

Literature and Psychoanalysis: Believing in Each Other's Real

Arka Chattopadhyay

Abstract: The article focuses on the function of the literary in psychoanalytic practice and vice versa in relation to a Real logic of non-relation where they share a "littoral" that both unites and disunites the two. Using Lacan's insights into truth as invention, the article proposes a poetics of truth in the Real where the literary embodies the order of "half-saying" by distinguishing the *saying* from the *said* through symptomatic belief. Interweaving psychoanalysis and literature can offer an alternative model of critical faith without religion which is where the question of a Lacanian poetics of the Real is posed.

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The Knotty Affair of Psychoanalysis and Literature: Where is Religion?

Deconstructing the discursive hierarchy of psychoanalysis over literature and vice versa, Shoshana Felman formulates an interfolding where the literary is seen as endemic to psychoanalytic practice. Apart from seeing psychoanalysis as the unconscious of literature, she also places the literary as the unconscious of psychoanalysis—that which remains “unthought” in psychoanalytic thinking (1977, 10). In Lacanese, I will re-formulate this in terms of a Real logic of non-relation—literature is the Real of psychoanalysis as much as psychoanalysis is the Real of literature. This is another way of saying that the two are related and not related at the same time through the orthographic function that etches their common limit. As Lacan suggests in his 1971 piece “Lituraterre”, writing in its materiality is the common “littoral” shared by psychoanalysis and literature (3). For him, the psychoanalytic intervention must engage with the *letter* in the literary text where it produces a writing (*écrit*) that bores holes in the Symbolic and glimpses into the inexpressible Real. It has been sufficiently pointed out via Freud that psychoanalysis is inextricable from the clinical function of storytelling (Brooks, 1984; Vine, 2005), which gives it a literary basis. In a more Lacanian formulation, Justin Clemens argues that “psychoanalysis is in love with literature” but “literature isn’t in love with psychoanalysis” (10) mapping out their relation *qua* philosophy and anti-philosophy. Without going into philosophy as a discourse, I will build on this transferential notion of love insofar as it looks forward to a Real logic.

Belief is an important notion in this love affair of psychoanalysis and literature and I want to speculate whether there can be a psychoanalytic notion of *symptomatic belief* that is informed by the literary. Can we see a shared structure of *believing in* the Real of the symptom in both psychoanalysis and literature? Can this belief construct a *critical faith without religion* through the transferences between psychoanalysis and literature? As opposed to Aron Dunlap’s theological appropriation of Lacan in *Lacan and Religion* (2014), I would argue for a Lacan who does not ignore but resists falling into not only the religious discourse but also the religious formation and effect of any other discourse. While I agree with Dunlap’s thesis that Lacan sees religion as a *sinthome* (161), I have sharp objections about his

point that Lacan endorses this diagnosis. Unlike Dunlap, I think throughout the 1975 interview “The Triumph of Religion”, Lacan diagnoses the *function* of religion from a critical distance. If he sees a triumphant *sinthomatic* function in religion, he colours it with an irony that sees through cartloads of Imaginary meaning and the illusion of an undivided subject that emerge from religious discourse. Lacan certainly does not champion the triumphant excess of meaning and subjective unity that result from the way religion marks the subject but on the contrary he juxtaposes the trajectories of psychoanalysis with religion. In the aforementioned interview, Lacan states that religion “can give meaning to absolutely anything whatsoever” but he also maintains:

Since the beginning, religion has been all about giving meaning to things that previously were natural. It is not because things are going to become less natural, thanks to the real, that people will stop secreting meaning for all that. (65)

A careful reading of this passage shows how Lacan opposes a future where religion will be successful in Symbolizing or signifying the Real completely. As he says, the Real in its resistance to the Symbolic will ensure that people cannot make meaning out of everything. Elsewhere in the interview, Lacan is more unequivocal about this: “By drowning the symptom in meaning, in religious meaning naturally, people will manage to repress it.” (67) In these cynical musings about a potentially post-psychoanalytic and religious future, Lacan sees religious meaning as a way of repressing the Real of the symptom while the analyst is there to drain out meaning from the symptom until what remains of it is a workable envelope or the letter of the symptom. Here we should remind ourselves of Lacan’s mathematically minimalist and functional definition of the symptom in *Seminar XXI*:

What is it to say the symptom? It is the function of the symptom, a function to be understood as the mathematical formulation $f(x)$ would do. What is this x ? *This is what can be expressed of the unconscious by a letter*, in so far, that *only in the letter is the identity of self to self isolated from every quality*. From the unconscious every One, in so far as it sustains the signifier in which the unconscious consists, every One is capable of being written by a letter. (21. 1. 1975, 59, my emphases)

The minimal material meaning of the *sinthome* as a Freudo-Lacanian *construction* (Miller, “Marginalia to ‘Constructions in Analysis’”) opposes the plethora of religious meaning, which explains it away.

Faith, Belief and Unbelief in the Symptom:

In the same interview, asked about “an act of faith”, Lacan puns the French word for faith “foi” with “foire” or “bedlam” in Bruce Fink’s translation (79). Lacan goes on to equate “foi” with “foire.” There is more than wit in this Lacanian *letter* which identifies faith with mess. In a more serious sense, we could consider trashing faith as the slope of analysis. For Lacan, if the analysand is anchored in “faith’s eternal pathos” (2006, 87) for the analyst as a “subject-supposed-to-know” of transference, analysis aims at trashing this transferential faith. I would argue that Psychoanalysis sabotages having faith in the knowledge of the Other to the radical point where the Other does not exist (the Other is always barred) and the subject is reduced to nothing more than a scrap in the Real, face to face with his “disbeing” (*désêtre*) (Lacan, 1995, 9). This entails a complex relation with the figure of absolute alterity, i.e. God and religion at large. I will come back to the religious question but as we can see, even outside its purview, the direction of Lacanian analysis goes against that of burgeoning faith. If we give faith a secular or not so secular translation in the form of “belief”, it has a pivotal role to play in transferential love. I would argue that through Lacan’s work, we can relocate religious faith into symptomatic belief where *believing in* something *qua believing* something maps out the role of psychoanalysis.

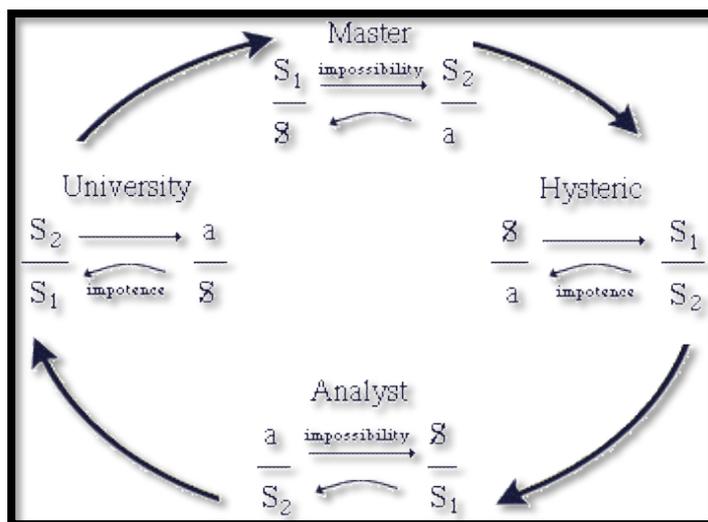
In the final session of *Seminar XI*, Lacan pinpoints the problematic of belief as crucial for the divided subject when he talks about the “fundamental alienation” that sustains belief. For him, belief is sustained by a “double subjective term by which, at the very moment when the signification of belief seems most profoundly to vanish, the being of the subject is revealed from what was strictly speaking the reality of the belief.” (264) In this illuminating passage, Lacan sees the being or “dis-being” of the subject as a divided trace of vanishing belief. The paradox is that when belief is counter-posed and neutralized by knowledge, the being of the subject emerges from that very break between belief and knowledge. This is why psychoanalysis cannot abandon belief altogether but what it does is to create a belief in the fundamental *sinthome* as something that emerges from the Real. The psychoanalytic Real is not a transcendental term, full of religious meaning but rather an immanent figure of strict meaninglessness. If religion has the function of embellishing anything and everything with meaning, the efficacy of psychoanalysis lies in undercutting the Imaginary register of meaning with the impossibility of meaning in the Real. Miller has highlighted the rejection of meaning in Lacan’s later teaching as the Real explodes in it. He presents Lacan’s final provocations in disjoining subjective meaning and knowledge from the Real in terms of a

“regime of outside-meaning” in what he calls “pure psychoanalysis” or “psychoanalysis outside-meaning” (Miller, 2002; 2003, n.pag.).

