolves 'truth' (the withheld 'nugget of truth') into 'the lies what flow from my pen' [...] hard fact dissolves into fluid fiction [...] the subject ('I') is dissolved into writing" (19).

Many conclusions may be drawn from this analysis of Woolf's metaphorical recreation of the human mind around the notion of fluidity, and this study may be further developed along several different paths. The rhetorical notions we have analyzed in Woolf lead us to the flowing language and images of unboundedness that French feminism proposed as typical of feminine textuality, and to the much debated question of whether Woolf was trying to create a specifically feminine language and identity. Or we could go even further and link the use of water as a structuring image with Jung's or Bachelard's conception of water as a universal archetype or symbol. Other lines of influence are open, for example Bloom's interpretation that "Woolf's sensibility essentially is Paterian" (*Views*, 2), and that it is due to this central influence that she presents "the self as the center of a flux of sensations" (2). In any case and leaving aside ultimate reasons and explanations of influence, which are actually quite obscure, I hope to have shown how Woolf, Freud, Bergson and James developed some of their ideas on the mind along very similar rhetorical and metaphorical patterns.

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Philoctetes and the schizoid personality

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In thinking about the myths of ancient Greece, Freud made us very conscious of their emblematic function as internal emotional struggles. In the ancient tales, struggles ensued between men, nations, and gods as all pursued such things as power and honor and found themselves committing such acts as patricide, fratricide, incest, etc. The mysteries of human behavior were explained through belief in gods who were feared because they possessed all human frailties as well as the power of immortality. The gods indulged their passions seemingly without consequences while human beings lived in perpetual fear of consequences for their own actions or inactions. The only hope of humans was to become favored by the gods through acts of homage to them. The gods could not be counted on for anything better than the deeds of man except through the arbitrary use of their power exercised towards favorites. The morality of these people, then, was based on fear of the gods and their own passions. Freud turned to the myths of the Greeks to tap into knowledge of our most "primitive" selves, our unconscious desires and fears, as opposed to our higher, moral selves, and thus he came up with an unconscious in which aggressive and libidinal drives could destroy us if left to their own devices.

It has not been difficult for the western mind to assume that the Greek myths were projections of the imagination of the ancients. Such an idea suited medieval Christianity which saw these myths as pre-figurations, and it suits modern psychoanalytic thinking which sees them as representing universal emotional states. Their power becomes even greater in their capacity to help modern thinkers understand human emotions and also the way in which emotion establishes values and purpose. If ancient man worshipped gods who demonstrated the baser emotions of human beings out of fear of retribution, these same gods also offered him values to which to aspire. Think only of the positive value of the sun-god Apollo or of Athena, but then remember also that these gods could be ruthless as well to those who did not do as they wished or who made them jealous. The gods, then, these projections of the human imagination, possessed the full range of feelings – love, hate, generosity, selfishness, greed, vengeance, anger, rage, jealousy – but they did not tolerate difficulty with these feelings for long, they did not have to.

So how can these myths serve us a century after Freud? If we think about the myths as projections of internal objects, we may find some answers. In the first six months, the internal life of infants is already peopled with good and bad figures/objects with which it is in a constant state of shifting alliance. Play, dreams, fantasy, masturbation and other types of auto-erotism affect the internal figures/objects

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and alter the child's view of the external world. Infants establish connections to objects from birth and develop through the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions with a host of objects, good and bad, in their interior world. To survive, splitting occurs into "good" and "persecuting" segments with the feeding breast representative of the good that will become love, trust, gratitude, and hope while possible threat comes from all sides both internally and externally. Every pain, disappointment, or shock attacks the trust in the goodness and strength of the object. Such is the paranoid-schizoid position in which all strength and safety from persecution derives from the idealized object, the mother's breast, or later, the father. When all splitting and idealization between infant self and objects has taken place, a child moves to the depressive position, and tender concern for the object comes to supersede selfish concern. At the same time, when the infant becomes anxious and fearful both of the overwhelming need for the mother's breast and that it may be taken away, the child gets rid of the anxious feelings through projective identification, ridding the self of sources of anxiety by projecting them into an object. The infant will bite the breast by which it is overwhelmed or of which it feels envy. Internal objects developed in this oral stage of life are well represented as projections and through projective identification in the myths of the ancients.

Let us demonstrate through one myth. The myth of Philoctetes begins with Herakles. At the end of his life, after a period of unendurable pain and suffering, Herakles orchestrates his own death by asking Philoctetes to light the funeral pyre that will relieve and kill him. As a reward for doing this, Herakles gives Philoctetes his infallible bow, and through this inheritance, Philoctetes is reborn as the adopted son of this man/god, as the recipient of object love. But to get this special status, Philoctetes had to agree to kill the father, Herakles; he had to accept the terms of his new-found paternity through patricide and abandonment. He inherits power by destroying its source, but his internal object is split by this.

The story continues with the Greek leaders asking Philoctetes to join them as they set out for their war in Troy. When they stop off at a tiny island to sacrifice to the local deity, Philoctetes approaches the shrine first and is bitten in the foot by a snake. The infection becomes peculiarly virulent, and the groans of Philoctetes make it impossible to perform the sacrifice, which would be spoiled by ill-omened sounds; the bite begins to suppurate with so horrible a smell that his companions cannot bear to have him near them. They remove him to a neighboring island and sail away to Troy without him. Philoctetes remains there for ten years during which time the mysterious and painful wound never heals. In the meantime, the Greeks at Troy suffer the deaths of Achilles and Ajax and learn from a soothsayer that they can never win the war without the help of Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, who inherited his father's armor, and Philoctetes of the infallible bow. Eventually, both men return to Troy; Philoctetes is healed there by the son of the physician Aesclepius, and he kills Paris in single combat. Neoptolemus and Philoctetes become the heroes of the taking of Troy.

So how does the myth represent internal objects? Melanie Klein stresses the ways in which "ambivalence arises over the weaning crisis when the infant learns to bite and can react sadistically." In her view, love and hate block each other. The infant attacks and also feels identified with the object of his aggression, and so he feels guilt and involves himself in the fate, factual or fantasied, of the object. Hate of the object involves hate of oneself: one suffers with the object attacked because the object cannot be given up. The holder of the infallible bow feels powerful enough to approach the shrine first (a weaning process), but the snake bites him. Assuming the power of his forebear by approaching the shrine first, he rids himself of the all-powerful Herakles, but when he is bitten by the snake, the act of projective identification backfires. Instead of discharging anxious feelings on to the object, Philoctetes identifies with the object of his aggression and hates himself instead of Herakles. This breast remains all powerful, and he must deal with the split off persecuting objects. Abandoned and without care, he lives with no one near the smell from the suppurating sore.

Sophocles' play, "Philoctetes" takes place during one day after the wounded man has suffered his abandonment and suppurating sore for ten years. It is a day on which Odysseus and Neoptolemus arrive on his island to get Philoctetes to return to Troy with them. Edmund Wilson frames his reading of the play around the emotional effect of his abandonment on Philoctetes, and the emotion shown is

hate, hate caused by suffering and suffering that increases hate. To Wilson human sympathy in the play helps the wounded man give up his hate and assume his role as hero. But this reading does not account for the snake bite, the duration and suffering from the wound, nor the unwillingness of Philoctetes to leave when his empathic friend asks.

The action of the play involves the attempts of Neoptolemus to bring Philoctetes back to Troy and the changes that occur in him as he observes the sufferings of the bitter, wounded man. Early in the play, Odysseus urges Neoptolemus to use cunning to get Philoctetes to come with them by falsifying a shared rage at Odysseus whom Philoctetes hates and holds responsible for his abandonment. The suffering man agrees to go home and away from the war with Neoptolemus, but as they are about to depart, Philoctetes suffers another burst of infection and pain and cannot move. He gives his weapons into the care of Neoptolemus while enduring his ordeal and falls asleep at the end of the painful episode. Neoptolemus becomes reluctant to carry through on this plan of trickery. Odysseus appears, wants to take the bow and run, but Neoptolemus knows that the bow and arrows require Philcotetes in order to fulfill the prophecy. During the discussion between Odysseus and Neoptolemus, Philoctetes awakens, and the ploy to get him to Troy is exposed.

Neoptolemus comes to feel empathy for Philoctetes and shrinks from cheating him. Philoctetes still refuses to go to Troy, but he is not unresponsive to the kindness of Neoptolemus who treats him as another man whose courage and pride he admires. While confessing his own part in the treachery, Neoptolemus still tries to urge Philoctetes to go to Troy by pointing out that the snake that bit him was an agent of the gods, and that the son of Asclepius at Troy will cure the injured man. Philoctetes remains adamant and insists that Neoptolemus take him home as promised before the trickery was exposed. In the end Herakles appears from Mount Olympus and tells Philoctetes that despite his having been tricked, he should go to Troy with Neoptolemus. He and the son of Achilles shall stand like lions and gloriously carry the day. Wilson says that the *deus ex machina* that becomes the deciding factor in making Philoctetes agree to go off to war is a figure for the kindness and friendship from Neoptolemus. The injured man has found someone who recognizes the wrong that has been done to him and champions his cause in defiance of all the Greek forces. Philoctetes then becomes the true heir of Herakles who himself had performed so many generous deeds, and a long hatred is dissolved.

But this plan does not work until Herakles appears at the end and tells his adopted son to go. The wound would not have been healed without the return of the father, the now introjected good object. Philoctetetes had an attack of physical suffering as he was about to leave with Neoptolemus, but this did not happen after Herakles appeared. Now he was ready to rejoin mankind. Under the care of Neoptolemus' growing empathy, Philoctetes did not yield but continued to be sullen, but with the return of the father to reinforce the suggestions of Neoptolemus, the younger man assumed an effective role as transitional object. Philoctetes now internalized Herakles sufficiently as a good object to assume his role as a man in community.

The bitter anger over his abandonment and the pain and stink from the wound have left Philoctetes weakened but alive. The wound follows a pattern whereby the infection gathers into an abscess which swells unendurably until it bursts. After it bursts, Philoctetes feels better for a while until the pattern renews and all of the infection in his bloodstream moves to one site of unbearable pain again. Psychic pain has a more elegant surface than this abscess, but this wound, this abscess, this ulcer, this cancer is a projection of an internal, a psychic wound in which an abandoned, angry, bitter man approaches a religious shrine before others, perhaps out of arrogance and envy, and now feels only helplessness, need, dependency, and longing. This longing for Herakles, the father, is relentless because it is accompanied by anxiety, the anxiety that comes from object hunger that cannot be satisfied. Clinically, one of the most basic responses to object hunger that cannot be satisfied is withdrawal into anger, bitterness, and isolation. Philoctetes does not withdraw initially voluntarily, but neither does he die from the wound or by his own hand. He lives with his suppurating sore, his anger, his bitterness, and his hatred until goodness and his father appear.

So Philoctetes suffers from object hunger, a schizoid condition that arises out of infantile fear and keeps one in a "dangerous state of anxiety." (Guntrip) Such infantile fear, or ego weakness, makes

for a flight from life expressed through being cut off or not one with people. This schizoid condition defends against the anxiety resulting from the experience of bad objects and the fear that the libidinal goal of finding gratification from objects will be frustrated. Yet we are constitutionally incapable of living in isolated units because we are object seeking creatures, and our experience with good objects does not have to be retained; these make us feel secure. We retain our experience of objects only when that experience is bad. Our inner psychic world is set up "duplicating an original frustrating situation. It is an unhappy world in which one is tied to bad objects and always feels frustrated, hungry, angry, guilty, profoundly anxious with the constant temptation to seek transient inner relief by projecting our anxiety back into the external world." (Fairbairn) When you want love from a person who will not give it, the person becomes a bad object to you, and you react by becoming enraged at the frustration and want to make an aggressive attack on the object and thereby force it to become good and stop frustrating you. Here is the problem of hate or love made angry. Sometimes, instead of getting angry, the person may simply go on getting more and more hungry, and full of a sense of painful craving that includes a longing to get total and complete possession of the love object in order not to be left to starve. "Love made hungry is the schizoid problem," and with that, the terrible fear is roused that one's love has become so devouring and incorporative that love itself has become destructive. The depressive is always goaded to anger and the schizoid always tantalized, made hungry, and driven to withdrawal. Fairbairn thought that the schizoid condition is more fundamental than the despressive. For Philoctetes, the snake bite did not satisfy his hunger; it prolonged it and isolated him. Only Herakles' attention could change that.

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Freud on «Repression» and on «the Unconscious»

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I do not think I shall surprise anyone, here in any case, if I say that Freud's major concept is the concept of «Unconscious», *das Unbewusste*. The very word, indeed, summarizes what has been called Freud's invention, a discovery which heralded the entry of humanity into a completely new age, something like a scientific revolution in fact. We all know the expression: «an epistemological break.»

The word is to be found in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in the book on *Jokes* and in *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* among others, but it was only in 1915 that Freud devoted a long essay to the concept: fifty pages in all if to it we add the shorter paper on «Repression», which can well be considered as an introduction to the main topic and in fact shortly preceded it in time. «Repression» was completed between the end of March and the beginning of April 1915, and «The Unconscious» was written in April of the same year, «a new definition of the Unconscious» Freud wrote to Lou Andreas-Salomé in his letter of the 1st of April. Both papers were published in 1915.

Today, in 2005, ninety years after that publication, the question for us is to find out whether this text still stands scrutiny and to what an extent it still constitutes a sound basis for our research.

And of course, in forming our appreciation – call it scientific judgment if you like – we shall not be able to set aside what we have learnt from Freud himself. Indeed, my claim is that Freud's work, because it rests on a few entirely new principles and concepts – which represented a decisive departure from what had preceded it –, can itself be read and assessed to the yardstick of these very principles. Such an enterprise is not new and we all know how a «return to Freud» was advocated some fifty years ago; what I simply propose is that we continue in the same line of thought. Any reading – this also is well-known – is an interpretation, but I shall do my best to remain as freudian as can be, while conducting this freudian interpretation of Freud's papers.

For over fifty years, the «inventor» of psychoanalysis, in an attempt to give a sound theoretical explanation of the facts clinical experience was confronting him with, revised his early propositions, leaving us finally a model of the human psyche he had unrelentingly improved.[1] And yet, the original «discovery», the founding principles of psychoanalysis – which, in 1915, became Freud's «Metapsychology» – remained. And we mustn't think this is too paradoxical: the hypothesis that most of our mental life is unconscious, an intuition on which the whole psychoanalytical «building» now rests, is simply the starting point of an inquiry which, precisely because of the fundamental unacceptability of

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[1] And of course the enterprise also represented his own analysis.

this assumption, was to be, if not endless, at least extremely long and difficult. Like an analysis, in fact. What the twenty four volumes of *The Standard Edition* clearly show is that all the modifications Freud introduced throughout the years can be considered as logical consequences of his original discovery. One does not always think so and one sometimes uses «one Freud» not to hear what «another Freud» has to say: thus is the radicality of psychoanalysis sometimes overshadowed. For me, there is no discrepancy between the first topology – the most radical one, I think – and the second; simply, it takes some epistemological effort to articulate them. In the same fashion, Freud's other fundamental discovery, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, is quite in keeping with the concepts of psychoanalysis which had been established before 1920; in fact, it helps to solve some of the problems which had appeared with these early concepts, repetition and the «death-wish» namely.

I

«The Unconscious», then and, before this, «Repression», for the two topics constitute a single object. See how Freud concluded his article on «repression»:

> The short series of comparisons presented here may easily convince us that more comprehensive investigations are necessary before we can hope to understand thoroughly the processes connected with repression and the formation of neurotic symptoms. (*The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, London: Hogarth Press, vol. XIV, 157)

The long paper «The Unconscious», which directly followed «Repression», constitutes one of these «comprehensive investigations».

At the origin of the reflexion on repression we find a question, a question directly dictated by Freud's clinical observations: «One of the vicissitudes an instinctual impulse [*Triebregung*] may undergo is to meet» with forces[2] which make it «inoperative,» why is it so? Why does the impulse pass «into a state of repression»? Breaking such new ground as he does, it is only normal that Freud should come across great difficulties. His first move, however, is impeccable:

> It seems to us now that in view of the very great extent to which repression and what is unconscious are correlated, we must defer probing more deeply into the nature of repression until we have learnt more about the structure of the succession of psychical agencies and about the differenciation between what is unconscious and conscious. (*S.E.*, XIV, 148)

And straight away afterwards, he introduces the notion of «primal repression» [*Urverdrängung*]. For us, who have learnt so much from him – who have learnt «everything» in fact –, the case is closed and brilliantly so. Beyond this intuition of the psychoanalytical «bar,» the intuition of what, in a word, founded the revolutionary concept of *Unconscious*, there is nothing more to say. It corresponds to the intuition – conforted everyday by clinical observation – that there exists a «domain» where consciousness is of no avail. But this was 1915, fifteen years only after *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and whatever the confirmations received from clinical practise, psychoanalysis as theory had yet to be securely established. It was indeed the discovery of a completely new dimension in man and woman, but because this dimension was so unacceptable, it took decades to be accepted. What I am saying here, in fact, is simply that the concept of «unconscious,» fundamentally, in its essence, cannot be consciously accepted and is in any case rather difficult to fathom. For Freud also such a research into our mental activity presented a difficultlty, and as we read his paper on repression we can observe his own efforts to control, to harness even, what promptings came to him from consciousness.

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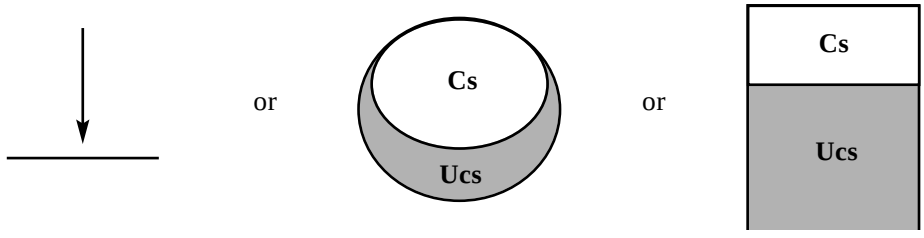
[2] This is a shortened version of Freud's question; also, I have not translated *Widerstande* (resistances) because it might have led us astray; the general term «forces» seems more adequate for the purpose of my demonstration.

Thus, no sooner has he spoken of «primal repression» – and this is more than an adumbration of the «bar» – than he mentions «repression proper» (calling it however «the second phase of repression») of which, of course, everyday life offers obvious evidence. We see Freud proceeding with the prudence of the scientist, carefully weighing the pros and cons, examining whatever objection he himself can think of, but firm in the end in the defence of the new conceptual system he is constructing. Following his mention of repression proper – which came, in a way, as a semi objection to the more radical concept of primal repression – here is his final argument:

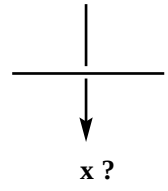
> Repression proper, therefore, is actually an after-pressure [*Nachdrängen*]. Moreover, it is a mistake to emphasize only the repulsion which operates from the direction of the conscious upon what is to be repressed; quite as important is the attraction exercised by what was primarily repressed upon everything with which it can establish a connection. Probably the tendency to repression would fail in its purpose if these forces did not co-operate, if there were not something previously repressed ready to assimilate that which is rejected from consciousness. (*S.E.*, XIV, 148)

And indeed, if one does not want to assimilate this «after-expulsion» to a mental movement which would be conscious, one has to resort to the idea of «something previlously repressed,» a «force» in fact whose function it is to maintain the repressed repressed. Here is how this can be illustrated:

a) Repression as rejection



b) A withdrawal. Attraction?



Freud's presentation does not proceed without hesitations, there are some twists and turns in his argumentation, but psychoanalytical theory as we know it today is on the making all the same whatever the «temptations» to change course and side with the forces of consciousness. The «struggle,» as Freud himself writes, is «never ending» (*S.E.*, XIV, 158), but the demonstration which will lead us from a *dynamic* conception to a more generally *structural* one is well on the way, as the metaphor of the «undesirable agent» clearly shows:

> The general vicissitude which overtakes the *idea* […] that represents the instinct can hardly be anything else than that it should vanish from the conscious, or that it should be held back from consciousness if it was about to become conscious. The difference is not important; it amounts to much the same thing as the difference between my ordering an undesirable guest

> out of my dressing-room (or out of my front hall), and my refusing, after recognizing him, to let him cross my threshold at all. (*S.E.*, XIV, 153)

Interestingly, the passage is followed by a footnote which is even more explicit:

> This simile, which is thus applicable to the process of repression, may also be extended to a characteristic of it which has been mentioned earlier: I have merely to add that I must set a permanent guard over the door which I have forbidden this guest to enter, since he would othewise burst it open.

What better metaphor of the «bar» than this «sentinel» which will have to keep constant guard over the door?

II

The writing of «Repression» was over in the first days of April, and «The Unconscious», written in the same month, followed close.

The first two paragraphs of this second text constitute a short preamble which sums up what has been presented in «Repression»: what is unconscious has not been abrogated or annihilated but simply *withheld*; it cannot be «apprehended by the common mind,» but it produces «effects,» and a «translation» of these manifestations is possible. Here, in a few sentences, we have a clear presentation of the whole of Freud's theory, «resistances» included. One sentence, however, deserves a commentary:

> […] let us state at the very outset that the repressed does not cover everything that is unconscious. The unconscious has the wider compass: the repressed is a part of the unconscious. (*S.E.*, XIV, 166)

I read this as a first step toward the recognition that the word «unconscious» implies much more than what simple observation has revealed to Freud the clinician. As a concept indeed, the unconscious will gradually come to represent what characterizes men and women in the whole of their symbolical and linguistic dimension.

1. *«Justification for the Conception of the Unconscious»*

The very title of this first part already describes the problem. How can the hypothesis about the existence of an unconscious activity in humans be at all verified? Freud's preoccupation is properly epistemological and can be given a very plain formulation: «If it is unconscious, how can we ever know about it?»

And yet, «we possess numerous *proofs* of its existence» (*S.E.*, XIV, 166); and also, «we must adopt the position that to require that whatever goes on in the mind must also be known to consciousness is to make an untenable claim.» This insistence on the unpracticability of a «conventional identification of the mental with the conscious» justifies Freud's recourse to the notion of «latency» and to the observation that there are «latent states of mental life.» (*S.E.*, XIV, 168) Some of the passages in these first pages of the paper could even be considered as answers *avant la lettre* to neurobiology.[3]

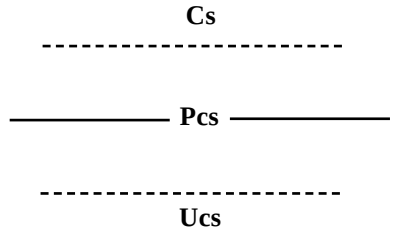
Then, from latency we proceed to the concept of *splitting*: the existence of mental processes whose elaboration remains hidden to us – processes which often strike us, besides, by their incohe-

[3] See: «We then encounter the objection that these latent recollections can no longer be described as mental processes, but that they correspond to residues of somatic processes from which something mental can once proceed.» (*S.E.*, XIV, 167)

rence – brings about this concept, and the last paragraph of this first part clearly announces the debate on the relationship between psychoanalysis and phenomenology (Kant is mentioned). In the same way as the individual subject is separated from the world out there, so the conscious subject – and I should write *Ich*, ego – is separated from himself or herself: an unconscious, split, subject. Lacan's real – one of the meanings of the word in any case – is not very far.

