Université de Montréal

Reading-Together as a Transformational Practice:
The Potential Role of Literary Fiction in the Work with Non-Neurotic Analysands

Par Inês Faro

Département de littératures et de langues du monde
Faculté des arts et des sciences

Mémoire présenté
en vue de l'obtention du grade de Maîtrise ès arts (M.A.)
en littérature comparée

Août 2019

Université de Montréal
Département de langues et de littératures du monde, Faculté des arts et des sciences

Ce mémoire intitulé

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Présenté par
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A été évalué par un jury composé des personnes suivantes

Terry Cochran
Président-rapporteur

Eric Savoy
Directeur de recherche

Simon Harel
Membre du jury

Résumé

Dans ce mémoire, j'explore la construction du sujet en relationnalité en m'appuyant sur un cadre théorique composé de concepts issus à la fois des études littéraires et d'approches psychanalytiques contemporaines. Dans la première partie de mon travail, j'explore la manière dont le travail littéraire peut faciliter l'actualisation de l'altérité à la fois dans le texte et chez le lecteur. Dans la deuxième partie de ce travail, j'illustre cette actualisation possible en en explorant les affects évoqués et produits dans l'histoire « I Only Came to Use the Phone » de Gabriel García Márquez. Dans la troisième partie, j'explore théoriquement l'impact potentiel de la fiction littéraire comme moyen thérapeutique auprès des lectrices/lecteurs « non-nevrotiques ». J'explore la façon dont la lecture d'histoires peut contribuer à l'activation de certaines traces mnésiques qui pourrait renforcer la capacité de symboliser expériences émotionnelles jusque-là non métabolisées ou non représentées. Je soutiens que la lecture et la discussion d'histoires dans des suivis thérapeutiques pourront aider des patientes à co-construire (à l'aide de leur thérapeute) de nouveaux récits qui pourront mener à une certaine transformation de la structure psychique non-névrotique des patients. Dans la dernière partie, j'avance comme hypothèse que le tiers intersubjectif issu de la rencontre d'un couple analytique avec l'histoire « I Only Came to Use the Phone » pourrait nourrir de nouvelles façons de penser, de sentir et d'exprimer des affects en séance, tout en activant des « rêves » dont l'émergence témoigne de la manière dont la lecture d'histoires pourrait potentiellement animer la vie inconsciente des personnes prises avec des états mentaux non représentées. Enfin, je soutiens que la lecture de fiction littéraire pourrait initier chez des personnes avec des états mentaux non représentés un mouvement de transformation, et ce, d'une part, en les aidant à passer d'un « bain mycélien de non-figurabilité » interne au renforcement de leur capacité à (se) représenter ; de l'autre, en leur sortant d'un état d'apathie vers le développement de nouvelles cartographies affectives.

Mots-clés : lecture ; psychanalyse ; médiation thérapeutique ; états mentaux peu représentés; récit de soi.

Abstract

In this thesis, I explore the subject's construction in relationality, first by presenting a theoretical framework built from concepts drawn both from literary studies and contemporary psychoanalytic approaches. In the first part of the thesis, I explore how the literary work has the potential to facilitate the actualization of otherness both in the text and within the reader. To illustrate this contention, in Part II, I explore the affective tone of the short story, "I Only Came to Use the Phone" by Gabriel García Márquez. In Part III, I elaborate theoretically on the potential benefits of using literature as a therapeutic medium with non-neurotic readers. I explore how the reading of short stories may contribute to the stimulation of the non-neurotic reader's capacity to memorize and to remember while promoting and strengthening her/his capacity for symbolizing previously unmetabolized or unrepresented emotional experiences. I argue that reading and discussing stories in the context of analytically oriented sessions may lead to the co-construction of subsequent narratives that may be transformational for the reader's non-neurotic psychic structure. In the fourth and last part, I argue that the intersubjective in-between space that might emerge from the encounter of an analytic dyad with the story by García Márquez could potentially facilitate the important task of supplying new ways of thinking, feeling and expressing, while simultaneously potentially producing "dream" material that may contribute to the enlivening of the analysand's non-neurotic conscious and unconscious life. Finally, I contend that the reading of literary fiction may initiate in non-neurotic analysands a transformational movement: first, from an internal "mycelial bath of non-figurability" to the strengthening of their representational capacity; and second, from an emotional apathy to the extension of the analysand's affective cartographies.

Keywords: reading, psychoanalysis, transformational practice, unrepresented mental states, self-narrative.

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To the women who struggle to think and talk about themselves and
to the people and stories that enable them to do so.

Acknowledgements

The idea that a "text" exists only with a reader, and Bion's notion that we need at least two minds to think a thought, enhances how existence is fundamentally relational. In that sense, this master thesis was only possible with the support and minds of many people. I would like to mention only a few.

My supervisor, Professor Eric Savoy, believed, from the first moment, that the unusual format of this thesis was possible. I thank you for not only your support and confidence in me, but also for introducing me to many of the authors and frameworks that I use in this thesis. Your carefully revisions and comments challenged me to write clearer.

I thank Professor Barbara Agnese, whose academic and friendly listening and whose recognition of women's /mother's challenges in the academia helped me in a moment I was struggling to complete this thesis.

I also would like to thank the people who challenged my hypothesis and fueled new ideas on this topic in the context of my presentations at the National Congress of the Canadian Psychoanalytic Society, at an IPSO meeting at the Société psychanalytique de Paris and at a scientific meeting at the Société psychanalytique d'Ottawa.

I thank the Département de littératures et de langues du monde, the Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales, the Fédération des Associations Étudiants du Campus de l'Université de Montréal, and the Caisse Desjardins Portugaise for their financial support through the attribution of generous grants.

Muito obrigada à Inês C., à Joana M., e à Selma P., pela amizade e escuta empática. I thank Yaël G. for the insightful and poetic comments on my work. I also thank Gale P., for taking care of my youngest son so well when he was still a baby, allowing me that way to return to my studies and to work without feeling (unbearably) guilty.

I extend a special thanks to my analyst for listening, containing and co-creating.

Agradeço aos meus pais e aos meus irmãos. Agradeço sobretudo aos meus filhos, M.C., T. e X., por me ensinarem a viver com mais curiosidade, mais espanto e mais amor. Finalmente, agradeço ao meu marido pelo apoio enorme durante a redação desta tese. Obrigada por me desafiares a pensar melhor e a amar mais. Sou, contigo.

Preface

This Master's thesis comprises an introduction, a conceptual framework, and a general discussion. In this master's thesis, I focus on the interface of the two fields of study that I am interested in: first as a master's student in comparative literature and subsequently as a candidate enrolled in a four-year training in clinical and theoretical psychoanalysis at the Canadian Institute of Psychoanalysis – Quebec English.

Freud writes in a letter to Arthur Schnitzler that the Viennese writer knows "through intuition, or rather through detailed self-observation" everything that he, Freud, had discovered by "laborious work on other people" (Hofmann 212)[1]. The relationship between literature and psychoanalysis is indissociable from the development of the psychoanalytic thinking. Freud saw in literature a luminous evocation of the unconscious life, and some of the foundational concepts in psychoanalysis were drawn from Freud's analysis of literary work. Simon Harel wrote that psychoanalysis itself is a story, a narrative constructed by Freud with both himself as its object and narrator.

Freud and many of his successors analyzed myths, literary texts, and the unconscious desires of writers and their narrators through the lenses of psychoanalytic concepts – a body of knowledge which later became known as "Freudian criticism," "Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism" or "Applied Psychoanalysis." Some of the most famous examples are Freud's study of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Lear*, his study of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* or Jensen's *Gradiva*. Psychoanalysis, in turn, has influenced literary texts such as

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[1] All in-text citations and references in this thesis follow the MLA Handbook (8th ed.).

D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner (stream-of-consciousness narration), *Portnoy's Complaint* by Philip Roth, and has inspired essential works of literary theory such as Harold Bloom's book *The Anxiety of Influence* or Peter Brooks's seminal paper "Freud's Masterplot," in which the author applies some of the ideas explored in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to the structure of a fictional plot.

Despite the mutual influence of literature and psychoanalysis, to date, there has been little focus on the potential impact of stories on the internal world of those who listen to or who read them. In this thesis, I explore the transformational role that stories, particularly through its affective orientation, may play when used as a pliable medium within psychoanalytic-oriented psychotherapies in the work with analysands with poorly represented states of mind.

The theoretical framework that I have built to address this goal is constituted from concepts and ideas stemming from literary and cultural studies, particularly reader-response criticism and contemporary contributions from affect theory; psychoanalytic theories of the work of symbolization with analysands with "unrepresented" or weakly represented mental states; contemporary psychoanalytic field theory; and literature as a "pliable medium" in the context of psychoanalytic-oriented psychotherapies.

The choice of breaking with the conventional form of the master's thesis in the wider field of literary studies is broadly aligned with the ways in which comparative literature have been practiced at the Université de Montréal since the very beginning of this field of study. In the article "La littérature comparée à Montréal : école ou communauté illusoire ?" Amaryll Chanady writes about the specificity of the Montreal school of comparative literature. She argues that the Montreal school adopted a "transdisciplinary approach, which transgressed all

borders and questioned disciplinary boundaries, its emphasis on theory, and the diversity of its objects of study." The pathway that led me to the choice of my object of study for my thesis resonates with what Chanady alludes to.

I started my master's program in January 2017. Prior to the beginning of the master's program, I had engaged in a training in clinical and theoretical psychoanalysis at the Canadian Institute of Psychoanalysis – Quebec English. Two main questions emerged from this "double-track" training: why and how do human beings make use of storytelling to symbolize and to articulate their emotional experiences in the world? Secondly, how does the production of meaning both reveal and construct who we are? Although there is no consensus as to whether storytelling and narrative in a broader sense are fundamental to the constitution of one's own identity (cf. Strawson), in this thesis, "narrative" and "identity" are inseparable and dialogical concepts. The more I advanced in my two trainings, the less distinct became the boundaries of the disciplines of comparative literature and psychoanalysis. This is particularly true of the interdisciplinary interface that shed new light on the issues of self-narrative, reader-response theory, and the constitution of a self in individuals struggling with a sense of inner fragmentation and with unrepresented mental states. My aim in intertwining contemporary developments in the fields of literary studies and psychoanalysis was to deliberately inhabit a "transitional space" (Winnicott, *Through Paediatrics* xviii) and to locate myself between a "espace d'expérience" and "horizon d'attente" (Ricœur, *Temps et Récit* 375-390) in which past, present and future could be conceived and experienced as intertwined. In her "Notes Toward a Politics of Location," Adrienne Rich speaks about talking from an area between an outer world and one's own thinking. In this thesis, I talk from my "location" and seek to

inscribe my specific experiences, interests and practices in the general modes of working in the academy.

"All criticism of literature," writes the literary critic Murray Schwartz, "originates in our personal experiences of individual works, and all criticism is a transformation of those experiences" (756). This transformation comes from the critic's specific location and the different horizons of knowledge to which she/he has access in order to be able to engage with an object of study. By exploring an interdisciplinary and comparatist approach on how contemporary views of the impact of the intersubjective experience of analysts with their analysands might benefit from the reading and discussion of short stories in session, I hope to contribute to the expansion of the ways in which psychoanalysis and literature can interweave.

Finally, in spite of being a proficient user of French, I feel more comfortable in English when it comes to academic writing, which is also the language of the vast majority of the bibliographic sources that I have read for my thesis. In keeping with scholarly conventions in Comparative Literature, all quotations from scholarly materials written in French are presented here in their original language.

Introduction and Thesis Plan

In this master's thesis, I put into dialogue concepts stemming from literary studies and contemporary psychoanalytic theory to explore the potential impact that the reading of literary fiction may have on the psychic apparatus of non-neurotic analysands, and on the development of their capacity to talk about themselves. Drawing on the hypothesis that the use of short stories can be used as a therapeutic medium to overcome non-neurotic analysands' difficulty in articulating a self-narrative, the central question of this thesis is: *why* and *how* can the reading of short stories in the context of a psychoanalytic psychotherapy enable non-neurotic analysands narrative capacity?

In Part I of this thesis, I engage in a meta-*mise-en-récit* to explore the idea that "we begin with stories, in the "mycelial2 bath of non-figurability," a metaphor that a friend shared with me after she read the material I presented on the subject of the use of literary fiction between an analyst and his non-neurotic analysand in a psychoanalytic congress. The first part is organized in five sections: "I" *as* and *with* Other(ness);" "Reading, an actualization of otherness;" and "Literary text: producing and practicing emotions." This section of the thesis is a meta-reflection on the constitution of the subject in relationality, and the creation and appropriation of stories in literary studies. I end Part I focusing on the contribution of affect theory to the way in which we engage with literary works by studying their affective orientation.

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2 In Botany, mycelial is a derivative of mycelium which stems from the Greek mukēs, 'fungus.' It refers to the vegetative part of a fungus, consisting of a network of fine white filaments that can organize in mats that can achieve massive proportions.

In Part II, I present an analysis of the affective tone of one short story, "I Only Came to Use the Phone" by Gabriel García Márquez. This short story focuses on a woman's journey committed to a mental health facility for female patients. I explore how this story is evocative of numerous themes with which mental health patients struggle, namely the feelings of disorientation, fragmentation, loneliness, lack of comprehension and affection, and emotional apathy. As a critical reader, my framework or my "location" for the exploration of this short story consists of a focus on the story's affective tone. I hope to achieve two things: first, to illustrate the result of the encounter of the author's *pensée littéraire* with my subjective appropriation of the meanings and affects evoked and produced through the mechanisms of the text. Second, I intend to create a cartography of the affects which I will later use to speculate on how this story in particular could present itself as a fertile terrain to foster the imagination and emotional life of a category of reader, whom I will designate the "non-neurotic reader."

In Part III, I elaborate on the differences between a neurotic and non-neurotic reader and how they might differ in the appropriation of a literary text. I develop the idea of "non-neurotic readers" to conceptualize reading in a therapeutic context as a practice that is transformational by enabling the linkage of representations and affects. I argue that reading may "supply content" (Green "Conceptions of Affect" 172) to people struggling with poorly represented, or unrepresented, emotional experiences and a scattered sense of who they are. I argue that reading in the presence of a psychoanalytic-oriented therapist may contribute to the analysand's process of subjectification in a very specific way – that is, by enabling the co-construction of other stories and metaphorical lands of their own that may facilitate the representation of their raw emotional experiences in familiar and sentient narratives.

In the fourth and last section, I speculate on how a non-neurotic analysand could subjectively appropriate the story. I briefly explore how this story could give content – that is, an addition or as a supplement to that which was previously neither represented nor symbolized in the analysand's mind. I discuss how the practice of reading-together in session may be used as a catalyst for the process of the construction of the analysand's *récit de soi*.

PART I

After discussing with a friend who is a psychoanalyst about the potential impacts of reading literary fiction on analysands with unrepresented mental states, she wrote me an email and commented on how "we begin with stories, in the mycelial bath of non-figurability" (Glick *private communication*). The following questions came to mind: What mediates this beginning/becoming with stories? How do we go from a "mycelial bath" of non-figurability to a full-fledged *mise-en-figure*? Could an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that includes concepts from literary studies and psychoanalysis shed light on this movement from non-figurability to the *mise-en-figure*?

I was intrigued by her comment. I was not sure what "mycelial" meant and I googled it. That night another response to my friend's comment happened, I dreamt about it. I appropriated the metaphor and gave it my own twist: in my dream, I heard myself negotiating whether it was possible for me to explore through my writing the way we, as human beings, transform preverbal material – in the dream illustrated by floating fibres of raw cotton balls – into something that holds a personal meaning. In the dream, I started to write and, right before me, I saw raw cotton fibres condensing and forming different bodies. When I woke up, I knew how to proceed: I would write this thesis in an academic manner, but without withholding my "pensée littéraire."

Would this metaphor have been integrated into my phantasmatic life had I been in a different phase of my life, that is, were I not at work on my master's thesis in comparative literature – a field that deals precisely with literary work and figures, representation,

interpretation, and self-narrative? More specifically, would this have happened had I previously "figured out" how to articulate in a synthetic manner the theories of the construction of the subject, intertextuality, reader-response, interpretation and its limits in literary studies and psychoanalysis?

Probably not.

