

Literature and Psychology:

Writing, Trauma and the Self

Literature and Psychology:

Writing, Trauma and the Self

Edited by

Önder Çakırtaş

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Literature and Psychology: Writing, Trauma and the Self

Edited by Önder Çakırtaş

This book first published 2019

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2019 by Önder Çakırtaş and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-2011-0

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-2011-0

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	viii
Introduction	1
<i>Antolin Trinidad, MD, PhD</i>	
Part 1: Psychological Writing-Writing Psychological	
Chapter One.....	8
Psychology and Literature	
<i>Nurten Birlik, PhD., METU, Turkey</i>	
Chapter Two	18
Peripheral Writing: Psychosis and Prose from Ernst Herbeck to W. G. Sebald	
<i>Melissa S. Etzler, PhD., Butler University, USA</i>	
Chapter Three	49
Beowulf: A Creative, Psychological Commentary	
<i>Ken Silvestro, PhD., Capella University, USA</i>	
Chapter Four.....	76
Dostoevsky's <i>Gentle Spirit</i> and Andre Gide's <i>The School for Wives</i> : A Lacanian Analysis	
<i>M. Önder Göncüoğlu, PhD., Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Turkey</i>	
Chapter Five	107
The Great War, Psychobiography and the Narrativization of Trauma in Hemingway and Freud	
<i>Antolin Trinidad, MD, PhD., Yale University, USA</i>	

Part 2: Writing-Narrating Trauma

Chapter Six.....	134
Nihilistic Determinism or Hopeful Testimony: Time, Trauma, and Narrative in <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> and <i>The White Hotel</i> <i>Kyle Mox, PhD., Arizona State University, USA</i>	
Chapter Seven.....	154
Agency in Complicity: The Aesthetics of Trauma in Constance Fenimore Woolson’s “Miss Grief” <i>Theodora Tsimponki, PhD., National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece</i>	
Chapter Eight.....	175
Writing Dance: Narrating Trauma <i>Marie France Forcier, MFA., University of Calgary, Canada</i>	
Chapter Nine.....	198
Healing Community Trauma Using Literature: Southeast Asian Refugees and Immigrants <i>Dan Thanh Nguyen, Graduate Student, University of Colorado Denver, USA</i> <i>Farah A. Ibrahim, PhD., University of Colorado Denver, USA</i>	

Part 3: Psychology of Self and Others

Chapter Ten.....	214
Worded Selves <i>Megan C. Hayes, PhD., Teesside University, UK</i>	
Chapter Eleven.....	237
Memory, Narrative, and Violence in Palestinian Resistance Literature Worded Selves <i>Manal al-Natour, PhD, West Virginia University, USA</i>	
Chapter Twelve.....	271
Collective Memory from the Aspects of Time and Place <i>Ingrida Eglė Žindžiūvienė, PhD., Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania</i>	

Chapter Thirteen	292
An Ethical Construction of the Self in Kate Atkinson's <i>Life After Life</i> <i>Magdalena Flores-Quesada, PhD Candidate, University of Málaga, Spain</i>	
Chapter Fourteen	314
Houses as Representations of Their Inhabitants in George Eliot's <i>Middlemarch</i> <i>Eva Oppermann, PhD., University of Kassel, Germany</i>	
Chapter Fifteen	338
Autobiographical Fiction or Fictive Autobiography? Georges Perec's Unique Testimonial Mode <i>Dana Amir, PhD., University of Haifa, Israel</i>	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My utmost debt is to my contributors whose comeback to an uncommon notion was both original and co-operative. There are others, less noticeable, who have made this book promising. I would like to express my warm thanks to the Cambridge Scholars Publishing team who made it possible to include photographs in the book. Sophie Edminson, my editor at Cambridge Scholars, was immensely helpful and patient in tracking down the editorial steps—her clear-sighted guidance always detailed and welcome. Also Courtney Blades, the designer, was really co-operative in the assistance in book cover design.

Special thanks must go to Antolin C. Trinidad at Yale University for his kindness in writing the introduction and patience in answering my tiresome emails for the requests, and providing the overview for another collection which I was unable to thank for – though I am late to show appreciation. I want to thank Nurten Birlik at Middle Eastern Technical University whose enthusiasm was infectious and her commentaries on distinct chapters serenely enlightening.

And my greatest thanks go to my wife Kubra, and my daughter, Zeynep Erva. Without their support and patience, this collection would never be as targeted.

INTRODUCTION

ANTOLIN TRINIDAD, MD, PHD

Somewhere in the period after the peak of deconstruction as a literary/critical method of textual analysis, a trend towards interdisciplinary cross-pollination occurred. This trend is buttressed by the academic tearing down – usually by humanities departments – of the special status heretofore accorded to texts produced by disciplines that utilize the scientific method as their primary sources of new knowledge, disciplines such as psychology and the social and natural sciences. These special statuses have now been questioned, and scholars now feel free to examine texts produced in the name of science as just like any text, subject to a new perspective with each effort at close reading. The advantage of this stance includes a greater accountability for and scrutiny of “truth” claims, a sort of check-and-balance. The disadvantage includes possibly diluting a rigorously built intra-discipline knowledge base, such as when a humanities department with inadequate grasp of physics or chemistry or the science of psychology critically interrogates these disciplines’ tomes without adequate intellectual preparation. Michael Clune, who eviscerates literary criticism as an example of this disadvantage, names this tendency as “humanities reductionism:”

...whereby literature scholars largely ignored the knowledge and methods of social and natural scientific disciplines in an ill-fated attempt to colonize them. [. . .] In the 80s, avant garde scholars came to see the existing discipline of literary studies — rooted in the practices of close reading developed by I.A. Richards, William Empson, and the New Critics in the first half of the 20th century — as an antiquated silo, preventing critics from engaging the most urgent questions of their time. We understand language, literature professors told themselves, we understand representation — we can go beyond literature! Language and representation became the wrecking balls which tore down the discipline’s confining boundaries, and made all language, all representation — which is to say, all human life, knowledge, and thought — the proper domain of the liberated critic.