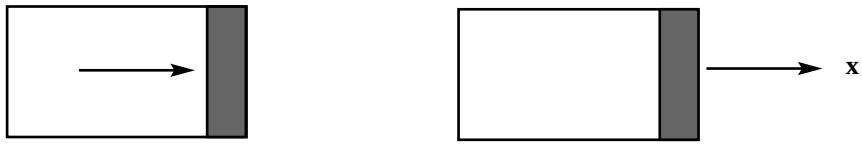
2. *«Various Meanings of the Term 'Unconscious'; the Topographical Point of View»*

This second section represents an attempt at drawing an abstract[4] topography of our mental states, and the task is at first so difficult that there will be some hesitation in the presentation of the results of the enquiry. In fact, none of the two questions posed in this chapter – about 2 or 3 systems and about the registration of mental acts – receive a clear answer. As for the 2 (or 3) systems, Freud explains he is «for the moment» «not in a position to decide between the two possibilities» he has been discussing. The mental topography he has conceived distinguishes two distinct systems – or three, he is not sure –: *Cs.*, *Ucs.* (and Preconscious which he does not quite know where to place). And the topography leads to a question about the «registration» in the mind of what was in the system *Ucs.* and has been transposed into the system *Cs.* (or *Pcs.*). The word is «*Fixierung*», fixation, but is followed by «*Niederschrift*,» inscription, and one understands that what is being discussed here is memory and acts of memory.[5] No definite answer is reached yet, but in the end, though, and in spite of the ambiguity – 2 systems, 3 systems? – the demonstration does go on, for what remains certain, now, is that we can «sharply» «discriminate» (*S.E.*, XIV, 173) between two systems – whatever their labels. True, the *Pcs.* holds an awkward position,



but the idea of a «rigorous censorship» is firmly established: I call it the «bar.» As for the question about the fixation/inscription of mental acts, it will receive a solution in the following section.

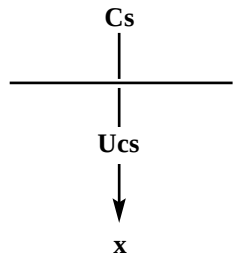
Here is what we have so far, then: the hypothesis of an «attraction,» and a «progression,» on the part of Freud, from rejection to attraction, which can be illustrated thus:



[4] Abstract because not founded on anatomy: «Our psychical topography has *for the present* nothing to do with anatomy; it has reference not to anatomical localities, but to regions in the mental apparatus, wherever they may be situated in the body.» (*S.E.*, XIV, 175) Lacan and his «*Je pense avec mes pieds*» once again is not very far.

[5] The first paragraph of this Section distinguishes very clearly processes «which are merely latent, temporarily unconscious, but which differ in no other respect from conscious ones» from the processes which really belong to what we have called unconscious space, «processes such as repressed ones, which if they were to become conscious would be bound to stand in the crudest contrast to the rest of the conscious processes.»

The idea of a «line,» or «border» is reinforced. The concept of primal repression is clearly founded.



3. *«Unconscious Emotions»*

What opposes *Cs.* and *Ucs.* is also at the heart of the third section, although not always with the clarity one might wish for. One statement, however, toward the end of this section, is explicit:

> Even within the limits of normal life we can recognize that a constant struggle for primacy over affectivity goes on between the two systems *Cs.* and *Ucs.*, that certain spheres of influence are marked off from one another […] (*S.E.*, XIV, 179)

Between the two systems there is indeed a «frontier» (the verb *grenzen* is used) and, again, we have no difficulty in recognizing our «bar». This aspect of the demonstration, however, does not seem to be the central purpose of this section. Here, indeed, Freud rather seems to have been impelled by a wish to present a complete and thorough examination of the problems related to the concept of unconscious, and this would naturally have led him to take «affects» into consideration. Today, however, this may not appear as central to the discussion he has been conducting so far. But because it deals with the nature of affects, the information that can be gained from this section is far from uninteresting and may help us to clarify some of the difficult concepts and notions Freud has been using. Thus, from the start, he disinguishes the *drive* and its *presentation* and I take this to be more important than it seems if we want to understand fully *Vorstellung* or *Repräsentanz*, for instance.

> An instinct can never become an object of consciousness – only the idea that represents the instinct can. (*S.E.*, XIV, 177)

In the next line he even insists on this distinction – as he will do throughout this section –:

> Even in the unconscious, moreover, an instinct cannot be represented othewise than by an idea.

I take this to be a clear indication that the «drive» in Freud's mind is a force, a vector, which needs some sort of form, a content, in order to express itself. See how, for a third time, he insists on this:

> When we nevertheless speak of an unconscious instinctual impulse or of a repressed instinctual impulse, the looseness of phraseology is a harmless one. We can only mean an instinctual impulse the ideational representative [*Vorstellungrepräsentanz*] of which is unconscious, for nothing else comes into consideration. (id.)

For «it may happen that an affective or an emotional impulse is perceived, but misconstrued.» (*S.E.*, XIV, 178) Indeed, in order to express itself, the drive has to become connected with «another idea» [*mit einer anderen Vorstellung*]. Already, we have here the structure of the metaphor, and this idea of substitution will recur several times in these pages.

The whole section is complex, repetitive and somewhat awkward, but the discussion, as I have tried to point out, does lead to a distinction we should find very helpful: ideas (representations) are

cathexes of memory traces, «whilst affects and emotions correspond to processes of discharge» (*S.E.*, XIV, 178); I read this as an indication that unconscious desire should not be confused with instinct, which perhaps is obvious today. (See Lacan's helpful distinction between *besoin* and *désir*.)

The section ends with a consideration on anxiety here labelled «the susbtitute for all repressed affects,» and this is obviously a question which would deserve a long essay in itself. What matters to us here, in this discussion of the concept of unconscious, is the conclusion that affects are effects, effects consciously experienced, and that they should be considered as distinct from what is subjected to repression.

4. *«Topography and Dynamics of Repression»*

This fourth section is really the heart of Freud's paper. After the discussion on affects, the demonstration resumes its original course, the unconscious again occupies the centre of the debate. The first paragraph formulates a question I find essential and that we have already met: the concept of repression has brought about the idea of a border, and Freud is naturally led to ask in which «system» the withdrawal takes place. This is an interrogation we can formulate in plain language, at the cost of oversimplification: where does what is repressed go?

> […] repression is essentially a process affecting ideas on the border between the systems *Ucs.* and *Pcs.* (*Cs.*) [*die Verdrangung im wesentlichen ein Vorgang ist, der sich an Vorstellungen an der Grenze der Systeme Ubw und Vbw (Bw) vollzieht*] […] It must be a matter of *withdrawal*; but the question is, in which system does the withdrawal take place and to which system does the cathexis that is withdrawn belong? (*S.E.*, XI, 180)

On which side indeed? Before we can try to formulate an answer, however, we must question the way the problem, at the time, was presented. For the formulation proceeds from a conception we can no longer accept, precisely because of what we have learnt from Freud himself. I have already alluded to this when I opposed «attraction» to «rejection.» To speak of a «withdrawal» [*Entziehung*] implies that there was, at first, «something» there which is no longer perceptible, something in a word which has been withdrawn, rejected, pushed beyond the line, beyond the «border,» and if this does not quite contradict the idea of a primal repression, it is certainly not easy to explain how both mechanisms can exist side by side. Freud is not without sensing that there might be a problem at this point and his next paragraph resorts to the notion of preconscious (this «area» between *Cs.* and *Pcs.* I find ambiguous and ill-defined as will be shown):

> Here repression can only consist in the withdrawing from the idea the (pre)conscious cathexis which belongs to the system *Pcs.* (*S.E.*, XIV, 180)

Does this amend the early version? We see the «repressed idea» gradually losing its «place» in the system conscious and getting nearer and nearer what we can call an unconscious «space.» In this paragraph, as in the following ones, every word counts. What is now described by Freud as active clearly belongs to the domain of the unconscious: «The repressed idea remains capable of action in the *Ucs.*, and must therefore have retained its cathexis.» This conception of a presentation (idea, *Vorstellung*) receiving cathexis from the *Ucs.* or retaining its «unconscious cathexis» (180) is central to the discussion here.

We still have the hypothesis of a withdrawal, but it all takes place in an «area» removed, somewhat removed I take it, from what is conscious. At this stage of the demonstration, the preconscious more and more appears as an antechamber to the unconscious rather than as an independent space.

In the whole discussion, in fact, the idea of a withdrawal does seem to stand in the way of Freud's reasoning. He retains the idea, but not without trying to render it more acceptable. What he is finding, or is about to find, is that cathexis, *Besetzung* (the fact of occupying or of being occupied, as in the case of a city or a place or a space), cannot be thought without the help of (and perhaps only comes

from) an active unconscious area. We can really speak at this point of a workingthrough on the part of the author of the concept of unconscious desire.

> Thus there is a withdrawal of the preconscious, retention of the unconscious cathexis, or replacement of a preconscious cathexis by an unconscious one. (*S.E.*, XIV, 181)

Obviously, we are approaching a point where it will be very difficult not to grant the unconscious the major role in the whole process. More and more, now, cathexis, *Besetzung*, is seen as taking place in unconscious «space» and it logically follows that the notion of withdrawal comes, at first sight, if not to be criticized or abandoned, at least to be seriously questioned. And yet, on second thoughts, I must correct my previous statement which considered the idea of a «withdrawal» as a notion we could no longer accept. For the formulation, in fact, *Entziehung*, appears as a very appropriate representation of what happens when the subject – the unconscious subject, the infant, say –, forgets, «withdraws» from consciousness, the very inscriptions he is the result of. For the time being, Freud only speaks of cathected and repressed «ideas» [*Vorstellungen*], ideas which try «to penetrate into the system *Pcs.*» (*S.E.*, XIV, 180), *presentations*, in other words, which try to cross the «border» between what is unconscious and what is conscious, but the seat, the place where what is unconscious lies or is produced is clearly the Unconscious; more important, perhaps, we do seem to have here an intuiton worth developing. A reversal of the first diagram has occurred and it is now obvious that the term «withdrawal» must be given another interpretation if we want it to be an adequate description of what is occurring in the «making» of a subject. This is probably why Freud, as we saw, resorted to «primal repression» at the end of what I take to be an important paragraph. Gradually and not without pain, the idea of a «split» in us, the notion of an impassable «bar» between *Cs.* and *Ucs.*, is being constructed: what was never conscious and already in a state of withdrawal cannot be withdrawn; today, however, we must add that if it was never conscious this was because very early in life it had been «forgotten,» in other words «withdrawn.» But of course «it» does manifest itself, and this is why the idea of renewed attempts, of repetition, is then to be found in the said paragraph.

Step by step, it seems, the nature of what the sign «Unconscious» expresses (the signified of the signifier /unkon'shus /) acquires more specific characteristics. No wonder, then, that the next paragraph suggests that we look for «another process which maintains the repression,» another process which «we can only find in the assumption of an anti-cathexis [*Gegenbesetzung*]» (*S.E.*, XIV, 181). And this time, it is not a question of «rejecting» what is not desirable for – or in – the system *Cs.*, but of the system *Pcs.* «protecting itself from the pressure upon it of the unconscious idea» (*S.E.*, XIV, 181) or, in the words of the 1925 translation, of guarding the system *Pcs.* «against the intrusion of the unconscious idea.» Whether the notion of a preconscious is needed or even useful is a point which shall be discussed later, but what is certain, let me insist on this, is that the image of something that should be expelled has been replaced by the image of something that should be prevented from coming in; the words used by Freud are explicit and leave little doubt: *schützen* (to protect) and *Andrang* (affluence, press). No wonder, then, that anticathexis should be followed – and in a way explained – by the notion of primal repression which we have already met.

> The anticathexis is the sole mechanism of primal repression. (*S.E.*, XIV, 181)

Thus is the concept of *Ucs.* gradually constructed with more radicality; and the insistence with which I use the adverb «gradually» is simply a way of pointing out that time was an essential factor in the process, a truly psychoanalytical process indeed.[6]

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[6] See how Freud modifies his previous positions one by one, as for instance in: «… in the case of repression proper ('after-pressure') there is in addition withdrawal of the *Pcs.* cathexis. It is very possible that it is precisely the cathexis which is withdrawn from the idea that is used for anticathexis.» (*S.E.*, XIV, 181)

All things which incite us now to consider this new idea of «anticathexis» with more attention. For at this point an analysis of Freud's discourse in the two papers we are examining seems possible; it will show us what the progression of his reasoning must have been.

Starting from clinical observation and from his study of the dreaming process Freud became convinced that humans demonstrate a propensity to forget. This led him to the conception of *repression*. The discovery of this particular mental act, however, was only Freud's first step, a preliminary stage in fact. For, as we have seen, he did not stop at this observation and went on to explain how he thought the mental «machinery» of repression worked, reaching the conclusion that there were 2 (or 3!) very distinct systems, and thus constructing his well-known model. In the event, however, going, as it were, deeper and deeper into the mysteries of our mental life, he devised – had to devise? – the new concept of «primal repression». Already, this was a good image of our «bar,» for indeed we do not simply reject what is unpleasant and unacceptable but also «protect» ourselves from what we think is an undesirable intrusion. That it does not quite work this way, today we know, and «protect,» of course, is not the word we need, quite on the contrary in fact, as I have just tried to point out. Indeed, why on earth would I have to protect myself against what I (unconsciously) desire? Part of the answer to this difficult and paradoxical question is to be found in Freud's next paragraph, and it is particularly explicit: wishing to amend the idea of a «withdrawal,» he proceeds to clarify the notion of «primal repression.» In fact, as he says himself, he is looking for «another process which *maintains* the repression […] and […] ensures its being *established as well as continued.*» (*S.E.*, XIV, 181) (my emphasis). What is here sugggested is the idea of a force permanently at work, again very germane to what I call the bar. This other process, Freud called «anti-cathexis.» The idea of rejection is still useful to describe what happens to what we (desire to) forget, but the dynamics at work take on another aspect: what is *rejected* also appears as strongly *attracted* out of consciousness (I represented this mental movement as «x» in one of the diagrams above). What we have now is not simply a force which repels or rejects, but also another force which *maintains*. We have now two forces instead of one and we are approaching the conclusion that the force which attracts or maintains the repressed is the stronger one. Also, the idea of «something» against which we should guard ourselves now imposes itself. (I know that Freud wrote that it is «the system *Pcs.* [which] protects itself from the pressure upon it of the unconscious idea» (*S.E.*, XIV, 181), but we shall see further down that there was no need for such a notion.) The final model is now simple and clear (?): it is definitely made of 2 systems (or 3!).

Perhaps it is not surprising that Freud should, at this precise point, feel the need to introduce his newly coined term of *metapsychology*. I read this as the sign that he was looking at mental phenomena from another viewpoint than the one he had had before, a new direction where what was unconscious in us appeared prevalent.

For the problem, from then on, is going to be to find out where to place the subject and his/her unconscious desire in the model now solidly constructed.

And this naturally invites us to look into the concept of anticathexis [*Gegenbesetzung*] more thoroughly. The first idea that comes to mind, I have already pointed this out, is that the term simply represents our «bar,» an image which illustrates or expresses what we think separates Freud's two systems Cs/Ucs. Cathexis, then, may not appear as such a good translation of *Besetzung* which, as we know, is the word for military occupation (although there are other signifieds of the sign). It seems the act of occupying, of taking possession of, a town or a country, is not represented strongly enough by «cathexis»; the french *investissement* may seem a slightly better choice at first, since *to besiege* is one of its signifieds, and since the verb *investir* has retained, among others, the sense of vesting someone with power. But in the end it is the economic dimension of the term which prevails today and the idea of a change of hands in the conduct of affairs is lost.[7] (Bruno Bettelheim, in his *Freud and man's soul*,

[7] *Besatzung*, with an *a*: garrison, occupying troops.

N.Y.: Knopf, 1983, discussed the english translation of Freud's works at length). Fortunately, the modification introduced by Freud, his addition of *gegen* to *Besetzung*, provides us with a clue. Whatever the precise psychoanalytical meaning of *Besetzung*, the act of occupying, securing, conquering an object, or the fact that the subject's libido is overpowered by a drive or, still, the act of discharging libido in a given direction, it is the *gegen* that matters, almost as an answer to the interrogation which accompanies the discovery that there exists a movement of our psyche such as repression. It is quite simple really, simple, but impossible to accept, because what I am discovering is that I do not cathect (!), act, love, hate, and we can say symbolize, as I thought I did. *Gegen*, anti-, counter-, perfectly expresses what happens in the case of repression: the difficulty, or impossibility, to «know,» the difference, in short, between knowledge and truth. The question was: why did «the preconscious cathexis» (but we won't pay too much attention to «preconscious» here) recoil from… accepting or taking charge of an «unconscious love-impulse which demanded to be translated into the system Pcs.?»[8] But to this we do not get an answer, and, to our surprise, Freud suddenly seems to lose interest in his own interrogation and prefers at this point to concentrate on anxiety. (And of course there is no denying that anxiety does appear in the scene and is in some sort of relationship with repression; for Freud, though, it is a consequence of the rejection of the libidinal cathexis he has just observed, while it seems, today, that another hypothesis is possible.)

Left with our question, however, we are not altogether helpless and the terms of Freud's investigation are going to enable us to formulate an answer. Why the «withdrawal,» the recoil? *Gegen*, as we have seen, illustrates all this: not only what I wish is not what I think I wish – and I find «desire» now is a better word –, but the ultimate aim of unconscious desire is unattainable. There is no need to resort to the image of withdrawal or of a rejected idea, for the very simple reason that what I desire is already withdrawn, unreachable (and here I can also mention what «inscriptions» accompanied my birth and early childhood, inscriptions now forgotten). Interpreted thus, Freud's idea of a withdrawal perfectly translates our splitting and gives its full strong sense to the concept of Unconscious. *Gegen* is the bar. By looking more carefully at *Vorstellung* and at *Besetzung* we may perhaps understand this more clearly (and no doubt a discussion of *Repräsentanz* could also be helpful here). We must remember it all started with Freud's theory about the production of our dreams (and of our slips of the tongue and in the end of all that is symbolical in our behavior). Psychoanalysis is also a theory of representation: in short, we represent what we *unconsciously* desire. And here, as we saw, we come across the problem, or the paradox, which is at the heart of the psychoanalytical «discovery»: if it is true that we are inhabited by «desire,» how can it be that such desire is «repressed,» rejected, in a word, unconscious? The answer, quite simply – beyond the fact that what was «imprinted» in us a infants has been mostly forgotten –, is that desire is not what we think it is. This is where the concept of «bar» is most helpful, I think.

From the point of view of ontology, the bar represents the distance which separates the subject from the world-out-there. (The relationship with phenomenology is obvious.) A subject can never be an object. To put it another way, the perfect, ideal object we crave for cannot be reached: *the only thing we have at our disposal is a representation* of this «perfect» object, that is all, call it Truth, Unity or the One, Fusion, or even Communication. From this first, general, acceptation of our division

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[8] These words are taken from the 1925 translation. *The Standard Edition* (1957) has: «We must suppose that there was present in the *Ucs.* some love-impulse demanding to be transposed into the system *Pcs.*, but the cathexis directed from it from the latter system has drawn back from the impulse (as though in an attempt to flight) and the unconscious libidinal cathexis of the rejected idea has been discharged in the form of anxiety.»

Here is the original: «*Es ist anzunehmen, dass im Ubw eine Liebesregung vorhanden war, die nach der Umsetzung ins System Vbw verlangte; aber die von diesem System her ihr zugewendete Besetzung zog sich nach Art eines Fluchtversuches von ihr zurück und die unbewusste Libidosetzung der zurückgewiesenen Vorstellung wurde als Angst abgeführt.*»

between conscious and unconscious it follows that what we can call the ordinary objects we desire as particular subjects are also out of reach, the oedipal law being the best representation of this.

But because, as humans, we represent, because we produce representations of what we desire (and cannot reach), we have now at our disposal a theory which can help us to tell which subjects we are and how we can sort out what is destructive in our behavior. For it is not, of course, forbidden to ream!

In a way, Freud left the question about the «why» aside and preferred to deal with the «how.» But even though – in this paper at least – he somewhat eluded the question (a question he had so successfully formulated), his observations on the «how» are fully coherent with the fundamental structure he is establishing. For his observations helpfully describe the workings of our mental system. Depicting repression as an attempt at flight, he writes:

> The [*Pcs.*] cathexis that has taken flight attaches itself to a substitutive idea which, on the one hand, is connected by association with the rejected idea, and on the other hand, has escaped repression by reason of its remoteness from that idea. This substitutive idea – a «substitute by displacement» – permits the still uninhibitable development of anxiety to be rationalized. It now plays the part of an anticathexis for the system *Cs.* (*Pcs.*), by securing it against an emergence in the *Cs.* of the repressed idea. (*S.E.*, XIV, 182)

«Flight,» fugitive cathexis, «substitutive idea,» connection «with a rejected idea,» «remoteness,» all these terms vividly describe how our mental system functions. And although we can no longer admit that unconscious desire can remain repressed *because* it manifests itself, it is not too difficult to right the formula and say that it is because unconscious desire *is* «repressed» (in fact is given an impossible object) that it manifests itself. If it did not, we could not speak of it! In the meantime, Freud leads the way and helps us to understand how we signify, *substitution* being the key word here.

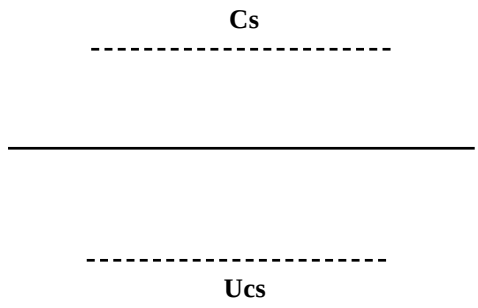
> The substitutive idea acts in the one instance as a point at which there is a passage across from the system *Ucs.* (*S.E.*, XIV, 182)

5,6,7. *«Special Characteristics of the System* Ucs.*,» «Communication Between the Two Systems,» «Assessment of the Unconscious»*

No wonder then that the three remaining sections of Freud's paper deal with «substitution» and with representation. For between the two systems communication is possible, though it is always veiled. At this point, Freud's hesitations about the nature of what he has called the Preconscious can be analysed and understood. He himself acknowledges the lack of precision of the notion (in an attempt, admitedly, to clarify the notion, but this does not suffice to alter our first impression):

> In this connection, also, we shall find means for putting an end to our oscillations [*Schwanken*] in regard to the naming of the higher system which we have hitherto spoken of indifferently, sometimes as the *Pcs.* and sometimes as the *Cs.* (*S.E.*, XIV, 189)

Placed between the system *Cs.* and the system *Ucs.*, the Preconscious – even more than simply the antechamber of the *Cs.* (or of the *Ucs.* for that matter) – is in fact nothing more than the abstract space where «communication» takes place; between the two systems there exists a circulation [*Verkher*] and the structure of such a circulation, or communication, is the structure of the metaphor, that is to say of language. (In passing this is quite in keeping with D. Winnicott's theory of a transitional space and with W. Bion's hypothesis or image of a «porous membrane».) Since Freud has shown dreams had a meaning which could be analysed, conscious and unconscious are no longer irremediably separated, our «bar» has holes, imperceptible though they may be, holes through which, after a metaphorical transformation, unconscious desire can manifest itself. It is the «area» of these symbolical transformations that Freud was representing, was symbolising, when between *Cs.* and *Ucs.* he left a space which he called Preconscious.



this is no longer the area of a nondescript mental operation, neither conscious nor unconscious, but the space where transformation and therefore communication between *Cs.* and *Ucs.* takes place

It now seems quite possible to do away with what I called this awkward notion of «preconscious»; in fact, what Freud was describing was the abstract space of the metaphor, the area where symbolisation takes place.

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Psychotic perception and literary construction of the self: Some Plathian images of an ordered chaos

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY AND PERCEPTION OF THE SELF

As several critics have discussed[1] the question of identity is such a crucial element in Sylvia Plath's works that any kind of interpretation – whether we consider psychoanalytical, feminist, phenomenological, or text-bound approaches – cannot take place without mention of the self.

