Chapter III

Voicing the Symptoms . . .

Psychoanalysis holds many valid lessons for the students of literature. The following is an outline of the psychoanalytic insights made use of in the explication of the plays under the present study.

Narrativity as History

Freud, the first analyst was also a great synthesiser. His case studies read like post-modern fictions in which he weaves together pieces of the patient’s associations, dreams and memories into a coherent pattern. They are attempts to narrativize random happenings in the patient’s life. The patient himself strives after narrative truth—the telling of the story of his life—that brings about the therapeutic effect by causing the cure. Narration in the psychoanalytic context means re-ordering of the meaning of one’s life, the transformation of the meaningless into meaningful. Through his speech that can’t be verified by any material evidence, the patient writes out the story of his life.

The analysand during analysis is like a narrator within the story who tries to textualise his ‘experiences’. The analysand has access to his own past in the form of an interiorizing memory—which is a verbal construct. The analysand can know of his own past only through language. Everything must be described. The narrative structure is valid, not because it contains a kernel of historical truth, but the
narrative structure is its own validation. Words determine how the patient sees his own psychic world. As Lacan puts it:

For it is present speech that bears witness to the truth of the revelation in present reality, and which grounds it in the name of that reality. Yet in that reality, only speech bears witness to that portion of the powers of the past that has been thrust aside at each crossroads where the event has made its choice.¹

Analysis as narration poses the question of the subject of the narration. The subject can't be conceived as pre-existing the text as the past of the book. In analysis it is the narrative 'I' who authors the text of his own discourse. Every analysis is a narration in which language speaks the subject. The subject comes in the being only in the scene of speaking—which is also a scene of writing.

The textual 'I' is both a person and a scene. It is a problematic word—almost an intransitive verb. The narrator becomes a textual metaphor in the process of becoming the subject. This is why in much contemporary thought the self is no longer understood as a pre-linguistic given but as a linguistic construct.²

Every analytic session gives only a partly unfinished story in which verbal structure constructs instead of re-presenting reality. Reality proves to be an elusive thing in the analytic context where word never represents external reality. As Mac Cannel puts it in *Figuring*
Lacan, "thus the great irony of the word is that, by negating (the real) it introduces what is not, but does it in the guise of what is."³

The narrator exists within the narration insofar as he does not have any existence outside the narration. The real within language becomes something other than the real outside. As Miller puts it, "the real is what it is, but when it is represented, expressed, referred to, connected in one way or another to language, the real begins to be what it is not."⁴ The patient retroactively confers signification on an event (non-event). Freud knew that no external event (historical real) could be located as a traumatic factor that triggers off the neurosis. He found that the primal scene was not a real event, but a retrospective interpretation. It is the reality of experience as it lingers in the memory. The event has the status of signifying material in the total signifying structure of his life.

The dominant factor here is the unity of signification, which proves never to be resolved into pure indication of the real but refers back to another signification. That is to say, the signification is realized only on the basis of a grasp of things in their totality.⁵

The traumatic effects arose, less from the event itself, than from the event as remembered (memory itself is a kind of narration).

In all his discussions on neurosis Freud underscores the importance of memory (textual real) rather than the real event itself. First neurosis arises only when an infantile scene gives rise to an
unconscious memory that is defended against in puberty; if the memory is not unconscious, defence has no pathological effect. The reality of the infantile scene is psychic and not material. “Its reality was first and foremost psychic; and only secondarily real in the sense of having occurred out there.”6 In neurosis, desire, belief and action are so concatenated that there is little interaction between neurosis and reality. The outer manifestations of neurosis are not directed upon reality nor are the internal constituents ever tested against reality.

The confusion between ‘historical truth’ and ‘narrative truth’ is complicated by an erroneous metaphor that Freud uses to characterize analysis. Freud often likens himself to an archaeologist, believing that in the process of analysis he was uncovering pieces of the patient’s past. Narrative truth is confused with historical truth and the very coherence of the account may lead us to believe that we have access to the actual events in the life of the patient. The patient in analysis is under the narrative tradition and he is swayed by the passion to say what fits into the context rather than what has happened. The associations of the patient have no one-to-one correspondence with his experiences, memories and unconscious thoughts.

It should be further borne in mind that truth is precipitated in an analytic session in an inter-subjective context. The speech of the analyst is addressed to the other and it is the analyst’s reading of the patient’s discourse that imparts it meaning. During analysis, the unconscious is couched in the form of a verbal act. Post-structuralist
insight into the plural significations of language makes us sceptical about the veracity of the materials available through language. Lacan and others of his school have argued that words through which we apprehend the world have meanings we can never totally pin down because of the potential of the unconscious to disrupt meaning.

Psychoanalytic theory doesn't deny but stresses the role fantasy plays in the apprehension of reality. Freud conceives of the mind as a fantasy-making mechanism. In "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911) and in his papers on Narcissism and Negation, Freud presents his theory of the primacy of fantasy. As T. E. Apter puts it, "the fantasist's world is also Freud's world; and Freud, the greatest representative of psychoanalysis, is also among the greatest fantasists." Fantasy strives after a hallucinatory form of wish-fulfilment. The relation between reality and fantasy links art with the central issues of psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis encodes a theory of history that problematizes the validity of historical truth. This has very much in common with the new historicist's argument that history can be known only in a linguistic form through its textualised traces. The past doesn't have an ontological status but an epistemological one. The past as such can never be entirely re-possessed or re-presented.

Among the consequences of the post-modern desire to de-naturalize history is a new self-consciousness about the distinction between the brute events of the past and the
historical facts we construct out of them. Facts are events to which we have given meaning. It is only through the mediation of language that the past can be apprehended. This makes narrativity highly relevant. As Hayden White puts it, "a theory of historical discourse must address the question of the function of narrativity in the production of the historical text." Thus psychoanalytic theory sheds light on how history is mediated through language. This insight into the textual nature of history is critically applied in the explication of Luther.

**Word as Symptom: Study of Hysteria and Neurosis**

Psychoanalytic probe into the world of hysteria and neurosis is of great relevance to the student of literature. Psychoanalysis is a hermeneutic enterprise which sets out to analyse the significative, semantic modes of the body articulated as symptoms. A symptom—hysterical as well as neurotic—is as ambivalent as the word and resists immediate signification.

This then is the symptom: a particular 'pathological' signifying formation, the binding of enjoyment, an inert stain resisting communication and interpretation, a stain which cannot be included into the circuit of discourse of social bond/network, but which is at the same time a positive condition of it.
A symptom also speaks a figurative language just like literature. It says one thing through saying another. This post-structuralist anxiety resulting from the uncertainty of signification is hinted at in the works of Freud and is later developed by Dr. Lacan. These insightful psychoanalytic probes help us to study a literary text symptomatically. It is in a post-structuralist context—the uncertainty of sign—that we undertake a study of hysterical as well neurotic symptoms.

Lacan's post-structuralist insights shed light on the textual ambivalence that is encrypted in the symptom. According to Lacan symptom is a metaphor. Metaphor is a linguistic phenomenon that shows the supremacy of the signifier over the signified in language. "This supremacy of the signifier is defined by language's peculiar aptitude for signifying something other than what it is literally saying."11 Symptom is a metaphor in which there is a transfer of signification.

