

**Speaking of Being:
Poetry as the Psychoanalysis of Presence;
From Language to Lalangue**

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By: Mir Hussain Mahdavi

Trent University

Peterborough, Canada

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Abstract

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Mir Hussain Mahdavi

The central question of this research is “What is poetry?” The ambiguity and unintelligibility of the question itself forces the writing to take two different approaches to it. The first approach is to define poetry not by what it is but by how it is related to the human being and to the world. Seeing poetry as its relation to Being allows a definition of poetry based on its function. This approach draws on philosophical discussions how poetry is related to the human and how Being can be extended into poetic creation. Martin Heidegger’s move from seeing poetry as the possibility of worldmaking to seeing it as a place of dwelling, and, in his later works, as unconcealment and the extension of Being as the House of Being, marks the direction of philosophical discussions in this paper. In this sense, poetry is defined as a creative possibility, where the speaking being comes in close contact with the speaking things and speaks of being.

The second approach is to define poetry not as a whole but as some of its essential parts, as “poetic imagination” for instance. This attempt to define the poetic imagination draws on long-running discussions of imagination, metaphor, metaphorical thinking, image and imaging. It also relies on Freud’s discussions of how dreams function as textual phenomena: the poetic imagination, this approach argues, is similar

to dreaming. The poet's conscious and unconscious engagements with language create an uncanny experience where the relation between object and its poetic image is simultaneously known and unknowable.

The third part of this study focuses on Lacan's move from the symbolic unconscious to the real unconscious, in order to shed light on how the real is related to its linguistic reality. This brings the discussion to a point where language is replaced by *lalangue* in order to knot the real directly to the symbolic.

To my mother

Khadija Qurbani

Who resides evermore in my heart and spirit.

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Introduction

From Language to Lalangue

As a poet, the greatest puzzle that I have faced was poetry itself. I didn't know the thing that I was producing. The question of "what is poetry?" is, in a sense, poetic itself. It is as ambiguous and as unintelligible as poetry. To answer this question, I found myself constrained with methodological difficulties. Poetry resists definition and remains mysterious. Although poetry is a linguistic product, its ultimate aim is to step outside of language to free itself from the very material that it is made of. To define poetry, I had to elaborate on either how it functions or what it is made of. The first approach was a philosophical and ontological contemplation of how poetry is related to human life: this shaped the first chapter of my writing.

Martin Heidegger's reflections on poetry and the relation of poetry to philosophy and human life are the central issues of the first chapter. In Heidegger's view, poetry is the extension of Being: a poet extends his being, his existence, by creating a poem. In this sense, poetry is defined as a pairing of the speaking Being and as what Merleau-Ponty calls "the speaking thing" (Ghosh 218); poetry is where the speaking being comes into close contact to the speaking thing.

Chapter One: The Being of Poetry and the Poetry of Being

Chapter one will frequently return to a rudimentary exploration of language since it is upon this that its arguments are based. I will attempt to demonstrate how language, in its traditional view, is a tool within modern Saussurian linguistic structures, not only in the content, but also in the very form of discourse itself.

As it happens, Saussure is a key figure in understanding Heidegger's discussion of language and poetry. I shall attempt to elucidate his theory of arbitrary signs while discussing the "lack" of signification in the gap between the signifier and the signified. In my discussion of language, I remain focused on Heidegger's theory of language but at the same time, I present a fuller picture of language and its essence. Perceiving language as a "presencing" of presence and elaborating on its finitude, its endless *evasion* of presence and its power of negation, will take us further in the Heideggerian understanding of language, where, in Heidegger's conception, language is the relation of relations. Defining language as the relation of relations and as the nearness of saying will shed more light on Heidegger's thoughts on language and his theory of poetry.

One of Heidegger's central points is the way he relates language to being, calling language "the house of being." The relation between language and being emphasizes the rule of the word. I illustrate the function of words, both as an individual entity and also in relation to other words. Imagination and the poetic image will make up the next stages of my discussion. *The poetic image* is the new name for how the word functions. It's the word that brings imagination from the mind of a poet to the practical playground of poetry. Metaphor and its crucial effect on our conception and thinking are very important issues for our discussion: metaphor demonstrates how the interactions of two or more words can become mysteriously poetic.

My discussion of poetry navigates its way through different issues: the essence of poetry and the way in which poetry becomes the projection of being. The fundamental question behind all these quests is poetry itself, what is poetry? Is it a projective saying, or the possibility of worldmaking? While I examine different answers to this essential question throughout, poetry remains the extension of our being.

Chapter Two: Poetry as Dream

My second approach is to define poetry not as what it is but what it is made of, as for instance “poetic imagination.” This attempt to define the poetic imagination draws on long-running discussions of imagination, metaphor, metaphoric thinking, image and imaging. It also relies on Freud’s discussions of how dreams function as textual phenomena, where the poetic imagination, this approach argues, is similar to dreaming. The poet’s conscious and unconscious engagements with language create an uncanny experience where the relation between object and its poetic image is simultaneously known and unknowable.

I start my discussion with a focus on the dream, its definition and its relationship with dreamers. The function of a dream or what Freud calls “dreamwork” is one of the most poetic operations outside of poetry; it generates poetic feelings and meanings. I will explain how dreamwork functions, what condition brings forward distorted wishes and under what circumstances it creates pleasure that is the disguised fulfilment of the dreamer’s wishes. Freud’s dream interpretation theory has an identical tone and uses techniques similar to literary theory: it tells us how a dream can be interpreted, just as a literary theory tells us how a poem can be interpreted. Freud’s dream interpretation is

crucially important for both dream and poetry, and for this reason we will examine how dream interpretation takes us into the dream, reviving vanished and lost experiences.

After discussing dream interpretation, I will move on to poetry and explore the dreaming and dreamlike features of poetry as a whole and in its parts. In the words of Paul Ricoeur, “words really do dream” (256).

As we dream while asleep, words dream in poetry: they do things, in a sense, without actually and physically doing them. From poetry’s literary analysis, we move on to poetry’s psyche and discuss how psychoanalysis is poetic in its nature.

Psychoanalysis seeks to reinstate the lost relations between a patient and his world, while poetry is the rediscovery of the lost relations between words and *their* worlds. Words without relations are empty, anxious, and meaningless. In a similar way, patients with psychical difficulties experience symptoms of anxiety and meaninglessness or have relations in their lives which they experience as devoid of meaning. In both situations, coherence is a necessity. Words imbued with personal meaning and emotion are essential to the practice of both poetry and psychoanalysis; for this reason, we study the source of a word’s power and its psychical value in creating relations and meanings.

The unconscious of poetry and the poetry of the unconscious will be our next stage of discussion. Exploring the unconscious, we will discuss Freud’s theory of the uncanny and its relation to the production of poetry. Freud’s free association or free talk can be seen as the theatrical and also practical source of automatic writing. I will argue that poetry in its essence is automatic and gives birth to itself through a free and mysterious engagement of the poet. A poem happens as an event by the work of the free

association of the poet; it happens as an uncanny and autogenetic event, whereas its shaping and look will be controlled by the poet's conscious intentions. Free talk between a psychoanalyst and his patient is similar to the free association between a poet and their poem, considering the poet as the analyst and their poem as the patient.

The discussion of automatism will take us into surrealism and its art, especially surreal poetry. Surrealism emphasizes the rediscovery of the unconscious, bridging the conscious and unconscious and making their communication possible. Surreal poetry will be discussed in a detailed analysis of its capacity, its function, and the factors that make it surreal.

Freud's theory of the dream's navel will help us to locate the boundaries and limits of psychoanalysis and of poetry. The dream's navel, according to Freud, is an irreducible dark spot, an unknown and strange element housed with known residents of the dream, or we may say, of the poem. Freud says that this strange and uninvited guest cannot be removed from the individual and we have to accept his unwanted presence with his face veiled (3). The presence of the dream's navel comes with important consequences both for the dream and poetry and we will try to show some of these issues.

This chapter will end with returning to Freud and his discussion of the essence of poetry and how poetry returns us to our childhood. According to Freud, we daydream through poetry and art, fulfilling our repressed wishes the way that a child fulfills his wish to be an adult through playing. In dreaming, we do the same: we fulfill our wishes. Dreaming, poetry, and play could be different names for the same thing.

Chapter Three: The Real Unconscious

The relationship between poetry and the real is the centre of the third chapter's elaborations using Jacques Lacan's later works. If according to Lacan, language cancels the Real and creates reality, then in the process of symbolization the real is lost. In the third chapter I will show how poetry is the return of the real. I focus on Lacan's move from the symbolic unconscious to the real unconscious in order to shed light on how the real is related to its linguistic reality, to the point where language is replaced by lalangue in order to knot the real directly to the symbolic.

To summarize, the first chapter discusses the symbolic, the second is centred on the imaginary, and the third chapter is concerned with the Real. In this way we will come to see that the poem functions as Lacan's Borromean Knot, bringing together the Thing, its symbolic representation, and its mental image.

The being of poetry and the poetry of being

Heidegger, Holderlin and the essence of poetry

What is poetry?

A general overview

In order to discuss “the being” of poetry, it necessarily means talking about the essence of poetry, attempting to locate the essential elements of poetry, and trying to deal with questions such as “what causes a poem to become a poem?” When attempting to define the function of poetry, Roman Jakobson is concerned with the same question. If poetry and prose are made of the same language, then what differentiates the poetic process, the gathering and interaction of words, from that of prose? It seems that Jakobson experiences the same problem when he asks “What are the intrinsic linguistic properties of the text which make it a poem?”

We already know that we don’t exactly know what poetry is, and that is the central cause of all of these ambiguities. If we knew what poetry is then we could easily map the way language turns itself into a poem and discover the mechanism and the structure of poetry and what causes a piece of literary work to become a poem. We could clearly and explicitly illustrate the process of when language turns itself into a poem and explain the mechanism of poem-making in great certainty and clarity. But with all this in mind, it is important to remember that the ambiguous nature of poetry and its refusal to be defined is not the only cause of the problem since we don’t exactly know if we don’t know what poetry is. It is also our own ambiguous approach to poetry which is why we don’t have an exact definition for poetry.

We have a paradoxical relationship with poetry: we are simultaneously able to comprehend what poetry is while also not being able to. I have stated two contradictory statements: “we know,” and “we don’t know” what poetry is. Allow me to explain what I mean by the second statement.

Throughout history, literary scholars and philosophers have been vocal in defining poetry. For example, from Kant to Hegel, the essence of poetry was seen in its power of condensation, manifestation and ability to bring together an excess of thoughts and ideas under a lower word count. Other important names in the history of philosophy and literature have defined poetry based on its power of being more in less; saying much more than what we expect. This creates the possibility of seeing more, as Paul Ricoeur defines metaphor as “thinking more”. In this sense, poetry is something that provides the possibility of thinking more. A poetic image appears to be more than what we see it as. Its existence is condensed and we don’t see the whole of its capacity, or its property; its condensed parts remain unseen. A poetic image, then, is the sum of presence and absence, a place where we see the unseeable. *Mallarme once called the essence of poetry “mysterious secret”, he defines it as “Mysterious secret language, incomprehensible to the profane”* (Allen 16).

So far we know that poetry has been defined by its condensation and its mysteriousness but there are always other perspectives. For example, Martin Heidegger defines poetry as the power of estrangement, being an estranged phenomenon,

estranging everything and itself. I will return to Heidegger's point of view in more detail to illustrate what estrangement means in his language and how he projects onto the relationship between poetry and being. Defining poetry as an estranging power reveals another poetic characteristic: understanding poetry as the power to spread estrangement, bringing gap and lack between known and familiar things and making them unknown and unrelated to each other. If Mallarme was viewing poetry as a mysterious thing, Heidegger sees it as the power of making and distributing mysteriousness, if we could roughly take mysteriousness and estrangement at the same semantic level. Derrida says that the poem captures in its image "a wake," not exactly a semantic shock, but simply a waking moment, an interruption in our involvement with literary experiences, causing the rupture of the routine function of language. Derrida's "wake," as arising from sleep, can be seen as important as Mallarme's "mystery" and Heidegger's "estrangement."

Since poetry is considered as a waking moment, then prose can be seen as a place where language goes to sleep. This waking or causing to wake can be seen in Derridean terms as a "Différance," to be different from the rest of the work and causing the meaning to be deferred. In this sense, meaning in poetry is always deferred, always pushed back to the remoteness of the language where silence and sound meet each other. The deferral of meaning in poetry and its "différance" do not mean that it is meaningless, on the contrary, it means to be meaningful, or full of meaning, it's because meaning keeps appearing, so much that it cannot find a moment to stop appearing. The delay of meaning provides the opportunity of poetic play, creating a "linguistic game" making the play of meaning possible, to show up not one, but multiple meanings for a singular word or image.

I listed these limited examples of poetic theories to show that we know a lot about poetry, its function, and its characteristics and its essential elements. Despite all of these bits of knowledge about poetry, this knowing has not helped us throughout history to properly define poetry. If we say that poetry is undefinable and unknowable, then what would we call all the historical attempts of philosophers and literary scholars defining poetry, or poetic nature? If we already know that poetry is not knowable, then why would we bother ourselves trying to expand our understanding of poetry and its functions? Unknowability must be seen as the limit of human knowledge, and as the boundary of our intelligibility, where nothing can be properly perceived, a darkening space where nothing can be comfortably seen.

Robert Powell discusses the problem of unknowability and its relation to knowability in his book titled, *The Real is Unknowable; The Knowable is Unreal* (81) claiming that the unknowable entities are pre-linguistic. He says, “The Real cannot be perceived, for it lies beyond the field of perception, or perhaps better: prior to the field of perception.” (TKU:81). In this sense, if poetry is unknowable, according to Powell, it must be a prelinguistic phenomenon, a thing which existed prior to language, or in other words, a thing which existed prior to its own materiality, to its own existence. I will return to this issue in chapter three, discussing Lacan and his understanding of poetry, the function of language and the possibility of understanding prelinguistic concepts. The intrinsic desire of poetry is to erase language in order to return to its own origin, but poetry is a linguistically structured entity, it’s made of language. Attempting to erase

language necessarily comes to a self-erasing point, where poetry's attempt to return to its origin becomes its preparation for its own destruction. The only way for poetry to become what it was in the first place, to return to its most original point, is to erase completely what it was written or to destroy what was constructed as. Poetry's attempt to return to its origin is an escape from language to nowhere, to nothing, to nothingness. The relationship between poetry and language can then be considered not only as evasive and elusive but destructive, where the only possible relation is no relation.

We must keep in mind that viewing poetry as a self-destructive power does not resolve the ambiguous nature of poetic knowability and the impossibility to fully perceive it. The evasive nature of poetry in an active and periodic cycle blocks any possible attempts to fully perceive it, and then releases the blockage, making our communication with poetry possible and intelligible. It seems that both the cycle of intelligibility and its blockage do not last long enough: it dies before it even takes place. The reason why poetry appears in its disappearance is that poetry, in its essence, is an open-ended statement: it leaves the door open for any possible interpretations but closes it before proceeding to a full understanding. It seems that neither our intelligible communication with poetry nor the blockage of our perception is long enough to plant its effects; poetry can reveal and conceal without the revelation much exposure because it reveals its concealment and conceals its revelation.

Any attempt to define poetry, itself, means that we somehow believe that poetry is not unknowable; it demonstrates that we think it's not something completely out of our perception's reach, and a harder attempt may take us there. For this reason,

throughout history, we have tried to examine poetry from its different aspects, its functions, its relation to human beings and to itself. In our historical attempts, we have experienced two paradoxical aspects of poetry, we have noticed that it is simultaneously knowable and unknowable.

The confusion of poetry's knowability and unknowability comes from our relation and our knowledge of poetry. To know something is to relate that thing to us and to eliminate the darkness and the shadows around that thing and to bring it to a complete light and clarity; to see that thing in its fullness. To know what, for instance, a tree is, we can articulate what the tree is made of, and how a tree functions and what the purpose of a tree is. The problem in dealing with poetry is that we know what a poem is made of and at the same time we don't certainly know. We know that a poem is made of words, but we don't know what those words are made of. They certainly signify something, as they do when they are outside of their poetic life, but in poetry, they signify something differently, and they signify different things. Not knowing what a poem is made of is not the only problem that we're dealing with, this unknown thing, its material, its essence, its being is not what we expect to experience. There is always a displacement involved, a thing always sits in a place of another thing but claiming to be the other thing. X always claims to be Y, as it continuously remains X. Let me give you an example. To clarify what I mean exactly by this, I will quote Mark Strand in his poem, called "Eating Poetry," who says, "*Ink runs from the corners of my mouth. There is no happiness like mine. I have been eating poetry.*" We can be very certain that this part of his poem is made up of these limited words. We can count these

words and easily separate them to know them better, and we can even write down the dictionary definition of each word next to it. This is exactly what we do when trying to define a tree or a table, but does this mechanism work here? No, it does not. These words that we see in the poem are not the same as if we see them in their individual functioning. They are completely something else. Becoming something else is not an issue, the issue is becoming something else while remaining exactly as what it was before. The word “ink” cannot refer to ink in this poem because we don’t eat ink as we eat cake, and perhaps poems are not made of ink. But at the same time, ink is ink and it remains to be ink wherever it goes, and more importantly, even if it doesn’t seem to be ink, it attempts to return to its origin, to its ink-hood, to be what it was in its previous life. The constant changes of the word “ink” in becoming ink from where it means a trace, a name, a sign, a place, a smell or a hint changes the way this word appears to us, and perhaps alters what it means and what it does. The changing aspect of poetry’s function is the only thing that it does not change. What a poem is made of is not a solid and certain material but an active process, an engaging operation of becoming a thing that never actually exists. Poetry is this process, the process of making possible the impossible, in Heidegger’s word, is an event, not the event itself, but the eventing. To return to our previous point, the knowledge of poetry, as we showed using Strand’s poem, is not what the words contain, but the wording itself, the way a word engages with other words, or in William S. Allen’s words, “The knowledge of poetry is the language itself,” the knowledge of a poem is its language, or perhaps, the way words interact with each other and the way it appears as its wording.

On Language

To understand poetry and its function, we must have a clear understanding of language prior to our discussion of poetry. It is language which grounds poetry and makes the foundation for poetic work possible. For this reason, I will introduce certain important linguistic theories and their consequences in the function of poetry

Language as a Tool

In the traditional understanding, language was a tool in the hand of man: man was the master of language and possessed it. The purpose of language was largely understood as a device of communication, a transportation of meaning which was owned and fully controlled by the speaker. In this traditional understanding, words had a direct relation to objects, to the world, and the nature of this relation was fixed and known. Language was not under social control, in which changes to language were made by society and culture, instead it was weathered by a natural and intrinsic relationship between words and objects. The important point in the traditional understanding of language was that they defined words as fully fixated elements made for human communication, carrying pre-given meanings.

Saussure and the Function of Language

At the beginning of the 20th century, French structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure shed light on the different aspects of language. His focus was on language as a system and the internal relationship of linguistic elements (*langue*), not on the use of language (*parole*). He examined how the elements of language synchronically related to each

other and how these relations would change the outcome of the statements we make. In Saussurean linguistics, language was understood as a socially constructed phenomenon, denying any natural or intrinsic relationship between word and objects. He defines language as a system of signs, each sign made of a sound pattern of a word conjoined with a mental concept. The sound patterns are the signature sounds of words in our minds, the sounds that allow people who know the language to recognize what they hear. The sound patterns are linked to the mental concepts, the mental images. In fact, the sound patterns, or in Saussurean terms, the signifier causes the mental concept, the signified. It is important to note that the system of signs is made arbitrarily by social contracts. All the names we give to different things in language, all the actions and the situations that we name, they are all made through the social contract and have nothing to do with how the word is pronounced or what it looks like. Signifiers are not made by a linguistic order but by an external order, a social contract. Another important issue is to remember that the mental concepts, the signifieds, are just a mental concept and not a thing, not an object that we are trying to talk about, but just a mental image. The sign's value is generated solely by its difference from other signs in the system. We value signs based not on what it is, but what it is not: today is a day that is not yesterday, and it is not tomorrow. "Difference", or "the taking place or occurring of the difference for word and things" (5) acts as a negative power, arranging the establishment and the function of our statements, based on what something is not. This negation causes a fundamental uncertainty, approximating the content of a statement. In this sense, language is based on the negation of something and its emptiness.

Language and the Lack of Signification

The Saussurean theory of language was a revolution in how we perceive and communicate with each other and how language functions. In his model of language, there is no direct relation between word and object. The word appears as a signifier. It does not reveal anything, or it does not tell us the ultimate thing; it only signifies, it shines and then fades away a hint and that's all. In the traditional understanding of language, the word would tell us all it had, its ultimate and final meaning. This direct and full expression of the signifier is completely different from what Saussure is suggesting: an incomplete, unfinished function of the signifier. According to Kristeva, Saussurean signification is not a finished project but a process, a process of signification, or as she calls it, "signifiante", a process in which the function of signification sets itself in motion. It continues to act as a signifier, signifying something endlessly.

The relationship between signifier and signified is fundamentally different from how words were related to objects in the pre-Saussurean era, where a word would directly evoke or cause a specific and fixed object. A signifier does not cause a fixed and predetermined signified. A signifier signifies a signified or a set of signifieds, depending on how the signifier (the word) is situated in a sentence and how the sentence is functioning, and more importantly how the reader is reading the sentence. It's important to notice that there is a gap between the signifier and the signified, and this gap can never be filled, a gap that is caused by the Saussurean system of signification.

There is no way that a signifier can take us directly to a signified, there is always a proximity, a distance involved, and because of this, the signifier can only refer to another sign, not a designated thing, or object. In the Lacanian approach, the signifier lacks a referent, it displaces a lack, an absence, Lacan says, “The signifier is a sign without any referent. It does not refer to anything, although it shares with the trace absence as its fundamental feature” (167). Lacan indicates that in the signification system there is no such thing as a determined signified, the referent of a signifier, or in his view the signified is totally absent, instead, what we have is an endless chain of signifiers, each signifier signifies another sign and this sign will act as our new signifier. He says, “the signifier is a sign which refers to another sign, which is as such structured to signify the absence of another sign, in other words, to be opposed to it in a couple” (Lacan 167). We have no access to the signified, we are permanently barred from it or it is forever excluded.

What are the consequences of this exclusion? We are forever barred from meaning, from what we desire to gain, from what system of signs are made for. Paul Frye, reading Lacan, thinks the letter itself is to be blamed for this absence, he says, “That is to say, that which brings my thinking into being is not present to me. It is it. It is the letter. It is the signified which perpetually evades us, and which cannot possibly be present to us” (56). Signification comes with an endless deferral and a perpetual absence of signified.

If the signified is out of the picture in our signification system, then what is language for? What is the function of language and why do we use it? In our traditional

understanding, language is a meaning-making system, a means to transport meaning. If there is no fixed meaning, then what will be the use of language?

What is Language and How it Functions

This question can be dealt with from its different aspects, such as what is the proper subject matter of linguistics, what are the purposes and usage of language, or how does language function? We can also take an ontological and phenomenological approach to find out what the essence of language is and what makes a language to be a language. In my research I mostly deal with the function of language and what makes a language to become language. For this reason, I will try to briefly look at the essence of language and from there on I will focus on some of the characteristics of language and its functions.

Language and its Essence

It is a very challenging task to talk about language using language itself, as Heidegger says. "Speaking about language turns language almost inevitably into an object. And then its reality vanishes (Heidegger 50)." To speak about language, there is no other way but to use language, and making language talk about its own self, or using language to investigate its own self takes away the possibility of independent seeing and saying and contradicts its function. We cannot speak about language using language. In addition to this methodological problem, the nature of language does not open up itself to full analysis, as Heidegger says, "The origin of language, is essentially mysterious" (50). Its enigmatic nature denies access to its full comprehension and there is always some part of language that refuses to be fully understood. Gerald Bruns believes that in

the Heideggerian approach, it is the essential characteristic of language to hide itself from us and withhold its nature. He says, “the essential nature of language flatly refuses to express itself in words” (121) Language’s defiance of our attempts to comprehend it can be seen as a struggle with its own problems. It seems that there could be some weakness that language wants to hide from us, some darkness in the midst of its clarity, something that language cannot bring into full expression, something that language is not aware of, or it is not even known to it. Heidegger thinks that there is some unfinished event that cannot be done in language, or by language, he says, “All worldly language has as its origin an event that cannot take place (126)” In other words, language’s desire to explicitly explain itself in full details cannot be fulfilled. There is always some unexplainable issue or inexpressible event that cannot be brought into language. How can we find out about this event, to see what it is and why it cannot take place?

It seems that this unfinished event or the event that is not an event yet cannot be studied. It is because language does not know enough about this event, it’s not intelligible to language, and perhaps it’s not comprehensible to us. If this event is not known to language, then how can we possibly know it? How could it be possible to think about such an event? If an event is not linguistic, then it cannot be fundamentally comprehensible. If it is linguistic then how could it be known to language even before it takes place? I don’t think there could be any possible way for us to investigate these issues, but what it can be of our interest in this research is to see how problematic language is. What we can consequently say is that the task to study the nature of this enigmatic mystery is not possible through language. The only way to

answer some of the questions that were raised is to look into what we can see and say about its nature and function.

Language and Its Functions

Language is made of sentences, and therefore sentences are made of words, but sentences and words are made of relations. They not only present the possibility of relation but also the types of relationships that could possibly be made between words and things, between things itself and the interrelations between words. In other words, relation is what language is made of.

1- Language as the Relation of all Relations

The essential function of language was to relate ourselves to nature, to the world, and also to each other. Language makes this relation possible, as Heidegger sees it, through its power of naming. If a thing is named, it enters into language, and it comes into being, “Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. Only this naming nominates beings to their being from out of their being” (Heidegger 73). I will return to the relation of language and being and its power of creating and distributing being later in this chapter to show how language can be seen as a stage of being but for now I want to focus on the naming power of language in order to show how naming can relate us to the world. We can speak of a thing through its name. This name is how we know that thing, its location, its address; and this address relates the thing to us. Heidegger thinks that the nature of language’s relation to the world is “open” and “ungrounded” and the openness of its relation projects the “ungrounded” naming power of language. The relation of language with the world is

open not only to different interpretations but also to forming different worlds, or to forming the world differently. The interrelation of language's parts to its whole is structured to manifest its non-exteriority and its independence from the outside world. The relation between words, words and sentences, and the relation between sentences is to establish language's relation not only to the word, but to the power of presencing, to bring something to presence. Relation is the power of language to bring something to presence, or to make its presence. Language is this relation and as Heidegger calls it, it's "the relation of all relations", the way in which all possible relations are related to each other.

2- Language as the Nearness of Saying

The relation of language with time is as important as its relation to humans. All these relations are present, even when it speaks about the past or the future. Language brings the past into the present time in order to make the relation possible. It must be present in order for language to talk about something, and then we can say the nature of relation in language is 'present', and language with its naming power brings things into being, into presence, the present, and therefore naming the past or the future is bringing it into the present. In addition to the presencing power of language, bringing things near or nearer, as near as it can be seen. It is another important aspect of language. Language brings things near in order to make it appear, and nearness functions as the introduction to appearance. It seems that saying and seeing are interrelated and language cannot say anything unless it brings it to presence. According to William S. Allen in his book, 'Ellipsis, Of Poetry and the Experience of Language after Heidegger, Hölderlin, and Blanchot', "Heidegger indicates that nearness and saying are the same" (Allen 186). The

interconnectivity of nearness and saying is essential for both saying and nearness, and for this, Heidegger sees the essence of language as “the nearness of saying”. If Heidegger defines the essence of language as the nearness of saying, then language is not defined based on saying but on its nearness of saying. What is the nearness of saying and why is it seen as the essence of language? We assume that the essence of language is saying, making things to talk or to be talked about, but I think this is what traditional language is all about, the direct relation between words and objects. In the modern understanding of language, starting with Saussure, language can only signify, it can only give us a hint to what is happening and what is there to understand, and this hint is not saying. It is, as Heidegger puts it, the nearness of saying. Now the question is how the nearness of saying happens and how the nearing power of language functions.

As we mentioned in our discussion of Saussure that a signifier only signifies the possibility of the existence of a signified, or in Lacanian understanding, there is no such thing as a signified, all we have is a chain of signifiers. This is exactly what Heidegger says. Seeing language not as saying but as the nearness of saying, this nearness distances us from the saying of language and according to Heidegger it cannot be removed. The nearness acts as nearing, and this nearing never ends. He says, “The event of nearing would only occur by way of its deferral” (Allen 186). What we have is the deferral of nearing, a nearing of saying that can only get to the nearness of saying, and the saying, in its deferral function does not happen. This is a situation that we not only face in saying but also in writing, as the written exhibition of saying. As Allen shows, both Blanchot and Heidegger see relation as “the very possibility of writing” (Allen 22).

Relation makes writing possible and that's what writing is. Relation, as we discussed, is the nearness of saying, and this nearness comes with endless deferrals. If relation is the possibility of writing then the possibility of writing is always deferred, and for this, Allen thinks that the very nature of the relation of language with nature is evasive. He says, "Writing has a resistance that arises out of its ruination, out of its refusal or evasion, and that this evasion is the very relation by which language approaches nature" (Allen 103). If nature is the immediate, then how could it mediate, and how does language speak of the immediate? Blanchot thinks that the relation of language has a nonrelation character in it: the absence of signified is a nonrelation, and it cannot be erased. The relation of language with the outside world, then, can only be a nonrelation, since there is always delay and deferral in getting to the possibility of saying. In the absence of saying, impossibility is the relation with the outside world. If language is internal to the user, to the I, then the relation of language and also our own relation to the other is nonrelational or impossible. The relation of language and thinking is also impacted by the nature of both language and thinking. We have to engage with language in order to grant access for thinking, and this, according to Allen, is "both that which is closest and that which is most distant from thinking, for any attempt to turn thinking around to encounter its own language will find that it has already translated and mediated that language by virtue of its attempt to access it" (Allen 18). In other words, the engagement of language in thinking is inevitable and the outcome is that it is language that speaks, or it is language that thinks about itself. The problem of mediation and translation that Allen mentions in his above quotation, can be seen as a very positive approach to this issue. As I mentioned, it can also be seen as the engagement of

language with itself, seeing language as both the thinker and the object of its thinking. As we discussed, regarding the existence of an irremovable gap between signifier and signified, Allen suggests that the same gap can be assumed between language and thinking. He says, "I feel that there is a pause between language and thinking that can neither be recovered nor removed, but that recurs and punctures our attempts to respond" (Allen 164)

3-Language as Finitude

Language, as the relation of all relations, expresses some of its challenging relations, or some nonrelational experiences, at the very moments that it comes to its end, or it feels that it does not have enough power to resist or remain as language. These moments expose not the lack of language but its borders and its finitude. Finitude is a central characteristic of language; it is what language is made of. Whatever language says, it speaks through finitude: it speaks only finitude, or as Allen says, "Language writes in finitude" (Allen 163). Language speaks to hide and at the same time to expose its lack, its limit and its finitude. The relation that language establishes to itself and to the world is not only to indicate these limits and finitude but to show that, as Allen explains, its finitude is the very condition of its relation. No relation can be made outside of language's finitude. The finitude of language is our own finitude; in our engagement with language, we not only experience the finitude of language, but as Allen puts it, "we experience the existence of our own emptiness and finitude" (158). Understanding language as a stage where we can see things, where things come to the

presence or present themselves to us, is very crucial and aligned with what the essence of language is. Language allows the staging of things, or as Heidegger puts it, “As letting something be seen,” a place where the being of things is presented, where we can see the presence of things when we speak about them, where speaking comes to us as a showroom.

4- Language as the Presencing of Presence

To speak of, or to write about something, means to bring that thing into language: to let the words stand for that thing and signify it. The function of language’s signification is to bring things into the open, to provide the possibility of the emergence of something into the presence. What is important is to note that language’s signification never brings things into presence; it attempts to make things present, it promises to make the presence of things possible, but it never fulfills its promises. The system of signification comes close to bringing things into emergence, into presence, but it cannot fulfil the act of presencing. If we call the process in which language attempts to bring something into presence “presencing,” then we could say that language appears to be only the presencing of presence and not the presence itself. As Allen says, “All we can say is that there is presencing, never presence” (44).

Language is the presencing of presence, it stages what is present; it is not presence itself, but the staging of the presence, the continuous attempts to show the presence of something. Language is not the bringing to the presence of present things;

instead, it's the presencing of presences, an endless deferral to what is presence but not coming to present. In other words, language is the presencing of something that is not present. It refers to non-presence as presence. It dissembles the presence and repeats it as presencing. The reason that the presencing takes the place of presence is that language encounters its limits and finitude. As we previously discussed, finitude is the condition for its relation, encountering its finitude. Language wants to show itself as something else, in order to escape the limitation on its saying. Encountering with its limits, language according to Allen, "repeats itself, and by way of its rupturing it dissembles and thereby differentiates itself" (213). The endless evasion of presence comes as the result of its endless attempts of dissembling and repeating its dissembled objects as their presences.

For this reason, there is always "tension between language and that which it seeks to address." (Allen 50) What language projects is not the thing itself but its dissembling; for this reason, language conceals the thing it attempts to illustrate, while simultaneously unconcealing the dissembled object. The play of concealment and unconcealment in language is very important, especially for Heidegger, where he establishes his theory of language and seeks the possibility of the existence of being in language. We will return to Heidegger's discussion in this regard shortly. For now, we need to mention that the concealment of things is what we called the gap between signifier and signified in Saussurean theory, the absence of the signified is the concealment of the meaning or the concealment of what we had in mind to express. The

signified is absent and there is no way to fill the gap and unconceal the concealment and reach the absent signified.

5- The Power of Abstraction and Negation

The power of signification in language produces mental images. That's all it does; anything which comes to language transforms into mental images. Language turns all its objects into mental images and consequently abstracts them. For this, Allen says, "Language is already a power of abstraction" (1117). He defines abstraction as "a form of negative pressure in which the work of art is induced to expose itself" (1117). In Lacanian understanding, language cancels the real and creates reality, and reality is anything that belongs to language, the abstract world. It seems that for this reason, in Saussurean linguistics, there is an unremovable gap between signifier and signified and the signified is absent in the Lacanian perspective. The signified is the mental concept, the abstracted objects, and it has been lost forever. This loss is seen as the abstraction. Language abstracts everything, and it causes the loss of its objects, turns the real thing into the unreal, the reality. In "The Esthetic of Negativity," Allen talks about how Mallarme and Blanchot view the complexity involved in the relation of negativity and language, explains how language destroys the material reality through its power of abstraction. He says, "For while language destroys the material reality of things through its power of abstraction, the value that then appears in the site of this abstraction is itself destroyed by the word's materiality (Allen 141)."

Negation can be defined as the way that language reacts to the engagements of its audiences, the readers and the listeners. In reading or listening to a language code, the act of reading or listening encode the in-used section. The act of reading or listening negates the section that it has been understood. It seems that language negates itself as soon as its message has fully passed on. Furthermore, if we understand a word, the word vanishes. If we read a text and we cannot fully understand it, for instance in reading a poem, on this occasion, the words resist evaporation and the attempt to remain as the process of comprehension hasn't been completed yet. This shows that the signification gap, the gap between signifier and signified, is fundamentally irremovable. If a text can successfully signify anything, it will be punished for removing the irremovable gap of signification and producing meaning.

6- Repetition as the Condition of Relation

We mentioned that language is the presencing of presence. It repeats the presencing of presence, it dissembles presence and repeats it as presence. For this, language becomes the repetition of layers of dissembling. If language is based on relation, relation is made of repetition, Allen says, "Repetition is thus the condition of both the possibility and the impossibility of relation" (18). It is through language's power of repetition, the reappearances and appearances, which imitate what is "there" and bring it into words and make language. Mimesis is the origin of repetition, and without repetition there is no mimesis. In imitating appearance, language is bound to its finitude, and this causes it to repeat itself in order to express its finitude. Allen thinks

that language is this repetition in the shadow of finitude., He says, “Language is nothing but this endless repeated encounter with its own” (Allen 208). Language, in its attempts to respond to its limits, interrupts the follow of linguistic relations and these ruptures provide the possibility for language to disassemble. Allen thinks that disassembling gives the language the opportunity to differentiate itself and differentiation makes the circle of repetition possible. We need to remember that repetition is the repeated layers of disassembling and not the repetition of presence; language repeats the presencing of presence in the name of presence.

7-Language as PHUSIS

Heidegger uses the ancient Greek word “*phusis*,” (nature) to refer to the essence of language, as well as art and poetry. He quotes Heraclitus’s fragment 123, which states that “Nature (phusis) loves to hide.” Gerald Bruns, in his book “Heidegger's Estrangement,” discusses language, truth, and poetry. In the later writing, defining language as phusis, he says, “language as PHUSIS is preserved as that which cannot be subsumed or assimilated into our orders of signification” (121). What he means here is that language is something that cannot be signified, something where the power of its signification lacks signification. Bruns continues to define language as phusis, he says, “Language is PHUSIS as well as logos, that is language is not reason and order but overpowering and uncanny, uncontrollable and wholly other” (120). He tries to emphasize the uncanniness and uncontrollability of language to consequently present language as un-signifiable. Bruns sees language as phusis, and phusis for him, as one of the central characteristics of language, is the poetic element of language, for him, phusis is the source of poetry in language. He says, “The poetic experience with language is an

encounter with the PHUSIS of language, where PHUSIS is no longer translatable simply as nature, essence or being of language, rather it is the resistance of language to nomination” (Bruns 120). Again, Bruns emphasizes on the untranslatability of language, simply because nature is the nature of language. If phusis is the nature, the immediate, then language is the mediate. The immediate cannot be mediated and for this, the mediate becomes the immediate. Now the question is, under what circumstances can it mediate or language become immediate, and how this transformation can be possible.

8- Language as a Force of Transformation and Creation

In “Language, Poetry, Thought,” Heidegger explains how in his view man has historically misunderstood language. He says, “Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man (Heidegger 144). He sees language as something that masters man, controls and leads him and gives the idea and thought for his life. In the same book, he continues to emphasize the superiority of language over man, saying, “In fact language remains the master of man, for, strictly speaking, it is language that speaks.” (Heidegger 144). In “On the way to Language,” Heidegger comes back to this issue, stressing the living aspect of language. He says, “Language must be regarded not as a dead product of the past but as a living creation” (Heidegger 117). How can we understand language as a: “living creation,” and what are the consequences of this understanding? In “The image of the Absolute Novel”, William S. Allen admits the creativity of language but thinks that this creation is “the creation of enigmas” rather than their solutions. He makes this point when he talks about how Mallarme and Blanchot review language, he says, “Language for Mallarme, as Blanchot had shown in his earlier papers, is not a system of expression or

medium of communication, but a force for transformation and creation, and the creation of enigmas rather than their solutions”

For language "is that which founds human reality and the universe," (Blanchot 1104), as it is that by which human existence reveals itself to itself, and it is thus not transcendent but "the very form of transcendence and as such is as impenetrable and as hidden as the universe itself." (1104). Language is a force to transform the real objects into their reality, their mental concepts, and create enigmas.

9- Language as the House of Being

In our discussion of language as the relation of relations, we quoted Heidegger, saying, “Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. Only this naming nominates beings to their being out of their being” (Heidegger 73). In our discussion of relation, we focused on the power of naming and how nomination can cause relation, but the most important part of Heidegger’s statement here is how naming causes being, and it brings something out of no-being, out of its silence and disappearance. Heidegger explains why he thinks that language brings things into being through its power of naming. He says, “Language alone brings what is, as something is, into the open for the first time. Where there is no language, as in the being of stone, plant, and animal, there is also no openness of what is, and consequently no openness of that which is not and of the empty.” In other occasions, he emphasizes that, “language alone brings beings as beings into the open for the first time.” (Heidegger 73)

Heidegger believes that language not only establishes being out of no being but also that it shapes and re-arranges our being. Anna Strhan, in her analysis of Heidegger and religious language, concludes, "Language allows beings to become what they are. It both frames and founds Being" (5). She thinks that in Heidegger's view language gives itself to being and brings Being to being, and then language allows being to speak for itself. Language becomes the language of being. Heidegger says, "The being of language becomes the language of being." For this very reason, he calls language the house of being, a place where being resides, where the dwelling of being takes place. What makes language a house for being, a place where Being discovers a dwelling opportunity? Allen explains why language is the house of being, he says, "Heidegger can announce that the un-coveredness (Entdecktheit) of Dasein (the experience of being or the projection of being -in -the -world) particular the disposition (Befindlichkeit) of Dasein, can be manifested by means of words in such a way that certain new possibilities of Dasein's being are set free. Thus discourse (Rede) especially in poetry, can even bring about the release of new possibilities of the being of Dasein. In this way, discourse proves itself positively as a mode of temporalization (Zeitigung) of Dasein itself" (Allen 30). We will come back to poetry and its relation to being later, but now it's important to highlight some of the points made by Allen here. Heidegger defines truth as uncoveredness, and here, Allen starts his comment from positioning Dasein's truth in a word. He thinks that only in a word could there be the possibility for Dasein to see his true nature, its truth. He talks about the dispositioning of Dasein in word, bringing Dasein into word, or redesigning Dasein in word. The positioning of Dasein in word would appropriate new possibilities for Dasein's being, or it releases new beings

for Dasein. That's how Heidegger sees the relation of language and being. He thinks that "in language the truth of being beings," every word is potentially a dwelling place for being; being could be positioned in every word of a language. It is because, as Allen sees it, "Being is the most said. For it is said in every word of language" (Allen 25), Being is the being of language, and language is made of words; it's made of being.

The presence of being in words could trigger our need for the meaning of being. In dealing with language and in the process of grasping the meaning of sentences, we would also want to grasp the meaning of being. According to Allen, Heidegger leaves no doubt that the meaning of being can only be sought in language. He says, "It is through language that we uncover the meaning of our being, for it is through language that we are mortal" (Heidegger 11) Now we may ask, if the meaning of being is made itself available in language, under what circumstances could we catch these meanings, and in what process does the meaning of being make itself available to the readers? It doesn't seem that the meaning of being avails itself to the eye of every reader, the text acts as phusis and it loves to hide. In addition to the intrinsic complexity of texts, similar to the intricacy of being itself, as Heidegger sees it, Being loves to hide itself. He says that being intrinsically inclines towards self-concealment. With all these in mind, how could we read being and understand its meaning?

Karl Jaspers, in his book *Psychology of Worldviews* explains how our beings expose themselves when we encounter our limits. He says, "The meaning of being can only be experienced when it is exposed to its limits." (Jaspers 9). Language, as we

discussed, “writes in finitude; “in language we are exposed to the limits of language as well as to our own emptiness and limits”. If Being resides in words, then the finitude of words will expose being to its limits and its finitude. In language, we experience not only the finitude of language but also the limits and finitude of Being. Allen reminds us that “This emphasis on finitude is at the heart of Heidegger’s understanding of Being” (Heidegger 9). Allen further explains how finitude can expose us to the meaning of Being. He says, “the word of poetry... disrupting our everyday existence and exposing us to the ground of our finitude, not by signifying, asserting, or indicating anything, but by way of its silence and emptiness” (Heidegger 33) Finitude is central to the understanding of language and to the meaning of Being, Allen even thinks that the occurrence of finitude exposes our existence and the meaning of Being. He says, “Being is thus not a given, not ground or horizon upon which Beings appear by virtue of a logic that is still apophatic, but an occurrence of finitude that exposes our own existence” (Allen 31).

Word and its Function

Language is made of sentences and sentences are made of words. Perhaps we can say that language is made of words and for this, it's important to see how words function and identify their significant characteristics. In this part, we will focus on the word, its qualifications and its rules in language, particularly in poetry.

When several words sit together, they make a sentence: a sentence is the result of collaborations and working together of several words. Words in a sentence establish two types of relations. The first relation is how words are connected and related to one another. These integrations can be seen as a chain of relations and each word can have a very unique connection to other words, and the types of connections and relations can vary from sentence to sentence. The type of interrelations that a word can make in a sentence depends on the environment of the sentence and how the specific word is functioning.

The second relation that words in a sentence make is the connections they make with the world, with objects and ideas. These relations are structured and ruled by the individual quality of the word and its interrelations. The inner and outer relationship of words seem simple but are in fact complicated relations. Here is how Northrop Frye explains these relations. He says, "When we read a verbal structure, our attention is going in two directions: One direction is centripetal, trying to make sense of the words we are reading, the attempt to bring together and related different words. The other is centrifugal, gathering up from memory the conventional meanings of the words used in

the world of language outside the work being read” (Frye 21) Centripetal relation is how a word appears in a sentence, or how it relates itself to the other words sitting next to it. Centrifugal relation is the relation of a word to the external worlds, to its outside world, to the way that a word is connected to the object or thing it represents, and to how this relation and representation works.

As I mentioned, the centrifugal relation does not only depend on how a specific word relates itself to the object that it signifies, but it also depends on the relations that the word makes with other words in the sentence, as well as its relation to the whole process of signification. For this, the relation between word and world is a multifactorial and not a fixed element. William S. Allen explains the difficult nature of this relation. He says, “Attempts to conceptualize the relationship between word and thing arise from the misguided assumption that word and thing fit together in a definite relation that we can grasp (Strhan 4)”.