Accordingly, Britzolakis considers Plath's production as an on-going process of personality rehearsal where the writer attempted different representations of the self, often contradictory. In her view, underlying this split of Plath's personality there is a need to conform to the standards of conventional values "as a product of a gendered literary market, which assigns the production of 'high' culture to men and that of 'low' or 'popular' culture to women" (17). Although hers is one of the most far-reaching interpretations of Plath's work, I think that it is still insufficient to explain the fascinating nature of Sylvia Plath's poetical meditations on her one particular self.

It is well-known that this American poet has also been identified by many as a psychotic writer. This is the case of some researchers interested in drawing connections between extraordinarily creative individuals and different kinds of psychosis. Thus Gordon Claridge, Ruth Prior and Gwen Watkins[2] argued "that creativity and psychotic symptomatology do indeed reflect equivalent forms of cognitive processing" (22-23). In their study of Plath's case they concluded that she "would probably now be diagnosed as suffering from schizoaffective psychotic disorder, with predominantly depressive features" (211), despite the opinions of one of her biographers, Linda Wagner-Martin, who reports that "her

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[1] D. Holbrook in *Poetry and Existence*, London: University of London, 1976; and Christina Britzolakis in *Sylvia Plath and the Theatre of Mourning*, Oxford /New York: Clarendon Press, 1998.

[2] *Sounds From The Bell Jar: Ten Psychotic Authors*, London: Macmillan, 1990. The authors also analyse the cases of Antonia White and Virginia Woolf, among others.

psychiatrist found no trace of psychosis or schizophrenia" (quoted in Claridge et al., 211). So there seems to be no agreement as to Plath's mental condition. However, what seems clear, as the authors of *Sounds from the Bell Jar* highlight, is that "like many psychotic writers she felt herself separated from life by a 'transparent envelop'; even the nine years she saw as happy before her father's death 'sealed themselves off like a ship in a bottle'".

Whether she was truly psychotic or not, one has to agree that she perceived the "world" as something disconnected from herself, hostile and inaccessible. This feeling of being severed from reality, being "under the bell jar", led Sylvia Plath to feel terribly confused about herself and ambivalent in her relationship to others. But in spite of the overwhelming impression of confusion, I believe that especially in her prose she tries to impose some kind of coherence both on that "outer reality" and herself, although with a complex – perhaps even a reversed – logic to that of the "non-psychotic" person.

Perhaps it is due to the fact that she seems to be engaged in a constant quest to make compatible her different identities, her "outer" selves with her "inner" self – perhaps that of poet? – that the idea of a split personality turns out to be a relevant point to discuss in relation to Plath's literary production and her different versions of the self. As I hope to make evident Sylvia Plath tries to impose in writing some kind of internal coherence on the chaos she perceives about her "selves". To that purpose she resorts to some basic primary metaphors and elaborates on some complex conceptual metaphors which may be identified at least in the examples given below as "The Self is a Container"[3] – a variation on "The Self as Location metaphor" – and "The Self as a Physical Object", denominations coined by cognitivist to refer to particular mappings normally used to speak metaphorically about "the self". Cognitive researchers Lakoff and Johnson[4] (267-289) have stressed the fact that these metaphors are quite widespread conventional ways of schematising our perception and knowledge of the self. In fact they suggest that those mappings of the self belong to a "shared world view" found across cultures. According to this theory, depicting the self as isolated by an invisible crystal jar from the rest, for instance, is by no means an original mapping of the experience of the self exclusive to Sylvia Plath, and it is not by any means peculiar to poetic expression. Quite on the contrary it is found in other schizoid or psychotic writers as well but also in everyday speech.

Now, following Lakoff and Johnson's "theory of metaphor"[5], my aim is to trace in some of Plath's short stories from *Johnny Pannic and the Bible of Dreams* some of her images of the self so as to illustrate how she conceptualises her own self in a very "consistent" way and to what extent she elaborates on the basic metaphorical mappings we all share. This may shed some light on the distinct quality of her view of reality and, as I intend to give proof of, on the fact that a closer analysis to her metaphorical mappings of the "self" provides a much more ordered picture, at least coherent with her view, than she makes us believe in her despairing entries of the *Journals*. What is clear to me is that she perceives her own self and her relation to the external world in a more sensitive and intense way, and as a consequence she needs to build up, starting from conventional mappings, a whole network of intricate images that, although depicting a disturbing inner turmoil, provide a somehow "sensible" but terrible picture of what lies outside and inside the self, whether we agree with the logic of it or not. It is surely this

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[3] The person (Subject) being in control of the Self is conceptualised as the Subject being located in the Container (the Self), that is, Subject and Self are in the same place. On the other hand, being out of control is implied when the Subject is not located in the Container, so it lies out of control of the Self.

[4] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York: Basic Books, 1999. They claim that: "Primary metaphors are part of the cognitive unconscious" (57); "These primary metaphors counted by the hundred provide "subjective experience" with extremely rich inferential structure, imagery and qualitative 'feel', when the networks for subjective experience and sensorimotor networks neurally connected to them are coactivated" [...] "We have a system of primary metaphors simply because we have the bodies and brains we have and because we live in the world we live in, where intimacy does tend to correlate" (58).

[5] Developed mainly in *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago/New York: Chicago University Press, [1980] 2003; and *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York: Basic Books, 1999.

tendency to seeing the self as "usually" disconnected from others and reality what allows her (a psychotic writer?) to depict the self in such fascinating but frightening ways.

2. COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SELF

Cognitivist assume there is a physical basis in our experience of the world on which meaning, imagination, and reasoning are built. Lakoff and Johnson (267), provide a comprehensive list of types of experience of reality and many examples from everyday language in which a complex system of metaphors is used to conceptualise the self. Just to mention a few, the experience may relate to different ways of controlling (or not) our bodies, or of feeling the conflict between our conscious values and values implicit in our behaviour.

The problem is that, although all these experiences can be postulated to be universal, there is not, according to these authors, "any single, monolithic, consistent way of conceptualising our inner life that covers all the cases. Instead, we have a system of different metaphorical conceptions of our internal structure. There are inconsistencies in the system" (267). However, what seems to be clear to cognitive researchers is that the metaphorical system of our "inner life" is based on a fundamental distinction between what has been called the "Subject" and "one or more Selves". In this paradigm, there is a Subject, that is, "the *locus of our consciousness*, subjective experience, reason, will, and our 'essence'". But while there is only one Subject, "there is at least one Self (and possibly more). The Selves consist of everything else about us – our bodies, our social roles, our histories, and so on." This means "there is not one Subject-Self distinction, but many" (268). These distinctions are all metaphorical.

The Structure of the Subject-Self Metaphor system is quite complex and organised in several levels. The basic schema of the subject-self metaphor reveals we experience ourselves as split. So it seems this is not exclusively a psychotic way of thinking about the self since in our world-view, and, according to that schema, a person is divided into a Subject (the locus of a person's Essence) and one or more Selves (body, social roles, past states, and actions in the world). While the Subject is always conceptualised as a person the Self may be conceptualised as either (1) an object, (2) a location, or (3) a person.

Let us now go deeper into specific cases of this metaphor and focus our attention on the two metaphors consistently found in Plath's prose writings. The first one may be identified as *The Self as Physical Object*[6] and is based on manipulation and control of objects as source domain. The primary metaphor is SELF CONTROL IS OBJECT CONTROL, as in "I have to control myself". A more complex form of this metaphor being SELF CONTROL IS FORCED MOVEMENT OF THE SELF (an Object) BY THE SUBJECT. This complex metaphor may have in turn two different versions. One reads BODY CONTROL IS THE FORCED MOVEMENT OF AN OBJECT as in "I dragged my self out of bed", or "You're pushing yourself too hard". The other alternative is SELF CONTROL IS OBJECT POSSESSION which may have positive connotations, as in "let yourself go", or negative, as in "you are seized by anxiety".

This type of mapping, picturing the self as a physical object that cannot be moved or that seems possessed, is quite recurrent in Plath's accounts of loss of control of the Self (her own body) to the Subject's will. Lakoff and Johnson do in fact remind us that "in American culture, possession – loss of control to another Subject – is mostly seen as evil and scary" (274).

The second metaphor I would like to mention for its relevance in Plath's essays and stories, the so called *Self as Location* (or *the Locational Self*), conceptualises control of the Subject over the Self as "being in a normal location", and by the same token, loss of control as not being in the expected place. A variety of this metaphor is based on the notion that SELF CONTROL IS BEING IN ONE'S

[6] I follow Lakoff and Johnson's typography in *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. Each type indicates different levels of the subject-self metaphor.

NORMAL LOCATION. Along with this conception goes the notion of THE SELF AS CONTAINER. This implies that a Subject that is out of control is conceptualised as being out of a container (home, earth) or out of the part of the Self where the Subject is normally (the body, the head, or the skull) as in "He is out of his mind". SELF CONTROL AS BEING ON THE GROUND stands as another possible form of *The Self as Location*. Accordingly, "being in the ground" means being in control of the effects of gravity as the expression "he's back down to earth" said of someone who has lately been "off the clouds" implies.

3. METAPHORS OF THE SELF IN PLATH'S PROSE WRITINGS

Hence, when it comes to the conceptualisation of "self-control" we can see there are two productive metaphors: the Possession metaphor – which views the Self as an object to be possessed – and the Location metaphor – which identifies the Self with a location. Both are extremely recurrent and merge in Plath's conceptualisation of the self in *The Bell Jar* and in *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* but also, and perhaps more prominently than anywhere else, in the *Journals.* This is a clear indication of her obsession with self-control and her feeling that lack of self-control was her usual way of being, as opposed to what the non-psychotic person experiences normally – a prevailing sense of control with exceptional, if any, bouts of "insanity" throughout one's life.

Of course, there are other very significant metaphors, such as the ones discussed and labelled by Lakoff and Johnson as "The Scattered Self" – indicating lack of attention of the Subject –; "The Social Self metaphor" – which offers a frame to relate our judgement of ourselves with other people's judgement so the Subject and the Self as seen as adversaries, father and child, friends, etc. –; "The Multiple Selves metaphor" – concerned with different values attached to different roles (mother, daughter, friend) assumed by the self –; and "the Essential Self metaphor" – which says that each one of us has an Essence that makes us unique, and equates the Subject with the Essence. The later is particularly significant in Plath because it allows us to conceptualise the self as split into two incompatible selves: The True Self – Plath's unconventional behaviour, being a poet – and the other self – Plath assuming a conventional role –. All of them seem to me equally persistent in her work and eloquent in explaining Sylvia's patterns of the self. However, devoting the time each one of them deserves would require much more space than I am allowed to use here.

In her analysis of "split selves" in literary narrative texts, Catherine Emmott (153-182)[7] clearly shows, following Lakoff (1980), there is a common denominator in the fictional and medical narratives of individuals with problems of identity or splits of personality. In Plath's work the conundrum of identity has usually been associated specially, in her poetry, with the mirror and other specular images – such as reflections in water, for instance. But this search for a "true self" in trying to understand the incompatible nature of the multiple selves she recognises when looking at the mirror in her poem of that name is also present in her prose.

But first, let us bear in mind that her non-fictional material provides good evidence that there is a significant disparity between what she writes down for herself in *The Journals*, and what she writes down for others, either to be published – short stories, essays and the novel – or to be addressed to a very close circle of relatives and friends – to be found in *Letters Home*. The critics have agreed that in the *Letters*, Sylvia Plath struggles to forge a positive image of herself, based, as I see it, on the "Essential Self Metaphor", just intended to reassure her mother of her filial love and her achievements

[7] "'Split selves' in fiction and in medical 'life stories': Cognitive linguistic theory and narrative practice" in Semino, Elena & Jonathan Culpeper. *Cognitive Stylistics.Language and cognition in text analysis,* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002, pp. 153-182.

as a young woman and poet. The *Journals* and the bitter narrative found in *The Bell Jar*[8] do on the other hand offer (a) different version(s) of Sylvia. Although when reading Plath's body of writing one ends up with an overwhelming feeling of confusion about the subject's identity – she is so many different things and takes on so many personalities – analysing specific metaphors of the self from the perspective of cognitive poetics may shed some light on the kind of order she imposes in her inner, and why not say it, chaotic reality through different modes of writing.

In contrast to the aim of the *Letters*, the *Journals* get written to allow her to give vent to her obsessions and cope with her inner ghosts. So they were for no audience. The short stories and essays collected in *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* were instead meant to make Plath earn money by imitating a kind of prose that would sell, asserted Hughes. But what remains true is that all of them are based on autobiographical material as it happens with the poems.

I agree with Britzolakis that "the different and often contradictory versions of 'Sylvia Plath' constructed by letters, journals, short stories, and *The Bell Jar*, are entangled with myths of selfhood, femininity, and nation attendant upon a particular place and time" (12). Plath's accounts of her different selves turn out to be often incompatible with one another, especially when the question of social roles and true self are at the stake. As a consequence, the metaphor of the scattered self combines with others in the *Journals* and thus the (Self) body as a container of the subject (the Essence) is rejected or unrecognised. Her diaries show that body and mind never seem to correspond to each other, while at the same time she strives to achieve an ideal version of the self (the imago) as a unified "whole".

We may conclude that in Plath's existence only the "writing" stood for her true voice, and, therefore, for presence and reality. As a result, creative writing turns into the only way to assert that she is and has real existence. In this sense it is worth noticing her constant allusions[9] to the vital need to have a powerful imagination so as to be able to write and hence to survive. Her feeling of utter despair at her creative blockages is manifest in the following words:

> "What I fear most, I think, is the death of the imagination. When the sky outside is merely pink, and the rooftops merely black: that photographic mind which paradoxically tells the truth, but the *worthless truth*, about the world. It is that synthesizing spirit, that "shaping " force, which prolifically sprouts and makes up its own worlds with more inventiveness than God which I desire. If I sit still and don't do anything, the world goes go beating like a slack drum, without meaning. We must be moving, working, making dreams to run toward; the poverty of life without dreams is too horrible to imagine: it is that kind of madness which is worst: the kind with fancies and hallucinations would be a Bosch-ish relief" (272)

All of Plath's writing is plagued not only by the presence of mirrors, and blank, faceless reflections – which do not allow her crossing to the other side – but with invisible barriers like the bell jar of the novel that isolate her from the rest. As the analysis of a poem like "Ariel" suggest Plath's aim is to transcend the barriers that separate herself from otherness. Hence the images of fusing and melting in "Ariel". In other poems there is a determination towards "disembodiment" – in the form of suicide – which seems to be Plath's natural drive.

It seems obvious by now, that Plath's understanding of reality is dominated by an internal perspective of the self, an extremely subjective point of view. What seems real to her is her inner self

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[8] In reference to *The Bell Jar*, Aurelia Plath (Sylvia's mother) wrote in her biographical note to *Letters Home: Correspondence 1950-1963*: "Practically every character in *The Bell Jar* represents someone – often in caricature – whom Sylvia loved. As the book stands by itself it represents the basest ingratitude. That was not the basis of her personality!" (294-295)

[9] In an extract from the journal written at Smith College and collected in *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*, London: Faber, 1977.

hidden under the outer shell of the body (the container). Thus, she can not see her essence – her true self is not really visible to the eye. However, she needs confirmation of the self by self-reflection, or identification with others but what she gets back in return are only outer shells, deadly masks, images of her body as inert objects, containers or locations and not an image of her true self – located in her exceptional mind.

This duality of mind and body belongs to an inherited Cartesian conception. This is the way the self has been traditionally codified in language – so it belongs to a particular world view – but the peculiar insistence on Plath's utter failure to connect mind and body, Subject and Self, seems somehow unusual, and probably distinctive of the psychotic mind. It is in this persistence on duality where Plath offers a very clear picture of what means a split self.

4. SYLVIA'S SPLIT SELVES

To illustrate how specific metaphors of the self pervade her writings, I have selected only a few examples from two of Plath's short stories and essays in *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*. The first one is "Tongues of Stone" (1955). Retold by a third person narrator, it is the story of Plath's own process of recovery after her crisis and suicide attempt in the summer of 1953. The story is set in a mental hospital where the protagonist gradually returns to her senses. A clear signal of her inability to cope with reality is her failure to knit. From the very beginning the disconnection between her will (the conscious Subject) and her body (the Self as an Object) strikes as obvious:

> "She had caught the loop but *her finger* was stiff and far away and would not make the yarn go over the needle" (274)
> "There was nothing to her now but the body, *a dull puppet of skin and bone* that *had to be washed and fed day* after day after day" (274)
> "There were safe outside the dream, so they could jargon away. But she was *caught in the nightmare of the body, without a mind*, only the *soulless flesh* that *got fatter* with the insulin and *yellower* with the fading tan" (274)
> (The emphasis is mine).

In the first two quotations we find the body as object that does not obey the orders of the subject, thus suggesting "lack of self-control". In the third quotation, the feeling of being "caught in the nightmare of the body" is expressed in terms of the Self as a Location metaphor, an idea emphasised by similar images of enclosure and imprisonment in: "she would drag out her night and days *chained* to a wall in a dark solitary *cell* with dirt and spiders" (274). The body is seen as "cell" and "as a dark cavern". That part of her that should serve as link with the sensible world, the body, is numb and does not react. She comes to see the body (the Self as Container) dissociated from her mind as if the two belonged to two different people. Her irrational emotions take shape in the body as material substance which in her imagination accumulates as "waste" and "poisons", "swelling her full".

The "dead face that greeted her, the mindless face" (276) is what she sees when she looks into the mirror. The girl needs to see in order to understand herself and her reality, both in such a chaotic state. But the only useful mirror at hand is her own imaginative writing. There she writes herself out. She can only escape the prison of flesh and skin she inhabits – where her instincts are repressed – by making use of the "mind's eye", which provides her with a powerful and lively "in"-sight.

In "Snow Blitz", an essay written in 1963 just weeks before she died, now in the first person Plath uses her imaginative potential to give literary form once again to her own schizoid perception of herself. Most of us share this traditional dualistic view of the self, normally perceiving the split self as an exceptional condition, and considering mind and body as two parts of a continuum. By contrast, in the light of her insistence on split selves and lack of control, it may be suggested that Sylvia Plath thinks about her self as usually split, as a scattered self, with multiple selves: the mind severed from the body, the invisible and the visible parts of the self wide apart, the true self in conflict with and the false selves.

Once more the story in "Snow Blitz" relies on the metaphor "the Self as a Container (a house)" and "the Subject (the tenant) who is out of control, is the content". The episode narrated by Plath opens with a deceiving description of the snow as "white, picturesque, untouched", conveying the false idea of purity, peacefulness and stasis. However, the snow hardens and freezes in sidewalks and street "becaming a rugged terrain of ice over whose treacherous crevices [old] people teetered, clutching dog leads or steered by strangers" (28). The snow is a symbol that stands for the disease (=madness) that makes the sick person (unstable=teetering) dependent on others (dogs, strangers=doctors, relatives) who lead them to their destination through a dangerous path. Despite the narrator's concern to get her steps – the "outer" part of the house – cleaned off snow, she surprisingly discovers one morning "the bathtub half full of filthy water" (29). She waits expecting it to be drained through the gutters but the amount of water increases "both in depth and dirtiness" (29) and it escapes its normal course. This (inner) domestic problem – a metaphor for her psychic turmoil and lack of control of emotions – makes itself visible in the form of a "stain" in her "beautiful new white ceiling".

> "As I looked, the ceiling *discharged*, at various spots, drops of *viscous liquid* that plopped onto the rug. The ceiling paper sagged at the seams." (30).

The contradictory symptoms of the subject's inner disorder are identified, on the one hand, as a "leakage", (a leak being "an unintended hole, crack, or the like through which liquid, gas or light *enters or escapes*", that is, indicating an uncontrolled flux of ideas, feelings); and on the other, as "stagnation" (that is, an unplanned and untimely death, inactivity or lethargy) of dirty waters in the bathtub. Both are indication that there is something not working properly, out of order. The water (feelings, emotions) is qualified as "black", "dirty". According to the catalogue of metaphors of the self provided, the fact that dirty water escapes its usual location implies lack of self-control. Nonetheless, neither the stagnant water nor its dirtiness are perceived at first as produced by the tenant (the narrator), whose unconscious self probably betrays her into believing that the damages in the flat are not her fault when she asserts:

> "My ceiling is leaking and my bathtub is full of dirty water."
> Silence.
> "Not *my* dirty water," I hastened to add. "Water that floods up into the tub of its own accord. I think there is snow in it. Maybe it's roof water." (30)
> (The emphasis is Plath's).

The unintended/unconscious nature of this domestic catastrophe is emphasized throughout the story, for instance in "I could not understand it. I do not understand plumbing" (30). Other metaphors are added to this central one. For instance, "Plumbing", (repairing pipes and drainage systems) obviously stands for a "mechanical" kind of psychiatry, and plumbers for psychiatrists, who take care of the well-functioning of the pipes and gutters (invisible paths from where the waters of the mind overflow or freeze). The "faulty gutter" localised "just over [the narrator's] bed" (31) stands for her impaired mind. The narrator wants to get it fixed for she fears to "wake up in a mess of plaster. Or maybe I won't even wake up" (31). She fears extinction, death.

Once again the cold detachment, and the mocking irony characteristic of many Plath's stories appears as the narrator tells us of her breakdown through an elaborated imagery on the Self as Container. She sees the plumbers "holding a yellow plastic bucket to a geyser [i.e., a spring that throws forth intermittent *jets of heated water and steam*] of ceiling water with the embarrassed air of covering some obscenity" (31). This geyser is obviously an unexpected burst of the uncontrolled self.

However, the worst threat the tenant of the flat faces is anticipated by the house agent who admonishes her: "You realize, though, that you are in danger of having no drinking water" (31)… "when the water in the upstairs cisterns is finished, that's the end." Death of the imagination is the worst death of all. What Plath really values is her true self, her essence as a writer, as a poet because it allows her a kind of transcendence.

As Semino and Swindlehurst (1996:147)[10], point out "at an individual level, the systematic use of a particular metaphor (or metaphors) reflects an idiosyncratic cognitive habit, a personal way of making sense of and talking about the world: in other words, a particular mind style" (147). I hope to have given enough evidence of the fact that Sylvia Plath consistently uses in her prose writing images of the self as normally split in order to define what Roger Fowler[11] defined as the "distinctive linguistic representation of an individual mental self" (103).

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Madness and modernism: Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" – Fifty years later

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Allen Ginsberg wrote Howl in 1954 and 1955 and first read it publicity at the Six Gallery in San Francisco on October 7, 1955. When I first read the poem "Howl" a few years after its publication in 1956, I found it shocking in many ways. Even the six asterisks representing the word "fucked" shocked me. Even more shocking were the many different sexual activities mentioned in the poem. At that time I did not even know what many of the slang words for sexual acts or drugs meant! It seemed quite alien to the "Grey Flannel Suited," Cleaver family 1950's in which I grew up. In the fifty years since Ginsberg wrote it, "Howl" has not changed; not even the asterisks were have been replaced with the then-unprintable word. What has changed is that so many of the corruptions that were only latent or subterranean at the time Ginsberg wrote "Howl" have become "all to concise and too clear" in the last fifty years. Ginsberg told us about not only what we were as a nation and culture but about what we were going to become. In Part II of the poem, he raged against what he called "Moloch," which was modeled not only on the old testament God to whom children were sacrificed but also on Fritz Lang's 1926 silent film *Metropolis* (about which I published a note in 2002 in *Notes on Contemporary Literature*). What Ginsberg called "Moloch" in the mid-1950's came to be called `The Military Industrial" or "The Military Industrial Academic Complex" in the 1970's.

A poem that was shocking in the 1950's and early 1960's and then a powerful statement of what frustrated many of us in the 1960's and 1970's now seems to read like a sociological and psychological history of the last fifty years in America.