Clune paints an extreme interpretation of the participation of the humanities disciplines in the methods of other disciplines. But not all interdisciplinary cross-talk is as vampiric as Clune suggests. Psychiatry, historically considered a specialty of medicine, has long enjoyed, or suffered, an interstitial reputation, meaning it has by its methods a reputation for interdisciplinary methods – it is the most “liberal arts” of the medical specialties. While it uses knowledge from neuroscience and biochemistry in its understanding of mental processes, it also identifies itself as a linguistic discipline, mired in the analysis of discourse as discourse is embedded in the culture that surrounds it. Psychiatry’s genealogy has Freudianism as its main antecedent and in particular, American psychiatry was, for a long period of time, dominated by psychoanalysis. Because psychiatry has a status as healing discipline accorded with the requisite privileges, it has always been a fascination to scholars of language. What factors underpin its dominance and what exactly is the relationship between linguistic practices and authority, if not healing? These issues have been fodder to recent literary debates. Beginning in the 1990s, and well into 2017, the literary critic Frederick Crews has been making Freudian tenets, especially Freud’s ideas on both the process of repression and his seduction theory, as subjects of his critical gauntlet. Along with the former psychoanalyst Jeffrey Masson, their disillusionment with Freud’s theories illustrate the readiness of non-specialists to tackle the minutiae of another discipline’s theories, to be loudly critical of them, and to contribute to a debate that rattles that discipline’s (psychoanalysis’s) very foundation. The rattling of those foundations has contributed in some ways to its obsolescence as a mode of clinical psychotherapy practice, if not its continuing utility as a tool for literary analysis. Crews and Masson, in their critiques of Freud’s repression and seduction theories, essentially indicted Freud long after his death as partly responsible for the tragedy of the epidemic of false memories of childhood abuse in the United States in the 1990s. We can say then that changing the subject of literary criticism from creative literature to psychoanalytic essays can, evidently, have real life consequences beyond intellectual jousting or academic tenure-chasing.

The surprising hardness of literary studies taking psychological constructs as subjects continues in the field of literary trauma studies. Indeed, it can be argued that trauma studies as a field has been enriched by the new attention. While the concept of post-traumatic disorder (PTSD) has been useful in the service of empiricism and the search for effective treatments, it is also reductionist. It gives an illusion of a binary dynamic: pathology and non-pathology. Cathy Caruth’s use of the deconstruction’s

aporia, the unclaimed psychic injury that cannot be put or cohesively narrated by language, has been one of the most intriguing concepts in the field of trauma studies. A new possibility emerged, the possibility that the unclaimed experience finds representation in other ways – hidden in literary tropes, or in biographies, ripe for discovery using the very techniques at which literary critics are very good: close reading, aesthetic scrutiny, historicizing and contextualizing the ways by which text interacts with the living human experience. To be sure, Caruth has her critics. And to be sure, these critics will fault manners of analysis that do not comport with the critical lenses they like to use. Foucauldian reading may contradict Derridean or Yale or Johns Hopkins-school inflected deconstructive analysis, as what Ruth Leys demonstrates in her strident critique of Caruth. We have the psychiatrist Judith Herman to thank for constructing an approach that is not binary. She, helpfully, put forward the notion that traumatic experiences produce a variety of sequelae depending on the extent, the repetitiveness of the trauma and how individuals can manifest extreme vulnerability while others may survive the trauma with little disturbances in the way they function. In other words, there are a number of psychological reactions after a trauma – some subjects will have traumatic amnesia, some will not, some may manifest dissociation while others may be resilient enough to go on with their lives with little evidence of impairment. Here, we see the differences between how a psychologist or a psychiatrist would approach trauma versus a literary critic. They would rely on observation, recording all that which are seen. The categories they construct would speak for themselves at first, interpreted only with caution. By contrast, literary critics construct cohesive but thoroughly explored interpretations of texts, sensitive to a genealogy of ideas, rather than observational notes on emergent mental and behavioral events. The resulting text that literary critics produce can be considered creative literature in and of themselves, subject to secondary and tertiary levels of critique. Geoffrey Hartmann ponders this, what he calls the “literary turn” of traumatic knowledge:

You may have sensed my literary turn, as the question of how knowledge of extreme experiences is possible moves from epistemological baffles to an underconsciousness deeply involved in story, speech act, and symbolic process. This shift does not leave the cognitive behind but puts us in a different relation to it. It leads to an unsentimental acknowledgment of the human condition, and a view of art as at once testimony and representation. The force of that acknowledgment tempers our tendency to find an ultimate explanation for trauma, that is, to “see through” to its biological or metapsychological base. Indeed, this temptation to explain, even to demystify, as it becomes a “fever,” may itself be an effect of traumatic

dissociation, a compulsive, belated effort to master the split between experience and knowledge by asserting in theory the convergence of a phenomenal cause (see-able) and a trauma (not see-able, or else "piercing" the eyes).

The morphing of traumatic experience to literary works then, according to Hartmann, connotes a different relationship to the cognitive and the literal in that the art that is produced becomes the main representation. Dissociation may then be an intermediary step in this morphing from experience to the production of literature.

Dissociation is a psychological phenomenon. It is evident that the conversation between literary criticism and psychology continues, and this, our volume, speaks to this enduring engagement. Human experience is a common subject for both. In trauma literary studies, the sub-subjects are negative and catastrophic life experiences. These experiences have distinct effects on language: language spoken, language written and language represented in conscious and unconscious thought. Language recognized and language not formed, as in a speechless reaction after traumatic experiences, are the wells upon which latter day literary trauma theory draw from. These wells are deep and dynamic, reflecting the very dynamism of language function and the creative and interpretative processes. Here, Jacques Lacan's concept of the abstruse real as only approximated by the symbolic in an unbreachable asymptote becomes ever more prescient. Language has limits. Interpretation and criticism continue to attempt to bridge that limit. In the same way that Judith Herman outlined the various ways by which the mind reacts to trauma, literary trauma theory posits that literary works may not only be interpreted through the lens of trauma but also that there is unique language emerging from a traumatic experience – whether as a narrative of that experience, or a work of fiction. In this volume, we also posit that psychobiography, and a body of work, may be intuited from the traumatic experiences of the author. As Geoffrey Hartmann writes, trauma experience "stays longer in the negative and allows disturbances of language and mind the quality we give to literature." Literature is a form of perpetual troping of it by the psyche, through figurative language. In this book, we also posit that a life narrative, as in psychobiography, may be seen as perpetual troping as well, in this case, to use a phrase that came out of the Freudian corpus, "repetition compulsion."