This is why the meaning of a symptom remains a mystery to the patient until the substitutive relation between the manifest and latent terms is revealed through analysis.

Lacanian theories offer a post-Saussurean insight into the signification of a symptom. For Saussure, the sign represented a collusion or bonding between two distinct realms—the signifier (acoustic image) and signified (the concept). Lacan questions, even as he borrows the Saussurean terminology, the state of symmetry and equilibrium between signifier and the signified. He uses the formulation S/s (signifier over the signified) to highlight a stubborn problem. Lacan
gives primacy to the signifier over the signified. Analytic experience bears ample testimony to illustrate the primacy of the signifier over the signified. In Lacan, the bar separating the signifier and the signified is itself more than a symbol. It is the pictorial enactment of a necessary and irremovable cleavage between them. The signified is placed beneath the signifier because the signified steps under the signifier and resists any attempts to locate it. This makes Lacan say "the symptom is the signifier of a signified repressed, a symbol in the sand, it participates in language."\footnote{12}

Hans's horse-phobia amply illustrates the metaphoric repression in a symptom. It also affords a post-Saussurean insight into the symptom. The signifier in the unconscious is substituted by another signifier in the conscious discourse and the occulted signifier takes the place of the signified. Hans was brought to Freud in an acute state of fear of horses. During analysis Freud lighted on the fact that fear of horses was a substituted signifier for another signifier in his own unconscious—fear of his father. Fear of father thereby remained a repressed signifier in his unconscious. Hans substitutes the signifier 'horse' for the repressed signifier 'father'. As the Freudian theory of repression seems to indicate, the instinctual cathexis which the subject withdraws from one idea is transposed by countercathexis to another and the initial traumatic idea is de-cathected. The de-cathcted idea remains an integral part of the conscious language, as its emotional charge has been transposed elsewhere. The idea in question is cast into
the unconscious and it carries the eternal mark of traumatic lived experience. This is how a symptom is born. As Lacan puts it,

thus to speak of the precise point we are treating in my seminars on Freud, little Hans, left in the lurch at the age of five by his symbolic environment, and suddenly forced to face the enigma of his sex and his existence, developed, under the direction of Freud and of his father, Freud's disciple in mythic form, around the signifying crystal of his phobia, all the permutations possible on a limited number of signifiers.13

The unconscious writes its desires using the language of the symptom. The unconscious resorts to a symptomatic language to outwit the censor and erupts into the subject's discourse wearing a mask. As Keith Green and Jill Lebihan put it, "the forms which the unconscious makes itself known are radically modified and deliberately in disguise."14 In symptoms, language seems to be torn apart and the unconscious speaks in a veiled and incomprehensible form. "Conscious discourse is rather like those manuscripts where a first text has been rubbed out and covered by a second. In such manuscripts the first text can be glimpsed through the gaps in the second."15

A symptom is analogous to a literary text. There is a textuality in the sexuality that symptom articulates through its distortions. In a symptom, the signified is not immediately tied to the signifier. This makes it resemble language. "This possibility of signifying something
other than what is being said determines language's autonomy from meaning.\textsuperscript{16} Both make use of techniques like condensation and displacement with the result that the signified is not immediately tied to the signifier.

A literary text also encloses silence as the symptom does. Psychoanalysis helps a patient to read the symptom in a literary way so that the inner core of silence is made to speak. The symptom is read in a literary way while the text can be read in a symptomatic way. Symptomatic study of the text necessitates an approach to the text which is defined by its lack—its incompleteness. Such a critical strategy probes the lacunae, gaps and ellipsis in the manifest text through which the 'textual unconscious' speaks.

Like the symptom, a literary text also disguises as well as unveils its meaning. Both contain the manifest as well as a latent content. Symptom sets up a \textit{bodily space} through which the unconscious operates. In text, as in the symptom, the textual space acts as a corporeal space through which the textual unconscious communicates its meanings. "The unconscious sets up a communication between a sentient, corporeal space and the textual space of the work."\textsuperscript{17} A psychoanalytic reading will help to unearth the latent meanings in the 'textual unconscious'. This links psychoanalysis with the post-modern notion of polysemy or multiple meanings which are to be found in any cultural phenomenon or text. The analyst's task, rather than being an
anatomist of the mental apparatus, is collectively to explore these latent meanings.

It is with a view to exploring the semantic element and the figurative language encoded in symptoms that we undertake an elaborate probe into hysteria and neurosis. Psychoanalysis is a hermeneutic enterprise, which sets out to analyse the significative, semantic modes of the body articulated as symptoms. Freudian study of hysteria has literary implications, for Freud conceives of it as displaced language. In hysteria the body behaves symptomatically—signifying something other than what it says. Hysteria speaks the language of language itself. It was the study of aphasia that gave Freud valid insight into the aetiology and symptomatology of hysteria. In the earlier theory, hysteria is precipitated by traumatic incidents from which the subject turns away. These thoughts fail to find verbal expression and the thoughts which are untranslated into words, reappear as symptoms. Symptom is displaced language. John Forester underscores the linguistic nature of symptoms. "In conversion hysteria, what takes up a place in the body is lacking from the discourse of the patient." 18

Freudian study of symptom is an insightful one into the part played by language in the dynamics of symptom-formation. In hysteria meaning or signification takes a detour. A linguistic intermediary is found in the conversion of psychical to physical pain in hysteria. Freud illustrates his argument in the case study of a woman suffering from
trigeminal neuralgia. He gives details of the symbolic construction of the symptoms.¹⁹

A verbal phrase or train of thought acts as such an intermediary. Thus a neuralgia may result from mental pain or vomiting from a feeling of moral disgust. Freud shows how the psyche makes use of the body to articulate its meanings.

The particular and the universal coalesce in the symptom. When a self-reproach is displaced onto a tooth-ache, the generation of the symptom is based on 'accidental' contiguities in experience. Tooth-ache is not the real meaning of the tooth ache. The real meaning is the thought or language that has got stuck up in tooth-ache as a symptom. The hysterical symptom is the result of a process whereby the metaphoric meaning had been taken literally. So hysterical symptom is an abuse of language. This view of symptom has great bearing on literature because literature also is, in a sense, an 'abuse' of language.

Psychoanalytic theory of neurosis also has great implications for a student of literature. Freud's study of rat man and Dora unravelled before him the dark and inscrutable world of neurosis. These case studies read like pieces of literature where we are allowed a peep into the metaphoric inner world of a neurotic. Freudian theory of neurosis goes far to prove that neurosis is structured like a post-structuralist text. Freud himself treats neurosis as a text. A quotation from Seductions of Psychoanalysis makes this amply clear: "This method is eminently textual and we do often find Freud quite often talking of the text of
neurosis, employing bookish metaphors." The analytic session is a reading strategy in which the patient's speech is treated as a symptom. "All symptoms appear in the talk of analysis, even if only negatively, even if only in the absence of talk." During the psychoanalytic sessions, the symptoms join in the conversation.

