Words Significantly Uttered: Existential Themes in Psychoanalysis, Pragmatism, and Amos Oz’s Writing

# Chapter One: “Love is a curious mixture of opposites”: The Symbolic Function of Language in Psychoanalysis and its Use in The Same Sea and [A Tale of Love and Darkness](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/27574.A_Tale_of_Love_and_Darkness)

## 1.a. The relations between signs and human consciousness

There is no element whatever of man’s consciousness which has not something corresponding to it in the word; and the reason is obvious. It is that the word or sign which man uses *is* the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign; […] my language is the sum total of myself.[[1]](#footnote-1)

A sign is the product of the link between the individual’s mind and their actions in the world, a connection that expresses both their selfhood and their relation to reality. Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), the founding father of pragmatism and semiotics, authored the most philosophically rigorous formulation of the links between all aspects of human experience and the diversity of signs in the world, and most importantly, the system of language. The method used by Peirce and his followers, which is based on indexicality (the relations between signs) and communication (the relationships between the speaker, message, and addressee), facilitates a distinction between internal linkages within consciousness that create meaning, on the one hand, and interactions between consciousness and external objects, both local (familial, geographic, cultural, and historical) and universal, on the other. In order to clarify these functions, I will employ two distinctions proposed by Peirce: that between sign, object, and interpretant, and that between icon, index, and symbol. Later we will see how Peirce’s approach, which is based on these two triads, sheds light on processes of conscious and unconscious symbolization.

By establishing meaning and generating communication through signs, a literary text not only invites interpretation based on this method, but fosters the objective in literary analysis of identifying and understanding phenomena unique to the literary field, in general, or, for instance, to the corpus of a specific writer, in particular. Thus, semiotic research illuminates the entire range of relationships between man and the world, particularly literary texts, and constitutes a medium that reflects an effect on reality of some kind, while generating, through its aesthetic formulation, an effect on the reader. The functions of semiotics are diverse, and in this book, I propose a new interpretive approach to the work of Amos Oz based on two semiotic trajectories thus far untapped in the literature. The first is Peirce and William James’s (Peirce’s student) semiotic-pragmatic methodology; the second explores the symbolic construct in a psychoanalytical context.

The main methodological argument is two-fold: Amos Oz’s work is replete with modes of symbolization, most of which are not mentioned in the literature. Moreover, aside from constituting a major conduit of themes underlying the Israeli experience in the twentieth century, throughout his literary career, Oz effectively formulated and developed a range of universal states of consciousness. While Peirce and James’s pragmatism explored the connections between signs and states of consciousness, it did not methodologically address the issue of intact, as opposed to deficient, mental development. In contrast, in the writings of Freud, Klein, and Winnicott, one sees both conceptual and methodological progress regarding psychological development and its malfunctions. The themes under scrutiny in this book, such as creativity, guilt, and betrayal, give rise to questions in three areas: first, in the context of Oz’s work, second, in pragmatism, and third, in psychoanalysis. Accordingly, I propose an interdisciplinary methodology in the framework of which I will present a variety of semiotic-pragmatic interpretive tools for selected works from Oz’s oeuvre as well as a chronological-reflective view drawn from psychoanalytical texts related to these terms.

## 1.b. *The Same Sea:* The semiotics of a hybrid genre

*The Same Sea* (1999)[[2]](#footnote-2) is a unique work in the landscape of Oz’s writing in terms of two major aspects. The first is its innovative use of generic conventions: the poem is written as a “narrative poem,” with certain parts written as “autobiographical lyric poem.”[[3]](#footnote-3) It is interesting to note that this genre has received little attention in literary studies, and there is even disagreement as to the validity of its usage as a fixed term. This is the only one of Oz’s novels written in this genre. Prior to and after its publication, Oz wrote novels, collections of essays, and research monographs, each reflecting one of his several occupations, that is, author, university lecturer, and publicist. In one of his last interviews, Oz claimed that *The Same Sea* was the only one of his novels that he re-read precisely because of its distinctiveness.[[4]](#footnote-4) To illustrate this exceptionality, Oz noted that he felt like a “cow who foaled a seagull.”[[5]](#footnote-5) It appears that the “seagull” is the narrative poem, the hybrid genre in the form of which Oz wrote only once.