In *Seminar VII*, Lacan translates the Freudian term “Unglauben” associated with paranoia as “unbelief” which is not “suppression of belief” but a distinct order of man’s relation to the world and his inhabited truths (130). He also suggests that this “unbelief” is “a place in discourse that is to be conceived precisely in relation to the Thing” (131). This is how belief, turned into “unbelief” returns to the Real through its connection with Das Ding (the thingness of the thing that is killed by the signifier as it comes into being). I would argue that “unbelief” is a way of grappling with the aforementioned paradox of belief. We have already seen that the Lacanian subject of the unconscious traces his broken being from the vanished belief precisely at the moment when she drains out all meaning from the belief. In other words, the psychoanalytic subject *unbelieves* and this is what I would call a *critical faith without religion*. Critical faith is a belief in the immanent antinomy of the Real. Not only is the Real not transcendental but it is antinomic as well. It is the impossible where both p and $\neg p$ are true. As Lacan states in *Seminar XX*, it consists of the double-negation of what “doesn’t stop not being written.” (94) To believe in the Real is homologous with unbelieving insofar as the *sinthome* is a modality of belief about something which it knows not to exist. This is an “unbelief” that uncouples belief from knowledge and yet sustains both. We unbelieve in something knowing full well that it does not exist. And yet the *sinthome* is constructed, generated, created and it is in this *inventive* creation that literature as a figure of the aesthetic comes in.

The Mutual Reals of Psychoanalysis and Literature

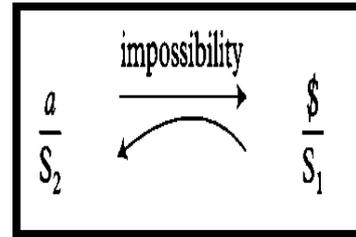
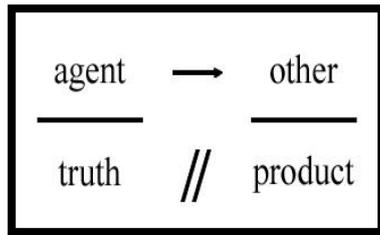
In *Seminar XX*, Lacan enigmatically remarks that “love is the sign that one is changing discourses.” (16) His four fundamental discourses (Master’s discourse, University discourse, Hysteric’s discourse and the Analyst’s discourse) revolve around a lack, constituting it in the process and each quarter-turn changes one into another (see the diagram for the quarter-turns). It is interesting that Lacan does not give literature the status of a discourse in spite of giving it such importance throughout his corpus, to the point of claiming that his *Écrits* is literature (qtd in Rabate, 2001, 165). I will replace the word “love” in Lacan’s remark with “literature”: *literature is the sign that one is changing discourses*. I would argue that for Lacan, literature is not so much a discourse in itself as it is a discursive *turn*.



The four discourses in rotation

The literary in its protean nature, discursive nebulosity and indefinability is a sign of the Real that makes an inter-discursive turn possible. In other words, literature is the condition as well as the effect of the quarter-turns that mould one discourse into another. Therefore, it is transformational by nature. It is multi-positional and can embody the hysteric, the university, the analyst as well as the master without being reducible to any one. In *Seminar XVIII*, after theorizing the four discourses in the previous seminar, Lacan discusses literature *turning* toward “lituraterre” (a neologistic *letter* rendered through spoonerism) as the margin of psychoanalysis and literature. There is a homologous turn in “l’etoudit” where he puns “*etourdi*” or “dazed” with “*le tour dit*” or “the said turn” as he talks about the Real *dire* (saying) which remains neglected in what is heard of the *dit* (said) (2009, 32). Literature as a plastic turn is a threshold between discourses that mobilizes the Real of saying which otherwise remains repressed in the said by emphasizing formalization. The literary turn in its essentially enigmatic character formalizes this “half-saying” which is the only Lacanian way of truth-telling.