Frye explains how the relation between word and world functions and what are the conditions of the relations. According to him, verbalization is the condition of the relation. He says, “Words have an arbitrary, or accurately conventional, relation to the things, ...However, words can never directly transmit to our minds anything that is not verbal. Words transmit the non-verbal only in their own terms” (Frye 22). The problem of verbalization is exactly what Allen regards as the relation of word and world as “misguided assumption”, and it seems that for Allen this relation cannot be defined and explained. Frye thinks the word or signifier is bound to what it signifies. He says,

“Words or signifiers are, in theory, being subordinated to what they signify, servomechanism to the information they convey.” (Frye 22) but this subordination can be imagined if we talk about a pure and solitary word, a word for word. As we will later discuss, a word for a word does not exist and we can only talk about a word in relations with other words. For words in a sentence the thing that they signify is not only crucial, but also their place in a sentence and the relations they build with other words is crucial. For this reason, a word’s subordination to what it signifies does not solve the problem of the difficult relation of word and world.

In “The Way to Language,” Heidegger indicates that the word in its relation to a thing is the relation itself. The relation is not something that comes as the result of a word’s function but that word is the relation. He says, “...the word itself is the relation, by holding everything forth into being, and there upholding it. If the word did not have this bearing, the whole of things, the world, would sink into obscurity, including the "I" of the poem, him who brings to his country's strand, to the source of names, all the wonders and dreams he encounters” (Heidegger 74). If a word itself is the relation, the one who works with a word, for instance a poet, should have the power to control this relation. Heidegger thinks poets would have the possibility to “obtain entrance into the relation of word to thing (74).”

For Heidegger the sense of relation between word and world is not as representation, and not even as signification. He defines this relation as a “hint” or as a “trace.” He says, “The word is a hint, and not a sign in the sense of mere signification.

Hints need the widest sphere in which to swing” (Heidegger 27). Seeing this relation in terms of trace, there is an inevitable ambiguity and unclarity involved in the nature of the act of signification: a word signifies something and at the same time it denies what it has signified. In this sense, a word is the absence of what it attempts to signify, the empty place of its signification. As Burns examines, when I say the word “‘woman’... the word gives me the being, but it gives it to me deprived of being. The word is the absence of that being, its nothingness. Of course, my language does not kill anyone. And yet: when I say, ‘this woman’, real death has been announced and is already present in my language; my language means that this person, who is here right now, can be detached from herself, removed from her existence and her presence and suddenly plunged into a nothingness in which there is no existence or presence; my language essentially signifies the possibility of this destruction” (105). And for this reason as Allen explains in *The Image of the Absolute Novel*, “The empty word becomes an image of ‘itself’” (1110), the word is not the thing, and the thing is not in the word, the word is empty, it has nothing in it but at the same time, it seems to us if the word is the thing, or at least thing has appeared in it but the fact is that the word acts as the placeholder of the thing it attempts to show. In fact, “the word conceals within itself that which gives being”, it tries to dissemble the thing and shows it as the thing itself, to obtain this complex functionality, it endlessly defers what it attempts to show. Allen explains how this complex condition happens., He says, “Its wording thus is the mark of deferral. It inscribes the space of being but withdraws from it, because it is nothing more than its spacing, its mark of lack and rupture by which it becomes a space, a

neighborhood in which relations can take place. Heidegger calls this “the mysterious nearness of the far-tarrying power of the word” (Allen 186).

Allen ends his comment with quoting Heidegger, and I think this quotation tells us a lot about what can be said regarding the nature of word; it’s near but at the same time it’s not, because it’s far. It’s far-tarrying, and this word combines all these paradoxical traits. Seeing the word, the nearness of far-tarrying indicates the function of the word as a promise, as something that is going to come, the imminent of the word, in which the word’s function is coming but never arriving. The word, as Allen sees it, to come in its coming to us as signs of its coming, in other words, “through the signs of its imminence; these signs of what is to come (teras, monstrum) do not present what is, but what is to come” (107).

Hölderlin sees words as “intrinsically unstable,” that is, acting less as a word than as a mark of wording, “in doing so it also projects beyond this limit into what lies beyond, without indicating what lies beyond.” Another reason for the word to be “intrinsically unstable” is that a word only arises out of its destruction. The meaning of a word only becomes possible through its reading and if we read a word, the word vanishes. Destruction is the only condition for the word to function and “the word ‘is’ only in ruins,” (Allen 111) but as we can see, this ruination comes with creation: it’s not the end of a word but it’s re-appearance.

Heidegger calls the word “mysterious,” and in his view this mysteriousness is intrinsic to a word’s existence. He says, “This essence, as mysterious, and the mysterious relationship between word and thing, Saying and Being, is shown in poetry.” (Heidegger 155).

It’s important to remember that the word is not just an empty place, the precencing of presence or the mark of its endless deferral, but it is also a place where, as Heidegger sees it, “the holy unveils itself,” or “the essence of what is named unveils itself in the word.” (Heidegger 58), Heidegger also says that the words “carry in themselves a hidden truth that a well-conducted interrogation could make appear” (Allen 101). Reading and grasping all these paradoxical traits would make us agree with Heidegger to say that the word is mysterious in many ways. Before I take my discussion to its next stage, I would like to remind you how Heidegger defines this mysterious thing, the word. Allen says that the word, for Heidegger is, “what it says in that it says what it is” (101) and this quotation itself precisely defines what it means to be mysterious; it tells us almost everything without even saying anything. A word is what it says in its saying of what the word is. if we ask what the word says in its saying, Heidegger would respond that it is “what it says.”

Word and Being

If we were to ask Heidegger where Being is located, it seems that he would respond, without any doubt, that the place we can visit Being is in the word. I know he

famously says that language is the house of being, but language is the house of the word too. The reason that I think Heidegger sees the word as the real location of Being, is his saying, which I have quoted before, that the “uncoveredness of Dasein, in particular the disposition (Befindlichkeit) of Dasein, can be made manifest by means of words in such a way that certain new possibilities of Dasein’s being are set free (Allen 29)”. To understand the reason why Heidegger makes such a bold claim, we need to see how he understands the relation of word and being. In *On the Way to Language*, he says, “what gives things their being is the word” (Heidegger 62). Seeing the word as the distributor of Being, he also repeats the same statement when he says, “The word conveys being to another thing” (Heidegger page number). And the “conveying Being” can have two different meanings: one is the word as it conveys meaning, and in this sense, we say that the meaning is the Being, but in this case we define the word as a container of meaning and Being. We can also say that “conveying Being” means that the word has the possibility to create Being, as it creates meaning. For instance, in poetry words are intended not to convey but to create meaning. Words in poetry can convey Being not as the container but as the creator of Being. Gerald Bruns explains how Heidegger sees the word as the creator of meaning, and not as its distributor. He says, “Only the word makes a thing appear as the thing it is, and thus lets it be present” (Bruns 65). He thinks that the Being of anything resides in the word.

In *On the Way to Language*, He explicitly says that “The word gives Being” and he leaves no room for doubt. The word that creates the being, as it creates the meaning.

Word and Poetry, and the Word in Poetry

Poetry is where the word achieves its most creative level. To study the relation of a word and Being, and how a word can create Being, we must study the relation of a word and poetry. I would like to begin this journey by reading a poem, a poem that Heidegger read when he was explaining his thoughts on poetry. The poem is by Stefan George and it is called, "The Word":

*Wonder or dream from distant land
I carried to my country's strand
And waited till the twilit morn
Hand found the name within her bourn
Then I could grasp it close and strong
It blooms and shines now the front along....
Once I returned from happy sail,
I had a prize so rich and frail,
She sought for long and tidings told:
"Not like of this these depths unfold."
And straight it vanished from my hand,
The treasure never graced my land...
So I renounced and sadly see
Where word breaks off no
thing may be*

Heidegger begins his discussion from the end of the poem, where George talks about a place where a word breaks off and, in that place, there would be nothing possible, a doomed place where there is no sign of life and no trace of existence possible. It's important to note that the poet is talking about a "word" or "the word" and not "words" and that brings more emphasis on "break off." We know that the break off appears as an abrupt discontinuity of the word and as the poem tells us this would cause a disaster-like incident. The central issue is to understand what it means for the word to be discontinued. Does this mean that the word discontinues its relations with us or that the word vanishes and suddenly disappears? Any interpretation of this poetic statement in its heart reveals the vital role of the word in human existence. Without words, there would be no world, no life. The example that we are building our discussion on is a poetic word and you may ask how this analysis could be held true for any other word.? Can any word create or extend life? The answer is no: only a poetic word could have a creative position, but Heidegger thinks a genuine word is in itself poetic. He says, "every genuine word is, as word, already poetic" (Heidegger 174).

It seems that for a word to be poetic, it has to be metaphorical, functioning as more than what it normally appears to be. We may ask if what is going on in poetry is that its words become the distributors of Being. Holderlin explains why the poetic word and its naming is the creator of Being. He says, "To name poetically means: to cause the Holy One to appear in words" (Heidegger 263). It is the function of poetry which invites the Holy to appear in the word, and the presence of the Holy in the word brings the world closer to the word, and gives the word the poetic power of worldmaking.

Poetry is not only made of words, but it's also "the work of the word." The life of poetry is centered on these works, and consequently, poetry operates on the limits of its words: "The work of the word not only says the way; it is the event of that way itself" (Allen 95). The work of the word projects the word's limits, and possibilities, and therefore it has the potential of either effacing or succumbing to its impossibilities. A word's finitude not only is the finitude of the poem but also, it is the poem. This finitude is what makes up the existence of a poem, or as Allen puts it, "The finitude of the word is thus central to the practice of poetry" (92).

The word is a path towards the world of a poem: the word establishes the existence of itself in accordance with the existence of a poem and it lives the life of a poem. Poetry is made of the interrelations of its words and how these words function. The word brings its mysterious being into the poem and makes the poem even more mysterious. As we previously discussed, a word is nothing but the absence of an object that once the word wanted to present; it's a sign for an absent thing. The presence of words in a poem causes the poem to become the presence of an absence, or as Allen thinks, "...a sign; a marker of absence and imminent" (Allen 105). Allen bridges the absence of words to the absence of the poem and thinks that this absence is not a full absence; it's the absence of a presence, the absence that attempts to present the presence; it projects the presence, or the presence that is going to happen, its imminence. He says, "By marking its words as the traces of what is no longer, a poem retreats into an absence in which it is itself also marked as not yet" (Allen 47). The word is a promise, a promise of making presence, the word is not the present of a thing but the

promise of its presence, the imminence of the presence, for this, the imminence of the word is how the word represents itself. A poem is the work of these imminences, as Allen explains, “In seeking to respond to the imminence of its word the poem recedes into its own imminence” (49).

The word, as the presence of an absence, or the presence of an imminent present, institutes a special time: a mysterious time, for it is not the past or the future, it is the present that will come, a continuous coming but not arriving, for this, the word “draws the poet into a time that is always to come” (106), and we can add that the word draws the poem into its imminence. For this, we talk about the absence of the poem, or see the poem as the presence of its absence. Allen thinks that when the poem is absent, its words will help us to trace it, not to locate the absent poem but to see its absence, he says, “The poem in itself is absent, but the words, as images of its passage, allow us a glimpse of what it was in its passing” (Ellipsis: 46). The words, in its attempts to give us “a glimpse of what the poem was in its passing,” show the poem in its passing. It shows the poem and shows its passing, or as Allen says, “the words both reveal and conceal a poem’s existence” and that is all the word can do: to show the poem in its passing, to reveal the poem’s concealment, or to conceal the poem’s revelation.

The word in a poem reveals its own mysterious concealment; it expresses its own emptiness and absence. The word would tell us that it’s not what it appears to be, and it shows that it is ‘not’ the thing that it supposes to be; for this, Allen defines the function of poetry’s word as “a saying of its absence in its absence (106).” If the word speaks of its absence in its absence, then the saying itself is absent, the saying doesn’t

even take place, and the poetic function makes us wait for this saying. As a result of this imminence, the poem becomes a place of an unknown event, or an unknowable place, where the poem claims that its existence takes place, the existence that no one has seen yet and at the same time, no one can deny the poem's existence. The secret of the poem's existence is in its language, where the existence of the poem is promised to come there. Allen thinks that the language of a poem is mysterious, and that it denies access, and "withholds itself and thereby draws the reader with it" (47). Once the reader is drawn into the act of reading the poem, the reader of the poem becomes something of the poem: they turn into the poem itself and continue to dwell in the poem. In a close reading of Heidegger and Blanchot, Allen concludes that there is a distinctive tension between a poem and its word. This tension comes from the presence of the word in a poem while the poem itself is absent, and according to Allen this tension is both "constitutive and preventative of our understanding" (46), and that it can never be avoided or settled. This unavoidable tension causes the poem to conceal the existence of the word and appear as a poem without word or enacts as a poem independent from its words. On the other hand, the word tries to break off from the poem, or as Allen says, "breaks up the poem's development and appears as its fragmentation and collapse" (114). The word appears as the poem's rupture, as the finitude of the poem; it allows the poem to experience its existence through death. The poem experiences the word according to Allen as a "textual caesura," experiencing its fragmentation and collapse.

The word's interruption becomes a central element to the understanding of poetry and writing. As Allen demonstrates, Holderlin and Blanchot have developed a

practical and theoretical understanding of poetry and writing as the repetition of interruption. Allen says, "Writing is the chattering of inedible words" (216). The experience of the interruption is what makes the possibility of poetic saying; this very interruption is what constitutes the poetic word and the poetic image. The word interrupts its existence to be reborn stronger and in a poetic way. It is important to note that the interruption happens when the word still resides in its poetic place in the poem; it interrupts when it remains as untouched.

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The poet's relation with his poem is shaped by the interruption of the word. In the process of interruption, words deny any relation to the poet and exile him outside of word's territory. This breakdown interrupts the poet as who he is and restates him in a new relation with his poem. Gerald Bruns, in his introduction to Heidegger's *Estrangement*, sees this interruption as the true source of poetry. He says, "The poet experiences the power of the word precisely at the moment when his own relationship with the word undergoes a decisive break." It's important to note that the interruption of the word cannot be erased, settled or expressed. The poetic experience in general, as Bruns explains, is something outside thought and language and we can only find its

marks. Its marks refuse words. For this Bruns thinks that the heart of the poetic lies in its unspeakability and silence. Silence is not just how poetry quietly portrays itself. It says the unsayable and it's the projection of saying, for this, we say that poetry is the saying in silence, the emergence of silence in saying. Allen decisively explains this impossible condition of poetry. He says, "we can say that a poem enacts the impossible situation of the work of art to an extreme. It finds itself caught between speaking and silence at the precise point where sound emerges into word" (Allen 83).

From Poetic Image to Imagination

Image and its Poetic Function

According to Blanchot, poetry speaks in images and for this very reason, “The essence of poetry is the creation of new images” These new images, in return, give life to poetry and, via the passage of living poems, to the poet. Without image, or I should say poetic image, there is no poetry. It’s the poetic images that create poetry. For Bachelard, an image is the birthplace of everything. He says, “A universe can be born from an isolated image (Bachelard 150).”

To study a poetic image, it is important to know more about an image, and from there we can focus on poetic imagination. We deal with photography as well as poetic and literal images every day: we use cameras to take photos and we use words to make poetic images. What are the general essence and function of an image?

Husserl sees an image as relation: it relates our unconscious mind to consciousness. In his view, it’s how the unconscious speaks to us, or how we speak to our unconscious mind. He thinks that an image is “a thing in consciousness, a relation, an act of consciousness directed to an object beyond consciousness” (Husserl 56). In short, he sees an image as a relation or an action taking place between the conscious and unconscious. Blanchot also sees an image as an act of consciousness. He says, “Images are lived experiences, ‘re-imagined’ in an act of consciousness which restores at once their timelessness and their newness” (46). In his words, an image is an act of consciousness that suddenly and somehow freshly stores the experience, and the

suddenness and freshness remain intact. He speaks of an image as the re-imagined experience, and this projects the possibility of an image in bringing our memories back to us.

For Heidegger, seeing, or in fact making the possibility of seeing or being seen is the essence of an image. He says, “[It is] the nature of the image to let something be seen” (Heidegger page number 250). In other words, an image can be seen as a container, holding or containing something to be seen. John Berger, in *Ways of Seeing*, says a similar sentiment, as does Heidegger, “Every image embodies a way of seeing (11). Roland Barthes, in *Camera Lucida* explains the ambiguous nature of image, saying that “the photograph itself is always invisible” (69). What we see is not the photo but what it contains; the image itself is there for something else, it disappears as soon as it comes to our eyes; “it is not it that we see.” The crucial point, according to photography, and image, is to realize that photography presents not only the absence of the photograph, or image, but is also the absence of its content. The thing in the photo-image is absent. The image shows something that is not there anymore. For this Blanchot thinks that “Image is to fill the absence of something,” (Maurice Blanchot 151) image is there to present the absence of something or to cover up and make the thing absent. In other words, images fill the absence of something with absence. It’s important to mention another function of image in the words of Blanchot: he says an image transforms a subject into an object. Image allows an objective presentation of a subject, makes a subject to be seen. We can see this easily in photography, but it can be seen in poetic images as well. A poetic image is poetry’s objectification force: it turns ideas and

thoughts into things. Let me explain this with the help of an example, a poem by Mark Strand. He starts his poem, called "Eating Poetry" with this line:

"Ink runs from the corners of my mouth. There is no happiness like mine. I have been eating poetry..." It is important to note that poetic images like ink, a mouth, and poetry are not what exactly we mean by them in their literal meanings. It's simply because they are poetic images and function metaphorically, that they act as poetic objects in this poem. We know that ink and a mouth are already objects outside of this poem. In this sense only the word "poetry," which is a subject, is turned into an object. The fact is that ink and a mouth are experiencing a completely different relationship in this poem.

Kuan-Min Huang, in his work, *Image and Imagination at the Crossroads: On Bachelard and Baudrillard*, talks about the major function of image as "deformation." In his understanding, Blanchot thinks that image deforms poetry and this deformation creates the possibility of the poetic unreal to look real. He says, "Bachelard determines the major function of the image not as the formation but as the deformation. Thus, the deformative action of imagination permits a possibility of the "function of the unreal (30)"

The relation between image and imagination brings forth a very special type of image: a poetic image. These types of images are ones that are made by poets in a poetic process. A poetic image can be seen as the highest level of creativity of language. In other words, a poetic image represents language in its best appearance. A poetic image

is how imagination speaks to us. It's the way in which imagination comes in contact with us, and it's also how a poet wants to communicate with us. Summarizing a world into a word, it's the furthest language can go towards a non-linguistic sphere, where language and nature meet each other in silence. This silence is the seed of poetic image, the silence is full of saying. For this, poetic image is an image that is made of impossible; it projects the reality of the unreal. Poetic image causes the poet to speak in a prophetic voice and in animated and vital words in order to uncover the secret of life. Poetic image, in its animation and newness in Blanchot's eyes, embodies psychic energy and opens a future to language.

Imagination

Imagination etymologically comes from the root of imagining and imaging, or making images of what we imagine. For this, image-making and imagining are very fundamental in the structure of imagination. Image making with words brings a word and image into close contact while they simultaneously remain as independent as possible. It's because the literal image has a sense of imaging, or photographic quality in it that a poetic image attempts to become a photograph. A photograph wants to break up the solid frame of its photographic existence and let itself free to become more than a photograph. To become a photograph is a perpetual attempt to become free from what it is while at the same time remaining a photograph: this is the paradoxical and problematic condition of the existence of poetic image.

As Arezou Zalipour explains in her work titled, *From Poetic Imagination to Imaging*, imagination, from its early account, “was considered as the faculty that generates images that are associated with feelings, passions, desires, aversions.” (3) She thinks that every poet creates poetic images connecting his own passions, emotions and feelings to the images he creates. The vital role of the poet's personal feeling in the creation of imagination is an important factor to conceptualize imagination, in Zalipour's understanding, “as an interaction between the conscious and the unconscious” (7) and a window to a human being's hidden inner world. Seeing imagination as a gate, an access, was popular among Romantic poets, for instance for Friedrich Hölderlin, where imagination was an indirect access to the essence of life, and Kant, where imagination was something inside this inner hidden world, a hidden art in “the depths of the human soul” unveiling the nature and making it intelligible to us.

Considering imagining as the root of imagination tells us more about how imagination was evolved from the basic act of imagining to the poetic imagination. Personal imagining is not bound to the principle of reality, perhaps the reason for imagining something is to make the impossible possible. For this, one of the immediate functions of the imagination was understood as transforming reality to a dream and the unreal into the real world. As Zalipour explains, imagination was conceptualized as vision, “as a special or modified way of seeing the world” (7) as a power to see differently, to see the things that are not visible to the eyes without imagination. Visibility has always been an important issue for humans, and it became more important when it came to seeing the image. To see an image was to see the seeing, as image is a

continuous act of seeing. Now we may ask, how could the act of seeing be witnessed in its multiple layers?

The 20th century's prominent philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein introduces his theory of Seeing as the visual experience of seeing plus another experience, which is the interpretation of what is seen. Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei shows that Wittgenstein recognizes imagination as "seeing-as." Imagination simultaneously functions as 'seeing-as' and provides the possibility to see the plural realities of images.

The relation that we make with the world is based on our broad sense of knowledge. We can only relate ourselves to what we know; not knowing is the end of relations. If something is unknown to us, we have no relation to that thing; that thing is outside of our world. Knowing has priority to relation: by knowing new things, we establish new relationships and that's why our relations with the world are always expanding. Imagination breaks up the understanding of the relations that we make and with its magical power it relates us to the things we don't know yet. Building relations with the unknown is the mysterious function of imagination. It does not try to know something first and then establish a relationship based on the knowledge that we have about them; it makes the relationship first and then leaves the task of knowing them to us. Gosetti-Ferencei thinks that the power of imagination in making relationships prior to knowing comes from its creative engagement with "the not-yet-known". She says, "Imaginative thinking is creatively engaged as the familiar is thrown into an unfamiliar light and the imaginer crosses into uncharted terrain" (12).

We manage to live based on the known relationships we have with other people and the world. We know others and the world and this knowing comes from not only the relation that we have with others but the relations that others and things have with each other; this chain of relations keeps us connected to each other and maintains it. Wallace Stevens defines imagination as a force that breaks up the chain of orders and liberates us. He calls this freedom “the strange liberty” and he argues that “imagination liberates us by pressing back against the pressure of reality (27)”. Imagination not only liberates us from a depressing reality and its chain of orders but also frees the world from the hold that we have on it; things become free of our ruling relation that we have with them.

Now it’s the time to ask, where does this strange liberty, or creative element in imagination come from? Does it come from the image or from the emergent meaning in language?

According to Zalipour, in her essay called “Phenomenological Studies of Imagination in Poetry,” during the Romantic period, creative imagination in poetry was associated with “the emblematic language of nature” and a poetic image was the trace of this emblematic language in poetry, a place where the strange whispers of nature could be heard. Advances in the field of linguistics have made countless studies possible; these progressive attempts have resulted in the discovery and recognition of the mysteriousness of human language and its endless power to create meaning. For this, the

strange liberating power of imagination was finally located in the emergent meaning of language. This shift, according to Zalipour, recognized imagination as “a dimension of language and as a medium in creating new meanings (102).” Modern philosophy and phenomenology define imagination based on its relations with meaning and language and highlight the function of imagination as creating new meanings. As we explained, imagination redesigns our relations to the natural world and establishes new relations between old things, making them seem new. The same innovation happened in language: imagination related images and things in a new fashion, keeping the old images, names and things in language as the way they were but relating them differently. The new relation created new meanings out of the old literal relations. The creation of new meanings, according to Zalipour, creates what is called “semantic shock.” “Semantic shock is the result of the mediating role of imagination in abolishing the logical distance between separate semantic fields” (Zalipour 109). Semantic shock is an experience in which the reader or audience of a text goes through a discovery for which the text does not provide an anticipation.

As Gosetti-Ferencei explains, imagination is a cognitive ability that reforms our formal cognitive perceptions. She says, “Imagination draws from fundamental cognitive capacities but also breaks with our cognitive habits, our routine ways of thinking about the world or aspects of it drawing from prior experience; imagination generates something new” (Gosetti-Ferencei 12). Paul Ricoeur focuses on the implications of the involvement of imagination in language and the creation of new meanings from the old semantic field. He calls the creation of new meaning “the semantic innovation” and

names the new meaning “the shock of contradiction” or the “semantic shock.” In his view, according to Zalipour, “The innovative power of imagination in language is defined by Ricoeur as the ability to establish similarity in dissimilarity” (104), and the establishment of similarities and dissimilarities results in the extension of meaning. In different words, imagination in its engagements with language creates new meanings and extends its function and its durability.

Metaphor and Its Function

Jeffery Donaldson, in his book, *Missing Link*, defines metaphor as “carrying across,” a ferry to carry across, and in his view, the function of a metaphor is to “let one stand as a symbol of the other” or “to let one mean the other.” These are the very simple and yet adequate ways to understand metaphor. Metaphor cannot be assumed as a singular entity. There are two things required to make one metaphor, or as Max Black argues, the work of the metaphor takes place in the “interaction between two subjects.” For example, if someone says, “Her dance is a great poem,” the speaker is making a simile between a dance and a great poem: seeing the dance of someone as a great poem.

To make this metaphor, both the factor of the face and the idea of a great poem are necessary. Black emphasizes the nature of the polarity of metaphor, in his view, a metaphor is the overarching of two separate units of a sentence, the frame of a metaphor and its focus. In the example, comparing her dance to a great poem, “her dance” is the focus and “great poem” is the frame of this metaphorical sentence. According to Black, between the two elements of a connected metaphor are what he calls, “a system of

associated commonplaces.” For instance, in the mentioned example, gracefulness, softness and magical-ness could be seen as the system of associated commonplaces. Black explains the interaction between the two elements of metaphor. He says, “When we use a metaphor, we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction” (Black 38). Black emphasizes that the function of a metaphor is to make a simile, not to express a simile; it’s what makes the unfamiliar things look familiar.

Ricoeur and the Meaning of Metaphor

For Ricoeur, what happens in a metaphor is that “the real word is put in for an absent word.” (163) A metaphor is a place of presence and absence, and the real and the unreal interact in a way in which the unreal takes the place of the real one and the absent thing pretends to be the present thing. When I say “John is a lion,” what this sentence could mean is to say that John is brave and, in this sense, the word lion is present but at the same it’s absent from the frame of conversation. I am not talking about the lion at all, even though I use the word “lion.” The audience and I know that this word is here to present something else, to be a placeholder for something else, and more importantly, this word has a referent, and according to Ricoeur its referential function has already been abolished by the metaphorical function. Ricoeur indicates that a metaphor “consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else.” (13) In the example that I gave the name of the lion is given to a person (John) which it does not belong to. When we say that John is a lion, we are naming John as a lion while simultaneously knowing

that John is not a lion. This misnaming is at the heart of the metaphorical relationship. Ricoeur defines metaphor based on this misnaming, or as he calls, as “the transfer” of the meaning of nouns or names. It’s important to note that according to Ricoeur, “metaphor is something that happens to the noun” and turns the noun to a verb because, “metaphor becomes a verb” (25). Misonaming, or the act of transferring names, can be understood as a kind of mistake which intrinsically happens in the process of metaphorization. Ricoeur acknowledges this fact, saying that “Metaphor always involves a kind of mistake, taking something for another thing (23)”. In addition to the involvement of a mistake, destruction is also a condition for the metaphor to take place: it destroys a relation, or an order, to replace it with a new one. As Ricoeur explains the poetic function, which is the metaphor, is the displacement of meaning.” In a simile the similarities are there; they exist in the two similar things. The function of a simile is just to locate and display the similarities, but as Ricoeur indicates, metaphor does not express similarities: it creates similarities, and in the process of creation, one thing is replaced by another thing. This is where the function of a mistake and destruction take place. In a simile we say, “this is like that,” whereas in a metaphor, we express the full replacement of one thing for another thing and say, “this is that.”

Displacement, or a movement from point A to point B, is important in understanding metaphor. The act of displacement shows that first of all, that metaphor is a borrowing act, that we borrow some characteristics from someone or something and give it to something else. Secondly, as Ricoeur explains it, “the borrowed meaning is opposite of the proper meaning” (17). Thirdly, the use of a metaphor is to fill a

“semantic void.” This gap has existed prior to the creation of the metaphor. For instance, in the gap between John and lion. There is no relationship between John and a lion. A metaphor fills this void and establishes a relation.

The essential function of a metaphor is to say, “This is that”: John is a lion, A is equal to B. The idea of $A=B$, in its metaphorical relation, creates a kind of paradoxical ambiguity, since what we actually mean in metaphorical statements is: $A=B$, but at the same time, we know that A is not, in any sense equal to B. For instance, in the example of “John is a lion” we have already established that John cannot be seen as an equal to a lion, yet we make this equalization and we mean it. How can we explain this complicated situation?

We have two different types of approaches in explaining the function of metaphorical relations. One is to say: A is B, and two, to say that A is equal to B. In the first statement, we assimilate A into B: in this sense, A or B is bigger than the other, and it contains the other one in itself. For this reason, when we say A, we have already said the other one, B too. In the second approach, A is equal to B. We keep both entities separate but count them as equal in order to allow the replacement of one another. As Jeffery Donaldson explains, the first approach comes from literary critics, such as I.A. Richards, and the second approach is that of Max Black, whose theory of substitution says that the central point in a metaphorical relation is that A is equal to B and at the same time A is not equal to B, or A is B, and at the same time A is not B, and this complicated situation has not been indicated in either of the two approaches. Jan

Zwicky, in her book called, *The Experience of Meaning* precisely illustrates this issue. She says, “Strictly speaking, X is Y is not a metaphorical claim unless 'X is not Y' is true. In a general sense, an expression is not metaphorical unless it implies a claim of the form 'x is y where x is not y' is true” (Zwicky page 5).

Let me finish my discussion on the metaphor with a quotation from Jeffery Donaldson’s book *Missing Link*. He explains how he sees the whole universe as a metaphor, a connected whole in which everything is related to one another. He thinks we all live inside a metaphor:

“In physics we say everything is related to everything else; things are reflections of one another in space and time; their placement and interaction cannot be firmly established and are governed only by certain probabilities. The total network of possible interconnections cannot be worked out; the computer that might do so would have to be bigger than the universe. We say then that everything is potentially related to everything else. We also say that these infinite relationships are already out there, already active and mutually constitutive of one another. We are part of their manifest expression. It is as though the universe were a total poem already written down in the language of its materials.

Understanding and Thinking Poetically

1- Poetic Thinking

The historical quarrel between poetry and philosophy, or poetry and thinking, can never be properly resolved. In general, poetry and philosophy are functioning in opposition to each other; each denies the credibility and the function of the other in relation to truth. We know, for instance, that for Plato, philosophy has a direct relation to truth, whereas in poetry truth is distorted. Since thinking is a function of philosophy and poetry's relation to truth, according to Plato, is distorted, then poetry has a distorted relation with thinking. This is how historically the relation of philosophy and poetry was understood. Poetry was mostly seen as an unserious thing, a play of words for the sake of making phantasy.

Heidegger questions the directness of philosophy's relation to truth, exploring the essential failure of philosophy in presenting truth, since in it has an arbitrary relation with truth and its expression of truth. On the other hand, poetry for Heidegger, because of its power of naming: "the founding naming of Being for the first time," has a non-arbitrary relation to truth, and for this reason poetry is the only way that can lead us to truth and thinking.

Philosophy takes up language as a material, as a tool, and for Heidegger language itself is where distortion happens. Language, for him is made of layers of dissembling that darken the gap between the language and the one it seeks to present. In opposition to philosophy, poetry never sees language as a present-at-hand material; instead, poetry itself first creates language and then language will freely live its life in

the poem, or in a different word, poetry first causes the language itself, and then language will continue to provide more capacity for the expansion of poetry.

The relation of truth and poetry, or art in general, is very essential to the philosophy of Heidegger. For this, it's important to note that Heidegger views truth not as something embodied in the work but as an event. He says, "Truth does not exist in itself beforehand, somewhere among the stars, only later to descend elsewhere among human beings (Heidegger 59)" He sees truth as an event of revelation, or as he terms it, "unconcealment." As *Aletheia*, truth is the event of unconcealment, the event that uncovers the Being of a being. For Heidegger, poetry is the only place where the event of unconcealment takes place. He says, "Poetry is a founding by the word and in the word" (Heidegger 41) and the function of this founding is to make things appear as what they are, or in his language, "is the setting-itself-into-work of truth (21). David Halliburton, in his book, *Poetic Thinking*, precisely explains what Heidegger means by poetry. He says, "Poetry is nothing other than the elemental way in which existence as Being-in-the-world is discovered, that is, brought into the world. Through what is expressed, the world becomes visible to others, who before this are blind" (Heidegger 11). For Heidegger, poetry allows the event of unconcealment to happen, and for this, poetry makes the possibility of thinking and understanding possible. It's poetry to make things be seen, to appear, and their appearance can only be seen poetically. We not only think poetically, but as Holderlin sees it, man dwells poetically. Thinking poetically means thinking through poetry, having a poetic access to the appearance of things in the world, seeing things through their poetic nominations, their poetic existence and their poetic appearance. Let's continue our discussion with the help of an example, a poem, to

see how thinking is possible through poetry. I chose the poem “Keeping Things as a Whole” by Mark Strand:

In a field

I am the absence

of field.

This is

always the case.

Wherever I am

I am what is missing.

When I walk

I part the air

and always

the air moves in

to fill the spaces

where my body's been.

We all have reasons

for moving.

I move

to keep things whole.

Through reading this poem, we experience what William S. Allen calls the finitude and emptiness of ourselves because we experience the limits of language and through language, we experience our own limits and finitude. The reason that we encounter its finitude in this poem is that this poem, in my view, functions in such a poetic way that provides multiple ways of reading and understanding it. Reading and finding the meaning of poetry is not as easy as connecting dots. We experience the linguistic gaps and try our best to fill up those gaps with what we think the intention of the poet or the creator of the poem might be, and that is not an easy task. In reading a poem, we read it so that we can discover its relationships, its way of speaking. This attempt to discover a poem's relations, in itself, is thinking with the poem. Strand says, "In a field, I am always the absence of the field". He is speaking with us and yet thinking that he is the absence of the field. He is always there but at the very same times he states his absence. He speaks with us from the position of his absence. What is actually missing is not him, but some of his words are not coming out in a correct order. For this, we experience a sense of breakdown, a kind of disconnection, and then he continues and says, "This is always the case, wherever I am, I am what is missing" then we start wondering why he is so insistent on the issue of missing. What does it mean to go missing, especially in the sense that Strand is talking about? Trying to find the possible answers for this question propels us to think, and as continue reading the poem, we continuously think. We will think throughout the poem in order to understand it, but understanding a poem is only possible if we can understand the world that the poem is made of, and for this reason, thinking through a poem is thinking poetically.

2- Thinking Metaphorically

Near the end of “The Rule of Metaphor,” Ricoeur discusses the engagement of imagination and understanding, he says, “But where understanding fails, imagination still has the power of presenting the idea. It is this presentation of idea by imagination that forces conceptual thought to think more. Creative imagination is nothing other than this demand put to conceptual thought” (TRM: 358). He introduces “creative imagination” as the demand for thinking more, as the possibility of thinking more. He continues his discussion, talking about the living metaphor, he says, “Metaphor is living not only to the extent that it vivifies a constituted language. Metaphor is living by virtue of the fact that it introduces the spark of imagination into a ‘thinking more’ at the conceptual level. This struggle to think more, guided by the vivifying principle, is the soul of interpretation.” (303). He says that metaphor introduces the spark of imagination into a “thinking more.” There is a triangle forming the metaphor which sparks imagination and the act of thinking more. We need to understand the mechanics of this triangle. Metaphor itself is the spark of imagination: it is imagination in its highest level. According to Ricoeur, it is metaphor that causes the possibility of more thinking. With the help of metaphor we can expand not only the area of our thinking but the way and the mechanism of our thinking. If our understanding fails and we struggle to provide the necessary and essential need for thinking, as Ricoeur describes, imagination will come to rescue us and make our thinking possible.

In their book, *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explore the relationship between metaphor and thinking. They argue that “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” or, “One concept metaphorically structured in terms of another” (Lakoff and Johnson 5). We use

one thing, the one that is known to us, to understand another thing. The function of displacement in metaphor helps us to extend the possibility of our understanding. The idea of understanding one thing in terms of another thing, according to Lakoff and Johnson, has shaped and structured our culture. “Our conceptual system is largely metaphorical” (Lakoff and Johnson 4). “The way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor.” Our structure of thinking and the way it functions is based, according to them, in the systematic conceptual metaphor. We have a system in place, and it tells us how to think and even what to think. According to Lakoff & Johnson, metaphors are behind much of everyday language and form our conceptual thoughts. They provide some useful examples of conceptual metaphors. For example, consider the metaphor we have for money. We say, “time is money.” The idea of “time is money” has shaped our engagement with the concept of money and the way we deal with it. We usually say things like these:

“You’re wasting my time.

I don’t have time to give you.

How do you spend your holiday?

That meeting costs me two hours.

He is running out of time.

I’ve invested a lot of time in painting.

Do put aside some time for your paper.

Please budget your time reasonably.

You should save enough time to do the next project.

She lost a lot of time when she was in university.”

In all these conceptual metaphors, we use time as we use money. Time is replaced with the value of money and that has shaped the way we see time.

Seeing the concept of time in terms of money expands the way we can shape our thoughts and the way we can think of time. Whether the spark of imagination or metaphor gives us the possibility of thinking more, or the fixed conceptual metaphors structure the way we think and how we think, it is important to remember that metaphor makes us think more.

3- Thinking in Image

Viktor Shklovsky famously said that “art is thinking in image,” defining art not as a form of pleasing but as a way of thinking and presenting artwork as a special kind of thinking, thinking in image. Image is the fundamental base of visual and literary art, and Shklovsky believes that without image, art, including poetry is impossible, he says, “Without imagery there is no art” (Art as Device). If poetry, for instance, is a system of formed images, images that are shaped by the structure and the content of a poem, then what does thinking do with these images? Do we use thinking to figure out how to put

images together in order to make an artistic sense of them? Shklovsky's answer is that poets use thinking to arrange images. He says, "poets are much more concerned with arranging images than with creating them. Images are given to poets; the ability to remember them is far more important than the ability to create them" (6).

Poetry, for Shklovsky is "a particular method of thinking, namely, thinking in images." He quotes Alexander Potebnja, a leading figure in the Russian Symbolist school of poetry and a philosopher and linguist, saying "poetry equals imagery," meaning that the poem, in general, can be summarized to the unique image that it presents. According to Shklovsky, there can be only two different types of imagery, he calls the first type a "practical means of thinking", and the second is poetic imagery, "as a means of reinforcing an impression" (*Art as Technique*). For him, image is a poetic thing anyway, and image remains poetic even outside of poetry. The task of poetry is to create images in order to create poems, for poetry in order to give birth to itself is to first give birth to image. The poet, in his attempts to arrange images, creates images; it's because arranged images bring forth new images on the surface of the poem and renew the poem.

Thinking about images in Shklovsky's theory allows us to read each image in itself and the way each image is related to other images, and more importantly to see how the image is imaging in the poem, what it speaks, and how it speaks to other images. Images will now allow themselves to be used as tools. Image is a wild wanderer. We must let the image use us as a means of its expression, to express itself

through us, to tell us what it wants to tell the other images. Images are connected to each other only through us, through a vivid reader who carefully listens to the silent sound of the image. In our dialogue with the image, we perceive what it wants to say, and what the society of the image, the poem, wants to express. Our attempts in listening and perceiving images provide the way we can think with images. Thinking with images means thinking in images.

4- Gestalt Thinking

In understanding a text, a poem or a movie, how do we understand and how does the process of our understanding take place? In reading a poem, as we read a literal text, we read it word by word, then gradually we move on from sentence to sentence and then stanza to stanza, and eventually we read the whole poem altogether. Reading is a gradual process by its nature. If we read word by word, does that mean that we understand a poem through understanding its words, understanding it through its words, its parts?

Jan Zwicky, in her book *The Experience of Meaning* tries to answer these questions and shows how the process of meaning-making takes place. She discusses Gestalt thinking, in order to explain how our conceptual process functions, then she defines how we understand an art product, a poem for example. In other words, we see the whole first. Wolfgang Metzger, one of the founders of Gestalt thinking says, “The mind imposes coherence on event” (Zwicky 7).

The central point in Gestalt theory is that we perceive the whole first and the parts are perceived through the function of its whole. Zwicky says, "There are contexts in which what happens in the whole is not derived from how the individual pieces are put together, but where. On the contrary, this is at the heart of the matter--what happens is in part determined by inner structural laws of that whole (5)". In Gestalt theory, the parts are interconnected to each other and to the whole, and they function through an organic relation to each other. The whole is more than the sum of its parts and the parts work according to the function of the whole. Michael Wertheimer, one of the leading names in Gestalt thinking, says, "Parts do not become parts, do not function as parts, until there is a whole of which they are parts" (5).

Gestalt perception is not something optional. It is not a tool or a method; it's the only way that our minds function. Zwicky emphasizes that "All understanding- not only of what logic is, but of science is, what systematicity and analytic are, what we mean by 'beauty' and 'moral excellence' or 'language' or 'philosophy' - involves grasp of a gestalt" (4). In reading a poem, according to Gestalt theory, we see and read the whole first and then through the whole we read its parts, but how this can be possible, since reading, as we mentioned, is a gradual process: we see and read the parts first. Here is how Zwicky responds to this question:

Great poems... they present a whole in a manner that invites us to see parts we would never notice before and to see them in connection with parts we thought we knew, but now see differently. They change the way we view things. We become aware of something very like an ecosystem. (Zwicky 5)

In other words, our first engagement with a poem is our attempt to read the whole. Reading the whole through its parts, we read the parts to read the whole. By reading the whole, we are able to discover the poetic relations that have structured the poem. Reading, especially in poetry, is a process, not a singular action. We continuously read, and by each reading we discover the structural relations that define the existence of the poem. Each reading can be an experience of the whole in determining the function of the parts. Zwicky sees the whole of a poem as these fundamental relations. She says, “The real poem, a resonant linguistic structure stands in a real resonant relation to a resonant structure in the world. The real point is that gestalt enacts, or responds to a way the world, or some part of it is” (Zwicky 27). If the understanding of a poem is Gestalt, then the question is what is in poetry to understand? In different words, in our engagement with a text, what we seek is the message in the text. In reading the text, we want to discover the message, but poetry, generally speaking, is not made to contain messages. When we read a poem, if we don’t expect to seek a message, then what we are seeking in reading poetry? To explain this issue, let’s read the poem “Torso of an Archaic Apollo” by Rilke:

Where eyes like apples ripened. But

his torso glows still like a candelabra

in which his gazing, though it’s shrouded

rivets us and gleams. Otherwise, the prow

of his breast could not blind you, and no smile

would ripple down the light twist of the loins

There, to the core, which held his sex.

Otherwise this stone would stand defaced, cut off

Under the shoulders' diaphanous plunge,

And wouldn't shimmer like the pelt of some wild beast.

And wouldn't burst from all its boundaries

Like a start: for there is no place

That does not see you. You must change your life

Now, after reading Rilke's poem, I would like to repeat my previous question, what does it mean to understand this poem, and what is there to understand?

Zwicky tries to answer this question, since the task of her book is to tell us how a poem can be understood. She says, "And poetry is work. It is the work of telling the truth, that is, for perceiving and responding to the real. In all ages and in all cultures, it

springs from the discernment of complex, non-linear, integrated, and therefore resonant structures in the world” (Zwicky 27).

Understanding a poem means to discover the fresh and awaking relations of things in the poem and the poem’s relations to the world. It’s to experience the gestalt, the pleasure of inventing our own understanding of the poem. Reading this poem and any other genuine poem will necessitate understanding a poem as a whole and not in its parts. The experience we had with Rilke’s poem shows us that poems do not communicate a message. They open the possibility of poetic experiences.

Projective Saying

Heidegger, Holderlin and the Meaning of Poetry

Poetry was one of Heidegger’s main subjects of philosophical reflections and in fact, poetry was a ground where he built his non-poetic arguments, such as those involved with Being, using poetry as its platform. Gerald Bruns believes that Heidegger is the only philosopher who took poetry seriously. He says, “I believe that no philosopher since Plato has taken poetry so seriously as Heidegger has (Bruns introduction)”.

In this part of my research, I would like to show what poetry means for Heidegger and what the function of poetry is for him. I have reflected on some of his thoughts on poetry in my previous discussions on words, language, poetic imagination

and the general definition of poetry, but I want to continue my focus on Heidegger's thoughts and build my argument based on how he sees poetry. In Heidegger's reflections on poetry, he uses poetic examples in order to make his arguments. For example, he has extensively worked on a number of German poets, such as Stefan George, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Friedrich Hölderlin, and these practical instances will help us to see how his theoretical contemplations on the nature of poetry's function. Heidegger uses Hölderlin's poems as the main source of his poetic examples, calling him the poet's poet, and taking him as a magical and even prophetic figure. Throughout his works, Heidegger introduces him not just as a poet, but as the poem itself. Heidegger thinks that in dealing with Hölderlin's poetry, we are engaging ourselves with pure poetry. It's because "Hölderlin puts into poetry the very essence of poetry," (Heidegger 64) and for him Hölderlin is the one "who poetized the future ahead," "who attempted to understand all of history in absolute terms." For Heidegger, he was a poet, "who opens new possibilities for the present" and even "he speaks to us from the past." As we can clearly see, Heidegger sees and characterizes Hölderlin in the same way one would read or introduces a poem; it seems that the boundaries between Hölderlin and his poetry are lifted.