In this Part I of my thesis, I engage in a meta-discussion of my appropriation of the metaphor "we begin with stories, in the mycelial bath of non-figurability." I see in this exercise of reader-response an opportunity to develop in an academic manner a *mise-en-scène* of how rhetorical figures in literary fiction are able to crystallize or to render accessible what is not yet represented, through the reader's imagination, clusters of knowledge, life experience, and personality – how, in other words, such rhetorical figures contain the potential to create meaning for ideas and experiences that seek representation and articulation in the subject's world. This way of proceeding, I hope, will help me to situate my "influences" and the frameworks to be explored later. According to Michel de Certeau,

> [les influences] apparaissent dans un texte (ou dans la définition d'une recherche) par les effets d'altération et de travail qu'elles y ont produits. (…) Des échanges, lectures et confrontations qui forment ses conditions de possibilité, chaque étude particulière est un miroir à cent facettes (d'autres reviennent partout dans cet espace) mais un miroir brisé et anamorphotique (les autres s'y fragmentent et s'y altèrent). [73]

De Certeau is referring to how essays develop intertextually, in a movement that is simultaneously an appropriation and a creation of a transformed, kaleidoscopic mirror in which various paradigms and languages interact with each other. "On écrit toujours sur de l'écrit" (71), writes De Certeau, reminding us that we do not write (or think or even exist) in a vacuum. Writing, thinking, responding, interpreting, are part of a dialogical exchange with others, an

exchange that has the potential of transforming all participants. Writing is therefore inseparable from the encounter with othernesses. Drawing on this idea, I suggest that the subject not only begins *with* (others') stories, but she/he also emerges *from* (others') stories.

I use the word "stories" metaphorically – that is, in a non-literary way – to reflect on the conception of "I" as relationally constituted. Such a conception of the subject, as we shall see, has an impact on how literary criticism and psychoanalysis both tend to highlight the role of the reader (and/or critic) in the co-construction of the text (an idea that is explored throughout this part of my thesis) or in the co-construction of meaning between analysand and analyst (as further explored in Part II). In a second movement, I shall consider "stories" as referring to literary texts and will reflect on what "is" a reader and what "is" a text. This will lead me to conceptualize a type of reader whom I call "non-neurotic," and to explore how fictional stories can be a valuable therapeutic medium for non-neurotic analysands. My task in this present section of my thesis is also to contextualize some of the theoretical models of the mind that I chose, particularly Wilfred Bion's and post-Bionian concepts, which will be developed in Part III.

"I" *as* and *with* the Other(ness)

Before we begin *with* stories, we begin *as* stories. We are present in our parents' minds as stories (*récits*), as *ph*antasies3, years before we are born. In 1988, the French psychiatrist

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3 By *ph*antasy with ph, I mean what originates in dynamic psychical realities, that is "unconscious mental content, which may or may not become conscious" (Susan Isaacs, The Nature and Function of Phantasy. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 29:73-97, 1948, p. 80)

and psychoanalyst Serge Lebovici described how we pre-exist in the form of phantasies before we are born. He suggested that the baby for the parents or their substitutes comprehends at least four babies: the phantasmatic baby, the imaginary baby, the cultural baby and the real baby. With his model of the four babies, Lebovici emphasises the transgenerational and intergenerational relationships and phantasies that give shape, to a great extent, to who the baby "is" and how it "becomes with." These phantasies that "precede" the baby go back so far in time that it is ontologically impossible to determine which of these phantasies or lived experiences define us as a subject. In this vein, even the absence of a phantasy is in itself a story. The idea of being "phantasized" requires the existence of the Other, and we also need the Other in order to continue "going-on-being" (Winnicott "The Maturational" 47).

Our first stories – in the sense of a temporally organized sequence of events – are preverbal and experienced in the relationship with our primary caregivers. When a newborn baby cries and the mother responds by offering her breast (or the bottle), she implicitly tells the baby a story, a story of a sensory and physical soothing: you are crying and I am here to take care of you; or, you are crying and you will be fed. This image of a hungry baby fed as a paradigm of a primitive form of communication was described by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. He puts forward the idea that breastfeeding constitutes the basis for one of the first affective memories of the experience of pleasure (or unpleasure). A more recent way of conceptualizing the importance of a *mise-en-récit* in shaping the baby's internal world is Wilfred Bion's seminal concept of the mother's alpha function. According to Bion, the "alpha-function" refers to the mother's capacity for "containing"[4] ("appropriating," we could add) the

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[4] Bion's idea of the "container-contained" is concerned with the processing of thoughts derived from lived emotional experience. The contained addresses the dynamic interaction of unconscious thoughts, and the container refers to the capacity for "dreaming" and thinking those thoughts.

baby's texts of raw "sense-impressions related to emotional experience" ("A Theory of Thinking" 17), which he calls beta-elements, and for transforming them into "metabolized"/processed material, or alpha-elements. Bion compares this process of transforming raw sensorial material to the function exerted by the digestive system. Through the repetition of this transformative and containing function, the baby eventually learns to translate certain intolerable affects and to attribute to them a meaning, which in a Bionian idiom would lead to "thoughts that can be thought." Bion saw in this transformation – which is also designated as a capacity for maternal reverie – the foundations on which the baby will build her or his thinking and dreaming apparatus. Thomas Ogden describes this alpha-function as a "function of doing conscious and unconscious psychological work on emotional experience" ("On holding and containing" 1355). The mother may evoke her *knowledge* or her *previous experiences* when she uses expressions, uttered in a mantra-like way, such as: "I know… You must be hungry."

The baby's crying is replaced by a babbled "gugugu" or a general sense of peace in response to the mother's capacity to emotionally "contain" her baby. According to Ogden, for Bion "the word 'container' – with its benign connotations of a stable, sturdy delineating function – becomes a word that denotes the full spectrum of ways of processing experience from the most destructive and deadening to the most creative and growth-promoting" ("On holding and containing" 1349). In this sense, the alpha-function is a metaphorical moment, a *mise-en-récit* of an intolerable, unthinkable affect that is alleviated by the mother – which may be understood by the baby as "I shall not fear, I will not fall apart." To some extent, in the dyad baby-mother, the infant's crying and movements are semiotic systems in the sense that they supply the mother with the signs that will allow her to respond via an interpretative act.

They are a chain of signs "awaiting a thinker to conceive it as a thought" ("On holding and containing" 1355). The mother is affected by the baby's distress, interprets it and transforms it. She provides the baby with an implicit narrative, something that can now be tolerated and integrated into the infant's mind. And this narrative is temporal: the baby learns through this bond with the mother, the cause-effect relationships within time.

The baby's sense of being and capacity to think emerges through this iterative process of transforming lived emotional experience. According to Bion's model of the mind, this process will be internalized (introjected) to form our earliest tapestry of memories. Bion calls this process "dreaming" or "dream-thought," which Thomas Ogden describes as follows: "Dream-thought is an unconscious thought generated in response to lived emotional experience and constitutes the impetus for the work of dreaming" ("On holding and containing" 1355). Bion understands "dreaming" in a very different way than Freud. Ogden distinguishes their respective conceptualizations as follows:

> Bion's (1962a) conception of the work of dreaming is the opposite of Freud's (1900) 'dream-work.' The latter refers to that set of mental operations that serves to disguise unconscious dream-thoughts by such means as condensation and displacement. Thus, in derivative/disguised form, unconscious dream-thoughts are made available to consciousness and to secondary-process thinking. [1355]

By contrast, writes Ogden:

Bion's work of dreaming is that set of mental operations that allows conscious lived experience to be altered in such a way that it becomes available to the unconscious for psychological work (dreaming). In short, Freud's dream-work allows derivatives of the unconscious to become conscious, while Bion's work of dreaming allows conscious lived experience to become unconscious (i.e. available to the unconscious for the psychological work of generating dream-thoughts and for the dreaming of those thoughts). [1356]

For Bion, "dreaming" is a form of unconscious psychological work, a way of working through one's lived experience. In Part II, I shall further explore Bion's ideas on the dream-work to

suggest that the analyst has to "dream" the short-stories that she/he might use in session in order for them to be *transformational* for the analysand. What is important to retain for the time being is that when this alpha-function fails, and the baby cannot introject this capacity of *mise-en-récit* of her or his emotional experiences, the raw sensations "flood the mind" (Ferro, *Psychoanalysis as Therapy* 3) and the baby is left with a sense of fragmentation – that is, of being invaded by "undreamt" and "interrupted dreams" (Ogden, "This art of psychoanalysis" 857). According to this model of the mind, this incapacity to "dream" or an incapacity to *mettre-en-récit* will have different equivalents in an adult psychic life, depending on the temperament of the baby, and the frustrations imposed by the environment, the external traumatic experiences – for instance the early death of a parent or a sibling, rape, war. Intra-psychic trauma should also be taken into consideration, that is "experiences of being overwhelmed by conscious and unconscious fantasy" (Ogden, *Rediscovering Psychoanalysis* 16) due to a lack of an internalized alpha-function. These undreamable experiences are what Ogden calls the "undreamt dreams" and make take the form of "psychosomatic illness, split-off psychosis, dis-affected states, pockets of autism, severe perversions, and addictions" (*Rediscovering Psychoanalysis* 17).

An alternative way of looking at the emergence of the "I" as a co-construction is Judith Butler's contention that "the ''I'' has no story of its own that is not also the story of a relation" (8). In *Giving An Account of Oneself,* Butler addresses the force of morality in the production of the subject and she also makes a distinction between "telling oneself" and "an account of oneself." Here, I am more interested in the "telling of oneself," and in the idea of the "I" as emerging in continuity-relationality. Relationality as both essence (*as*) and as constitutive (*with*) of the "I" is explored extensively by philosophers, literary critics and authors interested

in the "philosophies of the subject" (Ricœur, *Hermeneutics* 4). Heidegger's hermeneutic and phenomenological enquiry on Being and his notion of "being-in-the-world" contextualizes the subject in the contingency and concreteness of the on-going world. For Heidegger, Being is already embedded in the world, shared with others and immersed in language. "To be at all is to be worldly" (Steiner 55): that is Being's essence. Influenced by Heidegger's ideas on originary relationality, Paul Ricœur develops a hermeneutics of the self. The Self in *Soi-même comme un autre*, or in its English translation of *Oneself as Another*, exists only in dialectical tension with *otherness*. In the English translation of the introduction, he writes, "*Oneself as Another* suggests from the outset that selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other" (3, italics in the original). And adds: "*as*" (…) not only that of comparison (oneself similar to another) but indeed that of an implication (oneself inasmuch *as* being other)" (3, my italics).

For Ricœur, the subject is embodied, situated; it is linguistically, socially and culturally constituted. What is distinctive about Ricœur's conception of the subject is the fact that, in contrast with Heidegger, the subject has agency. For Ricœur, the Self is a combination of an *idem*-identity, that is, a spatio-temporal sameness, and an *ipse*-identity, which is the part that is imputable to and about itself. The "I" is constituted through dialogue and in the dialectic of *otherness*. This otherness includes the subject's creativity and, we may add, her/his endowments and internal world.

In Lacan's 1966 lecture originally presented in English entitled "Of Structure as an Inmixing of an Otherness prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever" in Baltimore, he argues:

> The message, our message, in all cases comes from the Other by which I understand "from the place of the Other." It certainly is not the common other, the other with a

lower-case o, and this is why I have given a capital O as the initial letter to the Other of whom I am now speaking. [186]

In a lecture Lacan gave ten years before the one mentioned above, he alludes to this idea of an "inmixing" of subjects, a "between-I, [*l'entre-je*], an interposed subject" (*The Psychoses* 193). An "inmixing of an Otherness," the otherness of the conscious, of the unconscious, of other people, of other objects, of the body, of death, and so forth, make the subject a *l'entre-je*, inter- and intra-subjectively construed. We need *othernesses* to become a subject. The "I" cannot indeed have a (singular) story of its own; the "I" cannot be conceived outside the sensory and collective memory and imaginary foundations upon which it will be built. The subject does, however, and simultaneously, contribute, through its creativity and practices, to the building *with* the Other.

The "I" *as* stor*ies,* is dependent on and constitutive of *othernesses*. Subjects are in this sense like Certeaunian readers: "nomades braconnant à travers les champs qu'ils n'ont pas écrits" (de Certeau 251). The subject is, simultaneously, a creative writer: "Il se déterritorialise, oscillant dans un non-lieu entre ce qu'il invente et ce qui l'altère" (250). It is in the space between what the subject inherits and what he attempts to construct that he is capable of producing meaning about his emotional experiences of and in the world.

With the acquisition of language, the number of possibilities of building oneself *as* a story and *with* stories grows rapidly. The toddler, for instance, is exposed to other narratives which become accessible to her/him, narratives which are also grounded in semantic constructions and rhythms that may evoke a vast array of meanings. It is around this phase of development that children hear their first tales and stories. These stories generate meaning, again in the presence of the Other, the storyteller. Bernard Chouvier from the "Centre de

recherche en psychopathologie et psychologie clinique" of the Université Lyon 2 writes about

how stories have the potential of enabling this affective link between the child and the adult –

specifically, what he calls "alchimie affective," – thanks to the *mise-en-figure* of raw

emotional experiences of the child and the child in the adult:

> Pour qu'il y ait authentiquement rencontre, il est nécessaire que s'opère la
> communication, aussi bien sur un plan représentationnel qu'émotionnel entre l'enfant
> présent dans l'adulte et l'enfant réel. (…) Le partage d'affects entre l'enfant et l'adulte
> se réalise grâce à la médiation du conte. Médiation horizontale entre le grand omnipotent
> et le petit sans défense, comme médiation verticale entre le sujet et ses propres terreurs,
> qu'il soit l'enfant ou l'adulte présents ici et maintenant dans la relation. [243]

Through storytelling, the child and the adult have an occasion to give form to experiences in a

lively and embodied way. These stories (in the sense of what is narrated) are read directly

from written texts and often derive from an oral tradition. Sometimes they are embodied and

experientially based narratives, or built on a family or a people, or they are derived from a

mythological narrative.

Another hint of the relational intertextual dimension embedded in stories is how oral

stories shape the written ones. The comprehension of the story's writer depends on what

she/he understood when she/he listened to it, in its oral version, on her/his lived emotional

experiences. De Certeau writes in that vein that: "une mémoire culturelle acquise par

l'audition, par tradition orale, permet seule et enrichit peu à peu les stratégies d'interrogation

sémantique dont le déchiffrage d'un écrit affine, précise ou corrige les attentes" (244). Oral

stories and lived emotional experiences are the *other* of literacy and vice-versa. The potential

for the creation of meaning emerges from relational, continuous and interstitial dimensions:

knowledge can only build on knowledge.

The Being and the world relationally constituted implies a continuing process. The "I" *as* stories exists and can only continue to exist if permanently engaged in an intersubjective and intertextual relationship: narratives are simultaneously told *by*, told *to* and constructed *with* others. But how does this conception of the subject as constituted as and with *othernesses* influence the way in which we are affected by what we read? And how does this conception of the subject may contribute to "produce" the text that is being read?

Reading, an Actualization of Othernesses

One way to engage with the world is through culture: reading books, watching movies, attending or being part of different types of performances, and consuming or producing different cultural objects. This happens in an ongoing, inter-relational and inter-psychic process through which we both become shaped by and contribute to the world:

> Les créations littéraires sont comme le lieu de rencontre entre notre monde intérieur et la réalité extérieure, à la fois reflet de l'homme dans ses profondeurs et reflet de la vie psychique d'un peuple, point de jonction entre l'imaginaire individuel et l'imaginaire collectif de la société à laquelle l'individu appartient. [Méry 156]

The stories that precede us are integrated by us and will elicit in us new narratives that, in turn, will evoke other narratives and figures. This idea has become commonplace now, but the text as a free-standing object, an autotelic thing, was the dominant view in the era of the Anglo-American New Criticism in the mid-twentieth century. This was followed by the structuralist theories of literary criticism that emphasized the importance of specific structural codes in

literary texts, which contributed to minimizing the role of the reader in the co-construction of the text.