It is around this notion of truth-telling that psychoanalysis encounters the literary within itself. As Lacan formulates, truth is structured like fiction and this fictionality pushes it toward the literary through the act of *invention*. The signifier, literally incarnated and littered into the letter, *invents* truth as a break in knowledge. As the schema of the Analyst’s discourse suggests, S_2 or knowledge is in the position of truth.



Positions in each discourse Analyst's discourse (S₂ in the position of truth)

In *Seminar XXI*, Lacan asserts that the unconscious invents and it is only through the act of invention that a truth can be seized from the collapse of knowledge. In the dialectic of knowledge and truth, the literary act of invention is key for Lacan. To posit a knowledge of truth which is impossible due to the incursion of the unknowable Real, discovery is not good enough. For Lacan, invention is necessary to show the Real hole in knowledge. In other words, since unconscious knowledge is knowledge without subject, to speak a truth about that knowledge or to reorganize that truth as knowledge, one has to fictionalize or invent by way of a literary act.

On 19.2.1974, he declares that “there is nothing to discover in the Real since here there is a hole” and there must be invention to “notice” the hole as “the edge of the Real.” This invention is creative as opposed to discovering something which is already there. Roberto Harari calls this the “creationist” avatar of later Lacan, opposing the signifier with the letter (346). If the signifier is equivocal which already opens the literary within psychoanalysis, the symptomatic letter, a written construction, is an invention that seals the opening. It is important that the letter’s inventiveness does not give free play to any number of Imaginary meanings but fixes this equivocal play, not with one monolithic meaning but with a minimalist cut in meaning. As Lacan indicates in “Lituraterre”: “The edge of the hole in knowledge, is that not what it [the letter] sketches?” (3) The letter thus marks the place where the signifier’s meaning-effect fails. What remains of meaning in the inventive literary letter is a purified material trace, closing in on its own materiality. In a 1974 interview, Lacan places the interpretive act at the level of literary invention when he reflects:

The subject is also provided with an interpretation, which at first sight seems to give meaning to what he himself says. In reality, the interpretation is rather subtler, tending to efface the meaning of the things from which the subject is suffering. The goal is to show him, by way of his own narrative, that the symptom [...] has no relationship to anything, and lacks any kind of meaning. Even if it is

apparently real, it does not exist. (2014, n.pag.)

Here Lacan defines interpretation as effacement of meaning and not addition to surplus meaning, as in religion. Insofar as psychoanalytic interpretation works on the Real symptom, it cuts away from its meaning and “constructs” the *sinthomatic letter* in its materiality. The literary is knotted with psychoanalysis in this constructionist fiction of meaning, *turning* toward meaninglessness but never becoming entirely meaningless.

At the cusp of this aesthetic half-saying of truth as the true hole in the Real of knowledge, the Lacanian literary reveals its logical dimension as we formulate a literary logic in the *letter*. The business of truth-telling that passes through the signifier’s equivocation to the letter’s materiality activates the poetic as the Real of psychoanalysis. In the preface to *Seminar XI*, written in 1976, Lacan categorically announces that the unconscious is Real (1979, vii) and it is not for nothing that in the same preface, he designates the subject of this Real unconscious as an act of poetry: “I am not a poet, but a poem. A poem that is being written, even if it looks like a subject.” (viii) At the very end of his teaching in *Seminar XXIV*, Lacan returns to the poetics of truth in psychoanalysis to give interpretation a literary and inventive status: “It is only poetry [...] which permits interpretation” (17.5.77, 125). He calls poetry a “hole-effect” and identifies interpretation as “poetic writing” in this seminar. In the next seminar “The Moment to Conclude” on 20.12.1977, he draws a vital distinction between saying (*dire*) and speaking (*parler*) and names the analysand’s production, “poetry.” Truth is produced as the analyst cuts into the analysand’s poem, which is itself, a cut of saying *qua* speaking. This *cut-interpretation* sharing some characteristics of writing interrupts the Symbolic of the *said* in speech with the Real of *saying*. As the analysand approaches a “full speech”, undergoing a shift of emphasis from what is said to the act of saying, the analyst’s cuts into the poetic saying of the analysand produce an effect of writing as mark-making. If mathematization, as Lacan holds, is the goal of psychoanalysis, aesthetics remains its mathematizing condition.