According to scholars, such as Marius Johan Geertsema and William S. Allen, we have two different types of Heidegger's when it comes to the analysis of language and poetry: the Heidegger of Being and Time, and the post-Being and Time Heidegger. The pre-Being and Time Heidegger defines and sees poetry completely differently from the post-Being and Time, or the late Heidegger. I will start with pre-Being and Time

Heidegger, to show how he defines poetry and how poetry and Being are so intertwined for him. I will end this chapter with my understanding on how the late Heidegger sees poetry differently. It's important to consider that Hölderlin remains essential to Heidegger in both these eras and during his philosophical evolution. What remains unchanged is how he understands Hölderlin. This fact shows that for him, Hölderlin has actually put into poetry the very essence of poetry, and for this very reason he could remain unchanged for Heidegger. By "remaining unchanged," I mean that Hölderlin remains to be the poet of poets and these ideas haven't been changed, but it's more accurate to say that Heidegger understood Hölderlin differently in his different eras of engagement with his poetry. In his pre-Being and Time era, Hölderlin was, as Bruns puts it, "the primordial namer of beings" (26), as the one who speaks the language of Being and makes dwelling possible; and in post Being and Time, Hölderlin was "the poet of fragments of the song that breaks off when language suddenly takes back its word and leaves the poet exposed to darkness and silence" (Allen 5). For Heidegger, Hölderlin was in a sense, a kind of superhuman poet, who could be read and explained in very different theoretical stages of Heidegger's thinking, and this shows his great loyalty to the poet's poet.

Heidegger and Poetry, Some General Reflections

Heidegger examines poetry in itself as a literary form, and in its relation to other elements, such as language, thought and Being. He studies poetry in its functions, such as worldmaking, founding, unconcealment, naming, saying and showing. In order to

have a better understanding of his thoughts on poetry, we need to focus on what are the essence of poetry for Heidegger, and how poetry is seen in its relation to other elements.

Poetry as Relation:

Language in general, and poetry in particular, is a system of relations. It's these internal and external relations that make the existence of a poem possible. A poem is nothing but the relations that it builds with the word and with the world; building poetic relations is what makes a poem, a poem. For Heidegger, the poetic relation is essential: a poet is the relation that he builds with the world in his poem. For this reason, in his view a poem is the relation that it has established. Seeing poetry as a relation was important for Heidegger because poetry was the only way of making relations possible. We are not naturally related to the world, or to the process of worldmaking, but through poetry (as a literary form as well as its creative function of language), by means of poetic imagination, we can relate ourselves to things that we are not related to. For Heidegger the nature of poetic relation was foundational, establishing the strongest possible connections between humans and the world we live in. For example, Hölderlin in "Another Day," starts his poetic journey with the following line: *"Another day. I follow another path, /Enter the leafing woodland, visit the spring/Or the rocks where the roses bloom/Or search from a look-out, but nowhere"*

He relates himself to the time, "another day", and further relates himself through "another path." He relates himself to a different place by entering the leafing woodland. For Heidegger, Being is how we are related to ourselves and poetry is where this

relation is projected in its most vivid possible way. It is because of this relation that Being is Being, and the poetic relation is the amplification and the repetition of Being.

Poetry and Art as Metaphor

In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger attempts to respond to the question of “what makes a thing to appear as art?” and for this, he reflects in detail on what the essence of art is. For him, art in its essence, is symbolic: it lies about itself when it says something that it is not, Heidegger says:

The art work is, to be sure, a thing that is made, but it says something other than the mere thing itself is. The work makes public something other than itself; it manifests something other; it is an allegory. In the work of art something other is brought together with the thing that is made.” (Heidegger19)

This “saying something and being something else” is what metaphor is. Ricoeur has said that “metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else (13),” and this is exactly what is happening in Heidegger’s definition of art: art is a thing “that is made, but it says something other than the mere thing itself (55).” In this sense, we are calling poetry a metaphor. We know that poetry is made of metaphors so can we now call a whole as one of its parts? If a whole is equal to one of its parts, then what remains of its wholeness when it functions as one of its parts? In my understanding, there is no problem in a whole functioning as one of its parts, and it does not necessarily mean that the whole is equal to one of its parts: since we are considering the function of the whole and not the whole itself. A poem is metaphorical in its essence.

It functions as if the whole poem is a single metaphor. A poem is a whole and therefore can be seen as a single metaphor. In fact, one of the ideal characteristics of a poem is to appear as a single entity and function as a metaphor, since to appear in a poetic world means to appear as a single poetic entity, as a word. Consider Robert Lowell's Epilogue:

Those blessed structures, plot and rhyme—

why are they no help to me now

I want to make

something imagined, not recalled?

I hear the noise of my own voice:

The painter's vision is not a lens,

it trembles to caress the light.

But sometimes everything I write

with the threadbare art of my eye

seems a snapshot,

lurid, rapid, garish, grouped,

heightened from life,

yet paralyzed by fact.

All's misalliance.

Yet why not say what happened?

Pray for the grace of accuracy

Vermeer gave to the sun's illumination

stealing like the tide across a map

to his girl solid with yearning.

*We are poor passing facts,
warned by that to give
each figure in the photograph
his living name.*

Can we not pray for accuracy and see this poem as the living name of a photograph? If so, the whole poem functions to help the establishment of a resonant whole. We travel through parts in order to reach the whole of the poem, considering each poetic element as a “poor passing fact” not able to figure the light of the poem’s living name. The relation between the poor passing facts will bring a vision, to see the whole of the poem.

The Truth of Poetry and the Poetry of Truth

It seems that for Heidegger, the work of art is not a dead or nonfunctional entity. It’s not something in which the work has been done and no work is taking place anymore. On the contrary, it is the working of art, where art works: the art continuously works in an artwork. Heidegger emphasizes on the working nature of an artwork. He says, “In the work of art, the truth of being’s setting itself to work” (Heidegger 259). For Heidegger, what is at work in the artwork is the truth. Truth is the functioning element of any artwork. A work only is artwork if the truth of an entity has set itself to work.

For Heidegger, allowing the truth of Being to work is essentially poetic, for this, all art, “as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of what is, is, as such essentially poetry” (72). The nature of poetry is the founding of truth, and for this “the full force of the truth expressed in poetry” (Heidegger 75). In other words, the happening of truth of the Being, is the condition for a work to become “a work,” a functioning work, or an artwork, and “the happening of truth in a work is the creative bringing forth of a unique being”. We need to remember that the work of art is never a finished project, it’s always on its way to becoming and happening. It’s the setting-into-work of truth. The happening of truth in a work, or the letting or setting-into-work, as Gerald Bruns explains, is a “bringing-forth” and “it’s a bringing out of concealment into unconcealment (106).” Heidegger conceives truth fundamentally different from its traditional meaning as adequate, fairness or any other qualifications. He sees it as an action; something to uncover, or unconceal. Defining truth as unconcealment has a direct effect on the way we perceive poetry, since poetry for Heidegger is the only place that this bringing forth, or unconcealment takes place. What allows poetry to function as the force of unconcealment? What unique and special capacity in poetry allows it to be radically different from any other discourse in terms of its uncovering power? To better understand the unconcealing power of poetry, let me bring “At The Middle of Life,” an example from one of Hölderlin’s works.

*The earth hangs down
to the lake, full of yellow
pears and wild roses.*

*Lovely swans, drunk with
kisses you dip your heads
into the holy, sobering waters.
But when winter comes,
where will I find
the flowers, the sunshine,
the shadows of the earth?
The walls stand
speechless and cold,
the weathervanes
rattle in the wind.*

In this poem we are faced with a natural concealment and its coveredness: the winter brings with it a white blanket and covers everything from us, we cannot see the beauty of the lovely swans drinking kisses, dipping their heads into the holy and sobering water. This beautiful event is covered under winter's blanket and when the spring springs, it removes the winter's blanket and uncovers the beauty of the earth and hangs down to the lake, full of yellow. It's not the spring but the mysterious and magical power of poetry to unconceal the concealed beauty of nature. Poetry is the spring: it brings things into our attention; it makes things to appear as they are. Poetry is the power of making something appear as it is. What allows poetry to be the essence of all of the arts, and what it is that makes poetry, poetry, is its unconditional and non-stop

function of “bringing-forth,” its continuous act of becoming, and its power of setting-the-truth-into-work.

Poetry as Worldmaking

In the Romantic tradition, art in general and especially poetry, was understood as the magical power to re-constitute the world. Kant has famously said that reason is the function of imagination. He says,

The power of imagination, as a faculty of intuition without the presence of the object, is either productive, that is, a faculty of the original presentation of the object, which thus precedes experience; or reproductive, a faculty of the derivative presentation of the object, which brings back to mind an empirical intuition that it had previously.” (Kant page 2006, 7:167)

This quotation tells us a lot about how imagination and its poem-making power is seen as the world making power. As Wallace Stevens, the great poet of the 20th century says the same, “the making of the poem is the making of the world” (167)

Nelson Goodman, in his book, *Ways of Worldmaking*, shows how the process of worldmaking functions and what it is like to go from word to world. In poetry, the rule of word is very central to the poetic creation, and the art of a poet is to make a good use of the words. Knowing how to work with words to make worlds out of them.

Understanding the nature of the word, their varieties, the power to bring different words together in harmony, and more importantly, how their formative functions are essential

to the practice of poetry. Goodman explains how generally, worldmaking works. He says,

Much but by no means all worldmaking consists of taking apart and putting together, often conjointly: on the one hand, of dividing wholes into parts and partitioning kinds into subspecies, analyzing complexes into component features, drawing distinctions, on the other hand, of composing wholes and kinds out of parts and members and subclasses, combining features into complexes, and making connections. (Goodman 7)

In poetic worldmaking, worlds are made by the relation and function of words. The magical power of the word relates unrelated entities and separate things that normally are one. It changes the way things appear to us, and shows us things. Let's continue our discussion with an example, a short poem called "Anecdote of the Jar" by Wallace Stevens:

*I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.*

It took dominion everywhere.

The jar was gray and bare.

It did not give of bird or bush,

Like nothing else in Tennessee.

It's very difficult to offer an analysis of this magical and enigmatic poem, but what we can certainly say and perhaps see is that the world is made by the jar. The speaker of the poem places the jar on a hill, the surroundings of the jar is wilderness. The presence of the jar on the hill causes the wilderness to grow up around the jar until there is no longer wilderness. The tall jar eventually takes over everything. It seems that the jar is made to port the wilderness, to subdue the wild. In the midst of wilderness, the jar appears as a figurative object to port the air and to touch the intact wilderness with its manmade presence.

The repetition of "round" words – "round", "surround", "around", "round", "ground," projects how the jar is the central image of the poem and forms the air and the wilderness.

This world is set up to express the working of the truth of the jar, to unconceal the concealed nature of the jar. Poetry, as Heidegger sees it, is "a founding by the word" and it's "the founding of the being in the word." Poetry, in its founding, is the way of world-making, remaking of the world in words.

Poetry as Dwelling

We remember Heidegger saying that language is the house of Being, but neither language nor poetry is our home. As Heidegger asserts, the primordial essence of human Being is in his homelessness. All we do in life is trying to find a place for shelter, to make a home and bring the comfortable feeling of being at home to ourselves. Heidegger indicates that our proper name is “homeless.” He says, “The human being alone can be called by the name “the uncanny” (der Unheimliche), the unhomely one” (Heidegger 84). It’s clear that the sense of our homelessness is not merely socio-psychological but also ontological. We are homeless in our core foundation. Heidegger the problem of our homelessness is that our very own Being is not our home. He asserts the problem, “That which is proper to the human being lies in this, that the human being does not belong to itself” (Heidegger 16).

Art and especially poetry are here to rescue us, to build a sense of home for us. If we cannot naturally reside in this world, we are being offered the poetic dwelling instead. Poetry brings us in a founding relation with the world, it makes us relate to the place where we live. In our poetic relation to the world, we tend to forget our homelessness, and feel at home in a sense. Dwelling poetically can either mean the nature of humans is poetic, or that poetry consists of humanistic elements. In other words, in some senses, either the human is poetic, or poetry is human. The idea of “man dwelling poetically,” comes from one of Hölderlin’s poems, where he says, “Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells on this earth.” Heidegger thinks that the human dwelling on earth was initiated by poetry, He says, “Poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling” (Heidegger 196). We discussed that for Heidegger the nature of poetry is unconcealment, or letting-into-

work of truth, he also suggests that letting-into-work of dwelling is also the essence of poetry. He says, “we are to think of the nature of poetry as a letting-dwell, as a perhaps even the—distinctive kind of building” (Heidegger 213). It’s important to note that for Heidegger dwelling is a “distinctive kind of building,” in dwelling on earth, we build, dwell and live poetically, but what does it mean to live or to exist poetically? Heidegger explains how he understands Hölderlin’s phrase, “Rather, the phrase ‘poetically man dwells’ says: poetry first causes dwelling to be dwelling. Poetry is what really lets us dwell. But, through what do we attain a dwelling place? Through building. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building” (213).

According to Heidegger, “poetic creation” is a kind of building, it builds dwelling: poetic creation first builds dwelling and then makes us dwell or makes the need for dwelling in us. Now we may ask what exactly the dwelling is and what it means to dwell. Heidegger briefly explains what dwelling is, he says that dwelling is a “distinctive kind of building”. He also sees poetic creation as a kind of building. If dwelling and poetic creation both are a kind of building, then, dwelling could mean poetic creation. In this sense, we can rewrite Heidegger’s comment on the meaning of dwelling. He says, “poetry first causes ‘poetic creation’ to create. Poetry is what really lets us create poetically.” (24). Does this interpretation of his comment seem right?

Seeing poetic creation as dwelling could have broader consequences in understanding both the poetic creation and the human dwelling on earth. We can say that through poetic creation, we dwell, since reading is not dwelling (it’s because reading is not creating something out of nothing, whereas in poetry, the poet brings about things for the first time in his poetic creation) then dealing with poetic creation

cannot be reduced to our engagements with the product of poetry or reading poems.

What it means to say that poetic creation is dwelling, is to say that we, as humans, reside in this world poetically. We can question again the meaning of “residing poetically” in this world and ask what it means to reside poetically. Does this mean that all human beings, in their essence, are poets? Or does it mean that we live on poetic perceptions of the world, or our knowledge of the world is essentially poetic?

Heidegger’s comments on this issue are as ambiguous as Hölderlin’s poem. We will try to read the poem as a whole and see if that will give us a clue of what poetic dwelling can mean for us:

*May, if life is sheer toil, a man
Lift his eyes and say: so
I too wish to be? Yes. As long as Kindness,
The Pure, still stays with his heart, man
Not unhappily measures himself
Against the godhead. Is God unknown?
Is he manifest like the sky? I'd sooner
Believe the latter. It's the measure of man.
Full of merit, yet poetically, man
Dwells on this earth. But no purer
Is the shade of the starry night,
If I might put it so, than*

Man, who's called an image of the godhead.

Is there a measure on earth? There is

None.

The heart of this poem is in the man's attempt to measure himself against the godhead, and then the poem raises the question of "what is god" or "is god known to us?" The poet's response to the question of if God is unknown or if He manifests himself in this world is, "I'd sooner Believe the latter." What does it mean to sooner believe the later? We don't know, in the same way we don't know if God is known to us. It seems that it's the God himself who is talking to us in this verse, or it's Hölderlin who speaks in God's language. Poetry is the language of the unknown, and it's the language of the gods. For this reason, in the eyes of gods, man is full of merit and they are given the reward to dwell poetically. It seems that man is full of merit because he knows the language of the gods, the language of the unknown and shares his thoughts and ideas with the gods, to the unknown. Man's merit is to speak with gods, speaking of a known to unknown, transforming knowns into unknown.

Now we can return to our previous question, does the poem tell us anything about the nature of poetic dwelling? The answer is both yes and no. It depends how poetically we reside in this world.

Poetry as language

It's very important, especially from its poetic perspective, to understand how Heidegger sees the relationship between language and poetry. Heidegger says, "poetry

makes language possible.” For Heidegger, poetry has its own language. He thinks that the language of poetry is prior to any other language. He says, “the original language is the language of poetry.” (79) In this sense, we have only one language and that is the language of poetry, or in short, poetry, and other languages, are the representation of the poetic language. We may ask, why is it so? Why is the original language the language of poetry and why does Heidegger make such an unusual statement? Heidegger is responding to these questions and trying to discover what the essence of language is, or what makes a language a language, and to see if the essence of language is poetic or not. Heidegger shows that the primordial essence of language is “the saying of Being.” It is the unconcealment of the truth of Being. Language is to disclose, to project, and to say what is there, or to disclose the presence of a thing. In the process of his reasoning, Heidegger arrives at the point to appoint poetry as the “saying of Being.” In other words, language in its essence is poetry. It seems that language can be distanced from its origin and turn to something else. For instance, language can become the language of science, or logic, and it can travel back to its origin and become poetry. For Heidegger, as closer as language gets to the “saying of Being” in a projective way, the closer it gets to itself, to its very origin, to become poetry. He indicates this by saying, “Poetry is the most original form of projective language.” (74)

If language, in its essence and in its best appearance, is poetry, then in reverse, poetry should have the same relation with language. Heidegger thinks that “a poem appears as an instance of language.” A poem, in its appearance as the instance of language, will bring its ambiguous nature to the surface of language and make language

evasive. For this reason, language “seems to evade or resist theoretical discourse”. Moreover, he says that language contains something unknown in itself, something that cannot be brought to the language of logic. “Language carries unknown consequences.” (Allen 5)

In Heidegger’s understanding, there is another important issue in the relation between poetry and language and that is the strange function of language in poetry. When a poet starts writing his poem, he has the whole control of his work: whether to start writing his poem or not and in what direction the poem needs to be written. In the process of his engagement with the poem, he starts to feel that he is losing his conscious contribution to his poem and some strange thing is happening. According to Heidegger, it is the language that takes the control of poetry writing; the language or the essence of language speaks in the poem through the poet. In Heidegger’s view, the poet is not the ultimate voice in his poem, or his words are not the final words; he is the one who “merely channels” the impersonal force of language. It’s the language that speaks in a poem. It speaks in a very strange and unknown language, and it “speaks solely with itself” Poetry, in allowing language to speak, allows language to set itself to work, to unconceal its truth. In return, according to Allen, poetry becomes the logos of language, or the logos of logos. “For the turning to language that is logos, occurs in language by way of poetry; poetry is this turning of language onto itself; it is thus the logos of logos” (Allen 11).

Poetry as Projective Saying

The essence of language is saying and saying is the attempt of language in setting- into- work of its truth, to the bringing of what it has covered, or to unconceal its truth. For Heidegger, “saying” is at the center of the poetic function. He says, “Poetry is the saying of the unconcealedness of what is.” It is the nature of poetry to make saying the truth possible and the saying in itself is the nature of poetry: it’s that which allows poetry to express itself. Heidegger precisely explains how the journey of “saying” takes place in poetry. He says,

For, through the words of poetry, the essential Being, or worldly character of the world is unconcealed and allowed to shine forth; poetry lets beings appear in their Being, as what they are. For poetry is “the saying of the world and earth, the saying of the arena of their conflict and thus of the place of nearness and remoteness of the gods. (Heidegger 74).

What Heidegger expects from poetry is not simply the “Saying” of the truth, but a projective way of saying, a saying in which the truth of the being is fully projected. For this, projective sayings for him are the most important function of language and its primordial essence. It will be helpful to our discussion at this point to discuss a poem and its function of projective saying. Here is a poem called “The Ister” by Hölderlin:

Now come, fire!

Eager are we

To see the day,

And when the trial
Has passed through our knees,
May someone sense the forest's cry.
We, However, sing from the Indus
Arrived from afar and
From Alpheus, long have
We sought what is fitting.
Not without pinions may
Someone grasp at what is nearest
Directly
And reach the other side.
Here, However, we wish to build.
For rivers make arable
The land. Whenever plants grow
And there in summer
The animals go to drink.
So humans go there too.

This one, However, is named the Ister.
Beautiful he dwells. The foliage of the columns burns
And stirs. Wild they stand

Heidegger provides a full analysis of the poem in his lecture course, titled, "Poetizing the Essence of the Rivers." He says that the coming fire in the poem is

related to the coming of the day, “It gives rise to the day,” we are eager to see the day, to see the coming of the day now. Heidegger sees the adverb of the coming “now” as a star: it “stands at the beginning of the poem,” and what the star does in Heidegger’s view is to “suddenly risen and that shines over everything.” I don’t exactly know why he is referring to “now” as a star, but for me this is the sign of the sudden arrival of the sun, It shows our wishes for the coming of the sun and the immediate response of the sun to our calling.

If we read the poem in its whole, we will see that there is a functional force, or a disclosive power that wants to share the secret of the poem with us. There are some constructive attempts in the heart of the poem, trying to undo the language code of the poem and tell us what the truth of the poem is while at the same time, there is a resistance, a strange push back to conceal the secret of the poem, to push us away and leave the poem unread, or cause our reading to be interrupted or distracted.

The poet makes the river and the land to speak to each other dialectally. The river utters in the language of water, it “makes arable”, and the land speaks in the language of plants and animals, to grove and drink. Let’s go back and read four lines of the poem: “ *For rivers make arable/ The land. Whenever plants grow/And there in summer/ The animals go to drink./ So humans go there too.*

The poetic language attempts to hide its truth by saying something that it does not mean while simultaneously leaving the door open for word replacement and redirecting the wave of meaning. The key words for these lines are “arable, land, plant,

grow, summer and drink.” The presence of the word “human” at the last line gives the impression that the poem gives us a hint, a clue to another possibility of relation, replacing all the key words with their proper and adequate words in relation to humans, their needs and suffering. The possibility of replacement is how poetic language wishes to share its secret, and implanting current key words projects the language’s resistance to reveal its secret. I will come back to the resistance of language, especially in poetic language, to see what causes its resistance against our attempt to make it intelligible, how the overall transformative power of language is shaped by its desire to conceal and to dissemble. What is important at this point is the projective saying of a poem, its desire to express, to say and to share what its secrets content are.

It’s important to note that defining poetry as “projective saying” means both projective and saying comes into a poetic unity. It is a saying that becomes projected or a projection that appears as saying. This may raise questions such as: what is a poetic saying? And what is the difference between poetic saying and its unpoetic version? Another important question that we may have is, since poetic saying is a distinctive kind of saying, a saying that resides in the neighborhood of non-saying, what is the difference between poetic saying and unsaying? We may also ask how, in Heideggerian terms, a non-saying can be projective, since as the essence of language, the saying, must be projective. Let’s take one non-saying line from *The Ister*, to see how the projection of this non-saying is possible: “ *And when the trial/Has passed, on one’s knees,*
one may feel the forest the forest's cry.
We. However, sing from the Indus

Arrived from afar...

What does it mean for the trail to pass one's knees and how does this passing give someone a clue as to what the "forest cry" is? How can this density say something and how can its ambiguous saying be projected?

Poetry and Being

For Heidegger, Being is not a present-at-hand entity: we cannot locate the Being of a being in order to show what Being is, but we can experience the presence of Being in a being during the time of its presencing or appearing. The presence of Being means its presencing, its temporal state as appearing. When we deal with Being, the presence of the Being conceals its Being, since by presenting itself, the Being conceals its Being: the being makes us forget its Being. Heidegger believes that it's the Being that conceals its presence by absencing itself. He says, "So, the concealment must surely come from Being. Then Being itself is the concealment of itself, and this is probably the only constitution of the possibility of the silence and the origin of silence. Primarily, in this region each time the word becomes" (Heidegger 77).

What causes Being to become a non-Being, to conceal its presence and to deny its saying? Geertsema explains precisely how Heidegger understands Being's self-concealment. He says,

Heidegger argues that Being itself lets poetry originate so that Being can find itself originally in poetry, Being opens itself in poetry in which it remains at

once ‘closed’ as the mystery. As such, the mystery of the saying of poetry consists in the way Being denies itself to itself in the way that it is not yet self-revealed and self-appropriated. Hölderlin’s poetry therefore concerns, in contrast with the metaphysics of Hegel, not the disclosure of un-concealment, but the disclosure of unconcealment as concealed.” (Geertsema 186)

Bringing Being into language multiplies the complexity of the issue: speaking about Being makes Being the subject of our speaking and this automatically evades the Being from the presence and makes it absent. The cost of speaking about Being is its absence, its non-Being. Bringing Being to language causes language to speak the language of Being, in its depth and in its fullness. The language that speaks Being, the language of Being, as Heidegger explains it, is the Being of language, and that is poetry. Poetry has the depth to think about Being, speak the Being and speak the unknown of the Being. We need to ask, one more time, why is poetry the only language to speak Being? Why does Being only speak in poetry? The language of logic, for instance, can only project the logic of Being, making Being as logically as possible and in this case, what will remain to speak is the intelligible and logical aspect of Being: Being in its non-Being. Poetry does not translate Being into any other language in order to express it; it is the original language of Being. Poetry, according to Heidegger, brings Being into language, creates it from the non-Being, from nothingness, then it preserves Being and conserves it. The poetic flexibility and the depth it creates have the capacity to put Being into words, and words, in their poetic essence, communicate the appearance of a Being with its magical complexity.

...But what about things that we love?

We see sun shining on the ground, and the dry dust,

And at home the forests deep with shadows,

And smoke flowering from the rooftops,

Peacefully, near the ancient crowning towers.

These signs of daily life are good,

Even when by contrast something divine

Has injured the soul.

For snow sparkles on an alpine meadow,

Half-covered with green, signifying generosity

Of spirit in all situations, like flowers in May —

A wanderer walks up above on a high trail

And speaks irritably to a friend about a cross

He sees in the distance, set for someone

Who died on the path... what does it mean?

(Mnemosyne by Friedrich Hölderlin)

It seems that in this poem, everything is in its fullest capacity: the Being of the poem is as obvious as if we were to live the reality of the poem at this moment. We see the sun shining on the ground and we also see the dry dust and smoke continuously. The use of “flowering” for rising and going out brings the act of “going up” out of its

ordinary reference to something going up. It incarnates the act of “going up” and embodies it.

As we read the poem, we, as the readers become the extension of the poem and the playground for its reality. We are the extension of the poem and the poem itself is the extension of the Being which it projects. The poem turns the reader to a wanderer and walks him up above on a high trail to speak irritably to a friend about a cross, a cross that he sees in the distance. Both the cross’s path and the distance are the poem itself: the poem is the high trail that gives the reader the possibility of seeing the distance. Perceiving each word of a poem as a vivid projection of Being gives a stronger sense of poetic creation to the poem and makes the relation between the poem’s parts to its whole and the relation of the poem to its reader stronger and transformative.

Poetic Measuring

In “lovely blueness,” Hölderlin raises a very profound question, a question that shapes his poetry and his life. He asks, “Is there a measure on earth? And he immediately responds to his question, saying: There is none. There is no measure or measuring possible, because nothing earthly can measure a human being. According to Heidegger, only poetry has the strange ability to measure: as the only way of measuring can assert how heavenly the world, the earth and the existence of human beings is. Heidegger explains why poetic measuring is the only workable option for us. He says, taking of measure, “does not consist in a clutching or any other kind of grasping, but rather is a letting-come of that-which-is-to-be-allotted” (Heidegger 203). In Heidegger’s

view, measure-taking is what poetry is. It's its nature. He says, "In poetry there essentially occurs what all measuring is in the ground of its being (124)" The task of poetry is to poetize the world, and "Poetizing is, understood in the strict sense of the word, measure-taking through which the human being first receives the measure for the expanse of its being." (Heidegger 200) Measure-taking not only makes everything known and related to humans but also expands a human's presence in his world and extends his existence. Charles Bambach in his book, *Thinking the Poetic Measure of Justice*, argues that the sense of poetic measuring is not exactly what the literal wording tells us.

Poetic measure-taking is, then, less a "taking" than a *releasing* or a *letting-come* of that which cannot be thought in advance: of that which Schelling calls "the unprethinkable". In this sense, the poet takes the measure of that which cannot be taken measure of; opens himself to the event-character of being as that which conceals itself in withholding or withdrawal" (Bambach 4).

Heidegger, in his reading of Holderlin's poems, explicitly shows how the poet implements his task of measure taking, the task which makes him the poet of poets for Heidegger. He explains,

No German poet has ever achieved such distance from his own ego as that distance that determines Holderlin's hymnal poetry. That is the real reason why we of today, who despite all 'community' remain metaphysically, that is, historically entangled in subjectivity, have such difficulty in bringing the right kind of hearing to encounter the word of this poetry. What has for a long time

hindered modern, contemporary human beings, who think in terms of self-consciousness and subjectivity, from hearing this poetry is simply this: The fact that Holderlin poetizes purely from out of that which, in itself, essentially prevails as that which is to be poetized. When Holderlin poetizes the essence of the poet, he poetizes relations that do not have their ground in the ‘subjectivity’ of human beings” (Heidegger 203).

Holderlin’s poetry functions outside the subject-object relations, it poetizes the essence of the relation itself, it poetically measures our way of measuring. Poetically measure-taking our dwelling takes us closer to the essence of the world, to the Being of ourselves. As Bambach says, it brings us “into the proximity or nearness of our being”. Heidegger sees measure-taking as the way to our essence, “Only insofar as the human being takes the measure of its dwelling in this way is it capable of being commensurate with its essence” (Heidegger 206). Measure-taking is a very challenging and difficult task of poetry, it measures, as Heidegger indicates, the unknown, the mysterious and strange entities. It speaks of the absent in its absence. “It measures the withholding power of language and the strange, foreign element of the invisible and the unthinkable.” (Heidegger 5)

Holderlin, in the last line of “Patmos,” says that it seems that it speaks the unspeakable and brings into presence what is absent:

*For far too long
The honor of the gods
Has been invisible.
They practically have to
Guide our fingers as we write,
And with embarrassment the energy
Is torn from our hearts.
For every heavenly being
Expects a sacrifice,
And when this is neglected,
Nothing good can come of it.
Without awareness we've worshipped
Our Mother the Earth, and the Light
Of the Sun as well, but what our Father
Who reigns over everything wants most
Is that the established word be
Carefully attended, and that
Which endures be interpreted well.
German song must accord with this.*

*For far too long
The honor of the gods
Has been invisible.*

*They practically have to
Guide our fingers as we write,*

The poem speaks of the invisible honor of the gods and he says one of these honors is to guide our fingers. It is to say that the gods write instead of the writers. They, the gods, are behind all the genuine words in poetry and creative writing. The honor of the gods guide us in unexplainable situations we encounter with our unwanted and unaware worshiping of non-heavenly things. *“Without awareness we’ve worshipped/
Our Mother the Earth, and the Light/ Of the Sun as well”*

The poem speaks this unspeakable event with its “established word.”

Poetry and poets

In speaking of the function of poetry, how much do we speak of the poet and his involvement in the creation of his poems? If poetry is the house of Being, does that mean that the poet is the builder of the house, or that he has nothing to do with the house of Being? Holderlin indirectly calls poets as the creator of the house of Being. He says:

*And so it is the songs of earth, without danger,
Now drink the fire of heaven.
Under God’s thunderstorms, fellow poets,
We must stand bare-headed to grasp*

*The Father's radiance with our own hands,
 Wrap the heavenly gift as song
 And give it to the people.
 For if only, like children,
 We have pure hearts, and our hands are guiltless*

Heidegger calls on poets, name them as “the sign,” “the demigod” and reminds them of what is taking place in the process of the poetizing of the Being. He says, “the sign, the demi- god, the river, the poet – all this poetically names the one and only basis of historical humanity’s making itself at home and its being founded by the poets” (Heidegger 192). In Heidegger’s view, the poet is standing in between gods and human beings as the one who causes the holy and brings it to the people. Writing poetry, for Hölderlin, is “the most innocent of all occupations” and at the same time the most dangerous of all. Poets, as the demigod, stand in between gods and people, and this standing itself shows that he is neither a god nor of the people, he is from where he is speaking, from in-between. He acts as a mediator, mediating between the immediate and the human being, but how can he mediate the immediate? He receives the gesture of gods and then he becomes the sign to interpret the gods’ gesture, to speak to the people of what the gesture conveyed to them. The gods’ gesture has no sign, no meaning. Gesture can only be gesture and cannot brought to any language. The only choice for the poet is to speak the gesture, to speak it as the gods speak, in the language of the gesture or the gesture of language. As Holderlin says in one of his poems “The Gods speak in Gestures,” Heidegger illustrates that “the founding of Being is bound to the gestures of

the gods, while the founding is at once the interpretation of the voice of the people”
(186)

Geertsema, in “Heidegger’s Poetic Projection of Being,” argues that Heidegger believes that the gods simply make gestures by “being” (189). “The nature of gods consists in being a gesture. As such, the basic elements of language are divine” (39). In Heidegger’s view, the gestures are made of words as poetry from the language of the gods. “Poets are compelled by the holy so that they may receive what is properly their own and find what is allotted to them as their destiny” (189). Consequently, in a Heideggerian approach, poetry is the language of the gods and this language is given to the poets in order to communicate with the gods, to perceive the gesture of gods, their Beings. For this reason, Heidegger says that “the more poetic a poet is, the more freer he is, and the more open and disposed to the unexpected in his saying,” the more freer he is from himself, the more closer he gets to the essence of poetry, to the gesture of gods” (Heidegger 214).

Heidegger also offers a very different and, in a sense, complicated explanation of the relation between the poet and the gods. He says,

The poet names the gods and names all things with regard to what they are. This naming does not consist in the fact that something already previously known is merely supplied with a name. Rather, by speaking the essential word, the poet’s naming first nominates entities as what they are” (Heidegger 41).

If a poet’s naming consists in bringing the entity into being, then the poets bring into being the gods as well as all things, but it was the gods who first gave being to the

poets. If the gods didn't exist prior to the Being of the poets, how could they, as non-Beings, give Being to the poets? Another important issue is to consider that poetry is a monolog environment, and in each poem, there is only one voice, and according to Heidegger, that is the voice of poetry and not the poet. It is not the poet who speaks in the poem. It is the poetry's voice that shapes the poetic conversation. If the poet names the gods and names all things for the first time and by naming brings them to Being, then why is there no trace of his voice in the poem? It seems that when the poet names, his naming brings the poem into Being and the poem becomes the stage of naming, a place for the creation of poetry. Poetry in its enigmatic presence fills the absence of the poet and becomes the transformative force of the poem.

Hölderlin, in a letter to his brother, explains the presence and the absence of the poet. He says,

I will just see now if I still have something that I can bring to you of which I recently wanted to say to you about poetry. Poetry unites the people, but not in the way of a game. I said that it unites them namely, when it is real and really works, with all the manifold misery, happiness, aspiring, hoping and with all its opinions and mistakes, all its virtues and ideas, with all the great and small that is among it, how it speaks in poetry. From the place of poetry springs the wave that in each instance moves its saying as poetic saying. But that wave, far from leaving the place behind, rather let's flow back in its springing forth all the movement of Saying to its ever more hidden source. As the source of the movement-giving wave, the place of poetry harbors the hidden essence of what

from a metaphysical-aesthetic perspective may at first appear to be rhythm” (194).

What Hölderlin refers to as “the movement-giving wave” or “the hidden source” is the internal or external musical character of a poem, a character that appears to represent the vividness and liveliness of poetry’s Being.

Late Heidegger and the Meaning of Poetry

Language and poetry for Heidegger around the writing of *Being and Time* (1927), had an established and in a sense stable characteristic, something that could be defined, something which could have a number of limited and known functions. Language for him was the house of Being, and poetry was the grounding of Being and the transformative force for opening up the world. Art for him was the letting-of-truth-of being to work, to bring-forth or break open the opening of a world. Truth was making something appear as it is, to uncover: the unconcealment was at the heart of understanding the truth in Heidegger’s work. The naming power of poetry was understood as the essence of Being. The poet, by his naming, had the magical and godlike power to bring things out of nothing: poets cause the existence of things by nominating them. Someone could ask, “where were all things before being named by the poet” As we know, those things did exist prior to being named by poets. Heidegger in his pre-*Being and Time* era was a magical thinker who would state vague and unclear ideas, making less philosophical sense than poetical sense, and under heavy influence of Romantic philosophy and theology. Heidegger’s philosophical views experienced a dramatic change after *Being and Time*, a change that almost made a new Heidegger, a

Heidegger who had a different relation with the world that he had made for himself.

Gerald Bruns in Heidegger's *Estrangement* reflects on the late Heidegger and his thoughts on language and poetry. He says,

But if one reads the later texts closely, it becomes clear that they have less to do with poetry as the revelation or establishment of Being than with the way poetry is taken up or appropriated by the withdrawal or reserve of language, its strangeness or otherness as saying, which will not let itself be put into words (Bruns 105).

For the late Heidegger, language is not the house of Being with a fixated sense of qualification, but as something that is withdrawn from itself, something which breaks off and takes its words back. For the late Heidegger language is "the peal of stillness." Its silence turns as its saying, and its absence becomes its presence, or its presencing. Poetry from "the letting-of -truth-of being to work" becomes, as "the letting-go of things". Poetry for Heidegger was a "projective saying" and it becomes the silence of language, or as Bruns puts it, "as the letting-go of language". Bruns thinks that, for the late Heidegger, poetry was understood solely in terms of its relation to language. He says, "As I read the later Heidegger, what comes to matter is no longer (or not just) the relation of poet and world or of poetry and Being but rather the relation of poetry with language" (Bruns 119).

In this chapter, I will try to bring a sense of what Late Heideggerian thinking is. I will focus on poetry, a new concept of poetry from the late Heidegger. It also is inevitable to not talk about language when discussing poetry so I will show what

language meant to the late Heidegger in order to show a better understanding of poetry. It's important to note that through the late Heideggerian thinking we get closer to the nature of poetry. Poetry becomes freer from Being and its heavy and directive rules; it is when we can see a clearer picture of poetry and a brighter sense of its essence.

My aim is to offer a better understanding of poetry and its function. I've always had an elusive relationship with poetry myself, an unfinished and ongoing relation that could never reach the point that it wanted to, but there was always something which motivated me to continue and search for a more comprehensive understanding of poetry. Now I know that the simultaneous presence and absence of poetry was the cause for the unspeakable relation that I had, and still have, with poetry.

Language as the Peal of Stillness

It's impossible to speak about language without using language itself. As Geertsema explains, we simply cannot "step outside language, watch it from above and determine it as an object" (119). We need language itself in order to step out of it but there is no language, at least in its general sense, outside of language. When we speak about language, as Heidegger explains, language becomes the subject of our speaking and it vanishes. For this reason, language for Heidegger "is not a problem but a mystery", and a mystery cannot ever be solved, and it remains always a mystery. Heidegger explicitly explains what it means for language to be a mystery. He says,

The origin of language is essentially mysterious. And this means that language can have arisen from the overpowering, the strange and terrible, through man's departure into Being. In this departure, language was being embodied in the word: poetry. Language is the primordial poetry in which a people speaks being. (Heidegger 131)

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger approaches language from a phenomenological standpoint whereas in his later works, the phenomenon becomes a language for him. This shift in itself can tell us a lot about how his understanding of language evolved. In the first instance, language comes second; it is the phenomenon that defines and shapes the language, and for this, language becomes the house for a phenomenon like Being, or it presents Being and the essence of language becomes the way it deals with the phenomenon of concealing the truth of Being. In his second approach, language comes first, it's the language that speaks, and the phenomenon goes where language was located previously: it becomes the place holder for language.

Language and its Different Aspects in Late Heidegger

1- Language as poetry:

The relationship between art and poetry, as well as language and poetry, were always crucial for Heidegger. He thinks that art is structured poetically. "All art in its essence is poetry" (197). This means that in each artwork there is poetry, or that each

and every artwork functions poetically. A similar relationship could be seen in Heidegger's understanding of the relation between language and poetry, he says that "Language is the primordial poetry in which a people speaks Being" (141).

It seems that language, for him, had the potential poetic capacity but in practice, in order to see language as poetry, it needed to come closer to art, to bring its capacity into practice and act more poetically. Bruns explains the otherness of language as poetry. He says "... language as poetry is something else. It is something other--no saying what, but we must imagine language resisting its own gathering, withholding itself, and refusing itself, always threatening to explode its own forms" (Bruns 118).

Geertsema explains how language was evolved in Heidegger's philosophy. He says, "Heidegger approaches language basically in two ways. In the period of *Being and Time* and the writings preceding this work, he discusses language in terms of what he calls "apophantic speech" as letting something be seen in and from its Being. After *Being and Time*, his writings start putting emphasis on language as a 'poetic founding'" (Geertsema 124). For Heidegger, it's language's "poetic founding" that brings language closer to poetry. In his later works, language appears as poetry and functions poetically.

2- Language as Logos

Heidegger uses the Greek term "logos" to show the nature of language as "a letting something be seen," as saying and projecting. The problem with logos was its

endless attempt to hide itself and hide what it says; this elusive nature of logos comes in more theoretical exegeses in Heidegger's later works. The nature of logos is to say and at the same time not to say, or immediately unsay its saying, as William S. Allen explains, "Logos is exactly that which is not said but is" (84). It hides its saying and appears as something that it is not. Allen also explains how logos hides itself in what it says. "Therefore, the logos lies hidden in some way beneath the sounds of speaking" (Allen 83). Heidegger uses "logos" to emphasize the manifestation of language, its force of disclosure and bringing forth the things that are not there. They appear in their dissembling appearance, or to show how language unites things and brings them together as a force of synthesis. Gerald Bruns also explains how language as logos could vary the way we understand language itself. He says,

Language is not logos, that is, not wholly identifiable or reducible to it, rather it is excessive and uncontainable also there could be no logos without it. language as logos is gathering, ordering, controlling, making sense; it is foundational and just. By contrast, language as poetry is something else. It is something other- no saying what, but we must imagine language resisting its own gathering, withholding itself, and refusing itself, always threatening to explode its own forms (Bruns 118).

3- Language as Phusis

Heidegger employed another Greek term to manifest how art and language strangely function. It's the word "Phusis." For the Greeks, it was "the emerging and

rising in itself and in all things” (Heidegger 41). Heraclitus has famously said that “phusis loves to hide.” Bruns sees the nature of art as phusis. He says, “the work of art is Phusis in the double sense of disclosure in which all things come to appear as what they are and self-withdrawal or self-concealment in which the work closes in upon itself, refuses to give itself up to our penetrating gaze” (Bruns 40). Heidegger defines phusis as the simultaneous openness and closure of a work, revealing and at the same time concealing its truth. Self-withdrawn and self-concealing is the nature of phusis; it loves to hide, but it reveals and then hides what it has revealed.

Language as phusis brings more poetic characteristics to language, making it something opposite to itself, something that loves to hide; an opposition to what we expect of language to say, and to project. Heidegger, by seeing language as phusis, turns away from his traditional view of seeing it as “projective saying.” Bruns explains the poeticity of phusis, saying, “language as PHUSIS is preserved as that which cannot be subsumed or assimilated into our orders of signification” (121). Bruns further calls phusis “uncanny,” “uncontrollable” and “wholly other,” and these create a good sense of seeing language as poetry and understanding its function as poetic. Language as phusis clearly stands in opposition to what Heidegger had in mind in his *Being and Time* era, embracing language as a transformative force, bringing forth the truth of something.

Language as phusis comes forth with several important consequences; one of them is that language dissembles itself, trying not to show itself, its true self, and showing something else as itself. Bruns thinks that it is this phusisistic element that

wants to hide itself. he says, “There is some evidence that the essential nature of language flatly refuses to express itself in words” (Bruns 120). In other words, language does not really want to talk to us. It withholds and veils itself and gives us empty words. For Bruns this withholding is the essential nature of language. He says, “If language everywhere withholds its nature in this sense, then such withholding belongs to the very nature of language. Thus language not only holds back when we speak it in the accustomed ways, but this holding back is determined by the fact that language holds back its own origin and so denies its being to our usual notions.” (121)

4- Language as Estrangement

Language’s attempt to withhold itself from us and also from itself indicates its dissembling character. It shows how language strangely wants to remain unknown and unnoticed. In our ordinary use of language, it doesn’t show itself to us, and instead it shows the things that we want to see, it signifies for us the things that we want to talk about. In this sense, language hides itself behind the things that we are talking about. In our ordinary approach to language, we experience the function of language, and not the language itself; through its functioning, language causes its own absence. This is the indication of how language is strange and for this reason, one of its functions is its estrangement: making itself and all things to look estranged, otherwise and the other. It’s difficult and challenging to study the estrangement of language but in Heidegger’s view, we can experience this estrangement when we encounter language, or when we

experience with language. Bruns stresses that it's impossible to experience with language in our ordinary use of language. He says,

The experience with language is likely to occur when language withholds itself in a radical way, that is, when we are at a loss for words and are forced to leave something unsaid. It occurs when language fails us, or when our linguistic competence breaks down. It is when we have lost control of language – when we are no longer in command of it but have been left speechless by its departure or by the words it withholds from us. (Bruns100)

In Bruns' understanding, our experience with language can only be possible if language withdraws itself from language. From itself, this replacing of language with its absence can bring language to the edge of absencing itself, to become the system not of signs but of un-signs, the system of absences.