Literary trauma studies now have a recognizable genealogy. And genealogies could be understood by describing it as a series of waves. The first wave might be Cathy Caruth. The next waves could be studies of trauma in non-catastrophic experiences or discontinuities in identity and

subject-formation, such as what Greg Forter describes as the “mundanely catastrophic:”

I am speaking here of the trauma induced by patriarchal identity formation rather, say, than the trauma of rape, the violence not of lynching but of everyday racism. These phenomena are indeed traumas in the sense of having decisive and deforming effects on the psyche that give rise to compulsively repeated and highly rigidified social relations. But such traumas are also chronic and cumulative, so woven into the fabric of our societies, that they cannot count as “shocks” in the way that Nazi persecution and genocide do in the accounts of Caruth and others.

Here, Forter writes subtly about a chronic form of trauma that, on the surface, seems silent but conceivably seeps in to the bedrock of personality and identity formation over a number of years, the result of which may, in the end, be as catastrophic as a single trauma. Forter therefore brings our attention to a critical discourse that splices knowledge gained from trauma theory with queer studies, for instance, or postcolonial studies. Other issues that could be included in later waves of literary trauma theory include intergenerational transmission of trauma, exemplified in the possibility of racism’s effects through the generations as articulated by J. Brooks Bouson in *Quiet as It’s Kept: Shame, Trauma and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison* where the question of the transmission of shame by racism by transgenerational learning is posed – the memory of violence, transmitted through different generations, becomes part of shared racial identity. Later waves of trauma theory would doubtless explore some more the issue of whether literary turns become useful in healing, or in the process of psychotherapy, during the after effects of trauma. I would predict that part of that inquiry would include more essays from psychologists interrogating the production of literature as traumatized subjects look for ways to feel better, to change their affects, their world views, their engagements with reality. Can we rely on the creation of literature to feel better? These new forms of inquiry will provide new ways of looking at extreme human experiences using new metaphors and rhetoric away from Freud, Lacan, Caruth, Felman and Laub, and into new authors and thinkers. The essays in this volume have been curated to represent the continuing dynamism of the relationship between critical studies, literature and the psychological facets of trauma while riding the various waves of literary trauma theory.

Antolin Trinidad, MD, PhD
Department of Psychiatry
Yale University, School of Medicine

Bibliography

- Caruth, Cathy, Ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- . *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Print. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Crews, Frederick. *Freud: The Making of An Illusion*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2017.
- Bousson, J. Brooks. *Quiet As It's Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison (SUNY Series in Psychoanalysis and Culture)*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999.
- Clune, Michael. *The Bizarro World of Literary Studies*. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. October 26, 2018.
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Bizarro-World-of-Literary/244938>. Retrieved 11-11-2018.
- Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Forster, Greg. "Freud, Faulkner, Caruth: Trauma and the Politics of Literary Form", *Narrative*, 15:3, October 2007, p. 259-285.
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", *New Literary History*, 26:3, 1995, 537-563
- Herman, Judith, *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), London, Basic Books, 2001
- Leys, Ruth, *Trauma: A Genealogy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

PART 1:

**PSYCHOLOGICAL WRITING-WRITING
PSYCHOLOGICAL**

CHAPTER ONE

PSYCHOLOGY AND LITERATURE

NURTEN BIRLIK

Peter Brooks in his *Psychology and Storytelling* says that, in 1951, “it was possible for Cleanth Brooks to declare with confidence that the critic’s job was to describe and evaluate literary objects implying the relevance for criticism of the model of scientific objectivity.” Brooks also states, “[n]ow the possibility of value-free scepticism is itself in doubt...” (vi). He calls this turn in literary studies “the theoretical revolution” (vii). We can go further than Brooks’ views and say that there is a big difference between the literary conceptions and critical practices before and after this theoretical revolution. While the former practice is logocentric and assumes a Cartesian self both in the author and the characters created by the author, the latter problematizes any possible centres that might be assumed by a “logos” or any unified, stable selves that act on a stable ground or that achieve coherence due to an essence they embody before their encounter with culture/ideology/discourse. Before the theoretical turn, objectivity was a taken-for-granted notion; however, in 2018 it would almost be blasphemy to take a position of “objectivity” in literary and critical practice. One’s position of objectivity might merely be taken as a naïve form of liberal humanism after all the theoretical vantage points like postcolonial, poststructuralist or psychoanalytical which emphasize the constructed/ ideological nature of the self or identity. These vantage points after the theoretical turn underline that, in the absence of human essence, the systems (discourses, ideologies, cultures, etc.) configure/construct the subjects. Rather than an autonomous, stable and self-knowing Cartesian subject of humanism, these vantage points take the fluid, constructed nature of the subject as their starting point, and put under scrutiny the subjectification process and the material conditions of being of these configured subjectivities which are always in the making. The convergences and influences between psychology and literature started before the theoretical turn due to metapsychology of Freud, which was one of the central elements that triggered and also contributed to this turn. In

this chapter, I aim to explore the reasons for this interaction between literature and psychoanalysis by putting the critics who occupied themselves with the issue in dialogue with each other to prepare an initial frame for the forthcoming chapters.