The Otherness of the Text

Hans-Georg Gadamer developed his version of the hermeneutic circle in which the reader collaborates in the production of the text. For him, to read is a halfway meeting between the text and the reader, and it amounts to a "merging of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*) – that is, the blurring of social, cultural, temporal, historical, interpersonal and intrapsychic boundaries, the merging with *othernesses*. Gadamer writes: "Every experience has implicit horizons of before and after, and finally fuses with the continuum of the experiences present in the before and after to form a unified flow of experience" (238). This, according to Gadamer, can have different meaningful consequences: for example, to merge the horizon of the reader and the horizon of the text; to merge the intention of the author with the knowledge of the reader; to merge the past with the present; and to merge the part with the whole and the whole with the part. Gadamer is interested in understanding how literature happens. His "prejudice" (to be a proper Gadamerian reader of Gadamer) is that the reader is already *in-the-circle*. Similarly to Heidegger's position of being-in-the-world, in this circle we have a fore-structure of understanding. For Gadamer, this "fore-structure" (268) is located in history and tradition: reading encompasses the process by which the reader is continuously projecting meaning out of his prejudices (Gadamer uses the word "prejudices" to signify pre-conceptions, without the negative connotation that attends this word), derived from particular modes of living, thinking, practicing, and also particular

literary traditions. Gadamer argues that we project meaning as soon as we start reading a text. However, Gadamer argues, this fore-structure of knowledge is dynamically constituted and can be revised:

> [A person] projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he is reading the text with particular expectations in regard to a certain meaning. Working out this fore-projection, which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he penetrates into the meaning, is understanding what is there. [269]

The reader projects meaning for the text as a whole and that meaning is continually revised. This idea certainly challenges the prevalent view at the time Gadamer wrote *Truth and Method* – that of the author's pre-textual intentionality or *intention auctoris* (cf. Hirsch; Knapp & Michaels). For Gadamer, and theorists such as Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, Paul de Man, the authorial intention alone can neither control nor determine the meaning of the text. The reading situation supposes the agency of the reader. The understanding that we, as readers, have of a given text cannot be dissociated from our experience of being-in-the-world and in-the-circle. Our engagement with the text depends on what we know and what we are looking for in the text. Reading becomes an in-between space to which the reader brings his own traditions and experiences and blurs them (*Verschmeltzung*) with the horizons of the text. The text offers the reader a space which he may question the very structures that first guided him. The hermeneutic circle that Gadamer refers to can be thought of as a dialogical area of thinking: "it is neither subjective nor objective, but describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpretation" (293). Meaning is generated by this movement among an environment, a particular bath of discourses, and the interpreter's ongoingly actualized knowledge. I argue that this circle "insists" through an idea

of continuity while simultaneously having the potential for development and expansion from the inside.

To better grasp the complexity of this encounter between the text and the reader, I shall now turn to various theoretical models of what a text is and how it is "produced" in dialogue with the reader. To tackle the question of what a text "is," I bring the notion of a semiotic "intertextualité" proposed by Julia Kristeva for whom a text is "une permutation de textes, une intertextualité : dans l'espace d'un texte plusieurs énoncés, pris à d'autres textes, se croisent et se neutralisent" ("Le texte clos" 103). For the early Kristeva, "intertextualité" is an ensemble of semiotic sequences construed by and with other stories. This hypothesis leaves aside the role of the reader vis-à-vis the intertextuality of the text. However, Kristeva's semiotic notion of intertextuality is further explored and redefined in a later book. In *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, the concept of intertextuality becomes pluri-functional as it refers to shared codes that work along two axes: one is vertical, which connects the text to other texts; and the other is horizontal, which connects the text to the reader of a text. In the first axis, the text is a space with a complex and interrelated interface among different texts that together form a textual system; and, in the second, the meaning of a text is mediated through codes that the reader constructs by reading other texts. Elaborating on Kristeva's definition of intertextuality, Roland Barthes argues that: "Tout texte est un intertexte ; d'autres textes sont présents en lui, à des niveaux variables, sous des formes plus ou moins reconnaissables : les textes de la culture antérieure, ceux de la culture environnante" (*Théorie du texte* 6). This makes of every text a "tissu nouveau de citations révolues" (6). But, Barthes adds, if the text is built upon something that precedes it, the text is also "une pratique signifiante," in which "la signification se produit au gré d'une opération, d'un travail dans

lequel s'investissent à la fois et d'un seul mouvement le débat du sujet et de l'Autre et le contexte social" (3). Furthermore, the text is a "productivité" (4), in which even in the written (fixed) form, it remains active, maintains a continuing, endless process. By conceptualizing the text in this manner, Barthes disputes the idea of a text as "dépositaire d'une signification objective, et cette signification apparaît comme embaumée dans l'œuvre-produit" (5). In this vein, Barthes makes a distinction between the word "signification," "qui appartient au plan du produit, de l'énoncé, de la communication" (5) and the process or work of "signifiance," which belongs to the "plan de la production, de l'énonciation, de la symbolisation" (5). "La significance" is thus a practice of attributing meaning to the text. This distinction is important, Barthes argues, if we consider that the text is conceived and read "comme un jeu mobile de signifiants" (5). The idea of floating signifiers resonates with hypotheses put forward by other authors about the limits and limitless of meanings of texts and words. For instance, in "la différance," Jacques Derrida argues in favour of an instability of meaning in writing and refuses the notion of an epistemic truth. Some years later, Paul de Man defended a limitless reading and unlimited semiosis, as well as the idea of the text as a system of "tropes and of figures" and its deconstruction (6). However, the idea of *limitless* readings can be easily misinterpreted (which stresses the importance of Barthes's distinction between "signification" and "significance"). Jonathan Culler clarifies the notion of the limitless limits of the interpretation of textual meaning. Drawing on Derrida and de Man, he writes that deconstruction "stresses that meaning is context bound – a function of relations within or between texts – but that context itself is boundless: there will always be new contextual possibilities that can be adduced, so that the one thing we cannot do is to set limits" (121). The instability of meaning or unlimited semiosis refers to the virtually infinite number of contexts

or frameworks within which the reader may interpret a text, which endorses the key role played by the reader. If there are virtually infinite contexts within which a limited number of meanings may emerge, the notion of one-and-only true meaning of the text seems highly implausible.

The Otherness of the Reader

The idea of an empowered reader that can subjectively interpret in countless ways raises an important and often debated issue in the field of literary studies: how many interpretations are "too many" interpretations? Addressing the question of "overinterpretation" in the field of literary studies, Culler responds by defending "overinterpretation" on principle. He writes: "overinterpretation is more interesting and intellectually valuable than 'sound' moderate interpretation" (110). However, Culler argues, this "overinterpretation" as it is practiced in the context of literary studies should not foreclose "literary sensibility or sensitivity: hearing in a verse, echoes of other verses, words or images" (112), nor a "systematic understanding of the semiotic mechanisms of literature, the various strategies of its form" (117). This is, Culler posits, the disciplinary matrix that the literary critic has to bear in mind in the practice of literary criticism. In contrast to the common, general reader, the motivation of the literary critic is to think about meaning while *learning* something *from* literature. The general reader may well share with the critic a fascination and interest for the literary work, but the role of the professional critic is "to develop interpretations (uses) of particular works but also [to] acquire a general understanding of how literature operates – its range of possibilities and characteristic structures" (118). In the context of "critical reading,"

overinterpretation is important because it expands and puts in tension different ways of thinking about a text. Nevertheless, Culler insists, we should not ignore the mechanisms of the literary. Critical reading is, according to Culler, about reconciling the protocols of text-processing with the articulation of the subjective experience of the reading. A similar experience may occur in a type of reading that is not necessarily "critical," but the uses that a general reader makes of literature are of a different type. The general reader may use the texts only for his own purpose and pleasure. Readers may read to learn something about a specific theme, about themselves, or about their historical moment in relation to the past. Note however that the "critical" reader and the general reader share the same fate if they ever resist or fail to revise their own "prejudices" through the continuing practice of reading: "those who fail to reread [both literally and symbolically] are obliged to read the same story everywhere" (Barthes, *S/Z* 16).

The Otherness of the Literary Work

In the introduction of his book *L'invention du quotidien*, Michel de Certeau, presents a compelling metaphor to represent the reader as an element of the reading economy. He compares the "mutation" of the text by the reader to a rented apartment inhabit by a tenant:

> Les locataires opèrent une mutation semblable dans l'appartement qu'ils meublent de leurs gestes et de leurs souvenirs ; les locuteurs, dans la langue où ils glissent les messages de leur langue natale et, par l'accent, par des « tours » propres, etc., leur propre histoire ; les piétons, dans les rues où ils font marcher les forêts de leurs désirs et de leurs intérêts. [introduction générale, L]

The tenants *act* in the rented space even if only briefly inhabiting it. In a similar way, the

readers appropriate the text and construct it via their imaginative capacity, without ever really "owning" it. de Certeau writes: "son lieu n'est pas ici ou là, l'un ou l'autre, mais ni l'un ni l'autre, à la fois dedans et dehors, perdant l'un et l'autre en les mêlant, associant des textes gisants dont il est l'éveilleur et l'hôte, mais jamais le propriétaire" (252). The reader metamorphizes the text *en passant* but never in passivity. To read is to transitorily occupy a text. However, this temporary nature of the experience is not limiting to the reader. Literary critic Tzvetan Todorov explains the long-lasting effects of the literary work and of reading in the following excerpt:

> By using words in an evocative way and by using narratives, examples, and specific cases, the literary work produces a vibration of meaning, it sets off our faculty of symbolic interpretation, our capacity to associate and provoke a movement whose reverberations will continue long after the original contact [with the text]. ["What is Literature for?" 25]

Todorov suggests that the literary work activates the reader's conscious and unconscious mind and sets in motion a dialogue with the introspective reader. He argues that "in representing an object, an event, a character, the poet [or the writer] does not make a statement but incites the reader to formulate one: she proposes more than she imposes, she makes the reader freer and more active" ("What Is Literature" 25). The literary thought, however, requires from the reader the action of assigning a symbolic significance to what is expressed in and by the text. Literary thought is about the *mise-en-scène* and *mise-en-figure* of human knowledge, human struggles, pain and joys, and what it means to be human:

> The truth of literary texts is not narrowly referential; it is intersubjective and consists in the adherence of readers far beyond centuries or national borders. For this reason, Sophocles and Shakespeare, Dostoevsky and Proust continue not only to fulfill our aesthetic aspirations but also our need to know and understand. [*Life in Common* xi]

For Todorov, literature is about a fundamental necessity: to know and to understand othernesses. He contends that the literary work facilitates the difficult task of addressing questions and themes that otherwise would be impossible to tackle. On a deeper level, it also has the potential to trick us in that it challenges the limits of a given temporal-historical context: "What is expressed through stories or poetic forms escapes the stereotypes that dominate the thought of our time and the vigilance of our own moral censure" (*Life in Common* xi). He continues: "Disagreeable truths – about us in particular or the human race in general – have a better chance of being expressed in a literary work than in a philosophical or scientific one" (*Life in Common* xi). It is precisely because the literary work focalizes through "representation" the assorted themes pertaining to how humans are in the world that the reader is able to identify with what he reads more easily than with other, possibly more abstract, discourses.

The French psychoanalyst René Kaës argues that the *mise-en-figurabilité* in a *conte*, a tale, has a linking function: "du mouvement pulsionnel générateur de l'action et de la scène visuelle qui la dramatise, de la chose vue à la chose dite dans le langage interprétatif (celui de la métaphore), du fantasme et du mythe, enfin du récit, du récitant et de leurs destinataires" (viii). Kaës adds that, "le conte se caractérise par sa possibilité de figurer, de mettre en scène, de contenir, de représenter, sur un mode ludique, les structures de liaison intrapsychique et les structures du lien intersubjectif" (viii). If stories *mettent-en-récit* the author's experiential and imaginative worlds, the poetics of a text solicits the readers to identify with – and therefore to assign meaning to – what they read. It is in that sense that a text is a "réservoir de prédisposition signifiante, un mot accroche une image qui en réveille une autre" (viii). Reading is an "enlivening" and transformative process: imaginative literature contributes to a

re-actualization of the reader's own phantasmatic, intersubjective, and cultural knowledge.

This idea opens up a universe of possibilities drawing on the notion that the reader's internal

world appropriates and is transformed by the text. By the act of reading, the "enigmatic

message or signifier" (Laplanche 661) or the floating signifiers, that is, signs that "represent an

undetermined quantity of signification, in itself void of meaning and thus apt to receive any

meaning" (Lévi-Strauss 63) in the text will be received and integrated into an already existing

internal system(s) of signs. The reader becomes not only a receptive but also an active reader.

According to Fabien Dumais, "quand une personne lit un livre, elle procède à une mise en

signe, voire une mise en figure" (53). Quotig Martin Lefebvre, Dumais adds:

> La figure est un objet mental, une représentation intérieure, qui appartient au spectateur
> [reader] et dont l'émergence repose sur la façon dont ce dernier se laisse impressionner
> par un film [or book or story], se l'approprie et l'intègre à sa vie imaginaire et à l'ensemble
> des systèmes de signes grâce auxquels il interagit avec le monde. [53]

The reader is called to interpret, to organize, to synthesize and to integrate new information

within her/his previous knowledge and experience of the world. Ricœur describes in that vein

reading as a hermeneutic encounter between the literary text and the reader:

> Dans l'acte de lecture s'entrecroisent le monde du texte et le monde du lecteur. Le monde
> du texte est un monde imaginaire, mais il assume le statu étrange du transcendant dans
> l'immanence. Le monde du lecteur est réel, mais exposé à la puissance du remodelage
> issue de la sphère de l'imaginaire. [*Soi-même* 38]

In the interweaving of the world of the text and the world of the reader, the reader's

transformation is ignited by the author's imagination. The text is constructed according to

certain rules, a form, a structure, specific cultural, social and historical codes, and in dialogue

with other texts – all of which constitutes the poetics of a text. Through the act of reading, the

text, far from having a fixed meaning, enables instead a most lively pluralistic and

polymorphous movement in which different and new (inter)texts continually emerge *from* and *within* the relationship formed by the vertexes author-text-reader. The literary work as the product of the author's imagination creates the conditions that will ensure the transformation experienced by the other (the author, the culture, the history, the tradition, the contingency of the book, etc.). This transformation is then actualized in the reader's response to the text, and it opens the door to further transformations in which the reader also extends his subjectivity. If the subjective reader may actualize what exists *in potentia* in the literary text,5 the literary text in turn may also *actualize* what exists *in potentia* in the reader. Reading thus allows for a multiple (re)actualization: the reader actualizes the literary text through his imaginative capacity to fill the gaps of the text, and the literary text actualizes the reader by contributing to the expansion of his/her realm of knowledge and breadth of possible emotional experiences.

Literary Text: Producing and Practicing Emotions

I shall now briefly address how the reader is transformed by the experience of reading – in particular, through the affective experience precipitated by the reading. Susan Sontag writes that "[works of art] give rise not to conceptual knowledge […] but to something like an excitation, a phenomenon of commitment, judgement in a state of thralldom or captivation" (21-22). For Sontag, the knowledge that the reader can both derive from and produce during reading is due first and foremost to its emotional impact. Vygotsky explores in *Théorie des*

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5 This idea was suggested by Wolfgang Iser in his definition of an "implied reader" in his book *Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Because the concept of "implied reader" is complex, arguable and not useful for the purposes of my argument, I am loosely appropriating it without wanting to explicitly associate it with the context in which Iser uses it.

émotions how the experience of emotions develops in a historical-cultural manner, that is, emotions are individual but also culturally and historically constituted. Taken together, we could infer that the emotional response prompted by the reading of a text is historically and culturally bound, which in turn opens the possibility of an ever-evolving emotionally-charged response to the text. In this sense, reading creates a space of possibilities where emotional othernesses cohabit. The transformative potential of reading lies in the fact that it is not only a cognitive-emotional dynamic activity, but it also depends on the reader's positionality as a subject. Louis-Philippe Carrier deepens the notion of the affective impact that a text may have on the reader with the conceptualization of the reader's "infratexte sensible." He writes:

> L'infratexte sensible pourrait designer ce produit de la lecture – cette émanation du lecteur dans sa « transaction » avec le texte – qui se situe en dehors du spectre visible (intelligible), mais contribue néanmoins à donner sa chaleur à un texte, à le rendre vivant pour ce lecteur singulier. [99]

According to Carrier, reading presupposes a dialogue between the text and the affective and emotional receptivity of the reading subject. The aesthetic pleasure and the emotional memory enabled by the reader's infratexte sensible are the means through which the individual reader makes sense (Barthes' significance) of what he reads. This does not determine the reader's individual pathway towards "aesthetic pleasure." For some, the pleasure may result from a specific word or image, from the simple movements of the plot, the construction of the characters, or how the story resonates with her/his experience. But literary texts are also a space where emotions are practiced. Recently in contemporary literary and cultural studies, emotions have been construed based on relationality with many "others" (the cultural other, the temporal other, the historical other, etc.). Monique Scheer describes an affective turn in the humanities in the last decade. Emotions are construed, she argues, as practices. They surpass

the dichotomies of subject and object, mind and body, inside and outside, private and public:

she and others resist the classical view that emotions are "states that exist inside the self and

are often regarded as properties of the self" (Labanyi 233). In this vein, Scheer writes:

> conceiving emotions as practices means understanding them as emerging from bodily
> dispositions conditioned by social context, which always has cultural and historical
> specificity. Emotions-as-practice is bound up with and dependent on "emotional
> practices," defined here as practices involving the self (as body and mind), language,
> material artifacts, the environment, and other people. [Scheer 193]

Scheer argues that "practices not only generate emotions, but emotions themselves can be

viewed as a practical engagement with the world" (193). In literary studies too, "practicing

emotions" means thinking about emotional expression in all its contingency: through different

combination of words and of *mise-en-images*, but also by and through the overall "affective

tone" (Ngai 28). Sianne Ngai's definition of affective tone presupposes an expansion of affects

as effects, that is, an understanding of how the fictional elaboration also affects the reader as a

whole. For Ngai, tone is:

> a literary or cultural artifact's feeling tone: its *global or organizing affect*, its general
> disposition or orientation towards its audience and the world. [...] I mean the formal
> aspect of a literary work that makes it possible for critics to describe a text as, say,
> "euphoric" or "melancholic," and, what is much more important, *the category that
> makes these affective values meaningful with regard to how one understands the text as
> a totality within an equally holistic matrix of social relations*. [28, my italics]

The notion of "global or organizing affect" of the text highlights the idea that feelings are not

exclusively experienced at the reader's or character's subjective level. Ngai contends that:

"tone is the dialectic of objective and subjective feeling that our aesthetic encounters

inevitably produce" (30). Affects are therefore produced *by* and *within* a literary text.