Freud's initial theory of the aetiology of neurosis goes far to prove how temporality operates within a neurotic symptom. Just like a literary text, the symptom encodes a past reality in the present context. Freud started with the premise that the neurotic suffers from reminiscences. The neurotic is fixed to a particular point in his past which leads to his alienation from the present.

Neurotic symptoms are shown to have an ideational structure. An idea has been invested in the symptom—an idea which has to be recovered through the word. The conceptual part of desire gets invested in the symptoms. It is only through the recovery of the concept that the driving energy of the desire can be identified and, if necessary, re-channelled. "In all these words are crucial; not only is psychoanalysis, as will be seen, fairly dubbed as the talking cure; but language is introduced right into the heart of the deep mystery of the unconscious."22

The kind of reality that is encoded in the symptom, as in the case of the word, is of a substitutive nature. The kind of satisfaction that the symptom affords is also substitutive and not real. This is the reason why the neurotic is alienated from reality. The neurotic reverts to a
past chapter in the life history. Symptom gives him an infantile way of
gratification which is independent of an object and he therefore
becomes estranged from external reality. The pleasure afforded by
symptom is condensed or compressed to a single sensation and
displaced to a tiny detail in sexual experience. A symptom resembles a
work of art in the kind of gratification it affords. T. E. Apter writes in
*Fantasy and Literature*:

> Since the work of art permits satisfaction of unconscious
> and repressed desires, it must disguise the gratification it
> provides so that resistances are kept at bay and forbidden
> satisfactions are enjoyed without arousing the anxiety that
> is repression's purpose to prevent.23

Phantasy plays an important part in symptom-formation. In
contrast to material reality, phantasies possess psychical reality and
psychical reality is the determining factor in the world of neurosis. The
reality that is embodied in symptom is not everyday reality, but non-
material like the linguistic reality of a literary text.

Psychoanalytic theory valorizes the role that phantasy plays in
the apprehension of reality. Thus Lionell Trilling points out that Freud
has special affiliation with literature, because he views the mind as a
fantasy-producing machine. Fantasy strives to produce a 'perceptual
identity' between the hallucination and that which previously brought
satisfaction. "Thus hallucination turns away from reality and generates
a metaphor: the thought is like the external object which satisfied the
need.\textsuperscript{24} The relation between fantasy and reality is the common ground between psychoanalysis and art. This is why Freud considers the artist as a neurotic. He writes: "The creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of fantasy which he takes seriously—that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion—while separating it sharply from reality.\textsuperscript{25}

The analogy between the artist and the neurotic should not blind us to the obvious differences between the two. The artist, unlike the neurotic, knows how to manipulate his fantasies. As Keith Green and Jill Lebihan put it, "the text becomes something which has been created out of the manipulated fantasies of the writer to produce particular effects."\textsuperscript{26} The artist knows only too well how to come back to reality from the world of fantasy. The artist invests his fantasy in the work of art. Art thus becomes a symptom—affording him substitutive gratification which is denied in reality. Since the work of art blossoms out of fantasy, it helps the readers circumvent their repression and thereby affords them unconscious pleasure. Thus a work of art is not only the author's symptom, but the readers' as well.

The relation between symptom and the word is highly insightful and relevant for the student of literature. Just as in the case of a neurotic whose physical symptoms provide clues through body language to unconscious concerns, words can behave symptomatically revealing unconscious meaning in a work of literature. In symptom as well as in language, the signifier is not tied to the signified. This post-
structuralist insight has been fruitfully employed in the explication of the select plays in the present study.

'Trauma' as Writing: De-Constructive Insights

In Freud's entire psychoanalytic probe, there is nothing as insightful to the student of literature as his concept of 'trauma'. An inherently difficult concept, trauma implies the problem of signification, the question of reality and temporality.

The original meaning of trauma is breaching the skin by external violence. It was Freud's relentless search for an original cause leading to transference neurosis that landed him in the concept of 'trauma'. Trauma was characterised as the causative factor from which transference neurosis springs.

An examination of patients who exhibited symptoms after a physical injury convinced Freud that there was no direct relation between the symptom and the physical injury. Even though the patient exhibited symptoms after the event, the effects were not intrinsic to the event. This made Charcot and after him Freud shift the emphasis on to the ideational aspect of the trauma. Trauma results from how the subject represents the traumatic incident to himself. There was an added dimension to the problem—the intervention of time. The symptom did not follow temporally from the physical injury. There was a time-lag (almost incubation period) between the physical cause and the symptom. The symptom was only the delayed (deferred)
signification (meaning) of the physical injury. This involved a problem of signification in which the body served as a textual space.

It was by such an involuted route that the study of trauma led Freud to the theory of delayed action which was later re-conceptualised as 'deferred action'. Freud's theory of 'deferred action' is contained in a brief clinical vignette in "Project for a Scientific Psychology" written in 1895. According to the theory of 'deferred action' trauma involves two events in the psychic history of the patient separated by an interval of time.

Freud's case studies of Emma and the Wolfman are brilliant illustrations for his theory of 'deferred action'. Freud's case study of Emma who suffered from a particular phobia (not being able to go to shops alone) exemplified this theory of 'belated action'. Emma's case involves the criss-crossing of two events that happened at two periods in her life. When she was a child of eight, she had gone to a small shop to buy some sweets and the shopkeeper had grabbed at her genitals through her clothes. But Emma could not give proper signification to that event. She couldn't read the sexual meaning behind that act. During analysis she was not able to recall this event to memory because the traumatic incident remained a foreign body in her psyche unassimilated to the narrative of memory.

A later banal event that happened in the same shop at the age of twelve revived traces of the first event and it was re-charged with sexual meanings. By the time of the second incident she had attained puberty.
It was an apparently innocuous incident. She went to the same shop on some errand where she saw two shop assistants laughing together and she took fright and ran away. She could recall that the two were laughing at her clothes and that one had pleased her sexually.

There was a reciprocation between the first and second incident which were connected in her mental life. The second incident which happens after sexual maturity, bearing a contiguous resemblance to the first, induces a belated understanding of the first. The second event conferred the meaning on the first event retroactively i.e. the laughing of the shop-assistants aroused in her the repressed memory of the shopkeeper and the sexual implication of his action. It was only by associative connection with the first action that the second action was able to give her sexual release. The first 'trauma' acted as a necessary cause because it acted as a memory.

Fundamental insights are inscribed in this theory of the 'trauma'. The first 'event' that happened in the infantile life of Emma was a non-event because it was not properly written (inscribed) on her mind. Freud surmised that the psychical act hadn't taken place when it should have. The first experience (non-experience) left a lack in the texture of experience in her psyche. It was the first occurrence of what had been repeating itself in the patient without ever having occurred.