The experience of language, according to Bruns, is possible if language “withholds itself in a radical way” in its self-refusal, or becoming the absence of itself. Heidegger indicates that the state of self-refusal in a work is its createdness. For Heidegger, Bruns says, “the createdness of the work of art is the mark of its radical otherness, its reserve, its self-refusal” (42). A poem is a poem because it refuses to be a poem anymore, because it's so radically different from other poems, and it's so radically different from itself. Every reading experience could bring a new status for the poem, and the poem defines itself through the engagement of its readers. Bruns understands “estrangement” the same way as he interprets Heidegger on the createdness of the work of art, saying, “The work of estrangement occurs when the work comes so radically into

its own” (44). If createdness and estrangement both can be seen only as the work’s radical otherness, then we may say that the estrangement of a work of art is its createdness, or the createdness of a work is the sign of its estrangement. When language is experiencing its moment of estrangement, it refuses to show itself, it creates something other than itself for itself, and it becomes the other. “Language now avails itself to us, not for speaking, not for poetic speaking or production, but as language, it avails itself, that is, in poetic abdication or renunciation, the nonspeaking, the not-having-anything- to-express” (105).

5- Language as Silence

As we discussed, language is the presencing of presence and not the presence itself. Language pretends to bring things into existence, into presence, but it only brings the shadow of its presence, the news of its coming but not the -coming -into -presence itself. Language takes a thing in its thingness, a present-in-hand entity and turns it into its absence. Heidegger sees the absence as silence: for him, language speaks in silence, and “language speaks solely with itself” (203). Geertsema thinks that in Heidegger’s view, concealing is silence. He says, “the later Heidegger argues that the origin of language is not an inner subjective sphere, but absence as silence” (Geertsema 21). He continues to say that all of language’s attempts to negate itself is its silence, he says, “However, before positing, language is originary withdrawal, denial and ‘nihilating’—that is, concealment as silence—in Heidegger’s view” (Geertsema 114). If concealment is silence, we may say that unconcealment is “the saying of language;” it’s where

language comes into to Being as a projective saying. The problem with unconcealment is that it comes automatically with concealment: any attempt of unconcealment brings with it a hidden concealment. The unconcealment of language conceals itself and the language.

Geertsema presents an example of the play of presence and absence outside language. For him, history is where concealment and unconcealment happen in its full capacity. He says,

Like history always implies absence (future) coming into presence (present) from out of absence (past), language is a self-calling that calls from out of the silence of the past (absence) beyond that which is present, into the silence (absence) and holding back of what is yet to come, according to Heidegger. As such, language is an ecstatic notion for him. (Geertsema 113)

Heidegger says that language speaks as the peal of silence. He put emphasis on “the peal of stillness” as the main function of language in his later works. For Geertsema, the peal of stillness is the presence of the absence of Being as presencing. Language, in its attempts of presencing, dissembles (silence as the presencing of one thing in the absence of another thing), withdraws and conceals (the silence of its presence) and finally it unconceals (silence as the hidden concealment). In this sense, language is the circle of silence.

6- Language as Gesture

For the later Heidegger, gesture becomes very essential in its relation to the function of language. For him, language was a way of gesturing, a way of revealing as concealment, saying something that does not come as saying but as none-saying. The interpretation of gesture goes beyond cultural and social arbitrariness; it's open not just to the ways it's presented but to the ways in which the gesture is received. We often speak to each other with gestures, and Heidegger thinks that gods speak with the language of gestures with us as well. He argues, "The gods simply make gestures by being," we are the gesture of the gods, the gods speaks to us and to the nature through us, as their ways of speaking, gesturing, and more importantly, as Geertsema explains, the gods, themselves are made of gesture.

Their nature consists in being a gesture. As such, the basic elements of language are divine, in his view. The gestures wrapped up in words as poetry form the language of the gods. Poets are compelled by the holy so that they may receive what is properly their own and find what is allotted to them as their destiny. (Geertsema 189)

Poetry, the Estrangement

As a poet, I've always wondered how to define the art that I myself am doing. The question, "what is poetry?" has been an everlasting question for me. It seems, as Allen explains, the very question of what is poetry, itself, was poetry for me. I was looking to find the answer to my question, but the question, always did and still does,

resists clarity. One of the challenging issues is that we know that there is no universal definition for poetry, and that no one can explain the exact function of poetry. It's obvious that there are many definitions of poetry accessible in literary books but none of them can define poetry in its wholeness, as well as, in its fullness. One of the ways that we can resolve this problem is to define poetry based on one of its aspects: seeing a whole based on one of its parts, for instance: defining poetry as what "poetic imagination" is. In this sense, we can try to show clearly what one of the main traits of poetry is in order to generalize that trait to poetry as a whole. However, this logic won't work, since parts are always smaller than the whole, and also according to gestalt theory, the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts. Another solution is to study the function of poetry instead of the poetry itself. In this way, we would show what poetry practically means, or what poetry will be when we put it in practice. The problem with this approach is that we won't be able to talk about all possible theoretical points of views. Practice specializes a discourse and erases the unworkable and unpracticable parts of the discourse, and therefore we will lose the parts that are not practicable, functioning or functional.

My desire has always been to understand and to define poetry, but the present work won't be an attempt to go into that direction. I am not offering any definition of poetry. What I have tried in my previous discussion or the coming pages to give you: first of all, a general understanding of poetry, then to offer you a Heideggerian approach to poetry, to see how Heidegger understood poetry. I will also reflect on the function of

poetry to show what poetry means in practice, especially from a Heideggerian perspective.

Overview on Poetics

Philosophy can be seen as something that causes clarity and enlightenment. When we are thinking, we are trying to eliminate darkness and to bring more light onto the issue we are working on. For Plato, philosophy was the direct path to the truth. Poetry has instead been viewed by general public opinion, as the opposite of philosophy: the dark side of our life, the realm of the unknown, or even as a transformative form of power capable of bringing more darkness or darkening the relation that we have with ourselves and with the world. For Plato, poetry's truth was distorted; it was untruth. What makes poetry a darkening force is its relation to the truth, it replicates, and it recapitulates what it deals with. Whatever comes to the land of poetry, it comes with a great cost: to leave their true selves in their homeland and go as the name, identity and self of the other. This means to die and be reborn as something or someone other than yourself. William S. Allen explains how imitation in poetry works. He says, " ...whereas poetry, by recapitulating this appearance in another mode, by way of sensible images, is only able to apprehend it indirectly and thus its truth is obscured and distorted. The word that Plato uses for this action of art in general is mimesis, or "imitation," for by rendering appearance in another mode poetry or art repeats it and thereby dissembles its appearance" (Allen 5). What Allen says is that poetry does not directly perceive reality. It communicates with reality through the mediation of its poetic perception. The way

that poetry records reality or imitates it is also problematic: it dissembles not the thing itself but its appearance. This means that what we may have as poetry is the indirect repetition of not the object itself but its image. We remember Heidegger talking about the originality of poetic language: “the original language is the language of poetry.” What does this originality mean and how can something like poetry be original? For Heidegger, poetry originates the everyday language, the language that has been used up by many users and it has lost its sense of freshness and newness. Poetry renews language and reinstates its intactness.

Poetry as the Impossible Name

Gerald Bruns answers the question of “what is poetry?” by offering a set of poetic qualifications, especially poetry’s material traits to show what poetry-making elements are. He says, “To ask what is poetry, one answer lies in its destiny or impermeability, its earthliness, its resistance to penetration by analysis, its uncontainability within grammar, rhetoric, or poetics- its essential darkness, that is, its hermetic character: its otherness” (Bruns 3). Bruns emphasizes the essentiality of poetry’s darkness, as he quotes Hopkins, saying that “the darkness of poetry is not a defect of its language but the essence of it.” It seems that when we speak of poetry’s darkness, we speak of the impossibility of clarity in both semantics and semiotics senses. The metaphor of light, as the possibility of seeing, presents also the boundaries and limits of lights. The metaphor of darkness functions as unperceivable, something that remains outside of our knowing zone.

We can continue emphasizing all other aspects of poetry, mentioned in Hopkins' list, and see them as poetry's essential traits. For instance, the resistance of poetry to our perception, its abundance of meanings, appears as a kind of meaninglessness because their instability presents a solid aesthetic form. The poetic is something that in its nature is not intelligible; it's, in Lacanian terms, made of "Jouissance," a super-enjoyment that denies access to our perceptive attention. Poetry appears as a beautiful thing, and as soon as we want to look at it to enjoy and to perceive it, it turns to the way of looking at itself, it becomes the 'looking' at itself, in order to deny our perception. Allen nicely uses the analogy of a bridge to define poetry. He says, "poetry will always appear for the thinker as a name that indicates an impossibility, just as "nature" does for the poet and "nothing" is for being, a bridge that obscures and defers that which it attempts to reach" (Allen105).

According to Allen, poetry is essentially impossible. "Impossibility" is its name, and the way it appears as a poem. Poetry's impossibility presents itself in different ways; its unintelligibility, its unspeakability and its "uncontainability within grammar and rhetoric". Poetry's eagerness to speak is the structural force behind its creation; poetry comes into existence as the fulfillment of its desire to speak. Poetry's ability to speak is its finitude. It's able to speak but as soon as it begins speaking, it reaches its limit: speaking jeopardizes its essential darkness. For this, poetry can never fully speak. Poetry remains as an unspeakable entity, or in Freudian terms as an "unfulfilled wish" and perhaps this unfulfilled wish is the main engine in all its poetic creation: each and

every poetic creation is poetry's attempt to speak but its wish can never be fulfilled. Poetry, as Blanchot indicates, "speaks to say nothing."

As a creative process, poetry maintains a difficult relationship with literary and cultural rules and regulations. Its created aspect, its metaphorical and imaginative power, demands a rebellious approach to any rule that limits poetic creation. If neglecting the rule is what it seems to be the rule of poetic creation, then what is the foundation of poetry built on? There must be a stable and commonly accepted ground for poetry prior to its building. The tension between poetry's createdness and literary rules presents the conflicting nature of poetry's event to its own products and roles. Poetry's impossibility to follow any rules or laws is also its essential trait: it cannot remain within a system of rules and cannot be governed by any laws.

It seems that wildness is the essence of poetry and it cannot be brought into any stable condition. Poetry is intrinsically a system of disobedience, a system that creates or attempts to create its own rules and disobeys any pre-written and premade rules. It seems that poetry's rules are not rules, per se, because they can potentially change from poem to poem, from poet to poet and can vary from one poetic environment to another. It is important to note that because of the creative nature of poetry disobedience, the true function of poetry literary rules challenge poetry's desire to disrupt and disobey. Poetry's laws present themselves as the language of each poem: the language of a specific poem is where poetry's creative rules are put in place. Foucault explicitly explains the relationship between literature and language. For him, literature is, "a manifestation of a language which has no other law than that of affirming – in

opposition to all other forms of discourse- its own precipitous existence; and so there is nothing for it to do but to curve back in a perpetual return upon itself, as if discourse could have no other content than expression of its own form” (Foucault 327).

As poetry expresses its form, its meaning makes the occurrence of the meaning impossible or delayed forever and poetry becomes the projection of its form. The presentation of form takes the place of the occurrence of meaning, and for this, poetry is where the renunciation of meaning takes place. The displacement of form and meaning causes the impossibility of meaning, and consequently the renunciation of meaning. “Poetry is renunciation of meaning as that which grasps and fixes, that which produces determinate objects. Poetry lends itself, avails itself, to the abyss, ‘the ideal of literature’” (Heidegger 106).

It seems that poetry is nothing but the projection of its impossibilities- the impossibilities that dissemble itself as possibilities--or as Heidegger puts it, as the “the transmission of its own impossibility”. Heidegger speaks of language, saying that “all worldly language . . . has as its origin an event that cannot take place” (129). We can extend his point to poetry and say that the origin of poetry is an event that can never take place. The impossibility of poetry to bring forth its original event is the failure of its language, but this failure succeeds with another creative possibility for poetry. As Allen explains,

But this failure of language is the mark of its persistence; it is what allows a poem to occur without ever taking place; it is not just the event of poetry as Heidegger would read it, but an event that perpetually recedes from our

ability to think it even as it constitutes our sole ability to think it, disabling the possibility of poetry even as it enables it. (Allen 50)

The ability of poetry to “occur without ever taking place” is, in itself, another impossibility: the impossibility to occur, but this impossibility presents itself as an outstanding poetic possibility.

The play of possibility and impossibility of poetry creation causes Heidegger to rethink his definition of poetry as a worldmaking force, as a productive engine or as a creative power. In late Heidegger, poetry is seen mostly from a strange perspective, as an estranging event which ends the ordinary way of seeing things; it destroys what has been built by the everyday culture and flattens it to the ground. Here is Bruns advising us on how to think of poetry in the late Heidegger era: “We must shake the idea that it is anything productive. Think of it rather as a sort of annihilation of whatever is present” (105).

Poetry as “Coming but not Arriving”

The impossibility of grasping meaning in poetry is not the impossibility of the existence of meaning but the impossibility of the meaning to appear or to arrive. There is a sense of certainty in the existence of meaning in poetic statements: we know that poetry has meanings, and it’s there in the poem and we imagine it when we are reading the poem but our imagined meanings do not arrive when we are expecting them. This coming of but not arriving of meaning in poetry creates a poetic stage, where the meanings are absent in a way in which the absence presents itself in the form of a poetic

creation. We can see that the meaning “is” not there and seeing something that is not there creates, not a hope but, a certainty of the thing to arrive. Poetry is the imminence of the arrival of meaning. Allen explains how poetry’s imminent qualification functions. He says, “It is only through this double movement of coming but not arriving that a poem emerges, for in seeking to respond to the imminence of its word the poem recedes into its own imminence” (Allen 49). According to Allen, the imminence of the poem is caused by the imminence of the word, but what causes the word to hold itself back and not appear as what it is but as what is to come? It is because the word is the presence of an absence: it is an emptiness, a place holder for something that is not there yet. The word’s double sidedness causes the assumption to see it as both the absence and the presence. If we see the word as an absence, we see it not just as an absence, but as the coming of the presence as well: “the coming into presence” is embedded in the presenceness of the word. The play of presence and absence in the words causes the language to withhold itself; while waiting for the word to appear, the appearance of the language sinks into its disappearance. The poet and the reader both are affected by the imminence of the poem, for Allen, the reader is trapped in the poetic game of coming but not arriving. He says, “The language of a poem withholds itself and thereby draws the reader with it” (Allen 48). Allen quotes Heidegger, which explains that the imminence of the poem comes from the fact that the poem is ahead of itself, for its imminence means “being ahead of itself and of distinguishing, beneath the word that has worked, the word that shines, reserved for what is not yet expressed” (Allen 48). There is a direct relation between the imminence of a poem with the poet, who is assumed responsible for the poetic promises that he has not yet fulfilled. The poet attempts to

respond, according to Allen, causing the poem to become more anxious and appear as the appearance of its own anxiety. In Allen's words, a poem "emerges as this foreboding when the poet seeks to respond to its demand, which places its appearance in an excessive imminence" (47).

Poetry as the 'letting -go of language'

For the later Heidegger, poetry is not what it had been for years. It's completely a new thing: a revolutionary thing. Poetry is not what makes language possible, nor is it the worldmaking phenomenon and it does not bring forth the truth of a work to appearance: it is not the appearance it's otherwise: the disappearance, the disappearance of everything, including the language, in Gerald Bruns's words,

For the later Heidegger poetry's truth is ... everything disappears: everything (the work of art, world and things, language, even, if we let go of our usual sense or command of things, ourselves)- everything withdraws or withholds itself, shows its reserve or self-standing. Everything is released from our control; nothing is as it was, everything (even Being) is otherwise, no longer speakable (Bruns 3). For later Heidegger, the essence of art is an event of estrangement: its capacity to make the familiar strange, to misappropriate the relations we have with the world, and Heidegger calls this work of estrangement "poetry." In the work of estrangement, poetry is not the letting-of -truth-of being to work, but as Bruns says, "It is the letting-go or releasement of language into its own" In the function of estrangement, poetry, for later Heidegger, shakes up all its relations with the world and itself and defines itself solely based on the relations it has built with language. According to Bruns, poetry functions for

Heidegger, as its relationship with language. Poetry breaks up every vital relation that it has with language and frees itself from all its relations. Poetry brings itself back from language and makes no relation as its new relation. The question is then, how can poetry be understood in its seclusion? In the work of estrangement, poetry has become so radical as to cause its own seclusion, its disappearance and its otherness. For later Heidegger poetry is this transformative force of seclusion, its desire to replace itself with its otherness, its destructive function, or as Bruns explains it, “Think of it [poetry] rather as a sort of annihilation of whatever is present.”

To show the work of estrangement in practice, let’s read the first line of Holderlin’s “In Lovely Blueness”:

*In lovely blue the steeple blossoms
 With its metal roof. Around which
 Drift swallow cries, around which
 Lies most loving blue. The sun,
 High overhead, tints the roof tin,
 But up in the wind, silent,
 The weathercock crows. When someone
 Takes the stairs down from the belfry,
 It is a still life, with the figure
 Thus detached, the sculpted shape*

*Of man comes forth. The windows
The bells ring through
Are as gates to beauty. Because gates
Still take after nature,
They resemble the forest trees.
But purity is also beauty.
A grave spirit arises from within,
Out of divers things. Yet so simple
These images, so very holy,
One fears to describe them. But the gods,
Ever kind in all things,
Are rich in virtue and joy.
Which man may imitate.
May a man look up
From the utter hardship of his life
And say: Let me also be
Like these? Yes. As long as kindness lasts,
Pure, within his heart, he may gladly measure himself
Against the divine. Is God unknown?
Is he manifest as the sky? This I tend
To believe. Such is man's measure.
Well deserving, yet poetically
Man dwells on this earth. But the shadow*

*Of the starry night is no more pure, if I may say so,
Than man, said to be the image of God.*

The poem starts from a colorful place, a place located within color: it is blue, and the blueness is shining out of the place. The blueness, in a sense, is an active color, not a passive one. The wording of the poem and its poetic function has turned blueness into a moving color, a color that takes over the place of other colors. *“In lovely blue the steeple blossoms/With its metal roof/ Drift swallow cries, around which/Lies most loving blue. The sun,/High overhead”*

It is only in lovely blue that a solid object, such as a steeple blossom with all its belonging, a “metal roof”. Is the sun that acts as most loving blue or it is the blueness of the sky that makes the sun to shine? “I would sooner, believe the later.”

The poem functions as a platform to project how measure-taking works: to measure is to rate your heart and test your soul against the unknown and heavenly quality of the God. The poet suggests that the sky is the extension of the God, the extended unknown, the measure for poetically dwelling. *“Pure, within his heart, he may gladly measure himself/Against the divine. Is God unknown?/Is he manifest as the sky? This I tend/To believe. Such is man's measure./Well deserving, yet poetically/Man dwells on this earth”*

The poem is the projection of saying, from the happy steeple to the Man who dwells poetically to the shadow of the starry night. Everything is speaking, and everything speaks loudly, and they speak by their Beings. In the midst of all these loud voices, the poem is full of silence. It says nothing and the heavy silence of the poem projects its stillness.

Conclusion

I know that the question of what is poetry, despite all our serious attempts still remained unanswered and it seems that the question of poetry is more than a question. It is a quest and a call for more thinking and contemplation. In responding to this question, we respond to our own thirst of poetry, our desire to read more poems and to live our live poetically.

The nature of poetry and its relation to our existence were the central ideas in this research and I tried my very best to remain focused on these two issues and investigate the relationship between the existence of poetry and its connection and relation to our own existence. It is important to note that what Heidegger means by poetry is not exactly what we normally mean, a literary product, and for this, we cannot extend Heidegger's arguments on poetry outside of his intended area. My aim in this research was to use Heidegger's arguments on poetry as a platform in order to seek further developments in relation to poetry as a literary product and our existence. What Heidegger means by poetry is the poetic state, the state that we are dealing with poetry, whether writing or reading it. In our engagement with poetry, we are not fully aware of what we are doing; we are consciously aware of what we are unconsciously doing. As

we have witnessed, Heidegger helps us to understand how this complex condition unfolds. Poetry, in the late Heideggerian era, was the letting-go of language. If poetry can possibly release its language, its materiality, it means what is left behind is a pure poetry, a poetry made of itself, made of the spirit of the “impossible name”, its being. But poetry without language does not exist, no poetry can ever walk away from its materiality, its language. Now the question is then when and in what condition poetry comes so radically to itself to release its language? The answer, according to Heidegger, is when poetry and thinking meet each other. Poetry and thinking meet each other only in our engagement with poetry, in our reading or writing poems. When we are poetically invested in a poem, reading or writing it, we become the thinking of poetry, poetry thinks through us. In our poetic engagement with poetry, we become the extension of poetry. In this sense, poetry establishes a thinking relation with us and we build a poetic relation with poetry. Since according to Heidegger, “thinking and being are the same” (90), the relation of poetry with us can be seen as bringing relation. Poetry uses us as a means to make us Being, to bring Being to us.

Poetry and Being meet in our engagement with poetry. In our reading and writing of poems, we become the means that poetry can practice and produce Being, and poetry in return becomes the platform where we can poetize our thinking. In our involvement with poetry, every word of the poem becomes the extended part of our existence, and therefore every word of the poem conserves our Being, and makes our Being extend in the poem. Heidegger calls poetry the extension of our being and that is exactly what we are looking to say here.

In our poetic engagement with a poem, in reading a poem, every word appears to us as a living phenomenon. We meet and experience each and every word of the poem and in return each and every word of the poem meet us and experience our existence. In reading a poem, we give the poem the opportunity of thinking, and the poem gives us its essence, its wondering. Poetry, with the letting go of its materiality, makes us function as its material and for us, poetry becomes the pure spirit of life, our life.

Chapter Two: **Poetry as a Dream**

Freud and the Poetics of Psychoanalysis

Introduction

The aim of this writing is to highlight the similarities between, first, dreams and poetry, and then, between Freudian methods of dream interpretation and the way in which poetry is understood or interpreted.

A dream as a fundamentally unconscious and passive state of mind is analogous to a poem. In dreaming and in writing poetry, we encounter unconscious and undetermined events and activities.

I start my discussion with a focus on a dream, its definition and its relationship with dreamers. The function of a dream or what Freud calls “dreamwork” is one of the most poetic operations outside of poetry; it generates poetic feelings and meanings. I will explain how dreamwork functions, what condition brings forward distorted wishes and under what circumstances it creates pleasure that is the disguised fulfilment of the dreamer’s wishes. Freud’s dream interpretation theory has an identical tone and uses techniques similar to literary theory: it tells us how a dream can be interpreted, just as a literary theory tells us how a poem can be interpreted. Freud’s dream interpretation is crucially important for both dream and poetry, and for this reason, we will attempt to examine how dream interpretation can take us to the dream, reviving vanished and lost experiences.

After discussing dream interpretation, I will move on to poetry and explore the dreaming and dreamlike features of poetry as a whole and in its parts. Words in general according to Paul Ricoeur dream, but when it comes to the function of words in poetry, “words really do dream” (Ricoeur 256).

As we dream while asleep, words dream in poetry: they do things, in a sense, without actually and physically doing them. From poetry’s literary analysis, we move on to poetry’s psyche and discuss how psychoanalysis is poetic in its nature.

Psychoanalysis seeks to reinstate the lost relations between a patient and his world, and poetry is the rediscovery of the lost relations between words and their worlds. Words without relations are empty, anxious, and meaningless. In a similar way, patients with psychical difficulties experience symptoms of anxiety and meaninglessness or have relations in their lives which they experience as devoid of meaning. In both situations, coherency is a necessity. Words imbued with personal meaning and emotion are essential to the practice of both poetry and psychoanalysis. For this reason, we study the source of a word’s power and its psychical value in creating relations and meanings.

The unconscious of poetry and poetry of the unconscious will be our next stage of discussion. Attempting to discover more about unconsciousness, we discuss Freud’s theory of the uncanny and its relation to the production of poetry. Freud’s free association or free talk can be seen as the theatrical and also practical source of automatic writing. I will argue that poetry in its essence is automatic and gives birth to itself through a free and mysterious engagement of the poet. A poem happens as an event by the work of the free association of the poet; it happens as an uncanny and autogenetic event, whereas its shaping and look will be controlled by the poet’s

conscious intentions. It is important to note that how free talk between a psychoanalyst and his patient is similar to the free association between a poet and their poem, considering the poet as the analyst and their poem as the patient.

The discussion of automatism will take us to surrealism and its art, especially surreal poetry. Surrealism emphasizes the rediscovery of the unconscious, bridging the conscious and unconscious and making their communication possible. Surreal poetry will be discussed in a detailed analysis of its capacity, its function, and the factors that make it surreal.

Freud's theory of the dream's navel will help us to locate the boundaries and limits of psychoanalysis and of poetry. The dream's navel, according to Freud, is an irreducible dark spot, an unknown and strange element housed with known residents of the dream, or we may say, of the poem. Freud says that this strange and uninvited guest cannot be removed from the party and we have to accept his unwanted presence with his face veiled (*The Uncanny*, 1919). The presence of the dream's navel comes with important consequences both for dreams and poetry and we will try to show some of these issues.

This chapter will end in returning to Freud and his discussion of the essence of poetry and how poetry returns us to our childhood. According to Freud, we daydream through poetry and art, fulfilling our repressed wishes, the way that a child fulfills his wish to be an adult through playing. In dreaming, we do the same: we fulfill our wishes through dreaming. Dreaming, poetry and play could be different names for the same thing.

Dream, Dreamwork and the Interpretation of Dreams

What is a dream and how does it work? This simple, yet multilayered question has been asked since the time of the ancient Greeks. What happens when someone dreams? We will attempt to respond to this question throughout this writing.

In order to dream, one needs to be sleeping first., Without sleep, there is no dream. The person who dreams has gone to sleep and their physical body is still present, but, in their dreaming, from the dreamer's point of view, they are somewhere else, actively engaging in doing something else. Physically and biologically, they act out, in a sense, what they are doing in their dream, but their body is not in alignment with their dream activity. From the dreamer's perspective, this mysterious phenomenon of simultaneously being somewhere while not being there shows how the human body metaphorically becomes the playground for psychological acts.

In dreams, we are usually more than what we are in our waking lives: during our conscious hours, we do what we can and when we dream, we do things that we cannot even imagine doing in our waking lives. We travel between countries in a wink, we overcome all the physical and mechanical rules and boundaries, and we can fly as easily as birds and go wherever we wish to go and do whatever we want to do. We create worlds with oppositional rules and situations in such a way as to enable us to explore them.

For the ancient Greek thinkers, a dream was a mental disorder, a matter of a human being's inner life, and was not thought to have a meaningful relationship with the outside world. Plato argues that a healthy man (physically and morally) has less violent

dreams. He says, "I can imagine a healthy man who lives in harmony with himself. He goes to sleep only after he has summoned up the rational element in his soul, nourishing it with fair thoughts and precepts" (Plato 260).

For Aristotle, the perception of dream activity was an important issue and he declared that it cannot be done through our conscious sense perception. He says, "If all creatures, when the eyes are closed in sleep, are unable to see; we may conclude that it is not by sense perception we perceive a dream" (Aristotle 702). Aristotle saw dreaming through the lens of consciousness: "In sleep one neither sees, nor hears, nor exercises any sense whatever". According to Aristotle sleep takes our mind to an unconscious state, where dreaming becomes possible.

He concludes, "When one is asleep, there is something in consciousness which declares that what then presents itself is a dream. If however, he is not aware of being asleep, there is nothing which will contradict the testimony of the bare presentation" (Aristotle 706). It is important to note that Aristotle didn't believe that the act of dreaming has a determined and conscious meaning.

For Rene Descartes the similarities between dreams and waking life is that dreaming is a means to re-experience the waking life. Descartes was more concerned with dreams as the projection of the outer world than with the inner human life, as a "royal road" to reality. He says, "I have in sleep been deceived by ... illusions, and in dwelling carefully on this reflection I see so manifestly that there are no certain indications by which we may clearly distinguish wakefulness from sleep that I am lost in astonishment" (Descartes 76).

Before the revolutionary discoveries made by Sigmund Freud, dreams were seen as mental products with no predictive meanings; they were either meaningless and nonsensical or understood through religious symbolism, a form of communication between gods and human beings. Freud's discovery brought the act of dreaming and the human unconscious into full light. For Freud, a dream was "a royal road to the unconscious," a path in between our conscious and unconscious life. Freud rejects the idea that dreams are nonsensical and meaningless. Claiming that all dreams have a meaning, he says, "Every dream reveals itself as a psychological structure which has a meaning, and which can be inserted at an assignable point in the mental activities of waking life" (Freud 35).

Freud locates the origin of dreams in the unconscious and sees them as the way the unconscious acts: it is the function of the unconscious and its gesture. For Freud, the dream is the expression of repressed materials, a release of the unconscious to the conscious. Dreams, then, either express an unconscious wish or release energy which has been accumulated from the dreamer's daytime experience. Dreams appear to our consciousness as visual images, riddles, and "picture puzzle" conditions. They unite "layers of memory, imagination, and desire," and "crucial elements of our psychic life are encrypted in its architecture" (Knafo 67). Freud emphasizes that dreams are not only picture puzzles but combined and composited characters. He sees dreams as "being of a composite character, as being conglomerates of psychological formations" (Freud 129).

For Freud, a dream is "the disguised fulfillment of suppressed wishes; it is an attempt to fulfill our suppressed wishes but since the act of dreaming takes place in fantasy, it is the disguised fulfillment of the wish. Dreams fulfill the desires of the

suppressed wishes, the wishes that cannot come true in our consciousness, the wishes that want to retain their status as a wish. As we mentioned dreams are made of the combination of visual images and auditory elements, and according to Freud, most dream images are “unique experience(s)”. The uniqueness of dream images makes it difficult to remember them, as well as challenging to interpret. In each dream, we are not only faced with unique and uncommon images but also the way these uncommon images are uniquely related to each other. It seems that dream images express unique experiences in unique expressions. It is important to note that poetic imagery has exactly the same quality: each poetic image is unique and the relation between poetic images is creative and unique.

As Freud indicates, dreams are a mental act and somatic process: it is perhaps the combination of these two, the presentation of psychic activities and somatic operations. Further discussing the quality of dream images, Freud identifies four important qualities of dreams. First, dreams are not intelligible. He says: “Now dreams are in most cases lacking in intelligibility and orderliness” (74). Second, they fall into pieces as soon as they come to being: “The composition which constitutes dreams are barren of the qualities which would make it possible to remember them, and they are forgotten because as a rule they fall to pieces a moment later” (Freud 74). Third, they are scattered and mobile, not residing in a particular physical space and constantly travelling. Freud explains their mobility and non-occupational traits, saying, “In this way dream structures are, as it were, lifted above the floor of our mental life and float in psychical space like clouds in the sky, scattered by the first breath of wind” (75). Fourth, they are not fully interpretable; a dream, as a creative work, can never be fully brought

to our understanding: “It is in fact never possible to be sure that a dream has been completely interpreted” (297).

I will return to these qualifications in my comparative discussions of dream and poetry but for now, I will move on to discuss what a dream can tell us.

The Structure of the Human Psyche

Freud’s personality theory (1923) indicates that the human psyche has more than one aspect: it is structured into three parts, the id, the ego and the superego.

The id, according to Freud, comes with our birth: it is the animalistic part of the self. The id operates only to fulfill its wishes, does not think, and has no capacity to perceive or to understand and thus only wants to satisfy its wishes instantaneously. The drive behind all of the id’s activity is pleasure.

The superego, the psyche’s moral campus, stands and functions as the very opposite of the id. It incorporates the value and moral of society. The superego’s essential function is to control the id and subject it to various rules.

The ego functions based on the “reality principle”: it basically tries to balance between “the unrealistic id” and the external real world; it is the decision-making part of the psyche. The ego works by reason whereas the id and the superego work unconsciously. The ego discovers a middle ground between the demanding biological id and the ordering and preaching superego. The superego is the reality principle, and it functions based on cultural and moral values, according to Freud. The superego is the

internalized rule of parents in society. The superego is unconscious and has no knowledge of what it is doing.

Jordan Peterson, in his analogy of the three parts of the human psyche, says, “Seen through a Freudian lens, the unknown is the Id, the known is the superego, and the knower/hero is the ego” (99). Through this analogy, we can expand our knowledge of the human psyche and its relation to reality. The id is the unknown, or as Peterson defines it, “the unexplored territory” (99), the superego is the known or the explored territory, the ego is the knower or the process. The ego is a process in between the culture, the known and nature, the unknown; it mediates the demands of both forces. The ego is in a very difficult position. Perry Meisel, in his work *Freud as Literature* says, “If culture represses, denies man his freedom, the biological or instinctual core of being that it represses still springs forward to speak for man even when man can no longer speak for himself” (37). Meisel quotes Schopenhauer talking about the unknown, the id, depicting it as chaos, saying, “The domain of the id is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality; the little that we know of it we have learned through the study of dreams and of the formation of neurotic symptoms” (95). The ego lives in a very imbalanced and unstable situation, resisting against the two aggressive forces, but according to Thomas Mann, the ego fears the superego far less than it fears and resists “those resolutely biological forces that make up the id’s rugged complexion” (23). In Mann’s view, “The ego, of course, is at the id’s mercy, its situation pathetic” (23) and Freud has famously formulated this “pathetic situation”, saying, “The ego is not master in its own house” (8).

The superego functions based on a moral or ideal principle and doesn't seek pleasure. The id is made of pleasure and knows no reality or moral values. For this, according to Freud, the ego represents the outer world to the id. The superego attempts to bound the unknown and primitive id with the known moral orders and the ego brings a taste of the outside world, the reality to the id. In introducing the outer world to the id, the ego wants to distance itself from the superego, becoming closer to the id. Meisel sees this as the desire of the ego to become independent. He says, "It is to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to widen its field of vision, and so to extend the organization of the id" (97). The ego's distance from the superego brings it closer to the id and that's where the ego feels at home: "The ego is that part of the id which became modified by contact with the outer world" (97). If we were to make an analogy between the function of the human psyche and poetry, we could say that the ego, the knower, is the poet; the id, the unknown; the sexual drive (libido) is the creative force; the superego, the known, is the literary rules and regulations; and finally, the outer world is the reader. The poet, the ego of the poem, wants to mediate the flow of creative energy between the arrival of the unconscious poetic events with the aesthetic, literary and cultural rules in place. In any given poem, the poet seems to be split into two, the one who creates the poem and the one who controls and measures the created materials based on the desire of the poem's superego, and the taste of the readers, or the poem's outer word. The controlling poet introduces the formative taste of the readers to the unknown creative force (the poetry's id). In a sense, the poem is the result of interactive function of the split poet, the coming together of the controller poet and the creative poet and becoming one. A poem in its final state presents the oneness of the two

poets and projects how norms and regulations have been internalized in a creative process of poem-making. The poet, in its essence, is closer to the creative art of poetry, to his id, and wants to distance himself from the ruling power of the superego: the fundamental rules of poetry. The more poets distance themselves from the fixed or established rules that limit their creations, the closer they come to the creative aspect of poetry. The poet, by distancing himself from the rules and regulations that derive from the superego, attempts to personalize or even privatize the rules of poetry and create a sense of his own personalized rules. The poet's private rules won't oppose or deny the general poetic rules, but they reflect the admixture of the id and the superego in his poetic language and declare his desire for independence from the burden of the general rules of poetry. The poet knows that what makes him a poet is poetic creativity and not the constraining rules of poetry and literature. For this, the poet always wants to be the next-door neighbour of the id, the poetic creative force, or even house where the poetic id is. As Freud describes the relationship between the ego and the id, "Where id was, shall be ego" and where the poetic creative force is shall be the poet. The reason for the poet's attempt to take the side of the unknown, the id, the poetic creative force, is clear. It is because "The ego, of course, is at the id's mercy" (23). Without creativity, there would be no poet, no poetry.

Dreamwork

Dreams, as Freud understands them, are nothing but the disguised fulfilment of suppressed wishes. It's time to explain how dreams work and how

suppressed wishes come to our dreams and how the disguised fulfilment of our wishes takes place.

In Freudian dream theory, a dream has two different and distinct phases, or two different parts: dream-latent thoughts and dream-manifest content. Dream thoughts are rational and conscious: they are where the material of dream wishes comes from. Dream contents are irrational and unconscious: they are what we remember and tell an analyst.

Dreams are shaped and formed by two psychical forces: the operation of the first force is to create the dream wish which is expressed by the dream, and the second force operates as a centre for censorship, bringing about a series of distortions on dream wishes. The first psychical force functions as a creative agent, and the second is of a defensive and not creative nature.

As we mentioned, what the first agency does is to create and structure the dream wishes; it does not consider any social or cultural value but instead the value of creation itself. The second agency acts as a parental or cultural representation and allows only valid and valued dream wishes to be released. Freud indicates how the second agency enforces its values, saying “Nothing, it would seem, can reach consciousness from the first system without passing the second agency; and the second agency allows nothing to pass without exercising its rights and making such modifications as it thinks fit in the thought which is seeking admission to consciousness” (169).

The materials admitted as dream content, Freud argues, are visual images and acoustic memory-traces, and therefore any other material forms must be reproduced to meet the demand of the dream work. The dream materials must also have

the quality of representability for this important reason: dreamwork brings about formative displacements, it replaces the materials based on consideration of representability. In addition to representability, the dream materials must present a very intensive form, to function in a manner similar to artwork, or poetry, to be interpreted and understood differently. As Roman Jakobson and later Jacques Lacan show, the dreamwork functions similar to two literary devices: metaphor and metonymy. The function of metaphor is to substitute a concept with another while metonymy relates one concepts with other concepts; in other words, the function of metonymy is to associate concepts based on their contingency.

Dreamwork condenses and arranges metonymically: condensation unites several visual images into one, bringing about a fresh relationship between dream materials and transforming the dream-thoughts into a manifestation of condensed materials (Freud, 299). It's condensation that shapes the final appearance of dreams, as Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan conclude in their work titled, *Psychoanalysis and Psychology, Strange to Ourselves*, "The unquestionable fact remains, however, that the formation of dreams is based on a process of condensation" (421).

Condensation brings things together and arranges them metonymically one to another, and it's a "recognizable gesture toward contiguity" (Paul Frye lecture 12). Condensation can be seen as a distillation of several images into an "overdetermined" unity and metonymy functions as the delay or in Derrida's term, *différance* of signification.

According to Freud, dream condensation prefers to combine contraries into a unity, bringing opposing images and thoughts into one: to represent all the contraries in one and the same. Combining all contraries into one and making them appear the same is “the art of the impossible”¹ and we could see how this impossibility is witnessed most in poetry. In poetry, we are offered the opportunity to experience contrary conditions at once. To show how contradictions can come together in a poem, let’s read a haiku by Kobayashi Issa (1763-1828): “ *O snail/ Climb Mount Fuji,/ But slowly, slowly!*”

This poem brings together the idea of climbing mount Fuji and a snail with its slow motion of movement together. These are the contradictory elements, but the poem makes them as one.

In the relationship between dream and poetry we could say that it’s either the work of the dream to imitate poetry or poetry is an attempt to become a dream-like phenomenon. In both dreamwork and poetry, the language is very condensed, and materials are formed in very intensive relationships. Jakobson and later Lacan emphasized that displacement functions similarly to metonymy and condensation stands as a metaphor. Kenneth Burke, according to Meisel, finds “the rhetoric of mind and poetry to be not just similar but virtually identical” (33). In other words, Freud’s two formative factors of dreamwork, condensation and displacement, are the same as the

¹ It is a book by Peter Robinson, published in 2010 by Liverpool University Press.

In this book, Robinson discusses the possibility of poetry translation.

rhetoric tropes: metaphor and metonymy. Metaphor and metonymy in poetry are as formative and as essential as in dreamwork, and this similarity brings poetry and dreamwork one step closer to each other. Meisel quotes Lionel Trilling, giving a very useful analogy. He says,

Condensation...deals with the respects in which house in a dream may be more than house or house plus. And displacement deals with the way in which house may be other than the house, or house minus. ...One can understand the resistance to both of these emphases. It leaves no opportunity for a house to be purely and simply a house —and whatever we may feel about it as regards dreams, it is a very disturbing state of affairs when transferred to the realm of art.” (Trilling 34).

According to Trilling, art does not just transfer reality, it transforms it into another thing, or as Lacan says about language, “the letter kills the real”.

Dream Interpretation

As we mentioned, Freud believes that all dreams have meaning, and therefore the task of an analyst is to find the proper meaning for each dream. In this sense, dreams appear as texts, and all texts have meaning. The process of searching for the meaning of individual dreams is similar to our involvement with texts. The act of reading in itself complicates the text: in dealing with a text our aim is to discern the meaning, but the text appears as a foreign entity, similar to a text that has been written in a different language. In order to understand a text from a different language, we need a third person to

translate the text from its original language to one we understand. In a similar sense, dreams are written in a different language: a language that is verbal, pictorial and puzzling. Dream interpretation gives us the possibility of reading dreams, reading someone's unconscious mind, and this will bring our unconscious mind to light. Before I delve into the possibility and the meaning of a dream, I need to discuss the Freudian method of dream interpretation and its differences from other popular methods.

According to Freud, there are three distinct types of dream interpretation methods: symbolic, decoding, and Freudian. In the symbolic method, the whole of a dream is to be replaced by another intelligible content. In the symbolic dream interpretation, each dream element has been taken as a universal symbol and the task of the interpreter is to replace each symbol with its unconditional meaning. Freud argues that this method will not function when it comes to interpreting dreams that are not unintelligible. He says, "It inevitably breaks down when faced by dreams which are not merely unintelligible but also confused" (Freud 122). The decoding method does not take the dream as a whole; it seeks to interpret each dream element separately. In a similar way, when we can see each verse of a poem as independent and separate from the whole. Freud further explains how the decoding method functions, saying, "The essence of the decoding procedure, however, lies in the fact that the work of the interpretation is not brought to bear on the dreams as a whole but on each portion of the dream's contents independently, as though the dream were a geological conglomerate in which each fragment of rock required a separate assessment" (124).

The final method is his own way of interpreting dreams: he does not interpret them solely based on their content, as the symbolic method does. Instead,

Freud interprets dreams in their physical, social, cultural and authorial contexts. He explains, “My procedure is not so convenient as the popular decoding method which translates any given piece of a dream’s content by a fixed key. I, on the contrary, am prepared to find that the same piece of content may conceal a different meaning when it occurs to various people or in various contexts” (Freud 129). Freud’s critical point is to realize that the same piece of content may contain or even conceal different meanings: this is exactly how language functions. From this point of view we can see why and how language was Freud’s essential tool in treating and interpreting dreams.

Now, we may ask, how exactly does his method work? Interpretation, in general, means to transfer an unintelligible content into a set of fixed and premade terms and keys. If Freud did not use fixed key terms to interpret dreams, then what was he using and how does it make the act of interpretation possible? He responds to this question, explaining how his method functions:

...We try to replace each separate element by a syllable or word that can be represented by that element in some way or other. The words which are put together in this way are no longer nonsensical but may form a poetical phrase of the greatest beauty and significance. A dream is a picture-puzzle of this sort and our predecessors in the field of dream interpretation have made the mistake of treating the rebus as a pictorial composition.” (Freud 296).

Examples of Interpretations Based on Different Methods

Offering examples of interpretation methods will help us to explain their functions and their differences. For this purpose, I will quote a very famous dream by St. Joseph and try interpreting it using different methods. It is important to note that what we call Joseph's dream is a highly literary version of his dream, much revised and handled, and therefore quite removed from the logic of an actual recounted dream.

Joseph's Dream:

“When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up” (Genesis, verse 41)

The Symbolic and the Decoding Methods on Joseph's Dream:

In the symbolic method, such a dream would be taken as an organic whole; it replaces the whole dream with an understandable narration. In order to substitute an intelligible whole for the unintelligible narration, we must substitute for each and every unintelligible dream symbol a familiar and understandable symbol. The unintelligible element, such as the seven fat cows, can be taken as the symbol of seven years of great abundance; the seven years of wealth and happiness and the seven ugly cows are the signs for the seven years of famine. In this method, the fat cows are the universal symbol of abundance and this symbolic function is independent of the dreamer or the

dream environment. Our attempt to make the dream text intelligible is the process in which we decode the dream's unintelligible elements but when we bring all the different dream elements together and relate them on the base of a singular narration: we are using the symbolic dream interpretation.