Some literary works have managed to replicate all that E. M. W. Tillyard calls a "world view" of their eras: society's values, familial hierarchy and relationships, political structures, individual's sense of self, cosmology, and theology. The *Canterbury Tales* captures the late middle ages, *Paradise Lost* the late renaissance, the poetry of Pope 18th century neo-classicism, *The Prelude* the romantic era, and, I believe, Browning's *The Ring and the Book*, the late Victorian age. Then, all of the fragmentation, self-doubt, lack of faith and its attendant values, and the general sense of despair that follows World War I was captured in T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and *The Waste Land*, poems that imply that things could not possible get any worse. But, by the middle of the 20th century, sure

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enough, things have gotten worse. And I believe that Allen Ginsberg's "Howl' describes just how much worse things have become. "Howl" is a poem that simultaneously describes mental illness – schizophrenia – at the same time that it paints a very troubling but accurate picture of life in America in the latter half of the 20th Century.

I will be relying on the theories of two scholars, Sylvano Arieti, a psychiatry professor whose *Interpretations of Schizophrenia*[1] was the standard medical school textbook on the subject for a large part of the latter half of the century, and Louis A. Sass, a psychologist and literary theorist, whose book is *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought*.[2]

Sass's well-documented book shows that there are seven characteristics that modernist art shares with schizophrenia. First is "negativism and anti-traditionalism", which include "its defiance of authority and convention, its antagonism or indifference to the expectations of its audience, and on occasion, its rage for chaos" (29). A second, and "related characteristic of any modernist and postmodernist works is the uncertainty or multiplicity of their point of view" (30). Third is "a certain fragmentation and passivization," which includes "a loss of the self's sense of unity and of its capacity for effective of voluntary action." According to Sass, this loss of self is the polar opposite of "the romantic cult of self" (31). Fourth is the "'loss of significant external reality'[3] with the emphasis either on the loss of the feeling that reality is external or on the loss of reality's aura of significance." That is, "the world seems to be *derealized*" (32). Fifth is a change in the sense of "spatial form," in that "certain traditional ways of organizing literary works become less viable." There may be a loss of "narrative structure" or logical development within a work, either of which would suggest the possibility of "meaningful historical change... as a central unifying principle" (34). Sixth, "mimesis of external reality, evocation of a spiritual beyond" and any "ethical or intellectual message" all seem to have lost their "ability to compel commitment or belief" (34). Seventh is "a particularly profound and pervasive form of irony" (35-36).

Since I have organized my argument on the basis of specific symptoms of schizophrenia specified by Sylvano Arieti and do not want to repeat my evidence in order to demonstrate these seven characteristics shared by modernism and schizophrenia, I will simply point out how the specific symptoms I focus on support Sass's seven assertions.

Ginsberg's "Howl" claims that modern society has driven the most promising men of his generation mad. In Part One Ginsberg's opening sentence is "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness...." He then continues to claim that the society in which they live has made these "best minds" both "crazy" (9) and "suicidal" (13). They are "hallucinating" (9) and suffering from "nightmares" (9) and "catatonia" (15). The best minds "broke down" (10), "were dragged off the roof waving genitals and manuscripts" (12). The best minds themselves recognize that they are psychotic, because they "demanded sanity traits" (15) and they "presented themselves on the granite steps of the madhouse... demanding instant lobotomy" (15). Ginsberg calls one of the best minds a "madman" (15).

These "best minds" were given the same treatments that were being given to schizophrenics at the time. They were given "the concrete void of insulin metrasol electricity hydrotherapy psychotherapy occupational therapy pingpong and amnesia" (15). They returned "to the visible madman doom of the wards of the madtowns of the East Pilgrim State's Rockland and Greystone's foetid halls" (15).

All of Part III is focused on the fact that "the best minds of my generation," who have been driven mad by their society, are now incarcerated in the mental hospital Rockland. In Rockland, these men demonstrate their madness in a variety of ways. They believe they have "murdered... twelve secretaries" (19). They "laugh at... invisible humor" (19). The "faculties of the[ir] skull[s] no longer admit the worms of the senses." The best minds "scream in a straightjacket that [they are] losing the game of actual

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[1] *Interpretations of Scizophrenia*, New York: Basic Books, 1974.

[2] *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought*, New York: Basic Books, 1992.

[3] E. Heller, *The Disinherited Mind*, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, p. 172.

pingpong of the abyss" and "bang on the catatonic piano" (19). Their minds are so fully destroyed that Ginsberg tells them that "fifty more shocks will never return your soul to your body again from its pilgrimage to a cross in the void." They "accuse [their] doctors of insanity and plot the Hebrew socialist revolution against the fascist national Golgotha" (20). For Ginsberg, the only consolation about the condition of these destroyed men is to fantasize that they finally all break out of their institutional and mental prisons. He imagines that they all "wake up electrified out of the coma by [their] own souls' airplanes roaring over the roof they've come to drop angelic bombs the hospital illuminates itself imaginary walls collapse," and he imagines them shouting "O skinny legions run outside O starry-spangled shock of mercy the eternal war is here O victory forget your underwear we're free (20).

Surely these sufferings parallel the huge increase in the number of contemporary Americans who suffer from various kinds of mental disorders and need the whole pharmacy of psychotropic drugs.

The "best minds" and the speaker in the poem exhibit paranoia, another symptom of schizophrenia. They also demonstrate a recurrent fear of many contemporary Americans, who feel that someone – the government, the liberals, their employers, or *someone* – is trying to cheat or destroy them. The "best minds" of Ginsberg's poem "accus the radio of hypnotism" (15) and believe they are being "investigat[ed] by the F. B. I." (11). They believe that they have been given "mustard gas" by "sinister intelligent editors" (14). Likewise in the last fifty years we (conservatives and liberals alike) have become more and more suspicious of what the power-brokers in our nation are doing and we seem more and more fearful of corruption in business, which might seem paranoid if we had not seen so much evidence of curruption, like that of Enron.

Another major symptom of schizophrenia is intense psychological pain, which leads patients to seek ways to numb or at least distract themselves from their pain. In order to ease their pain, Ginsberg's "best minds" rely on all kinds of drugs and alcohol: "an angry fix" (9), "maryjuana" (9), "paint" (9) "alcohol" (9), "Peyote" (10), "wine" (10), "tea[ ]" (10), "stale beer" (10), "junk" (10), "cigarettes" (11), "narcotic[s]" (11) "Tokay" (13), "opium" (13), and "whiskey" (14). Some "retired to Mexico to cultivate a habit" (15). They also try all varieties of sexual activities to alleviate their pain. Surely the last fifty years has been a time in which people have become dependant on drugs or alcohol to alleviate their psychological sufferings.

Just as schizophrenics revert to more primitive language, less logical language, and language controlled more by its sound than its meaning, so does the speaker in Ginsberg's poem. The speaker says that the "best minds" were "passing out incomprehensible leaflets" (11). What they thought were lofty incantations were in fact only "stanzas of gibberish" (13). Sometimes their talk is merely "ashcan rantings" (10). What they speak is merely "yacketayakking screaming vomiting" (10).

Many of the speaker's own statements make little cognitive sense, although they may have powerful imagistic and symbolic implications. Some examples are the following: "ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind" (10), "the crack of doom on the hydrogen jukebox" (10), "secret gas-station solipsisms of johns" (13), "nitroglycerine shrieks" (12), "drunken taxicabs of Absolute Reality" (12), "hotrod-Golgotha Jail-solitude watch" (12), and "midnight solitutude-beach dolmen-realms of love" (15).

Sometimes the speaker's utterances are organized more by sound than by sense. The poem includes frequent examples of alliteration and repetition. Some examples are "from Battery to holy Bronx on benzedrine" and "battered bleak of brain all drained of brilliance in the drear light of Zoo" (10), "who journeyed to Denver, who died in Denver, who came back to Denver, watched over Denver and brooded and loned in Denver..., and now Denver is lonesome for her heroes" (14), who wandered around... wondering where to go, and went" (10), traveled in "boxcars, boxcars, boxcars" (11), and "the sirens of Los Alamos wailed them down, and wailed down Wall, and the Staten Island ferry also wailed" (11). Similarly, influential writers like Jack Kerouac, Sylvia Plath, Bob Dylan, and rap musicians have led many of us to use language for the emotional impact of its sound instead of concentrating on more traditional grammar and logic.

These "best minds" were given the same treatments that were being given to schizophrenics at the time: "insulin metrasol electricity hydrotherapy psychotherapy occupational therapy pingpong and

amnesia." They returned to mental institutions, "to the visible madman doom of the wards of the madtowns of the East Pilgrim State's Rockland and Greystone's foetid halls" (15).

The "best minds" frequently behave as schizophrenics do. They "scream," they "howled on their knees in the subway" (12). They "chained themselves to subways" (10) and "wandered around and around at midnight in the railroad yard wondering where to go" (10). They "bit detectives in the neck and shrieked with delight in police cars" (11). They "distributed Supercommunist pamphlets in Union Square" where they "weep and undress" (11).

As some schizophrenics do to distract themselves from their psychological pain, Ginsberg's best minds mutilate or hurt themselves. They "ate fire... or drank turpentine" (9), they "presented themselves on the granite steps of the madhouse... demanding instantaneous lobotomy" (15), "plunged themselves under meat trucks" (13), and "jump[ed] down the stoops off fire escapes off windowsills off Empire State" (10). They "walked all night with their shoes full of blood on the snowbank docks" (13), "jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge" (14), "burned cigarette holes in their arms" (11), "cut their wrists" (13), "fell out of subway windows" (14), "jumped in the filthy Passaic" (14), "jumped off the roof" (18), and "plunged themselves under meat trucks" (13).

Ginsberg's "best minds" also suffer from hallucinations. They experience "incomparable blindstreets of shuddering cloud and lightning of the mind" (9). They believed they were being "burned alive in their innocent flannel suits on Madison Avenue" (15). And they "cowered... burning their money in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall" (9).

The last fifty years has seen much aberrant behavior and self-destruction, sometimes in irrational protest and sometimes as a result of psychosis. And Ginsberg's "Howl," has given us a remarkable description of the specifics of an era which William Butler Yeats so aptly predicted when he wrote

> Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

But, in contrast to the Yeats's bleak pessimism, Ginsberg, after his long emotional outburst, is able to rediscover hope and to assert that everything is "Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!." Despite all that is wrong in society, Ginsberg finds hope and celebrates "the supernatural extra brilliant intelligent kindness of the soul."

"Howl" rings true psychologically to most of us. Nearly all of us have experienced such feelings in bouts of extreme anger. Ginsberg shows how a person moves from an out-of-control, sometimes almost non-verbal anger to verbal attack with specific accusations to emotional hope, when he concludes with an assertion that all is "holy." Just as a person suffering from a grand mal attack eventually emerges from the attack experiencing a kind of euphoria, so does Ginsberg in "Howl."

By presenting all that is wrong with late twentieth century society and then affirming hope, Ginsberg's "Howl" replicates both the despair and the hope of the decades it represents.

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Hysteria and postpostmodern novel

SOLANGE LEIBOVICI (*)

Hysteria has been banned from DSM, where it has been replaced by "histrionic personality disorder". But one might ask as does Juliet Mitchell in *Mad Men and Medusas*: "Is it hysteria itself or its classification – psychiatric, medical or psychoanalytic – that has become redundant?" (Mitchell 15). Hysteria has been studied by anthropologists as well as psychoanalysts, it is as broad and expansive as human culture. It certainly never disappeared from literature.

Freud's famous case-study on hysteria "A Fragment of a Case of Hysteria in a Female", (1905) about Dora, is a stunning literary text, a novella that reminds us of Schnitzler's tales about fantasy and adultery. The most significant aspect of Dora's hysteria, is that she exemplifies the propensity for easy and absolute mimetic identification with the characteristics or actions – real or imagined – of another person. This mimetic power seems to be the core of hysteria: Christopher Bollas stresses that the hysteric transforms herself into an event, her body becoming an erotic stage. The hysteric is always watching the self as a theatre, acting her part and being her own public at the same time. And enjoying it in a painful way, in what Lucien Israël has called "la jouissance de l'hystérique". This is what Freud wants to learn from Dora: he repeatedly asks her what she gains from her involvement in the complicated family history of her father, her mother, Herr K. and Frau K. Like always, Freud is interested in the economy of the whole process.

What I would like to discuss is the role played by hysteria in a novel I have called "postpostmodern", *What I loved* (2003) by Siri Hustvedt. In *What I loved*, hysteria is everywhere. It is present at various narrative levels and it represents what you could call the "libidinal economy" of the novel. I use this term in the way Slavoj Zizek does in an article called "The Thing from Inner Space: *Titanic* and *Deep Impact*" (published in Glen O. Gabbard, *Psychoanalysis and Film*). Zizek writes that, in the case of *Titanic*, "it is as if the iceberg hits the ship and the catastrophe occurs in order to prevent the much stronger libidinal catastrophe of two lovers happily being together and then seeing their union degenerate. This is Hollywood at its purest." (Gabbard 161) In *Deep Impact*, the approaching comet is a metaphoric substitute for paternal infidelity, for the libidinal catastrophe of a daughter facing the fact that her father has chosen another young woman over her. Zizek writes that "the heroine's helplessness and vulnerability should not deceive us. She is the evil spirit who, in the underlying libidinal machinery of the film's narrative, pulls the strings, and the scene of finding death in the protective father's embrace is the realization of her ultimate wish." (Gabbard 166). The libidinal economy works like an internal mechanism or system

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that supports the narrative construction of the novel, it is also used as a tool that connects the different characters and episodes to each other. The word "economy" suggests there is some benefit, for the story itself, for the characters and – maybe – for the writer.

I will stress four aspects of hysteria: the mimetic identification with another person, the theatrical aspect, the seduction of the desired other, and the uncertain, problematic sexuality. All these elements (mimetic identification, theatrical tendencies, obsessive seduction and precarious sexuality) make hysteria so predominant in western cultures, where relations to other persons are characterized by mirroring, copying and identification, where television learn people how to turn their lives into reality soaps, where emotional emptiness and social fears lead to what we now call "borderline disorders" (according to DSM 6 to 10 millions Americans suffer borderline disorders). Borderline is also characterized by a highly dramatic personality and can be seen as a contemporary form of hysterical disorder. The characters in *What I loved* all have some hysterical traits, the most terrifying of them being Bill's son Mark, who is a real borderline, and the novel is in a way a case-study of Mark's evolution from a nice young boy to a sociopath. I am looking for hysteria as a form of libidinal economy, as the motor behind the actions that occur in the novel, the fuel that feeds the author's narrative desire.

The postpostmodern novel seems to get along pretty well with hysteria. But first, what is postpostmodernism? According to the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, the primary meaning of postmodernism is "what comes after modernism". Well, postpostmodernism is what comes after postmodernism. It is difficult to define precisely what literary postpostmodernism is because a broad theoretical discussion has not find place yet. Typical postpostmodern novels are *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace, *House of Leaves* by Mark Danielewski, Dave Eggers' novels, and also novels about family histories, like Jonathan Frantzen's. What they have in common is the need to show that postmodern creative freedom has become a claustrophobic, erratic wandering about, where the writer is imprisoned in networks of virtualities. Paul Auster's *The Music of Chance* might be read as a metaphor of this attempt to escape postmodernism and search for new directions and new goals. Postpostmodernism is what Hal Foster calls a "turn to the real", a new movement in art and literature where the artist is seen as an ethnographer, where there is a desire to localize the subject in a daily social reality. This explains the predominant role of identity, of witnessing, of trauma. There is a will to get involved, to understand the other and identify with him/her. This identification can be called mimetic, physical, even hysterical.[1] In postpostmodern literature we also find very strong autobiographical elements. The creation of fiction is no longer the author's main desire: to him reality is more complex, more fascinating and more frightening then the invention of stories.

Siri Hustvedt is Paul Auster's wife. He writes about her in *The Art of Hunger* (1997): "Then, early in 1981, I met Siri Hustvedt, the person I'm married to now. We took each other by storm, and nothing has been the same since." (313) When they write, they are most of the day in "that strange space of the novel", as Hustvedt puts it. For Paul Auster, writing is not an act of free will but a matter of survival: "Writing, in some sense, is an activity that helps me to relieve some of the pressure caused by buried secrets. Hidden memories, traumas, childhood scars – there's no question that novels emerge from those inaccessible parts of ourselves." (295). In 2003, Siri Hustvedt published *What I loved*. In the same year, Paul Auster published *Oracle Night*. These are two totally different stories, written in different styles, and I don't believe Auster and Hustvedt willingly copy or even influence one another. There seems to be something else going on.

In *What I loved* we follow art historian and narrator Leo Herzberg and his friend artist Bill Wechsler for twenty-five years, with their lives in the New York art world, their successes and failures, their marriages, their wives and children. The key character is a young woman, Violet, a French history specialist who writes about hysteria, eating disorders and cross-gender and also has been Bill's favorite

[1] Maybe this is what we also see in the involvement in postcolonial theory and Holocaust literature.

model. Bill and her fell in love and he left his wife to marry her. Later Leo will discover he has also fallen in love with Violet. *Oracle Night* is the story of writer Sydney Orr and his wife Grace. Sydney buys a blue notebook in a Brooklyn store. He fills it with stories, scenarios, newspapers articles, footnotes and references, adding embedded stories that take place on different levels of reality. Within the novel, another novel called Oracle Night emerges, and the line between reality and fiction becomes blurred. Sydney discovers that Grace has had a relationship with his friend also writer John Trause.

Now let's look closer at *What I loved*, especially at Bill's art. He abandons painting to create boxes, each representing scenes and people from his family, to move on to what he calls his "hysteria constructions". Last year in Arles, Georgiana Colvile did a paper on Siri Hustvedt, and she noted that Violet, who writes about hysteria, feeds the subjects she's working on into Bill's "corresponding plastic creative drives." Between Bill and Violet, there seems to be a kind of creative symbiotic relationship. In the case of Auster and Hustvedt, I'd rather call it a potential or transitional space. For Winnicott, the transitional phenomenon develops in a space between the subjective and the objective, it forms a transition between fantasy and reality, and it is related to cultural life. T. A. Ogden describes the transitional space as a process "in which opposing elements each create, preserve and negate each other; each stands in a dynamic, ever-changing relationship to each other." This is where we find what Paul Auster calls "the fictitious subterranean autobiography", where the words are no longer only symbols, but passages to the unconscious. What we look for here is, beyond the narrative structures of the fictional work, what Murray Schwartz calls "the more inclusive realm in which and through which both the data and ourselves are constantly interacting and combining in new configurations." (Rudnytsky 60) In the poly-vocalness Auster wants to achieve, some of the voices are Hustvedt's, and in Hustvedt's novels we find Auster's voice. In the case of *What I loved* and *Oracle Night*, the transitional space can become perceptible when we analyze the two novels simultaneously.

Oracle Night has been called a postmodern novel because of the many embedded stories and subtexts which present virtual realities en comment on the main story. In *What I loved*, these short texts are replaced by the paintings, collages and installations Bill Wechsler creates in different periods of his life. Space is one of Paul Auster's obsessions, and his work always shuttles between open spaces and hermetic spaces. Hustvedt translates this into the artistic space of the boxes. I'll give one example.

The boxes are all about three feet by four feet. Bill uses flat and three-dimensional figures, he combines real objects with painted ones, and he uses contemporary images to tell old stories and perverted fairy-tales. The small boxes draw on the fascination people have with peeping into dollhouses, but "the content of Bill's small worlds subverted expectations and often created a feeling of the uncanny." (*What I Loved* 113). There is a dark-skinned and dark-haired Sleeping Beauty, laying in a coma in a hospital room, with tubes and the wires of a heart monitor entangled with life-sized floral arrangements: "gigantic gladioli, carnations, roses, birds-of-paradise and ferns that choked the room." In a later scene, "a cutout of a naked man with an erect penis hung in the air over her bed as she slept. The man held a large pair of open scissors in his hand." (*What I Loved* 114). The scenes are constructed like dreams by means of displacement and condensation. The Sleeping Beauty in her hospital bed reminds us of Auster's protagonist Sydney Orr, who is recovering from a near fatal illness. But in Auster's novel there are also dark-skinned ladies, who stand for lust and adultery: Sydney has an erotic encounter with a black prostitute. Paul Auster also has a dark skin and dark hair. The man with the erection and the scissors is a figure of desire: of sex, of castration and revenge. The life-sized flowers which seem to almost choke the Sleeping Beauty symbolize anger and violence.

The boxes also show Hustvedt's fascination for cross-gender (the hysteric's uncertainty about sexuality): there is one called "The Girl Who Pretended to Be a Boy", where the princess finds her trials have transformed her into a boy, "at her crotch was the unmistakable bump of manhood." (*What I Loved* 114) The small boxes are embedded in the story like Auster's subtexts, because they tell stories which are related with the main narrative but also give other, three-dimensional information, mostly at an unconscious level. Hustvedt seems to stress Peter Rudnytsky remark about art as a transitional object: "Art, like play, must be situated in both a *temporal* and a *spacial* dimension, as Winnicott does with his concepts of transitional objects and potential space." (Rudnytsky XIII) The uncanny comes

from the fact that characters are usually placed in spaces where they walk from one room to the other and change the world they live in. Here the small figures are trapped in little frozen stages, rooms that are not locked like Paul Auster's, but from which they cannot escape.

What Hustvedt does is transforming the postmodernism in Auster's novels into postpostmodernity. In the first place, this has to do with the fact that representations and images substitute themselves to language. Then there is the involvement and identification and the will to become part of Auster's fantasy world and traumatic experiences. Christopher Bollas writes that these skills – identification and representation – can be developed to a remarkable degree by hysterics, who show uncanny abilities to gain access to the other's desire and then to represent it. (Bollas 54-55) Of course this doesn't imply Siri Hustvedt is a hysteric, but that she is able to work with and even transcend the hysterical qualities she possesses. We see this when she describes how Violet aggressively seduces Bill into leaving his wife, how she desires total fusion with the man she loves, even wanting to smell like him. When Leo takes Violet in his arms, he notices: "I smelled Bill – cigarettes, turpentine and sawdust." Violet also represents the hysterical attempt to deny the lack by taking possession of the phallus. After Bill's dead, she says to Leo: "There was always something I couldn't get to in him, something remote, and I wanted that thing I could never have. It kept me alive and it kept me in love, because whatever it was, I could never find it." (*What I Loved* 351)

The transitional space can also be used as a fictional weapon against the claustrophobic closeness of the symbiotical relation. In Oracle Night, the narrator's wife Grace is nearly killed and she looses her baby. In *What I loved*, Bill, the only man Violet will ever loved (and a heavy smoker like Paul Auster), is sentenced to death by Siri Hustvedt. One day, Violet comes home and finds him laying on the ground, with the portfolios with all his designs, his unfinished paintings against the wall, and the boxes with their uncanny scenes stored on shelves above it. Like his own father, Bill "dropped dead, fell to the ground and died." (*What I Loved* 248)

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"Our Offering is Language": Speech and communication disorders in the narrative of Don DeLillo

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For the past few decades, postmodernist novelists have been using and describing speech and language disorders in their works, showing a growing interest in picturing the ways in which individuals with their linguistic skills impaired relate to the social environment and organize their knowledge of reality. Mentioning just four examples, novels as different as Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1971), Paul Auster's *City of Glass* (1985), Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* (1997) and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) feature characters suffering from more or less explicitly defined speech disorders: selective mutism in Atwood's and Roy's characters, stuttering in Roth's terrifying Merry Levov or the deficient language acquisition process in Auster's feral child, Peter Stillman.