An example of this production of affects as multiply constructed within a literary text is the intersection between affects and materiality, "the entanglement of the human with the material" (Labany 223). Instead of considering emotions only in abstract or subjective ways, or as part of a specific genre, this approach considers the manner in which particular emotions are linked to specific objects in the text.

For the moment, I would like to stress that reading literary fiction may perform a transformative function both *within* the text and *within* the reader: this is why affect theory emphasizes the power of the text to enable the practicing of emotions. This transformative function may be prompted either by specific imagery or metaphors in the text that solicit emotions, or by the whole of the literary production, its global or organizing affect.

Drawing on the conceptual framework explored throughout Part I, in Part II I shall illustrate how the textual production of the short story "I Only Came to Use the Phone" by Gabriel García Márquez offers a rich context for the exploration of a powerful set of meaning-affects.

PART II

In this section, I shall present a critical reading of the short story "I Only Came to Use the Phone" by Gabriel García Márquez published in the collection *Strange Pilgrims* through the exploration of some aspects of García Márquez's poetics with a focus on the story's "affective orientation" (Ngai 28). My aim with this critical reading is also to prepare the ground for exploring below how the pattern of affects expressed in and within this text, particularly the feelings of loss and defragmentation, can be appropriated by other readers. More specifically, I hope to be able to demonstrate in the fourth and last part of this thesis how the affects produced by this story could potentially be integrated in the intersubjective relationship between an analyst and her/his non-neurotic analysand in the analytic space to facilitate the patient's transition from mycelial baths of non-figurability to the co-construction of intrapsychic and intersubjective metaphorical spaces.

I Only Came to Use the Phone: Exploration of the Affective Tone

Drawing on Sianne Ngai's book *Ugly Feelings* and Raymond Williams's essay *Structures of Feeling*, I explore García Márquez's style in order to conceptualize the affects represented and expressed in and within this text – in particular, how the text conveys states of both loss and fragmentation and the emergency of new "structures of feeling" (Williams 134). I shall briefly look into the intersection between affects and materiality, with a focus on

how particular objects are invested with the capacity to bridge the old and the new, reality and fantastic, the feeling of loss and the sense of continuity.

The Familiarity of Unbridled Realities

In the Prologue to *Strange Pilgrims*, García Márquez recounts the origins of this collection of short stories. Written randomly in several notebooks and his children's composition books over a period of over eighteen years and while he was living in different countries, many of the stories remained "shipwrecked in a squall of papers, until 1978" (x).

The writer acknowledges that when he was planning this book the short stories had to be (re)written, "in a single stroke, with an internal unity of tone and style that would make them inseparable in the reader's memory" (x). The stories in the collection are "based on journalistic facts that would be redeemed from their mortality by the astute devices of poetry" (x). Márquez explains that his guiding idea for this collection was to articulate his "conscientious examination of [his] own identity" in relation to "the strange things that happen to Latin Americans in Europe" (x). In his Acceptance Speech for the Nobel Prize in Literature, which García Márquez entitled "The Solitude of Latin America," he elucidates the strangeness that percolates through his writing:

> I dare to think that it is this outsized reality, and not just its literary expression [...] A reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines each instant of our countless daily deaths, and that nourishes a source of insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty, of which this roving and nostalgic Colombian is but one cipher more, singled out by fortune. Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable. This, my friends, is the crux of our solitude.

The unbridled reality that García Márquez is referring to in his speech is at the heart of his work. And yet, García Márquez's poetics in this story goes beyond this unbridled and strange reality that characterizes his fiction. While García Márquez seems to be in pursuit of something new and unfamiliar in literary history, he tells a story in which the affects that are produced *by* and *within* it are nonetheless very familiar, even if only in phantasmatic and unconscious ways. In the next sections I shall explore the familiarity of the unbridled in this story by reflecting its pattern of emotions.

Effects and/or Affects

Set in General Franco's Spain, the short story "I Only Came to Use the Phone" recounts the uncanny experience of María, a Mexican woman involuntarily held at a psychiatric hospital for female patients and her struggle to accept and adjust to her fate as a subject of the social rules of a mental health institution. In this story, it is possible to identify many of the rhetorical effects commonly associated with magic realist narrative, particularly how the magic or fantastic, as a highly improbable event, is intertwined with the concrete materiality of the "real" world. However, I argue that describing this short story only by drawing on this reductive and narrow preconception of the magical realism genre overlooks the affective tone of the text, as conceptualized by Sianne Ngai in Part I of this thesis (cf. 41). According to the American cultural theorist, "tone" has an "explicitly feeling-related sense […] as a "cultural object's affective bearing, orientation or "set toward" the world" (29). Ngai's definition of tone draws on the notion of affects as publicly and multiply- constructed. She writes: "tone is never entirely reducible to a reader's emotional response to a text or

reducible to the text's internal representations of feeling" (29). By defining tone this way, if the affective orientation of a work is disgust, Ngai does not imply that the work is representing disgust or that it will necessarily disgust the reader. Although Ngai acknowledges that "tone" is a difficult object of analysis, she brings to the foreground a conceptualization of tone or affective orientation of a work as "the dialectic of objective and subjective feeling that our aesthetic encounter inevitably produce" (30), in other words, she argues that feelings "slip in and out of subjective boundaries" (31).

In order to be able to think about feelings as the result of the "interaction between self (mind and body) and the world" (Labanyi 233), we need a more capacious vision of magical realism. While magical realistic narratives are typically associated with the marvelous and the improbable, they have much more complex engagements, particularly in the way they challenge social organizations and enhance both social dysfunctions and, I contend, tensions within different "structures of feeling" (Williams 134). According to Raymond Williams, structures of feeling are characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically, affective elements of consciousness and relationships (...) practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating community" (132). Williams adds, "we are then defining these elements as a 'structure': as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension." He considers that, "we are also defining a social experience which is still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating" (132). I shall develop Williams's conceptualisation of structures of feeling further in this section.

In Amaryll Chanady's essay "Magic Realism Revisited: The Deconstruction of Antinomies," she writes that magical realism is "a mode that expresses important points of

view, often related to marginality and subalternity" (442). According to Chanady, magic realism is the result of a "long tradition of literature that gives free reign to the imagination while critically reflecting on the ailments of society and the predicament of the human condition" (442). I argue that Chanady's approach to magic realism makes room for an exploration of the "affective orientation" (Ngai, 2012, p. 28) of this short story. As I shall explore, this story's global or organizing affect seems to be a sense of being "at a loss" – for instance: not being able to link thoughts or events, what it means to lose someone, or to lose a sense of Self. It also refers to feelings of longing for something, or not knowing where one is or who the other is, to struggle to tackle what is happening, or not "getting it," and so on and so forth – explored in and within a variety of ways.

Where Are We?

"I Only Came to Use the Phone" recounts a series of unpredictable, bizarre and frightening events. While crossing the Monegros desert between Zaragoza and Barcelona, María de la Luz's car breaks down. She needs to use the phone to call her husband to let him know that she will be late for the show that they had planned to present that night. An ex-music hall performer, María is married to a cabaret magician of whom she is an assistant. The heroine is familiar with magic tricks and with what it means to invent and to live in a made-up world. In this sense, María is accustomed to the idea of performing "unlived lives – the lives we live in fantasy, the wished-for lives" (Phillips xvii). However, none of her previous experiences and nothing of what she knows appears to be useful to deal with the utter strangeness of what she is about to live. Raymond Williams's distinction between the known

or the past and the experiential present may be evoked in this context. Raymond Williams writes:

> If the social is the fixed and explicit – the known relationships, institutions, formations, positions – all that is present and moving, all that escapes or seems to escape from the fixed and the explicit and the known, is grasped and defined as the personal: this, here, now, alive, active, "subjective." [128]

Drawing on Williams' distinction between fixed social forms and the actively lived and felt experience, I argue that the question "Where are we?" (72) that María de la Luz asks at her arrival at the as-yet-unidentified hospital for female mental patients can be thought of as the story's fundamental question. I shall now seek to explore the multiple meanings of this question and how it contributes to the affective tone of the text.

On the bus, María succumbs to the sound of rain after experiencing the contagious serenity of the other women. On several occasions in the story, she "is less certain" or does "not know" (pp. 72-76) what is happening to her. The people around her are now "motionless," "lethargic," they look "like images in a dream" (73) and move as if they are "at the bottom of an aquarium" (75). On that rainy spring afternoon, María de la Luz becomes a character in a dream-like situation where the frontiers of the conceivable and the inconceivable, and of the fixed forms of the social and the private experience are unclear.

Where are we? It is what we ask ourselves when we do not have available meanings for what we are experiencing in the "here, now" (Williams 128). María has "no idea (...) what place in the world they had come to" (72). By entering the old convent, her knowledge about reality and life suddenly collapse. María tries to explain "with great urgency" (74) the misunderstandings that led her there, but the matron responds with silence and by shrugging her shoulders. The matron then escorts María to her bed with "a sweetness that was too patent

to be real" (74). The heroine is described as being "distraught" (72), "in dismay" (75), and "paralyzed with terror" (75). In her first night at the hospital, María receives an injection with a sedative to enable her to sleep. The last thing she knows is that she is tied to the metal bars of the bed by her wrists and ankles. She shouts for help, no one comes and the morning after, less than a full day after her arrival at the hospital, the world seems a "haven of love" (76). The doctor describes the patient as "agitated" (77). María's state of confusion and disorientation is further portrayed by the staff when they refer to her as "senseless in a swamp of her own misery" (76).

The "where" in the question "Where are we?" speaks to the heroine's confusion regarding orientation in space and time. After her admission to the hospital, space and time collapse, and she becomes part of a timeless transitional space. This idea is further validated later, when María meets with her husband for the first time at the hospital and she says: "I don't even know how many days I've been here, or how many months or years, all I know is that each one has been worse than the last" (89). It seems that the only thing that holds her sense of existence together throughout the narrative is neither time nor space, but the emotions, the positive ones – when the world seems to her a "haven of love" (76) – but, more so, the negative ones.

The experience of being at a loss is not unique to the heroine's life. Given María's husband, Saturno, in his job as a magician, the staging of illusionist tricks can be seen as the ultimate metaphor for feeling at a loss: magic tricks challenge what we know, believe and are familiar with, they cause surprise and confusion, wonder and frustration, that emerge from being in the middle of a situation that goes against one's expectations. Saturno the Magician not only represents this being and existence between illusion and reality, but he also

experiences how it feels to inhabit a disorienting, baffling space when María vanishes without a trace. He becomes tormented by her absence, "waits in despair" (77) for news; and has a "muddled dream" in which María wears a "ragged wedding dress spattered with blood" (78), to which he reacts with a "fearful certainty" that she had left him forever. Saturno's initial fear that something bad had happened to his wife, will later evolve into paranoia and envy as he starts to see confirmations of his wife's betrayal in all his interactions, and memories of the time they spent together. His misery deepens, he becomes famous because of his "jealous frenzies" (82), until he realizes how alone he feels in that "beautiful, lunatic, impenetrable city, where we would never be happy" (83). He resolves then to forget María and to "hardened his heart to keep from dying" (83). He will not forget María, but throughout the story, he will fail to believe in her and to listen to her, to recognize who she is and to try to respond to what she needs. Saturno's unpredictable reactions, while funny at times, also unsettle the reader; his behaviour is incongruent with respect to the reader's optimism who "expects" him to rescue María from the unlikely situation she was caught in: when María finally reaches him by the phone, he calls her "whore" and hangs up the phone. At the end of the story he deceives again the reader's expectation by taking the doctor's side and, once again, by dismissing María's attempts at explaining to him what had happened to her: "Don't tell me you think I'm crazy too!" says María, to which Saturno replies that "it would be much better for everybody if you stay here a while" (89). María feels humiliated by repeatedly being the subject of a lack of understanding, here reinforced by Saturno's complicity with the institution and screams, like a "real madwoman" (89).

Puzzlement and states of loss are also the dominant feelings expressed by the staff upon María's arrival. They echo Maria's fundamental question, "where am I," by wondering

where she had come from. They are "surprised" (74) to see that she is not wearing identification; they cannot find her name in their patient's list. Later in the story, they wonder not only about where she had come from, but also about the reason for her presence there – which they see as an "enigma" (77). The doctor too, expresses doubts surrounding her identity: "No one had known where she came from, or how or when, since the first information regarding her arrival was the official admittance form he [the doctor] dictated after interviewing her" (87). Although the staff is confronted several times with many incongruences in respect to María's presence at the hospital, they remain attached to the idea that she must be there because she is sick: the only certainty the doctor has is of "the seriousness of her condition" (87). María exists for the staff inasmuch as she fits in with what they want her to be, and that is at the core of the lack of recognition that María is subjected to throughout the narrative.

Reverberations of María's question "Where are we?" are also heard every time we as readers try to grasp the liminal space between what we know and what we do not know, between our needs and expectations towards the others – the others in the story, the other of the text, and the other of the author. The sense of being at a loss is also felt by the reader while reading the story: is she telling us a dream? Could someone actually be accidently admitted to a psychiatric hospital? Why is not someone helping her? Are we observers of María's journey from sanity to insanity?

Where are we? This is the interrogation that inhabits everyone when the world and its "fixed forms" are in tension. Williams writes:

> There is frequent tension between the received interpretation and practical experience. Where this tension can be made direct and explicit, or where some alternative interpretation is available, we are still within a dimension of relatively fixed forms. But

the tension is as often an unease, a stress, a displacement, a latency: the moment of conscious comparison not yet come, often not even coming. [130]

He continues: "and comparison is by no means the only process (...) there are the experiences to which the fixed forms do not speak at all, which indeed they do not recognize" (130). Whether in the reader, in the lives of the characters or within the narrative, tension emerges as the result of the dialogue between different and/or changing structures of feeling.

If the multiple manifestations of the private "I" that I tried to underline are important to this reflection, the reader's encounter with the text is, at the same time, an encounter with a collective experience of being part of/experiencing emergent structures of feeling. Examples of unsettling experiences include not only a psychiatric institutionalization, but, for example, the fear of being in enclosed or confined spaces, living under an authoritarian regime, being a minority in a repressive society, being a woman in a patriarchal society, or simply being subjected to a condescending environment, among many other possibilities. In this sense, this story is about the emotional dimensions of being caught up in a chain of misunderstandings, the ultimate failure of the intersubjective situation, and of what it means affectively to be forced to comply with new rules and new ways of relating and feeling.

Who Am I?

When faced with having to adapt to new rules and new ways of relating and feeling, one inevitably revisits the process through which one becomes a subject. The "I" that I explored in the Part I is formed in relationality: I form myself before the Other. The subject is always addressed by the Other, even if this Other is an abandoning or abusing Other. That holds true for María and the various relationships that she develops throughout the story. I shall now

explore briefly how García Márquez's poetics in this short story contributes to the typology of affects privileged so far.