Psychoanalytic interpretation as an *act* dialecticizes logic with poetry. In *Seminar XXIV*, on 19.4.1977, Lacan specifies analytic truth as “being poetic” and parallelly evokes his logical pursuit of truth. If the Real is construed in a projective plane where parallel lines meet at infinity, we can glimpse a *poetic logic* of truth at work in the horizon of psychoanalytic interpretation. This poetic logic privileges equivocation and fixes it with materiality (insofar as the letter is the material body of the signifier) through invention. This logic is on the side

of literature as well as the literary model of interpretation which not only gives free reign to itself but also acknowledges its own limit by preserving ambivalence and antinomy. It is here that Justin Clemens's formula that psychoanalysis interrupts science with literature (6) makes sense in the Lacanian edifice. Psychoanalysis as a practice is poised on an interpretive structure that counter-poses the scientific with the literary or the logical with the poetic. As Lacan observes in "L'etourdit", analytic interpretation is *apophantic* in targeting truth (2010, 12) and insofar as truth is a "half-saying" in the Real, it is a matter of literary *turn*. As the literary screw turns in the Real, psychoanalysis and literature *invent* a relation in the name of non-relation, turning *toward* if not *into* each other's Real. The logic of the Real can only be a logic of non-relation and yet the poetic or literary act of invention ensures that the non-relation is aesthetically constructed as an invented relation in absentia. Real is the irreducible third that makes this love-letter between psychoanalysis and literature (im)possible, as the Borromean logic would have it. To get to a couple, we have to begin at the third, just as the third ring knots the first and the second in a triple-Borromean knot. The letter always arrives at its destination, which in the present argument is the Real locus of unbelief.

So far we have seen how literature is the Real of psychoanalysis. To turn to the other side of my chiasmic axiom, let me point out how psychoanalysis can be the Real of literature, not in terms of intertextuality but in an unconscious logic of encounter. Literature *encounters* psychoanalysis not by conscious citations but through unconscious knotting around shared operations such as writing and its limits, the function of the body, love and sexuality and mathematical aspects of structure and counting. This is what Shoshana Felman suggests by replacing the signifier "application" with "implication" as a way of understanding the interface of psychoanalysis and literature, playing on the etymological meaning of "implication" as "being folded within." (9) I would supplement the Real, which is missing from her discussion as a point of great importance. In the conventional understanding of a psychoanalytically charged literary criticism, psychoanalysis is just another epistemic repository to analyse literature. As Felman notes, "While literature is considered as a body of *language* - to be *interpreted* - psychoanalysis is considered as a body of *knowledge*, whose competence is called upon to *interpret*." (5, emphases in the original) In this classical paradigm of psychoanalytic literary criticism, knowledge is on the side of psychoanalysis and enigma is on the side of the literary. This is precisely the arrangement that Lacan proposes to reverse in "Lituraterre."

Lacan prescribes a psychoanalysis-literature interface where enigma would be on the side of psychoanalysis and knowledge in all its *aporias*, on the side of literature: “A method whereby psychoanalysis better justifies its intrusion; for if literary criticism could effectively renew itself, it would be in that psychoanalysis be there so the texts can measure themselves against it, the enigma being on its side.” (3) What better name can enigma have in Lacanian psychoanalysis than the Real? Real is the psychoanalytic enigma per excellence for Lacan. It is the enigma of the unconscious as the speaking-body and literature is a pathway of aporetic knowledge in all its elements of unbelief that measures itself against the Real. Psychoanalysis fixes literature as a transferential body of “subject-supposed to know.” In other words, psychoanalysis takes it for granted that literature knows more than what it thinks it knows and writes more than what it knows to write. It is this supposed *surplus* that psychoanalysis tries to find in literature but it finds the function of the letter in literature, which instead of proliferating this surplus signification, undercuts and stalls the signifier’s literary equivocation through its mathematical integrity.