Only one kind of explanation can be given to such an inherently difficult problem. Emma could not understand the sexual nature of the first act because her psyche lacked the intellectual materials to think
such a thought at the time of occurrence. The psychical incapacity also meant that the psychical act could not take place. It is only during analysis that the psychic act comes into being. "... or are we really to suppose that we are really dealing with thoughts which never came about, which merely had a possibility of existing, so that the treatment would lie in the accomplishment of a psychical act which did not take place at the time."\textsuperscript{27} Freud could explain that only in the foregoing manner. "And he also associated this intellectual incapacity very directly with the pre-verbal period. Certain events had not been thought because the verbal residues were not available with which to think them."\textsuperscript{28}

Emma's case is insightful because it involves the problem of belated signification and deferred action. In Emma's case it was not the real event (the first event) that was traumatic, but the memory of the event. Memory constitutes an event by 'deferred action'. Memory arouses an affect which it did not give rise to as an experience. This leads to the repression of memory which serves as a causative factor in neurosis. Repressed memory has far greater excitatory effect than 'real' incident itself. Freud puts it like this: "The traumata of childhood operate in a deferred fashion as though they were fresh experiences; but they do so unconsciously."\textsuperscript{29} It was not the trauma that was traumatic but the memory of the trauma; the trauma as memory. The trauma had to be located, not in the 'real' event but somewhere in the memory lane, or in other words, remembering was bound up with the process of discovering the 'trauma'. During analysis, the patient had to
go back through the memory lane—revert to his personal past—in search of the original 'trauma' which was not a trauma at the time of its occurrence. The central paradox in the problem is that even though the 'traumatic' experiences belonged to the period of childhood and were concerned with sexual experiences affecting the child's own body, the sexual meaning was conferred on them retroactively through the advent of later incidents in the psychic life. That is why infantile experiences which have not been properly translated into verbal consciousness form the core of neurotic symptoms.

This concept of trauma contains post-structuralist insights since it makes us conceive of the psyche as the metaphor of writing. We have also to make note of the Derridean de-constructive insights implicit in the concept of the trauma. Every event that is inscribed in the psyche is a written word that defers its meaning. This deferment results in a paradoxical situation; an experience that is inscribed on the writing pad of the psyche in the form of a written word comes to possess a meaning 'belatedly'—a meaning that it lacked in the beginning. Every inscription on the psyche is a sign under erasure—showing the inadequacy and incompleteness of signs. Every sign on the psyche is a trace—an absent presence. It is inhabited by the trace of another sign. What is there in the sign carries a trace of what is not there. Analysis reveals that the psyche is a repertoire of many such traces. Every sign is a ghostly mark carrying within it the trace of perennial alterity. There is an absence at the heart of every experience that is inscribed on the mystic writing pad of the psyche. Trauma is such a trace. This insight is essentially
Derridean. "Derrida’s trace is the mark of the absence of a presence, of the lack at the origin that is the condition of thought and experience."

The concept of trauma thus gives us an insight into post-Saussurean and post-structuralist view of meaning or signification. Another way of putting the concept of trauma is that meaning is not present in a sign. “Meaning, if you like, is scattered or dispersed along the whole chain of signifiers; it cannot be easily pinned down, it is never fully present in any sign alone, but is rather a kind of constant flickering of presence and absence together.” There is a constant defusing and spilling of meaning—which Derrida calls ‘dissemination’.

The temporal ‘aporias’ implicit in deferred action is worthy of note. Freudian theory of deferred action renders the status of the past peculiarly fluid because we have to be sceptical about the reality of memory. Freud himself is of the view that all our memories are screen memories. We can never have memories from our childhood—only memories relating to our childhood. ‘Deferred action’ confers an ontological status on the Future—as it is the second incident temporally located in the future that retroactively confers meaning on the first event. ‘Deferred action’ is a commentary not only on the past and its fluidity but the ‘fading’ of the past. The temporal history of the subject is punctuated by such retrospective and anticipatory time-axes. There are many ‘past moments’ in the history which will explode into meaning only in relation to a future moment which is deferred. The meaning of the past is inscribed in such a deferred future.
This involuted time-structure is in operation during analysis. Through analysis, the subject realizes its history in the present. This present is only the future of the past. As Lacan puts it: "Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true speech and the realization by the subject of its history in its relation to a future."\textsuperscript{32} Every past event in the patient’s life-history contains a potential future within it, because it is only by the advent of the later event that the earlier one becomes itself. Malcolm Bowie puts it thus: “For Freud’s new science studies not simply formative and causative events or scenes within the early life-history of the individual, but the futures, themselves now past, in terms of which such events were originally experienced.”\textsuperscript{33} The patient’s life is punctuated by a succession of temporal points in which a past event is not earlier than a future one or a future event later than the past one. The future is not later than 'having been' and 'having been' is not earlier than the future. “Temporality temporalizes itself as a future which makes present in the process of having been.”\textsuperscript{34} There is a cross-switching between time and tenses. Every stride towards the future is a coming back—a 'having been.' Where we expect a future we find the past ‘beenhood’ lying in wait; on the other hand, where we expect a ‘beenhood’ there the future has its wonders to perform. Freudian time-paradox is best summed up in the witticism in \textit{Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious} that the political leader has a great future behind him. Future is not outside the past but embedded within it.

This is why Lacan quizzically opines that the symptoms come from the future.
The Lacanian answer to the question, from where does the repressed return, is then paradoxically from the future. Symptoms are meaningless traces; their meaning is not discovered, excavated from the hidden depths of the past, but constructed retroactively. The analysis produces the truth, i.e. the signifying frame which gives to the symptoms their symbolic place and meaning.35

So every analytic session is a historical rupture, the advent of a new signifier that retroactively changes the narration of the past. "That is why we are 're-writing history' all the time, retroactively giving the elements their symbolic weight by including them in new textures. It is this elaboration which decides retroactively what they 'will have been'."36 A person's history is a construction with futurity inscribed within. The events in the past come about only through the intervention of the future. This time-paradox is at the heart of analysis.

This interplay of past, present and future and the syncopated and paradoxical temporal scheme is the central concern of not only Freud but also Lacan. The past and future converge and 'unwrite' the present. "A Lacanian clock would be one that displayed the unidirectional flow of time while displaying also the spasmodic incursions of past and future into the perpetually forwards-flowing now of human passions."37 The past provides structural opportunities from which an abundant sense of futurity can be fabricated.
This is why Lacan uses the *future anterior* tense as the matrix for the historicity of the subject. This tense stands in marked contrast to the present perfect which Hegel uses as the temporal medium of his discourse. Hegel uses this tense because subjectivity is present in a perfected form in all of us. The thinking subject can come to know itself only insofar as the form of the self has always been there as a *potential present*. The self is there as an interiority to be unfolded and explicated over time. It is the self-realization of an identity that has always been virtually present to itself.

The Hegelian temporal medium of the present perfect is supplanted in Lacan by the future-anterior, thus calling into question the very foundations of subjective identity conceived in terms of an *interiorizing memory*. Instead of the perfected closure of always-already-having-been, the subject is inscribed in an inconclusive futurity. The past of the subject is a ‘time’ that can never be entirely remembered because it has not fully taken place. This prevents the subject from ever becoming entirely self-identical.

In the psychoanalytical perspective, then, memory becomes something very different from what it was for metaphysics—not because of a future that the subject will never be able to catch up with fully, but because every attempt by the subject of the unconscious to grasp its history inevitably divides that history into a past that, far from having taken place once and for all, is always yet to come.
This Derridean insight that is encrypted in the text of trauma has literary implications. No text is autonomous and self-sufficient. There would be no need for critical activity if we did not feel that the text needed interpretation. The critical material that we bring to bear on the text is not an adjunct to the primary material. The latter inserts itself in the interstices of the former, filling the holes which are already there. Criticism acts on the text like the second act that precipitates the meaning of the first event.