Joseph's Dream and the Freudian Method of Interpretation:

In the Freudian approach to this dream, there is nothing universal and no dream element functions symbolically. The seven fat cows in the Freudian method are not the seven great years of abundance and nor are the seven ugly cows the signs of famine: there cannot be a premade meaning for these elements. Freud believed that a dream can only be interpreted in the free association between the dreamer, his dream and his socio-political, cultural and economic conditions. To interpret Joseph's dream, we would need to study what fat calves mean for Joseph and how he sees cows, not just in their broad socio-cultural sense but in his personal approach: what position cows hold in his personal life and how he relates them to other aspects of his life. To find the answers to all these questions, we need to talk to the dreamer; we need to free-associate with him and through him with his dream. In other words, there cannot be a premade interpretation for any dream, including Joseph's. It's the dreamer who dreams and they are the one who leads us to the interpretation of their dreams.

The Act of Dream Interpretation

The act of dream interpretation, as Paul Ricoeur understands, is the encounter of interpretation and the phenomenon of the dream: the analyst attempts to transfer the act

of interpretation upon the narration of a dream. Ricoeur says, "... Dreams attest that we constantly mean something other than what we say; in dreams the manifest meaning endlessly refers to hidden meaning; that is what makes every dreamer a poet. From this point of view, dreams express the private archeology of the dreamer" (15) We speak of interpretation in relation to a text when the text has multiple meanings and the task of interpretation is to detect the right or the proper meaning. The act of interpretation is concerned with what Ricoeur calls "the semantic of desire, a desire for the location of meaning, or in a strict sense, to locate the right meaning. Interpreters employ language to fulfill their desires, to find the right meaning, but as we have discussed in our first chapter, language is a system of distortion: it is where meaning is lost or displaced among other meanings. Language presents itself as layers of dissembling texts, offering multiple meanings for one semantic event or experience, and it functions, as Ricoeur sees it, as "the locus of complex significations where another meaning is both given and hidden in an immediate meaning (Ricoeur 7). Language appears as the interplay of meaning, where one meaning stands to erase and simultaneously trigger another meaning.

In dream interpretation, dreams appear as picture puzzles or complex auditory and visual images. In order to interpret these, the dream must be apprehended as a text. What we are interpreting is not the dream itself, but the dream text. Ricoeur emphasizes the textuality of the dream for the purpose of interpretation. He says, "It is not the dream as dreamed that can be interpreted, but rather the text of the dream account; analysis attempts to substitute for this text another text that could be called the primitive speech of desire" (Ricoeur 6).

In the Freudian dream interpretation, the entirety of the dream will be broken down into reliable fragments, and then, with the help of the dreamer, each functioning fragment will be retraced to restructure or reframe the dream as a whole. In this method, the interpreter, or the analyst, will meet the dreamer or the patient in each and every dream fragment, each fragment will be evaluated based on the experience of the dreamer/patient.

Through the process of dream interpretation, what the interpreter has in front of him is a set of complex symbols; the task of interpretation is to associate the dream symbols and create meaningful relations among them. According to Ricoeur, the act of interpretation moves from obscurity to a lesser density of meaning: from a less intelligible text to a more intelligible one. For Ricoeur, in dream interpretation, we move from the manifest content of the dream to the latent content. The interpreter, with assigning meaning to each element of the manifest content, brings us to the latent content of the dream. The interpretation of dream, in Saussure's language, is the attempt to move from ambiguous signifiers to designated signifieds, or in Lacan's chain of signifiers, from a more complicated signifier to a lesser obscured one and in Derrida's term, dream interpretation presents the difference between the manifest content and the latent.

Dreams are the disguised fulfillment of repressed wishes to transform the dreamer's wishes or desires into dream images, and for Ricoeur, this is the second distortion in the function of dreamwork. The first distortion is the transformation of latent content into the manifest content. The dream images are distorted wishes, or they embody the dreamer's desire. It is important to treat dream images as the conservation

of desire, a place where traces of the dreamer's inner wounds are left off. A proper interpretation can revive them as the dreamer's desire. If each dream image functions as the partial manifestation of the dreamer's desire, then the responsibility of dream interpretation is to associate each dream image with the right one.

The double task of the interpreter is to arrive from the manifest content to the latent content, and from the dream images to the dreamer's desires. Ricoeur concludes that the task of dream interpretation is to bring the dreamer's desires into a clear light. He says, "Since desires hide themselves in dreams, interpretation must substitute the light of meaning for the darkness of desire" (159). Now we may ask, how does the interpreter arrive from dream images to the meaning of the dream, or the dreamer's desire? Meaning is, on one hand, the dreamer's desire or it's what manifests the dreamer's wishes, on the other hand, the revelation of the dream's meaning is the desire of the interpreter.

The general theory of interpretation indicates that interpretation is either seeking to collect the lost element of a dream in order to redesign or redefine the dream's distorted or lost totality or to eliminate or reduce the illusion surrounding the dream that made it impossible to understand it. It seems that these two different "interpretations of interpretation" (Ricoeur 32) are interwoven, or at least one of these two is the resulting point of the other, or one cannot succeed without becoming the other; the goal of the collection theory is to bring more clarity and reduce illusion and the aim of reduction theory is to bring together the lost pieces and parts of the dream, to make it function as a whole.

Before I continue my discussion, I want to make a reminder of the similarities and correlations between dreamwork and poetry, specifically in the above-mentioned areas. Poetic images embody the poet's unconscious wishes and the task of a poetry reading is to "substitute the light of meaning for the darkness of desire" (Ricoeur 160). If poetry's meaning can be understood as the projection of the poet's desire, then arriving at a coherent and satisfying meaning is what a poetry critic desires. It is important to note that by "poetry's meaning" I mean our aesthetic and at the same time meaningful involvement with a poem. In the same way, a poem's manifest content is written and presented as the distortion of its latent content, the initial thoughts and ideas that brought the poem into existence. The task of poetry reading is to enjoy the discovery of how beautifully and meaningfully the poem's latent content has been transformed into its manifest content. The poem manifests itself as picture-puzzle and as complex images, and in most cases the relation between poetic images is obscured, erased or redefined in order to create a poetic language. It is a challenging task to read the functional and constitutive relationship between poetic images, as well as the erased and lost relationship, and through this careful reading locate its meaning.

In Freudian dream interpretation, the dreamer is the foundation and the source of interpretation. Whatever the dreamer narrates is considered as his dream and the interpreter has no right to question the credibility of the dreamer's memory or narration. Not only what the dreamer says, but also, and more importantly, how he narrates, his tone of voice, his bodily gestures and his emotional involvement makes the basis of interpretation. In a similar condition, poetry acts the same way. A poem is essentially how a poet speaks to us, and a poem is read by listening to the way that the poet speaks

in his poem. A poem is not what it says but how it is being said since in poetry meaning is shaped by its form. In poetry, in comparison to dreaming, the presence of the poet has been replaced with the presence of the poem, whereas in a dream, the physical presence of the dreamer is impossible and for this reason it has been replaced by the presence of the dreamer in the process of dream interpretation. In fact, it is the dreamer who acts simultaneously as the dreamer and as the dream. In poetry, the presence of the poem functions as metonymy. In reading a poem, we have only access to the poem and the poet is absent. The absence of the poet is replaced with the presence of the poem. The replacement of the poet by the poem makes poetry as the dominant territory of the poem, whereas in a dream, the dreamer and the dream work together. It seems that the act of dreaming functions as a metaphor, unites the dreamer and dream, and creates a new state of being, a state where the products of dreaming becomes one with the dreamer. The unity of dreamer and dream, in a sense, generates a spoken dream, a dream that speaks both for itself and for the dreamer; the voice of the dreamer becomes the voice of the dream. If we are dealing with a textual dream, the dream that has been written, the unity of dream and dreamer brings about a written dreamer; the dreamer functions as a text or even turns into a textual phenomenon, and the dream, returns to its previous and original acting stage of dreaming, which summates voice and sense to its motionless and non-being practice. The metaphorical function of dreaming brings two new concepts to the analysis of dream interpretation, the idea of the dreamer as a text and the concept of the dream as the spoken phenomenon (dreamer). Perry Meisel, in his work, *Freud as Literature*, quotes Steven Marcus, saying, "The patient does not merely provide the text; she also *is* the text, the writing to be read, the language to be

interpreted” (21). Meisel elaborates more on the issue of the dreamer acting as the text of the dream, saying, “The psyche itself, then, becomes a texture of language, a grid or honeycomb of representations” (21). In dream interpretation, we listen to the dream, speaking through the dreamer, and the dreamer becomes the voice of his dream. The interwoven status of dreamer and dream, or the metaphorical function of the dreamer as the dream projects the Freudian psychoanalysis, according to Meisel, as a movement from libido to language, the coming to presence of infantile and sexual oriented wishes to language, and this movement, for Meisel organizes “the history of Freud’s accommodation to letters”

The movement from libido to language may raise questions such as: in what sense can this transformation be possible? How is a transformation from a somatic act process to language possible? To explain this, we will return to dream interpretation as Freud theorized it. Freud explains what dreams are made of and consequently, how dream materials make the act of dream interpretation possible. He says,

Suppose I have a picture puzzle, a rebus, in front of me. It depicts a house with a boat on its roof, a single letter of the alphabet, the figure of a running man whose head has been conjured away, and so on. Instead, we try to replace each separate element by a syllable or word that can be represented by that element in one way or another. The words which are put together in this way are no longer nonsensical but may form a poetical phrase of the greatest beauty and significance. A dream is a picture puzzle of this sort and our predecessors in the field of dream-interpretation have made the mistake of treating the rebus as a

pictorial composition: and as such it has seemed to them nonsensical and worthless” (296).

Dream interpretation, in Freud’s words, is the attempt to replace “each separate dream element” by a “syllable or word” and this replacement will move us from the realm of psychological elements to the realm of language. In dreams, we see everything as objects, as things, even as Freud mentions we see words as things. In this sense, dream interpretation is the attempt to narrate a very objective experience, an experience made of things and objects. For this reason, the narration of dreams is an attempt to bring a set of complex “picture puzzle” conditions into language. Freud makes an analogy between dream and the Chinese script, emphasizing the complexity and obscurity of the dream text, he says,

[The dream symbols] frequently have more than one or even several meanings, and, as with the Chinese script, the correct interpretation can only be arrived at on each occasion from the context. This ambiguity of the symbols links up with the characteristic of dreams for admitting of ‘over-interpretation’ for representing in a single piece of content thoughts and wishes which are often widely divergent in their nature (367).

Freud speaks of the possibility of a final and correct version of interpretation but at the same time, warns that the Chinese script, similar to the divergent phenomena of dream images, won’t represent “a single piece of content”. If dreams are similar to texts, then how can someone claim that a particular text has only one correct interpretation? How can we arrive from a multifunctional relationship between dream images in a dream to a basic and a single functional relation in a text that presumably

has a single interpretation? Considering a unique and exclusive interpretation for a dream would inevitably bring us to the erroneous conclusion that for each text, there is a pre-written text, a text in Derrida's sense, "which would be already there, immobile" or in Meisel's language, "a text of truth behind the dream symbols" (47).

According to Derrida, the interpretative quest is always deferred: meaning is the interpreter's wish and it cannot be fulfilled. What interpretation brings is the disguised fulfillment of the interpreter's wish. Meaning is barred from the text because the literal meaning is the death of the text. Harold Bloom explains why "the correct meaning" disguises itself. He says, "Literal meaning equals anteriority equals an earlier state of meaning equals an earlier state of things equals death equals literal meaning" (405). Dream interpretation cannot arrive at a final and literal interpretation because the correct interpretation is the collapse of interpretation; interpretation must always remain distant from the literal meaning because it creates a fiction from the meaning it wishes to locate. It seems that dream interpretation attempts to interpret dreams but at the same time it could create another dream; the attempt to decode a dream may itself become a new coded dream, or in Edgar Hyman's words, dream interpretation is "a poem about a poem" (21).

In comparative reviews of poetry, we don't generally speak of "poetry interpretation" in reading a poem in its original language. We speak of poetry interpretation only if we deal with the transportation of a poem into another language. In opposition to this general view, Peter Robinson suggests that any attempt to understand a poem is an attempt of translation and that reading, even in our native tongue, essentially functions as translation. Robinson explains why reading is

translating. He says, “reading is already translation, and translation is translation for the second time” (75). We can say that poetry reading is already interpretation. When we read a poem, we interpret the poem for ourselves in order to understand it. In this sense we could say that we, the readers, become the analyst, the poem becomes our patient, or the analysand, and the poet, in his seclusion, functions as the dream. The poem, or in psychoanalytic terms, the dreamer, speaks to us, as the analyzed speaks to the analyst: we listen to the poem speaking to us through its monologue communication. We become active listeners and by way of listening, allow the poem to speak to us intimately. John Forrester argues that in Freudian psychoanalysis, the dreamer is the only trace of the dream. He says, “in Freud’s method: it imposes the task of interpretation upon the dreamer himself” (75). In order for a patient to narrate their dreams, they must return to their dream and dream again. The narration of their dream turns into the dream of their narration. If a dreamer is the only source we have for (re)constructing a dream, as Forrester argues, then a poem is the only source we have for (re)constructing a poet.

In the same manner, when we read a poem, the poem speaks to us, or in different words, the poem narrates its experience of being a poem: it narrates the poet, its dream. Through its narration, a poem attempts to fulfill its suppressed wishes. By talking to us, the poem tries to seduce us, to bring us one step closer to itself. We, as the readers and the analysts, are victims to poetry’s mysterious seduction and for this reason the act of reading poetry functions as our attempts to fulfill our repressed wishes, our wish to uncover the veiled presence of poetry. If psychoanalysis is the talking cure, reading poetry functions in the very same way. Poems do not speak to us directly. It is us, the readers, who voice the written words of the poem; we speak for the poem and listen to

our own speaking; when we read a poem, we read it in our own voice— we hear our own voice, our own intonation, accent, rhythm and timbre. When we speak for the poem, we speak for the poem and not for ourselves: we become the poem in order to speak as the poem. The poem, in its metaphorical being, brings the poet and the way of their saying, the poem, together and presents them as one. In reading a poem, we read the poem and the poet, or what Michel Foucault calls “the function of the author” (What is an Author).

It is important to note that without reading the poet, our desire to read the poem will not be fully accomplished, we need the poet to read their poem while simultaneously needing the poem to read the poet. Reading poetry, similar to listening in psychoanalytic sessions, is a multi-functional phenomenon. We have the freedom to read or leave the poem unread, but as soon as we start reading a good poem, the aesthetic and meaning-making gravity of reading poetry may pull us in, strip us of our freedom and force us to remain in the poem and in a perpetual and everlasting engagement of reading the poem.

Helen Vendler, in her book called *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*, analyzes Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken” and comments on the functionality of poetry. Here are the first lines of this poem:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth.

Reading poems can fundamentally change our relation not only with the world but also with ourselves: the poem's words bring a new world to us. Vendler argues that these magical changes come from the act of reading. She says, "To read these lines is to be transformed into the hesitating speaker. We do not listen to him; we become him" (Vendler 102). According to Vendler, in poetry reading, the act of reading functions as an innovative force and diversifies us into a fundamentally new position, transforming the reader of the poem, the one who has been seen as the consumer of the poetic products, to the creator of the poem. If we re-read Vendler's comments in psychoanalytic terms, we can argue that in her view, the act of dream interpretation transforms the dream interpreter, the analyst, into the dream. In other words, to interpret means to become the subject of your interpretation. It doesn't mean to interpret yourself but to become one with the subject of your investigation. To become one with the subject of your investigation is what modern psychology calls "empathy". To understand someone, you have to be able to feel what they're feeling, be in their shoes, experience what they're experiencing, blur the distinction between self and other. Before Psychology, "understanding" someone just involved knowing their types.

I argue that poetry reading unites the poet and the poem, or in psychoanalytic terms, the dream and the dreamer, and in Vendler's view, the act of reading unifies the reader and the poet (the dream interpreter and the dream). It's important to explain here what I mean by "poet". We know that the poet does not exist in the poem that we are reading. If that is the case, what are we referring to when we speak of poets? It's a very difficult task to locate and define poets, but what I can say here is that the poet is not just

the effect we are getting from a poem. It is the effect of the poem plus the way in which the poem wanted to affect us. The poet is the one who speaks for the poem and as the poem.

Consequently, dreams (poems) are the center of both metaphorical unifications: on one hand, the creator of the dream, cannot create their dream unless they turn in to their dream: on the other hand, the reader of a dream (the interpreter) must become the dream that he seeks to interpret it. In both cases, the solution for creation and interpretation is to become the dream; dreaming promotes itself as the only solution for both quests. In the language of poetry: to read or to write poems, we must become the poem itself. But how can it be possible for us to become a poem? What does it mean and in what sense can we turn into a poem?

The Incompletion of Poetry

For Vendler, poems are made of words and of the gaps in between words. The act of reading a poem is insufficient if the reader is exclusively paying attention to the words of the poem. To read a poem, or in Jakobson's term, to read a "poetic function," we must read the gaps, and the empty places in between words: we are asked to read the present words in a poem as well as the absence and the gaps that these words present. Vendler, speaking of lyric poetry, emphasizes that reading the gaps is more important than reading the words. She says, "In fact, lyric depends on gaps, and depends even more on the reader to fill in the gaps. It is suggestive rather than exhaustive" (96). Some words may not be present in the poem, but their absences are as present as their

presence. The meaning of reading poems is to fill in the gaps between words, and this task is as creative as the creation of poems in the first place. The reader, in his creative engagement of reading the poem, participates in the creative process and takes a stance where the poet stands. The reader becomes the poet when the poet is absent.

A poet leaves his newly created poem on its own after they accomplish their task of creation. The newly created poem is an incomplete artwork, and the poet has neither the desire and nor the power to complete it. All poetry books are filled with incomplete and unfinished poems, waiting to be finished and brought to their ends. The reader, as the new poet, is the one who will bring completion to the poetic project. It's important to note that the poem is never finished. Readers bring their individual readings to the poem but even those readings would contain gaps of always further potential. Frye talks about the typological relationship between writer and reader, where the poet creates potentials that are latent in the text and the reader fulfils some of those potentials in her own reading.

Let's review an example, a poem by Arthur Rimbaud entitled "Vowels":

A black, *E* white, *I* red, *U* green, *O* blue: vowels

One day I will tell of your latent birth:

A, black hairy corset of shining flies

Which buzz around cruel stench,

Gulfs of darkness; *E*, whiteness of vapors and tents,

Lances of proud glaciers, white kings, quivering of flowers;

I, purples, spit blood, laughter of beautiful lips
 In anger or penitent drunkenness;
U, cycles, divine vibrations of green seas,
 Peace of pastures scattered with animals, peace of the wrinkles
 Which alchemy prints on heavy studious brows;
O, supreme Clarion full of strange stridor,
 Silences crossed by words and angels:
 —*O*, the Omega, violet beams from His Eyes!

Rimbaud names five vowels, A, E, I, U and O, and associates them with colours, black, white, red, green and blue. Linking a vowel to a colour or smell creates a condition or situation called “synesthesia” and Rimbaud’s synesthetic images make it very difficult to establish a relation with the poem and grasp its poetic language. The synesthetic nature of this poem makes it even harder to realize that the poem is incomplete.

Can we apply the same structural and functional status to dreams, calling them unfinished and incomplete projects? As discussed, dreams are made of complex visual images, puzzles made of pictures and pictographic events. To solve puzzles made of pictures, we must read and relate the materials of the puzzles, to each other in a meaningful way. By “the materials of the puzzles” I mean the words and sounds of the poetic image or picture. Pictures in their puzzling structure are not related to each other. They appear as non-relation, so to relate them it means re-arranging the “wording” of the picture in order to make the relation between pictures possible. The way this

relationship function is not something that is built into the dream, but an innovative function of dream interpretation.

How can the interpretation of the gaps between pictures be possible? To fill in the gaps, do we need to create new dream images? It seems that dream interpretation is nothing but reading the dream images and reading the gap between images. The dream interpreter fills in with their own experience the gaps left by the dreamer. In a similar manner, the reading of a poem fills in the gaps between the reader's personal experiences and the experiences the poet made available in the poem.

The interpreter not only creates the missing images in the gaps but also structures the relationship between the missing images and the images that are present in the dream. The interpreter dreams of the dream while he is not dreaming and is awake. The dreamer leaves his dream unfinished and the dreamer becomes the new dreamer and finishes the dream.

Psychoanalysis as Poetry

Suppose we have a novel containing the story of someone's dream narrated in a very detailed and vivid language. In the novel, the dreamer tells us what has happened in his dream, exactly as he would tell an analyst. Now we may ask, what is the difference between a fictional character telling his dream and a real dreamer explaining his own dream? A potential response is that fictional characters are not real people whereas the dreamer is real, and also that what the fictional character tells us is contrived and what

the dreamer tells us is real. However, Freud has said in this matter that we should take whatever the dreamer remembers as his dream; whatever the dreamer remembers is what they make of their own dream, a fiction of their own thoughts. As a result, the boundaries between the real experiences in a dream and the fictional narration of it are not definite: we don't exactly know where and when in a dream story the real dream experience is, nor where the fictional narration and imaginative exaggeration begin. It seems that no such boundaries exist; the dream is altogether a fictional story, made up by the dreamer's "over determinations".

Dream interpretation retells the dream back to the dreamer, recapitulating it, expanding and analyzing the dream narration. Psychoanalysis as a talking cure has only one solution for all psychical disorders, and that is talking: which allows language to work as a healing machine. Freud was fascinated by the power of words to make the impossible possible in psychoanalysis. He calls words "watered-down magic": "A layman will no doubt find it hard to understand how pathological disorders of the body and mind can be eliminated by 'mere' words. He will feel that he is being asked to believe in magic. And he will not be so very wrong, for the words which we use in our everyday speech are nothing other than watered-down magic" (283). This "watered-down magic," according to Josef Breuer, is the only solution. He writes, "Local diagnosis and electrical reactions lead nowhere in the study of hysteria, whereas a detailed description of mental processes such as we are accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers enables me, with the use of a few psychological formulas, to obtain at least some kind of insight" (161).

Freud further describes how the transformation of images to words functions: “Once a picture has emerged from the patient's memory, we may hear him say that it becomes fragmentary and obscure as he proceeds with his description of it. The patient is, as it were, getting rid of ‘it by turning *it into words*” (280).

John Forrester argues that dream images were themselves initially words, transformed into images: “What is being turned into words is an affect and a memory that had become converted into a symptom. The symptom itself was the expression of these “lost” words. On the model of the word/object systems, what has happened is that a relation between *the specific* word presentation and the *specific* object association has been refused” (31).

A psychoanalyst is a poet who knows how to use his words: not just what to tell his patient but more importantly how to tell them. Jeanine M. Vivona, in her essay “Psychoanalysis as Poetry,” investigates why and how language, and especially poetic language, is the only healing tool in psychoanalysis. She says, “In psychoanalysis, we appreciate the powerful effects a speaker brings to words through tone of voice, as well as through facial expressions, body posture, and gestures” (1111). The use of poetic language in psychoanalysis to create greater and deeper effects comes from the fact that psychoanalysis functions mostly as the conversation taking place between the analyst and the analysand, and mostly the narration of the analyst. The centrality of narration in the field of psychoanalysis is brought into a brighter light through the work of Peter Brooks. In his book *Psychology and Storytelling*, Brooks demonstrates how psychoanalysis is formed by narration. He says, “There appears at present to be

increasing agreement even among psychoanalysts themselves, that psychoanalysis is a narrative discipline” (47).

In Brooks’ view, a psychoanalyst’s chief concern is the stories told by his patients. Without these stories the analyst has nothing to work with and his patients are not curable. According to Brooks, patients are patients because they have problems with their stories, they are either terrified of their own stories or they cannot re-tell them: “... The psychoanalyst is ever concerned with the stories told by his patients, who are patients precisely because of the weakness of the narrative discourse that they present” (47).

In a psychoanalytic session, we have the patient, their story and the analyst: these are the three pillars of the cure-talk which work together to bring the patient’s narration to a curable and legible completion. Listening is as important as telling, and the active listener not only helps patients tell their story in a meaningful tone and word arrangement but also allows the analyst to locate themselves according to the story and the storyteller. In Brooks’ view, there must be a “dynamic interaction” between the teller and the listener in order to accomplish a sensible story. According to Brooks, the active and engaging relation between teller and listener is not only part of the structure and the form of the narrative but also part of “the meaning of the narrative text”.

According to Brooks, the relationship between the analyst and his patient is a metaphorical relation. In Martin Buber’s term of “I and You”, it is a metaphor of “I and Thou.” Brooks writes, “The words of the analysand in the psychoanalytic session form themselves in relation to the listener... The I and the you as we know from Emile

Benveniste's work on discourse, are markers that change place according to who is speaking, in a relationship that is necessarily dialogic" (72). I will explain how in poetry the form not only shapes the meaning, but also is a part of the experience of the meaning. It is important to note that in psychoanalysis, according to Brooks, what the analyst deals with is not something that is distorted but on the contrary, something which is still alive, achievable, and curable.

Thomas H. Ogden, in his work, [The Music of What Happens in poetry and psychoanalysis], argues that in these sessions, despite the broken words of the patients, the analyst already knows that feelings and ideas are there "behind" the repression barrier in the patient's unconscious. He says: "Analytics are a principal medium through which the unconscious of the analysand is brought to life in the analytic relationship" (63).

Ogden argues that psychoanalysis in itself is an attempt to be poetic, or make poetic use of language:

For the analyst, the attempt to achieve aliveness in his use of language is in the service of bringing feelings and ideas to life in words that will advance the analytic process. A conscious or unconscious effort on the part of the analyst to be 'poetic' (that is, to create beautiful, pithy, artistic forms with words) in his patterns of speech and choice of words in the analytic dialogue almost certainly reflects a form of narcissistic countertransference acting in" (66).

For Ogden, psychoanalysis's attempt to become poetry goes as far as it can while still remaining distinct from poetry: it doesn't want to become poetry but only to act like

it. Psychoanalysis “uses” language as a tool to turn words into “talking words,” colourful and effective. In poetry, language does not function as a mere tool and it does not seek any aims outside of its artistic form.

The ground of both psychoanalysis and poetry is language, and their similarities come from the poetic function of language. For Ogden, poetic language is fundamental in how disciplines make our experiences vivid and re-experienceable: “Perhaps what is most fundamental to both poetry and psychoanalysis is the effort to enlarge the breadth and depth of what we are able to experience” (71).

The Function of Poetic Words

Patients in psychoanalytic sessions reveal and release their internal conflicts and turmoil through words: they employ words in order to express their inner world challenges. According to Vivona, each patient has their unique expression, tone and bodily postures associated with words.

The amalgamation of the semantics of the word and its personal expression and tone bring a new status and function to the word. The psychoanalytic meaning of the word depends on where the word is located in a sentence, how the word is pronounced, the tone of the word and its semantic meaning. For Vivona, it is crucial for the analyst to note the link between the tone, voice and bodily posture of the patient with the semantics of the word they use. The patient’s personal treatment and expression of words provide us with access to their psychical condition.

Words in poetry possess the same critical role as in psychoanalysis. In poems, words are freer than anywhere else, and they gain liberation from the concrete

and constructive rules of grammar. Poems are made of words and their existence depends on the poetic function of words and at the same time the poetic function of language in poetry gives freedom to words, a freedom that comes close to a sense of independence. Words in poetry function as if they were fully independent of the poem and their sovereignty were respected and recognized. For this reason, they present themselves in their fullest capacity: fresh and transformative. Vivona argues that words in poetry are the ideal kinds of words, and therefore psychoanalysis wishes to employ the same types of words: “I focus narrowly on the nature of words that poetry reveals to us, particularly their evocative and active potentials” (1111). In her view, poetic words are at work in psychoanalysis “as source of therapeutic action” (1112).

What is central to the function of words in psychoanalysis to project personal emotions and meanings. Words embody the wishes and the fears of patients, and work like mirrors to show them what their inner world looks like. The magical function of words, according to Vivona, is that they evoke “sensuous experiences” jointly by “their sound and semantics”

In our engagement with a written or cited text, or when we speak or write, we use words in such a way that the general rule of literary products allows us and at the same time we fill words with our own experiences, emotions and thoughts. Consequently, we personalize the word we use, and make it our own. They, in turn, carry traces of our personal traits, experiences and thoughts. Vivona sees a word as “an auditory aspect of a lived experience” (1110) that attempts to represent that experience:

Words are more like things, like part of the action, than like symbols.

Ideally, the word is neither wholly separate from its experiential foundations nor

wholly merged in it. The ability to use language in a flexible way that meets the demands of particular meanings, with the right mix of rationality and expressiveness, is a sign of psychological maturity, as well as of the poet's talent. (Vivona 1121)

She emphasizes how a word embeds the traces of the speaker, and perhaps the writer:

The experiential context of language development is unique for each person, and that context imbues words with a personal sense, along with a consensual meaning, so that the same word may have different shades of meaning for different people. These personal senses are sometimes accessible to reflection.

When you hear the word *river*, which river comes to mind? For me, it is the Hudson River, which was a central feature of the landscape of my childhood. This is the river that *river* means to me, and which I bring to Collins's poem. (Vivona1018)

We may ask how someone could personalize language: language belongs to the public and it's made through social contracts, not private affairs. Language, in its essence, is disconnected from the real world: it has no direct and real access to actual world outside it. In Saussure's linguistics, according to Lacan, the signifiers are barred from the signifieds: our attempt to signify something is permanently delayed and cannot be reached anywhere outside of its signification zone. As Lacan has shown, language is a chain of signifiers, its signification power returns to itself, and it only signifies another signifier.

For Saussure, the arbitrariness of language causes the force of abstraction: what language merely does is to abstract the world of objects, its signifiers (the arbitrary function of language) create mental images (signifieds) and not real things. For this reason, language is self-referential and not world-referential. It refers to itself and it allows its user, the readers of texts, to refer to the ways they prefer to use the signifying system. In other words, language refers to itself and to its user's world. Language is an open-ended interactive system and each user chooses their own conclusion. The open-endedness of language opens a golden gate, or in Freudian terms, a "Royal Road" to the inner world of language users. Based on each user's interaction with language, psychoanalysis can study how and in what ways language is referred to. In this sense, the ways of using words become the embodiment of personal traits. They refer to personal meanings as well as its arbitrary (semantic) ones. For this reason, words become the battleground between the user's personal experiences and literary/poetic conventions.

Vivona, as a psychoanalyst, defines the utterance of the words as "imbued with personal meaning" (1111) and "embodied resonance, and emotional tone" (1111): "A word is always an experiential memory. That said, the admixture of abstractness and aliveness in the word can vary dynamically" (1121).

The tendency of words to create abstractions of personal experiences, on one hand, helps to locate and diagnose the symptoms of illness, the weaknesses in patient narrations, while on the other hand, the tendency of abstraction extends the remoteness and seclusion of the patient to the realm of language. The patient who

suffers from loneliness in his approach to the world and to others will be further pushed towards seclusion in the ways he communicates with the others.

Words and the Source of its Power in Poetry and Psychoanalysis

In our discussion on “the function of poetic word”, we discussed how words work in poetry and how the word’s poetic function is similar to its function in poetry. Words in themselves have no power, the source of their power comes from the way they are related to each other, in other words, their power comes from their relationships. A poet, by relating a word to another in a very specific and unique way, creates a new order, a new way of seeing things and perhaps a new way of being. The new relation between words and things in a poem not only creates the possibility to see and experience the world differently but also gives new life to the words themselves. Let me explain “the poetic relation,” using Marks Strand’s “Keeping Things Whole”:

In a field

I am the absence

of field.

This is

always the case.

Wherever I am

I am what is missing.

When I walk

*I part the air
and always
the air moves in
to fill the spaces
where my body's been.*

*We all have reasons
for moving.
I move
to keep things whole.*

In the first line of the poem, “In a field, I am the absence of field”, Strands creates a new relationship between the field and himself. His relation to the field is determined by “absence”. The absencing relation is not the absence of relation itself: this contradiction plays a very important role. If we displaced words from their original order, the relationship that Strands has discovered would be destroyed, along with the essence of its poetic-ness. Let’s say we only change the arrangement of the wording and for instance make it, “I am the absence of field, In a field”. This statement is not going to be meaningful without the play of poetic effects. In the first section of the poem, the central issue is the relationship between the speaker and field:

We cannot change the wording of the poem without destroying it, and the main reason for this is that we demolish the relations that the poet has created between words and things. In this poem, we can clearly see that the word “absence” for example functions differently than in its everyday use. It means more than “not being there”, but

rather to be and at the same time not to be there, it stands bolder and higher than its normal place in language.

Word as Imbued with Personal Meaning and Emotion

As we discussed, Vivona argues that the meaning of words is personal. She says that words are filled with personal meaning: “Word meanings are not inherently abstract but potentially experiential” (1121). The experiential aspect of the meaning presents itself mostly when words, or texts, are approached by verbal, unwritten and expressional acts. To consider an embodied meaning for a word is to take the word in its verbal context: we need to hear someone speaking the word in order to see how the pronunciation of the word attaches the word to the person who pronounces or verbalizes it. In poetry, the experiential, personal traces and verbal context of the word are mostly pushed aside by the abstracting force of poetry.

One of the fundamental functions of poetry, as we previously discussed, is to create new relations between words and things, and the process of building these new relations come with isolating and detaching images from their previous and familiar relationships with other images and words and forcing them to a new condition. The process of detachment and isolation of images and words from their familiar meanings and context forces them to new relations is the “abstracting force of poetry”.

Hans Loewald’s psychoanalytic theory of the nature of language offers an account of the ways in which language develops in early life. Vivona argues that for Loewald, “language ties together human beings and self and object world, and it binds abstract thought with the bodily concreteness and power of life” (1121). The sound of

the mother talking to her child becomes associated with the word she uses and the trace of the mother's voice remains in the child's infantile memory and "Over time those sounds become differentiated from other sensations of the lived world as a special kind of sound; these special sounds grow into words" (1121). In addition to infantile sound memories, each individual may have special occasions in their life: a love story, or a lost or a given event. Each event comes with its unique sounds, pronunciations, and the emotions expressed. For Vivona, "a word is an auditory aspect of a lived experience that comes to represent that experience; because the word emerges from the experience, it can later evoke it in a multisensorial way. Moreover, individuals differ in the sensory modes through which they experience and process words" (1110).

As I mentioned, the embodiment of meanings in words and the sound of words function in psychoanalysis but this doesn't mean that in poems we have no personal meaning. In reading poems, as in psychoanalysis, we create our own meaning. In this sense, each poem has as many meanings as it has readers. In interpretation, the open-endedness of poems functions the same way as with patients in psychoanalytic sessions: both provide the possibility of personal meanings for the written or verbalized word.

Vivona argues that words function as the embodiment of emotion. The words of a patient bear with it the emotional status of the patient: "a word can carry with it, as part of its memorial meaning, emotional aspects of the lived experiences within which the word is learned and used" (1122). In her view, words are not neutral to the user's emotions, but they are "potentially emotion-laden" (1125). In psychoanalysis, spoken

words come with their tones: the tones bring out the speaker's emotions. The semantics of words weave sounds, as well as the emotions of the speaker. What is offered in psychoanalytic sessions is the unity of these three and an amalgamation of literal meanings, voices, and emotions and this creates special forms of communication. In other words, the form of communication that is dealt with in psychoanalysis is the combination of the general meaning of the sound and the emotional reaction of the patient. The task of the analyst is not to find the formal meaning of the patient's story. The formal meaning comes automatically with the statements. Instead, their task is to discover how the patient has personalized the language he uses, or what the sound and emotions of the patient are and to what they're referring. According to Vivona, the task of the analyst is "to create language that mobilizes the experiential, memorial, and relational potentials of words, and in so doing to make a poet out of the patient so that she too can create such language" (1126).

Words not only carry in them the experiences of the patients but they can also create new experiences, which are founded on the basis of the telling and listening between a patient and an analyst: discoveries are made by way of the patient's expression and through the active and engaging listening of the analyst. Passive listening from the side of the analyst destroys the possibility of creative storytelling by the patient. It not only removes the engagement of the analyst but also retracts the saying of the patient. It is also the task of the analyst to bring the patient into a talking position: a creative talk, a free and at the same time formative talk which brings the unconscious of the patient into work, causing the unconscious to speak on behalf of the patient. In order to make the patient unconsciously reveal themselves, through the use of

poetic words, the analyst attempts to connect unconsciously with the unconscious world of the patient. Poetic words can “connect self to other, thought to feeling, present to past, and present to future” (1129).

It will be very helpful to practically demonstrate how poetry and psychoanalysis are similar in function. I choose a poem analysis from *Psychoanalysis as Poetry* by Jeanine M. Vivona and in her analysis of Billy Collins’s poem “Fishing on the Susquehanna in July”, she takes a psychoanalytic approach to discover what is inside of the poem and what is in the mind of the poet. For most psychoanalysts, poetry is a way into the poet’s unconscious mind. I also chose an analytic session from “‘A Music of What Happens’ in Poetry and Psychoanalysis” by Thomas Ogden. In his analytic example, Ogden brings his conversation with one of his patients and this includes the patient’s dream.

I use Vivona’s reflections on Collins’s poem as a means to understand the poem, but I omit, edit and rewrite most of her comments. This is because I want to combine the analysis of a poem made by a psychoanalyst with the way a poet, myself, understands it. In introducing Ogden’s analytic session, I quoted the whole text, without making any changes to show how he uses his words and says what he wants to say.

An Example of Poetry Analysis:

Fishing on the Susquehanna in July By Billy Collins

I have never been fishing on the Susquehanna
or on any river for that matter

to be perfectly honest.

Not in July or any month
have I had the pleasure—if it is a pleasure—
of fishing on the Susquehanna.

I am more likely to be found
in a quiet room like this one—
a painting of a woman on the wall,

a bowl of tangerines on the table—
trying to manufacture the sensation
of fishing on the Susquehanna.

There is little doubt
that others have been fishing
on the Susquehanna,

rowing upstream in a wooden boat,
sliding the oars under the water
then raising them to drip in the light.

But the nearest I have ever come to

fishing on the Susquehanna
was one afternoon in a museum in Philadelphia

when I balanced a little egg of time
in front of a painting
in which that river curled around a bend

under a blue cloud-ruffled sky,
dense trees along the banks,
and a fellow with a red bandanna

sitting in a small, green
flat-bottom boat
holding the thin whip of a pole.

That is something I am unlikely
ever to do, I remember
saying to myself and the person next to me.

Then I blinked and moved on
to other American scenes
of haystacks, water whitening over rocks,

even one of a brown hare
 who seemed so wired with alertness
 I imagined him springing right out of the frame.

Vivona says that she is interested in the function of words in this poem as “Collins creates for the reader, and for himself, an experience he has never lived” (1113). In fact, poetry is nothing but the creation of “never lived” experiences. In her view, Collins created every aspect of this poetic experience poetically and vividly so that in reading the poem, every action and experience described is “springing right out of the frame” of the poem. The poem offers a magical experience to its readers. “Once we have read this poem, we have been fishing on the Susquehanna in July. Collins’s poem enacts the vivid lived experience through words” (1113).

“I have never been fishing on the Susquehanna/ or on any river for that matter/
 to be perfectly honest./ Not in July or any month/ have I had the pleasure—if it is a
 pleasure—/ of fishing on the Susquehanna”

The central element of both stanzas is the projection of a strong denial. No fishing has taken place. According to Vivona, this semantic denial has been itself denied by the tone and the expression of the poem, a denial which repudiates itself, denies the expressed denial. The semantic denial is to present an expressional conformity. She explains that this kind of denial is familiar in Psychoanalysts: “The semantic content of words conveys one message and the tone or feeling conveys quite another” (1113). Collins says that “I have never been fishing on the Susquehanna, or on any river for that matter”. However his denial contains signs and hints which “spring right out of the

frame” of denial: hints such as “to be perfectly honest” and “in a quiet room like this one”. For Vivona, Collins’ poem constructs the virtual and imaginative possibility of what it would be like to fish. “I am more likely to be found/in a quiet room like this one—/a painting of a woman on the wall,/

a bowl of tangerines on the table—/trying to manufacture the sensation/of fishing on the Susquehanna”

Collins continues the path of denial in these two stanzas. The room is quiet, a painting of a woman hangs on the wall, and a bowl of tangerines is on the table. This part of the poem projects the speaker’s desire to fish without showing him fishing. He is looking at a fishing scene in a painting. Collins manages to break the boundaries between painting and poetry and for this reason the speaker of the poem oscillates between painting and poetry, attempting to become the speaker of the painting, or the speaking painting.

In the tenth sentence, the tangerines are set on the table. This setting is simultaneously setting and moving; the bowl of tangerines tries to deny its function as a fish tank or aquarium, imprisoning the fished tangerines: the fish-like smell of tangerines brings an end to the quiet setting of tangerines and moves our attention to fishing: the projection of both actions in one depicts how a moving object can move while it has been set somewhere without any movement. The magical unity of two opposite traits conveys a slight sense of denial to the statement and the state of the speaker’s being. The eleventh and twelfth lines reveal the speaker’s denial of his previous statements. The tangerines are “trying to manufacture the sensation of fishing

on the Susquehanna” Vivona finds that the rhythm in “trying to manufacture the sensation” is broken and for her,

This gets our attention; we trip over its awkward rhythm and hard syllables. Why manufacture? Of course, it is another denial, but not only that. The manufacturer announces the work of the poet and calls attention to the poem in part by interrupting the experience it has begun to create in the reader. 1114).

“There is little doubt/ that others have been fishing / on the Susquehanna, /rowing upstream in a wooden boat,/ sliding the oars under the water/ then raising them to drip in the light”

I think the sentence, “There is little doubt” indicates that there is little distance between the speaker and the readers who experience fishing on the Susquehanna River. It is the poet who rows the oars underwater. Vivona thinks that the poet projects his own action through the action of others. She says, “Collins achieves this immediacy in part by putting us on the river, where we are ‘rowing,’ ‘sliding,’ and ‘raising.’ We are not observing the actions of another; we are doing” (1114).

In the midst of fishing, Collins takes us back to another place, a place in which no fishing is possible, the closest thing to finishing in this place is to look at the picture of someone finishing: “ But the nearest I have ever come to/fishing on the Susquehanna/was one afternoon in a museum in Philadelphia”

Collins, according to Vivona, reminds us that we are in a poem not in a river, “we must not forget that the reality we are experiencing is created by the poem, a

reality undiminished by the fact that the experience Collins now describes is triply mediated by a painting in a museum in Philadelphia” (1115).

“when I balanced a little egg of time/ in front of a painting/ in which that river curled around a bend/

under a blue cloud-ruffled sky,/dense trees along the banks,/and a fellow with a red bandanna”

The speaker talks about balancing a little egg of time in front of a painting. In Heideggerian terms this is “projective saying”, showing what we want to say. The speaker may intend to say that the idea of fishing on the Susquehanna has become a very central issue in his life, or that he has rearranged his daily sensations with the sensation of fishing on the Susquehanna. We may also say

that balancing the egg of time in front of a painting could mean that the speaker wanted to say that the painting is everlasting, or that he would want it to be so. Vivona makes her last comments, “This poem is an ironic tribute to language itself.” I think through these two stanzas, Collins brings the experience of writing poems, painting and fishing together as one and expresses this unity in the painting-poem-fishing part of poem. I think we can also experience a sense of dreaming in these stanzas, where someone is dreaming of painting with words and “fishing” the worlds he painted. In the rest of the poem, the speaker goes back and forth to his room, the museum and to the river, denying in each occasion his attempt to fish, bringing a sense of unity, not just between poetry writing, painting and fishing, but between poetry, museums, and rivers, uniting them in one, in poetry.

An Example of the Analytic Session

Thomas Ogden, in “A Music of What Happens”, in *Poetry and Psychoanalysis* shows how an analysand in her conversation with an analysis not only expresses her unconscious and repressed ideas and thoughts but by her word selections and her expression provides a dreamlike opportunity, not just to speak her dream but to dream. The analysand’s dream-talk draws the analyst into the same situation: the analyst speaks her dreams, or she dreams by the expression of each word she uses.

I have Ogden’s full report on one of his analytic sessions in the Appendix and it is important to read this analysis explanation of the encounter of the reader and the text, the analyst, and the analysand in order to make a better sense of the coming comparisons.

A Comparison between the Two Analyses

We can use these two examples to show the similarities and differences between poems and analytic sessions. I will be referencing the aforementioned examples to bring attention to the following issues:

1- All poems have an established structural form and language; their wording projects language in its highest and finest form. The task of the poet is to finish the form of his poem and to make it the finest and purest possible product of language. The task of the reader of a poem is to recreate its meaning: the reader does not contribute in shaping the form of a poem, instead a pre-structured linguistic entity, a premade form is given to him to create meaning, emotions and sentiments of the poem.

2- In psychoanalysis, the analyst does not receive pre-structured language, or a pre-established form of a dream: the patient's narration of his struggles is a set of seemingly non-related events and separated puzzle pictures. The task of the analyst, in contrast to the reading of poetry is to give form to the patient's formless statements, to structure and bring them into a state of meaningfulness. For this very reason, in psychoanalytic sessions, the analyst's goal is to become a poet, to gain the poetic power needed to form a moving statement.

Note that the task of reading a poem, in contrast to psychoanalysis, is to unpack and unload the loaded language of the poet.