Psychoanalysis seizes the Real from literature as an impasse of literary formalization in terms of a disruption of the Symbolic. It seizes a writing that happens neither at the level of the signifier nor the signified but between them. This is what Lacan calls the “littoral condition of the letter” in “Lituraterre.” When psychoanalysis engages with writing as a “furrowing” in the Real, it encounters literature turning towards *lituraterre* there (7). The literary writing thus exposes the Real cut in knowledge where a littoral breaks in between knowledge (*savoir*) and *jouissance* (5-6). I would not venture into the intimate link between *jouissance* and literature in the present discussion except to remark that this *jouissance* of the letter is a move away from both knowledge and meaning. Psychoanalysis therefore exposes the limits of literature as its own Real. The supposition of subjective knowledge with which it launches into literature breaks down as it encounters unconscious knowledge without subject (the kind of knowledge that Lacan calls a “depot” in the seventh session of *Seminar XXI*) in the literary text. In this encounter with the textual unconscious in literature, psychoanalysis registers the points where transferential faith in knowledge fails and the text comes up with unbelieved knowledge that no one knows; sometimes even the text does not know. And yet the text has a Real *savoir-faire* (as encounter) with this non-knowledge. Stated differently, it knows how to formalize this break in knowledge as an *aporia* of truth.

Believing in the Real as a Way of Not Believing it

Does psychoanalysis *believe in* literature? Or does it *believe* literature? In *Seminar XXII*, Lacan comes back to the complex of belief in love as he talks about *a* woman as *the* man's symptom. Man believes in *a* woman and to *believe in* a symptom is to *believe a* woman. Lacan defines love as a way of believing in the *sinthome* by believing what a woman says. (21. 1. 1975). For Lacan, the neurotic "believes in" his symptom while the psychotic "believes" it. In love when the man believes what a woman says, this *believing in* acts as a stopper to *believing* which would take the man toward The woman who does not exist (64). There is no believing The woman precisely because there is *a* "believing in" *a* woman. I would argue that this *believing in* which goes against *believing* brings us back to the category of unbelief. The neurotic believes in a woman as his symptom and this believing in prevents him from believing the symptom like the psychotic Schreber.

To bring religious discourse back into our spectrum, I would formulate that believing the symptom is a formation of religious faith while psychoanalysis talks about *believing in* a symptom which means to believe in its signifying power or its ability to say something. The trajectory of analysis lies in draining out meaning from this belief in the symptom so that one does not believe it. The symptom in psychoanalysis is made to speak not in order to bolster it with more meaning but to subtract meaning from it. This is the core opposition between psychoanalysis and religion where the former tries to uncouple faith from the latter, profane it into a belief that unbelief and finally extract all the meaning it can from the belief so as to leave it high and dry in the Real. Once this *sinthome* of unbelief is *constructed* on the Real, the subversion of religious faith is completed. What anchors this subversion is love.

Literature *invents* a world which does not exist outside itself and in spite of its plotted similarity with the world outside, it is never *reducible* to external reality. A book of fiction conjures a world with its unique set of characters and the act of reading is about *believing* that the in-existent world exists. It is about believing that something exists and at the same time, knowing that it does not. When literature encourages us to believe in the existence of something which does not exist *alongside* the knowledge that it does not, it triggers the gap between faith and knowledge. The knowledge keeps belief in check or better still turns it into unbelief. Let us consider the opening of the Australian novelist Gerald Murnane's 2012 short story "The Boy's Name Was David":

There was never a boy named David, the writer of the fiction might as well have written, but if you, the Reader, and I, the Writer, can agree that there might have been such a boy so named, then I undertake to tell you what you could never otherwise have learned about any boy of any name.
(182)

Although the reader is explicitly told that there is no boy named David, the story nevertheless invites her to take this fictional hypothesis at the level of literary faith. As Murnane observes, the story can only work on this condition of *critical faith*. The literary is functionally conditioned by this aporetic faith where we know that *x* does not exist and yet we believe in it in order not to believe it.