At this point, we might ask, why this theoretical turn in general, psychoanalytical breakthrough, in particular, happened in the 20th century rather than in the previous centuries. The answer to this question comes from Terry Eagleton right at the beginning of his chapter titled "Psychoanalysis" in his *Literary Theory*. Eagleton states that there are "relationships between developments in modern literary theory and the political and ideological turmoil of the twentieth century." Dismissing a simplistic approach, he emphasizes that "such turmoil is never only a matter of wars, economic slumps, and revolutions," and it is "a crisis of human relationship and of the human personality, as well as a social convulsion" (131). Eagleton states that anxiety, fear of persecution, and the fragmentation of the self had been there throughout recorded history, but they were put under scrutiny and made into a focus of scientific study in the late 19th and early 20th century in psychoanalysis due to Freudian doctrines. In *Seminar II*, Lacan too underlines the significance of Freud in the 20th century and says that the revolutionary breakthrough offered by Freud was that he located the truth in the unconscious and started metapsychology. Freud's "notion of the ego is so upsetting as to warrant the expression *Copernican revolution*" (3). We can explore the implications of what Lacan calls the *Copernican revolution* on a broader scale and say that with his metapsychology, which implied a model of psychodynamics beyond the control and grasp of the self, Freud started a hermeneutics of indeterminacy. His ideas that are also reflected in his clinical practice functioned as a gateway to a clinical conception of post-Cartesianism as, in his context, we can speak of not unified selves but fluid subjectivities, which are doomed to be shaped by the forces the subject cannot comprehend. Along with Eagleton's and Lacan's views, we can also refer to the weakening, thus, visibility of the ideological apparatuses in/of modernity. The organising principles of the dominant discourse can no more formulate a naturalised version of the dominant ideology. At the turn of the century and particularly after the Great War, Western intellectuals questioned different forms of the impasse in modernity, and with the influence of the significant figures like Nietzsche, Freud, Einstein and Bergson, new ways of formulating the truth started to attract them. In such a context, in the early 20th century in the West, the dominant discourse, which was supposed to establish the suitable framework for the correlation between power and knowledge, was

radically challenged. From the late '60s onwards, its ideological tools reached the weakest level concerning achieving invisibility, and this gave way to the poststructuralist movement, which engaged in radically different conceptions of the self and its psychology.

Why psychoanalysis and literature?

Although there are many other branches of psychology like ego psychology or cognitive psychology, psychoanalytic psychology is most of the time what the literary critics consult in their analysis. Paraiso states that “[o]f all the different schools of modern psychology, psychoanalysis seems to be the most significant concerning literature; indeed Freud's legacy to that respect constitutes a whole literary theory” (qtd in Jauregui 1170). Freud's discovery of many of his theories in his self-analysis went parallel to his reading of literature, and he ended up borrowing and re-contextualising vocabulary and concepts from literature. Freud was a widely read intellectual who knew the seminal texts of Western literature and who was familiar with the leading philosophical figures of his time. Jauregui in his article titled “Psychology and Literature: The Question of Reading Otherwise,” extensively underlines Freud's indebtedness to literature and says that “Shakespeare was Freud's Bible” (1170). Lionel Thrilling too underlines the same point on a different level, and he claims, “Freud has had an effect on literature as much as literature had an effect on Freud” (Jauregui 1170). Like Freud, Lacan has put psychoanalysis in touch with other disciplines; therefore, it would be unrealistic to attempt to understand Lacan without prior knowledge of literature, Hegel, Heidegger, Live-Strauss, Jacobson or Saussure, and many others. Like Freud, he borrowed terms and recontextualised them in his epistemology in configuring the coordinates of his psychoanalysis.

Both Freud and Jung attached significance to humanities, particularly to literature, in the training of the psychoanalysts. Due to their attitude, a humanist heritage entered psychology in such a way that literature became a valid source for understanding different phenomena in the human psyche. Freud resorted to literature in an attempt to validate his theories and went so far as to say: “The poets and the philosophers discovered the unconscious before I did...What I did discover was the scientific method through which the unconscious can be studied” (qtd in Jauregui 1172). Freud tried to convert psychoanalysis into a natural science but for this aim, interestingly enough, he “returned to the library, encouraging us to read ancient religious, mythic and literary texts. Thanks to Freud and Jung, a humanist heritage was given a place in the field of psychology, and

myths and literature were transformed into valid sources for the comprehension of the human condition” (Jauregui 1169). Lacan too was aware of the significance of literature in Freudian psychoanalysis: “Indeed, how could we forget that Freud constantly, and right until the end, maintained that such a background was the prime requisite in the training of analysts, and he designated the age-old *universitas litterarum* as the ideal place for its institution?” (2006: 413). Lacan too stressed the need for interdisciplinarity and the incorporation of the humanities into the psychoanalytic training programme. Like Freud, he thought that the analyst has to be an artist himself, schooled, in a wide range of disciplines, including mythology, comparative literature and history of ideas, and linguistics (Bär 534). Freud, Jung and Lacan’s familiarity with literary and philosophical figures and their re-employment of their concepts both enriched their psychoanalysis and attracted the critics and readers from these nonpsychological fields. After Freud, Jung, and Lacan, the same interdisciplinarity continued in the case of the other psychoanalysts as they borrowed from and collaborated with neuroscience, semiotics, etc.

One can count different reasons for this interaction. Norman Holland says that psychoanalysis is the “science of human subjectivity” and it “offers insights into the mind’s ways of thinking, dreaming, imagining, wanting, and especially the mind’s ways of hiding from itself” (2). As the “laboratory of this science” is the human psyche, it becomes inevitable to borrow concepts or terms from psychology while dealing with non-psychological texts like literature, which are also about “human.”

Freud’s reference to psychoanalytical practice as the talking cure and the emphasis he puts on free associations of the words in his analytic training might be another motivation for the interaction between psychology and literature. In Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, the emphasis is put on the language of the analysand and the pivotal role of different forms of slips in the sessions. Words are the only material of the unconscious because the subject is nothing other than a construct of words to which only words can give access. Lacan says that “whether it sees it as an instrument of healing, of training, or of exploration in depth, psychoanalysis has only a single medium: the patient’s speech” (2006: 40).