The object of criticism is not the world, but a discourse, the discourse of someone close; criticism is a discourse upon discourse. It is a second language or metalanguage (as the logicians would say) which operates on a first language (or language object).³⁹

The text delays its meaning until it is read and interpreted by the reader or the critic. The meaning thus produced is itself under erasure because another reading can erase the existing meaning and precipitate a new meaning. No reading can produce the final ‘truth’. It shows the textual signifiers’ resistance to being totally transformed into the signified. A text practises the infinite deferral of the signified. As Barthes puts it, "the word enacts its own meaning, a wandering of signification which is, precisely, text."⁴⁰ Every text encodes within itself a potential space for interminable analysis. There is no closure. The authority of the text, the critics’ control and the primacy of meaning are challenged by this new theory of reading. This shows the open-ended indefiniteness
of textuality. A text must surrender itself to being inscribed within the chain of future de-constructions and decipherings. It is just like a neurosis that would remain interminable if the practical analyst did not terminate it. During reading, the repressed, indeterminate textual unconscious surfaces to the consciousness of the present historical moment.

Jacques Lacan also underscores these new insights. Meaning is not something stable or fixed but is inscribed in the very movement of the signifying chain. This is why Lacan writes: “What this structure of the signifying chain discloses is the subject’s possibility to signify something entirely different from what it says.”41 So the movement of signification is anchored in language itself and does not depend on the conscious intention of the subject.

Freud’s deferred action is best exemplified in Sophocles’ play Oedipus Rex where the meaning of the hero’s sexual transgression re-emerges long after the event. “Like Emma’s ‘psychoneurosis’ Oedipal sexuality concerns a certain lag or limp of the subject in relation to structures of meaning.”42 The meaning of his actions dawns on Oedipus only later on. It is a reading back. As Freud himself points out, the action of the play is the process of revealing, with cunning delays and ever-mounting excitement, a process that can be likened to the work of psychoanalysis. As Jonathan Culler puts it, “from a semiotic point of view, what is important here is the play’s implicit
commentary on the relation between meaning and event, between signs and the 'realities' often thought to be independent of them.\textsuperscript{43}

The psychoanalytic knowledge implicit in the theory of trauma has been applied in the study of \textit{Inadmissible Evidence}. The concept of trauma explains the relation between the text and the reader. Reading is the second event that retroactively confers meaning on the text. Every text leaves a potential space for the future reader. This deconstructive insight in the concept of trauma explains how meaning is precipitated during reading and has been fruitfully employed in the explication of the dream text of the drama.

\textbf{Dream as Symptom: A Theory of Dreams}

The theory of dream holds important lessons for the student of literature, since art itself is a dream that has never been dreamt at all. A knowledge of the \textit{writings} of the unconscious in the form of dreams gives us a peep into the nature of a literary text. Both dreams and literary works are incidences of the 'return of the repressed'—unconscious material which has evaded conscious control is present in both. In psychoanalytic terminology the dream itself is structured like a symptom. This is why Freud himself says that dream affords us a 'royal road' to the unconscious. Every representation in the dream-text is a misrepresentation—saying something through saying another. Freudian theory of dreams is encoded in the monumental work \textit{Interpretation of Dreams}, published in 1912.
The dream is ambiguous and ambivalent because it is the disguised fulfilment of a repressed wish. What is important in the dream is not the thought it expresses, but the wish it conceals. The dreamer's relation to the wish is a peculiar one. He represses and censors his own wish. This explains why the dream has contrary significations—it expresses and at the same time represses the wish. This is how the dream distorts its own meaning.

Dream is not a thought about a wish but wish fulfilment itself. Dreams are centred on 'undesired ideas'—undesired by the 'ego' but desired by the unconscious. The wish which is the nucleus of the dream is transferred to a recent material to get itself articulated. "The dream itself can be considered a substitute for an infantile scene, modified by transference onto a recent experience."44 Freud maintains that the material of the dream is the day's residues—i.e. insignificant memories that remain from the day preceding the dream. These memories are stripped of their original meanings and re-invested with new meanings.

What is important in a dream is not what it says, but what it means.

Dreams for Freud are essentially symbolic fulfilment of unconscious wishes and they are cast in a symbolic form because if their materials were expressed directly then it might be shocking and disturbing enough to wake us up. In order that he should get some sleep, the unconscious
charitably conceals, softens and distorts its meanings, so that our dreams become symbolic texts which need to be deciphered.\textsuperscript{45}

The dream as we experience it is the 'manifest content' while the 'latent content' is the dream-thought which gives the dream its sense or meaning. The 'dream content' and 'dream thought' are structured as two descriptions of the same content in two different languages. Dream content is the translation of the dream-thoughts into another mode of expression. "The dream-content is, as it were, presented in hieroglyphics, whose symbols must be translated one by one, into the language of the dream thoughts."\textsuperscript{46}

It is very difficult to read the meaning behind a dream because dream itself is a distorted piece of thought. Dream appears to be an error through which the truth of the Other (unconscious) is articulated. In the theory of dreams, error has an ontological status, because the unconscious is accessible only through its own distortions. The truth itself becomes true only through the mediation of the error. "... the unconscious is a paradoxical letter which insists only insofar as it does not exist ontologically."\textsuperscript{47} The unconscious adopts error as the metaphor of its meaning.

It is dream-censorship that distorts the dream. The censorship—the force of repression between the conscious and the unconscious—will not allow unconscious material to be presented in the original form. The repressed material evades censorship by transforming itself into an
unintelligible form. "The more intense the force of repression, the more intense the encodings. The distortions of the materials present in the dream are thus traceable to the power of censorship." Sometimes censorship takes the form of resistance shown by the patients in penetrating to the unconscious thoughts behind the dream-content.

Dream-censorship operates through 'dream-work' which is analogous to 'art-work'. Dream-work translates the latent content to the manifest dream. The dream-work subjects the material—day-residues—to unconscious mental activity. Just like art-work, dream-work makes use of certain devices to transform the material at its disposal.

A dream, yields its meaning only on interpretation because the language of dream represses its meaning. The case history of Wolfman shows how dreams make use of puns or word play to conceal the meaning from the dreamer himself. Sometimes, dreams make use of words or sentences in everyday language, but their meaning is re-duplicated. That is why 'nudity' signifies moral shame or 'staircase' an arduous task in a dream. Sometimes the images in a dream exhibit the nature of a pun—a play on words.