Paul Auster in his short story “Auggie Wren’s Christmas Story” works with layers of fictional belief that push knowledge toward ambivalence. The narrator-writer’s friend Auggie bails him out of trouble by offering him a Christmas story after he commits himself to writing one for *The New York Times*. Apart from standing behind the counter in a cigar store, Auggie is also a photographer who likes to take serial snaps of the cityscape in the difference and repetition of everyday life. As the narrator-writer befriends him, Auggie tells him how he got hold of his camera. It turns out to be a product of his strange encounter with shoplifter Robert Goodwin’s granny. Taking the clue from the wallet, which Robert had dropped while fleeing from Auggie’s store after shoplifting, Auggie reaches the address. There he finds Robert’s blind granny Ethel who is convinced that it is his grandson returning home for Christmas. This is the first element of belief in the story where Ethel believes in Auggie and the story knows this belief is nothing more than unbelief. Auggie steals Robert’s supposedly stolen camera from the place and also plays into Granny Ethel’s belief by having a Christmas dinner with her. If Auggie extends her belief, the readers know that the belief is not true and by the end of the story, the narrator-writer is not even sure about the veracity of Auggie’s narration. The narrator-writer can only *believe* in Auggie’s story about how he found his camera but does not know if it is true:

I was about to ask him if he’d been putting me on, but then I realized he’d never tell. I had been tricked into believing him, and that was the only thing that mattered. As long as there’s one person to believe it, there’s no story that can’t be true. (n.pag.)

Though this passage does not distinguish between believing something and believing in it, it is testimony to the importance of fictional belief, which eclipses a possible knowledge of truth. The literary text here at its terminal point furnishes an aporetic and unsubjectivated knowledge (neither the character nor the reader knows the truth) and psychoanalysis makes

that hole in knowledge resonate with the Real. This Real is the littoral, psychoanalysis and literature share and it bristles with the question of belief. As the narrator reflects, the function of the literary is founded on belief and not veracity. This belief resists religious faith by sabotaging it with a knowledge of inexistence in Murnane or an ambivalence of not knowing in Auster.

Arguing for a notion of “postsecular belief”, transmitted through literature, Manav Ratti in *The Postsecular Imagination* (2013) has theorized a non-psychoanalytic model of *belief without religion* through the workings of literature. While Ratti talks about belief in the literary process and craft (18), I am arguing for a notion of belief without which the literary *sinthome* will not function. Though we both agree on literature’s efficacy in deconstructing the binary of religion and secularism (xxi), I am more interested in the *symptomatic* notion of *belief in the Real* that makes literature work as a fictional world. Weaving psychoanalysis into literature and vice versa opens up this critical agency of faith-turned-belief-turned-unbelief. Ratti’s discourse cannot reach this point arguably because he does not invoke psychoanalysis. To read psychoanalysis into this is to read a *symptomatic* belief without faith that constructs a self-critical faith, in suspension. The self-reflexive admission of fiction’s fictionality ensures that belief grounding the literary function is a belief uncoupled from knowledge. By creating this disjunction between knowledge and belief, literature makes belief unbelieve itself. This is the homology it has with psychoanalysis, which also uncouples belief from knowledge by turning it into a *sinthome*.

Thinking belief into unbelief, psychoanalysis believes in its literary and invented Real. Literature in turn believes in psychoanalysis as its Real, which also means that it does not believe that psychoanalysis is its Real. As reflected above, to believe in the Real is not to believe the Real and this is where both psychoanalysis and literature profane religious faith by counterbalancing it with a critical (non-)knowledge. It is in this antinomy of both belief and unbelief that the Real thrives. To believe that literature is the Real of psychoanalysis and vice versa would be a religious thesis but to “believe in” this relation would be to counter the religious belief. In other words, to “believe in” psychoanalysis as the Real of literature and vice versa is consonant with a Real logic of non-relation where the two are related and not related at the same time. This “believing in” as an axiom of unbelief acts as a stopper to religious faith as belief in rapport with knowledge. Rethinking the literature-psychoanalysis interface the way we have done with the principal emphases on the Real and the complex of

belief thus makes inroads into a critique of religious faith. It yields a model of literary and psychoanalytic belief that litters faith into unbelief.

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