3- The aim of psychoanalysis and poetry reading are both to make the psychical or the poetic product legible and understandable. This common goal in psychoanalysis and poetry is approached through two opposite routes: the first attempts to poetize the raw psychical materials of the patient, and the second tries to unpoetize the linguistic product they are reading. In the search for meaning, psychoanalysis and poetry distance themselves from each other in opposite directions, effectively replacing one another. Far from its initial aim to create meaning, psychoanalysis becomes, in its poetizing attempts the new poetry, while the process of de-poetization brings poetry closer to analytic statement.

4- Both psychoanalysis and poetry depend on the creation of new meanings. In poetry reading, the discovery of poetic relations and the process of unpacking the load of a poem bring new meanings into life. In psychoanalysis, the analyst attempts to discover the obscured or lost psychical relationships and create new meaning by poetizing transformative and powerful statements.

5- Reading poems can be considered as an act based on the pleasure principle: it seeks only to gain pleasure, whereas interpreting dreams or analytic sessions aim to cure psychological illnesses; the goal is not to please but to cure someone else. For this reason, the two disciplines tend in opposite directions: psychoanalysis begins by working on a psychological phenomenon, aiming at an effect, curing someone's illness, while poetry begins from an action, the experience of a poem, and ends up as a psychological phenomenon, the pleasure of reading.

6- Words are the foundation and the essence of both practices. Without words, there are no poems and no cure in psychoanalysis. In the writing of poems and in psychoanalytic practices, words are the source of worldmaking, the only material which has the potential to create pleasure or cure. Words, in both practices, undergo the process of poetization: becoming more than what they are: their functions, therefore, are creative and transformative.

7- The function of poetry is to unite and bring together the things that normally are not. In the mentioned examples of poetry analysis, poetry unites through painting, fishing and the writing of poems: these three different acts are united through Collin's power of wording and the poetic relations that he has created between these things. Poetry not only metaphorizes things and brings them to unity but is also itself a symbolic metaphor. Poetry is literally (in its literal sense of the "by the letter") the fishing and painting that it represents. It performs what it says.

8- Dreaming and reverie, each in different ways, function as poetry, they both eliminate boundaries and unite concepts. Ms. S's dreams not only brought her old friend, Ms. Red, back to her memory, uniting them, but also forces the analyst, Mr.

Ogden, into reverie, allowing him to go back and forth between different paths in his life while sitting in his office and consulting Ms. S.

9- In poetry, we have only one poet, the one who writes the poem and leaves it to his readers to project their own meanings of the poem. The original version will never change, and the readers have no right or ability to alter the physical appearance of the written poem. Once the poem is written, it will be, in terms of its form and structure, an everlasting poem. The readers certainly will be able to discover new meanings and new relations between the poem's elements; all these discoveries and newfound relations must be based on the original material of the poem, the one that the poet has made.

In psychoanalytic practices, such as dream interpretation and analytic sessions, in a sense, there are two poets working together to form one poem. The dreamer (the first poet), tells his dream to the analyst (the second poet). The dream in its initial structure appears as non-related thoughts, separated pictures and nonsensical and meaningless statements. It is similar to poetic inspiration, an event, a memory or scenery inspires a poet to begin writing his poem; the inspiring event is not a full or complete description of the whole event, it is rather a hint, a glimpse of what is happening. The poet will bring these nonsensical and meaningless hints into a whole, a complete form of the event. Poems remain as the event, not the description or meaning of the event but the event themselves and the task of readers is to describe the event, to make it meaningful. The patient, as the first poet, is dealing with an event, and the event is taking place nowhere else but in himself, in his psyche. In a strict sense, an event is *taking place* in his psyche while it simultaneously presents itself as an inspiring event to the patient. The patient is simultaneously inspired (as a poet) and forced into the event (as a patient).

The analyst, the second poet, is inspired by the story of the patient and brings the event into language: by giving form to the formless event and structuring it as a meaningful and understandable event. The task of the analyst is to form the meaning of what had inspired him: the patient's story. The way an analyst forms the nonsensical event of his patient is completely different from how a poet forms the nonsensical event of his inspiration. The analyst forms the dream in order to make it meaningful; making meaning is what sits behind the formation of dream interpretation.

The Unconscious of Poetry

Poetry and the unconsciousness are related to each other in several ways: the Romantics believed that poetry is a gift, and the light of poems first comes from the poet's unconscious, it is the poet's unconsciousness that acts as a gate for the arrival of poetic inspirations. Even in modern poetry, where poetry is mostly seen as the product of the mechanical hard work of the poet's brain, and not the inspiration of the poet's mind, the work of the unconscious in the production of poetry is undeniably important. In modern poetry, the form of the poem is seen as the result of the conscious function of the content. The content, the known part of the poem, cannot exist without establishing a form. For this reason, the form is how the content comes to life: the content is conscious, but the way it appears, or the way it makes an appearance for itself is not fully known. In modern poetry, the poet does not exactly know the content of his future poem because the form comes as a surprise, as an unknown and as an alien guest. The stage of "what to say," where the poem begins its search for its identity, is far from the stage of "how to say," where the poem begins navigating towards its destination. The

seeming gap in between the content of a poem and its form is filled with unknowns; no poet knows what the final stage of their poem will look like before reaching the destination of their poem. The gap between the content and the form of a poem is removed when the content appears in and through the form.

In modern poetry, the poet's mind in its mechanical workings understands what to say, but the saying and shaping of the poem is produced, as it were, without their permission. The poet can edit and change the form of the poem as many times as they want but there are always unknown and unforeseen events, parts of the poem that will always remain undiscovered and uncontrolled. The poet has the power to relate words to each other, to choose the wording of their poem, but he does not have the ability to dictate how the words will function; words will function based on their own nuances; they relate themselves to other words in ways foretold by the word-environment. These are all things that are out of the poet's control.

I would like to use two different poetry examples in order to explain my argument. The first instance is a haiku and the second one a classic poem.

Example One

Haikus have a very strict format. They must be three lines of 5 syllables, 7 syllables and 5 syllables respectively. The first line appears as the introduction, the second line explains and opens up the ambiguity of the first line and finally, the third line concludes the poem. In this limited and strict space, the poet must bring the thought-content into a pleasing and at the same time striking form. Here is a Haiku by

Matsuo Basho (1644-1694): “An old silent pond.../ A frog jumps into the pond,/ splash! Silence again”

The immediate meaning or content of the poem is obvious enough: there is a pond and a jumping frog. But these simple and primitive elements structure a worldmaking form. One of the ways to understand this poem is to see the old and silent pond as the universe; the jumping frog introduces a living agent--a human being into its midst. The metaphoricity of the scene allows the frog to be a frog and at the same time something other. The pond is so much bigger than the frog, with its pervasive silence diminishing the frog's presence. The pond's fundamental role is its silence and the jumping of frogs and the splashes that they make are part of this old silence. As we can see, the poem begins the step forth through the basic elements of its content (the pond and the frog) and continues through to a transformative meaning: from its initial stage to its final destination, it is filled with gaps and distances. The poet, by using his limited materials, forms his thoughts, makes the poem possible.

It's important to note that by “poem's content” I do not mean to say that poem's contents pre-exist, by content I mean the saying of a poem, the things that the poet wants to state; the saying of the poem or the poem's content is not separable from the poem's form; instead it is the function of the form.

Example Two

Acquainted with the Night

By Robert Frost

I have been one acquainted with the night.

I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.

I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.

I have passed by the watchman on his beat

And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet

When far away an interrupted cry

Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;

And further still at an unearthly height,

One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.

I have been one acquainted with the night.

In reading this poem, we are dealing with a number of poetic images and thoughts that are not completely related to each other, so the task of reading becomes to discover the potential relations between each poetic event. The whole event of the poem takes place between one recurring statement, “I have been one acquainted with the night.” Between the first line and its repetition at the end of the poem, there are

seemingly separated actions and events that need to be understood in relation to the rest of the events.

The poem begins with a complex relationship between the poet and the night. The relationship cannot be fully brought into light and it also cannot be left aside as nonsensical. For the reader, this contradicting situation, the one that cannot either be set aside or fulfilled, creates a strange sense of gravity between the poem and the reader, a relationship which makes the reader more involved, replacing the reader with the speaker of the poem, the one who is acquainted with the night. The “I” of the poet becomes the “I” of the readers, and gradually it becomes the “I” of the poem. “I have been one acquainted with the night.”

The ambiguity of this sentence comes not only from the indefinite condition of the “I”. It also comes from the uncertainty of the time of the action. We don’t know when the “I” is acquainted with the night. The time of the action for this sentence is in the past, a complete past, but it seems that the action carries on to the present time. The action of the sentence is actually a present statement, something that happens presently but the poetic version of the sentence takes place in the past and at the same time in the present. This means that the event of acquainting happens and at the same time happened or even has happened. The poetic play of time creates an intimate relationship between past and present, the past loses its pastness and the present appears as its past. The disappearance of the sense of time creates a time-gap, a gap which is made of time or made of the disappearance of time.

The central image in the second stanza is “dropped my eyes.” It brings the imagery of dropping the “I” since the sentence has no “I” and it also could show the

seriousness of the speaker in not willing to clarify his relationship with the night, closing his eyes on the issue and totally forgetting about it. Dropping the eyes could also stand in a sense as the replacement of the “I,” the “I” of the poet moves to become the “I” of the poem. The “I” of the poem is the speaking being speaking in the poem, the voice of the poem, the one who bring the poem into existence or becomes the subject of the poem.

The mobile “I” causes the experience of the poem to appear as incomplete and still open to interpretation. The gap of the subject or the gap caused by the subject’s movements cannot be filled with anything but the absence of the subject. The whole stanza presents a very sad image. Not only is the poet sad, but the sadness has become the expression of the city and the way the watchman passes the speaker. The last sentence is the saddest possible conclusion, the speaker dropping his eyes and abandoning his mission. The speaker’s dropping his eyes presents another gap, a gap between the “I” and what he is doing. “ I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet/When far away an interrupted cry/Came over houses from another street”

After the speaker drops his eyes in line seven, he drops any possible sound that he could make and stands still, a gradual move towards no sound. The central image for this stanza is the “interrupted cry,” which as Freud may tell us is an uncanny event, the cry that has interrupted but still presents itself as a cry, a cry that comes over the house from another street.

This uncanny event creates a semantic interruption, a deferral in the process of bringing the poem to the light of knowledge and experience. The “interrupted cry” comes from far away, it may seem that it’s far away from where the poem was taking

place but it is not; the interrupted cry is where the poem experiences its being, or in Heideggerian terms, poetry comes into its being in this interruption. It is important to note that “interrupted cry” is a perpetual deferral of the interruption of a cry, an interruption that forever defers and has never been fully interrupted. On the one hand we have an environment of zero sound, a total silence, and on the other hand, we speak of a cry, a cry that has been interrupted, the presence of a cry in the midst of this total silence that shakes the foundation of the poem. We know that the “interrupted cry” is no cry at all but this uncanny event not only shakes the foundation of the poem but also brings a sense of confusion to the very nature of the “interrupting cry”. We don’t exactly know whether the happening of a cry is interrupted or that a cry was interrupted at some point in time, but this interruption has not been interrupted itself or the cry has not been fully interrupted yet. This uncanny event interrupts our attempt to bring the poem into a complete understanding, to conclude what the poem is going to tell us. “

But not to call me back or say good-bye;/ And further still at an unearthly height,/ One luminary clock against the sky”.

A gradual and uprising rhythm begins from good-bye; it reaches the unearthly height and eventually becomes the sky. It is a sense of rhythm that extends its musical being into meaning, making each and every word work together to create a moving sound. These three lines present a well-managed and embodied internal and external music, a music that function to link ideas and thoughts outside of the semantic combination of words. If I rewrite the first line based on the way it sounds, it will help us to grasp the embodied music of each words: “But not to/Call me back/ Or say goodbye.”

And this can be done with the two other lines as well.

The musicality of these three lines brings a sense of sound that invites us to close (or drop) our eyes and listen to the presence of the night. The stanza begins with “But not,” a strong and complex denial, a rejection that carries the tone of invitation in its essence, inviting an intimate relation. “But not... good-bye” is how the poem presents the complexity of presence and absence, the rejection of good-bye by saying good-bye. The self-denial of the poetic images in this poem brings deeper and unresolvable gaps, gaps that are dressed as place holders of poetic images, even as they pretend to be the poetic images.

In these two mentioned examples, we have the presentation of poetic images as well as the gaps between the images: the gaps are the lack of images and at the same time function as poetic images. For this reason, the poetic experience is an aggregation of poetic images and poetic gaps. I will explain what I mean by “poetic image” and “poetic gap” using this example:

“But not to call me back or say good-bye;/And further still at an unearthly height,/One luminary clock against the sky”.

In the first line, the speaker feels that the purpose of the cry was not to call him back or say goodbye. The poetic image in this line can be seen as the hidden desire to say goodbye and this image has been embodied in the function of the words. Beside this formally stated poetic image, there are some hidden or unsaid elements that not only shape the way we read and understand the images but also suggest the function of the

voids and negations. The central point of the poem is to present the function of the gap. The poem itself appears as a gap. What the speaker is experiencing is a gap between himself and the cry. He might have felt that the cry was for him and that he was called to answer it, but then he intuits otherwise, that it was not for him and that therefore he is alone, alone with a gap that feels even larger now, given his discovery. His own sense, we could argue, has been interrupted, since an implied expectation (that the call was for him) has certainly been disappointed.

The gaps between poetic images, or as I call it “the poetic gaps” are made of lacks. They present lack, emptiness and nothingness, and the emptiness comes with the possibility of anything. Consequently, the gaps are filled with the unknown, filled with things we are not familiar with. I argue that these unknown entities are the unconscious of the poem where perhaps the known parts, the known functions of the poem, are its consciousness. It is important to note that the boundaries between the unconscious and conscious states of poetry are very loose, unfixed and even mobile. For this reason, it is impossible to define a fixed border between these agencies that can be applicable and functional in all poems. Each poem has its own kind of conscious and unconscious agencies and interactive boundaries. Let’s look again at our first example to locate the conscious and unconscious parts of the poem: “An old silent pond.../A frog jumps into the pond,/splash! Silence again”.

Generally speaking, images and words in their poetic functions are the conscious part of the poem. The old and silent pond, as long as it remains and functions as a pond, will be the known and conscious part of the poem. It is the same with the frog, its jumping and the splashes that it makes. We all know these things and they

function in the same way all the time and everywhere. The wording of the poem causes some serious problems for our established and known semantic insights: the pond appears to be the pond and something else: it functions as more than what it first is, the pond grows out of its pond-ness. It becomes in effect, the universe. We may ask, how can a pond turn itself into a whole universe? To answer this question, we will examine some linguistics and literary theories to find out how this mysterious thing is possible. For our purpose here, we don't ask why this happens; instead we care about the consequences of this action but shortly we can say this happens because of the poetic function of language. When a pond functions as more than a pond and becomes two or even more things at the same time, then we can ask how the semantic of the thing functions. The word "pond", in its conventional signification, is the conscious aspect of the word; its additional and new meaning, the universe, is its unconscious part. It is important to note that the poem itself, its wording and its structure is our access to the poem's unconsciousness.

I argue here that poetry not only renders the unconscious, but also functions *as* the unconscious. In order to come to this conclusion, I have to introduce the meaning and functions of the unconscious and find its similarities and sameness with the unconsciousness. If I manage to show that poetry products work the same as unconsciousness, then I will be able to conclude that they are metaphorically the same. Seeing poetry as having conscious and unconscious parts will give more autonomy and independence to poetry and poems can be seen as a sovereign entity.

The Unconscious and Its Meaning

Harold Bloom, in his work called, “Freud and the Poetic Sublime: A Catastrophe Theory of Creativity” defines the two agencies of the conscious and the unconscious as follows:

“Consciousness,” as a word, goes back to a root meaning “to cut or split,” and so to know something by separating out one thing from another. The unconscious (Freud’s *das Unbewusste*) is a purely inferred division of the psyche, an inference necessarily based only upon the supposed effects that the unconscious has upon ways we think and act that can be known, that are available to consciousness. (Bloom 394).

According to Bloom, unconsciousness is the unknown part of our psyche and it speaks to us only through our consciousness; it makes itself known to us through the known part of our psyche, the consciousness. It’s important to see the unconsciousness as an unknown entity setting inside a known area, a darkness that has hidden inside a bright area. We may ask, how is this possible, and more importantly, doesn’t the combination of darkness and brightness dim the quality of brightness? How can it be bright and bring light to others when it cannot sustain the light in its own house? The issue of the unconscious residing in the same house as the conscious has caused lengthy and historical discussions among thinkers and psychoanalysts: the unconscious was defined as the alien guest, the foreign invader, the internal other. Freud introduced a dream as a communicative means to connect the unconscious and conscious to each other; he has famously said that dream is a royal road to the unconsciousness. Psychoanalysis was established as a power to give us access to the unconscious, illuminate the darkness of the unconscious and shed light on its buried

desires, or in different words, to make the buried desires in the unconscious become conscious.

I argue here that just as poems function similar to dreams, poetry functions the same as psychoanalysis in that it provides us with access to the unconscious, not just the unconscious of the poet, but also the unconscious of the poem itself.

Bloom believes in Freudian understanding, that there is no one single concept of the unconscious, because:

There are two Freudian topographies or maps of the mind, earlier and later (after 1920), and also because the unconscious is a dynamic concept. Freud distinguished his concept of the unconscious from that of his closest psychological precursor, Pierre Janet, by emphasizing his own vision of a civil war in the psyche, a dynamic conflict of opposing mental forces, conscious against unconscious. Not only the conflict was seen thus as being dynamic, but the unconscious peculiarly was characterized as dynamic in itself, requiring always a contending force to keep it from breaking through into consciousness. (Bloom 395).

In the poetic unconscious, as discussed, there is a dynamic interaction between the known and the unknown parts and it leads the poem and structures its form.

Bloom continues to identify the Freudian unconscious:

In the first Freudian topography, the psyche is divided into Unconscious, Preconscious, and Conscious, while in the second the divisions are the rather different triad of id, ego, and super-ego. The Preconscious, descriptively

considered, is unconscious but can be made conscious, and so is severely divided from the Unconscious proper, in the perspective given either by a topographical or a dynamic view. But this earlier system proved simplistic to Freud himself, mostly because he came to believe that our lives began with all of the mind's contents in the unconscious." (Bloom 395)

It is important to see why Freud moves from the double-sided known-unknown topography to a new dynamic topography where, according to Bloom, the dynamic relationship between an unknown unconscious and conscious is implying three agencies or instances of personality: id, ego, super-ego, to expand the territory of the unconscious. In Freud's new topography, as Bloom says, "All of the id and very significant parts of the ego and super-ego are viewed as being unconscious" (395). New Freudian topography helps us to resolve the tension we have noticed between the unconscious and the conscious, because according to Freud's initial theory they live together, in a double-sided domain of dark and light. The unconscious resides in the same house as the conscious which doesn't seem to be an issue anymore since according to Freud's new topography, most of the human psyche is occupied by the unconscious and there is also a dynamic relationship between the two forces.

The id in poetry is the letter, the word, and its collective identities; it aims to create pleasure through their physical effects. We remember that according to Saussure's theory all words are what they are in relation to one another, and that their relations are a play of differences and identities. In the process of building relations between words, it may seem that one word attempts to invade the space of another word to join the other word and become one.

The word's wish is to become the other word's property, to make its body known to other words, to merge into other words and create a new and joint body of two or more words. In poetry, we may not be able to speak directly about a word's sexual behavior, but we can certainly talk about the word's function charged with sexual seduction and desire. Keeping in mind Saussure's discussion on the tensional relations between words, we can say that the seductive function of words not only projects and promotes sexual intercourse but also depicts the sexuality of the word itself. Let's look at the first sentence of the haiku we talked about earlier, "An old silent pond." In the gathering of "old silent pond" the central word, or in a strict sense, the only functional word, is the pond, the old and the silent are there to help the pond function, to establish a clearer picture of the pond. They help to clarify the situation of the pond, a pond that is old and silent. These two words transform themselves as the servant of the pond, they cease to signify anything except in relation to the pond, they give up their own life and become parts of the pond, and their bodily physics or their literal appearance as letters becomes the territory of the pond.

The superego in poetry is the rules of grammar and of poetry, the ruling power of super poetry, the ideal poem, the collection of all poetry, and the talk of the super poet. The poetry's superego is known to poets, but it functions as an unintentional and unconscious force, a force that operates from within and constitutes a forbidden moral and social behaviour for the function of words. Words in a poem want to be free of the poetic and social rules; they want to act freely and respect no rules and limitations but the rules of poetry or its superego pushes all the perpetrators outside of the poetic game or forces them to submit themselves to the poetic rules. Similar to what we have in

the human psyche, the poetry's id fights back and attempts to break poetry's rules and reach the poetic pleasure that they desire. The process of poetry creation seems very self-contradictory. It operates within a very conflicting environment; it projects a limited freedom or freedom of limitation. Words attempting to set themselves free in a poem have been defined as the essence and the foundation of poetry but this foundational moment can only be shaped and come into being through its antagonist, the rules of poetry. The poetry's ego is the letter's "I," the literary "I" and it mediates between the superego and the id and therefore itself is shaped by the collision of the two rivals. There is also an unresolved rivalry between the "I" of the poet and the "I" of the letter, each attempting to take over the control of the poetic product and become its voice. The "I" of the letter attempts to function as the speaker of the poem and as the only ruling voice in the society of words. In an opposing attempt, the poet enters the playground of poetry as the god of the game, as the one who has created everything from ground zero, bringing all empty and silent words together and giving them thoughts and voices. The poet remembers all he has done and reminds his creative position of the chaos of conflict and rivalry. The poet thinks he is the only one who deserves to speak on behalf of all words.

Bloom believes that the new Freudian topography views the unconsciousness as what "tends to become merely a modifier". The reason is that the new concept of the ego delivers an ego that is mostly unconscious, and according to Freud, "behaves exactly like the repressed—that is, which produces powerful effects without itself being conscious and which requires special work before it can be made conscious" (396).

Lacan and the Meaning of the Unconscious

In his book *The Lacanian Subject*, Bruce Fink pictures a coherent and decisive conception of “unconsciousness” through a Lacanian understanding. According to Fink, Lacan defines the unconscious as the “most foreign of all others:” “Lacan states very simply that the unconscious is language, meaning that language is that which makes up the unconscious” (8). It is important to note that in dealing with the unconscious, Lacan separates his conception from Freud. Freud sees language as our means of accessing the unconscious; whereas Lacan says language constitutes the unconscious.

Lacan has famously said that the unconscious is the language of the other. Language is made up of signs and signifiers. In this case, can we say that the unconscious is made up of signs and signifiers? Fink explains how the “unconscious as a language” works for Lacan: “According to Lacan, the unconscious is structured like a language, and a natural language (unlike speech) is structured like a formal language. As Jacques-Alain Miller says, the structure of language is, in a radical sense, ciphering” (21). Fink emphasizes that for Lacan “the unconscious is nothing but a ‘chain’ of signifying elements, such as words, phonemes, and letters, which ‘unfold’ in accordance with the very precise rules over which the ego or self has no control whatsoever” (9).

For Lacan, the unconscious is where the Other resides, it is where the other comes to presence as the “I” and speaks on behalf of the “I.” The unconscious is a dark topography where it is possible to remain anonymous to the conscious world and

speak from a position of the unknown. Similar to the unconscious, poetry is where the anonymity of the subject is an essential poetic function; it is where intimate relations can be made between seemingly unknown elements. Finally poetry's function cannot be brought into a full understanding. We know that poems are linguistic products; in fact, language in its utmost creative stage becomes poems. Poetry is the way in which poems take place: the becoming of poems. Poetry is the dark side of language where linguistically unknown events take place. If according to Lacan, the unconscious functions as language, then poetry is the unconscious of language.

There is a dynamic relationship between poetry's known parts with its unknown topography: the known parts of the literal function of poetry help feed the unknown territory or the highly or even purely poetic parts with its knowledge and clarity, making the poetic parts appear darker and more unknown; this allows for the unknown parts to be seen as the other, or as "most foreign of all" The poetic elements of a poem help the known parts of the poem be more known, to be seen clearer, and to be recognized as the familiar and internal.

For the later Freud, the ego is seen as mostly unconscious, and "behaves exactly like the repressed". This conception of the ego introduces uncertainty into the question of who the subject of an action or a statement is. Lacan makes a decisive distinction between subject and ego and frames both concepts in a new rule and definition. According to Fink, Lacan views "the self is an other, the ego is an other"(7) and in his seminar II, Lacan says, "I is an other" (9); "the ego is an object" (44). Fink argues how the "other" runs the show and pretends to be the "I" or the self: "That

otherness runs the unlikely gamut from the unconscious (the Other as language) and the ego (the imaginary other [ideal ego] and the Other as desire [ego ideal]) to the Freudian superego (the Other as jouissance)” (Xii).

According to Fink, the ego in the Lacanian perspective is defined in terms of the imaginary register, but the subject is seen as its position in relation to the other. Lacan’s concept of imaginary order comes with a distinctive relation to the conscious and unconscious. The consciousness appears to be the relations of detached and separated things, a relation that brings unrelated things in contact with each other, whereas relation in the unconscious functions in a poetic way, to fuse things together, make them belong to one another.

If ego for Lacan is the other, and impossible to locate it in a poetic statement, it is because the price of admission to the symbolic order is that the subject is replaced by a signifier that marks not its location but its absence. The subject also positions itself as a secret, as Lacan so often reiterates: “the subject is that which one signifier represents to another signifier” To locate the subject in a poetic product we must disclose what one signifier tells another signifier. In poetry, we may ask, what signifiers represent to one another? Is there any particular way to detect the process of the meaning of representation between signifiers in poetry? We can certainly say that signifiers in poetry speak to each other, represent or signify things to one another, and that’s how they communicate internally and with readers. Any attempt to locate and to disclose the sense and the semantics of their communication is doomed to failure; poetic products operate as metaphors, and in their metaphorical function, each poetic image brings multiple significations into the poetic communication, making it impossible to

detect a singular meaning of the image or word. Consequently, we can consider multiple subjects for a singular poetic product, and perhaps oppose the monologue comprehension of poetry or to dismiss the plural subjective approach altogether and go back to Freud's definition of the self and ego.

It seems that poetry, in its pluralistic functions, provides more evidence to support the Lacanian conception of the subject. Poetry provides layers of complex and at the same time promising and joyful imagery, which invites readers to discover its poetic relations. A multifunctional phenomenon such as poetry offers the possibility of multi speakers and plurality of voices in a poem. Let me explain my thought on this issue with an example of a Haiku poem, by Kobayashi Issa (1763-1828): "The light of a candle/Is transferred to another candle—/Spring twilight"

The poem resonates with the Lacanian concept of the subject: each candle transfers light to another one. It seems very reasonable that all candles have the same light, that all lights are coming from the same source, but this sameness and uniformity does not reflect the diversity of poetry. The last line, as its concluding statement, indicates a different outcome: that what actually springs from the transferring of lights is not light but the decline of light, the otherwise of the light, the darkening and the end of the light or the rise of the darkness. If one candle gives its light to another candle, the light should be transferred equally and become doubled, but Kobayashi says that the transference of light is not the same and candles are different from each other, each candle perceives and consumes the light differently and for this, the outcome of light transference is the "Spring twilight."

Freud's Uncanny as the Unconscious of Poetry

Freud's theory of the uncanny

Freud presents his theory of the uncanny in 1919 and he explains what an uncanny experience is in psychological terms and more importantly what causes the uncanny. Freud admits that the uncanny feeling or experience belongs to the category of the terrible and arouses dread and horror. The uncanny feeling happens when a familiar thing behaves and acts as the unfamiliar; its behaviour disturbs our sense of familiarity. In Freud's account, "the uncanny is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (Freud, *The Uncanny*). Freud acknowledges that the strangeness of the uncanny, asking the same question that we may have: "How this is possible, in what circumstances can the familiar become uncanny and frightening?" The root of the uncanny theory is familiar acts appearing as unfamiliar, but Freud discusses several other theories of the uncanny.

Ernst Anton Jentsch focuses on intellectual certainty and believes that "a particularly favourable condition for awakening uncanny sensations is created when there is intellectual uncertainty whether an object is alive or not" (Freud, *The Uncanny*). For Freud, intellectual uncertainty cannot be the cause of the uncanny. He says, "Jentsch's point of an intellectual uncertainty has nothing to do with this effect"

Schelling defines the uncanny as "something which ought to have been kept concealed, but which has nevertheless come to light" (13). For Schelling, the essence of

what is uncanny is to conceal and at the same time reveal and, in this sense, all figural statements are uncanny since they simultaneously conceal and reveal what they conceal.

For Freud the experience of the uncanny occurs in several conditions which may be listed as follows:

- 1- If the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, this condition may produce the uncanny effect in which the imaginary will appear as the reality and the reality will emerge as imaginary. This may be seen which the function of the familiar appears as unfamiliar; the reality presents itself and functions as imaginary or “a symbol takes over the full functions and significance of the thing it symbolizes” (16).
- 2- If an action or impression trigger repressed infantile complexes and revives them, or our primitive beliefs once more are confirmed, the uncanny effect arises.
- 3- If the process of repression estranges the old and familiar thing and makes it appear as unfamiliar and new. For Freud “the uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind” (17).

The central point for Freud’s thoughts is that the uncanny is when the unfamiliar arises from within familiar; the familiar that functions as unfamiliar but remains the old and familiar thing. The uncanny is that which brings a paradoxical experience to the fore, an act and its refusal at the same time, the action that erases itself and at the same time; the erasure that presents itself as the action. It is not that two images of one thing appear as opposition, denying the function of each other; in contradiction, the two

paradoxical images support the functioning status of one another. Freud explains how the German word *Heimlich* (the uncanny) means the combination of two opposition words in which they don't oppose each other: "The word *heimlich* is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which without being contradictory are yet very different: on the one hand, it means that which is familiar and congenial, and on the other, that which is concealed and kept out of sight" (4).

Schelling's definition of the uncanny, as the hidden secret that attempts to reveal itself, is included in Freud's theory of the uncanny. The hiddenness in Freud's description of the uncanny is the function of unconcealing, revealing comes into the being as does concealing. In the heart of the Freudian understanding of the uncanny is the presentation and function of two opposing characteristics at once: the hiddenness remains to be as a perpetual attempt to hide but at the very same time, in its endeavour of hiding, it reveals itself. Jentsch's intellectual uncertainty explains how familiarization functions as intellectual certainty, making the familiar as the known, but it fails to bring intellectual uncertainty and certainty together while simultaneously keeping them separate. The intellectual uncertainty, in its essence, cannot be uncertain, and therefore fails to accomplish the uncanny effect.

The Uncanniness of Poetry

If Freud's uncanny is to locate the strangeness in the ordinary, then poetry and not the human psyche is the place where this theory has been in place and has been practiced since poetry's day one.

In poetry, every poetic image can be seen as the function of the uncanny and in a sense, poetry cannot exist without its uncanny nature and uncanny effects. Freud speaks about how the uncanny functions in the realm of fiction, but it seems that he is taking merely a psychoanalytical approach to view the function of fictitious products. Freud acknowledges that the uncanny in fiction may have different meanings and functions than the real world: "In the realm of fiction many things are not uncanny which would be so if they happened in real life" (18). He speaks of the effect of the uncanny and not its function: therefore the experience of the effect and feeling of some events cannot be fully brought into language, and for this reason, the creation of some experiences in fiction and poetry may have less uncanny effects than the real experience itself. But what makes the whole practice of poetry as the expression of the uncanniness is the similarity between the function of the uncanny and the practice of poetry. The function and meaning of the word in poetry cannot be the same as its literal status, it must bring a different result and conclusion to the meaning-making process. The reassuringly familiar meaning of a word appears alongside a troublingly unfamiliar meaning in poetry and this is the basic expectation that we may have from a poetic product. The function of the familiar word will always remain what it is, as the familiar but this familiarity is secretly attached to the uncanny and strange effect. Words in poetry grow

into a higher stage where the new qualities simultaneously function as the new and the old. Let me explain this with an example, a poem by Mark Strand (1934-2014).

Man and Camel

On the eve of my fortieth birthday
I sat on the porch having a smoke
when out of the blue a man and a camel
happened by. Neither uttered a sound
at first, but as they drifted up the street
and out of town the two of them began to sing.
Yet what they sang is still a mystery to me—
the words were indistinct and the tune
too ornamental to recall. Into the desert
they went and as they went their voices
rose as one above the sifting sound
of windblown sand. The wonder of their singing,
its elusive blend of man and camel, seemed
an ideal image for all uncommon couples.
Was this the night that I had waited for
so long? I wanted to believe it was,
but just as they were vanishing, the man
and camel ceased to sing, and galloped

back to town. They stood before my porch,
staring up at me with beady eyes, and said:
"You ruined it. You ruined it forever."

The experience of seeing a man and a camel on a city street in itself is an uncanny experience, even more so when you witness them singing a mysterious song only when they are out of eyesight. The man and the camel vanish from town, but then return straight back to the poet's porch.

The camel is a camel in the poem and remains a camel even when it sings, becomes elusive and vanishes. The camel appears as an uncanny phenomenon and functions as if it remained loyal to its camel-ness while it simultaneously becomes something else, something far from a camel. It projects two complex and opposing images of itself while remaining loyal to both of them. The whole experience of man and camel in this poem is uncanny; it unites experiences that cannot live together, and the individual experiences remain as they are. Can we say that the man and camel are the products of a poet's creative mind or his reverie? Yes and no: yes, because they are created by the poet and no because as soon as the poem is created they become part of the poem's reality and cannot be erased or dismissed by the poet or the readers of the poem.

The poetic function forces words to act upon the role and the desire of poetry; it is poetry that dictates what a word should do and where it should be set. This formal and strict environment can be seen as constraining towards words. Words are controlled and mostly repressed by the ruling poetic function. If we read the first three

lines of “Man and Camel” we can view how poetic repression can occur in a poetic product. The first two sentences are completely repressed and they oscillate between the literal status and poetic function, leaning towards poetic function: “*On the eve of my fortieth birthday/ I sat on the porch having a smoke.*” The words in these two sentences function as what they literally are and not as their potential poetic attributes. It seems that the words in these two sentences are repressed and forced to remain silent. The repressed words will be revived when an impression raises the memory of the speaker’s past experiences. “Smoking on the eve of his fortieth birthday,” as a repressed statement is revived as soon as the speaker remembers a man and a camel in front of his porch. The repressed and dead statement enters into poetic life and engages creative events. The repressed words and statements need a spark of imagination in order to revive; the hint of the poet’s past memory sparks their freedom. This emphasizes how poets attempt to remain functional in their poems in each reader’s attempt to read the poem. The poetic repression changes, or in Freudian terms, estranges the whole function of repressed words. Freud, in his uncanny theory, explains how the process of psychical repression estranges the familiar and makes them act as unfamiliar.

As discussed in Chapter One, for Heidegger poetic estrangement is a key element for understanding art; it defamiliarizes, or in Freud’s term, unfamiliarizes the familiar. The difference between Freud and Heidegger, in the discussion of estrangement, is that Freud explains how the process of estrangement happens and where the source of these energetic changes comes from, whereas Heidegger mostly explains what happens when the process of estrangement takes place. Repression in both

psychology and poetry arises as psychic or poetic estrangement, creating uncanny experiences and bridging unrelated events.

The Uncanniness of the Poetic Unconscious

One of the ways in which an uncanny effect is “often and easily” produced in Freud’s view is to efface the distinction between reality and imagination. If we land in a situation where we cannot distinguish between what is real and what is unreal, things will appear to us as uncanny. If this is the determination for producing uncanny effects, then poetry is exactly where we need to land. It is where we learn how to unlearn our knowledge of the real, we practice seeing our imaginative products as real, and the real as imagination. Effacing the distinction between the real and the imagination, according to Freud, not only produces uncanny experiences but also extends the realm of the poetic unconscious, loosens the boundaries set by human intellect between the real and the imagined. The uncanny experiences are the projection of the limited reality that unbind the imagination in a place where we can examine the traces and effects of the poetic unconscious. The expansion of imagination automatically broadens the domain of the poetic unconscious and frees poetry from the standard poetic roles. Poetry intrinsically functions based on pleasure principles but in practice, these principles become the reality of poetry or the principle of reality. Poetry unconsciously inclines towards a creative position with no principle, but poetic consciousness remains loyal to the principles that promise the establishment of pleasure. In this sense, the extension of the imagination means more limitations for the ruling power of poetry and

a freer condition for the poetic unconscious. In poetry the free play of signifiers is effectively constrained by the conventions of language.

Freud argues that unfamiliarity is insufficient for a thing to be uncanny: “Something has to be added to what is novel and unfamiliar to make it uncanny” (2). It seems that the only thing that needs to be added to unfamiliarity, in order to make it uncanny, is familiarity; the uncanny is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. We can extend this instruction to the analysis of poetry, concluding that a functioning word, in a poem or a poetic image, cannot be made of only the real or imagination; it must be at the same time real and imagined. The “porch” in “Man and Camel” is simultaneously real, a place that the speaker stands and smokes on, and unreal, an imaginative place that no one could arrive at. It cannot be just one of these two, otherwise it will not function poetically. Conceiving poetry as a platform where reality and imagination both function in every poetic instance broadens and prolongs the realm of the poetic unconscious. We can conclude that every word and every single image in poetry functions unconsciously and extends the domain of the poetic unconscious.

Poet’s Imprint and the Poetic Unconsciousness

An established poet has his own style of poetry writing. He writes in a distinct way, leaving his personal imprint on every word he uses. Style in poetry refers not only to the wording of a poem but the way a poem uses meter: rhyme and rhythm structure the way poems sound to readers. The music of a poem is the result of a poet’s conscious choices and the operation of the poetic unconscious. The choices that a poet gradually makes becomes part of his unconscious mind: he does not need to think each time when

he wants to choose an image or a sound. It comes automatically. We need to make a distinction here between the unrepressed unconscious and the repressed unconscious. The unrepressed unconscious is the habitual stuff that we are unconscious of but which is easily accessed; the repressed unconscious is the inaccessible unconscious. A poet's use of a particular syntax may become habitual, but that does not make it repressed.

The function of the poet's unconscious mind will lead the way to the poetic unconscious of his poem's function, but it is important to remember that these two are not the same. The poem's ego is shaped by the conflicts between the poetic unconscious and the conscious poetic, the poem's id and superego respectively. A poem would usually tell us who the poet is, even if the name of the poet is not mentioned. A poem by William Shakespeare doesn't need to carry the name of its author with it. The poem itself, through the traces and imprints left by the poet, will tell us who the poet is. The poet's imprint is part of the poem's unconsciousness, but it functions as the known part of the poem, as its consciousness. Reading T.S. Eliot's poem would automatically tell us who the poet is; this automatic signification is the function of the poetic unconscious, but it reveals and reactivates the reader's consciousness, telling him the name of the poet. What this means is that "the poet" (the "subject" of the poem) is an effect of language, not a referent in the real world.

Let me bring an example, only the first stanza of a poem called, "*The Imprint*" by Jennifer Moxley:

We will count on these walls
to whisper

our resumes
to the strangers who take up
the work of these rooms,
forwarding them
past dust.

Our purpose shared,
suspended in trust
to a poem
that told us a long love
is *willed*.

It would be a very difficult task to show the trances that Jennifer Moxley has left behind in this poem, but it would be feasible to consider the way in which poetic images are structured. This may help us to come to a general conclusion as to how some poets exclusively structure their poetic images. Moxley's poem shows that she is very interested in the poem's internal music, bringing for example words such as walls, whisper, who, work... in a short distance from each other to create an internal music. It can also be helpful to study some of the poetic images in this poem to see how and in which way Moxley structures her wordings and her poetic images, for instance, "counting on these walls", "the past dust", "the suspended trust" ...can give us a clue of how Moxley plays with words and how her wording works.

Free Association as the Communication of the Unconscious Mind

The unconscious, as the unknown and inaccessible part of the human psyche, is the main concern of psychoanalysis: to bring its content into the light has always been a key task. Since Freud, dream interpretation has been treated as a crucial method, because as Freud acknowledged, it is a “Royal Road” to the unconscious. The Royal Road in itself was not able to grant access to the unconscious; for this, dream interpretation came to rescue the Royal Road and gain access to the unconscious. The magical function of dream interpretation in leading us to the unconscious was largely a product of a method developed by Freud called “Free Association.” According to Ernest Jones, Freud’s biographer, the method of Free Association goes back as early as 1892 and 1895 and “it developed very gradually, becoming steadily refined and purified from the adjuncts - hypnosis, suggestion, pressing, and questioning - that accompanied it at its inception” (214).

Free association refers to a psychoanalytic method in which the patient is given the opportunity to share his seemingly scattered and random thoughts; the task of the analyst is to create links between dispersed thoughts and relate them in a meaningful way. Freud describes it as such: “The importance of free association is that the patients spoke for themselves, rather than repeating the ideas of the analyst; they work through their own material, rather than parroting another's suggestions” (24). The analyst asks some basic and directive questions and then allows the analysand to speak freely, to bring the association of his thoughts freely. The process of free association brings the suppressed unconscious into a stream of consciousness and this will create what Christopher Bollas calls “Freedom of psychic movement.” The analyst suspends his

active presence in the process of free association by absenting from the conversation and allowing the analysand to be the monologue voice of the session and provide him the opportunity of “free talk.”

Freud uses the analogy of travelling on a train: as the train is moving, we remember things that rapidly pass from the window. Each thing or image will be moving similar to the train that we are travelling with; the succession of images will provoke a “train” of thought in us, we relate some of the images that we remember. The patient is given a similar opportunity, a train ride, by the analyst, who will explain each thing that comes into the patient’s mind, intentionally disregarding its logical relations with other elements. The patient’s “train of thought” manifests the content of his unconscious and provides access to it.

Christopher Bollas prefers to call free association “free talk” because in the process of free association what really happens is free talk, not free association. Free talk associates the patient unconsciously and freely: according to Bollas, the patient in talking freely, speaks his mind, as it were, his way of thinking: “Free talking is its own form of thinking, thinking out loud” (74).

Free association, or what Bollas calls the Freudian Pair, arranges the return to the previous psychic experience. The method is designed to help the patient speak from within his lost psychical experience, his dream. Bollas explains: “One of the remarkable accomplishments of the Freudian Pair is both to facilitate the return of the analysand to the dream (and to maternal origins), and to foster a process of separation and individuation authenticated entirely by the patient’s own associations” (75). According to Bollas, the patient simultaneously speaks from within his dream and from his free

talking position. This indicates the expansion of the patient's "network of thoughts and knowledge" and enhances his unconscious reach. The enhancement of the unconscious not only happens as the connection of the analyst's and the patient's unconscious but also in the expansion and branching out in the unconscious of both the analyst and the patient. Bollas perceives the expansion of the patient's unconscious as the artwork of the analyst:

In the course of an analysis, the patient's branches develop a network of thought that constitutes the matrix of the analysand's unconscious as it functions within the psychoanalytical space. By asking for free associations and by receiving them through a very particular frame of mind, the psychoanalyst not only increases the network of knowledge but also, simultaneously enhances the patient's unconscious reach. (Bollas 40)

The analyst, by suspending his presence and 'absenting' himself from the process of free association, may experience a similar return to his dreams or reveries as the patient. Bollas believes that free association may take both the patient and the analyst very far from the immediate psychic experience, especially in the case of the patient, and this may break down the associations.

The patient, in the analytic session, holds a very crucial and difficult position: he is asked to narrate his psychical events, or in Bollas's view, "read off all the time the surface of his consciousness"(3). He is not required to follow any rule of honesty or accuracy in the process of his narration; his engagement in the free talking process generates a sense of responsibility for honest engagement or "free" association. The free association must be read as an association free of any censorship, participating

in complete honesty, narrating without any judgement of the content. According to Bollas, the patient should not hold back any thoughts or ideas in his narration even if... “(1) he feels that it is too disagreeable or if (2) he judges that it is nonsensical or (3) too unimportant or (4) irrelevant to what is being looked for. It is uniformly found that precisely those ideas which provoke these last-mentioned reactions are of practical value in discovering the forgotten material” (3).

It seems that the process of free association inserts the patient in a position that allows him to speak the content of his unconscious word by word, without attempting to think, he functions merely as a narrator, as though he were narrating someone else’s written experience. Bollas emphasizes the contribution of the analyst in constructing the patient as a mere reader of the surface of his consciousness. However, the process of free association itself is independent of the role of the analyst; it plays a very important role in constituting a free talking environment. Winnicott, Bollas notes, speaks of the analyst’s concentration on the selected parts of the conversation in free association session as “holding.” Bion’s conception is of “the analyst containing the patient” (64). In Bollas’ view, the analyst “holds” the patient, bringing him under his power, containing him and eventually turning him into a form of expression: “By holding the patient through reverie, the psychoanalyst receives the patient’s unconscious move, which will not only yield more information about the patient’s inner life and historical conflicts but will facilitate the articulation of the analysand’s being, a form of expression” (64)

Seeing the patient’s being as “the form of expression” manifests how passively he engages in the process of free association.