The study of dreams by the Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis has helped us to come to grips with the profound nature of the unconscious. In his study of dreams, Lacan has re-thought Freud in the wider framework provided by linguistics. Freud himself was aware of the operation of linguistic mechanism behind dreamwork.
He drew a large number of comparisons between the dreamwork and linguistic mechanisms, thus, by implication, pointing towards linguistic mechanisms as the appropriate area in which to find the specific characteristics of the action of the unconscious, though the linguistic mechanism in question might either be present-day ones or ones appropriate to the development of language or those belonging to a hypothesized primitive language.\(^{50}\)

Lacan links the transfer of signification in dreams to the operation of the linguistic device of metonymy. Owing to the operation of metonymy, the signifiers in the manifest content of the dream are subject to a transfer of signification. Dream resists immediate signification due to the metonymic device that it employs. The relation between the signifiers in the manifest dream to the final signified is not immediate. The signifier that rises into consciousness is only a substitute for the final signified—the signifier supporting unconscious desire.

Dreams construct a temporality appropriate to human wishes. By the hallucinatory representation of the wish as fulfilled, dreams retrieve the future into the present of its representation. The past and future intersect in the present because the future that is embodied in the wish is an exact replica of the past. The wish in the dream makes use of an occasion in the present to construct, on the pattern of the past, a picture of the future. The past is like an inescapable destiny because the past
supplies the wishful mind with the structural template on the basis of which its futures are produced. "Dreams cancel future by seizing its desired contents and offering them upto an all-devouring now."\(^{51}\)

The most important question that is posed by the language of the dream is the place of the subject. Lacan's explication of dream is centred on this topic. In dream we are confronted with a paradoxical situation. The wish that is fulfilled during dream is abhorrent to the 'conscious ego'. So wish-fulfilment comes close to wish renunciation. This results in the split subject.

The 'I' that appears in dream, as a repository of conscious thoughts is constituted in language. The 'I' in the dream fails to represent the unconscious subject. Freud himself is conscious of the verbal nature of the 'I'. This is why he differentiates between the conscious and the unconscious in the following manner. In the 'unconscious' there is only thing representation while word presentation is there only in the conscious part of the psyche. Consciousness itself has the form of a verbal discourse.

The subject that is constituted in the language of dreams lacks the reflexive identity and transparency because language itself is a play of signifiers. There is a de-railing of the subject in the discourse. The signifying structure of language places the subject in a place where he can never arrive. The subject cannot be demarcated fully because the subject is "there where I am not, because I cannot situate myself there."\(^{52}\) The subject is like a scar, a fader. The subject may be called
a fader because it appears insofar as it fades. As Lacan puts it, "I am not, wherever I am the plaything of my thought; I think of what I am wherever I do not think [that I am] thinking."\textsuperscript{53}

The study of dreams is highly relevant for a student of literature because Freud himself notes that literary texts are like dreams. Both express unconscious material in the form of complex displacements and condensations. Literature and dreams are not direct translations of the unconscious into symbols; literature like dreams displaces unconscious desires into imagery which bears no resemblance to its origin.

The post-structuralist insights encoded in the Lacanian theory of dreams are employed in reading the dream-text of \textit{Inadmissible Evidence}. As in a dream, the play also problematizes the subject. The subject proves to be highly ambivalent. A knowledge of dream theory helps us much in explaining the slippage of meaning in the play. Dream theory also explains why the play resists immediate signification.

\textbf{The Self as the Other: Lacanian Mirror Stage}

Lacan's account of the mirror-stage is chronologically the first and technically the greatest of his re-reading of Freud. The mirror-phase marks a milestone in the historicity of the subject as it is during this stage that the 'ego' is precipitated. Lacan's concept of the 'ego' is only an extension of the Freudian 'ego'. Freud represents the 'ego' as a psychical map, a projection of the surface of the body. The 'ego' embraces a fundamental alterity enclosing within itself a potential space
for an alternate structure. Every change in the erotogenicity of the organs brings about parallel changes in the erotogenicity of the 'ego'.

In the earliest stages of its life the child is unable to distinguish between itself and other objects in the external world. It is in an amorphous state with no corporal boundary. Without a definite sense of self or defined sense of a centre, the child imagines itself to be an extension of the objects in the environment. In this phase, the child has a symbiotic relation with the mother's body and there is a merging of identities. The child also remains physiologically incapable of controlling its bodily movements and behaviour and its body is an uncoordinated aggregate of parts. The child with no sense of homogenous identity is born into the order of the 'Real'. Even though it is a pure stage of plenitude and fulness, it cannot be experienced as such because it belongs to the order of the Real. According to Lacan, 'Real' resists representation. This phase cannot be experienced or represented as such. It is what is 'unassimilable' in representation, the impossible. "The Real has no boundaries, divisions or oppositions; it is a continuum of raw-materials." 54

The importance of mirror-stage is two-fold—both positive and negative. It is positive in the sense that the mirror-stage marks the beginning of a sense of identity—an integrated self-image which precipitates the 'ego'. The child understands that it is a distinct entity, quite separate from its environment. Lacan uses the metaphor of the mirror to describe how a baby, between the ages of six and eight
months, comes to perceive itself as a 'self'. For a child contemplating itself in a mirror, the image reflected back from the mirror gives a gratifying unified image of itself. The child is seduced by the image that is reflected back from the mirror. The child finds in the image a pleasing stability and unity which it cannot experience in its own body. The mirror-stage also places the subject's tumultuous incoherent experiences within corporeal boundaries. Though the child's relation to the image is of an 'imaginary' kind, the mirror-stage indicates the process whereby it constructs a centre of 'self'. The child gets a sense of 'I' from the 'I' reflected back to it from the mirror. The mirror-image both is and is not the child. It is through fantasised identification with the visual gestalt that the child acquires an illusory corporeal cohesion and the sense of an 'I'. This is how our identity contains Otherness or how the 'I' becomes the Other. The child's identity is based on the (mis)recognition of an Other as the same. As Anika puts it, "it is in the other that the subject lives and registers himself."55 "The 'ego' is partially a consequence of idiosyncratic and socially structured psychological relation between itself, others, and its body image."56

It is the recognition of lack or incompleteness that propels the child into the mirror stage. The child understands that its corporal space is not one or complete within itself. The child attempts to fill its 'biological prematurity', 'anatomical incompleteness' and 'organic insufficiency' by identification with a unified image of itself. The child's recognition that its world is not its own makes it seek a potential totality in something outside itself. "This marks the primitive origins of the
child's separation of inside and outside, subject and object, and a number of other conceptual oppositions which henceforth structure its adult life."^57

The mirror-stage is also the first step in the complex process of social acculturation of the child. The specular image of its own body helps the child locate itself in a social space.

The genesis of the ego brings about a disjunction between the 'ego' and the self. The subject finds itself alienated in its own 'ego'. Through identification with the other as the same the potential subject is annihilated. There is a disjunction between its own felt experiences and the visual image that is incorporated into the child's organization of its experience of the body. The mirror-stage is a necessarily alienating structure due to the unmediated tension between the fragmented body experience and the solidity and permanence of the body as seen in the mirror. "A human being is thus able at a much earlier stage to perceive the unity of an image than it is able to produce this unity in its own body."^58 There is no coincidence of the image with the experience of the self. The constitution of the 'ego' makes a true historicity of the subject impossible because the ego cannot be equated with the self. As Lacan puts it,

this gestalt, by these two aspects of its appearance symbolises the mental permanence of the 'I' at the same time as it prefigures its alienating distinction; it is still pregnant with the correspondences that unite the 'I' with
the statue in which man projects himself, with the phantoms that dominate him or with the automaton in which, in an ambiguous relation, the world of his own making tends to find its completion.\textsuperscript{59}

The child's identification with the image is partial, anticipated, put off into the future and delayed. The mirror image locates the subject in a future anterior.