Form, Formless, Form

In the beginning, there is a storm. María stands in the rain and eventually hitches a ride on a passing bus. Inside the bus, she looks like "a bedraggled little bird" (García Márquez 72), and a woman gives her a towel and a blanket so that she can dry herself. I argue that this specific passage contributes to set the tone of the narrative. A religious symbol of birth and death, purification and destruction, the water bridges María's past and future. According to the historian of religion Mircea Eliade, "whether at the cosmic or the anthropological level, immersion in water does not mean final extinction, but simply *a temporary reintegration into the formless*, which will be followed by a new creation, a new life, a new man" (212, my italics). This is helpful in understanding the heroine's strange pilgrimage, while also contributing to the exploration of the affective orientation of the text: for María, to enter the old convent does not amount to her final extinction. What we witness instead is the journey of a woman who loses her "form" to adapt and to survive new structures of feeling. It is not a coincidence then that María is at the beginning of the story saved from the storm by a "ramshackle bus" (71). The state of the bus anticipates the falling apart, the loss of a form. Described as a "bedraggled little bird," an "it" instead of a "she," a metamorphosis imposed by the strength of the water and mud, Maria at this narrative moment may be construed as an initial manifestation of the multiple experiences of (de)subjectification that she will endure during her stay at the hospital. To be "bedraggled," in this context, can be thought of as an "embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate" (Williams 131).

Inside the bus, she tries to talk, but a woman interrupts her by "placing a forefinger to her lips" (72). The forefinger on her lips marks the beginning of her emotional subjugation to the rules of her new life. The next time a "forefinger" appears in the narrative economy of this story is when María is with the other women at the hospital entrance and to indicate to her where she ought to be. Each time, María obeys. The heroine's soul and body are in the hands of the total institution; however, she tries to negotiate her agency throughout the story. As the plot unfolds, the staff, the protocols of the psychiatric hospital and the rules of a patriarchal society will together give shape to this woman who is in a state of temporary loss: "'I don't think I'll ever be the same'" (89) – she tells her husband when they meet at the hospital for the first time. After two months at the sanatorium, we know in retrospect that "at first she resisted the canonical hours with their mindless routine of matins, lauds, vespers, as well as the other church services that took up most of the time" (83). This refusal, however, did not last long: "after the third week she began, little by little, to join in the life of the cloister" (83). María's daily life adapts to that of her peers: "after all, said the doctors, every one of them started out the same way, and sooner or later they became integrated in the community" (83). There are more manifestations of the pressure of the institution in the doctor's recommendations to Saturno: "He was prepared to authorize a visit with all the necessary precautions if Saturno the Magician would promise, for the good of his wife, to adhere without question to the rules of behavior that he would indicate" (87). "Temporary formless" and in a state of suspended agency, María exists only insofar she awaits a new "structure" (Williams), "a new life" (Eliade 212).

But how can María de la Luz "sustain a vital presence as a speaking being against all the many forces that fragment, negate and depersonalize" (Kirshner 1), against all the negative

and destructive feelings, protocols and institutions that together could potentially break her, desubjectify her? There are certain material objects in the story that exert this function of linking during María's stays at the asylum. I shall now explore how the cartography of affects that give the tone of the story is represented and practised by some material objects described in the narrative, particularly by the ways in which they contribute to enable a sense of continuity or "going-on-being" (Winnicott "The Maturational" 47) to the main character.

Sometimes a Cigar(rette) Is Not Just a Cigar(rette)

The American philosopher Jane Bennett develops the concept of "vital materialism" (Bennett vii). Drawing on Deleuze and Felix Guattari's experiment with the idea of a "material vitalism," she conceptualizes the relationship between humans and objects. In her book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Bennett writes that by "vitality" she means "the capacity of things – edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi-agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own" (Bennett viii).

Instead of considering emotions in abstract or subjective ways (i.e. associated with a fictional subject), or as part of a specific genre, I will consider the ways in which particular emotions are linked to specific objects in the narrative economy. García Márquez's poetics of the image and of metaphor construe material objects as quasi-agents occupying a central role. They are associated with María's affects throughout her process of subjectification and desubjectification. The cigarettes are an example of the central role played by objects – a role that seems to endow objects with agency, or more precisely, with the power to activate agency

in the subject. Here, they bridge different points in María's life: her life as an independent woman and a life of suspended agency imposed by the institutionalization. When she first smokes in the story, María gives in to "a desire to vent her feelings" (García Márquez 72). Cigarettes are emotions-objects and their presence in the story is inseparable from the emotional states of the process through which she loses agency. When she arrives at the hospital, she gives away her (damp) pack of cigarettes to another woman. At that moment, the bus pulls away and she is left behind, marking the shift in her life. Smoking and cigarettes are also closely linked to loss, as the following two passages illustrate: "Longing to smoke" (75), and "lack of cigarettes" (83). Smoking cigarettes is also the act that gives María a sense of continuity and embodiment: if nothing else, in the experience of smoking she regains control over her breathing and her hands. Cigarettes are the objects through which she validates her existence; objects are thus anchors of strong emotions: 'je fume, donc je suis; I smoke therefore I have a body.' Cigarettes are one of the few points of contact between her incarcerated life and her previous life outside the hospital: at the end of the story Saturno stops visiting her but continues to leave a supply of cigarettes at the porter's office.

Another point of intersection between affect and materiality is, of course, the telephone. It is because she needs access to a phone that she enters the bus and, in turn, is involuntarily admitted to the hospital. Although the first days at the hospital are saturated with fear and incomprehension of all its aspects, the imperative to find a phone is what keeps María hopeful of putting an end to her nightmare. To better understand this optimistic fantasy and her attachment to this particular object of desire, Lauren Berlant's exploration of "cruel optimism" is useful. According to Berlant, "cruel optimism" refers to "a relation of attachment

to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be impossible, sheer fantasy, or too possible, and toxic" (24). She adds:

> What's cruel about these attachments, and not merely inconvenient or tragic, is that the subjects who have x in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object/scene of desire, even though its presence threatens their well-being, because whatever the content of the attachment is, the continuity of its form provides something of the continuity of the subject's sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world. [24]

The telephone is the object that protects her from losing her purpose in life. The possibility of calling her husband is the linkage between her past life and her present experience, and it is what connects the world inside the hospital and the outside world. The phone ensures a continuity of being and thus keeps her going – but not for long.

General Francisco Franco's lithography is another example of an emotionally invested object, as illustrated by the following passage: "after two months (...) she survived by just picking at the prison rations with flatware chained to the long table of unfinished wood, her eyes fixed on the lithography of General Francisco Franco" (García Márquez 83). Later in the story, in the night after she finally reaches her husband by phone, and is insulted by him, she attacks the image of General Franco: "that night, in an attack of rage, María pulled down the lithography of the Generalissimo in the refectory, smashed it with all her strength into the stained-glass window that led to the garden, and threw herself to the floor, covered in blood" (86). As with other objects, Franco's lithography deepens the affective dimension of the narrative. On a more superficial level, because it is the object through which María displaces the hate and rage against her husband and against all types of authority that were or are being impinged on her at the institution. By smashing the "Generalissimo," María practises what she has been unable to do overtly until then: that is, her potential to exert agency and to use her

strength against those who want to annihilate her. It is interesting to note though, that after the

destruction of this symbol of authority and repression, she falls apart, covered in blood, like

some of the political opponents and dissenters that attempted at challenging Franco's regime.

Her throwing herself to the floor speaks about María's fear that her adjustment to emerging

feelings such as rage and self-affirmation might mean her ultimate internal disintegration.

María attempts to resist, but not for long: "She still had enough fury left to resist the blows of

the matrons who tried, with no success, to restrain her" (86), but very quickly gives up. The

staff immediately reacts: "they dragged her to the ward for violent patients, subdued her with a

hose spurting icy water, and injected turpentine into her legs" (86).

By exploring the affective tone of this short story, I sought to illustrate how affects are

construed in a multiplicity of ways and thus contribute to give an affective orientation to a

narrative. I also exemplified how certain objects in the story exerted multiple functions: they

represent emotions, that is, they evoke or stand for particular feelings, but they also *practice*

emotions, that is, they act as quasi-agents within the story.

In the next section, I shall focus on how this story might contribute to activate a

conscious, unconscious and phantasmatic world of a non-neurotic analysand. The question

that I will address is how the affective tone of this short story could work as a catalyst for the

integration and linking of previously fragmented and unsymbolized experiences in the

analysand's mind.

PART III

In Part I, I have explored theoretically the mediating function of the text as a space for the creation of symbols and "significance" and for the practice of emotions. In this vein, I have argued earlier that reading contributes to a refiguration of what is in potential in both in the text's and in the reader's world. My goal in Part I was to present a brief overview of how literary theory and contemporary critical practice understand the interaction between the text and the reader, as well as how, despite the differences among recent conceptualizations of this interaction, most of these positions assume that reading is a dynamic process. Meaning and affective tone do not pertain exclusively to the text or to the reader, but arise in the interaction between the two. In Part II, I drew on my subjective appropriation of the affective tone of the short story "I Only Came to Use the Phone," to exemplify how the creation of meaning in a literary text happens in the encounter between the world of the author and the world of the reader. As previously mentioned, I shall later return to this exploration to imagine how this particular text could offer a transitional intersubjective space in which an analyst may assist her/his non-neurotic analysand in the exploration of the analysand's own feelings of fragmentation and loss and how, mediated by this short-story, analyst and analysand may co-construct representations of previously unrepresented emotional experiences.

While not explicitly formulated, phenomenologies of reading are built on the entirely assumed prototype of a "normal" reader, that is, an individual without any diagnosed psychopathological impairment. I shall call this default prototype of reader the "neurotic reader," that is, someone with a relatively stable sense of Self, a cohesive identity, and capable of engaging in ongoing dialogues with others and with othernesses. According to Howard

Levine, "*neurosis* implies organization, psychic representation, symbolization, conflict, compromise formation and defense (*Beyond Neurosis* 277, italics in the original). The neurotic reading-subject is capable of engaging in interpretations, in the broader sense, by unconsciously or consciously expressing through language the ways in which he/she was affected by the literary work. Such interpretations would be possible because the reading-subject has access to a breadth of affective, interpersonal and intergenerational experiences, and a good-enough comprehension of her/his own intrapsychic life.

For a neurotic subject, the process of engaging with stories, with others' personal, social, cultural, political narratives (among others), however dynamic it may be, is not without its challenges (hence the choice of "neurotic" as a synonym for the "normal" reader). We can see these natural "limitations" from two different, although intrinsically connected vertexes: the limits that are inherent to all human beings; and the individual specificities of that (human) reader in the "production" of meaning from what he reads. With respect to the "limitations" that are fundamentally human, we can consider the restrictions imposed by language ("Tout language est un acte manqué," wrote Lacan); the limits imposed by the emotional afterlife of traumatic loss and decline – such as the death of loved ones, or the deterioration of physical and cognitive abilities; and the limits imposed by the historic and socio-political context where we develop.

As previously explored, being capable of reading and re-reading ourselves and the world we live in contributes to the expansion of our knowledge-circle. But how does reading affect subjects that, as the result of highly traumatic emotional experiences and/or mental illness, have experienced an interruption in the continuity of their being? How can someone with a prevailing sense of inner fragmentation and psychic chaos attribute meaning to the

world, more specifically to what she/he reads? Does reading as a co-construction between the text and the reader holds true for "non-neurotic" readers?

The Non-Neurotic Reader

I shall start by describing how the subject's "personality" is formed by different parts that are relationally constituted. Above, I described in brief Bion's contribution to the role played by dream-work in the construction of the psychic apparatus. Another significant contribution is his conceptualization of the personality as being formed by two parts: a psychotic and a non-psychotic part. According to Avner Bergstein, Bion claims that the psychotic part of the personality lies "concealed in each of us to a lesser or a greater extent, and which we are so often unable, or unwilling to get in touch with" (2). Without that psychotic part of the personality, one would be "a total character minus… almost a caricature of robust common sense and sanity" (Bion "Caesura" 52).

In his 1957 paper "Differentiation of the Psychotic from the Non-Psychotic Personalities," Bion argues that the so-called psychotic personalities are also constituted by non-psychotic or neurotic parts: "the ego is ever wholly withdrawn from reality" (267). He adds that "its contact with reality is masked by the dominance, in the patient's mind and behaviour, of an omnipotent phantasy that is intended to destroy either reality or the awareness of it, and thus to achieve a state that is neither life nor death." Bion argues that, in most cases, psychotic personalities never lose total contact with reality: "Since contact with reality is never entirely lost, the phenomena which we are accustomed to associate with the neuroses are never absent" (267). Bion contends that neurotic characteristics are to be found amidst

psychotic material: "On this fact, that the ego retains contact with reality, depends the existence of a non-psychotic personality parallel with, but obscured by, the psychotic personality" (267). Bion summarizes the presence of non-psychotic features in dominant psychotic structures the following way:

> patients ill enough, say, to be certified as psychotic, contain in their psyche a non-psychotic part of personality, a prey to the various neurotic mechanisms with which psycho-analysis has made us familiar, and a psychotic part of the personality which is so far dominant that the non-psychotic part of the personality, with which it exists in negative juxtaposition, is obscured. [267-268]

In his description of the psychotic part of the personality, Bion writes about one of its major characteristics, that is, the destructive attacks – what he calls "attacks on linking" ("Attacks on Linking" 308) – which the person makes on "anything which is felt to have the function of one object with another" (308), or "attacks on linking her/his though processes" (Green "The Analyst, symbolization" 6). We can think of these attacks as attacks on linking with othernes*ses*; unconscious attempts of annihilating any possibility of growing with the Other. The linking function is a mental process that fails to occur in the psychotic part of the personality and "whose absence or destruction cause psychotic patients to manifest severe impairment of the ability to pay attention, to remember, to judge and to generate visual-associative ideas" (Amir 10). Drawing on the work of Bion, Dana Amir writes about the consequences of these attacks: "the psychotic patient actively attacks these psychic functions in order to avoid integration, therefore barring oneself from the input necessary for psychic development" (10). The intensity and fragmentation of the emotional experience arising from psychotic functioning are beyond symbolization or are "intolerant of the restrictive nature of

symbolization" (Bergstein 9) and struggles to "survive the experience of "void and formless infinite"" (Bion quoted in Bergstein 11).

Bion's conceptualization of psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the personality is important because it paves the way to think differently about *parts within one's psychic structure*, particularly the role played by the primitive and undeveloped areas of the mind in processing – or in attacking the possibility to metabolize – emotional experiences. More recently in the field of contemporary psychoanalytic theory, the idea of less structured parts or spaces in the psychic structure of "non-neurotic" patients has been theoretically developed. The focus is on the unthinkable, on the unrepresented within some patient's mind. To go back to what I said before, the question is how to work with these patients' "mycelial baths of non-figurability," how to address the unrepresented psychic reality predominantly dominant in non-neurotic structures.

It is in this context that the concept of poorly or "unrepresented mental states," was developed by César and Sára Botella from the "Société psychanalytique de Paris." The authors drew on the works of Freud, Bion, Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott and André Green to tackle the question on how one elaborates on that which is unrepresented, of "what is not yet experienced" but "did nevertheless happen in the past" (Winnicott "The fear of breakdown" 105). André Green, for instance, has addressed this when he wrote about the unrepresented as a "hemorrhage of representation, a pain with no image of the wound but just a blank state" ("The Primordial" 658). More recently, Levine, Reed, Scarfone, drawing on the notion advanced by the Botellas proposed a definition based on a fundamental distinction between represented or neurotic mental states and weakly or unrepresented non-neurotic mental states. According to these authors:

The "good-enough" presence of the external object is the foundation upon which the capacity for representation will be built. Once this capacity is in place, the infant will be able to represent the object in its external absence and so have an internal presence (object representation) that will allow it to tolerate and experience that external absence. [6]

In the case of non-neurotic patients, on the contrary, the overly traumatic external object would, according to Levine et al. disrupt or impede the development of the capacity to represent the object internally. There is an incapacity to create representations and to link them with drives: the mind functions, but with voids and absences (Stern, 2014).