Don DeLillo (New York, 1936) seems to be a particularly relevant author in this context. Most of his novels contain one example or other of a character suffering from some disorder related to his or her linguistic skills: In *Ratner's Star* (1976), a character known as "the scream lady" suffers attacks of what appears to be a combination of logorrhea, coprolalia and verbigeration (*RS* 249).[1] In *The Body Artist* (2001) a stranger with his linguistic skills severely damaged appears at Lauren Hartke's door. DeLillo's portrayal of Lee Harvey Oswald in *Libra* (1988) emphasizes the character's dyslexia or "word-blindness" (*L* 166), which is diagnosed by KGB recruitment agents when he passes the tests in order to become a spy for the Soviet Union. In *White Noise* (1985), Wilder, the youngest child of the Gladney family, suffers from either autism or selective mutism. And in *Great Jones Street* (1973), rock star Bucky Wunderlick suffers a transitory episode of global aphasia.

After this enumeration of more or less accurately diagnosed disorders, I should make clear that my interest in this topic lays not so much on the clinical description of them, but on the effects they have in literary terms. The aims of this paper are mainly two: first, to analyze in detail some instances

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[1] References to DeLillo's works will be made parenthetically and identified by initials – *Ratner's Star*: RS; *White Noise*: WN; *Libra*: L; *Great Jones Street*: GJS; *The Body Artist*: BA. Full reference will be given in the "Works Cited" section.

of speech disorders in DeLillo's novels in the wider context of his interest in abnormal linguistic behaviors including babble or glossolalia. Second, to locate their narrative function in the novels, which can be said to be analogous to that of other narrative elements related to isolation and anti-social behaviors, in the literary context of modernist and postmodernist fiction.

In order to illustrate DeLillo's use of speech and communication disorders I will focus on the exposition of two case stories: Mr. Tuttle, from *The Body Artist* and Bucky Wunderlick, from *Great Jones Street*. Mr. Tuttle shows severe impairment of his comprehension capacity, while his output is fluent. His verbal output is the only clue we have as to what his condition may be: he might suffer from autism, specific language impairment (SLI) or some form of fluent aphasia. *Great Jones Street* (1973) ends with an episode of global aphasia suffered by its protagonist as a consequence of drug consumption. The description of its effects coincides with usual definitions of aphasia: "It's a drug that affects one or more areas of the left sector of the brain. Language sector […] Loss of speech in other words" (*GJS* 255).[2] Mr. Tuttle's condition is fluent and seems to be permanent, while Bucky's is non fluent but temporary.

Both novels offer abundant evidence of the characters' verbal output, which might help us to identify their disorders. Mr. Tuttle's speech consists of fragments of jargon and repetition of phrases – "'If there is another language you speak' she told him, 'say some words'. 'Say some words'" (*BA* 55); "Say some words to say some words" (*BA* 55); "The word for moonlight is moonlight" (*BA* 82) – and of agrammatical sentences – "It is not able" (*BA* 43) – which show his incapacity to establish a conversation with another person. This is what Lauren, the woman at whose door he mysteriously appears, says about him: "There's a code in the simplest conversation that tells the speakers what's going on outside the bare acoustics. This was missing when they talked" (*BA* 65). Moreover, Mr. Tuttle has an almost miraculous ability to imitate other people's voices, as an extreme form of echolalia – "It wasn't outright impersonation but she heard elements of her voice, the clipped delivery, the slight buzz deep in the throat, her pitch, her sound" (*BA* 50). He is able to reproduce fragments of conversations they had in the past – "But it was Rey's voice she was hearing. The representation was close, the accent and dragged vowels, the intimate differences, the articulations produced in one vocal apparatus and not another, things she'd known in Rey's voice, and only Rey's" (*BA* 61) – and, according to Lauren's impression, conversations they will have in the future: "She listened to him say, Don't touch it. I'll clean it up later […] Then she said it herself, some days later" (*BA* 98). To sum up, while Mr. Tuttle's output remains fluent, it seems to be affected by his incapacity to process input; his paraphasic speech, together with his compulsion to reproduce other people's speech, may help us to conclude that he suffers from transcortical mixed aphasia.[3]

Bucky's speech is more severely impaired during his aphasic episode, which is described by another character in the following terms: "You'll be perfectly healthy. You won't be able to make words, that's all. They just won't come into your mind the way they normally do and the way we all take for granted they will. Sounds yes. Sounds galore. But no words" (*GJS* 255). While he is completely unable to produce any words, he is still able to emit inarticulate sounds: "I made interesting and original sounds. I looked out of the window and moaned (quietly) at the lumbering trucks…" (*GJS* 264). As

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[2] See Sarno, 1998: 25: "Aphasia is a disturbance of the complex process of comprehending and formulating verbal messages that results from newly acquired disease of the central nervous system (CNS)"; from the National Aphasia Association: "Aphasia is an impairment of language, affecting the production or comprehension of speech and the ability to read or write. Aphasia is always due to injury to the brain-most commonly from a stroke, particularly in older individuals. But brain injuries resulting in aphasia may also arise from head trauma, from brain tumors, or from infections".

[3] Defined by the National Academy of Neuropsychology as follows: "A rare aphasic disorder involves the isolation of both Broca's and Wernicke's areas. The patient has a virtual compulsion to repeat utterances to the point of appearing echolalic. Other language abilities, such as comprehension, naming, expression, and reading are impaired. The patient may not utter any language unless spoken to".

to his comprehension capacity, it is not easy to evaluate the extent of his impairment, for he does not have direct intercourse with anyone during his aphasic episode. As he walks the streets like a somnambulist, he seems to keep his capacity to register what other people perform, though most of the times as shouts and cries: "the man wailed to the blank windows above him. It was a religious cry he produced, evocative of mosques and quaking sunsets" (*GJS* 259); "[…] those whose only peace was in shouting ever more loudly" (*GJS* 263). Bucky's could be a case of global aphasia, as his language function as a whole seems to be affected.

From a narratological perspective, we must note in the first place that Bucky's episode is narrated retrospectively by himself – "the drug was less than lasting in its effect" (*GJS* 264) – while Mr. Tuttle's condition is described and reflected upon from Lauren's point of view. While Bucky will undergo a drastic impairment in his communicative skills, just to report on it afterwards, Lauren will bear witness to Mr. Tuttle's condition simultaneously, thus bridging the communicative gap between him and the narrative form and therefore, between him and the reader. Both narrators, it should be noted, are artists whose habitual modes of expression are different from verbal communication: Bucky is a musician; Lauren is the body artist mentioned in the title. We should note as well that both cases of communication impairment take place in contexts of physical isolation. Lauren and Mr. Tuttle live in an isolated house in an indeterminate coastal area; Bucky retreats to a decrepit apartment in an obscure New York City suburb. In both cases, there is an attempt on the part of protagonists to withdraw from their social environments.

For both Mr. Tuttle and Bucky, the narrative suggests that their cognition is affected by their aphasia. In this way, the novels seem to take a position regarding the historical debate on whether "thinking" is affected by aphasia or not (see Varley, 128; Sarno, 11) and, in a wider context, they enter the realm of the discussion on linguistic determinism. As a consequence of their disorders, both their image of themselves and their perception of the world are affected. As it has been observed in psychological practice, "the loss of normal communication strikes at the very roots of a person's sense of self inasmuch as identity is based primarily on relationships which, in turn, depend largely on communication" (Sarno, 569; see also Jonker, 41). Mr. Tuttle's realm of perception and existence is described by Lauren as an indeterminate state external to the linguistic organization of time and space: "He hasn't learned the language. There has to be an imaginary point, a nonplace where language intersects with our perceptions of time and space, and he is a stranger at this crossing, without words or bearings" (*BA* 99). Living without language makes Mr. Tuttle a stranger in the world, without means to interact with it. In this passage, the topographical metaphorization of the linguistic order as a grid – suggested by terms as "imaginary point," "intersect," "crossing" – closely resembles B. L. Whorf's famous statement on the strongest version of linguistic determinism: "We cut nature up, organize it into concepts and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it this way – an agreement that holds thought or speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language" (Whorf, 213-214). As for Bucky, his newly acquired condition results in an estranged perception of the objects and people around him. The lack of this linguistic grid to measure reality affects his perception of it even in spatial terms: "Having no words for the things around me affected my movements across the room. I walked more slowly, as though in fear of objects, all things with names unknown to me" (*GJS* 264).

In narrative terms, it must be noted that even if both stories are told by normally fluent characters, they are affected by characters' estranged perception of the world: Bucky's later reconstruction of his aphasic episode shows the traces of his deformed perception of street sounds and people's voices; Lauren's story (in free indirect discourse) is affected by her relationship with Mr. Tuttle, as her narrative ends up imitating his speech. The first narrative effect of the characters' disorders in the novels is defamiliarization, defined by Russian formalists as the capacity of literary language to alter habitual perceptions of reality through the verbal manipulation of representation (Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 5-24). The representation of reality in both novels is that of a "deforming mirror," and it connects with other literary works in which characters with their linguistic or cognitive skills impaired tell a story, from the Benji section of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) to Jonathan Lethem's *Motherless Brooklyn* (1999).

What is most interesting about DeLillo's portrayal of speech disorders in his novels is that they are recurrently described as desirable states, thus contradicting all evidence on real aphasic patients, who usually regard their condition as traumatic, sometimes to the point of undergoing a "catastrophic reaction" (see Goldstein, cf. Sarno, 569-570). In *Great Jones Street*, however, Bucky remembers his aphasic period as one of absolute happiness: "I was unreasonably happy, subsisting in blessed circumstance, thinking of myself as a kind of living chant" (*GJS* 264). Lauren, on the other hand, contemplates Mr. Tuttle with admiration and almost envy: "She wanted to chant with him, to fall in and out of time, or words, or things, whatever he was doing" (*BA* 74). In both novels, aphasia is described as a means of liberation from usual modes of perception and expression – "Maybe he falls, he slides, if that is a useful word, from his experience of an objective world, the deepest description of space-time" (*BA* 83).

Bucky's slow recovery of speech, moreover, will be described as a process of failure to remain in that non-verbal realm: "*Mouth* was the first word to reach me, dropping from one speech mechanism to the other. It happened while I was looking at myself in the mirror, examining its strange parts, *hanu*, *ous*, *leb*, *oog*, *nakka*, and when I opened my mouth out came the word for that part, word instead of sound, *mouth*, startling me" (*GJS* 264). As Christopher Donovan has noted in relation to *Great Jones Street*, "Bucky longs for a pristine state of language, and to this end he endeavors to strip away all the most frivolous aspects of our modern tongue in order to reach an elemental core, equivalent to the state of the baby at the moment of birth" (Donovan, 46). Bucky attempts to attain "permanent withdrawal to that unimprinted level where all sound is silken and nothing erodes in the mad weather of language" (*GJS* 265). He talks about a pure, nonreferential form of language that appears throughout DeLillo's novels, often described as "pure chant:" "It was pure chant, transparent, or was he saying something to her?" (*BA* 75), wonders Lauren in *The Body Artist*, but the same expression can be found in *White Noise* (1985) or *Underworld* (1997) as well. It relates every abnormal linguistic behavior in his novels through the same mystical rhetoric of a conception of an alternative form of communication outside the grounds of conventional meanings.

At this point, DeLillo's concerns about language apparently depart from Whorfian determinism, for he seems to hint at a point or a state in which individuals can be completely free from language: the "unimprinted level" mentioned above. I suggest that "unimprinted" lends itself to Lacanian interpretation in terms of the negation of "double inscription": DeLillo seems to suggest a realm beyond or beneath conscience that is not formulated in linguistic terms. Bucky and Lauren long for what Leonard Wilcox has called, in reference to Lacan, "the return of the Real:" "Occasioned by an eruption of contingency, it involves a shock of recognition, a disturbance in the symbolic world of the subject" (Wilcox, 121). Though I am not qualified to offer a comprehensive Lacanian interpretation of these novels, I would like to point out, nevertheless, how Lacan's concept of the (pre-verbal) Real and the possibility to encounter it only in those instants he calls the "tuché" might be illuminating for the understanding of Bucky's – and other DeLillo characters' – longing for the "unimprinted level" of sound.

DeLillo's intuitive notion of a pure, pre-referential language, has been repeatedly expressed in his writings in terms charged with religious and mystical overtones. When Lauren tries to join Mr. Tuttle in his gibberish in *The Body Artist*, for instance, her attempt is narrated in terms that resemble those of mystical poetry: "This is the point, yes, this is the stir of the amazement. And some terror at the edge, or fear of believing, some displacement of self, but this is the point, this is the wedge into ecstasy, the old deep meaning of the word, your eyes rolling upward in your skull" (*BA* 75). Pure chant is a means to attain that "displacement of self," literally an attempt to escape from oneself: by escaping from the linguistic order, DeLillo's characters can escape from their conscious being, as formulated in the symbolic order.

This account of two speech and communication disorders in DeLillo's fiction should be enough to show that his aim when using them in his novels is not to provide accurate accounts of those pathologies, but to use them as an excuse for reflection on the nature of language. It could be said that speech disorders often lead in DeLillo's novels to a reflection on the nature of language itself, pointing to what Arnold Weinstein describes as his "visionary concern with language" (289). In both cases the emphasis is laid in the characters' perception and narrative representation of reality as a consequence

of their disorders and in the consideration of their state as a desirable one, as long as it is understood as liberation from any linguistic order. In this sense, both Mr. Tuttle's and Bucky's cases should be understood in the general context of other abnormal linguistic behaviors in DeLillo's fiction, such as the episode of glossolalia or "speaking in tongues" narrated at the end of *The Names* (1982), the fascination with infant babbling in *White Noise* or the different attempts on the part of several characters in *End Zone* (1972) or *Underworld* to attain a state of quasi-mystical speechlessness which provides the happiness and serenity mentioned by Bucky. Moreover, this "displacement of self" finds parallel behaviors in other ascetic impulses like physical isolation or the imposition of severe self-discipline, drawing what Mark Osteen has called "a pattern of withdrawal" in DeLillo's characters (450).

Another focus for the interpretation of the narrative function played by abnormal linguistic behaviors in DeLillo can be found in the linguistic construction of social reality, and in a general dialectical frame in which language is described in ideological terms. Going back to Whorf's statement: "we are parties to an agreement […] we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees" (214). In twentieth century culture, the awareness that language is the frame on which all world-views are cast is followed by the conviction that all language is ideological, in the sense that its normative uses are determined by particular power structures operating through institutional (and hence collective) discourses: political, scientific, artistic, etc. – formulated by Russian formalism, particularly in the work of V. Voloshinov, and also by authors such as Louis Althusser or Michel Foucault. Voloshinov writes in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*: "The word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence" (13). The clearest expression of this view can be found in *Great Jones Street*, when the drug administered to Bucky is said to have been created by a governmental secret agency – tentatively known in the novel as the "language warfare department" (*GJS* 255) – as a means to control subversive groups: "Maybe they think the best way to silence troublemakers is literally" (ibid). In *The Body Artist*, Lauren considers the possibility of calling mental hospitals and asylums in order to find out about Mr. Tuttle's origin, and she thinks: "He didn't act crazy, only impaired in matters of articulation and comprehension. Why did she ever think there was something psychotic about him except in the sense that people who threaten our assumptions are always believed to be mad?" (*BA* 97). This idea was formulated in very similar terms by Michel Foucault in *Histoire de la folie* (1961), and it points to the underlying power structure in any formulation of what is normal, sane or appropriate in a particular social context. In this case, as Lauren ponders, her initial consideration of Mr. Tuttle as a mad person betrays the mechanism by which her perception of reality protects itself against threats to its epistemological integrity.

In this context, abnormal linguistic behaviors can be easily perceived as a threat to those power structures, thus providing a possibility of escape from them to those characters affected by particular disorders. In *The Body Artist*, Mr. Tuttle is said to be free from language and time codes, basic structures which impose order upon human existence: "If there is no sequential order except for what we engender to make us safe in the world, then maybe it is possible, what, to cross from one nameless state to another, except that it clearly isn't" (*BA* 83). If silence, speechlessness or any deviation from what is usually named "normal" speech is described as a desirable state in DeLillo's novels, it is because of the way in which those abnormal linguistic forms provide an unmapped area in power structures. In this sense, speech disorders in DeLillo's narrative serve the aesthetic and sociological role of resistance often attributed to silence or to any abnormal use of language in previous literary traditions, such as the interest in extremely alienated and isolated individuals in modernist and existentialist fiction and drama (Engelberg, 2001), on the one hand, and to the American anti-social tradition, on the other hand (Tanner, 1971).[4]

[4] A similar use of communication disorders has been made in the field of postcolonial literatures, where abnormal linguistic behaviors are explicitly related to the will to resist the colonizer's culture through the rejection of its language (See Dennis Lee, "Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in the Colonial Space" (1972) in Ashcroft et al. (Eds), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 397-401, London: Routledge, 1995). See the works of the already mentioned Arundhati Roy, the Caribbean-Canadian Marlene Nourbese Philip or the Jamaican Michelle Cliff.

Contemporary interest in speech disorders has very prominent antecedents in the Anglo-American tradition like Herman Melville's *Billy Budd Sailor*. In *City of Words*, Tony Tanner writes: "There is a profound quest for silence running right through American literature, even in its most prolix manifestations" (Tanner, 28). He is referring to a long tradition of anti-social retreat into silence and isolation as a means to rebel against any organized power structure that goes back to H. D. Thoreau, developing up to the second half of the twentieth century into the novels of William H. Gass – *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country* – or William H. Burroughs – *The Exterminator*, *Naked Lunch* – and the poems of Charles Simic – "Windy Evening" – or Mark Strand – "The Remains." Although Tanner refers to this tendency as characteristic of the American tradition, we must note that authors such as Virginia Woolf or Samuel Beckett were also obsessed by abnormal linguistic behaviors, thus linking DeLillo's aphasic characters to an ascendance that can be traced back to modernist and existentialist fiction.[5] As it has already been mentioned, modernist novelists and playwrights repeatedly exploited for narrative use characters who exhibited anomalous or pathologic linguistic behaviors to dramatize the modern individual's isolation or the collapse of traditional forms of communication (Engelberg, 2001).

DeLillo's interest in aphasic characters can only be fully understood in the literary context I have tried to briefly sketch. In this sense, it is worth mentioning Ihab Hassan's postmodernist poetics, designed precisely through the line I have just pointed at, linking modernist and postmodernist authors in what he called "The Literature of Silence:"[6]

> Silence refers to an avant-garde tradition of literature […] Silence implies alienation from reason, society and history, a reduction of all engagements in the created world of men, perhaps an abrogation of any communal existence […] Silence creates anti-languages. Some of them are utterly opaque, others completely transparent […] Silence fills the extreme states of the mind – void, madness, outrage, ecstasy, mystic trance – when ordinary discourse ceases to carry the burden of meaning. (Hassan, 13-14)

The literature of silence described by Hassan in this passage encompasses the uses of speech and communication disorders I have mentioned in this paper, and serves as a cue to sum up some conclusions: In the first place, DeLillo's use of aphasia and other disorders must be related to the recurrence of abnormal linguistic behaviors in his novels. Speech disorders in his narrative are a source for narrative defamiliarization, calling forth the Russian formalist concept of *ostranenie* or estrangement. They can be seen in turn as part of a wider dialectical narrative structure, which usually organizes his texts, often rendered in DeLillo's novels through a narrative pattern of ascetic withdrawal or extreme alienation attainable only through the renunciation to language or the creation of alternative forms of communication. This dialectic can be read as well in ideological terms, as the individual's attempts to escape from institutional discourses by means of linguistic behaviors considered abnormal by those institutions (political, medical, cultural). In his use of what Hassan calls "anti-languages," DeLillo joins a double literary tradition of radical individualism and aesthetic experimentation, which connects him to modernist and existentialist poetics of extremely alienated individualities. In his novels, then, speech disorders function as the only means to escape "the prison-house of language." The recurrent use of abnormal forms of communication provides a defamiliarized narrative perspective on reality which proves to be the real ground for

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[5] In *Molloy*, for instance, Beckett writes: "You would do better, at least no worse, to obliterate texts than to blacken margins, to fill in the holes of words till all is blank and flat and the whole ghastly business looks like what it is, senseless, speechless, issueless misery" (Beckett, 1979: 14). See Michael Beausang, "*Watt*: Logic, Insanity, Aphasia", *Style* 30.3, 1996, 495-524.

[6] See also Susan Sontag's "The Aesthetics of Silence" (1969), in connection with DeLillo's mystic rhetoric aforementioned: "As the activity of the mystic must end in a *via negativa*, a theology of God's absence, a craving for the cloud of unknowingness beyond knowledge and for the silence beyond speech, so art must tend toward anti-art, the 'subject' […] the substitution of chance for intention, and the pursuit of silence" (Sontag, 1969: 4-5).

individual resistance to any concept of "normal" linguistic use in DeLillo's novels, thus becoming a central element in his narrative from a psychological, ideological and aesthetic perspective.

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The excessive element of the hero in both the poetic and artistic expression of Nikos Engonopoulos: The case study of "*Bolivar*" and the contemporary revival of Greek mythology

EVANGELIA DIAMANTOPOULOU (*)

It is, I think, in itself an heroic act to speak today of heroes and heroic excession in an era that is characterised as antiheroic. In earlier times – much earlier than the nineteenth century – the history of human achievement was not conceived of as anything but the history of heroic deeds which the distinguished dared to undertake and successfully managed to execute (J. P. Vernant, 1989: 145) and whose memory is still alive. But, nowadays, achievement is considered to be the transient personal flaunting in fields such as politics, economics, athletics and entertainment. Those people, indeed, inspire admiration bordering on deification, reverence, in other words, equal to the admiration for heroes of earlier times, adoration of idols. Our time is antiheroic, a time in which idols have substituted for heroes and the necessity for self-assertion and personal benefit wins over this collective development.

However, the question still remains as to the excess in human potential and the choices confronting an adventurous temperament extinguishing or at least neglecting fear in the face of danger. No matter how extraordinary and insane it might be, very often, heroic behaviour continues to enchant. This happens, possibly, because of the element of excess which is characterised, more than at any other time, by a convergence of the desire of modern man not to be hemmed in by individual "musts" of the technological civilization and a desire to return to the charm of the fairy-tales of his childhood years. This effort to accept the reality is never completed since no human being can be freed of the pressing necessity to unite an external and internal reality. That's why the adult secures a relief from this pressure with the immediate environment of the experience whose value is not called into question, just as a child is preoccupied in a game. (R. A. Segal, 2003: 34).

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FIGURE 1
Leandros

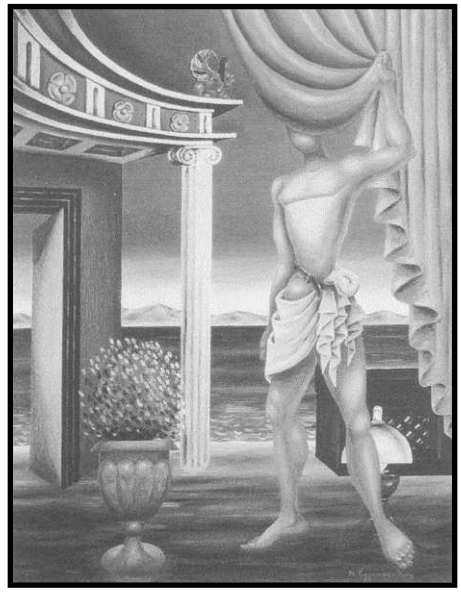
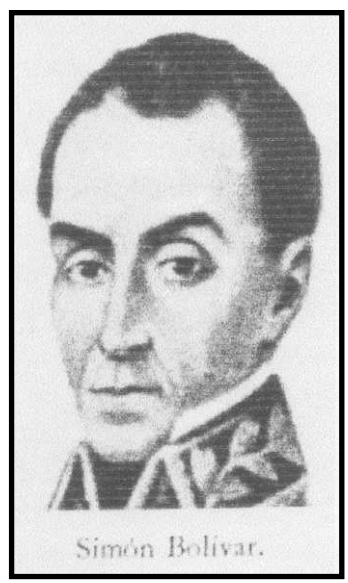


FIGURE 2
Nikos Engonopoulos

Many times, literature and art offer this immediate environment. Nikos Engonopoulos is one of the first surrealist poets – with Andreas Empirikos – and he might also be classified as the first Greek surrealist artist. Engonopoulos created an air – artistic and literary – in which he combined aspects of traditional Greek poetic and artistic forms with contemporary surrealistic elements. It is worth, in fact, mentioning that – even though the surrealist movement, which originated initially in France, confronted tradition negatively – not only in the Hispanic world but also in the Greek world, surrealism and tradition were combined creatively with the contemporary surrealistic opinion, perhaps because tradition is directly related to the psychological make up of those peoples. (Y. Andreadis, 2001: 77). This is the particular way in which Engonopoulos converses with the hero, not only when he paints but also when he composes verse.