Due to the similarities between what the ego does in the production of a text and real life, as Simon O. Lesser states, psychoanalysis might offer a pathway to have access to “the deepest levels of meaning of the greatest fiction” (297). Sarup too thinks that the symbiosis between meaning and narration is pivotal in both fields:

Both psychoanalysis and literature are concerned with narrative, with telling stories. Psychoanalysis reads the past to make sense of the present. Like a detective story, it starts with effects and traces these effects back to origins. The reader, too, has to find causes and connections and, like the analyst has to work again through time to recover meaning. (161)

In a similar line of thinking, another reason for this interaction might be the tendency among the psychoanalysts which takes the field not as a field of science but as a hermeneutics since psychoanalysis too is characterised by a creative narrative construction:

Lacan sees psychoanalysis more as a calling than as a career. He personifies a conception of analysis not as a quasi-medical technique focussed on 'cure' but as a scientific discipline and a process of individual research and self-discovery. (If a cure comes at all in psychoanalysis it comes as a bonus or secondary gain.) For Lacan, psychoanalysis is not a system of treatment, it is not a method of explaining or guaranteeing knowledge, but is a series of techniques for listening to and questioning desire. (Sarup 11)

The emphasis put on the metaphors and the act of writing in Jungian criticism is another element that generates affinity between psychoanalytical practice and literature. Moreover, in modern Jungian criticism, in Kugler, in particular, the interrelation between consciousness, language (text) and images is emphasized: "Consciousness is continually being imagined (imagined, in-formed) by the metaphors in the very text it is writing or reading" (Holland 42). Likewise, in cognitive psychology, the linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson say; "Our minds work through a metaphorical logic," in their *Metaphors We Live By* (198).

It is possible to expand this list of possible reasons for the interaction between psychology and literature, but it is hard to specify any one of these motivations as the exact reason since none of these justifications can exhaust or contain the whole endeavour. The basis for this interaction might also be a combination of all the above-given arguments. Emig puts all these points in a nutshell, therefore, it would be appropriate to quote the closing remark of this section from him: "Text-based in its methods, psychoanalysis shares with literature the poiesis of images and expressions, the poetics of their arrangement, the grammar of narratives, but also a theory of interpretation" (Emig 175).

Whatever the reason is, one thing is clear that there has been a close dialogue between literature and psychology through the psychoanalytical psychology of Freud, Jung, and Lacan. This parallelism between

psychology and literature has been fruitful and has developed into a new field of literary theory and critical practice.

Freud and Lacan

Due to Freud, psychoanalysis has colonised vast areas of culture (Sarup xvi). He dominated psychoanalytical literary critical practice with his metapsychology and with his concepts and topology that offered a conceptual toolbox for the literary critics until the appearance of Lacanian ideas. Lacanian ideas occupy a considerable place in the second part of the twentieth century as he influenced many of the prominent figures of philosophy and literary criticism. Lacan became a gigantic figure as he was welcomed by the intellectuals more than the medical institutions. Therefore, it is possible to see his influence as a reaction or counteraction in his audiences. In 1963, Louis Althusser invited Lacan to bring his weekly seminars to (academia) the Ecole Normale Supérieure from the Saint Anne Hospital. From this move onwards, Lacan's seminars became a meeting place for most of the poststructuralist thinkers and prominent figures in Parisian intellectual circles, like Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Philippe Sollers, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Claude-Lévi-Strauss; "after the 1966 publication of Lacan's *Écrits*, as many as a thousand people tried to get into his seminars" (Sarup xvi).

Both Freud and Lacan put forward ideas about the symbiosis between the subject and the culture it is born into. For them, this symbiosis leads to a conception of psychodynamics which is not a given but which is constructed and always in the making. Both of them foreground the external factors and intra/intersubjectivity in the formation of the subject. Lacan offers us a structuralist reading of Freud and foregrounds the constitutive potential of language in the cognitive and psychic development of the infant. He insists on "the primacy of language" not "the primacy of events" (Mellard 6). He even goes so far as to say that language precedes the subject as "it was certainly the Word (*verbe*) that was in the beginning" (2006: 61). Lacan claims, "what the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious is the whole structure of language," which means that the unconscious can be understood as the way language is appreciated since the unconscious is structured like a language (2006: 47). He explains the unconscious mechanisms through the terms he borrowed from Roman Jakobson, metaphor and metonymy.

Lacan also rewrites Freud's Oedipal model in linguistic and socio-cultural terms. The Freudian idea of castration to be achieved by the biological father metamorphoses to the linguistic castration implemented

by the Law of the Father or the paternal metaphor (which is more than and beyond the biological father). In fact, he metaphorizes many of literal expressions in Freud and formulates his theory of the registers on a linguistic model. Therefore, for him, the symbolic entry to which the infant is integrated from the Oedipal stage (linguistic castration) onwards is the structure of language itself. The individual has to enter into this structure to become a speaking member of the symbolic. As in Hogan's words, "[s]ociety is born only with language," and it functions only through the symbolic (18). On the significance of the linguistic structure for Lacan, Lemaire maintains, "[l]anguage is the vehicle of a social given, a culture, prohibitions, and laws. The child who enters in this symbolic order with its multiple dimensions will be fashioned by this order and will be indelibly marked by it without being aware of it" (54). Therefore, "the symbolic register of language is particularly vital for the 'subject'" (Lemaire 57). With language, the infant is integrated into a social and ethical system, and then this process can be taken as the acculturation process. Language is already there before the infant is born, and it regulates both the unconscious, conscious, and social mechanisms. That is, language constitutes both the internal and the external, therefore, "the law of man has been the law of language" (2006: 225). In other words, for Lacan "it is the world of words that creates the world of things" and man "speaks but it is because the symbol has made him man" (2006: 229). Lacan also maintains that:

Symbols in fact envelop the life of man with a network so total that they join together those who are going to engender him "by bone and flesh" before he comes into the world; so total that they bring to his birth, along with gifts of the stars, if not with the gifts of the fairies, the shape of his destiny; so total that they provide the words that will make him faithful or renegade, the law of the acts that will follow him right to the very place where he is not yet and beyond his very death; so total that through them his end finds its meaning in the last judgement, where the Word absolves his being or condemns it- unless he reaches the subjective realization of being-toward-death. (2006: 231)

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, linguistic turn triggered by structuralism merges into the intellectual revolution Brooks speaks. Not only the subject but also the society is a linguistic construct or an effect of the signifier. However, this signifier in Lacan is a free-floating linguistic element which determines the course of things in signification on both subjective and communal level but which is also impossible to put under control. "This recognition of the impossibility of mastering the signifier sets Lacanian literary theory apart from earlier Freudian criticism" (Britton 217).