If we use the analogy of a text for the patient, then we can see how the analyst, as the reader of the text, reads the text without the engagement of the text itself. According to Bollas, it is the reader who turns the text into a form and positions himself as the content of the form. Attributing a constructive position to the author does not fit easily into any contemporary critical discourse of text analysis, which in most cases highlights the totalitarian rule of the author in producing and shaping the future of the text and marginalizes the reader. If we replace the act of reading itself as a creative engagement with the analysand's original creative control, we could bring this conflicting view to a solution. It is the act of reading that holds the patient, contains him, turns him into a textual form and gives him meaning.

In the process of free association, "free talking" functions simultaneously as talking and thinking, the talking that thinks or the thinking that talks. For Bollas, the analysand in his thinking-through talking, uses the analyst as the medium of thought, thinking-through analysis, or thinking by analysis. The presence of the analyst is very figurative; he *presences* himself in the process of free association; his silence speaks for the statements that he hasn't yet made. The analysand, in the words of J Austin's theory of "Performative Utterance," performs utterances that bring the silence of the analyst into words. The unconscious interactions between the analyst and the analysand function, as Salvador Dali views it, "in dream logic"; the dream-work arranges the content of the conversation in order to condense, displace, and distort certain parts of it.

In Bollas' view, the ego, in both participants, is the conductor of the dream-work; it "forms symptoms, which stores psychically valuable moments during the day, which organizes any and all features of a self's unconscious life. The ego has a

vested interest in perceiving reality, in giving it organization, and in communicating it to others” (44).

Automatism as the Unconscious Talk

Freud criticizes attempts to study and reveal the content of the unconscious consciously. In his view, the conscious revelation of the unconscious intrinsically fails to demonstrate the true nature of the unconscious: “The unconscious is the true psychological reality; in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of the consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs” (613).

A direct connection to the unconscious is the only way to bring the content of the unconscious to light, and for Freud, free association is the direct connection.

Free association, or the free talk, is in fact unconscious talk; through free talk, the unconscious can be brought into consciousness. The two unconscious minds, according to Bollas, “sense counterpart” and pair each other through free talking; they discover each other, just as we immediately notice and find someone speaking our language in a large crowd.

The patient talking freely has also been defined as automatic talking: talking without following any specific platform or having any idea or intention to express. Freud’s free association found a very crucial and, in a sense, transformative place in the art and it gave writers, poets and artists the opportunity to freely create. According to Athanasia Nikolakouli in her remarks on the influence of Freud’s dream

theory on Surrealism, Freud's method of free association liberated imagination:

"Freud's revelations about the unconscious were offering a proper ground for the liberty of imagination to flourish"

The artistic imagination, which was suppressed by the restrictive governing rules of art and literature, are set free to discover the world and connect to the artist's inner world. Surrealism was established as a cultural and artistic movement in 1920 to bridge together reality and imagination. Surrealism set its foundation on free imagination, the abolishing of boundaries between reality and imagination through automatic creation. Salvador Dali, a surrealist painter, claims to change and redefine reality by means of an inner power, in particular the artistic imagination: "I believe the moment is at hand when, by a paranoiac and active advance of the mind, it will be possible (simultaneously with automatism and other passive states) to systematize confusion and thus to help to discredit completely the world of reality" (179).

He also thinks that reality is not something concrete, existing outside of our psychic life, instead, in his view, "our images of reality themselves depend upon the degree of our paranoiac faculty" (180).

Andre Breton, one of the founders of surrealism, defines automatism as an artistic uprising against the oppressive rule of reason, aesthetic and morality: "Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express – verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning of thought. Dictated

the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.”²

Breton acknowledges that surrealism brought the unconscious to artistic light based on Freud’s insights:

It was, apparently, by pure chance that a part of our mental world which we pretended not to be concerned with any longer – and, in my opinion by far the most important part – has been brought back to light. For this, we must give thanks to the discoveries of Sigmund Freud. The imagination is perhaps on the point of reasserting itself or reclaiming its rights.”

Automatic writing is very similar to free talking. It means to write whatever comes to your mind. The automatic writer will not attempt to follow any literary and sometimes even grammar rules and instead listens to the flow of words in his psyche and writes them down as they come. The difference between the free talking of a patient in a psychoanalytic session and automatic writing is that the writer acts as the analyst himself and his writing, the automatic flow of words coming from the pen or the type writing machine, functions as the patient. The writer must suspend his personal experiences, views, his knowledge of writing and his ideological responses in order to facilitate the process of creative writing.

In automatic writing, in comparison to a psychoanalytic session, the unconscious flow of words, the agency of the writing, is the patient and the writer is the analyst. The

² Andre Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism* by - 1924

written text is how the writer and the agency of writing communicate with each other; it is simultaneously what the writer is saying to the unconscious writing and what the writing says to the writer. The writer, absenting himself from the “scene of writing,” turns himself into the *facilitator* of writing, bringing the act of writing into presence; the writing, by its way of automatism, mirrors the desire of the writer to eliminate the boundary between himself and the flow of words, between the automated word, and world-making. What oppresses the desire of the writer to write freely is the standards of reason and logic, along with the rules of literature. Automatic writing releases the writer from the constraints of standards and rules. The practice of creative automatic writing, on the one hand, teaches the writer how to distance himself from himself and let the work of writing be free of his authorship; on the other hand, the writing replaces the writer and by distancing the writer from what he has written, secures the freedom of the written products. William S. Rubin, in *Dada And Surrealist Art* explains: “The value of creative activity lies in the doing, in the act of making, rather than in the aesthetic significance of the thing made” (19). Surrealism, or in Breton’s words, “the pure psychic automatism,” not only relies on automatism and the free flow of words but also the way the automatic words are put together. Surrealism employs the poetic and dream-like style of writing, and Breton emphasizes the crucial rule of words: “Let it be quite understood that when we say ‘word -game,’ it is our surest reasons for living that are being put into play. Word, furthermore, has finished playing games. Words are making love” (19).

Poetry and Surreal Automatism

In a sense, poetry had already invented surrealism and automatic writing long before the terms were coined. The heavy reliance of the Romantic tradition on poetic revelation brings it into a close relationship with surrealism. J.H. Matthews claims that “The surrealists are the direct descendants of the French romantic writers” (38) and he quotes Breton’s acknowledgement that calls surrealists the “tail of romanticism.” Poetic revelation for the Romantic can be understood as a kind of surreal automatism. In both practices, the artistic revelation and automatism shape the fate of the poem, form its contents and structure its form. As Paul Eluard explains, the automatism in surreal poetry not only generates poetic images unconsciously but the practice of automatization shapes the whole poem: “automatism has the effect of developing and enriching the field of poetic examination” (33).

Automatism is a sudden event and has no past, no history, not even in the form of poetic revelation. Revelation and automatism can only relate themselves to what they do, not to what they are. Automatism is full of the future: it is in a perpetual state of happening. It causes the poem and gives birth to its eventful experience and reappears in each and every experience of reading. Surreal automatism is the reality of all poems and a function of all poetry analysis.

The commonality between the Romantics and Surrealist is in the emergence of the poetic event which turns into a seemingly unresolvable knot of disagreements and contrasts. The Cartesian dualisms of form and content in Romanticism give way to the oneness of form and content in Surreal poetry. Michael Richardson in *Surrealist Poetics* shows how surrealist forms are made of content and content forms form. He discusses the comments of Breton and Paul Eduard in their

notes on poetry: “What matters therefore is neither form nor content, but a content which is at one with its form” (136).

Poetic form intrinsically delivers a sense of automatism in relation to its contents: it forms the content as if the content descended automatically, or as if its functionality had been challenged by the revelation of the content. In a successful poem, the sense of automatization permeates into the practice of reading. A reader forms the poem he reads and by forming it, revives it and brings it into a sense of close contact with himself. The poem appears to the reader as the act of reading and it pushes the reader to a state of automatism, a condition in which the reader reacts, or acts automatically to the revival of the poetic experience.

Surreal poetics, besides its automatism and the oneness of form and content, exhibits several other structural and transformative attributes that I will briefly explain.

1- **Obscurity**: surrealist poetry is fundamentally obscure. It is not just that obscurity is the function of poetic abstraction but that prior to abstraction, obscurity veils the nature of the poem and erases analytic attempts to reveal its identity. Obscurity protects and fulfils its wish to remain anonymous. Poetic obscurity or the poetry’s essential desire to keep itself outside of the boundary of analytical paradigm, is a common characteristic in all different types of poetry but in surrealist art, especially poetry, the extent of obscurity cannot be reduced.

2- **Newness**: in surrealism, the boundaries between reality and unreality *are supposed to* have vanished, where the world is not divided into the real and the imaginary, or conscious and unconscious; in fact, the world is only made of surreal

things. The poet is *understood to be* free to perceive things the way he would like to, and he has the total freedom to build his poetic world. This new worldview brings a fresh look to the way that poetic products are created. In surreal poetry, poetic experiences are made of nothing but the newness itself. For surreal poets, the poetic experience is not what has happened but what it is going to come to existence. The surreal poet does not have any premade old material, nor does he have the gift of relying on other poets' thoughts and ideas. Everything he has is his own, made from scratch. The poetic function in surrealism is defined to create anew and to bring into existence anything that the poet wants to use in his poem.

3- ***Limitlessness***: surrealist poetry establishes its practice by respecting no moral, religious, aesthetic or literary rules: it is made to unmake the rules that others have made. It's number one rule is no rules: it creates its own literature and in a sense its own personalized rules. In surreal poetry, every poem appears as the projection of its own rules. Breton and Schuster highlight that poets don't need to follow other poets' paths. They say, "The poet has no need to exculpate himself before any judge" (Breton and Schuster page number). The absence of rules creates limitless freedom for surreal poets to create. The surreal attempt in denying the past and ignoring what other poets and other types of poetry have done is to emphasize their claim that poetry, in its essence, is surreal. Breton and Schuster account for the war that a surrealist poet has declared against history, especially literature: "I have despised cadence and rhyme; I have decapitated words" (30). One of the important aspects of surrealism is its dream-like reality; the artist and poet function as dreamwork and brings together the inner and the outer world. The inner world speaks in the language of the objective world; at the

same time, the concrete world, without leaving its concreteness aside, operates like a dream.

4- Poetic exchange: In the heart of the surrealist's perception of art is the double sidedness and communicative function of art in which creativity is shared by the artist and the spectator, the audience and the reader. In different types of poetry in general and in poetic surrealism in particular, the distinguished poets leave the process of his poetic creation unfinished for the reader to bring it into a complete creation. Comte de Lautreamont has famously announced that "poetry must be made by all, not one". Poetic exchange, for J. H. Matthews, is a surreal function:

In clarification of the issues involved when we are contemplating the operation of the surrealist mind, one may say that it created on poetic exchange. Something else ought to be added also. The exchange surrealists relied on poetry to bring about endowed the poetic with a character that despite their belief that poetry has always had but one function allows us to speak after all of surrealist form of poetic communication. (Matthews 211)"

Revolutionary function and comprehension of poetry: surrealism not only takes a revolutionary approach to define art and its function, but it delivers revolutionary principles to create art and poetry. It seems fair to say that surrealism functions on revolutionizing both poetry and the poet; reading a surreal poem, one must expect that the whole function of poetry, the place and operation of words, the function of grammar and the way words and images are related to each other are fundamentally other than what we experience in non-surreal poetry. Revolution is a sudden and structural transformation and in surrealism, the innovative insurgency of the sudden and complete

change is what does not change. Richard Leslie defines surrealism as “the dream of revolution” in the way of seeing, what we see and the things that come to our sight.

5- *The unknowability of the known*: what we know, we categorize as the known, that is, things that have a clear, certain and reliable relationship with us. Our world is divided into known and unknown things, and the known part of the world is ours. It is where knownness comes as light and certainty, and the unknown as fear and darkness. Surrealists have challenged this way of perception and questioned the set boundaries between the known and the unknown. Breton questions the category of the known: “The greatest weakness of contemporary thought appears to me to reside in the extravagant over-estimation of the known compared to what remains to be known” (Matthews 30).

Surreal art sees itself as the expression of instinct or the instinctual expression of things, where the instinct appears as an expression of the unknown; It does not attempt to bring the unknown into the realm of known; rather, the expression of the unknown extends and broadens the realm of the unknown. Surrealism transforms poetry into a vivid instrument, exploring the human psyche, becoming the language of the unconscious, or that extended part of the unconscious where the unconscious exhibits its existence. Surreal poetry, by bringing the unconscious into words, not only eliminates the darkness of the unconscious and brings it into conscious light; it also amalgamates the conscious and known part of our psyche with the unconscious and unknown.

An Example of Surreal Poetry

I would like to conclude my discussion of surreal poetry with a surreal poem, to show what it means to be a surreal poem and how a surreal poem is different from other types of poetry. I chose a poem by Cesar Moro (1903-1956), a Peruvian poet and painter who joined the surrealism art movement in the 1920s.

The Illustrated World

By: César Moro

The same as your non-existent window

Like a hand's shadow in a phantom instrument

The same as your veins and your blood's intense journey

With the same equality with the precious continuity that ideally
reassures me of your existence

At a distance

In the distance

Despite the distance

With your head and your face

And your entire presence without closing my eyes

And the landscape arising from your presence when the city was
only, could only be, the useless reflection of your slaughter
presence

In order to better moisten the birds' feathers

The rain is falling a great distance

And it encloses me within you all by myself

Within and far from you

Like a road that vanishes on another continent

The poem appears to begin from the middle of a conversation; it leaves off some part of the dialogue such that we can't be sure what the poet conceals from us or leaves unsaid. The poem talks about a non-existent window; we know that the non-existent window is no window at all: according to the poet, it is like the shadow of a hand in a phantom instrument. The poem is made of obscure images, mostly inaccessible or difficult to perceive, and they are related to each other in the strangeness of poetic relationship.

We don't know who the speaker and the addressee of the poem are, but we know the speaker is concerned with the address's existence or at least the pronouncement of it. The poem functions as a journey to seek existence. It talks about the intense journey of blood in her vein and the continuity of the journey assures the continuity of her existence. It consciously remains distant from existence and from the one that it directly talks to, the addressee. The distance dances to project its existence: " At a distance/ In the distance/ Despite the distance."

For the poet, closing his eyes functions as the slaughter of the addressee's entire presence; it seems that the eye of the poet where the subject of his poem is resides. According to J. H. Matthews, in his book, *Toward the Poetics of Surrealism*, seeing is very crucial in surrealist art; it is how we bring something into our perception:

Surrealists locate the excitement of spectacle at a point between what we see, and the interpretation placed upon it by reasonable minds. This is why one of surrealism's essential roles is to advocate severance of the connection between eye and brain, usually taken for granted as serving to link seeing and comprehending. (Matthews 138)

The poem indicates that “the rain is falling a great distance.” We don't know if the rain is falling in a faraway land or the great distance is raining; whatever the rain and its falling are, it closes a distance, a distance between the speaker of the poem and the person that the speaker is talking to. The rain pours the poet into the addressee's existence, and the poet speaking from within the addressee, confuses us as to whether he is the rain or the rain him.

The function of words in surreal poetry is the same as in other types of poetry, but it seems that words in a surreal poem are freer, obeying fewer rules such that the limitation and restriction is far narrower. We can see how the word “distance” plays freely in these three sentences: “At a distance/ In the distance / Despite the distance.”

The Poetic Navel

In his interpretation of Irma's injection dream, Freud postulates the existence of “a spot in every dream” at which the dream is unconnected to the rest of the dream, where the dream is unplumbable and forces the dream interpretation to a halt. In other words, Freud posits that in every dream there is a spot where the dreamwork is barred from entry and remains isolated and unconnected to the system of a dream. Freud calls

this spot the “dream’s navel” and discusses this issue twice in *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

In the interpretation of Irma’s injection, he says,

I had a feeling that the interpretation of this part of the dream was not carried far enough to make it possible to follow the whole of its concealed meaning. If I had pursued my comparison between the three women, it would have taken me far afield. —There is at least one spot in every dream at which it is unplumbable—a navel, as it were, that is its point of contact with the unknown. (Freud 135)

He returns to the dream’s navel in his discussion of “The Forgetting of Dreams,” where he provides a clearer picture of the issue:

There is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be left obscure; this is because we become aware during the work of interpretation that at that point there is a tangle of dream-thoughts which cannot be unravelled and which moreover adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream. This is the dream’s navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown. The dream-thoughts to which we are led by interpretation cannot, from the nature of things, have any definite endings; they are bound to branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought. It is at some point where this meshwork is particularly close that the dream-wish grows up, like a mushroom out of its mycelium. (Freud 528).

His second passage highlights several important issues regarding the nature and the function of the dream’s navel. We can summarize it thus:

- 1- Each dream has a “tangle” and this unsolvable tangle comes all the way from the dream thought and not from the way the dream was manifested.
- 2- The dream tangle is caused by the nature of things in the dream thought, it comes naturally and cannot be removed by interpretation.
- 3- Freud predicts, without providing a reason, that even if we could remove the dream tangle, it would not add anything to the dream content. David Sigler, in his essay, “Freud’s Navel of the Dream,” calls the dream’s navel “a certain secret” and highlights Derrida’s discussion on the nature of this secret: “The secret, here as in Derrida’s work, is precisely not an inner truth to be discovered, revealed, or confessed: it is an unconditional thing that must, by necessity, remain silent, giving rise to no affirmative process whatsoever” (26).

The dream’s navel is the realm of the dream’s unknown: it means that dream must have a known part, an unknown but knowable part, and finally a wholly unknowable component. For Freud, the dream’s navel exists as the unknowable element that the dream presents itself, an unknowable phenomenon that challenges our perceptive ability to make it known; the navel causes the dream to remain permanently mysterious, something that can never be brought into a full and complete interpretation.

- 5- The dream’s navel, in Freud’s view, closes the meshwork of dream interpretation. It brings the relations of the dream’s parts to each other and into a blockage. The dream’s navel is the limit of interpretation, a hole that threatens the wholeness of dream interpretation.

The idea of the dream's navel as an unknown spot, which remains as an unremovable and unknowable tangle in the midst of the known, reasonable and related dream elements indicates the metaphorical nature of the dream's navel. How can we consider the existence of one unresolvable point in every dream which resists dissolving and becoming one with the rest of the dream elements? More importantly, what is this indissoluble spot made of and what causes it to rebel stubbornly against our perception? David Sigler quotes more crucial questions made by Derrida: "Does this supposed point of contact with the unknown have its own history, its own archive? Might progress be made in unravelling this navel in times to come? Or is the navel, as Freud seems to suggest, the endpoint of any analysis, an indivisible atom?" (21).

The metaphor of the dream's navel presents the otherness of the dream, where the other is naturally barred from entry into the mass, remaining as the unknown, the dark and the unwanted element.

The dream's navel or as Singer calls it, "an irreducible mystery," not only remains as an unknowable gap between the known dream elements but also throws a mysterious shadow over the dream interpretation. In the emergence of "irreducible mystery," unknowable darkness comes face to face with the light of known elements, challenging the limits of human knowledge.

The Dream's Navel and Poetry

In poetry, language functions metaphorically, in the very same way that the dream's navel operates, an unknown and unresolvable spot. In every established and functioning poem, there are poetic images that function as the poem's navel, the

unknown and unknowable “spots” where the interpretation of the poem comes into its end. A poem cannot be brought into a full understanding because the poem’s navel naturally remains unresolvable and unknowable. If a poem’s navel projects a natural resistance to clarity and knowability, then we must come to the conclusion that the poem’s navel is the centre of poeticality, that is, of the poetic itself, in a poem: it is where the essence of a poem is created and reserved. In dream interpretation, a dream’s navel operates as an unresolvable challenge not only to limit the functionality of interpretation but also to present itself as a seductive spot, calling for the attention of interpretation, bringing interpretation to its limit provoking the need for more interpretive engagement.

Conceiving a poem’s navel as its poetic centre, as the unknown spots where the relation of poetic elements comes to a halt, turns the experience of the poem into a pleasant and at the same time difficult and challenging encounter with the unknown. Let’s read a Haiku by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), called, “A Poppy Blooms”: *“I write, erase, rewrite/ Erase again, and then/A poppy blooms”*

It’s clear that the navel of the poem is its last line, *“A poppy blooms”* and the rest of the poem is known to us, can be brought into light with less effort. The last line is where the unknown of the poem resides and at the same time, it is what makes these three lines a poem, a wonderful haiku. The poem’s navel, *“A poppy blooms”* is a dense and playful poetic experience that can be understood in many different ways. For instance, it is the relation between the word and the thing: a poppy blooms because the poet writes “a poppy blooms” ... for indeed, there are the words themselves. It is the ability of the poet to create ex nihilo, out of nothing.

The multiple layers of meaning and varying linguistic relations leave us to conclude that it cannot be brought into full comprehension and clarity, but remains naturally unknown, in short poetic.

A poem is usually made of more than one unknown spot or navel; each unknown spot brings the linguistic relationship to a pause. A poetic image functions simultaneously as the interruption of the relations and as a seductive call for the need of renewed and deeper relationships; it closes the rational and known relations and opens up the possibility for unknown relations. It is not that each poetic image individually structures the poem's navel, but that several poetic images (or the most poetic and functional ones) appear as the poem's centre (or one of its centres). Each poem's navel brings together and relates the known elements of a poem by making itself the unknown centre; it functions not as the way in which the unknown is defined by the known; rather the unknown defines the known as if unknown knew more about the knowns than the known elements themselves. The poem's navel leads the poem's direction; it tells the poet and the reader what the poem is, how to read the known parts, and how to leave the unknown parts unread. The unknown spots bridge relations between each other and unite the poem's navels in an unknown and at the same time unknowable relation. The poem, as we have discussed in chapter one, is the relation of relations and the nature of poetry's relation is made of a poem's navel, the "irreducible mystery." In poetry, through its mysterious relations, the impossibility of reading the unknown becomes the possibility of pleasure, the *jouissance* of reading the unknown.

In Hokusai's poem, the impossibility of reading "*A poppy blooms*" as the unknown navel of the poem, brings the possibility of pleasure in relating these three sentences together and causing the creation of poetic jouissance.

The Art of Daydreaming

Freud and Poetry

For Freud art and dreams are very similar. They come from analogous origins and their functions are identical. In general, art is imaginative creation and poetry, in particular, is made of phantasy. Phantasy is a state of mind, a largely unconscious process to create unrealistic and improbable mental images.

In art products and poetry, there are only phantasies and everything we encounter in them is phantasmatic and not real. Freud perceives dreams also to be made of the same nature, phantasies. He says, "Our dreams at night are nothing else than phantasies" (Freud 4). For Freud, both art and dreams are means of distorted fulfilment. They disguise our suppressed wishes and through artistic function or dream-work distort our repressed desires and fulfill them. It seems that for Freud, a dream is a piece of art, a poem, in which the objects in dreams are 'words,' rather than concrete objects. They establish a poetic relation with each other and function symbolically. Freud, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, indicates that objects in dreams appear as words, and in his view, these "words" are related to each other and function based on condensation and displacement or metaphor and metonymy. If dreams are made of words and operate poetically, then it must be poetry or made of the very essence of what makes poetry. In poetry, the words appear as objects. They symbolically represent reality and their

technical operation can be summarized as metaphor and metonymy, or condensation and displacement. The poet is a dreamer. He is not fully conscious of his essential dream (poem), but it comes to him as a dream comes to a dreamer. The poet plays with words, selects words (displacement), and structures his poetic sentences and brings several ideas into one poetic image (condensation). The dreamer plays with objects, with real things, but the sense of his play is not real. In his imagination (dreaming), he situates himself in an action and chooses (or rather the dreamwork chooses for him) what to do and what action or objects to put together, and this makes the base of the literary device of metonymy. The dreamer or the dream-work combines several actions and thoughts and unites them as one, and that is what metaphor is.

For Freud, these are indications of how poetry and dreams are similar. Art is nothing but a dream, a daydream. Stanley Edgar Hyman in his essay “On The Interpretation of Dreams” emphasizes that dreams and poetry operate in the same mechanism:

The dream-work is in fact very like the composition of poetry. One dream has ‘a particularly amusing and elegant form’; another, ‘remarkable among other things for its form,’ alternates idea and image as a poem does. Like the poem-work the dream-work ‘does not think, calculate or judge in any way at all; it restricts itself to giving things a new form. (Freud 230).

In his 1908 essay, “Creative Writing and Day-dreaming,” Freud claims that imaginative writing and poetry function to fulfill the writer’s suppressed wishes and they bring about “a correction of unsatisfying reality, the same way that childhood’s play fulfills the child’s wish to be “big and grown-up”. In his view, “every child at play

behaves like a creative writer”, creates his own world: in Freud’s words, the child “rearranges” the things that he has around him in a new way which pleases him. The poet does exactly what a child does to the things he has in his world. The poet rearranges the words that he has at his disposal: he establishes a new world for his words by rearranging them in a new way. The poet rearranges his words to structure a source of pleasure. His poem pleases him and whoever else plays (reads) with his words. The poet’s words express his unsatisfied wish in a “very distorted form”: the poem is not what he was wishing for, even the pleasure that he receives from creating the poem is not exactly what he would receive in fulfilling his true wish, but it functions as a replacement for the lost satisfaction and suppressed wish.

The child, in Freud’s view, plays in front of the adult. He doesn’t need to hide what he does. On the contrary, the adult performs the child’s play, the daydreamer, and hides his phantasies from other people, because he feels ashamed of what he is doing. The child fulfills his wish to be grown up one day and become an adult but he cannot fulfil his daydreams. The artist and poet can only become a child in their daydreaming, art and poetry become their playground, where they can pretend to be children and play.

If the origin of art and poetry is a return to childhood play, it is important to carefully highlight and discover what childhood play means to Freud. Children, in their play, create imaginary worlds, and these imaginary worlds are very serious for them, as serious as the real world. The child invests in his play with time, attention and emotion.

He makes the world of his play from the external real world but keeps the two worlds separate from each other.

Donald Winnicott in *Psycho-Analytic Explorations* argues that play indicates a child's emotional growth and starts as a symbolic trust of the child in his mother. For Winnicott, play is crucially important, not just because of the pleasure that it creates but also because of the practice that it provides:

Play is an *imaginative elaboration* around bodily functions, relating to objects, and anxiety. Gradually as the child becomes more complex as a personality, with a personal or inner reality, play becomes an expression in terms of external materials of inner relationships and anxieties. This leads on to the idea of play as an expression of identifications with persons, animals and objects of the inanimate environment. (Winnicott 60)

Play in art, poetry and daydreaming, is a pleasure-oriented practice that provides the disguised escape from the harsh reality. The pleasure that fantasy and daydreaming create is very essential in maintaining the psychical balance among artists and art consumers. As artists and poets create phantasy, the phantastic elements, in return, create or guide the reality of the artwork or poetry. Freud explains how hysteric symptoms are fueled by phantasies. He says, "every hysterical attack which I have been able to investigate up to the present has proved to be an involuntary irruption of daydreams" (Freud 160). The imaginary world of artists and poets is created and kept separated from the real and everyday world, but artistic and poetic play happen at the borderline of the phantastic and the real. Art and poetry simultaneously bring the imaginative cosmos and the real world together, while time simultaneously separates

and unites them. In the process of its creation, the play of art and poetry occurs as a perpetual tension between fantasy and reality. It remains intrinsically unsolved and reiterates itself in every creative encounter with the work of art and the reading of poems. The function of art and of poetry is to frame and balance the progressive tension between the real and unreal, making the real look imaginative.

A poet daydreams in the form of a linguistic product, a piece in which danced and displaced words function to exhibit his dream. A poem is a personal and even private experience, shared with others. Freud asks, how does a poet make his “innermost secret” overcome the barriers between his ego and others? For Freud, this mysterious power comes from poetic technique. He explicitly defines the type of technique that he believes erases the boundaries between the poet and others:

We can guess two of the methods used by this technique. The writer softens the character of his egoistic day-dreams by altering and disguising it, and he bribes us by the purely formal—that is, aesthetic—yield of pleasure which he offers us in the presentation of his phantasies. (Freud 3)

The poet, in Freud’s words, bribes us with pleasure to mistake ourselves with him, taking his poetic and personal experiences as our own. The poetic pleasure promotes a sense of ego connectivity and the experience of the poet in his encounter with the poem becomes the poetic experience. The poetic experience is not necessarily what the experience of the poet is, rather the experience of the poem, belongs *to* the poem and through reading, to the readers of the poem. According to Freud, the actual enjoyment of an imaginative work, a poem, for instance, proceeds from becoming one

with the imaginative work, experiencing the same emotional and mental events that the poet, and the poem, have explored.

Our unity with a poem liberates our mental tensions and allows us to fulfill our repressed wishes. As discussed, in a poem there is nothing else but fantasies. According to Blanchot, a poem is where the death of the poet happens. For Blanchot, poetry is a condition rather than a kind of work. It “is made of words but is not a use of them”. (Bruns 54) In other words, a poem is a vacant but functional structure that welcomes readers to reside in the poem and feel AS if they had written it, and as if the poem were their own experience and the fulfilment of their own suppressed wishes.

For Freud, poetry is daydreaming. It is where the practice of dreaming is possible. Reading a poem is similar to closing our eyes and getting ready for dreaming. In reading a good poem, each and every word sinks us deeper into the mysterious layers of the poem. We become lost in the same way we lose ourselves in dreams. We go to different places as we are sitting and reading the poem; we do things as if we were someone else. A poem is the extension of our dreaming, dreaming is the continuity of reading a poem, and both experiences are motivated and structured by pleasure.

In art and poetry, we substitute an illusion for something real and this allows us to rebuild the entire reality in a free and pleasant way, as we might wish it to be. The rebuilding of reality in a poetic fashion becomes a source of pleasure as well as the fulfilment of our wishes.

Conclusion

The similarities between dream and poem, dreaming and poetry, and finally between dreamer and poet is an essential unity and despite all these similarities, they remain strangely different from each other. A dream is a condition in which the dreamer gives up his conscious control and active engagement with the world. He himself is controlled by the dreamwork and becomes part of the objects at its disposal. Poetry, as the governing force of poem making, in a similar way, attempts to control and use the poet. In poem-work the poet is not fully unconscious; his ego is mostly controlled by the pleasure-oriented id. For this reason, as the poem becomes more poetic, it becomes more pleasurable and therefore more id-centric and unconscious. It might be possible that a poem begins its life with a very conscious mind; both the poet and the poem know what is happening around them. A mysterious poetic image, an unexpected poetic event, and at the same time an uncanny poetic incident could change the whole environment and reduce the level of consciousness or even replace it with a fully unconscious condition. Who can control the situation in poetry? Who can say the last word and order others to obey? No one knows for sure; it depends on the politics of the poem and how poetic images themselves interact with other images, making stronger allies and on the functionality of the poetic image itself.

Dreams and poems are very similar to each other. The Freudian theory of dream interpretation can be defined as a theory of poetic analysis. If Freud's theory describes and locates the relations and meanings in a dream, it's because it takes a poetic approach to analyze a poem-like phenomenon, a dream. We learned that in the practice of psychoanalysis, words are treated as if they are imbued with personal meaning and

emotion, which is exactly what happens in poetry: words are imbued with personal meaning and emotion. In poetry, words become personal territories, a private entity with its gate fully open to the public; words are the reader's private room, and each reader has the potential ability to extend his private poetic territory.

The poetic unconscious is backed by at least two Freudian theories, the uncanny and free association. Poetic events are mostly mysterious and uncanny; they cannot be fully comprehended and brought to light. In a similar way, events in a dream and also the psychological reality of a patient in an analysis session can be strange and uncanny. In order to interpret a dream, or to understand what psychological events are taking place in a patient's psyche, Freud suggests one solution: the method of free association. A free talk can bring the reality of dreams and of the psyche onto the surface. Free association is not a free talk between the patient and the analyst but between the patient's psyche and himself. The analyst is absent from the free talk, and his absence clear and evident. As we have discussed, we have the same mechanism in place in poetry: free talk or automatism is the ground where poetry builds its structure.

The navel of dreams presents an irreducible spot, a drop of darkness in the midst of light; this unreadability brings the act of dream interpretation face to face with its indefatigable enemy. In the dream's navel, the act of dream interpretation dreams. It fulfills its suppressed wish of interpreting the dream's navel. Poetry is the projection of the dream's navel outside the dream. They are made of the unknown and unknowable spots in the midst of the known.

Both psychoanalysis and poetry work with words: if there were no words, there would be no poetry and no cure of psychoanalysis. Words, in both practices,

appear as what they are, as the mirrors for the reflections of the reader's and patient's faces, the colour of their eyes, the ways of their looks and their emotions. The crucial material of both practices is the same; they are made of the same element, the word, which functions the same way in both practices. With all these similarities, one might wonder why poem and dream, poetry and psychoanalysis, are not one practice yet.

Poetry as the Real Unconscious

Lacan and the Jouissance of Lalangue

Poetry: From Language to Lalangue

The aim of poetry creation is to step outside of language, gain access to what is out there, and move from talking about things to confronting things themselves. Poetry betrays language; it tries to end the supremacy of language, or, in Lacanian terms, the symbolic order, by using language itself; by making the symbolic order testify against its own ruling position. Poetry is a linguistic product: it is made of language just as prose is, just as our daily conversations are. But these latter materials function differently. In poetry language functions at its fullest capacity: it distances itself from communicative and even arbitrary functions, isolating itself from its social and political roles, while attempting to grasp only itself.

We are told that poetry is not saying but showing: poetry is capable of showing, of bringing into presence the presence of something. In this sense, by moving from saying to showing, poetry attempts to gain access to the Real through the symbolic order. As a symbolic order, showing cannot be achieved *only* by saying. Rather, showing is a seeing of the saying, a way of making the saying appear before us, to become what it was *before* the saying, before its subsumption into the symbolic order.

I will come back to this issue to elaborate how poetry shows and how poetic showing functions. For now I would like to relate poetic showing to Lacan's return to the real. In his latest theoretical contemplations, Lacan realizes that the symbolic increasingly fails to mediate between the Real and the imaginary. In his seminar of 1974-1975, Lacan introduces the concept of the "knot" to replace the "chain" of signifiers, and the idea of knotting the two or more orders of the symbolic, the imaginary and the Real to explain the relation of a subject to language. He calls the knotting of these three consistencies "Borromean Knots." Lacan emphasizes that the real is the core of the Borromean Knot and the link between any of these three to two others is reciprocal. One example of knotting is where language overlaps the subject's mental image. Meaning is the product of the knotting of the symbolic order (language) to the internalization of the image (the imagination). We may ask: if meaning is the production of the knot between the symbolic and the imaginary, then where is the Real? Does the Real have any effect in the production of meaning? For Lacan the Real is the core of the subject's relation to the other: the symptom and the meaning come from the Real. The symbolic is responsible for the creation of meaning and it does so by mediating between the Real and the imaginary. In the process of mediation, the symbolic order symbolizes the Real in order to make it realizable or conceivable to the imaginary order. As a result of the mediation process, what is left is a chain of the "imaginary real," or an imagined Real. What the symbolic does is to localize or domesticize the Real and bring it into the symbolic chain. The process of the symbolization of the Real kills the Real and cancels its effect in the Borromean Knot. For this reason, meaning has been seen as the product of the knot between the symbolic and the imaginary. The cancelation of the Real by the

symbolic splits the Real into two, the internalized Real and the impossible Real, the Real outside the symbolic order. In her book *The Unconscious Reinvented*, Colette Soler acknowledges the splitting of the Real in its encounter with the symbolic: “We see the splitting of the notion of the Real here: a Real internal to the Symbolic and a Real to which knowledge is added. In both cases, it is clear that it is not unconscious knowledge that is said to be real” (18). In this sense, we have a Real inside of the symbolic order and a Real outside of it. The Real outside of the symbolic chain is traditionally conceivable; it is something that exists prior to language and symbol. But what do we know about the Real inside the symbolic? How can the symbolic encompass elements of unsymbolizable entities? If the symbolic order brings things into language, into meaning, then how can it itself be contained?

In regards to the location of the Real, whether it is inside or outside, and its relation to the symbolic, Charles Shepherdson, in his book titled, *Lacan and the Limits of Language*, discusses how the dualistic interiority and exteriority of the Real can be defined differently in the Lacanian tradition: “Jacques Alain Miller developed the term *estimate* from Lacan, suggesting that the Real is not exactly ‘outside’, but rather a kind of ‘excluded interior’, or ‘intimate exterior.’ Shepherdson notes that Lacan, regarding the relation of the Real to the symbolic, speaks of ‘excluded in the interior,’ indicating that this exclusion encounters us as a gap in the symbolic order. In other words, the gap in the symbolic order is the internalized Real, the Real that interrupts the function of the symbolic and brings it to the edge of its functionality or, as Shepherdson puts it, to an “internal void.”

Poetry begins from the discovery of, and the emphasis on, the internalized Real, the “internal void,” the gap between the symbolic chains and the unsymbolizable elements residing within it. This gap in poetic work can be seen as simultaneously the physical gap between words and the psychical or immaterial gap between them. The gap between words can be extended to the words themselves: a word in poetry can function at the edge of its existence, as the emptiness of its own presence, as its void. Poetry is simultaneously concerned with how to speak words into being and also how to force them into silence; sometimes the word’s silence or its functioning as a gap is more poetic than its actual content. A distinguished poet sometimes feels the need to fill the mouth of words with emptiness, with gaps, and make the silenced words work and sound louder than the speaking ones.

Poetic showing not only has a sense of theatrical function attached to it, a function which brings things onto the stage, or, in the Heideggerian terms, presencing the presence of a thing; it also seeks to reach the thing itself, bringing the thing and its thingness into presence. Poetry, as the art of showing, proves that the function of poetry is not to bring the Real into the symbolic order but other way around: to link the symbolic order to the Real, to undo the work of language and restore those things they have lost in entering into the symbolic chain. In language, as we know, we bring the Real into the symbolic order, we replace a thing with its name, with its arbitrary equivalence. The function of the symbolic order is to dismiss or deny the Real by creating reality. Lacan says that language, by creating reality, cancels the Real. Poetry as a linguistic product has no access to the Real and works only with linguistic reality, with the mental images of the thing and not the thing itself. Poetry is mostly concerned with

the relation between a thing itself and its substitution in a poem, the poetic image, or the mental representation of a thing in poetry. The desire of a poetic creation is to reduce the distance between things and their signifiers in language. The ideal object of poetry is to make this distance zero, to bring the thing itself into poetry, to make the saying to function as the showing. The Real is the impossible to say, the impossible to write, “the mystery of the speaking body.” For this reason, poetry tries to make the image of a thing function as the thing itself, to heighten the reality of an image. The ideal poem is the Real poem, the poem in its Real sense, the poem that is written by nature.

From the Real Inside the Symbolic to the Real Outside

Jacques Alain Miller’s conception of the “excluded interior” is an attempt to knot the Real outside of the symbolic chain with the one inside of the chain. Miller offers the possibility of knotting, a joining of the Real and the symbolic Real. The “excluded interior” is the immersion of the impossible to say with the impossible to see (the gap or the hole). This doubly impossible phenomenon is an internalized exteriority or an externalized interiority, a paradoxical identification: it is the gathering of the not-coming-together of the inside and outside. Miller’s concept has its place in poetry, in fact it is only poetry where the excluded interior can find its home, a place where the knotting of the Real outside and inside the symbolic chain is possible. To show why poetry is the only place for the gathering of the not-coming-together, we must show what the internal Real and the external Real means for poetry, and then we can show how these two connect.

Poetry and the Real Inside of the Symbolic Chain

The internal Real is the letter itself. The letter is the materiality of language. It is what allows any linguistic element to be stated, to come into being. We must pay attention to the path from the letter to the word, the way in which material turns itself into matter. The letter in itself does not say anything. It does not symbolize; it is a stage prior to symbolization, prior to language. Language in its communicative function moves from letter to word, cancels letters, and creates symbolization. In the process of meaning making, letters move in two opposite directions; they are cancelled and replaced by words, as the gathering of letters turns into a signifying system. A return to letters initiates a necessary distancing of meaning (signification) and for this the process of signification attempts to erase the effect of the letter (the internal Real) altogether and replace it with stable meaning even while the letter resists its erasure from the text. The letter's resistance transforms itself as the gap between the signifying chain and the irreducible hole in meaning. The process of signification is doomed to an amalgamation of words and letters, a combination of meaning and meaninglessness.

Poetry does not aim to produce meaning: it brings the pleasure of discovering meaning, it causes the pleasure or in Lacanian terms, the *jouissance* (which is not necessarily reducible to pleasure and mostly comes with pain and suffering) appears as a possibility to create your own meaning. For this reason, in poetry, letters are as important as words and they are not doomed to elimination. The joy of joining letters together or helping them to pronounce their individuality is the art of poetry, it is where letters are counted as the material of the art of showing. Poetry establishes itself as a

progressive work, as a journey from the letter, the internal Real to the Real outside of the chain.

Language and Lalangue

Language is made of connections. According to Lacan the connection is not between the signifier and the signified but between the signifiers. We have a chain of signifiers: one signifier introduces the subject to another signifier. The language's connectivity is going to be placed on a pause by the signifiers that are not linked to another signifier, the signifier that functions as a non-signifier. These non-signifiers interrupt the follow of a seemingly coherent system of language. Psychoanalysis, as a meaning-making trend, attempts to bring the signifiers without links, the non-signifiers, into signification, into an active engagement in the process of meaning production. Free Association was first introduced by Freud as a tool to reduce the gap and make the unsymbolizable elements of language speak and symbolize. Lacan introduces the concept of Lalangue as the materiality of language, as how language sounds and projects itself outside its meaning making function. For Lacan, when signifiers are transformed into jouissance, when the language does not produce meaning but jouissance, then what we have is lalangue and not language. For Lacan, lalangue is a language that does not aim at communication; it functions as a point of pleasure, as a place where meaning and signification is replaced by jouissance, by an amalgam of jouissance and signifiers. If we see lalangue as signifiers that are made of jouissance, then its task will no longer be that of signification. Colette Soler sees lalangue as eluding elements that lie about their function: "*Lalangue* is rather the "set of all equivocations" possible, which nonetheless does not make a whole" (27).

Language is made to symbolize, to create meaning, but according to Collette, in *lalangue* there is no meaning. It “is not Symbolic but Real. Real, because it is made of ones outside the chain and thus outside meaning (the signifier becomes Real when it is outside the chain), and of ones which are enigmatically fused with *jouissance*” (35).

Defining *lalangue* as the Real recalls to our attention the function of the letter, the way the letter projects its materiality. The letter is the source of meaning, a pre-meaning condition; it is where the Real of the letter appears before the system of signification. The letter, as Soler explains, is defined as “a fusion of *jouissance* with a linguistic element outside meaning” (56).

The Real Unconscious

Lacan spoke of the unconscious for years, the unconscious that is structured like language, the unconscious that speaks, the unconscious that signifies, but by the time of his twenty-third seminar, he begins speaking about an unconscious that does not speak. Lacan began to move from the unconscious that functions through metaphor and metonymy, word and image, to an unconscious that is not symbolic anymore, but Real. Soler describes Lacan’s departure from the symbolic unconscious and his move to the Real unconscious:

Ultimately, we have a Symbolic which is no longer language but *langue*, to be written *lalangue*; an Imaginary which is not signification subordinated to the Symbolic but is essentially form and representation; finally, a Real outside of the Symbolic whereas its previous definition located it at the limit points of linguistic formalisation. (Soler 3)

Soler, in her public speech on Friday, April 13th, 2012, talks about the Real unconscious: “So, Lacan’s last thesis is that the unconscious in itself is just made with *lalangue*.” She continues to elaborate how the Real unconscious is radically different from the symbolic unconscious: “With this thesis we have the end of the monopoly of the signifier in the teaching of Lacan, the end of the monopoly of the signifier, when what is at stake is to reveal something Real.” The symbolic unconscious was the place of meaning making and signification, where signifiers function as the knotting of the symbolic and the imaginary and produce meaning. For Lacan, meaning was the splicing of the imaginary and the symbolic and it was the central point and the major concern of psychoanalysis. Lacan moves from meaning, and language, to outside meaning, and *lalangue*. If signifiers carry meaning, we are in the realm of unconscious knowledge, but, when the signifiers no longer produce meaning, then we are in the Real unconscious where knowledge is *jouissance*: we are in the realm of the enjoyed unconscious.

In Lacan’s Real unconscious, signification is replaced with *jouissance*: signifiers no longer attempt to deal with meaning, but they point to *jouissance*. By carrying *jouissance*, signifiers merge into *jouissance* and become one with it, or in Lacan’s terms, they function as “the apparatus of *jouissance*” (22). The combination of signifiers and the gap between them, the hole in the signifying chain, the symbolic and the un-symbolizable elements of a text create *jouissance*. The Real unconscious contains knowledge that does not produce the effect of meaning but that of *jouissance*, a knowledge which speaks. According the Soler, the Real unconscious is located outside meaning and “It concerns the unconscious as the “spoken knowledge” [*savoir parlé*] of *lalangue*, a knowledge that is at the level of *jouissance*” (37). In the relation between

knowledge and the Real unconscious, Lacan defines the Real unconscious as the knowledge without a subject, the knowledge that determines not meaning but jouissance. The Real unconscious is not teachable for Lacan; it is singular and each individual experience it differently. For Soler, the Real unconscious is not interpretable and defies “both awareness and communication” (55).