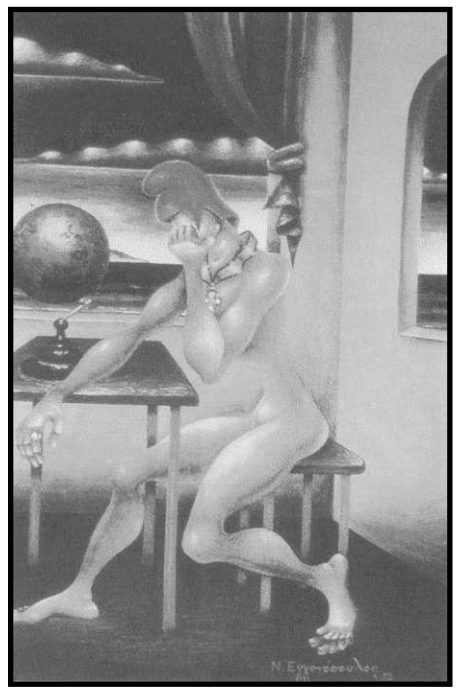
"*Bolivar*", which is perhaps his most important work of poetry, made surrealists well known as central players in greek spiritual life. It was written during the years 1942 and 1943, during the German occupation of Greece, and initially it circulated in hand-written form and was read at resistance gatherings. The reference to Simon Bolivar, whose name is connected with the struggle for indepedence in Latin American countries to such a degree that he is characterized as a liberator and is remembered as a hero, was in itself an act of resistence against German occupation. The reason is that in "*Bolivar*" of Engonopoulos the hero, despite being distant in both time and place, is reborn and reappears as a contemporary for which the poet is searching. The fact that as a subtitle of the work the phrase "*A Greek poem*" is written, is, in itself, important, in an attempt, maybe, of the writer to introduce this foreign hero into the drama of his sorely tried homeland, precisely because the heroes don't have a homeland or because their homeland is all the globe. Something analogous nevertheless, happens when Engonopoulos speaks about "*the severe and wonderful figures of Odysseus Androutsos and of Simon Bolivar*" which

FIGURE 3
Simón Bolivar



"*have both withstood the test of time, always alone and free, brave and strong*"[1]. It is interesting to draw parallels between Bolivar and Odysseus Androutsos Odysseus Androutsos was a Greek hero and freedom fighter of another historic moment, the Greek revolution against the Turks in 1821. Both Bolivar and Androutsos, even if contemporaries, didn't meet at all. Despite that fact, according to Engonopoulos, what connects them is their same unsubdued and striving thought and the same powerful presence in respective struggles for races and peoples. Nevertheless, the labyrinth is always known and there remains nothing other than to follow the same thread of the hero trail. (J. Campbell, 1998: 223). It is necessary for the hero to be strictly dedicated to his principles and with a superiority in the face of others to surrender his life to something greater than himself. Other than those liberal and fighting manifestations, Engonopoulos mentions both the element of singularity and of loneliness which accompanies Androutsos and Bolivar and quite possibly every heroic individual. It is that loneliness and singularity which distiguish each special and unique person or – as the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotelis said – each strange, in other words, distinguished individual whose essential attribute is melancholy, because he moves with tortuous frustration between personal prohibition and resistance to social coercion and exclusion. This melancholy, which is connected with real reactions of the being, and whose etymology indicates, melena choli, that is black bile, expresses the internal turmoil of the hero and the struggle of his resistance to the social conventions. (P. Rigopoulou, 2003: 390-402).

FIGURE 4
Odysseus thinking



[1] Translation into English by Paul-Stanley Aleksiewicz.

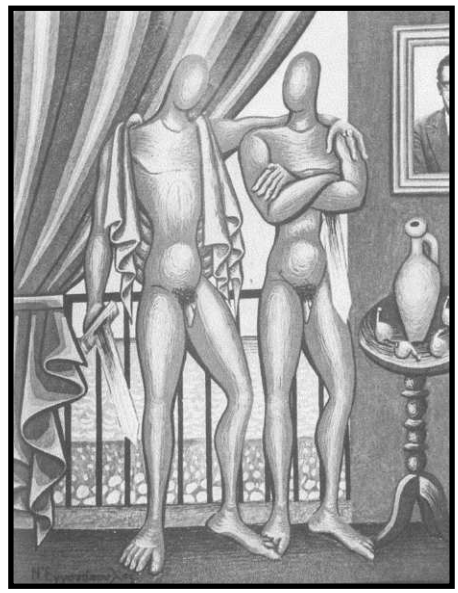
We can see that singular and melancholic hero in a painted work of Nikos Engonopoulos which is entitled "*Odysseus thinking*". It concerns the Homeric Odysseus even though nothing is visible that gives witness to the identity of the sacker of Troy. Here, the heroic form of Odysseus is depicted in the muscular naked male as a reference to the statues of Greek antiquity. The fact, however, that he sits pondering in a hunched position might divert us from the certainty of the power of the hero. It indicates, more, the man who is questioning what is happening around him, especially a warrior who is burdened by responsibility and ingenuity. This is shown not only by his singularity in an enigmatic building whose opening leads to a deserted area, but also by the globe on the table. The reference to the world with the globe which is clearly smaller than the human form, is, perhaps, the artist's proof that this world, our world, is too small for the greatness of the bodily and, more important, the spiritual form of the hero.

This vastness is celebrated when the poet Engonopoulos says: "*Bolivar, Name madeof and wood metal, You were a flower in the gardens of South America. You had all the nobility of flowers in your heart, in your hair, in your look. Your hands were huge as your heart, were dispensing both good and evil. As you crossed the mountains, the stars trembled, You were coming down the plains with your golden epaulettes bearing all the insignia of your grade, The gun hanging from your shoulder and your chest Uncovered, your body full of wounds*". In these words are excluded not only bodily but also mental capabilities of the hero to such an extent that they surpass human limits. Limbs from rigid or unbending materials, such as metal and wood depict his durable being. All his strength is concentrated in his arms, which are large and powerful, a strength which is capable at the same time of both good and evil, because the end of a struggle surely involves biological or spiritual death. In his presence, the stable and unperturbed elements of the universe quake, as happens in Greek popular poetry. So the poet intervenes and overturns natural laws in his attempt to present the intensity of Bolivar. The same, moreover, happens when he maps out America on the body of Bolivar saying: '*The Amazon and Orinoco rivers spring from your eyes The high mountains have their roots in your chest The Andean chain of mountains is your backbone. On the top of your head, my hero, run untamed horses and the wild buffaloes, the wealth of Argentina*". Engonopoulos adds, however, that dynamism with the spiritual greatness of the hero and those already mentioned geophysical elements give immeasurable support with its beauty. The fact that Bolivar's chest is presented bare is important, indeed, just as most of Engonopoulos's heroes in his painting are naked or semi-naked. In his work "*The Tyrantkillers*", Armodios and Aristoyeiton, the two Athenians who killed the tyrant Ipparchos in 514 B. C., are drawn naked and with one leg slightly forward, something which betrays the kouros of Ancient Greece. The naked body certainly shows the bodily force and also, at the same time, the individual who does not hesitate to confront danger, who reveals the nakedness of his body and reveals his willingness to compete and withstand the injuries that he might have to suffer in the attempt. The position of his body, the enormous limbs and exposed sword, as well as the golden colours which are all too familiar in Byzantine iconography and which also show the flesh, denote an individual presence of the two heroic forms. However, the two heads are faceless just as faceless as the global and everlasting hero is. The hero without a surname, a hero with which the poet Engonopoulos baptises Bolivar and gives him Greek citizenship when he mixes Greek national colours with the colours of Bolivar's native Indian forefathers, saying: "*And people were coming and to paint you*[2]*, as was the custom of Indian warriors with chalk, half white and half blue, so that you should look like a small chapel at a coast of Attica Like a church in the Tataula area*[3] *or a palace in a deserted town of Macedonia*". In the same way, Engonopoulos interferes with the painting and changes the

[2] On specific Cyclades islands, it is customary on religious festivals to paint the exterior of the church or the churchyard walls with whitewash and bluing.

[3] A densely – populated district of Constantinople.

FIGURE 5
The Tyrantkillers

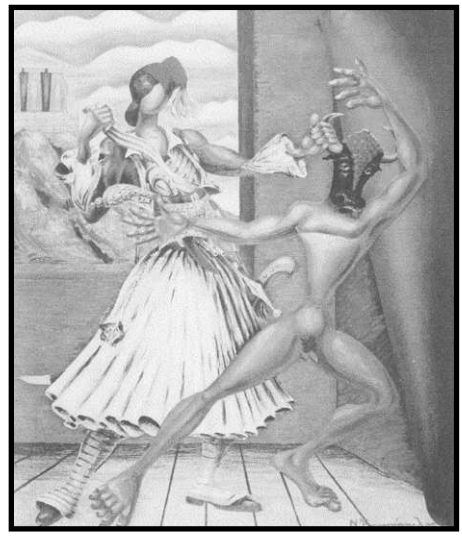


myth, by dressing Thesseus in the traditional skirt, the fustanella, of the Greek freedom fighter of 1821 in his work "*Thesseus and the Minotaur*". Thesseus is also alone with the Minotaur in an enigmatic room, like an isolated chapel and a deserted Macedonian town, like the ever – lonely path of the hero that he himself cuts. Even if lonely, however, the heroic presence induces a strong feeling of difference and revolutionary action. That's why Engonopoulos, speaking about the hero Bolivar, wants not only South America but also Greece to quake with his passing and to participate in a revolutionary act. He says: "*When you speak, terrible earthquakes ravage everything, From the imposing Patagonian deserts to the multicoloured islands, Volcanoes erupt in Peru and vomit their wrath to the heavens, The soil is shaking everywhere and the holy icons at Kastoria*[4]*, the silent city close to the lake, tremble*". This trembling is expressed both in a painted work of Engonopoulos with the title "*The liberator*". This concerns a work of 1940 and I believe that the date of the painting indicates a direct relation with the historic facts in Greece in that period. In this work, both acute colour changes as well as arching lines with which the body of the liberator is depicted, show the uncontrollable impulse, as if sweeping away everything in his path, as if he is the one who controls the flow of events. This is the same thing that Engonopoulos emphasises when he speaks about Bolivar: "*You saw for the first time the light in Caracas It was your own light Bolivar, as beforel you came, the whole of South America was buried in bitter darkness. Now your name is a burning torch illuminating America North and South and the*

[4] A pictureque lake-side town in Northern Greece.

Universe!" The fact that Engonopoulos uses the words universe and now is important because he irrevocably places Bolivar as a shining beacon in time and place of human existence. For that reason he claims that the liberating force and activity of Bolivar remains when the situation requires. He says: "*Bolivar! You were and are real, not a mere dream. When the wild hunters nail the wild eagles and the other wild birds and beasts above the wooden doors in the wild forests you come back to life and strike and you are yourself the hammer and the nail and the eagle*". And it is especially interesting that, according to Engonopoulos, the hero is reborn with the same characteristics of the predator and the prey.

FIGURE 6
Thesseus and the Minotaur

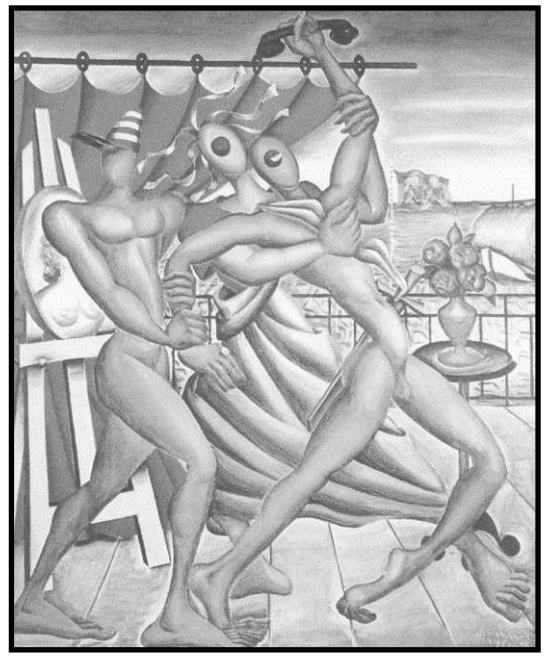


Nikos Engonopoulos, consequently, restores the liberator Bolivar restructuring the basic elements which characterise a hero: boldness to go to the front lines in dangerous, common struggles, stretching human limits and also a profound recognition of the individuality of his path, a profound recognition that he is both the dynamic and the feeble body of a struggle.

Nikos Engonopoulos doesn't bring back Bolivar speaking in anniversaries and festival celebrations because, in that way, the facts would be all the less real and historical and all the more imaginary and mythical and, finally, the heroic memory of Bolivar would become invalid. In contrast, he again poses the question of revolutionary tactics and he brings back the Latinamerican hero in occupied Greece and introduces him into its revolutionary struggle. For that reason in conclusion he says: "*Bolivar, you are beautiful like a Greek*", believing what the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates said: To be a Greek is nothing to do with origins but to do with nurture. (N. Engonopoulos, 1993: 49)

Might it be the case that this heroic nurture, this nurture which leads to the excession of our personal safety, is always tested in a time and place, when the conditions demand it? And could these conditions pose the question of a redefinition of history?

FIGURE 7
The liberator



Certainly, Nikos Engonopoulos adopts this opinion about heroes within both his paintings and his poems, when he refers to Greek nurture without, of course, taking possession of cultural chauvinism, related to cultural superiority and the "peculiarity" of the Greeks (Gellner, 2002: 45). Moreover, this further proves the transatlantic nature of his *Bolivar*. I believe, however, that appropriate upbringing can create only a leader and not a man who achieves heroic excess. After all, the effort to trace the "behavioural map" through the familiar origins – according to the opinion of Monica Mc Goldrick –[5] even when it can be accessed, often leads to contradictious conclusions. However, neither Freud's argument – and subsequently Rank's – who emphasise to the significance of children's fantasies related to parents, that drives its origin from the Oedipus myth, provides – I think – adequate explanations. Yet the argument of Aristotelis who places the concept of the hero into biological basis, speaking about the "black bile" that determines the heroic nature, proves the philosopher "one track minder" and excludes the free choice.

Thus, I conclude, that internal and external factors that consist the "behaviour of the hero", can not be interpreted by only one theory – psychoanalytical or not – as, at least, is proven from the different interpretations through which we defy a poem or a painting with heroic substance.

[5] "Geneogramma" according to Monica Mc Goldrick, 2002.

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De lo psicológico a lo literario: El caso de un escritor de los siglos XX y XXI

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La primera ficción narrativa de Medardo Fraile, uno de los maestros de la Edad de Oro del cuento español contemporáneo, surgió a la edad de cinco años. La temprana edad de su escritura nos lleva a investigar sobre los hechos que acompañaron su infancia y que pudieron despertar en él esa necesidad de crear. La lectura de su obra narrativa, vinculada a su biografía, así como alguno de sus numerosos artículos, nos confirman el efecto que produjo en Medardo Fraile niño la ausencia de su madre, fallecida meses antes del surgimiento de ese primer cuento. En el artículo "Crónica de mí mismo y alrededores" el escritor nos dice: "Hasta los cinco años, mi vida estuvo condicionada por la enfermedad de mi madre, que murió a los treinta y tres años de una cardiopatía de tipo reumático cuando yo tenía cinco" (70). En su novela *Autobiografía* encontramos este mismo hecho transformado en ficción:

> Al llegar al portal se soltó y subió la escalera a saltos. La puerta estaba entornada. La empujó y se lanzó a la alcoba a besar a su madre. Abrió la puerta y vio el cuarto vacío y el balcón abierto de par en par y, en un rincón, un montón de lana.
> Alguien le llevó al comedor, mientras el beso que le corría prisa dar, ahorrado tantos días, se le anudaba incrédulo en el cuerpo, en el vacío, en el aire. (236-237)

Los sentimientos de ausencia y soledad producidos en el jovencísimo Medardo Fraile por la muerte de su madre, influyen decisivamente en el desarrollo de su oficio. En "El interés del Psicoanálisis para la Estética" (1913) Freud nos recuerda que hay conexión entre las impresiones infantiles y los destinos del artista y sus obras, como reacciones a tales impulsos. La muerte de la madre de Medardo Fraile constituye un momento crucial aunque todavía temprano del desarrollo de su escritura, en ese despertar de su mente creadora. En "Más de cien cuentos en busca de su autor" el escritor nos describe ese momento inicial de ficción narrativa:

> El primer cuento que recuerdo – y si lo recuerdo será por algo –, lo hilvané, en Madrid, oralmente, a los cinco años, en un banco de la calle Princesa. Mi madre había muerto meses

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> antes y yo vivía en nuestra casa con mi padre, casi siempre ausente, y mi madrina. Aquel día salí del colegio necesitando un pañuelo, no sé por qué. Llegué a casa, no había nadie, volví a la calle y me senté en un banco. A mi lado, se sentó un niño y yo le conté la tragedia que suponía estar sin pañuelo y sin posibilidades de tenerlo, agregando por mi cuenta, que mi madrina, viuda y joven, se había marchado de casa para siempre con un cabo de infantería destinado en África. Aquel cuento callejero fue mi primer relato adivinatorio, o cuento de verdad, y aún no sé por qué elegí un banco público para contar la historia a un desconocido y por qué, con intuición genial, enjugué tanta crónica – orfandad, abandono – en aquel pañuelo de mocos o lágrimas, e inventé una mentira que dejó de serlo, porque mi madrina no se fue a África con el cabo, pero sí a casa de sus padres a los pocos meses. (*Documento Nacional* 202)

El mismo recuerdo de este episodio de la infancia lo encontramos ampliado en el cuento titulado "El banco" (*Escritura y verdad* [371]) en el que ni siquiera la ciudad puede paliar su sentimiento de abandono en aquellos momentos en que, sin entender la muerte – "[y]o no entendía la muerte" (372), nos dice el protagonista en el cuento –, siente la ausencia afectiva como consecuencia de ella.

Los contenidos inconscientes no se destruyen. Intentan aflorar constantemente a la consciencia bajo distintos disfraces que se derivan del inconsciente (Paraíso 73), en este caso en forma de literatura, deformando los hechos, que aparecen relatados por Medardo Fraile adulto de diferentes maneras en cada fragmento, con respecto a la realidad vivida en la niñez. Se produce por tanto una gran flexibilidad frente a lo narrado, haciendo correr la imaginación, apareciendo los hechos bajo distintos disfraces derivados del inconsciente en forma de ficción con detalles diferentes.

De acuerdo con la teoría analítica las experiencias de la niñez quedan más grabadas en la mente que las vividas *a posteriori*. De alguna forma las experiencias recientes o nuevas se asimilan a las antiguas inconscientemente. Jones nos dice que la respuesta corriente siempre está compuesta parcialmente por la respuesta a la actual situación, y parcialmente por las respuestas a situaciones antiguas, inconscientemente sentidas como similares (18). La preocupación actual de Medardo Fraile por el tema de la muerte, no sólo contenida en estos fragmentos, sino reiterada a lo largo de toda una obra cuentística coherente producida durante toda una vida, viene a ser una consecuencia de las experiencias que ha ido adquiriendo a lo largo de la misma, a las que se une la instalación en el inconsciente del efecto que produjo la muerte de su madre cuando él apenas contaba cinco años. Y derivada de esa persistencia podemos ver también una profunda preocupación por lo humano individual que se desprende de toda su obra. En su artículo "Crónica de mí mismo y alrededores" el escritor nos proporciona una pista sobre el origen de tal preocupación: "A los ocho años, yo había trasegado por fronteras humanas que mucha gente no pasa nunca, o lo hace más tarde" (70).

De estos recuerdos de infancia instalados en el inconsciente, surge en Fraile la necesidad de contar otros sucesos, como el hecho de ser más o menos violado cuando tenía unos tres años de edad, por una muchacha de dieciséis o diecisiete, que le pagó con una bola de cera.

Todo ello nos recuerda el caso estudiado por Freud "Un recuerdo infantil de Leonardo de Vinci" (1910) en el que analiza cómo el artista proyecta en su obra una reminiscencia de la infancia. "[S]ólo una vez incluye Leonardo en sus apuntaciones científicas algo referente a su infancia. En un lugar en el que trata del vuelo de los buitres se interrumpe de repente para seguir un recuerdo de sus más tempranos años infantiles que surge en su memoria:

> Parece como si me hallara predestinado a ocuparme tan ampliamente del buitre, pues uno de los primeros recuerdos de mi infancia es el de que, hallándome en la cuna, se me acercó uno de estos animales, me abrió la boca con su cola y me golpeó con ella, repetidamente, entre los labios". (*Obras Completas* 1588)

Podríamos decir que el caso de Medardo Fraile es bastante similar si tenemos en cuenta que se produce una proyección de un recuerdo infantil de contenido sexual en el terreno del arte, en este caso en la literatura, a manera de liberación de lo reprimido. Nuestro autor proyecta en su obra ese episodio

de la infancia en dos ocasiones. Una, en su cuento "El caramelo de limón". La otra, en su novela *Autobiografía*, donde nos relata el mismo recuerdo de manera diferente. En el relato, el sabor de un caramelo de limón despierta recuerdos de la infancia en el protagonista, cuando la sobrina de su madre le daba un caramelo, y lo ocurrido previamente, cuando una joven llamada Laura abusaba de él. Podemos observar el siguiente fragmento de la narración:

> Laura. Sí, ahora recuerdo lo de Laura. Yo no quería, me ponía triste. Ella cerraba los postigos y se arreglaba a oscuras en su habitación. Me besaba. Me estrujaba sobre sus piernas, hasta que abría la ventana y empezaba a peinarme. Y luego, siempre, en la cocina, me hacía al calor una bola de cera. (*Escritura y verdad* 146)

Contrastando el contenido de este fragmento con lo que nos dice el escritor en "Crónica de mí mismo y alrededores" comprobamos que se trata de un hecho tomado de la realidad – aunque naturalmente, aparezca transformado en la ficción –: "No voy a contar, por ejemplo, cómo fui más o menos violado a los tres años – o, quizá, menos – por una muchacha de dieciséis o diecisiete, que me pagó con una bola de cera" (73).

De nuevo estamos ante un "retorno a lo reprimido", ese mecanismo psicológico básico, que tantas veces hemos visto en la Literatura, por el que los elementos reprimidos, tienden a reaparecer porque en realidad no han sido eliminados y continúan estando ocultos en el inconsciente. En el relato, un objeto símbolo es un mero pretexto para que esto se produzca. Un caramelo de limón, su sabor, hace que reaparezcan en la mente del protagonista esos elementos que habían sido reprimidos y permanecían en el inconsciente como dormidos. No obstante, por actuación de la "censura", no reaparecen en su forma original sino sufriendo una deformación, para ser admitidos por el consciente, esto es, bajo la apariencia de una "formación de compromiso" (Paraíso 73). Las principales formaciones de compromiso descritas por Freud son el síntoma y el sueño, pero también cabe añadir la obra artística, como es el caso que analizamos, y todas las producciones del inconsciente.