In the model of poorly or unrepresented mental states developed by Levine there are parts of one's own experience that, rather than being fully formed and disguised or hidden, are instead in search of representational expression. Because they are still to be represented, they may not be spoken "unless or until they undergo some form of transformation" (Levine "Psychoanalysis and the Problem of Truth" 399). For André Green, one of the fundamental tasks of a psychic apparatus is to supply content to affective experiences that exist only in unrepresentable form: "If content is connected to sense, we must nevertheless remember that nonsense has two different meanings: chaos and nothingness" ("Conceptions of Affect" 172). According to Green,

the problem lies in the fact that the psychic apparatus registers the traces of affective experiences before it is ready to establish mnemic traces of perceptions and that the whole aim of the work is to separate out the representations from the contradictory affective infiltrations, whose general tendency is towards diffusion whilst the representations seek articulation. [172]

According to Green, representation *is* articulation, is to give a structure to emotional experiences and is that capacity that non-neurotic personalities seem to be struggling with. Similarly to Green's idea of the psychic apparatus need of supplying content, César Botella

writes about "the imperious necessity for psychic life to elaborate the ahistorical unrepresented traumas, to give them a meaning by creating links" ("On Remembering" 915). Botella is interested in "*a memory without recollections*" ("mémoire sans souvenir") and also by a particular "*trauma whose trace is negative*" (915). But, the Botellas write, "the absence of representable content does not mean an absence of an event" ("The Work" 164). Instead of a mnenic trace there is an "amnesic trace" ("The Work" xix). Because there is no trace, in weakly represented mental states, what is not being told is not "saturated" with meaning and therefore is not yet interpretable. This is precisely one of the biggest challenges in the work with non-neurotic patients: to address in session and to work through the patient's internal intelligibility. But how can analysts foster that capacity within their analysands to give structure to emotional experiences that is impaired in some analysands? How can the analyst work through an analysand's propensity for attacking linking processes towards the creation of linked interpersonal and intra-psychic material? How can the analyst help the patient to engage in this work of figurability that allows her/him (the analysand) to transform irrepresentable content into content saturated with meaning?

From Interpretation to Representation: A Brief Overview

The concepts of symbolization, representation and figuration have been developed in recent years by several authors often wedded to an intersubjective perspective in psychoanalysis. Intersubjectivity theory is a field theory which approaches psychological phenomena not as the result of isolated intrapsychic mechanisms, but as the product of an

intersubjective context of two actors (e.g. analysand and analyst) who reciprocally influence each other (Stolorow and Atwood 1996).

In his later writings, Freud became more interested in the active role of the analyst in the analytic process. The focus remained however on how the patient "must be brought to recollect certain experiences and the affective impulses called up by them which he has for the time being forgotten" ("Constructions in Analysis" 257-258). Freud compares this work of construction or reconstruction to an archaeologist's excavation of an ancient edifice, which is work that is possible through the analyst's interpretations. Interpretation is conceptualized at this date as an objective intervention on the part of the analyst who is not implicated in the edifice that is being unearthed. For Freud, the aim of interpretation is to help the patient to bring into consciousness his unconscious thoughts. However, for many contemporary psychoanalytic thinkers, interpretation, or in more broad terms, the analytic work is conceptualized as an imposition of an external truth on the subject and forced by the subject in authority.

The emphasis on the intersubjective nature of the analytic enterprise challenges the value of interpretation as the only tool of therapeutic action. More recently, in post-Freudian practice, the focus has been on addressing what is not yet available for interpretation, that is, the unrepresented parts of one's experience. René Roussillon writes about the shift in theoretical and clinical psychoanalysis in terms of both the ways in which the concept of "symbolization" and particularly of Freud's theory of symbolic representation changed and how that change in perception also brought necessary changes in the clinical work: "Jusqu'alors la symbolisation est fondée à peu près uniquement sur la perte, le deuil, l'absence, la castration et les diverses formes du manqué : on symbolise pour tenter de pallier

le manqué, pour faire pièce aux formes et figures du négatif et de la négativité" ("Conclusion" 374). This, he adds, has implications for the posture of the analyst: "il occupe une position retirée de la scène" ("Conclusion" 374). On the contrary, contemporary approaches recognize the psychoanalyst as fundamental piece of the psychoanalytic process. In that vein, Bergstein writes that Bion "has put the emphasis of his work on the *analyst's* state of mind and on what is required *of him or her* in order to move towards an apprehension of the patient's transformation of emotional experience" (6 italics in the original). As many post- Bionian thinkers would agree, the patient's transformation of the emotional experience is a joint process between patient and analyst. According to Ogden (2017), the analyst is expected to use "his own capacities for dreaming the emotional experience that is occurring in the session to facilitate the patient's efforts to dream his undreamable or incompletely dreamable dreams" (7). Resorting to his capacity for reverie, the analyst is called to "construct a story" (Bion 1990 17), a story that did not exist before.

This work of symbolization, representation and figuration is based on the premise that the analyst plays a more active role when compared with Freud's archaeological metaphor. Roussillon too emphasizes the intersubjective nature of the analytic situation. For him, analysis is possible through a work of co-construction of meaning, "meaning (...) is no longer always there, hidden somewhere in some corner of the analysand's unconscious. It will gradually be produced within the psycho-analytic process itself and with the — often active — help of the analyst" (*The Primitive Agony* 53).

Inspired by the works of Botella and Botella, Roussillon and André Green, Levine suggests that, in the work with patients with unrepresented mental states, it may prove insufficient to only help patients discover and explore their dynamic unconscious (a reference

here to Freud's archaeological model). In addition to help patients search for something that is hidden or repressed, Levine proposes that the work of psychoanalysis should also be on facilitating patients to develop a stronger capacity to represent themselves. The work of psychoanalysis should provide the patient with a structure that serves as a catalyst for enlivening the patient's unconscious, fostering thus the patient's capacity for "dreaming" in the post-Bionian sense, and of co-constructing and representing previously unrepresented emotional experiences.

One of the leading figures of post-Bionian contemporary psychoanalytic field theory, the Italian psychoanalyst Antonino Ferro has written about the transformative potential of what is intersubjectively co-constructed in the field of the session. He suggests that instead of resorting to traditional interpretation from an authoritative sense-saturated position (the analyst who "holds" the truth about the patient), the analyst should move to a position in which he is the co-creator of a dialogic cooperative space with the patient. For Ferro the analyst should therefore be interested in facilitating a transformational co-narration, that means that meaning in the session emerges through a co-creation, a joint narration between analyst and patient. The idea of a transformational co-narration is fundamental in the work with patients with unrepresented mental states. According to Levine et al., in the analysis of patients with unrepresented or weakly represented mental states, the analyst has to first prepare and "dream" a space in which the co-narration of analytic dyad can take place: "the analyst may be required to provide some expressive, catalytic action in order to help precipitate or strengthen the patient's representational capacities" (70). The analyst has to listen to and to work with the analysand in a creative and engaged way in order to facilitate emotional growth of the analytic relationship. In working with patients with poorly represented mental states, the author argue

that the analyst has to help the patients create a dynamic unconscious where the patient may deposit his mental contents that are repressed. He writes that *"...the elements of mind – conscious, preconscious, and unconscious – must first be created by a work that begins in the analyst's psyche and is then offered to and inscribed in the psyche of the patient as part of an interactive, intersubjective relationship and process"* (70, italics in the original). But how do we go about creating that "dynamic unconscious" in order to facilitate the production of meaning in session? Levine argues that it is possible by "initiating or catalyzing processes that strengthen and/or integrate [the patient's] ability to think by strengthening and integrating weakly inscribed psychic elements or giving form to something that was previously unrepresented" ("The Colourless Canvas" 612). The question I am raising is how do we go about this important task of giving form, or of integrating unrepresented or poorly represented mental contents – unrepresented early traumas – to overcome the sense of void and formless infinity and the emptiness in some patients' narratives? How can the absence – "something that had either been split off or had never existed" (Da Silva 98), be transformed into something that deserves to be told, metamorphosed into a generative meaningful-thing? Da Silva suggests that the analyst should offer "a representation, a shape, a container in the here and now of the session as a possible means to access the unrepresented through language enveloped in emotions and to deepen the understanding of the self" (98).

As I shall explore in the next section, in the work with non-neurotic analysands this generative process of replacing the silence or the unnarratable into a narrative form may be stimulated with the help of a "pliable medium" (Milner 190). By pliable medium, Marion Milner refers to an "intervening pliable substance," that "pliable stuff that can be made to take the shape of one's phantasies" (190). Similar to the case of Marion Milner's 11 year- old

patient who set out all the toys in the consulting room in the form of a village, the non-neurotic analysands, in reading and then discussing a story within their therapy or "analytic play-room," may found "a bit of the external world that [is] malleable; [s]he [may] found that it [is] safe to treat it as a bit of [her/him]self, and so let it serve as a bridge between inner and outer" (193). As I shall argue, the pliable medium facilitates a first-person reintegration or re-elaboration of symbolic elements, and therefore allows a series of new texts to emerge and to enrich the patient's psychic map.

Why Can Literature Be an Interesting Therapeutic Tool in the Work with Non-Neurotic Patients Within a Psychoanalytic-oriented Framework?

One of the few ways of allowing some patients to reengage with the world intersubjectively, and within her/his Self – intrapsychically – is to reinforce her/his meaning-making apparatus, to offer her/him the chance to restore a self-imaginative-analytic space, and to offer her/him the possibility of *mise-en-récits* of what had been previously unprocessed and therefore unnarratable. When the creation of this space fails to emerge, the therapeutic couple often remains "incommunicado." The word incommunicado is taken from the poem "Paterson" by Williams Carlos Williams: "they walk incommunicado […] The language is missing them / they die also / incommunicado. / The language, the language / fails, them / They do not know the words. […] — the language / is divorced from their minds, / the language" (11). The poem has inspired the American psychoanalyst Fred Griffin's definition of incommunicado to refer "both to the lack of successful communication between patient and

analyst, and to the resultant state of solitary confinement that is created for the patient (and for the analyst) when there are no thoughts and words to give shape and meaning to the analysand's unconscious experience" (25). Incommunicado thus refers to the lack of words, to the impossibility of using words to give meaning to one's experience and to convey emotional states to another. If the framework of unrepresented experiences has implicit the idea that one cannot express or represent which one does not, for the moment, has access to, the lack of words in the analytic relationship can also be construed as a mistrust towards the communication engine. Judith Butler writes in that vein that "the refusal to narrate remains a relation to narrative and to the scene of address" (12). "As a narrative withheld," she continues, "it either refuses the relation that the inquirer presupposes or changes that relation so that the one queried refuses the one who queries" (12). Implicitly, narrating implies the presence of two desiring individuals hoping that, through the experience of telling, a transformation will occur, and agency is exerted. In the psychoanalytic process the emphasis ought to be put on the analyst's capacity to *listening creatively and to transform* that which the analysand struggles to give meaning to, that is, the emphasis should be on co-creating an analytic subject. This analytic subject is a subject that is more capable of linking emotional experiences to words and more confident in saying those words to an Other. In a similar vein, and focusing on the need of a listening Other Roussillon writes, "l'hypothèse implicite des dispositifs clinique et du processus qu'ils cherchent à rendre possible est en effet que, pour être intégrée, l'expérience subjective d'un sujet a besoin d'être communiquée et partagée par un autre sujet, de prendre valeur de langage pour un autre sujet" (« Une métapsychologie » 42). To exist, the subject needs a listening, transformative other. To do so, he adds,

le travail de symbolisation qui rend possible l'appropriation subjective des expériences vécues et leur partage, suppose qu'une forme sensible soit donnée à l'expérience, forme sensible qui est à la fois le vecteur de la communication des caractéristiques de l'expérience et le support de leur transformation en une forme de langage par le partage qu'elle rend possible. [42]

If Roussillon enhances the word and verbal language as the medium par excellence for therapeutic work to be possible, he is also concerned with the plasticity or the malleability of the internal world of the analyst in the analytic space. Roussillon has been interested in the work of mediation in the psychanalytic space for many years. He writes that the mediums used are of different kinds, some are more material, like drawing, painting or sculpture, but they can also take a less material form:

Ces médiations… peuvent aussi prendre une forme moins manifestement "matérialisable" comme le langage verbal et le type d'échange qu'il rend possible, voire une disposition d'esprit du clinicien qui actualise, par les réponses qu'il fournit et la part de lui-même qu'il met à disposition du sujet pour celle-ci, une attitude interne, une « disposition d'esprit », au service de l'accueil et de la transformation de ce que le sujet cherche à lui communiquer. [41]

For the purposes of my exploration of the role of literary fiction as transformational in the work with non-neurotic analysands, the idea of a pliable medium incarnates both definitions proposed by Roussillon, that is, on the one hand, the pliable medium as an attuned, receptive and "malleable" analyst, and, on the other hand, a pliable medium as a "material" medium. In the next section I shall explore the use of a *dispositif littéraire* and the practice of reading and discussing short stories within a psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

The *Dispositif Littéraire*

Books and stories may have for non-neurotic analysands the potential to become what Bollas calls "evocative objects," that is, "objects which may stimulate the self's psychic

interest" (*The Evocative* 40) or objects for reverie, ones that can evoke emotion and provoke thought. The use of a *dispositif littéraire* has already been explored in the field of literary studies – for instance, in the context of practices commonly known as bibliotherapy, reading-therapy, poetry-therapy, or art-therapy. What is distinctive about the way I approach the *dispositif littéraire* in this thesis is how it may emerge and be used *within* the practice of psychoanalytic-oriented psychotherapies. I focus on how a story may have a therapeutic meaning and relevance inasmuch as the reading of that story or stories is constitutive of the therapeutic process and not, as it usually the case in the aforementioned practices, the centre of a group activity that is offered to patients in parallel to more conventional form of treatments (psychopharmacological or more classical forms of psychotherapy).

Réné Roussillon explains in that vein how in the work with some patients there is: "a nécessité de trouver les dispositifs susceptibles d'accueillir la symptomatologie souvent bruyante, violente, ou, à l'inverse, apathique, des sujets auxquels les praticiens d'orientation clinique sont maintenant massivement confrontés" ("Diversité" 31). The interest in this type of practices has been one of the main object of study of the "Centre de recherche en psychopathologie et psychologie clinique" affiliated with the Université Lyon 2. René Roussillon explains in preliminary fashion how the introduction of "dispositifs" is clinically relevant as a mediator in the clinical work:

> Dans l'utilisation des médiations, il y a deux options, l'utilisation des artistes qui débouchent sur les diverses formes « d'art-thérapie », l'utilisation des cliniciens qui débouchent sur les pratiques cliniques à médiations (…) nous pensons, à partir de l'expérience, que l'utilisation du transfert mobilisé par les médiations – utilisation essentielle pour garantir que la pratique obéit aux critères de l'éthique clinique du soin, qu'elle reste centrée sur le développement de l'appropriation subjective par les patients des pans de leur vie psychiques non ou mal intégrées antérieurement –, suppose une pratique clinique véritable et pas seulement une technique artistique. ["Conclusion" 378]

Roussillon talks about the use of literary fiction in psychoanalytic-oriented psychotherapies: it does not work as a medium for an artistic practice. I hope to be able to illustrate this difference in the course of this thesis by focusing on the role that the analyst may have in enabling the non-neurotic analysand's representational capacity and in helping her/him to overcome the limits of the linking, narrative capacity usually impaired in non-neurotic patients. Roussillon supports this idea:

> Offrir un objet de médiation c'est proposer que l'ambiguïté se distribue sur deux scènes distinctes mais reliée car si le médium endosse une partie du processus transférentiel, le clinicien est toujours là, toujours présent à l'arrière-fond de l'utilisation du médium, toujours présent pour assurer et garantir la fonction symbolisante de la situation et du dispositif. ["Conclusion" 379]

One of the main arguments of this section is that the transformational potential of short stories on non-neurotic analysands' capacity to talk about themselves presupposes various others: an analyst, a setting, and external narratives told by different authors. As I shall develop further in the next sections, I contend that the transformational potential resides not in the affects evoked or provoked by the *dispositif littéraire per se*, but, by the use of this specific *dispositif* in the here and now of the field of the session, that is, as another piece in the intersubjective relationship between an analysand and an attentive and malleable analyst.

Reading as Linking

I shall now conceptualize reading short stories, the discussion of the texts with the analyst and the co-creation of new narrations and meaning(s) in the field of the session as a transformational practice.

Etymologically, the word "text" stems from the Latin verb "texere," to weave. Reading a text, as we shall see, may also be understood as an act of linking. This combination of weaving and linking implied in the writing and reading of a text is made possible through a variety of means, but we shall focus here on only a few.

An exhaustive exploration of the role that fiction or literature in general might play for readers in a therapeutic context is beyond the scope of this master thesis. In the next sections, I shall discuss only a few hypotheses that can help us to understand how the reading of short stories and the production of co-created narrations in the context of the session may be transformative for non-neurotic analysands.