The subject is caught up in future anterior—it will have been the image whose place it takes. But in order to take place, it must also repudiate or foreclose the alterity of the futural past. In order to say 'I am', it must deny the irreducible alterity of the image upon which the ego depends, and instead interiorize that relationship.\textsuperscript{60}

From the mirror phase onwards the subject becomes established in the realm of the symbolic. The mirror-phase represents a mould for the symbolic, a pre-figuration of the roles that the subject has to play in his life. The crucial recognition of the Other in the mirror—that is both oneself and not oneself—serves as the prologue for the entry into the symbolic. The mirror-image is analogous to the reflection of the subject in language. "Entry into the symbolic is the recognition that the 'I' that is spoken is not the same as the subject that actually speaks the 'I'. The nominal identity, the 'I' is always a misrecognition of the subject as unified and coherent."\textsuperscript{61}
Lacanian mirror stage shows the constitutive power of the image. Usually the image is construed as a representation that re-presents a pre-determined and temporally prior idea. The image comes after the model. But Lacan inverts the relation between the image and the model.

Lacan slightly but decisively displaces this notion of the image; it depicts, not so much by reproducing or representing an object, as by taking it apart, dismantling it. Nothing can be said to stand before the image—its model for instance—that comes after it, just as the ego comes after the mirror-image and depends upon it. This belated arrival of the 'model' inscribes it in a chain of doubles, as the 'splitting' image of its ostensible original.

Mirror-phase thus envisions the 'ego' as precarious and unstable enclosing within itself a fundamental alterity—a potential space for becoming another.

Lacan's mirror-stage may be taken as a semiotic model of psychoanalysis in which the literary text is not the exclusive object of analysis. Literature and psychoanalysis shed light on each other.

Literature and psychoanalytic criticism, in this model, inform each other in textual interactions that are both psychoanalytic readings of literature and literary readings of psychoanalysis, a cycling through the positions of
subject and object that enacts a dynamic series of reversals.\textsuperscript{63}

This insight implicit in Lacanian mirror-stage may be fruitfully employed for the study of drama. In mirror-stage, there is a non-coincidence between the image and the subject. In drama as stage performance also the person who impersonates a character on the stage becomes alienated in the character. This results in the disjunction between the person and the character. This knowledge has been employed in the study of Entertainer.

**The Subject as Symptom: Lacan's Symbolic**

Lacanian psychoanalysis is concerned with narratives of childhood only insofar as they lay down a structure which defines the subject. The story of the child is perpetually recapitulated in the experience of the adult.

Lacan offers an account of the genesis of the human subject re-reading Freud on the figural and linguistic rather than on the literal level. In his study of Oedipus sexuality, Freud suggests that all subjectivity is based on loss and absence. The socialisation of the subject entails a transition from the imaginary to the symbolic.

The pre-Oedipal world of imaginary identification is one inhabited by two people—the child and its mother. It is a period of blissful coherence in which the child has a feeling of omnipotence and is in love with its mother.
But the advent of Oedipal sexuality brings about a rupture between the mother and the child by the intrusion of a third term that punctures the child's feeling of omnipotence. The father symbolising external authority intrudes upon the child's idyll with its mother. The child identifies with the father by the introjection of his image. This introjected image serves as the child's ego-ideal ensuring libidinal as well as cultural normalization. The identification with the father initiates the child into the world of culture. "It is in the name of the father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law." The child is caught up in the quest of an ideal which conforms to the moral verdicts of the society.

The Oedipal phase marks the end of the imaginary and the birth of the symbolic. The authoritative intervention locates the child in a social frame. In the symbolic, Father becomes a metaphor—the paternal metaphor represented by the phallus. Even in the absence of the actual father, the child experiences the 'paternal metaphor' through cultural substitutions—i.e. language and other systems of representations. The phallus serves to mark the symbolic castration to which the child is submitted to, as a result of the advent of the Oedipal stage. "It is through castration that the phallus is constituted as a signifier." It serves as the transcendental signifier that fixes meaning in the world of language.
The Oedipal phase also initiates the child into the symbolic world of language. In language also there is a symbolic castration because language replaces the lived experience with a symbol. In language as a signifying system, the referent is always absent. One of the specific characteristics of language is that it evokes a thing or reality by means of a substitute (a word for example) which is not the thing. A word is the presence as well as the absence of a thing and constitutes its own order of reality. The entry into the world of language is a birth as well as a death. It is the birth of the world of meaning but also a death because, the symbol manifests itself as the murder of the thing.

Language erases even as it creates. The signifier replaces the object it identifies as a separate entity; the linguistic symbol supplants what it names and differentiates, relegates it to a limbo beyond language, where it becomes inaccessible, lost; and in consequence the being of language is the non-being objects.66

In language there is a metaphorisation of desire. The child who enters the world of language learns that the signifiers (words) in language represent things which are absent. Words stand for objects and in this sense they operate like metaphors.

Entry into language makes the child a human subject marking a passage from nature to culture. As Lacan puts it, "man speaks, then, but it is because the symbol has made him man."67 Language affords the child a counter to negotiate and represent its own experiences.
Language is the means by which a person keeps a distance from the world of lived experience. Language acts as the intermediary between man and the world. Language also affords the subject a point of reference to his own identity. Socio-cultural symbolism also effects an identical registration of self on the part of the subject. It is socio-cultural symbolism that gives a distinctive place to the child in the family constellation. The symbolic world of language forms the subject in its own image. To quote Lacan again:

Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him by flesh and blood; so total that they bring to his birth, along with the gift of the stars, if not with the gifts of the fairies, the shape of his destiny.68

The various pronouns like 'I', 'he', 'she' etc. are positions which pre-exist and lie in wait to receive the child on its entry into the symbolic world of language. The 'I' is a site of positioning and strategic marking in discourse. Since the subject can exist in language only under a name which has been allotted from elsewhere, the name supplants what it constitutes. The subject identifies himself with the subject-position and loses himself in it. These various subject-positions are like mirror images with which the child identifies himself. Thus subjectivity is the result of social signification. Implicit in subjectivity is the recognition of the self as a signifier. The phallus is the first sign encountered by the
child which allows it access to all other meanings symbolised in the same way in language. Rosalind Minsky comments: "By this joint entry into language and at the same time textual ordering and identity, the child gains an identity and becomes a human being capable of identifying with, seeing itself reflected in the 'I' of the language."69

According to Lacan, the identity that a person gains in the world of language is highly precarious and fragile. Lacan does not agree with the object-relation theorists that our identity is authentic and coherent. Basing his theories on Freud's narcissism, Lacan argues that as an infant in the realm of the imaginary, our identity is based on an image of ourselves which is reflected back from someone else. Even though this identity seems to be based on secure foundations it is not so because the identity is based on something outside ourselves. The ego cannot be called our own because it depends on something outside ourselves. In the symbolic also our identity is based on the meanings offered us in language. Language becomes the locus from which our identity is reflected back to us. This identity that we draw from language is highly unstable and insecure because "language both places us and displaces us as subjects."70 The sense of identity that we receive from language is disrupted and subverted by our unconscious desires. So the child's recognition of identity in language is a mis-recognition. Michael Foucault writes: "The researches of psychoanalysis, of linguistics, of anthropology have 'decentred' the subject in relation to the law of its desire, the forms of its language, the rules of it actions or the play of its mythical and imaginative discourse."71
The registration of the subject in the society leads to the repression of the self—the innermost part of the psyche. This happens even in the case of sexuality. Caught unawares in the nets of the symbolic, sexuality itself becomes de-natured. Sexuality becomes only a representation and the natural erotic desire is lost.