Por otro lado, el hecho de convertir en ficción narrativa ese suceso de la infancia supone la expresión de unos contenidos inconscientes a modo de liberación, que se relatan tanto en el cuento como en la novela, pero en cambio no se desean contar en el artículo autobiográfico "Crónica de mí mismo y alrededores", en el que sólo se nos da noticia del episodio infantil y no se desea entrar en detalles – "No voy a contar, por ejemplo, cómo fui más o menos violado a los tres años…" –. En la ficción, la forma narrativa permite describir sentimientos de una manera natural y más libre – "[y]o no quería, me ponía triste" –, sin temor a que lo que se cuenta pueda molestar al lector, y se nos describen con igual naturalidad detalles a través de los cuales transcurre la acción – "[e]lla cerraba los postigos y se arreglaba a oscuras en su habitación. Me besaba. Me estrujaba sobre sus piernas, hasta que habría la ventana y empezaba a peinarme" –.

Podemos ver cómo se relata el mismo hecho en la novela:

> Diana estaba delante de él mirándole, se metió las manos por debajo del vestido, se quitó las bragas con un movimiento rápido y las puso en la percha. Se tumbó boca arriba. Se abrió de piernas. Cogió a Manuel y lo puso encima de ella. Le acarició el pelo, le besó en la boca, manoseó, un rato, el escroto y la pistolilla del niño y luego hizo que todo coincidiera con una carne oscura y temblona y un matojo tibio de pelos que buscaban el dedo orinoso de Manuel como las cuerdas de un guitarrillo. Manuel chapoteaba, torpe. Diana le apretó contra sí y le preguntó bajito:
> – ¿Tienes ganas de orinar, Manuel? ¡Mea! ¡Anda, mea!
> A poco, estaban en la cocina. Ella encendió la vela y le hizo una bola de cera a Manuel que desilusionó al niño por ser pequeña y no del todo blanca; tenía vetas oscuras como sapos. (*Autobiografía* 38-39)

La descripción del suceso es más larga, mucho más explícita y detallada. Corrobora lo que acabamos de decir con respecto al pudor del escritor al comentar el suceso en el artículo, y la expresión libre – y transformación – en la novela de los contenidos que habían perdurado en el inconsciente.

No fue fruto de la casualidad el hecho de que los cuentos de Fraile fueran galardonados con los mejores premios. Más bien fue resultado del reconocimiento de una originalidad – destacaban por ser unos relatos distintos, peculiares –, de un acertado tratamiento temático que se servía de la más fina y sutil ironía. Hoy día continúan sorprendiendo al lector estos valores en sus nuevas narraciones, especialmente por su visión crítica y humorística.

La conexión que se produce entre la intención del escritor y la captación del humor por parte del lector, hace posible y condiciona el placer. En el caso de los cuentos de Medardo Fraile, la conexión con el lector es inmediata. Sólo basta una palabra, una frase, la actitud y características de un personaje, o la evocación de un ambiente, para que la mente del lector se ponga en movimiento y se produzca dicha colaboración.

Podríamos decir que el humor está presente en la mayor parte de sus cuentos. Pero, ¿cómo es este humor? Acostumbrados como estamos a encontrar tan a menudo en la literatura española una oscilación entre la austera severidad y el cruel sarcasmo (Amorós 150), nos sorprende hallar en nuestro escritor una ironía tierna y tolerante, una visión del mundo comprensiva y amable, a la manera de Miguel de Cervantes, quien nos relataba con dolorosa humanidad sonriente, lo que acaecía a nuestro querido caballero andante Don Quitote y a su escudero Sancho. Para Medardo Fraile "el escritor humorista no es, probablemente un hombre que quiere hacer reír, sino un hombre al que las cosas llamadas serias le hacen reír y trata de que las veamos como él las ve, convirtiéndolas en material de derribo, desmontándolas ante nosotros. El humorista desea que el mundo sea serio, y aporta su esfuerzo con un sólo fallo sustancial, importante: que nos hace reír o sonreír. Porque lo que no advierte casi nunca al lector medio de humor cuando sonríe es que lo hace de sí mismo y de cuanto le rodea" ("Maestro de lo trivial").

En sus relatos se produce un distanciamiento para desdramatizar las situaciones, para evitar la expresión directa de las emociones. Elige la vía indirecta con el fin de suavizar y restar gravedad a lo que cuenta. Por supuesto, esta maestría en el arte de la sugerencia, se convierte en un elemento caracterizador de su prosa. Este excelente dominio del humor y de la ironía como elementos distanciadores, hacen de Medardo Fraile un escritor bastante especial dentro de la literatura española de su generación.

Es muy habitual encontrar en sus cuentos una desdramatización de la muerte a través del humor, así ocurre en uno que lleva por título "Duelo". Hemos comentado al comienzo de nuestro trabajo la relevancia que adquiere ese tema en la mente de nuestro escritor debido a circunstancias de tipo autobiográfico, por lo que en un primer momento nos sorprende la forma de comenzar este relato: "En Leicester, ha muerto un viejo cuando trataba de abrir un tarro de mermelada" (*Escritura y verdad* 489). No obstante, si recordamos a Freud, comprendemos que "[e]l humor es entonces un medio de conseguir placer a pesar de los afectos dolorosos que a ello se oponen y aparece en sustitución de los mismos". Además, "[n]o tenemos, pues, más remedio que admitir que el placer del humor surge a costa del desarrollo del afecto cohibido; esto es, del ahorro de un gasto de afecto" (*Obras Completas* 1162).

María del Pilar Palomo ha señalado el particular uso que Medardo Fraile hace del humor. "[E]s absolutamente lógico que no encontremos rasgos de humor negro ni la sátira hiriente en sus relatos, salvo en los de clara intencionalidad de crítica social (y aun en éstos, en pocas ocasiones)" (*Cuentos de verdad* 51). Por ejemplo leemos en el relato "El preso" que: "en su celda había sólo un duro camastro, un cantarillo con agua y un trozo de pan. En realidad, no se comía mal en la cárcel, pero cada preso tenía pan y agua, porque el director cuidaba los detalles que dan a las celdas un aspecto cruel" (*Escritura y verdad* 112). Desde el punto de vista del escritor, podríamos decir que el humor tiene una función protectora, pues consiste en la anulación de algo doloroso. Y al lector, le ahorra un sentimiento. Por eso Freud define el "placer" del humor como "gasto de sentimiento ahorrado".

Según él, lo sobresaliente del humor está en la confirmación de que el yo es invulnerable y por tanto, no puede ser afectado por el dolor que proviene del exterior. Así, en este relato hay una negación de la crueldad que supone vivir en una celda, y el escritor nos dice que no se comía mal y que el director cuidaba los detalles que dan a las celdas un aspecto cruel. De este modo, oponiendo

resistencia – porque el humor es rebelde, como nos recuerda Isabel Paraíso (113) –, se rebela y supera las severas condiciones impuestas por la realidad.

En "Ruptura", muere la mujer de Dionisio, el protagonista. Medardo Fraile describe la muerte desprovista de dramatismo, se produce un distanciamiento a través del humor y un no querer enfrentar la realidad del personaje al final del relato, cuando éste le dice a su mujer muerta: "– Ahora no me quieres hablar... Bueno... Al fin sabes algo que yo no sé..." (*Escritura y verdad* 483). De esta forma rehuye el sufrimiento, haciendo ver que su mujer no ha muerto y que lo único que ocurre es que no quiere hablar con él. Se produce una autodefensa contra el dolor así como un elevarse por encima de las circunstancias.

"No es indiferente lo que un hombre cree recordar de su niñez (nos dice Freud en 'Un recuerdo infantil de Leonardo de Vinci' 1910), pues detrás de los restos de recuerdos incomprensibles para el mismo sujeto se ocultan siempre preciosos testimonios de los rasgos más importantes de su desarrollo anímico". En el caso de Medardo Fraile, por supuesto no sólo no es indiferente, sino necesario, pues de lo psicológico surge lo literario y relacionado con esos recuerdos infantiles se halla el nacimiento de su narrativa.

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The psychology of the terrorist based on Doris Lessing's vision (*)

LÁSZLÓ HALÁSZ (**)

We are in London in the seventies or eighties of the 20th century. All unemployed, Alice and his lover, Jasper, and their friends are moving into a dirty, deserted house. Thirty-five-year-old Alice was a good student at the university but never tried to get a job. Her rather wealthy parents divorced long ago. Jasper was not a student because of his poor school achievement and also failed to find a job. Previously, Alice had lived with her lover in her mother's appartment, although her lover had called her mother a bourgeois pig. Neither Alice's mother, nor her father is willing to help them financially. Also, they are not prepared to give them any help in getting permission from the Council to live in the house. Alice's girlfriend gives her Ł50 and feels sorry for her. *You are such a good girl, Alice, why can't you choose yourself someone you should have a relationship with someone* (Lessing, 1985: 36).

Alice directs the cleaning work in the house, helps the others (who are younger than she is) and handles the negotiations with the Council. As the money she has obtained from her girlfriend is not enough for Jasper, Alice steals Ł300 from her father, then another Ł1000 from his shop. She becomes acquainted with a Comrade Andrew in the neighbourhood. He would like to arrange for her a course in computer training, *which would be a sufficient basis on which an intelligent woman like her could build* (Lessing, ibid., 165). Then she could get a good job and flat and live an ordinary life. Alice does not see clearly who Comrade Andrew is, and does not want to live a middle-class life and wait for instructions. Comrade Andrew knows that Jasper and his friends have failed to offer their services to the Irish comrades and now that their plan is to go to the Soviet Union as tourists. He tries to persuade Alice to leave Jasper and the others. *They are playing, Alice, like little children with explosives. They are very dangerous people. Dangerous to themselves and to others* (Lessing, ibid., 227). Andrew admits that he is half-Russian and half-Irish born, and that because of his duties sometimes disappears. He disappears again, but sends Ł500 to Alice although she has not asked him to do so. Two young men brings big parcels. Next day a man warns Alice that the Ł500 was to all intents and purposes a contract and that her duty is to do with the material as they wish. Alice is suspicious that the man is an authoritarian Russian and protests against any sort of instruction. One night she and her girlfriend carry a bomb to

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a concrete block in front of a Council building. The noise of the detonation is rather significant, but they are not satisfied with it. The members of the group discuss the advantages and disadvantages of blowing up a railway station, a restaurant or an important public building. Alice finds their ideas wilder and wilder. She goes to her mother.

Jasper steals a car to carry a bomb. Alice worries that they are unable to calculate who will be there when the bomb explodes. She would not like the explosion to happen during the night. But the others do not accept her proposal because their aim is to achieve the greatest possible effect in order that their action should get into the media. They think that the best place and time for the explosion would be in front of a big hotel at the beginning of the rush hour. Just before Alice starts out for the scene, a man with an English accent appears and is interested in Comrade Andrew. Alice would like to hurry, but says that if the visitor meets Andrew, he should tell him not to send anything because they, the independently-minded British communists would throw away everything. The visitor proposes a meeting the next day in a restaurant.

Alice and her comrades go by Underground while Jasper drives the car with one of their woman-comrades. Alice thinks her lover is a bad driver, one who would panic in an emergency. She feels a strong pressure in the pit of her stomach when she thinks that they could murder people and calls the Samaratins from a telephone booth to come quickly as there is to be a bomb in a car. But instead of the correct address she gives another one and adds: *It's the I. R. A., freedom for Ireland! For a united Ireland and peace to all mankind!* (Lessing, ibid., 353) Finally the car appears, but Jasper has caused a minor accident and that is why his woman-comrade is driving it. She cannot park and when she eventually finds a place, parks badly, driving the car violently up on the pavement. Jasper is able to get out but not his woman comrade. The bomb explodes and the car flies apart. *All down the side of the hotel, it was a scene of disaster bodies on the pavement, some lying still, some struggling to rise bits of metal, of shattered glass, handbag, masonry, blood* (Lessing, ibid., 353).

Returning home, Alice and Jasper listen to the news that five people had died and that twenty-three had been seriously hurt. The I. R. A. had accepted no responsibility. Alice cannot speak of her telephone call because this would destroy the friend's trust in her. Jasper and his friends decide it is time to leave the house. Alice, however, stays there and views her lover's dispassionate departure with some resignation. She listens to the news that one of the wounded, a fifteen-year-old girl is dying. The I. R. A. says in a declaration that the explosion was not their work, and that in any event they do not bring the death of innocent people. Alice is laughing in her despair. The house is empty, the women have gone as well. Alice thinks tenderly that the the betrayed house is her achievement. She would like to go to one of her acquantainces for a talk. But she realizes that she cannot do it. *No, there 'd only be a lot of silly talk about the I. R. A. and the bombing. Ordinary people simply didn's understand and it was no good expecting them to... Poor things, poor things, they simply don't understand – as if she had her arms around all the poor silly ordinary people in the world* (Lessing, ibid., 366).

Alice is thinking. *After all, if publicity was the aim, then they had certainly achieved that! All of them knew their lives were at risk, the moment they understood this sort of thing, decided to become terrorists. She could not remember a point when she had said, 'I am a terrorist, I don't mind being killed.' (...) I was all the time waiting for something* to start *– she thought and on face came a small scared incredulous smile at the inappropriateness of it. Had she not believed that the bomb was serious, then? No, not really she had gone along with it, while feeling it was not right and behind that was the thought that serious work (...) would come later* (Lessing, ibid., 367).

She remembers the man whom she will meet. He certainly is not a Russian perhaps he is a member of the British counter-intelligence. She does not remember exactly what she told him the previous day, but she knows that she has told him nothing about the material. She imagines that they will have a nice lunch and speak of nothing disagreable.

I understand Alice much less than I do not understand her, although the narrator describes not only Alice's circumstances, but also her actual state of consciousness. The reader is often in her consciousness, sharing in her view of people and their situations. Alice's perspective cannot be, however, separated

from Lessing's. Thus the reader changes from a narrow perspective to a well-informed one and moves away from that of Alice (Greene, 1994: 214).

She lived during her youth in good circumstances. Even her appearance was favourable and she did not have any difficulties during her student years. She had a degree, which made possible a successful career even if she showed no signs of a deeper interest. Although she has never had a place of work, I cannot think of her as workshy. She was always busy. She was diligent and worked hard, even at the dirtiest jobs at home. Her sense of reality worked very well, too. She was steady with the Council, she was efficient and careful. She did everything for the community, more precisely because by no means did she wish to separate herself from the group. Although she stole from her father, she regarded herself as a revolutionary, not as a thief. At the same time, she always was honest.

She connected her life to that of Jasper, who had exploited her. She felt that she stuck to her lover for reasons other than the sex, and nobody was able to understand her attachment. Jasper was the guarantee of the way of life that gave sense to Alice's existence. This way of life, however, meant a need not only for being endangered, but also for being subjected to brutal force, even to force more brutal than Jasper's. During demonstrations *she knew that they would all be arrested at the slightest provocation. She yearned for it, longed for the moment when she would feel the rough violence of the policemen's hands on her shoulders, would let herself go limp, would be dragged to the van...* (Lessing, ibid., 237). Presumably, Alice's longing for even physical subjection to an irresistable power shows that she was attracted to Jasper in spite of his harshness, but because of it, and that in the depth of her being she did not find this too much, but rather too little.

At the same time, no doubt that she was the awakening conscience itself. When she sat down exhausted and thought of how good it would be to be alone and quiet, she immediately felt guilty for being unfaithful to her comrades. She explained that she did not want to be like her mother, who was selfish. But this attitude, which seemed to be a conscious counter-identification, had an unconscious root. Her extraordinary solidarity along with some kind of motherliness, was the most obvious sign of her tender womanhood. But, it was as though this was inseparable from her repressed drives, full of aggressive images, not only towards her parents and all the bourgeois rubbish they represented, but even towards herself. The reader cannot know the precise history of her conflict with her parents, but I see this as basically a self-conflict, as a split in her personality. The unconscious side of her self represents her mother I shall talk about this later. At the same time, for her conscious self both her parents represent the evil to be rejected and those against whom the weak and the deprived are to be supported, those toward whom her only task is to be good. By all means, the adjective in the story is correct one: Alice is good in the sense that she thinks of goodness. She is good with her comrades good-for-nothing young people whose only merit is that they come from an unfavourable social background and are unable and unwilling to accept the norms of the British society.

Alice never hankered after reading, and she read only the indispensable books, even at the university, where she studied economics and politics. She thought that a clear view of life was endangered by reading. In her eyes, education and knowledge were not valuable. Her slogan was that only the facts are interesting and meanwhile she could not see that she was being driven by her rather primitive and hostile disposition against every discipline, against everything that could be considered a part of her parents, and thus finally against herself, too. I must repeat again that I do not understand why and how this disposition developed strongly and lastingly in her, but this is the fact which determined her choice of an uneducated, hot-tempered lover mouthing empty ideological phrases and of other comrades, and of her whole way of life. And these formed the basis of her belief in the existence of fascism in the Britain of the day and in the necessity of terror.

As a matter of fact, when one feels in danger, one needs to know clearly who are the good and who are the bad. A black-and-white view of the world, a clear separation between bad and good, is a manifestation of an archaic way of thinking that uses absolute categories (Beck, 1999). It is appropriate when one does not have enough time for reflecting and making fine distinctions, but is damaging to oneself and to everybody else in all other situations. By the way, it is also a breeding ground for all kinds of fundamentalism. The world is changed according to its needs. The tragic consequences of the

Messianistic formula are well-known: all problems of society and of the human condition in general will be solved once and for all. These lastingly false interpretations eliminate any willingness for adaptation, problem-solving and compromise. And from my point of view these factors connecting Alice with the former Red Brigade and today's Islamic terrorist are more important than all the obvious (sociological and psychological) differences separating them.

However, Alice's sense of reality broke through even this distorted world-view. She was aware of Jasper's unfitness for the attack. The unreal ideas of the group members made her nervous, and she was the only one who would have liked to explode the bomb at *innocent* time as she said. She tried to avoid the tragedy at the last moment but was unable to step outside the group and intentionally deny her feeling of identity. In her telephone call she linked the expected devastation which she was afraid of to cheering the peace of mankind in the name of the I. R. A.. The hypocrisy of this attitude she realized clearly. Alice was shocked when following the attack a friend of Jasper's read from a piece of paper which he pulled from his top-pocket over his heart: *The law should not abolish terror to promise that would be self-delusion or deception it should be substantiated and legalised in principle, clearly, without evasion or embellishment. The paragraph on terror should be formulated as widely as possible, since only revolutionary consciousness of justice and revolutionary conscience can determine the conditions of its application in practice. Lenin – said with confidence* (Lessing, ibid., 362). Alice saw the now-smiling man outside the hotel like a leaden-faced corpse. In contrast to him, to Jasper and to the others who were going their ways without any remorse, even satisfied with themselves as people who did what they had to do, Alice was unable to continue anything.

I have mentioned in passing that owing to the absurd ideas of the group Alice went to her mother, although she had tried to break with her. And she had to experience again that they were unable to understand each other. Her mother told her that she had wished so much for Alice to be an educated woman, because she herself was not one. The mother knew that her own life had already passed without her doing anything remarkable. Unfortunately, Alice and Jasper, like herself, were *peasants, you'll never do anything*. Alice contradicted: *We are going to pull everything down. All of it. This shitty rubbish we live in. (...) – With so many of you around, with only one thought in your minds, how to get the power for yourselves...* – laughed her mother. *Jasper will be probably the Minister of Culture, he's the type for it. (...) And you'll be his willing aide* (Lessing, ibid., 330). Her mother's words hurt Alice who ran from the room, pushing her mother to the edge of the table and calling her an old fascist. Thus she expressed her deep sense of uncertainty over whether their great goals would be realized, saying that Jasper's speeches made no sense, and that their desire for power was ridiculous and unacceptable. And mainly, and this was the most terrible for her, that the poor simple people like her mother were right.

While Alice's unusually violent anger was brought about by a simultaneous painful recognition and repression of reality, the next scene with her mother – one showing a strong attachment that contradicted her self-image – was brought about only by repression. This occurred the day following the devastating action when Alice imagined what her mother would say if she knew what had happened. *Not that Alice believed that she – Alice – had any reason to feel bad she hadn't really been part of it* (Lessing, ibid., 366). The events of the past 24 hours had been beyond Alice's powers of psychological endurance. She was unable to manage the tension arising between her subjective inclinations and her political self. Her personal energies were towards building and care, while her political ambitions were destructive and murderous (Green, ibid., 213).

She is starting on the way to derealization with the aid of her fantasy. As a first step, she plays down her real role. Then, fearing the consequences, she relies upon not on her good memory, but on her good forgetting, and to find a stable point she grasps onto her childhood. *'Once upon a time there was a little girl called Alice, with her mother Dorothy. One morning Alice was in the kitchen with Dorothy who was making her favourite pudding, apple with cinnamon and brown sugar and sour cream, and little Alice said, "Mummy am I a good girl, aren't I"'* (Lessing, ibid., 368).

How can the nice good girl who accepts her mother's warmth have anything to do with the foolish attack, how can she be a terrorist murderer of people whose only crime is that they just

happened to be in the worng place at the wrong moment. When Alice is warned by the pressure in her stomach that her mind is unbearably stormy, she has to travel even farther from her adult being. The derealization process is going to be total. In her fantasy Alice locks the windows and doors. She goes up to the attic and puts a weight on the trapdoor so that no one can come up to it. *Smiling gently, a mug of very strong sweet tea in her hand, looking this morning like a nine-year-old girl who has had, perhaps, a bad dream, the poor baby sat waiting for it to be the time to go out and meet the professionals* (Lessing, ibid., 370). But you can be sure that they are coming, as they have come earlier, but now they will find somebody who has lost the world finally, somebody who was once Alice.

Although Alice exhibits feelings of superiority and extreme hatred to conceal those of worthlessness, self-hatred and unimportance, (behind all of these preoedipal and oedipal anger can be supposed), I think it would be too much and too little to characterize her as suffering from "terrorist psychiatric syndrome" (see Frick, 2003).

There is a general impression that a "true believer" is humble. But the truth is that giving up individuality causes arrogance. The true believer thinks that if someone believes in things that are different from those she or he believes in that person is evil itself. The hatred and cruelty coming from selfishness are nothing in comparison with the cruelty coming from unselfishness, as an American docker with a life of ups and downs remarked more than half a century ago (Hoffer, 1951).

And here is a similar, somewhat later conclusion, from a likewise much experienced self-taugt English writer of Hungarian origin. If you measure it on a historical scale, the damage caused by individual violence is unimportant as compared to the devastations and and mass murders caused by devotion to collective belief systems. Instead of mature social integration, this self-denying resolution is a conseqence of the primitve identification which partly or wholly suspends the feeling of subjective responsibility and starts the quasi-hypnotic phenomena of mass-psychosis (Koestler, 1967).

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"Once the Hunter": The little other in children's literature

An intercultural analysis

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«*Children... have no use for psychology. They detest sociology. They still believe in God, the family, angels, devils, witches, goblins, logic, clarity, punctuation and other such obsolete stuff... When a book is boring, they yawn openly. They don't expect their writer to redeem humanity, but leave to adults such childish illusions.*»

(Isaac Bashevis Singer, speech on receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature, *The Observer*, 17 December 1978. – Quoted in Jenks, 1996, p. 56)

There is an old Saxon Myth declaring that "child" is an abandoned crazy whom one day, through "play", will become king in another man's position. "Play" continued all these centuries from the first appearance of the myth and after, distributing the roles of the "crazy" and the "king" that will be overthrown according to the positions that were set each time in a "ready for everything" chest. A chest constructed by the needs of social hierarchy, of economy, of social cohesion, of the narcissism of the various ethnic or economic or religious or any other groups. But also influenced by efforts against the previous factors, as they were articulated by heterodoxies that were ready most of the times to transform themselves into orthodoxies and continue the "play" from the beginning.