Narrative Sequence

The act of reading demands from the reader a capacity to follow a narrative sequence. Paul Ricœur calls this narrative sequence or "la configuration narrative" (29), that is, the internal organization of a narrative text based on codes identifiable by structural analysis. Narrative brings together heterogeneous factors into a coherent unit. It is through that causal continuity that a narrative becomes intelligible and credible, for "narrative demarcates, encloses, establishes limits, order" (Brooks 4). The reader is typically asked to respect a chronological succession of links among words, sentences, events, and the emergence of characters. According to Ricœur, the two main concerns of a narrative are coherence and structure. Reading requires an effort of logical reflection on the part of the reader. To grasp the plot, the reader has to be able to link events in dynamic, causally structured patterns. "Le conte est récit," writes the French psychoanalyst René Kaës, "en tant que tel, il propose une forme

ordonnée d'énoncés relatifs à des évènements qui deviennent intelligibles et transmissibles lorsqu'ils sont organisés dans la représentation de l'unité d'une action" (iv). This action is only understandable for the reader if there is a temporal logic preceding it. The stimulation of one's memory and the strengthening of one's ability for linking a sequence of events is an important function exerted by the narrative sequence.

Another readerly function elicited by narrative is related with desire and the range of expectations in regard to the ways in which the story will unfold. Peter Brooks explains how the reader plots, anticipates what will come after a particular event, "seeking in the unfolding of the narrative a line of intention and portent of design that holds the promise of progress toward meaning" (xiii). Roland Barthes describes the desire activated by the narrative suspense. This may be due to the progressive unveiling: "c'est ce scintillement même qui séduit, ou encore : la mise en scène d'une apparition-disparition (...) toute l'excitation se réfugie dans l'espoir de voir le sexe (rêve de collégien) ou de connaître la fin de l'histoire (satisfaction romanesque) " (19-20). The narrative sequence stimulates, on the one hand, the desire of the reader, while developing in the reader the capacity to tolerate both the immediate gratification and the uncertainty about the story's denouement on the other.

Reading fiction is first and foremost an act of comprehending – that is, tolerating and integrating an existing structure as part of an external reality. This activity is entirely continuous with one of the main goals when working with all patients, but particularly with those who present with weakly or poorly represented states of mind: to offer and to invite them to integrate and to introject a safe structure that can facilitate the emergence of old and new memories and the exploration of the analysand's desire.

Referential Power of the Economy of the Text

The pleasure obtained from the act of reading has been explored in literary studies as an important pre-requisite for the creation of meaning. According to Jean-Marie Schaeffer, a philosopher notable for his work in reception theory, the potential transformational effects of literary reading cannot take place without the reader's pleasure in reading: "quelles que soient ses éventuelles fonctions, [la fiction] ne saurait les remplir que si elle réussit, d'abord, à nous plaire en tant que fiction" (327). Pleasure and the aesthetic impact on the reader are therefore the necessary conditions for appropriating the story and for engaging in the process of attributing meaning to it. Being aesthetically affected by the literary work enables emotional and sensory links to be woven between the reader and the text.

The literary work, that is, the *mise-en- scène*, and the *mise-en-image*, solicits and invites 'identification' of the reader with the human experience represented in the fiction. It also plays an important role in the understanding of oneself in that they are the subjectification of lived or imagined events of the narrator's life: "la compréhension de soi est une interprétation; l'interprétation de soi, à son tour, trouve dans le récit, parmi d'autres signes et symboles, une médiation privilégiée" (Ricœur *Soi-même* 138). Reading is a mediator for the knowledge but also for the construction of the self. Reading is "un viatique pour se découvrir ou se construire, pour élaborer son intériorité, sa subjectivité" writes Michèle Petit (7). Stories are vehicles for the author to represent and to symbolize the world and to "textualize" affective responses to experiences. In this sense, through reading, we engage in a narrative transmission: we introject, we are fertilized by different subjective experiences, different *déjà-dits*. The process of subjectivation of the reader is possible, according to Petit, "parce qu'on y rencontre parfois des mots qui viennent heurter ce qui était comme arrêté sur l'image pour lui

redonner vie" (3). The dialogue with different subjectivities enables an activation of autobiographical memories and emotions and contributes to the potential of the literary "as a guide to self-interpretation and self-understanding" (Felski 83). Reading creates a space in which different emotional encounters may occur both vertically – from the author to the reader – and horizontally – from what is written to what is being read. Reading allows the reader to practice the emotions expressed in and within this text, depending on the affective orientation of the stories. Jean-Marie Schaeffer argues in that vein that,

> une des fonctions principales de la fiction sur le plan affectif résiderait (...) dans le fait qu'elle nous permet de réorganiser les affects fantasmatiques sur un terrain ludique, de les mettre en scène, ce qui nous donne la possibilité de les expérimenter sans être submergés par eux. [324]

Schaeffer argues that the regulation of affects or the reorganization of the affects is made possible to the reader via the development of an imaginative capacity within a safe, contained space, the text. This is possible, Schaeffer argues, due to the game of distance and desidentification that the reader would play while reading. Indeed, for Schaeffer, the fictional immersion allows both an identification and desidentification with the characters, with emotions and with different situations portrayed in the narrative. This game of identification and desidentification requires from the reader a capacity to suspend judgement concerning the implausibility of the fictional narrative, that is, what the poet Coleridge coined as the "willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (1817).

To Dream-up the Text

Because they are anchored in imaginary worlds, fictional stories also foster imaginative capacities in the reader, inviting him or her to saturate with meaning – that is, to

figure and represent the worlds evoked by and within the text. Charles Crootof compares reading to dreaming by arguing that both the reader and the dreamer enter "the world of primary process – of dreams and wishes, urges and drives, hates and loves, turmoil and fulfilment. But it is a willing suspension of reality testing" (46). Contrary to the experience of temporal reality, the reader is offered the choice to continue, interrupt or resume the exploration of a text: "he can explore this cave as deeply as he wishes; having entered willingly, he can return whenever he wishes" (46). Through reading fictional narratives, the reader has thus the chance to choose to continue or to stop reading, and to safely inhabit and imagine in-between worlds.

The analogy of reading as dreaming is taken further by Thomas Ogden. As mentioned earlier, and unlike Crootof's understanding of the dreaming process – influenced by Freud's conceptualization of the dream work – Ogden is influenced by Bion's ideas on dreaming:

> What we dream when we are asleep is a rediscovery of our waking experience, a rediscovery that not only sheds light on that lived experience, but transforms it into something new, something with which we can do unconscious and psychological work. That psychological work (the work of dreaming) is work that we have not been able to achieve in the more limited medium of waking thinking. [*Rediscovering Psychoanalysis* 10]

Dreaming as rediscovering is fundamental to understand Ogden's approach to reading. For the psychoanalyst, dreaming a text in the act of reading and writing – and we can add or thinking or discussing – about it, is to do something of one's own with the text, an idea that echoes much of the reader-response criticism: "the text is the starting point for the reader's own creative act that is unique to him and reflects his own "peculiar mentality" (9). If the idea that the reader transforms the text is commonly accepted, Ogden is interested in how reading is mutually creatively transformative: the text gives us something with which we can do unconscious psychological work, the text links another person's dream with my own internal

and relational works and my capacity in a certain moment of my life to dream it as my own dream. Dreaming up the text is a transformational practice because, like in a dream, one word, one figure, one character and/or situation "may encompass a lifetime of experiences – both real and imagined – with one or with many people" (10). More important, the reader, like the dreamer, has the opportunity to rework that figure or that situation in one's own terms.

Reading's potential for transformation and co-creation of personal meaning presupposes the presence of a receptive-active reader-dreamer. But, again, how can we situate the experience of readers that are not able to "dream"? How can a non-neurotic reader take in and benefit from reading when the mind is overwhelmed with fragmented and unrepresented experiences?

Stories both evoke and produce internal and relational worlds and emotions, and they contribute to promote a space for the reader to achieve a binocular vision, that is, "the capacity to view an experience from two different perspectives" (The Edinburgh Skelton). According to Skelton's definition of binocular vision, "the ability to shift back and forth from one point of view to another is seen as a pre-requisite for the growth and development of the non-psychotic personality" (The Edinburgh Skelton). What I am trying to argue is how reading can potentially produce and "supply content" (Green "Conceptions of Affect" 172) for previously unrepresented and unsaid experiences while contributing to potentially expanding psychic space, that is, a mind that is more capable of linking and dreaming one's emotional experiences.

The Limits of the Role of the *Dispositif Littéraire*

After having participated in several literary workshops with psychotic patients both in France and in Quebec, Sara Bédard-Goulet argues in her Doctoral thesis entitled "Lecture et réparation psychique" that "la fréquentation régulière d'œuvres littéraires peut contribuer à réadapter les individus souffrant de psychose, par le biais des émotions qu'elles provoquent et qui seraient le point de départ d'un intérêt pour soi-même et pour les autres en réactivant l'activité de l'esprit" (47). She explains how reading allows for an appropriation of words, an expression of previously unnamed emotions. This, she argues, allows the psychotic patient to gradually find his own voice in a safe manner. For Bédard- Goulet, the voice of the author performs the function of linking the real to a sign, a representation of that real, while mediating at the same time the relationship between the reader and the world. I argue that reading may indeed have a therapeutic potential or what I call a "transformational effect" on patients with a non-neurotic structure, provided that that practice is performed in a "safe environment," in the presence of a therapist who can properly "contain" and "dream," in the Bionian sense, the potential raw elements that reading may evoke in the encounter with a non-neurotic structure.

The appropriation or the "dreaming" of the medium-story will likely differ from patient to patient. To dream-up the text may occur without noticeable difficulties in a neurotic reader, but that might not be the case for non-neurotic readers. I assume that non-neurotic readers are more likely to struggle with "floating signifiers," and with the appropriation of the story. With a different access to a symbolic and linguistic system, the relationship that non-neurotic readers will have with literary texts ought to be different. Non-neurotic readers may

indeed find it traumatic to be exposed to words and images that may be outside of their non-neurotic knowledge of the world. This resonates with Laplanche's concept of "enigmatic messages" addressed to "someone with no shared interpretive system, in a mainly extra-verbal manner (...) with verbal signifiers outside of their linguistic 'usage'" (661). The risk of overwhelming the non-neurotic analysand's psychic apparatus with enigmatic messages is something that has to be taken into consideration when talking about the use of literary fiction as a therapeutic medium. Contrary to Bédard-Goulet who describes the *dispositif littéraire* or the act of reading per se as a relief of suffering, I argue that the transformational potential of the *dispositif littéraire* has to take into account the intersubjective space created in-between story-analysand-analyst who functions as a container and who assists the analysand in her/his safe appropriation of the text. In the next section, I shall elaborate further on this idea by exploring how the analyst's alpha function may facilitate non-neurotic patients in the process of metabolizing potential "enigmatic messages" into meaningful things.

Reading-together

In his famous book *The Uses of Enchantment*: *The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Bruno Bettelheim explores how tales content provide a safe ground to explore some of the child's deep fantasies and fears. However, Bettelheim does not elaborate on the role of the context and how its interpretation is also shaped by the intersubjective relationship created between the tale, the teller and the child. Antonino Ferro writes that fairy tales are key in the psychic development of children because their "potential to transform the child's deepest fantasies is 'living'" (*The Bi-Personal Field* 54). But this, he argues, is activated by the

narrated text, and by the "affective and emotional fabric which is woven by child and narrator together" (54). For Ferro, the transformational potential of narratives goes beyond the emotional encounters evoked and provoked by the text. He suggests that the affective co-constructions that emerge in the reading of fairy tales are due also to the emotional fabric created by the child, the parent and the text. Ferro's inclusion of a "third" in the act of reading is an interesting one here, considering the triadic configuration between the stories read in session, the patient and the analyst.

Reading-together may be seen as a practice, as way of being together that allows a Third, a new character in the field, to emerge. The emergence of a tridimensional spatiality resonates with Ogden's notion of the "intersubjective third" ("The Analytic Third" 3) that emerges in the analytic encounter. This idea of a third mind resembles Lacan's concept of the Other: "The Other is therefore the locus in which is constituted the I who speaks with him who hears" (Ogden "The Mother" 141). This concept of the Other which takes root in the prototypical mother-infant relationship and provides the infant, according to Ogden, with the necessary psychic conditions to generate meaning from experience. "The mother, in a state of reverie" writes Ogden, "accepts the infant's unthinkable thoughts and unbearable feelings (which are inseparable from her response to the infant's distress)" (*Reclaiming* 28). The Other is therefore needed to help the infant to metabolize his disturbing experiences, as Ogden explains:

> Beginning in earliest infancy and continuing throughout life, every individual is limited, to varying degrees, in his capacity to subject his lived experience to dream thinking, i.e., to do unconscious psychological work in the course of dreaming. When one has reached the limits of one's ability to dream one's disturbing experiences, one needs another person to help one dream one's undreamt dreams. [28]

If the intersubjective third is a fundamental quality of the psychoanalytic process, reading a story together may offer the analytic pair an alternative way through which this intersubjective third can be used as a catalyst for psychological work. In order for reading-together as a practice to have a psycho-analytic and therapeutic value, the analyst has to be engaged in the process of generating meaning with the patient. In the here and now of the session, the analyst's role would then be to assist the analysand in unearthing and transforming which is unsayable in the analysand's mind. The non-neurotic's raw material stirred up by reading a story would have to be received and transformed by the containing function – alpha-function – of the analyst. More specifically, the maleable analyst would have to facilitate a process of subjectivation of the text, while at the same time preventing the patient from feeling overwhelmed or destroyed by it. The risks in the appropriation of a text are twofold: the risk of an excessive or of an insufficient appropriation. Bertrand Gervais explains what happens when there is an excessive appropriation: "c'est comme si le lecteur pouvait être absorbé par le texte qu'il lisait, non pas métaphoriquement et, par suite, de façon atténuée, mais complètement, irrémédiablement" (Dumais 81). In this excessive appropriation, the reader is *caught in* [*pris dans*] the text; there is no separation between the text and reader, only confusion. It is, we may say, a fusional relationship based on a fantasy of non-differentiation. In the case of insufficient appropriation [*pris sur*] of the text, the reader does not allow her/ himself to be affected by the experience. For instance, the non-neurotic analysand may struggle to find enough critical distance between what is fiction and what is her/his own history and experience. Ultimately, the aim of the analyst would be to nurture the non-neurotic analysand's capacity to interpret situations and affects represented and expressed within a story while offering her/him a third

intersubjective space to contain her/his anxieties – namely the anxiety of being caught, or what Gervais mentioned as being *pris-dans* the story – during the process.

      To prevent the field of the sessions from being dominated by "enigmatic messages;" and to prevent the non-neurotic analysand's feeling of being trapped inside an excessive or insufficient appropriation of the text, the analyst would have to enable the analysand to inhabit the *in-between spaces for creation of meaning* in a safe way. Through its reverie function, the analyst may also assist the analysand in the translation of some potentially enigmatic messages in the stories that are read and discussed within the psychoanalytic-oriented psychotherapy. I hypothesize that the presence of the analyst's alpha-function and the intersubjective third created in the practice of reading-together may contribute to the creation of an analytic space that would assist the patient in containing the represented and unrepresented emotional experiences stirred up by the reading. In that vein, through the analyst's alpha-function or reverie the analytic pair might be able to engage in the co-creation of new and transformational narrations, allowing the non-neurotic analysand to engage in the process of linking the content of stories with her/his own life story, of linking thing- representations to word-presentations, of linking unrepresented emotional experiences to names. The outcome of this practice would be a supplement of symbolic content that could be appropriated and integrated into the non-neurotic analysand's psychic networks and finally be used by the analysand for the psychological work or "dreaming." The trust in the relationship and the development of the non-neurotic patient's capacity for symbolization and representation, would ultimately stimulate her/his capacity for self-narration.

PART IV

My aim in this last part of my thesis is to draw on the ideas developed in the previous parts to do a speculative inquire on how through a practice of reading-together in the context of a psychoanalytic psychotherapy, the story "I Only Came to Use the Phone" by Gabriel García Márquez could be used as a pliable medium. I shall explore how a prototype non-neurotic analysand could appropriate this short story while also illustrating the practice of reading-together (analyst-analysand) as a linking space. First, I focus on how the story may contribute in different ways to the expansion of the reader's intrapsychic space. I explore how the pattern of affects expressed by and within this text, particularly the feelings of loss and fragmentation, might offer the analytic dyad a transitional intersubjective space which could help a non-neurotic analysand to work through similar affects. Finally, I argue that the reading of this story with an analyst could contribute to give meaning and coherence to contingent events of a non-neurotic analysand; cumulatively, then, the reading of this short story and its discussion could contribute to inscribing the non-neurotic analysand's existence into the world. This inscription of her/his existence through the use of this short story as a pliable medium could enable the non-neurotic analysand to communicate and to co-construct a *récit de soi* from previously weakly represented internal and external experiences.