In a Lacanian context, the constitution of the subject cannot be achieved in the absence of the identificatory processes and the intersubjective conditions of being which are linguistic. While he locates intra-subjectivity (imaginary processes) in the (m)Other's domain, he associates intersubjectivity, the state of acculturation, with the realm of language. Because of the emphasis put on linguistic mechanisms and identificatory processes in his epistemology, sexuality becomes psycho-sexuality: "Lacanian ego is a network of identificatory and linguistic relations. In such a context, there is a reciprocal relationship between the Lacanian subject and its social environment which functions as a mirror" (Birlik and Çankaya 2). The significance of linguistic processes in deciphering the recesses of subjectivity and the emphasis put on culture/symbolic/ external space in the configuration of the subjectivities create a symbiosis between the internal and the external. The Lacanian idea of the Mobius strip might be a metaphor to refer to this symbiosis as it implies the close correlation between the internal and external mechanisms. This correlation takes the external as the precondition for the internal or vice versa, therefore: "Lacan's theory holds out promise of a new style of materialist social criticism- one that is able to make coherent connections between the structure of the unconscious and the interactive signifying practices that constitute a given culture" (Sarup 163). This metaphor also leads us to the idea of a fluid, centreless (or multcentred) conception of psychodynamics which we call the "human." Due to the unbridgeable gap between the logic of the unconscious language and that of the social, there is an unbridgeable gap between conscious and unconscious meaning, "[t]o the extent that what is spoken rarely coincides with what the ego intends to communicate" (Schneiderman 3). Unconscious, as an estranged system of a network of signification and representations, is structured like a language but these representations as pure signifiers function on their logic. This split or dividedness in the psyche, or Lacan's reference to it as a barred S, brings him closer to a poststructuralist ground of thinking.

In Lacanian theory, the rules of language or the logic of the signifiers are also regarded as the Law of the Father. Entering the symbolic necessitates subjecting oneself to its regulations, and to prohibitions of language as the symbolic representation of reality. If the individual refuses to obey this command or if s/he chooses to submit to other images of reality, s/he is taken as a misfit or is pathologized by the symbolic s/he is born into. In this process, language becomes a "house of being" in the Heideggerian sense, as for Lacan, language is crucial for acculturation/humanization of the infant. As part of the theoretical turn, we see similar attempts to explore the psychic processes in linguistic terms in

post/ anti-Lacanian too. Although some of them accuse Lacan of being a phallogocentric thinker or a phallogocrat, they base their alternative readings of the psyche on a linguistic model/ challenge, too. A case in point is *semiotic chora* in Kristeva or the idea of the *écriture féminine* in Cixous. In their case, too, the process of configuration or construction of the subject in a phallogocentric context or the subversion of it is explored concerning linguistic processes. In recent years, however, in psychoanalytical studies there is a reaction against the idea of psychoanalysis “merely as a system of interpreting language”:

Some psychoanalytic thinkers are trying to connect the psychoanalytic model of the human being with ‘cognitive science,’ that is, with cognitive psychology (the principles developed from experiments in perception, cognition, and memory): with the simulation of intelligence on computers; and with neuroscientific research into the functioning of the brain. This merger represents a return to the scientific origins of psychoanalysis, as against the recent claim that psychoanalysis is merely a system for interpreting language. (Holland 12)

Despite this reaction, it seems to be impossible to undo what Freud, Jung and later Lacan did in humanities in general and in literature in particular. What Sarup says for Freud is also applicable to all three of them:

It has been said that Sigmund Freud contributed to something much broader than merely the growth of a scientific discipline. He has contributed to the whole cultural milieu of the twentieth century in that he has given us a way of seeing things. He fashioned a new image of what it is to be human. Freud, by the power of his writings and by the breath and audacity of his speculations, revolutionised the thought, the lives and the imagination of the age. (Sarup 1)

Likewise in Lacanian epistemology, “[t]he basic idea that the subject is constructed in language provides a radically new way of looking at fictional characterisation and narrative point of view and has regenerated this whole area of literary criticism” (Britton 212). By way of conclusion, one can say that the close dialogue between psychoanalytical psychology and literature proved fertile ground in literary theory. Psychoanalysis generates ideas about the working and structure of the human psyche, which creates a common ground between literature and the human world. This common ground implies that psychoanalysis might give us a conceptual roadmap while analysing literary texts or literary texts might supply a lexical resource or conceptual toolbox for psychoanalytical theories. Literature can translate itself easily to psychoanalysis or vice versa as in Schweiser’s words: what Euripides did in Ancient Greek

Drama is echoed by Freud, as “Freud’s case histories are modern tragedies, transformations of suffering into a narrative event, ‘a significant whole’” (11).