The central function of the Real unconscious, according to Soler, is that it combines “an element of language with jouissance” (134), making the element of language, the signifier, to function as jouissance or to create a knot between the Symbolic and the Real. It is important to explain how and why signifiers carry not meaning but jouissance and I will explain this next. The Real unconscious is knowledge without a subject and therefore Real unconscious writing, such as poetry, is not aware of itself; it takes place without being planned out or even noticed. As Arka Chattopadhyay puts it, “It is an unconscious writing. It is a writing of the unconscious” (3).

Poetry and its Relation to Meaning

Meaning is the main purpose and the foundation of communication; we communicate to carry our intended meanings to other people. Meaning is not only the core of actual verbal communication; it is also very central to the essence of literature and poetry. A novel, for example, communicates with us in the very same way that a salesman speaks to us on the phone: it offers us meanings. The difference between our conversation with a salesman and a novel is that the novel gives us meaning in layers, woven together, and requires us to relate and connect and categorize the different scenes

and events together in order to make sense of the whole story. Meaning comes with joyful feelings, meaning that we experience surplus enjoyment, or jouissance. Lacan bridges a path between meaning and jouissance when he says, “everyone enjoys meaning” Soler elaborates Lacan’s finding on how meaning and jouissance are related. She says, “The secret of meaning is that it is always found on the side of jouissance” (Soler 75).

A- Meaning and Jouissance

It is important to see how meaning is related to jouissance, and how jouissance affects meaning. If meaning, according to Soler, is located on the side of jouissance, any access to meaning could be translated into an access of jouissance. Can we say that the more access we have to meaning, the more jouissance is going to be produced? The answer is clearly no: more meaning does not necessarily mean more jouissance. If that were the case, our conversation with the salesman would be the most joyful conversation because he means exactly what he says.

If we draw a diagram of how meaning and jouissance affect each other, we could see that the functional graph of meaning moves in the opposite direction of jouissance; more meaning projects less jouissance. On one side, we have the idea that the meaning is on the side of jouissance and on the other side, we have the variable engagement of meaning with jouissance; more meaning means less jouissance. As we can see, the main variable in this diagram is not the meaning itself but the way we have access to meaning. Easily accessed meanings come with less jouissance and if our

access to meaning gets harder, the amount of jouissance grows bigger: it is the difficulty of locating meaning that counts for the amount of jouissance. I should note that by saying “easily accessed meaning” I do not intend pre-existing meaning as I do not believe in the pre-existence of jouissance either. The access that we talk about in this context is more about creating meaning, bringing meaning into being. In this case, communicative engagements are mostly based on transmitting the intention of the author, whereas in literary products we don’t speak of the author’s intention but rather of how a literary product is understood or read: reading becomes the place of creation, the site of creating meaning. As Soler puts it, “the operation of reading is not about deciphering letters; it is always about giving them meaning” (76).

We can conclude that the relation between meaning and jouissance depends on how meaning is accessed. More importantly, in the process of creating meaning, if the amount of meaning creation is zero, the given meaning or meaning as mere product of communication is in its max, and at this point the amount of jouissance is zero. The more we create meaning the more jouissance is created and the less pre-existing meaning is engaged. In regard to Soler’s statement, we can say that the creative meaning, and not the mere meaning, is on the site of jouissance.

B- Meaning and Poetry

Meaning in general, according to Lacan’s Borromean Knot, is the result of knotting the symbolic and the imaginary, using metaphorical conceptualizations to isolate the image of a thing from the thing itself, or to turn a thing into a mere image. In

poetic creation, the thing itself becomes the major point of attention for the poet; who re-imagines and re-images the thing in a fresh and new way. In poetry the most important issue is to see how a thing is represented in language, how the Real is symbolized and more importantly, how the symbolized element can fully represent its realness and function as the Real. The ideal condition for poetry creation is a complete return to the Real. For this reason, in a sense, poetry is a schizophrenic state where all of the symbols are Real. In “The Interpretation of Dream” Freud explains how dreams are similar to poetry production where words are not words but the thing itself: “Generally speaking, words are often treated in dreams as things” (Freud 313)

Poetry’s attempt to return to the Real from its symbolic representation is aligned with Lacan’s attempt to introduce the Real unconscious and the return of the Real in relation to a subject or to language. The knotting of the symbolic to the Real and not to the imaginary comes with important consequences. One of them is to move from meaning to jouissance; since meaning is a function of the symbolic chain and as we discussed, it is located on the site of jouissance. We know that jouissance doesn’t come from the symbolic order, it is caused by the Real and it is Real. In the communicative function of language, jouissance is repressed by the symbolic order, by signifiers, but poetry frees the repressed jouissance; as Soler puts it, poetry provides a linguistic, as well as a psychological possibility of “a masked return of a repressed jouissance” (13). In poetry, signifiers are themselves “transformed into jouissance” (13). The transformation of the symbolic order, the signifiers into jouissance, is a poetic event, an event that transforms the language into itself, into its essence, into *lalangue*. If meaning

is the product of the symbolic unconscious and *jouissance* is the product of the Real unconscious, Lacan moves from the symbolic unconscious to the Real unconscious.

The more a work is poetic the more meaning is replaced by *jouissance*. This does not mean that meaning is not important in poetry; meaning is an essential part of poetic production, but the function of poetic creation, the new images and the new relations between older images, creates a new stage for meaning, a stage where meaning functions as *jouissance*, a stage where the linguistic gaps function as the place holder of meaning. The poetic creation establishes a kind of blind spot, where the symbolic order cannot connect and signify the gaps in its chains. The secret of poetry is to gather the gaps and the symbolic order's blind spot and bring them into a relation with the symbolic chain, with language. For this reason, in an ideal poem, the meaning is completely replaced by *jouissance* and the signifier points to nothing else but *jouissance*; as Soler puts it, "signs cipher *jouissance*" (62). In this sense, poetry provides a possibility for *lalangue* to function as language, as a meaning-making system, where meaning is nothing but *jouissance*. For Lacan, according to Soler, *lalangue* is not symbolic but Real. "It is a signifier outside meaning" (Soler 41). The unconscious *lalangue*, as Lacan puts it, is not a signifying chain but a ' *motérialité* ', where "The letters of writing carry not meaning but *jouissance*" (62).

One of the important points in Lacan's theory of the Real unconscious is the fact that *lalangue* is the place of unconscious knowledge, a knowledge that, as Soler puts it, is spoken and enjoyed, "a knowledge that is at the level of *jouissance*" (35). Knowledge as *jouissance* is a knowledge outside meaning, a knowledge made of *lalangue*. In order to create unconscious knowledge, Soler suggests, we need to "subtract the letter from

the chain of meaning and fix therein a jouissance outside meaning” (74). If there could be one place to subtract the letter from meaning, it is within poetry. The poetic creation aims to liberate letters from meaning and replace them with jouissance. Lacan, according to Soler, has discovered this unique function in literary products, especially in poetry. She writes: “Lacan had diagnosed a *literary symptom* that short circuits meaning by way of a special use of equivocation” (Soler 73). Equivocation in poetry is the result of different techniques, aiming to mislead, to lie, to produce multiple meanings but in fact intending not a specific meaning; it is the possibility to say the unsayable, to make the signifying gap, the void to speak, to come to existence.

C- The Function of the Void

Lacan suggests that symbolizing the unsymbolizable, saying the unsayable, and bringing the hole and the void into presence is the central function of all arts: This thing will always be represented by void, precisely because it cannot be represented by anything else—or more exactly, because it can only be represented by something else. But in every form of sublimation, void is determinative.... All art is characterized by a certain mode of organization around this void. (Lacan 129)

Graciela Prieto, in her book entitled *Writing the Subject's Knot*, argues that Lacan sees poetry as positioned around the symbolic gaps: “A way Lacan explicitly takes in *L'insu*... where he argues that poetry, rather than logic, can produce the effect of a hole that must be targeted by interpretation” (6). We may ask, why for Lacan is the void, the non-existent, the centre of the existence of art? In order to find answers for

these questions we need to study Lacan's theory of sublimation. According to Viviana M. Saint-Cyr in her work entitled *Creating a Void or Sublimation in Lacan*, Lacanian sublimation is concerned with how a thing is related to its image; therefore in Lacan's view, "sublimation raises an imaginary object, which is not the Thing, to its object Dignity" (7).

Lacan's sublimation, according to Saint-Cyr, comes down to the techniques and ways in which the Real, "the imageless object," the object that lies "outside the signified," is signified:

If the main Freudian question concerning sublimation is the transformation of the sexual drive and its possible satisfaction beyond the sexual by going via widespread collective consent to this satisfaction the main Lacanian question is above all the question of the possibility of a relation to the Real.

According to Saint-Cyr, in Lacanian sublimation the void takes the place of the thing and becomes the thing itself, but this only happens if we try to represent the thing. She writes: "The void is therefore an element that comes to the place of *das Ding* as the minimal representation of the Thing. It is a re-presentation of the Thing which, unlike the imaginary representations, does not veil over the unrepresentable Thing".

If the void, according to Saint-Cyr, functions as the minimal representation of the Thing, and the void is the lack, the emptiness, then we may ask how an object can be replaced by nothing? How can nothing function as the representation of an object? To deal with these kinds of questions, we have no choice but to accept that the void is not a complete void, but rather a place where the Thing was once located, that is, a

placeholder for an imminent object that may arrive. We may suggest that the void is the Real inside the signifying chain, inside the symbolic representation of the Thing, and since the Real is un-symbolizable, the place of the external Real in the symbolic chain, the internal Real appears as a void that has an unspeakable truth in it: it represents the external Real. The void is the only way that the Real can be brought into the symbolic chain.

The central element of Lacan's sublimation is to avoid the veiling of the object of representation by the language system of representation. The symbolic chain at once represents objects and bars them, replacing them with signs. Lacan's sublimation attempts to return to the barred object, to the Real and knot it directly to its mental image.

Lacan, following Heidegger, uses a vase as an example to show how the void functions: it signifies nothing, it signifies to create void. Saint-Cyr writes: "The vase is a signifier fashioned in the image of the Thing, and thus it is a signifier of "no particular signified" (16). The challenging issue for Lacanian sublimation is to see how the Real, the impossible to say, can be related to its image, the imaginary. Lacan attempts to make the imaginary function as a mediator between the Real and the symbolic, unknotting the imaginary and making a direct knot between the Real and the symbolic. Yet the problem remains unsolved. The Real cannot be knotted to the symbolic, since "the symbolic kills the letter" and creates reality or the symbolic thing. To avoid this problem, Lacanian sublimation suggests bringing the Real into the symbolic, to interrupt the flow of the signifying chain and to create unreadable signifiers, the signifiers that are not linked to its next sign. Sublimation, then, is the erasure of signification.

D- Poetry as the Function of the Void

If the Real, according to Lacan, is the void, then the void is nothing but a function of poetry, a poetic element in its essence. The fact that the void is simultaneously an empty place, a hole and the replacement of the Real is paradoxical, an enigmatic characterization that brings two opposite functions mysteriously together. In poetry we can combine and bring together opposing and paradoxical elements. It seems that Lacan's sublimation can be explained only in poetry and the poetic arts, where the artistic function is to unite the empty and the full and at the same time keep them fully separate.

In poetry, the void is located outside of meaning. It is where meaning ends and language appears in its full capacity. It is a return to the letter, to the realm of language; it is where the materiality of the language comes into effect. The void, as poetic function, takes place in a poem's materiality, in its letter, but the void, the lack of signification and the gap in between signifiers generates a united materiality in the letters: this forms a pure material letter outside its signifying function. In poetry, the concern for the function of the work is not mainly how to effectively symbolize but to materialize the conceptual frame of our approach to the world, to connect the words to the world, or to bring the world into the word. Similar to Lacan's sublimation theory, poetry is concerned with how to relate the image to its imageless object, how to relate the word to the world that it attempts to represent. Since poetry recognizes no boundaries, there could be no challenges to replace the poetic void with the Real. The void, in its attempts

to replace the Real, functions poetically; it is the poetics of the Real in its encounter with the symbolic.

In order to explain why I suggest that the void is the encounter of the Real with the symbolic, the engagement in language of the impossible-to-say, I need to elaborate on two essential poetic techniques: creation and abstraction and conclude how these two techniques function in a manner similar to the void.

E- Poetic Creation

Through its imagination, poetry creates not only new and fresh images of Things but also creates new relations between Things themselves and between Things and the human subject. Poetic creation can be divided into two different categories according to their implied source: those that establish themselves on the ground of an existing poetic creation and those that begin from ground zero, from nothing. The first type brings a previously created poetic image into completion. In this category of creation, the poet uses the premade materials of another poet but creates something new out of the old materials. The second type of poetic creation comes from no experience, no premade material; it has no history, it comes on its own and from itself.

Let me explain poetic creation further by discussing a short poem, a Haiku by Hokushi Tachibana circa (1700). I have discussed this haiku in my elaboration on “Dream Navel” in chapter two and now want to link that discussion with poetic creation and also in a larger scope, the relation of creation with the Real: “I write, erase, rewrite/ Erase again, and then/ A poppy blooms.

Poetic creation functions the very same way that this haiku unfolds its essential event: the existence of the poetic creation, for example in this haiku, begins with writing, with the symbolic order. As it progresses, it makes more and more effective relations with the Real and eventually “becomes” the Real. The poem starts with “I write,” for it is in writing that creation begins. It brings Things from nothing into existence, into poetic life, as we see in the second type of poetic creation. To explain how the first type of poetic creation functions, we can see, for instance, how the metaphor of “poppy blooming” works in this poem. A “Blooming poppy” is a premade material but functions as new and as something that was just invented by him. The work of “writing and erasing” can be seen as the work of a farmer, the placing of seed in the ground, watering it, taking care of it, cutting the weed (erasing it) and finally making the poppy bloom.

Richard Halpern, in his article “Creation: Lacan in Kansas,” tries to explain what creation, in contrast to evolution, means for Lacan. Does creation (including poetic creation) come from nothing? If yes, then what is nothingness and how can nothing and the void be brought into existence, or how or why can a thing be made of nothing? Halpern focuses on the function of the vase and tries to answer these questions:

Yet as Lacan says, the vase also "creates the void"; thus it is not only creation *from* nothing but (even more fundamentally) creation *of* nothing, since the void that is the vase's void cannot precede it. Once again the vase allegorizes signification as such, insofar as ‘the fashioning of the signifier and the introduction of a gap or a hole in the Real is identical.’“

Poetic creation comes from the void., It functions to expand and extend the realm of emptiness and the void that it originally came from and eventually becomes the replacement, and placeholder, of the void, functioning as the void.

F- Poetic Abstraction

According to William S. Allen in “Aesthetics of Negativity,” the relation of thought and language can succeed neither in expressing itself nor in communicating purely. For Allen, language itself becomes an obstacle: it inherits a force that Blanchot calls “the possibility of a radical transformation,” transforming Things into ideas through its force of abstraction. Allen says, “language is already a power of abstraction” (16).

Allen talks about writing, or as he puts it “the process of writing,” as an agency that is inherently mysterious, an endless capacity for mysteriously “positing” and at the same time “negating” meaning. Allen claims that the agency of writing draws the writer into abstraction:

Blanchot thus finds that despite its gratuity writing is also onerous and inescapable, and in response to this inextricable milieu the writer is drawn to abstraction as the only means of focusing these excessive demands, refining his approach so as to understand the relation writing has to the world when it bears the responsibility of discovering and inventing actual material articulations. (6)

Allen sees abstraction as a force caused by the work, or more specifically, by the style of the work of art attempting to activate the function of nothingness. The nature of

abstraction, for Allen, is a combination of the conceptual and the aesthetic; abstraction, according to him, “designates the move away from figurative art toward a greater formalism or greater materiality, which conveys a relation that is either more conceptual or more aesthetic” (3).

Allen sees abstraction as the possibility of the object gaining the power to speak. It is what makes the object begin speaking. He also describes it as a “negative pressure” caused by the work’s attempt “to expose itself,” its attempt to speak to us. Allow me to offer an example to show how abstraction functions. “In a station of the metro/ *The apparition of these faces in the crowd:/ Petals on a wet, black bough*”

Ezra Pound, in this very short imagistic poem published in 1913, manages to juxtapose petals on a tree branch and a crowded subway station. The poem erases the lines that explain how these two are related and leaves the blank for readers, to give them the opportunity to imagine, to fill the gap in their own way. Beside the undeniable power of this poem in inventing and relating poetic images, one of its main factors is its force of abstraction: it turns the crowded faces into apparition, then makes the wet black bough and all its petals become faceless; it transforms them into apparition. The poem’s attempts to expose itself to the reader is manifested through inventing and exercising “negative pressure”.

In poetry, abstraction functions as a form of total transformation, as a power that annihilates, burns to the ground, and at the same time recreates and brings the annihilated object into being with a different face. Poetic abstraction functions simultaneously in two different directions: negation and creation. On the one hand,

abstraction negates the known and the common aspects of Things, isolates and disconnects them from the conscious knowledge, and makes them look strange and unfamiliar to us. Abstraction in its negation process extends the realm of the void, the gap between not knowing anything after its negation and our previous knowing of the Thing. On the other hand, abstraction, in its creating phase, conceptualizes the aesthetic, internalizes the beauty of the word and establishes a new thing in the place of the old one; this is why, according to Allen, “the new is necessarily abstract”. Allen sees in the new a very poetic qualification, a blind spot that is, according to him, simultaneously “forbidding and obscure”.

The idea that the new carries in it a series of unknown areas, a number of blind spots, points that are not known to us, invites our careful attention and reveals itself as the very essence of the poetic. Since poetry is made of these blind spots, poetry challenges the poet by erasing some areas of his work, secretly hiding aspects from him and demanding that he find those hidden words or recreate the erased section of the poem. For the reader, the poetry’s blind spot is where the most jouissance is accumulated: it is the place of surplus enjoyment.

G- Poetry as the manifestation of the impossible

As we previously discussed, for Lacan, the Real is the impossible to say or to signify. Poetry pushes language towards its edge of contacting the Real, bringing a sense of the Real into the signifying chain, making language function as if it were in direct relation with the Real. In poetry, meaning is poetically and, in a sense, secretly, placed where the most jouissance is located. The poet, artistically and somehow intentionally,

obscures his poems, makes them less accessible and provides less evidence of where the meaning is located or how the meaning becomes accessible. The relation between the production of meaning in poetry and poetic creation is in opposition; a more poetic creation can be perceived as less meaningful. By “less meaningful,” I mean the presence of poetic obscurity, the replacement of meaning with *jouissance*. Let’s read a poem by Robert Frost, called “The Rose Family”: “The rose is a rose,/ And was always a rose./ But the theory now goes/ That the apple’s a rose,/ And the pear is, and so’s/ The plum, I suppose./ The dear only knows/ What will next prove a rose. / You, of course, are a rose –/ But were always a rose”

In this botanical poem, Frost wants to talk about the thingness of a thing, or what makes a thing, and for this he begins with questioning the rose-ness of a rose. In reading this poem, we use the same reading techniques as when we read other texts: we read it word by word and connect each word to the next one and each image to its related words. In this sense, the first two sentences are meaningless. It’s senseless to say the rose is a rose and it was always a rose; it is redundant. In poetry though, reading means locating different layers of relations; it makes the word ‘rose’ take different functions and meanings in one sentence. It is important to realize that in this poem, rose not only means rose but also means apple, pear, plum and more importantly it means you. The more poetic a poem is, the more it brings the impossible to speak. In poetry, the impossibility of meaning can be seen, as Alenka Zupancic states in a 2011 lecture, as “a sign of the real” (191). By creating different layers of relations and meanings, poetry creates the chance for the impossible to manifest itself: it is the expansion, as well as the extension, of the impossible. Poetry is where the impossible encounters its possibility; it

is where the play of the possible and the impossible takes place. Poetry is the only place where an impossible relation between a human, “you” and a flower, the rose, can become possible. One would not say that, in any rational sense, a rose is an apple, but this impossibility becomes possible in poetic art. It is only in poetry that we can witness the resistance of the impossible in not giving itself up to mere logic or reason in order to become something possible.

Zupancic illustrates that Clément Rosset, the French philosopher, says that the Real always strikes us as the impossible. In this sense, we could say that poetry strikes us with the impossible or delivers the impossible to us in a sense that encounters us with the impossible.

H- An Example of the Function of Lalangue in Poetry

I offer a reading here of James Merrill’s poem “b o d y” in elucidating the function of lalangue in poetry: “Look closely at the letters. Can you see,/ entering (stage right), then floating full,/ then heading off—so soon—/ how like a little kohl-rimmed moon/ *o* plots her course from *b* to *d*—as *y*, unanswered, knocks at the stage door?/ Looked at too long, words fail,/ phase out. Ask, now that *body* shines/no longer, by what light you learn these lines/and what the *b* and *d* stood for”

This is a poem that takes us directly to the jouissance of the letter, to the function of the letter and to a step prior to the creation of meaning, to lalangue. In this poem, the letters function simultaneously as letters and as signs, but, as letters that enjoy their realness and signs that are made of jouissance. We can see traces and examples of poetic

creation, the impact of poetic abstraction, and the symbolic blind spots where there is nothing but jouissance.

The speaker invites the reader to note how the word “body” is produced and how the letters b, o, d and y come together to form a unity and create a new name or a new qualification. It shows how the letters dissolve into the symbolic function of the word and disappear from the word as if they never existed at all. For the speaker of the poem, life is a stage and each letter is full of life, letters one by one appear on the stage. At the same time, these independent and separate letters—b o d y— are going to be knotted together and give birth to a thing called “body.”

The speaker wants the reader to pay attention to the letters of b and d, the beginning letters of birth and death. Birth and death are related directly to the body: the body experiences its own birth and then its own death and for the speaker, the letter o connects these two separate stages, the starting point and the ending dot of someone’s life. Y completes the connection, by asking the unanswered question, in essence, of what it is.

In this poem, the poet attempts to show how letters have their own independent life and value. The cost of producing meaning and significance for the letters is death; they die to give birth to words, the Real brings into being its most dangerous enemy, the symbolic order. The Lacanian return to the Real explains a possibility to look beyond signification, outside of meaning and to see how *lalangue*, in its real-istic function, produces jouissance.

The Poet’s Know-How

The production of poetry does not come from the knowledge of the poet: a poem is not what a poet knows about things. It is how the poet places his knowledge into something. It is how he practically makes use of his knowledge; in Lacanian terms, it is the poet's "know-how" that stands behind all his poetic creations. In poetic creation, there are two factors that play the most effective roles: how to speak knowledge and how this knowledge comes into practice. In writing a poem, both knowledge and the way that the knowledge is going to work function unconsciously; the poet plays with his knowledge, places it in his technical toolbox. The artist's know-how for Lacan is the work of the unconscious. As Soler explains it, "The artist's know-how is conceived as the equivalent of what he himself called the 'work of the unconscious', an unconscious that speaks, an unconscious that constructs messages that need to be deciphered" (5)

The artist's know-how is a singular phenomenon, depending on how an artist puts his knowledge and techniques into practice. The differences between poets come from the differences in their "know-how" and not necessarily from their knowledge. By reading their poems we can see how Shakespeare is different from, for example, Ezra Pound, or Mark Strand; these differences are the projection of how the poet's know-how functions.

The poet's know-how is singular and unconscious and for this reason, it is not accessible through reading poetry. Soler indicates that reading a poem cannot help us to locate the poet's know-how. She writes: "I could pastiche Lacan in saying: 'that one writes remains forgotten behind what one writes'" (5). In other words, when works are read as a message, these readings say nothing about the activation of the know-how which produced it or had effects. For example, "In a Station of the Metro" does not say

anything about how Pound created this poem and under what poetic circumstances the poem was brought into being. The idea that the poet's know-how is singular and unconscious highlights several important theoretical points and I would like to emphasize.

Since we cannot trace the poet's know-how through reading his poems, we can state, as Soler explains, that the poet's know-how is not subject to interpretation. Interpretation is a key element in Lacan's discussion of the Real unconscious, for the more a text is interpretable the more meaning is available, and the more symbolic unconscious is provided. Lacan, and later Miller, repeatedly emphasized that the unconscious enjoys interpretation and that the task of analysis is to put an end to interpretation.

In the light of the function of poetry, Lacan's late teaching forms a new approach to interpretation and introduces an interpretation that is concerned not with meaning but jouissance. If reading poetry is to make sense of the non-sense, then in reading poetry we turn the poem we read into a spoken and enjoyed thing. Eric Laurent, in *A Real Science of Life?* elaborates how Lacan's move from symptom to sinthome brings about an enjoyed interpretation:

Analytic interpretation, like the spirited remark, has to set its sights on the ethical, that is to say, on jouissance. ...The new poetics that Lacan brings to light through interpretation is not linked to beauty, but it touches on jouissance, as does the spirited remark that triggers a particular surplus jouissance." We have nothing beautiful to say. Another resonance is at issue, to be grounded on the spirited remark. A spirited

remark is not beautiful. It hinges only on an economy. (191) To show how poet's know-how functions, I would like to introduce a poem, Pablo Neruda, called "Cat's Dream," and explain how the poet's unconscious technical works unfold:

How neatly a cat sleeps,
sleeps with its paws and its posture,
sleeps with its wicked claws,
and with its unfeeling blood,
sleeps with all the rings-
a series of burnt circles-
which have formed the odd geology
of its sand-colored tail.

I should like to sleep like a cat,
with all the fur of time,
with a tongue rough as flint,
with the dry sex of fire;
and after speaking to no one,
stretch myself over the world,
over roofs and landscapes,
with a passionate desire
to hunt the rats in my dreams.

I have seen how the cat asleep
would undulate, how the night
flowed through it like dark water;
and at times, it was going to fall
or possibly plunge into
the bare deserted snowdrifts.
Sometimes it grew so much in sleep
like a tiger's great-grandfather,
and would leap in the darkness over
rooftops, clouds and volcanoes.

Sleep, sleep cat of the night,
with episcopal ceremony
and your stone-carved moustache.
Take care of all our dreams;
control the obscurity
of our slumbering prowess
with your relentless heart
and the great ruff of your tail.

The poem unfolds by telling us what Neruda knows about the life of a cat. The knowledge of the poet is expressed in a very enigmatic and surprising way, in a way meant to project not only what an unconscious Neruda can say about a cat but as an

open invitation to the reader to become part of this unconscious engagement with the cat. In reading this poem, we can examine the logic of Neruda's unconscious work, how he poetically frames his thoughts. In these thirty-five lines, Neruda describes a very simple subject, a cat, expressing his wish to sleep as peacefully as one. He aims to connect the simple and isolated soul of a cat back to the society of souls and, at the same time, gain the simple unconscious of a cat, to be able to experience a cat's life.

Neruda's know-how, his poetic abilities and techniques that function unconsciously, begin to frame the life of a cat by focusing on the way a cat sleeps, "how neatly a cat sleeps." From this sentence, the poet's know-how expresses itself unconsciously and more effectively to create a cat outside its linguistic cat-ness, to bring the cat-ness of a cat, its realness, back to it. The poem continues to express the desire of the speaker to have a similar state like a cat. It projects the speaker's desire to become the sleeping being, instead of a speaking being, a desire to become an un-linguistic being, a Real being.

It is crucially important to note that not only do the poem's letters project the Real but also the way in which these letters are separated from each other, the comma, and the ways in which sounds and senses come to an end, are the manifestation of the Real. Commas and periods help delineate meaning and parse its movement throughout the text; but in poetry, meaning is very restricted, pushed aside and mostly replaced by jouissance. In poetry, commas and periods help to establish jouissance, and slow down the reader and stop his reading, stop the flow of the poem in a Real sense. The punctuation emphasizes the reality of the speaking voice and the encounter of the eyes with the Real boundaries, that slow down or stop its movement.

Poet's Know-how and the Real Unconscious

The poet's know-how employs unconsciously the symbolic order to create the impasse of logic and language where signifiers signify not meaning, but *jouissance*. I would like to emphasize that the poetic work functions as a self-denial agency whose operation endangers the very essence of its being, its symbolic enterprise, and disables the function of the symbolic order. Poetry is the only example that begins its life as a chain of signifiers and perpetuates its existence by distancing itself from meaning, from the meaning-making system, making its way out of meaning, out of the signifying chain, to *jouissance*. According to Deborah Gutermann-Jacquet, Lacan sees poetry as "a path that offers access to the Real" (43-49) as a way "to touch on what cannot be said". As Gutermann-Jacquet explains, from *Seminar XI* onwards, Lacan places his emphasis on *jouissance*, on moving away from a purely linguistic unconscious to an unconscious that "is reaching-out toward *jouissance*" (43-49), the Real unconscious. As I mentioned earlier, in poetry and poetic art we can practically examine the manifestation of this transformative move, a move from meaning to *jouissance*.

The poet's know-how unconsciously gives birth to his poems. He consciously begins to rearrange the wording and the working of his poem. We can also assume a situation where the poet begins writing his poem consciously and then some of his unconscious creativity engages in the formation and completion of the poem. A poet's conscious attempt to rearrange his work not only deals merely with the products of his unconscious creativity but is also itself an admixture of his conscious reworkings and

his unconscious poetic wishes. We can say that every poetic act comes from speaking and enjoying knowledge and bringing the poet's artistic unconscious desire into practice by providing the possibility that the poet's unconscious may meet with the conscious poet. It is important to note that the knowing in "poet's know-how" is a poetic knowledge, a knowledge that brings together the known and unknown. Lacan calls this knowledge-as-unknown, or un-knowledge, "the other signifier": "If there is knowledge that is not known, as I have already said, it is instituted at the level of S_2 , which is the one I call the other signifier" (33). Poetry and poetic art are the only instances that allow language, the symbolic chain, to encounter enigmatically with the Real, the impossible and embrace it. It is where the unconscious and the conscious mind meet and work together to create a poem. In this sense, a poem is the knotting of the Real with the symbolic. It is where the knotting between the Real and the symbolic is in progress. The knotting between the Real and the symbolic in poetry is not isolated from the reader of the poem: the knotting takes place in the reader's imagination, and for this reason, it is the reader who brings this knotting into being and makes it function.

Poetry as Sinthome, as the Function of Saying

In his seminar "Le sinthome" (1975-76), Lacan continues elaborating on Borromean Knot and in his topology introduces the term sinthome, spelling the word symptom according to the Greek origin of the French word *symptôme*. In psychoanalysis, symptom is traditionally understood as a linguistic product, a signifier and a ciphered message, but Lacan in his later teachings defines it as a "writing process," a process that neither produces meaning nor calls for interpretation; it is a pure jouissance. Lacan defines sinthome as an access to jouissance: "the symptom can only

be defined as the way in which each subject enjoys [jouit] the unconscious, in so far as the unconscious determines him" (seminar of 18 February 1975).

The (mis)spelling of symptom indicates a sense of (mis)placing, a mistake, or as Juliet Flower MacCannell puts it, a "mis-knot in Lacan's approach to symptom". She says:

...he [Lacan] suggests that the *sinthome* is a "mis-tied" knot, a mistake that nonetheless transforms the traditional symptom and the symbol alike into a new hybrid form: a linguistic, or linguistically modeled, formation that somehow permits *jouissance* to flow through it rather than be repressed and hidden by it. The difference lies in where it is located. (53)

Lacan's *sinthome* comes into effect as a rupture, an unknotting of the imaginary, freeing the imaginary from the symbolic and replacing it with the Real. The process of knotting the symbolic to the Real and unknotting the symbolic and the imaginary, in a sense links the Real directly to the imaginary, making the imaginary mediate between the two knotted registers. The knotting of the symbolic and the Real brings the Real into language with difficulties and challenges. The fundamental problem in this regard is how to say the unsayable and signify the unsignifiable. This deadlock can reach an enigmatic solution by the mediation of the imaginary, imagining the impossible to appear as nothing, as hole in its linguistic appearance.

Lacan speaks of "true holes" producing holes and more importantly establishing organic and functioning holes in a work: "To produce a true hole, it must be framed by something resembling a bubble, a torus, so that each one of these holes is outlined by

something which holds them together, for us to have something which could be termed a true hole” (Seminar XXIII). We may ask, how can we produce nothing? How can someone intentionally create linguistic gaps and lacks?

Jorge Assef, in his work titled *The Construction of an Analysis*, indirectly answers these questions. According to Assef, for Lacan poetic art and especially poetry is the answer; it is the only way that we can create and organize linguistic holes, the only way that the Real can come to language. Assef explains why poetry is the answer:

Now, what (Eric) Laurent takes from the first interpretation of his analysis, when Lacan tells him, “the contraction of time allowed by the story produces stylistic effects,” and the way in which those words refer him to poetry and the void, show us that Lacan already had the goal of reducing the meaning of the novel to the point of an irreducible opacity. This is so because once the subject finds that opacity, he only has one way out: that which he can invent. Thanks to analysis, what Lacan refers to when he talks about “stylistic effects” also comes into play in that invention (Assef 5).

Poetry by its “stylistic effects” creates a new hybrid form, a *sinthome*, allowing *jouissance* to flow through its linguistically structured body. Poetry knots the Real *jouissance* with language. Filling words not with meaning but with *jouissance* allows the encounter of the Real with the symbolic.

Poetry becomes a key concept in Lacan’s late teachings. In his analysis of the subject’s relation to the other, or language, in a similar way that Heidegger sees humans “dwells poetically.” Lacan sees himself not as a poet but as a poem: “A certificate tells

me that I was born. I repudiate this certificate: I am not a poet, but a poem. A poem that is being written, even if it looks like a subject.” Jean- Michel Rabaté in *Jacques Lacan’s Philosophy of Poetry* explains that in the preface to the translation of Seminar XI from 1976, Lacan “establishes a general principle stating that all human subjects are not ‘poets’ but ‘poems’” (Rabaté 5). Lacan explicitly states that it is poetry that helps psychoanalysts to make sense of psychological nonsense such as slips of the tongue, lapsus, and other unconscious productions. He writes: “Man’s cunning has been to fill all this with poetry, poetry that is an effect of meaning, but also creates the effect of a hole. Only poetry, I have told you, makes interpretation possible, and this is why in my clinical practice, I am not able to make it cohere any longer. I am not enough of a poet, I am not ‘Poetassé’ (Lacan Seminar XXIV). For Lacan, poetry is the function of saying; it is where sayings come into work.

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Appendix

Psychoanalysis as poetry

Example of an analytic session

Source: Thomas Ogden, “A Music of What Happens”

From my consulting room I could hear Ms S, a woman in her late thirties, close the door to the bathroom in my office suite. In the twelve years that we had been working together in a five session per-week analysis, it was only in the previous year or so that Ms S had begun occasionally to use the office bathroom. As I waited for her, I recalled an event that had occurred five or six years earlier when on leaving the bathroom, Ms S had realized that she had failed to button some of the many buttons on

her trousers. In reality, there was no danger of them falling down, but she experienced intense feelings of embarrassment when she noticed the unfastened buttons.

I remembered having suggested to Ms S that she might have felt that the bathroom was a place where both she and I were undressed (although at different times) and it may have felt as if we had been undressed together in that small room. My interpretation seemed heavy-handed and formulaic in retrospect. This “bathroom incident” was followed by several months of profound emotional withdrawal on the part of the patient. At that time, I was practicing at a different

office building. I recalled, more in visceral sensation than in visual imagery, what it felt like when the office next to mine was occupied by my closest friend, J, and how empty that building had felt when her office was rented to someone else after her death.

These thoughts and feelings, which began as I heard the bathroom door close, left me feeling diffusely anxious. When I met Ms S in the waiting room, there was an unexpected and uncomfortable formality about it. Once in the consulting room and on the couch, Ms S began

without a pause to tell me that she had had a dream the previous night that she was looking forward to telling me. She said that it was an unusual dream in that it was about the two of us and a friend of hers and not about female students of mine. (For years she had imagined that my students were far more interesting and likable to me than she was.) The dream seemed to her to be a very important one.

In the dream, your office has very white walls. You have a collection of ten statues in the closet behind your chair. You've had them there all along, but you've never known quite what to do with them. It's you, but you don't look like you. Each of the statues is a talisman. One represents

Victory and another Courage. I forget what the others represented. You've taken them out over the years. My friend, R, is there and I'm glad that the two of you are meeting one another. She tells you a story of my swimming in an ice-covered lake. There is a really nice feeling in listening to her tell you the story. I laugh and say, "I wouldn't do that now." You take out a statue which has real green grass growing in it. I think it's a woman cooking, a woman making things. I forget what happens next, but at the end, R and I leave the office. In the dream I think that this is my lot in life . . . I will have friends, but not a love relationship with a man. I've begun to accept being alone . . . I know how difficult I am to be with.

I was struck by the simple directness of the dream. Things of significance were being taken out of hiding. Feelings were being accurately named. Her practice of swimming in an ice-covered lake, which was portrayed (rather optimistically I thought) as a thing of the past, seemed to refer to the patient's chronic state of psychological detachment in which she is unable to know what she thinks or feels or experiences in her body. Ms S had relied heavily on histrionic imitations of feeling and on efforts to elicit feelings of anger from me by means of endless provocations. Her ability to get me angry would momentarily relieve her profound feelings of psychological

deadness. The naming of the statues in the dream reminded me of the fact that the patient's mother, who was twenty years old when she gave birth to Ms S, was so

ambivalent about having a baby that she was unable or unwilling to give the patient a name for almost a month after her birth. After telling me the dream, Ms S said that she missed the excitement of expecting magic from me each time she came to her sessions. (She was referring to her previously unconscious wishes that “the treatment” would involve my giving her my thoughts [in fantasy, parts of my vitality and sense of self], which would magically transform her into a person who felt alive, albeit, with my feelings.) She told me that in the dream *the statues did not feel like magic charms that would give her victory or courage or anything else. They were interesting pieces, particularly the one with the grass growing in it.* She said that that statue gave her the feeling that, unlike the other statues, it was not an object “left over from some ritual performed by an extinct culture”; rather, it felt like “part of an event that never stopped happening and is still happening”. She said that she had the thought as she was telling me the dream that I might have been awarded the statues for achievements in my life. But the thing that felt new about the dream was the fact that she did not get stuck, as she often has, in making a story in which she is the outsider trying to steal my life, my achievements, my family, and my friends. She said that in this dream, although there was a sense of her being resigned to being alone for the rest of her life, she did at least bring her own friend and her own interests and curiosity.

While the patient was talking to me about her dream, I was feeling quite off-balance not knowing what to make of what was happening in the hour. Ms S seemed to be making analytic use of her dream, but it seemed to me quite possible that she was being compliant in coming up with what might have felt to her like “the right answer” (i.e. my answer) to the dream. I felt that there was a good deal in the dream that I could

comment on. For instance, the statue of the woman with grass growing in it might allude to the patient's increasing sense of her own fertility, her own ability to make things with her mind (perhaps even our imaginary baby), as well as an enhanced sense of groundedness in her own femininity. This and several other possible interpretations that went through my mind felt flat to me and so I remained silent rather than saying something for the sake of saying it. I found my mind wandering to thoughts about a patient whom I would be seeing later in the day. That patient had been in a great deal of pain and turmoil at the end of our most recent session. I felt concerned about her and eager to hear how she was feeling.

Ms S went on to describe more fully the feeling of hopelessness that she experienced at the end of her dream. She then told me that for several weeks she had been extremely frightened of driving in the rain because she could not see clearly despite the fact that she had twice changed her windscreen-wiper blades. She had been afraid that she would be killed in a "head-on collision". (This brought to mind for me the fact that the patient's father, before Ms S was

born, had been in a very serious car accident. He had been chronically depressed up to that point, but the accident seemed to exacerbate the depression. From very early on in her life, Ms S felt that she had served as her father's confidante and [in unconscious fantasy] his therapist, his mother, and his wife.) The morning of the session under discussion, the patient had been told by her car mechanic that her windscreen had opacified slightly and needed to be replaced. I began without being aware of it to think about the fact that the elder of my two sons, who was living in New York City at that time, would be coming home for a visit in a few days. I was very much looking forward

to seeing him and was going over in my mind the details of the arrival time of his flight and the need to tell him that I would meet him at the baggage claim area. Despite the fact that we had for years met at the baggage claim area when he came to visit, I felt at that moment in the session a great sense of urgency to remind him.

I felt put upon by him, which seemed odd to me. I realized that my disgruntlement with my son disguised my fear of not finding him or of my getting lost. I also realized that the fluorescent lighting of the airport that I was picturing was associated with my visceral memory of feelings of sadness, emptiness, and fear as I had waited in the airport late one night several years earlier for a flight to New York to visit my father who was gravely ill and hospitalized.

As I refocused my attention on Ms S, my partial understanding of the reveries that were occupying me (particularly my irrational annoyance with my elder son) led me to be more consciously aware of the sourness and disguised fearfulness that I was experiencing at that moment and, in retrospect, had been feeling throughout the session. I think it was my tone of voice more than the content of my interventions that conveyed the emotional change that I was

undergoing as a consequence of my increased self-awareness. A little later in the hour, Ms S said that even though she was feeling that she had a place here in my office today and had even

used the office bathroom, she had felt that when I met her in the waiting room, I seemed surprised that it was she who was there. I was quite startled by the simple

straightforwardness of the patient's observation. I had the somewhat disturbing feeling that for quite some time in this session, and probably in previous sessions, the patient had been "ahead of me": she was looking forwards (through her windscreen and looking forward to telling me her dream) while I was looking backwards (to the "bathroom incident" of a half-dozen years earlier and to the death of a friend). What had previously been for me intellectualized ideas and subliminal feelings and images, now began to take on a stark clarity and emotional immediacy. My thoughts and feelings about the trip East to visit my father became an "analytic object" of a different sort at this juncture. I recalled crossing the street at night in the bitter January cold of New York City with my wife and sons after having visited my father in the hospital. My elder son was seventeen years old at that time and was only a year away from going to college. I had been aware of the intense sadness that I had been feeling about the approach of the time when he would be leaving home, but until that moment in the session with Ms S, I had not been as fully aware that during that trip East I had been experiencing his leaving as if it were he (and I) who were dying, and not my father. Despite the fact that it has required much time and many words to describe this reverie experience, these thoughts, feelings, images, and sensations occupied only a short period of time in the session.

Ms S went on to say that she had made a decision as she entered my office today not to fold up and put under her head the blanket (which I keep at the foot of the couch) as she had done for the previous month or so: "When I put the blanket on top of the pillow [to remedy back pain], my voice comes from my throat. My voice is fuller and comes from my chest when I don't use the blanket to prop up my head. I wanted to see

today what would happen if I didn't use the blanket in that way. As I'm talking about this, I'm so curious about whether you noticed the change. It's only what you think or see or feel that counts. Why do I still need that from you?" This question

was followed by a silence of about a minute. I then said to the patient that I thought that she had been feeling great pride and excitement about hearing the fullness of her voice and the richness of her mind in being able to dream a mysterious and interesting dream and to think creatively about it. I added that I thought that she had noticed with disappointment that she had interrupted herself as she began to feel that I was the only one in the room who had a mind and that it was crucial that she get me to give her my thoughts. Ms S replied that she had been aware of feeling anxious as she was telling me earlier in the session that she enjoyed thinking and speaking in

a way that felt creative to her. She said that even though she had been aware of what she was doing, she could not stop herself from turning to me in the way that she had. I suggested that she might be afraid that if she were to feel that she has become a person in her own right, and not simply a carrier of parts of me, it would mean not only that the analysis would come to an end, but that we would lose all connection with one another in an absolute way, almost as if one or the other of us had died. (I was thinking not only of the feeling in my reverie that my elder son's growing up was equivalent to his dying and to my feeling utterly lost, but also of the reverie involving my experience of the absence in my life [the empty office] following J's death. Also in my mind was the patient's fear of being killed in a "head-on" collision [a fatal collision perhaps in fantasy resulting from her having her "head on", that is, from her being able to think and feel her own thoughts and feelings].) Ms S cried and after several minutes said that what

she was feeling now was gratitude to me for having talked to her in the way that I had and for her ability to talk to me in the way that she had today. She said that she did not want to say more because she was afraid of crowding out what she was feeling with space-filling words. The patient and I were silent for the final few minutes of the hour.

In that time I experienced a quiet feeling of love for Ms S of a sort that I had never previously experienced with her. It was a love that had a sadness about it. I became aware in the course of the silence that I felt appreciative of the unconscious effort on the part of Ms S in this session to teach me (by showing me) about the struggle in which both of us were engaged to live with the sadness and loss and pride and excitement and sheer inevitability of movement towards separateness that is inherent in growing up and becoming a person in one's own right.

The patient began the following meeting by saying, "I've never met anyone like you before." I laughed and Ms S joined me in this laughter. The laughter felt full of affection, as well as having a sense of comic relief, as the two of us looked at ourselves (as if from a distance) after a very long period of strenuously and earnestly toiling with (and at times against) one another. I said, "Maybe you felt that you met me for the first time in yesterday's session. Meeting me in that way is not the same as having a meeting with me." In the weeks that followed, we talked about the idea/feeling that you can't leave a place you haven't been to. It was only after Ms S had met me that there was the possibility of her ever considering leaving me.