Expanding Psychic Territory: Links with Otherness

The reading-together as practice may function as a linking space. As I have explored earlier in this thesis, the non-neurotic analysand should have some characteristics, namely a

neurotic part that would allow her/him to be engaged and to take pleasure in reading. If the non-neurotic analysand is capable of being engaged in the practice of reading-together, the discussion of this story may allow for an expansion of the reader's psychic space by assisting the reader in the dialogue with internal and external othernesses. In "L'herméneutique du sujet," Michel Foucault mentions how reading allows for la *meditatio*, a space for meditation, for thinking. In the case of the analytic dyad, this space for thinking and linking may by co-created and mediated by the reading-together of stories. The stories may enable a mediation between the external and the internal narratives; between the words of the other (the author of the text read) and the reader's own words. Foucault argues that what we expect from reading is: "non pas d'avoir compris ce que voulait dire un auteur, mais la constitution pour soi d'un équipement de propositions vraies, qui soit effectivement à soi" (341). Reading, for Foucault, is a practice, an experience. Foucault argues that writing is what allows for a continuation of the experience of meditation ignited by reading: "La lecture se prolonge, se renforce, se réactive par l'écriture" (341). Writing is therefore also the continuation of this practice of introspection, and constitutes a version of a *récit de soi*: "l'écriture," writes Foucault "ne cesse de s'affirmer toujours davantage comme un élément de l'exercice de soi" (341).

If the analysand does not take the initiative, the therapist may invite the non-neurotic analysand to highlight certain words and passages or composing marginalia. This first gesture will allow the analysand to appropriate the story in her/his own terms. To do so, the analysand has to be in touch with her/ his self, with her/his internal lexicon, to decode and to attribute a personal meaning to the imagery evoked by the text. In this sense, the reading of literary fiction can set off within the analysand the process of producing a new narrative, a narrative "*à soi*." Considering the experience of García Márquez's character inside a psychiatric

hospital, the reader might find there an opportunity to speak her/his own "wounds" through the heroine's point of view. This idea echoes what Cathy Caruth explores as the encounter with another that is enabled by reading or listening to the voice and to the speech delivered by another's wound: "the story of the way in which one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound" (8). But before the non-neurotic analysand could become her/his self a speaking subject available to engage in a co-production of her/his new story, she/he has to first be capable of bearing witness to María's emotional experiences within the asylum for women.

Fictional and Real Characters

The fictional character's experiences may foster the non-neurotic analysand's empathetic imagination. The analysand may be able on her/his own or by invitation of her analyst to make specific linkages between her/his herself and the protagonist, such as, for instance, about both being "held" under the care of a mental health professional or in a mental health facility or the feeling of being emotionally deprived. By exploring María's loosing of agency throughout the story, the non-neurotic analysand might be capable of making bridges and reflecting on her/his own experience as a child, as a young adult or as an inpatient or outpatient of a mental health facility. One of the risks in this exercise of reflecting on one's own experiences in comparison with a fictional character can be an adhesive identification with the heroine in the story. To prevent this from happening, the analyst might want to validate how the analysand feels about the similarities with the fictional character while at the same time facilitate their separation and differentiation. The analyst might want to secure an

"optimal distance" (Akhtar 1061) and, in turn, the conditions for the creation of third and hybrid identity, constituted by María's and the reader's parts of the personality, that could be explored safely. For instance, the non-neurotic analysand might identify with María's state of confusion and disorientation, and with the heroine's feelings of being out of her place. Exploring the example of María's unsettling experience of feeling that time had collapsed into an undifferentiated, unmarked and static temporality, the analytic couple may find a transitional space in which the non-neurotic analysand might be able to allow her/ his self to address similar experiences. Maria's fundamental questions "where am I," who am I? could provide a possible context to start working through the non-neurotic analysand's own feelings of self-discontinuity and loss. In many situations, the non-neurotic analysand has to face the fact that she/he is neither understood nor believed by their families or by people in their communities or by health care professionals. This story could then offer an opportunity to bring to the consultation room, the non-neurotic analysand's identifications with parts of María's struggles. For instance, feelings of distress evoked by María – she felt "distraught" (García Márquez 72) and "paralyzed with terror" (75) – could present an occasion for the analytic couple to talk about what it means to feel that one is going through a psychotic or non-psychotic period and how the others around respond to it.

This short story read and discussed in the therapeutic space could allow for the working through of certain struggles both in the interpersonal world and from an intrapsychic perspective. Instead of "forcing" the links between the fictional story and the non-neurotic reader's life, the analyst might want to create a space in which the non-neurotic reader can practice her/his self-reflexivity. This self-reflexive exercise would consist in carefully listening to the reader's projection of her/his unconscious phantasies via the multiple

comparisons the reader might want to make between María's experiences and her/ his own. Playing with and working through the identification and differentiation between the analysand and the fictional character echoes Judith Butler's construction of the "I" with the other that I briefly described in Part I: "The uniqueness of the other is exposed to me, but mine is also exposed to her. This does not mean we are the same, but only that we are bound to one another by what differentiates us, namely, our singularity" (34). To be able to compare herself to María, the non-neurotic analysand has to engage in an intrapsychic dialogue which would allow her/him to compare Maria's story with her/his own experiences. In this play of identification and desidentification in the presence of the analyst, the non-neurotic reader may find a space in which she/he could *practice* her/his own subjectivity. Note that 'practicing subjectivity' in this particular context is possible through a narrative practice. Through the discussion of a work of fiction, the non-neurotic reader might be more capable to say how she/he could identify her/him self with María's experience in certain passages of the story. At the same time, this narrative practice may also be used by the analysand as the starting point of an autobiographical narrative, if we imagine, for instance, an analysand saying "this is what happened to me."

Institutionalisation

The heroine's relationship with her husband but also the various relationships she develops inside of the psychiatric facility, that is, with the doctor, with the fellow women institutionalized and with the domineering and violent Herculina, would be a good canvas to talk and to reflect on the reader's experience with significant figures of her/his past. Also, García Márquez's story could offer the analytical dyad an opportunity for speaking about the

agency or the lack thereof when one is confined in an institution, be it a family, a prison, a

psychiatric hospital or other types of mental health facilities.

Foucault described hospitals as "curing machines" ("The politics of health" 123), and

prisons as institutions organized for the surveillance and control, creating what he calls an

institution "panoptique" (*Surveiller* 207). Michel de Certeau nuances this view by arguing that

regardless of the control exerted by these two institutions, there is always a possibility for

resistance, for practising one own's intelligence and freedom. This is possible, according to de

Certeau, because people bring inside the walls their own experiences and desires which cannot

be controlled. The question of how much a prisoner or a mental health patient has "freedom"

to resist the structures of control is indirectly portrayed in this short story by García Márquez.

As previously explored, apparently trivial objects in the story (such as the cigarettes) had the

power to foster María's sense of a subjective continuity and to protect her from being totally

dominated or controlled by the institution. Drawing on these examples, the analyst might want

to invite the reader to think about objects or experiences that could exert a similar function in

the non-neurotic reader's psyche. Reading-together as practice could be, for instance, a way to

allow the reader to feel more connected to her/ his self and to other past and present realities

outside the walls of the consulting room or outside the walls of a psychiatric facility. Alluding

to the impact of reading in a hospital environment Michèle Petit writes:

> Le fait que la lecture permette d'élaborer ou de restaurer un espace à soi prend
> évidemment tout son sens à l'hôpital, où l'espace de l'intimité se réduit comme une peau
> de chagrin ; où l'on se sent assigné à un statut de corps-objet, tenu de se soumettre, «
> pour son bien », aux décisions des autres ; où tout vous astreint à une passivité, une perte
> d'autonomie, une régression que ce soit la maladie et les limites qu'elle apporte à la
> motricité. [100]

Petit's focus on reading in hospital settings could also be applied to other institutions, such as prisons. What is interesting to note here is how books and stories could allow for a double mediation in the reader's contact with this particular story. I argue that the non-neurotic reader's engagement with stories might be a way for the reader to claim a space of her/his own within the institution. Moreover, the affects evoked and produced within García Márquez's story might enable the analysand's capacity to think about and to practice her/ his agency – the capacity and the space to construe a narrative of her/his own.

Loss

Both María's and Saturno's worlds were disrupted after María's car broke down. This "loss" at the beginning of the story is a threshold onto a world of loss, and it prepares the reader for the plethora of losses that María will be faced with from that moment on. The affective tone of the text might be familiar to non-neurotic readers in many ways. The various moments of loss evoked by the story could enable the reader to project her/his way of grappling with various discontinuities and losses of people, spaces and objects of her/his past and present life. For instance, drawing on Maria's various setbacks and their associated affects, the analytic pair might want to explore the analysand's struggle with, for example, the symbolic loss of her/his mind, the feelings of not belonging and of a fractured existence.

Reading-together: Enlivening the Symbolization Process

The distance introduced by fiction may allow the analyst to offer to the non-neurotic analysand a safe space for the elaboration of otherwise intolerable psychic material. According to Chouvier, "le conte, malgré ses apparences anodines, actualise la vie fantasmatique

inconsciente au niveau du moi en lui en offrant une figuration suffisamment ludique pour être tolérable par le surmoi" (xx). The fictional and paradoxical nature of the various misadventures lived by María in the story may be used as a segue by non-neurotic analysands into the exploration or appropriation of important "signifiers" such as: What does it mean to feel one is "incarcerated" or psychically restrained? What does it mean to be thought of as a "crazy"? What does it mean to accept or to resist the help offered by with mental health professionals, family and one's entourage?

This short story could have may have provide the non-neurotic analysand with a space in which she/he could begin to metaphorize, to bring together fragments of her/his own experience, and to produce and synthesize affects that were, until then, unnarratable. The discussion in session of specific experiences and affects evoked in the story in session might facilitate the non-neurotic analysand's work of linking symbols and saturating with meaning certain life experiences. Inspired by the reading, the analytic pair might be able to start naming and bridging previously unlinked aspects of the analysand's life, thus allowing the reader to operate a subjective and meaningful appropriation of the representational and phantasmatic elements evoked by the story.

Reading *in the Presence of* an Other

For Winnicott, "playing implies trust, and belongs to the potential space between (what was at first) baby and mother figure, with the baby in a state of near-absolute dependence, and the mother figure's adaptive function taken for granted by the baby ("Playing" 52). Analogously to the child-parent relationship described by Winnicott, the non-neurotic

analysand has first to have enough trust in the relationship with her/his analyst to use books and stories as pliable mediums.

The analysand and the analyst would then have to became "bricoleurs" (Derrida, 1967) who select, discard, and appropriate meanings for the creation of new and transformational co-narratives. Ideally, the analytic space would be secure enough and fertile to facilitate the non-neurotic analysand's integration of new ways of thinking, feeling and expressing. Through the analyst's reverie, the story read in session might became saturated in meaning, and the co-creation of subsequent emerging narratives or new "texts" in session could then become possible. The outcome of this practice for the non-neurotic analysand in the development of her/his capacity for insight and the deepening of her/his appreciation of the range and complexity of her/his own emotional experience. The experience of talking about the stories with a receptive analyst may help the non-neurotic analysand to process unmetabolized psyche/soma/affective experiences to thoughts that could be thought by her/him, and words that could be told to the analyst. This movement would only be possible if the analyst would create the conditions for what Ferro calls a "transformational co-narration" (*Psychoanalysis as Therapy* 1) by enabling the links through the ellipsis in speech and thus facilitating the creation of a coherent narrative. In a context where some or most affects are unsayable, unarticulated and therefore impossible to represent and narrate, the reading of an external narrative may open a door into the recognition of some previously unfelt or inaccessible affects, leading to a further expansion of meaning, and fostering the analysand's representational process. We may also anticipate how the practice of reading-together might help the analysand to be more at ease to recognize her/ himself in the stories that the analytic couple would co-create: "Un sujet se reconnaît dans l'histoire qu'il se raconte à lui-même sur

lui-même" (Ricœur *Temps et récit 3* 445). More than allowing the analysand to just talk, it may help the analysand "to represent," which etymologically stems from "to become present," embodied. The reading and discussion of short stories within a psychoanalytic psychotherapy may be transformational in the sense that it may contribute to con-*figure* some aspects of the non-neurotic analysand's internal world, giving a form to what has not been previously represented nor symbolized.

The exploration in session of the short story's affective tone may provide, for instance, the non-neurotic analysand with a structure that would serve as a catalyst for enlivening the analysand unconscious: thus fostering her/his capacity for "dreaming" in the post-Bionian sense, and of co-constructing and representing previously unrepresented emotional experiences.

Before concluding, I argue that if non-neurotics readers struggle with internal "mycelial baths of non-figurability," the rhetorical potential of short stories and its affective orientation, together with the intersubjective dimension discussed above (the affective in-between space that is created between the analysand, the story that is read and discussed, and the analyst) may facilitate in non-neurotic readers the process of appropriation, integration and internal creation of new *mise-en-figures* that via the text become available to be shared with the other. Reading-together may be considered a practice of a transformational encounter facilitated by the dynamic integration of both the story, the inner realities of each member of the analytic dyad and the third intersubjective space. I contend that it is precisely this encounter of psychanalytic and literary *othernesses* that could sustain non-neurotic readers in the task of continual construction and adjustment of her/his coming-into-*narrative*-beings.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the subject's construction in relationality. I argued that an exploration of relationality is fundamental in understanding the dynamic interactions between oneself and the Other, and, consequently, between the text and the reader, or between a psychoanalyst and an analysand.

In Part I, I explored the idea that we begin as "stories;" that is, that we begin as phantasies in the Other's mind. First, I focused on how the construction of the "I" and, consequently, the narrative building of that "I" depends on the encounters with Others and on the actualization of othernesses within oneself. Secondly, in the context of the narrative activity, I explored how human beings begin with stories to enhance who the reader is, what a text is, and what they "become" in their encounter.

In Part II of my thesis and to demonstrate some of the ideas developed in Part I, I explored the affective tone of the short story "I Only Came to Use the Phone" by García Márquez. I proposed a cartography of the affects that were both evoked and produced in this story.

In Part III, I underlined the difference between neurotic and non-neurotic readers; and I explored the value of using a *dispositif littéraire* in a therapeutic context drawing on a theoretical framework formed by concepts stemming both literary studies and psychoanalysis. I explored the use of short stories as a potential therapeutic or "pliable medium" in the work with non-neurotic readers. Because non-neurotic readers' speech is usually empty of meaning and affect, it is not yet available to be reflected upon or be "interpreted." I then explored how the practice of reading-together literary fiction may be used as a context in which non-neurotic

readers and their analysts may be able to promote new forms of representation, or figuration, and therefore contributing to the strengthening of the non-neurotic reader's representational capacity and to her/his ability to work through her/his emotional apathy. I argued that the discussion of literary fiction in a psychoanalytic oriented psychotherapy may help non-neurotic analysands to construct a more articulate narrative of her/ his self.

The exploration of the affective orientation of the short story "I Only Came to Use the Phone" by García Márquez in Part II, oriented me in the last part to further speculate on how the affects represented within García Márquez's economy of the text could be relevant for a non-neurotic reader's appropriation of the story and for the co-generation of new "texts" within the reader. I contended that non-neurotic reader's construction of a *récit de soi* may be facilitated by a set of emotional memories triggered by the text: "Like María, I like, I felt, I did." I drew attention to the role of the interpersonal intersubjective relationship established between analyst and analysand when considering the positive impact of reading in and between sessions. I contended that the use of short stories may be transformational in the sense that they can allow for the figuration or symbolization of previously unrepresented experiences and promote the cocreation of new and "her/his own" narratives which may allow the analysand to explore and to co-elaborate a new subjective position: "(unlike anyone else) I feel, I like, I do." My aim was to elaborate on how the non-neurotic reader's participation and engagement in the creative process of reading may help her/him to lift the cover of a deep well of feelings which may became more readily available, and integrated, in her/his *récit de vie*. The new co-created "texts" that may emerge from the encounter of the analytic dyad with the story – that is, the intersubjective and in-between space – may contribute, in its turn, to the

non-neurotic reader's expansion of her/his own cartography of (conscious and unconscious) affect(s).

With this thesis, I hope I have elucidated several points of contact between the fields of literature and psychoanalysis and how the two benefit from this interdisciplinary dialogue. I also hope that my work has enhanced the potential of the use of literature as a therapeutic medium within psychoanalytic oriented psychotherapies – particularly in the work with non-neurotic analysands and/or analysands with "mycelial baths of non-figurability."

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