Bibliography

- Bär, Eugen. “Understanding Lacan.” *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Science*. Vol 3. Eds. L. Goldberger & V.H. Rosen. New York: International UP, 1974. 473-544.
- Birlik, N & T. Çankaya. Introduction. *Lacan in Literature and Film*. By N. Birlik, T. Çankaya & T. Aydın. Bethesda, Dublin & Palo Alto: Academica, 2015.
- Britton, Celia. “Structuralist and Poststructuralist Psychoanalytic and Marxist Theories.” *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*. Vol. 8. Ed. R. Selden. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. 197-252.
- Brooks, Peter. *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.
- Holland, Norman. *Psychoanalytic Psychology and Literature-and-Psychology*. New York & Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book II: The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*. Trans. Sylvania Tomaselli. New York: Norton, 1988.
- . *Écrits (1st complete edition in English)*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.
- Lakoff, G. & M. Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago & London: Chicago UP, 2003.
- Lesser, Simon O. *Fiction and the Unconscious*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1957.
- Jauregui, Immaculada. “Psychology and Literature: The Question of Reading the Otherwise.” *International Journal of Psychology* 83 (2002): 1169-1180.
- Sarup, Madan. *Jacques Lacan*. Hertfordshire: Simon & Schuster, 1992.
- Mellard, James M. *Using Lacan, Reading Fiction*. Urbana and Chicago: Illinois, 1991.
- Schneiderman, Stuart. *Returning to Freud: Clinical Psychoanalysis in the School of Lacan*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale UP, 1980.
- Schweiser, Harold. Introduction. *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*. By Peter Brooks. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994.

CHAPTER TWO

PERIPHERAL WRITING: PSYCHOSIS AND PROSE FROM ERNST HERBECK TO W. G. SEBALD

MELISSA S. ETZLER

In the fall of 1966, a twenty-two-year-old Germanist-in-training,¹ Winfried Georg Sebald sat at one of the oversized desks in Ryland's Library in Manchester dutifully penning pieces of what would become his master's thesis "Carl Sternheim: Critic and Victim of the Wilhelminian Era."² The revisionist portrayal of Sternheim created by Sebald, who had already revised his own identity by adopting the moniker Max to distance himself from his inherited German history,³ lands him squarely within the field of German Studies as a *provocateur*. Many had problems with the content of the work since Sebald associates this Jewish writer with fascist ideology (McCulloh 2003, 176). Sebald's unconventional approach to Sternheim's literature was also problematic. Based on Sternheim's fictional texts, Sebald conducts a psychiatric evaluation of the man himself and creates a case study of Sternheim revealing a pathology resulting from his failed attempts at assimilation within the German bourgeoisie. The genesis of Sebald's discovery of this approach lies in his desire for

¹ Though Sebald taught European literature, he published about ten essays on German authors and almost thirty on Austrian writers. For an in-depth study of Sebald's controversial academic career, see (Schütte, "Against *Germanistik*").

² *Carl Sternheim: Kritiker und Opfer der Wilhelminischen Ära*, all translations from German into English throughout this article are my own unless otherwise noted.

³ "The name with which family and friends addressed him, Max, had been given to him by himself in the 1960s while he was still a student—a means of separation and starting over." "Den Namen, mit dem ihn später Familie und Freunde anreden, Max, hat er sich als Student Mitte der sechziger Jahre selbst gegeben—ein Mittel zu Abgrenzung und Neuanfang" (Schütte, *W. G. Sebald*, 17).

distraction. Fed up with the writing process and with Sternheim, Sebald lays his work aside to focus on much more stimulating material: Leo Navratil's *Schizophrenia and Language* (1966). That Sebald read this text while simultaneously writing his Master's Thesis is apparent in not only Sebald's insertion of quotes from Navratil's book in footnotes but also in his adoption of Navratil's methods of scrutinizing his schizophrenic patients' language. In examining Carl Sternheim's linguistic choices, Sebald pronounces Sternheim schizophrenic based on the qualities of his writing that resemble the characteristics pointed out by Navratil in *Schizophrenia and Language*. The magnetism of Navratil's text kept Sebald enthralled as a young academic and continued to exert a force over roughly the next three decades. Sebald alludes to Navratil and his patients in his critical academic writings and his internationally acclaimed prose fiction.

Navratil's text features a variety of short written works by diagnosed schizophrenics and residents of the psychiatric institution, Landesnervenheilstalt Maria Gugging, just outside of Vienna where Navratil served as director beginning in 1946; he remained active at this institution until his death in 2006. Navratil would give his patients a postcard and then ask them to write a short response to a term such as "giraffe" or "home." Navratil quickly recognized the aesthetic value of the pieces and argued in his book that the texts written by his patients linguistically mirror canonical poetry by the German greats such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe or Friedrich Hölderlin. One of the most well-known writers from Navratil's collection is Ernst Herbeck "Alexander" (1920-1991) who was consulted beforehand neither regarding his pseudonym nor the publication of his works. Nonetheless, once Herbeck and the other patients were aware of the release, primarily because they were turned into pop stars overnight since several of the most prominent literary figures of the late 1960s, 70s and 80s wanted to come and visit them, they embraced the idea of also being literary authors and visual artists. A few of the authors that travelled to Gugging to meet the artists were Peter Handke, Gerhard Roth, Ernst Jandl and Friederike Mayröcker.

Navratil took advantage of the fact that many established authors wanted personal contact with his patients and, considering himself a part-time psychiatrist and full-time friend to the patients of his institution, Navratil re-vamped the housing situation for his artists-in-residence. Navratil devoted one home on the property explicitly to the patients who wished to pursue the artistic pursuits that they had initially begun as therapy work. The artists painted a variety of landscapes and abstract, child-like people on the outside of the house in primary colours. Both the

playful nature of the images as well as the extravagance of the larger-than-life images have been preserved. Today, one can visit The House of Artists [*Das Haus der Künstler*] in Maria Gugging as well as the museum in an adjacent house that features visual works created by residents of this institution as well as rotating exhibitions from other institutions. Visitors can purchase the poetry collections as well, including Navratil's volumes which so fascinated Sebald and many other writers of his generation and beyond, and even watch the 1981 documentary film by Heinz Büttler, *Zur Besserung der Person* [For the Betterment of the Person], featuring Navratil, Herbeck, from whom the title originated, and the other artists.