Which one could possibly be the role of the child (especially the "other child" or the "little other", Tsioumis, 2001) in an era were the ethnic-self has to be replaced by a new globalised one and were, due to financial and ideological difficulties, the play of the adults has to be spend in the best of the cases mostly in the effort to avoid or minimise the 'dystopias' than in the search of utopias?

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Having late modernity to corrosive slowly, like the liquid salt, the "stable" rock of modernity, sweeping together all the myths that the Enlightenment was bringing with it?

Is child condensation of the "hope" and the "threat" like the old myth requires – still a "lunatic" playing, or has it become the "king" and if yes how it has won its – undefined-kingdom?

What is, thus, child's image (Doulkeri, 1998) within Post-modernity's social context and what it reveals for society's self evaluation is going to be examined through children's literature which, as collective representation, «represents the arrangements of the society and historical era in which it is carried on» (Stone, 1982). That means we will divide this paper into two parts. In the first we will explore parts of the procedure that made child an important factor in the collective operations (both social and psychological) of the west, in the recent centuries and in the framework of the nation state. In the second we will try to explore in a case-study how the new, "post-nation-state" society is reflected in the literature that is referred to children, having as a given that language (and "logos") – along with children as we will see – operate as a kind of "social prophet".

But if language is a kind of auto-erotic play that «we can not define without grasping its historical and cultural contexts», as Schwartzman (1979, p. 93), argued writing about the contextual character of play, then words are ritualised symbols of this play itself, that help us learn of a society's past. In the next pages we will try to learn also about society's present and future.

1. CHILD AS SOCIAL SYMBOL

1.1. *Once Upon A Time: From Modernity to Post Modernity*

Any change into the way that the social consciousness apprehends a major and public symbol, like «child» and «childhood», reveals certain perspectives and ideologies – that often are being transferred into delusions or orthodoxies – for other symbols and social parameters, that through them, and within them, the social practice and its interaction with the current, the by-past and the things to come is being reflected.

Thus, the major change, not only into the consequently conditions of the actual children's everyday life, but mostly into the social status and the related significance of the notion of «child» and «childhood» the last three centuries is subsumed, and at the same time reflects, the socio-cultural stream that, being revealed mostly from the mid 17th century and after, succeeds and meets – within the history of the West – an era of blistering political, social and religious changing classifications, as it tries to articulate its curriculum between the «light» of an enlightenment and the «darkness» of a barbarous industrialisation.

The passage from a collective feudal economy to an industrial and then to a technological one, carried with it much more than changes in the means of production and in social leadership. Most significantly carried a subversion of the distinctive features of the Modern world which were the outcome of a set of fundamental institutional transformations that signalled the beginning of Lyotard's great narratives.

If we think about it all those centuries we embody in children all our investments, delusions, struggles, racisms, responsibilities, fears and hopes. And child, persecuted or controlled or envisioned through adult orthodoxies, became symbol of the «other» himself, named as Jew or as Black, or as Arab or as liberated woman threatening order and hierarchy. «Are they not human? Are they not flesh and blood like you?» St. Anselm was wondering (quoted in De Mause, 1976, n. 234) projected what was to become the Shakespearean «Merchant of Venice», the ultimate literary symbol of the persecuted. Prejudiced as threat within survival as a social construct (Bauman, 1992) to the extend to be identified with madness itself (Foucault in Ch. Jenks, 1982, p. 170), and glorified as Messiah (Emerson), within «a fabricating protest against natural reality», child, caring the antithesis of a sacred symbol, became the excavation of roots and attachments itself (Jenks, 1996, p. 106), trying to adopt a terminology of belonging for our kind, transcending national or religious or boundaries of any other kind.

1.2. *Children in Modernity: Being the «Angel»*

> *«What-is-this?» he said at last. «This is a child!» Helgha replied eagerly, coming in front of Alice to introduce her, and spreading out both his hands towards her in an Anglo-Saxon attitude.*
> *«We only found it today. It's as large as life and twice as natural!»*
>
> (Lewis Carroll, «Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There»)

«Its one of the puzzles of our history», argues Somerville (1982), «that the greatest exploitation of children coincided with the greatest glorification of childhood». As a period of blistering political, social and religious changes evolved between 1600-1900, industrialisation was recognised as agent and part of one of the most exciting processes in western history and in the way we perceive childhood.

Because as the gathering of the population in cities could no longer hide in isolated landscapes abuse from social consciousness and, meanwhile, as the growing industrialisation was in need for cheep labour and children – children of the poor – became its «primary victims» (Cunningham, 1991), the discourse about the children at work raised fundamental issues about the nature of childhood. Children worked before, all right (Cunningham, 1991; also Somerville, 1982, p. 161), but not in the production line.

Though (within an increasingly urban environment were the offhanded gathering of population was to reveal and reinforce like never before the social diversification (Hall, 1988, «Cities of tomorrow») giving birth or reinforcing related movements, squeezing – among others – the outcasts in the slums or the streets), the children of the streets stopped being just the innocent primitives of Romanticism and «were seen as danger, as «savages», whom – this time – might subvert the stability of mid Victorian civilisation» (Cunningham, 1991, Introduction).

First it was Romanticism, in rebellion against the previous Puritan discourse and also «in rebellion against the coming of mass society, seeing in childhood the glimpses of a lost paradise» (Cox, 1996, pp. 80-121), that took the image of «the child» and called it «innocence». The coincidence of the child stature with this tremendous notion, not only smelted the idea of «the child» into a «Super Ego» (if we are allowed to borrow this useful psychoanalytical term) that put on trial the collective – and through it the individual – «Self Image», contributing into a massive cultural shock, but also loaded its image with plenty of mystique notions.

«With the main stream of emerging bourgeoisie seeping in their conscious, allaying and fretful, came a notion which was not new (in some senses was as old as Christianity itself) which imbued the child with mysticism and with power» (Cox, 1996). This way «the child», with its peculiar qualities that come into conflict with the world of the adults, acquired a vast symbolic power, creating not only social evolutions but also «moral panic» for possible «similar calls» that could shake the social hierarchy of a barbarous system and of a passive society.

Child image was a basic agent in this social awaking, related with folk myths and, thus, with the deeper culture. Dickens's dead children – so contradictious with the orthodox image of the «Romantic child» –, were used to shock the masses, especially of the English middle class, during the entire Victorian era. Most of them were dead little girls (Somerville, 1982, p. 170). If the popular myth of the Dark ages that «it was enough to make love to a young virgin in order to cure yourself» still meant something to the society, that meant that their subconscious may knew there was no healing. The first sign of the catalysis of the myth «the industrial technology and science is God», will throw the first seed of a Postmodernity (that will be maximised so much after the catalysis of the immediately following – despaired and glorious – mythology: «the proletariat is God», used in its turn child's image).

It was the guilt (Somerville, 1982, p. 172) and fear Victorians felt for a victim «having», from the inherited Romantic discourse, an image of beauty and a fragility and a freedom of social conventions

(Cunningham, 1991) that along with the bourgeois oriented agenda to homogenise childhood, made the child innocence to represent «a sheer power» (Mavor, 1994, p. 188) and «energy in the end of the century» (Cox, 1996). It was the power of «forgotten» nature still manifested in the child itself that made it to be seen in muddled image (Cox, 1996, p. 152). The child of innocence, «the ideal of bourgeois home» (Auerbach, 1982), foundation and ultimate justification of bourgeois hierarchy, and that virtuous enemy of man (Cox, 1996, p. 160), embodiment of the violated from the modernistic discourse nature itself (Somerville, 1982) that, sooner or later, was going to take its revenge.

1.3. *Children in Nation State: «Being the Enemy»*

> «*And once she had really frightened her old nurse by shouting suddenly in her ear, «Nurse! Do let's pretend that I'm a hungry hyena and you're a bone!*»
>
> (Lewis Carroll, «Through the Looking Glass and what Alice Found There»)

As this had to be avoided, «in their attempt to control this strange being» (Cox, 1996) a new status of children was invented, involving the loss of the right of participation in the main stream (Archard, 1993; Somerville, 1982, p. 179). Children were squeezed in institutions, following the Sunday school's movement (Cox, 1996; Somerville, 1982, p. 192), as «their lives should revolve around the stable and the discipline environment of the home and the school, avoiding the dangerous intermediary between the two», filled with rage and ideas, «the street» (Cunningham, 1991).

Used in a diversified way, child image – adopted by hegemonic structures this time – played a part in this process of social maintenance and nation states structured too. Schooling – expanding free for children of the poor – became «not so much a right as a necessity» (Cunningham, 1991) while the rising nation states, in their effort to justify and take more power than ever before hiding social dispositions and their causes (Stone, 1975, 1982), used child's domesticated or successfully institutionalised image to impose the delusion of social harmony. The imposition of a uniform childhood, haunted by patriotism, submission to rules or team spirit, (Somerville, 1982, p. 196; Sutton Smith, 1986) became not just a goal, but a «absolute» – almost religious – ideal.

The «other» said Simmel (1989) attributed the outcast as permanent member in the group's inner games of power «is the one whom – awaking conscious and unconscious fears and challenges – reinforces the coherence of the group»: If we read myths in a Foucaultian (1984) way, (as the growing institutionalisation produced «a new kind of poor, rootless masses beyond the reach of prevailing social standards or religious institutions», Cunningham, 1991), it is that common fear in all cultures of the invasion of the stranger, of the uncivilised (named as Arab, Jew, black, proletarian, Kurd, liberated woman, or even animal), in the civilised self (Cunningham, 1991, p. 123) or territory. Codified as elf, goblin or witch in the folk myths, and in a constant yearn or imposition of assimilation into the hegemonic standards, it was rationalised in the new sympathy to ensure the progress of the human race that started mainly from 18th century's continued to built nationalism up to 20th.

1.4. *The Children in The First Half of 20th Century: Being the «Torchbearer»*

> «*And a child shall lead them*»
> (Isaiah, «Bible»)

Twentieth (20th) century, an era of blasting evolutions in economic and social level, carrying with it the remarkable trail of childhood in the previous centuries, was charged with miscellaneous agendas

and perceptions. In Ellen Kelly's words the time had come for «the 20th century to be indeed the century of the child» (quoted in Cunningham, 1991, ch. 9).

With this vision before mankind, and after a long trail as projector, scale, or carrier, the child had finally become a 'telos' in himself. One of the last myths of Modernity, «the held of promise in the struggle for social betterment» (Cunningham, 1991, ch. 9, quoting Simeral, 1916). And, thus, the main weapon – once again – for the related political agendas. Either as «the asset of the race, the torch bearer to the civilisation of the future» (Isabel Simeral, quoted in Cunningham, 1991, ch. 9) either as the embodiment of class miseries, propagated in dr. Barnardo's photographs, or as «antidote of the war» himself, propagated western or communist progress, or even fascist «progress» and «paradise society».

Indeed «after the first world war», claimed Sylvia Lynd, and within a discourse of a rising cold war between communism and capitalism fighting to gain the planet as carriers of a new land of promise, «there was a conspicuous consumption change in the appearance of children everywhere. The poor child with tousled hair, wrinkled black stocking and heavy boots had disappeared» from the front-line (Cunningham, 1991). And in their place the happy, clean and well fed child appeared, tremendous emblem of the cultural superiority and the political continuation of the nation, the class or the race which that child represented.

This was an image coming massively through and from many places. Political handouts, cultural events, family portraits...

There was a process going on. «Childhood», reinforced by the antagonistic drives between nations and races and by the very fact that it was the inheritor of our world, «was envisaged», like never before, «as a mirror image of the ideal of adulthood» (Kline, 1993; Cunningham, 1991). If child was the «perpetual Messiah», as Emerson had put it, this should be a Messiah predicting only the «right religion». Having been charged with all the miscellaneous societal and metaphysical notions that contribute to «the manifestations of the Other which so powerfully shape the narrative of the self» (Cox, 1996, p. 127) in modernity, child was hired to promote the totalitarianisms of the era and the myths it carried.

2. TRYING TO COMPREHEND LATE 20TH CENTURY THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

But if two of the most stable myths were the Nation Self and the Nation State, we have an almost total reverse of this the recent decades. Due to mass immigration and the intercultural societies that were evolved, western world meets "the disappearance of the Self and the State" as we knew it.

If children and language are used as social prophets enlarging problems to fit our changing situation, as Sutton Smith argued (1984, p. 29) then what could possibly be the image of the "small other" in children's literature?

2.1. *The Social Meaning of Literature*

As we mentioned in the abstract the study of the representations (the relation between social structures and the symbolic forms) has become an important field in the social and anthropologic research the recent years. Having language as one of the most important representations (Ingarden, 1958; Mplioumi, 2002; Samara, 1987) comes as a given that the literature as a product of language's use, is relative to temporal or historical circumstances, and power relations, as well as sociocultural context. Children literature is proven all the more a rising field of research (Jenks, 1996; Cox, 1996) since it is a product of society and yet, reproducing values and accepted behaviors, produces society at the same time (Stephens, 1994).

Having this in mind I constructed, under the supervision of A. Karakitsios, a method of literary Analysis, hoping it could "mirror" the complicated era we are going through and hoping it could bring forth the tremendous changes in collective and individual level society faces the recent decades.

The main field of this analysis was to research which are the symbols of the "other" that are mirrored in the literary production that was developed in Greece in the decade of the '90s, a decade of mass

migration? How is the foreigner and the local (strangers to one another) presented and Why are presented in such way?

2.2. *Greek Society, a Society in Transition*

According to some researches, the amount of Refugees in Greek state was raised up to 54% in the decade of the '90s. Greek society proved unprepared for this phenomenon of mass migration, that meant a reverse of the migration dynamics, as Greece (on the contrary with the past and on agreement with what happened to the most of the States of the poor European South) had to accept and not to "send" refugees abroad. Thus, and having as a given the major significance of child as a symbol, it is important to explore the way that children's literature perceives this reality through the image of the "Small Other", using Greece as a case study.

2.3. *Method of Analysis*

In the effort to respond to the multi-sidedness of the topic I recommended in the major paper of my Master that we should construct a synthetic method of Analysis (combining the theories of Wierlacher and Bachelar), able to bring forth not only the linguistic structures but also the psychological parameters that intervene in the literature and can make it an important tool of 'proper' (or un-proper") socialization. Andreas Karakitsios recommended also Genette and the "body" of the method was fulfilled.

Each theory covered a different option without the danger of inner contradictions. After all reading can be a multisided experience that through it we can transform ambiguous messages, transferring even subconsciously the antithesis between the idealizing and the real "Other". A verb, a word or a comparison can play an important role to that.

In order to bring forth the complicated interactions that intervene between the complicated world of "Literature' and our "Consciousness" and "Reality" we based our analysis on the combination of 3 different theories/practices:

1) On the "catholic and local pictures" of Wierlaher (2000) – naming as catholic the 'scenes' that 'link' us, like scenes of birth, or death etc, and as local those pictures related with the cultural particularities, for instance Muslim 'Ramazani' or Greek Easter. This way we may find the important scenes we should concentrate on instead of getting lost inside the text.

In the content analysis of concrete textual points, ("pictures") the research was based:

2) On the theory of Genette (Tziovas, 1987). In this the antithesis in the representation of the "foreigner" and the "local" in literature can be analysed through the "Imagologie", a sector of the "Comparative Grammatologie", that tries to explore through the Structure of narration the "icon of the other, the foreign country, its people and its culture". The theory of the narration seems necessary in those parts of the text were the inner connection of the motives and the function of the view-point of the heroes need to be lightened in order to realise the ways of representation of the foreign (the different) *vs* the local (the identical).

This is achieved examining the structure of the text in various levels, such as the words that are chosen, the hierarchy of the relationships between the factors of language, the scenarios and the theoretical motives (Ampatzopoulou, 1980).

Genette distinguishes the notion of the "story" (the series of events, their articulation and their order in real life) and the "narration" (the ways those events are presented in the text, their articulation and their order in the narration). The last one, "narration" is examined in a more detailed way through 3 basic axes: a) Time, b) Obliquity (inclination) and c) Voice. All tree are examined through the notion of "order" of the presented items or thoughts etc. Time (that is related with the dimensions of order, duration, meaning the length of time, and frequency) is related with the analogies between the "story" (real series of events) and the narration (choices of which event the writer will present first etc) the possible differences

and divergences from a pragmatic narration of the story, the narration that are pro or post the real time and the ways of narration (who is the narrator? the actual hero or a mediator, the dialogue and if the language is direct or not and who's point of view reproduces etc).

3) The choice of words (f.i. surnames or phrases) became an object of an analysis based on the pro-Freudian theory of Bachelar (1967), that examines the psychological/ideological background of those words, which reflect that background and on which finally they depend. The choice of Bachelar is justified because the attitudes related to the "other" do not reflect the objective reality, as we mentioned prior, but the ways the social subject perceives, something that has obligatorily a lot of psychological parameters. It is interesting, consequently, that for Bachelar the phenomenology should be analysed not as a conscience of the external but of the psychological phenomena. "A new approach of the poetic pictures, the systematic psychological analysis of the landscapes of our internal life". Bachelar uses collective signifiers of our civilisation in a way that reminds us a mix approach between Jung (1989) and Freud (1995). For instance "water", "sky" "land" or words with strong investments like "light" of "fear" etc are used in order to reveal and explore the cultural parameters that construct our psychic reality and vice versa and all their possible connotations and relations from mythology to modern aspects of social evolution.

Using initially (because the research is evolving) as a case study a book of children refugee literature ("Once upon a time the Hunter..." by E. Sarantiti, we applied the notions of the 'catholic' and the 'local' in 5 main sectors of social action or personal operation: 1) Social relations, 2) School, 3) Family, 4) Love, 5) Perception of the country-land (land of origin or host-country), that constitute basic anthropologic constants. We should clarify here that even if all and each one are common events of all persons, (that is why they are determined as "anthropologic constants") the way with which they can be expressed or they can be described in the literature, can (bringing forth all the different cultural environments) function not as a universality, but as we will see as locality, creating thus a dipole in which the opposition is that the existence of "stabilities"/'constanten' can belong in the first category (universality) while the its expression in the second (locality).

3. BRIEF FINDINGS

In Greece, we locate more than 30 books concerning the topic of immigrants. This is important because the image of the foreigner has been in the mainstream of Greek society only recently. In fact what we have is a total reverse of the word 'immigrant' as from a signifier of the Greek immigrant abroad has turned into a signifier of the immigrant that comes to Greece. This transformation of the countries of the 'poor European south' into countries of migration import, and not countries of migration export any longer, no doubt has been mirrored in the literature that is produced into those areas. Interestingly the field of children literature seems to be the first to take notice into these socio-cultural changes.

Yet the immigrant remains in many cases 'Greekalised' (for instance, due to the special events of Greek history) many immigrant figures are of Greek origin that had to leave during the civil war, or members of the Greek diaspora, that remains for centuries in the eastern Europe. In some other cases the immigrant is the Greek that lives abroad, narrating his or her story. But, especially in the crucial decade of the 90s, we locate stories that are concerned with the foreigner, the people of different origin and religion that comes to Greece (mostly from the ex USSR and Albania).

In most of the cases we have repeatedly with statistic analogies the same anthropological 'constanten' (stability), that are expressed through scenes of locality and universality. More often are the 'constanten' of "Love", social or professional relations, school, the notion of new country, the memory of the old one. "Love" is always a scene of universality that is turned into locality. The way 'love" is expressed is always very tense as this seems natural as this the category that will lead to more intimate relation

with the other when, at the same time, this is the category where the other will meat one of he most intense 'forbidden'. Yet the danger here (due to the tense) is the story to be articulate through the love affair end not to explore the multiple difficulties of the coexistence, turning this way into a romance.

The relations that evolve into the working field (professional) mostly are mirrored as scenes of locality, whether the story has to do with the Greek immigrant **abroad**, or with the immigrant that comes to Greece **from** abroad. The poor salaries, the social exclusion, the language problems (problems of reality, Tsiakalos, 2002) are the most often referred to that field.

The social stabilities ("constanten" in German) of "social relations" is present almost to all stories. In most of its expressions, though, is a scene of locality. In some cases the 'anti-parathesis' (contradiction) of specific words like foreigner of locals, or even patriots and refugees signifies an effort to personalize the social guilt into the faces of the refugees.

In those scenes that concern school in most of cases the text begins with data of locality and ends up with data of universality. Mostly because in those stories the "Little foreigner" is of Greek-origin, and sooner or later will adapt more easy than the 'total stranger' into the Greek school.

In the perception of the new-land, of the country, the significance of this method possibly reaches its top revealing the complexity of the object. For instance in the book called "Once the Hunter", named after Seferis famous lyric, what we have is a scene of locality (its person a story and memories and ideas of his or her own) that intervenes with the past. In this story the grandmother filters the new land through her tragic memories of the Greek civil war that burdens eternally her perception, when the young girl identifies the new land (Greece) with water (river, sea, etc) that strucks her. Thus through what Bachelar, quoting Young and Kerenyi (1979) refers to as a symbol of the womb, a womb that, even through difficulties, gives birth into a new period of life.

What remains to be said concerns the mix scenes, that is a vast and intriguing category and the statistic use of foreign words and its comparison with happens in he literary production of other countries. That last one (use or no use of immigrant words) especially in Greek example (due to the vast political significance that the language required in the construction of the national identity and the "nationalisation of religion and language" throughout Balkans) seems extremely interested in order to explore the reclamation of the methodological tools of the literary analysis and critique in the framework of an extended social critique (Zima, 1985) that we tried to introduce in this research.

We argue that this reclamation will re-establish the relationship between the textual and the social fields of action and practice (Kedurie, 1999). In this way we may lead in a more complete and productive use of the theoretical approaches concerning literature and the representation of the "Other" in political, philosophical, psychological, social and pedagogical level.

We may question, for instance, in what extend the dual reading of the social action as a basic scheme of anthropological arrangement in modern Greek (or any other) society, is in a phase of change and re-articulation, also of search of new ways of expression because of the new face of interculturality that is in process. From this point of view the "issue of language" and its use in literature is, among other things, an obvious, presented realization of the broader semiotic phenomenon of the 'disemia' (dual meaning) as Michael Herzefeld has argued. (Siaflekis, 1988).

This in our opinion finds its basis in the process of socialization and thus in the models of comprehension of the language. The language in general and the hetero-langauge (the language of the different) in specific. Thus, literature in modern multicultural societies, having to represent not only the formal language (and all cultural elements that carries) of atomic or collective presentation of "ourselves" (From, 1975), but also the modern multilingual environment and all the challenges that brings. This way we may value the children or teenage literature not only as a field that carries fun and knowledge through fun for children or youngsters, but also as an able for inter-scientific analysis field that can be used as a useful resource of social and psychological givens, that reveal parameters for both children and adult society and that in their turn may influence children culture and its pedagogical approaches.

To deal literature as an empirical given that transcends the limits of the traditional grammatological analysis is always extremely interesting yet is not a new approach. The analytical approaches of Vygotsky on the plays of Shakespeare and the acceptance of the Piazetian model of development from the

sociology of literature by Lucien Goldmann in 1977 (Siaflekis, 1988) may consist the most characteristic expressions of a research direction that uses empirical and grammatological givens in order to analyse the social structures and procedures of the social formation of subjectivity and (at some extend) *vice versa*. Through the analytical method we introduced here we tried, making the most of methodological possibilities, to correspond in a subject complicated from its own nature.

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