The advent of the Oedipal phase and the consequent entry into the world of language results in the split-subject. There is a split between the self—the innermost part of the psyche—and the subject of the conscious discourse. Representation in the symbolic entails, for the subject, the loss of an essential part of himself. The subject becomes a signifier which is dissociated from its own signified. In language as a signifying system, the referent is always absent. Samuel Weber writes in *Return to Freud*:

> With the entry of the subject into the language of the signifier—into verbal language in this case—it enters into a structure of articulation in which direct identification no longer functions; the subject can never again hope to find itself in the signifier, because the latter only receives its identity by virtue of its place in the signifying chain. . . . The subject is thereby split between the ‘said’ and the ‘saying’; between the enunciated and the enunciation; it is inscribed in a structure of representation that cannot be traced back to an original presence, but is instead constituted by an irreducible movement of repetition.72
The subject figures in the signifying chain as a missing element, in the form of a stand-in. "Mediated by language, the subject is irremediably divided, because he is at once excluded from the signifying chain and 'represented' in it."73

There is thus a division—a division between the 'I' of the utterance and the psychic reality it represents—the self and self objectivized as 'I'. The subject's insertion in the signifying chain of language entails a death—death of the self. 'I' identify myself with language but only by losing myself in it like an object. There is a disjunction between the two 'I's—the I (the subject of the enunciation) with the 'I'—the subject of the utterance. Lacan puts it thus: "It is not a question of knowing whether I speak of myself in a way that conforms to what I am, but rather of knowing whether I am the same as that of which I speak."74 The subject of the utterance and the social roles is his 'ego'—only the objectification of the subject. The 'ego' masks the truth of the subject's being. "This act of substituting a sign for a reality is also an operation of mediation whereby the subject places himself at a distance from the lived experience and is thus able to locate himself as a subject distinct from his surroundings."75

The 'ego' is thus antithetical to the essential truth of the subject. 'Ego' is that part of the subject which is externalized or represented in the discourse. "The ego is not a substantial form but one position within a discourse for the staging of an utterance, like the position of the 'I' in a long and otherwise complex utterance."76 This is why Lacan
argues that in discourse the subject experiences the lack of being for he is no more than represented in the discourse. The subject is subjected to and by being a subject, the subject becomes what he has been. The true subject lies in the underside of the discourse—repressed. The 'I' that is spoken is not the same as the subject that actually speaks the 'I'. The truth about the subject is thus alienated in language.

In language the subject is not the cause of his own meaning, but only an effect. The subject acquires meaning in world of language that pre-exists it. "It is the world of words that creates the world of things." Through accession to the symbolic man becomes a signifier. This is why Lacan prioritizes the signifier over the signified. The following quote from Lacan underscores the relation among the signifier, signified and the speaking subject. "The signifier has an active function in determining certain effects in which the signifiable appears as submitting to its mark, by becoming through that passion, the signified."  

So language becomes the Other that speaks the person. This makes Lacan say: "Is the place that I occupy as the subject of a signifier concentric or eccentric, in relation to the place I occupy as subject of the signified? . . . that is the question."  

The Lacanian premise that the individual becomes a subject only by identifying with the position pre-figured in the symbolic world of society and language has its echoes in Althusser also. Althusser assigns to ideology a role that Lacan assigns to language. According to
Althusser, ideology has the function of constituting concrete individuals as subjects. Ideology interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects (Ideology is a representation of imaginary versions of the real social relations that people live). "It is not their real conditions of existence, their real world, that 'men' represent to 'themselves' in ideology, but above all their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there." It is the mirror structure of ideology that interpellates individuals as subjects. "The individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the subject i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection, i.e. in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection 'all by himself'. There are no subjects except by and for their subjection."

Lacanian psychoanalysis which gives primacy to language has given a new impetus and direction to criticism. Critics belonging to this school make the text itself an object of analysis. "It is the foregrounding of language—as subject—that makes the literary text a legitimate object of analysis in its own right." They see the literary text as enactment of the unconscious, particularly the endemic elusiveness of the signified. The textual unconscious erupts in the form of symptoms. In addition, the knowledge that subjectivity itself is the result of social signification gives us insight into how a character in a text gets written in extra-personal structures of language. This knowledge has been used in the study of Look Back in Anger.
Notes

1 Lacan, “Function and Field of Speech and Language,” Ecrits 47.


6 Seductions of Psychoanalysis 80.


Lemaire 42.

Andre Green, "Prologue: The Psycho-Analytic Reading of Tragedy," *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism* 51.


One patient of Freud displayed great irritation for her husband. During analysis she described a conversation she had with her husband, during which she was severely insulted and her self-esteem wounded. Suddenly she gave a hysterical cry and said: "It was like a slap in the face." With this her symptomatic act came to an end.

What happened was an intricate kind of symbolization. The symptom was the enactment of the literal meaning of a verbally figurative expression. The figurative expression "a slap in the face" was literally transferred to the body. During analysis, the figurative meaning was restored to the expression.

Seductions of Psychoanalysis 147.


23 Apter, *Fantasy and Literature* 138, 139.

24 Apter, *Fantasy and Literature* 137.


28 *Language and the Origins of Psychoanalysis* 34.

29 Freud, qtd. in Forrester, *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis* 201.


34 *Psychoanalysis and Future Theory* 32.


43 Jonathan Culler, qtd. in Cynthia Chase, “Oedipal Textuality,” *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism* 64.

44 Apter, *Fantasy and Literature* 131.

45 Eagleton, *Literary Theory* 15.

46 Brill 319.


48 Wright, *Psychoanalytic Criticism* 19.

49 Freud had to interpret a screen-memory that appeared in the Wolfman’s dream—“a beautiful big butterfly with yellow stripes and large wings which ended in pointed projections.” During free-association, the patient brought back the memory of a nursemaid who was very fond of him. He remembered her name in a round about way. He thought of a pear—a pear with yellow stripes as its wings. The word for ‘pear’ in his language was ‘Grusha’, that was the name of the maid.
Thus the memory of the nursemaid lay hidden behind the screen memory of the butterfly—a play on the word ‘pear’.


68 Lacan, "Function and Field of Speech and Language," *Ecrits* 68.


70 Minsky, *Psychoanalysis and Gender* 142.


72 *Return to Freud* 135.


75 Lemaire 51.

76 Robert Con Davis, *Criticism and Culture* 90.


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