Before continuing with Navratil and his artists/patients, let us return to Sebald, who we left sitting in the library procrastinating on writing his master's thesis by reading Navratil's *Schizophrenia and Language* instead. Sebald recounts his impression of reading Navratil's book and how he finds himself particularly drawn to the writings of Ernst Herbeck or "Alexander": "I first came upon Herbeck's eccentric figures of speech in 1966. I remember sitting in the Ryland's Library in Manchester [...] every now and then, as if to refresh my mind, [I picked] up a little volume published by dtv [...] and [found] myself amazed by the brilliance of the riddling verbal images [...]" (Sebald 2005, 125).⁴ The fact that Sebald emphasizes the location, the Ryland's Library, in this context is crucial as it draws attention to the academically established contrast between canonical literature that was deemed relevant "culture" by those in privileged positions or elitist groups, Sternheim's works fall into this camp, and "profane" Outsider Art.⁵ The library, which typically is home to standard canonical literature, symbolically demonstrates what Sebald would aspire to do in all of his forthcoming projects—give a voice to the marginalized minority by constellating outsider voices with those works labelled canonical, thereby collapsing a well-established border in academia. It seems Sebald arrived in Manchester at just the right time, as

⁴ "Meine erste Begegnung mit den exzentrischen Sprachfiguren Herbecks geht zurück auf das Jahr 1966. Ich entsinne mich, wie ich in der Ryland's Library in Manchester [...] immer wieder das dtv-Bändchen *Schizophrenie und Sprache* zur Hand nahm und staunte über den Glanz." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (8 Dec. 1992) and (Sebald 2003, 171).

⁵ For more on the exclusivity of literary works which were deemed worthy of being taught at the university in the mid-1960s, see (Sheppard 2011, 45). In 1972, art critic Roger Cardinal coined the term and published a book on "Outsider Art." While Cardinal's term refers to art by the mentally ill created outside of commercial culture and the art institution, it also includes art by people who feel inspired to create despite the lack of any official training or education in the field.

his colleagues at the university, where Sebald was not only working on his master's thesis but also working as a German Assistant (*Lektor*), were like-minded thinkers. For example, one colleague, Professor Raymond Furness, often voiced his preference for “the ‘off-beat, outré and stuff outside the canon’” (Sheppard 2011, 72). Although Sebald would ultimately incorporate the poetry found in Navratil's book within his own academic and prose writing, at this stage Navratil's own style of psychiatric analysis and his attempt to dissipate the border between genius and sanity is what seems to impress Sebald the most since he conducts a reading of Sternheim's literature in a decidedly Navratilian manner.

W. G. Sebald, a Brief Biography

A concise outline of Sebald's life grants an understanding regarding why he would be so intent on not only becoming intimately familiar with Navratil's work but also making personal connections with Navratil and Herbeck. Born in Wertach, Germany at the end of World War II (18 May 1944), Sebald demonstrates that tendency so often found in writers of his generation—a compulsive literary return to the war in an endless process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or coming to terms with the past. Sebald unusually positions himself as a child born of trauma, the victim of an abusive and malfunctioning parental society. He states:

To this day, when I see photographs or documentary films dating from the war, I feel as if I were its child, so to speak as if those horrors I did not experience cast a shadow over me, and one from which I shall never entirely emerge. [...] I know now that at the time when I was lying in my bassinets on the balcony of the Seefeld house and looking up at the pale blue sky, there was a pall of smoke in the air all over Europe. (Kaufmann 2008, 108)

Despite Sebald's lack of direct experience with the war, “Sebald argues that through imaginative empathy, he has somehow experienced *more* than others have and has been truly scarred by events while the others have skated by on the surface of memories they have repressed” (Ibid.). His ability for “imaginative empathy” is what will ultimately enable Sebald's alignment of himself with marginalized individuals at the cost of turning his back on his home country. Criticisms of post-war German society pepper Sebald's prose works, despite his popularity in Great Britain and the United States, his works are comparatively under-researched within Germany.

Because Sebald believed his father, who was in the German army and was released from a prisoner of war camp in 1947, to be a culpable figure of the Second World War, he transferred his resentment of his father to the entire generation and Germany.⁶ Sebald was frustrated by the collective madness of his father's generation that demonstrated willful amnesia and normalized silence when it came to the war. He also loathed how Germany tolerated former members of the National Socialist Party continuing in official governmental and state positions after the war had ended. Sebald sought an escape from the corruption he viewed throughout mainstream Germany and also from the guilt he felt he had somehow inherited by his birthplace, nationality and the fact that his family remained untouched in their rural home throughout the war. Despite his attempts to learn more about the war, during his undergraduate studies at the University of Freiburg, his frustration increasingly grew as he discovered the issue to be taboo. He was shocked by the lack of information available, especially since his time there coincided with the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt (1965).

The experience in Freiburg was, however, not entirely negative. It was here that Sebald met Albert Rasche, who later became a distinguished psychoanalyst. Rasche, like Navratil, was interested in overlapping the fields of psychology and literature. Rasche participated in literary and artistic circles, but his primary area of interest remained psychiatry. Although Sebald transferred to the University of Fribourg in Switzerland and then immigrated to the United Kingdom in 1966, their friendship survived. They exchanged several letters over the next thirty years,⁷ and followed each other's work. It is therefore likely that several of Sebald's ideas and continuing interest in psychiatry stem from this early friendship.

Feeling himself an outsider in Germany because of his inability to move beyond the Germans' collective guilt, Sebald fled the country. After

⁶ "Although Georg Sebald [Max's father] was never a member of the National Socialist Party, Sebald saw his father as a follower and at the same time an accomplice of the Nazi regime not least on the basis of his participation in the general swearing to silence which was the common means of dealing with the past during the Adenauer era" [Obgleich Georg Sebald nie Mitglied der NSDAP gewesen war, sah Sebald in seinem Vater als einem Mitläufer zugleich einen Komplizen der Naziherrschaft, nicht zuletzt durch dessen Teilnahme an der allgemeinen Verschwörung des Schweigens, die den Umgang mit der Vergangenheit in der Adenauer-Ära prägte] (Schütte, *W. G. Sebald* 19).

⁷ Included in Sebald's literary remains at the *Deutsches Literaturarchiv* [German Literary Archive] in Marbach, Germany are letters ranging from the early 1980s up to 1997.