The second aspect is thematic: this is the first time in which Oz deals with his personal past. Despite this, to date, discussion of the novel in the literature is scarce at best, limited mainly to a special edition of the *Journal of Israeli History* from 2020 dedicated to Oz’s work, in which, both Yigal Schwartz and Vered Karti Shemtov argue that *The Same Sea* constitutes an intermediate link that laid the foundation for *A Tale of Love and Darkness*.[[6]](#footnote-6) Thus, it appears that a constructive point of departure for discussing the novel is Oz’s own view of its uniqueness. This vantage point calls attention to how the first aspect, the novel’s hybridity, facilitates Oz’s semiotic innovations, which in turn, enable him to confront the wounds of his childhood with unprecedented acuteness and candor. A necessary step, however, toward understanding the novel’s unique semiotic constructs, is to review the fundamental characteristics of its hybrid genre.[[7]](#footnote-7)

In effect, *The Same Sea* combines the three fundamental literary genres: poetry, prose, and drama.[[8]](#footnote-8) While it is made up entirely of poems – each with its own title, poetic structure, and meter – some are written in the form of a narrative poem and some appear to simulate (Kafka’s) narratives, while others emulate play scripts in which the main character is introduced in the title.

This complex of structural formats and literary devices – i.e., how Oz chooses to shape the narrative plot and characters – reflects his own existential position vis-à-vis his literary, as opposed to publicistic, writing:

I can write an article only when I agree with myself one hundred percent, which is not my normal condition – normally I’m in partial disagreement with myself and can identify with three or five different views and different feelings about the same issue. That is when I write a story, where different characters can express different views on the same subject. I have never written a story or novel to make people change their minds about anything – not once [...] I even use two different pens, as a symbolic gesture: one to tell stories, the other to tell the government what to do with itself.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Indeed, *The Same Sea*’s hybridity facilitates this position in that it employs a range of real characters from Oz’s past (his mother and father) and present, as well as fictional characters, which combine to form a type of chorus. In the novel, there is a certain tension between the chorus’s integrated voice and the characters’ (real and fictional) unique individual voices. This is in contrast, for example, to the epistolary novel *Black Box* (discussed later in this book) in which the form of writing (letters identified by their writers) is compatible with the characters’ different voices. The distinctiveness is manifested as well in each character’s specific use of vocabulary and linguistic register.

Parallel to this splitting of the characters’ voices is a splitting of the narrator’s voice into four different narrational functions, as demonstrated in the poem “Magnificat”: “The fictional narrator, the whole cast of characters, the implied author, the early rising writer, and I.”[[10]](#footnote-10) The narrator’s objective in this deliberate “tallying” of the types of narrator is three-fold: to ridicule the academic tendency to categorize types of narrators in prose, to call attention to the fact that the narrator assumes different positions and agencies in different parts of the plot, and, by ending with the first-person “I,” highlight this distinctive characteristic of lyrical poetry. On the one hand, the narrator is a narrative persona, and on the other hand, in their capacity as implied author and “I,” they call attention to the hybridity, which in turn, underscores the work as an autobiographical narrative poem. This double narrative position is evident in what follows in “Magnificat”: the narrator employs an integrated voice by which descriptions of his family’s (including his parents) and fictional characters’ mundane routines are interjected with reflective contemplations regarding each character and their contribution to the narrator’s autobiography. The shifts in narrative voice here are constituted in the interweaving of a naturalistic depiction of ordinary life and reflective meditations mediated through the characters.[[11]](#footnote-11)

On the poetic level, lyricality is a prominent feature throughout the novel and across its different genres. James Phelan formulated two main modes of lyricality, both in which there is an emphasis on the speech-act in the present tense through which the speaker conveys their own psychological perspective of a given situation.[[12]](#footnote-12) Phelan associated both modes of lyricality with poetry. The following excerpt illustrates the poetic lyricism in *The Same Sea*. In the poem titled “Rico thinks about the mysterious snow-man,” the narrator communicates through two fictional characters, Rico and the snow-man, the hardship of liberating one’s self from their parents:

Man that is born of woman bears his parents on his shoulders. No, not on his shoulders. Within him.

All his life he is bound to bear them, together with all their host, their parents,

their parents’ parents, a Russian doll heavy with child back to the first generation:  
wherever he walks he bears his forebears, when he lies down he bears his forebears and when he rises up he bears them,

or if he wanders far or stays in his place. Night

after night he shares his cot with his father and his couch with his mother

until his day comes.[[13]](#footnote-13)

This two-stanza poem is embedded in the middle of the novel. In the first stanza, Rico employs the Russian doll image to describe his perception of parent-child relationships. Moreover, he contemplates the fatalness of the child’s perpetual connection to the parents, despite his or her attempts to separate, both physically and psychologically. In contrast, the snow-man, which is neither born of woman nor capable of bearing children, is spared the entrapment of this perpetual bond. Written in the first-person in the present tense – “lies down,” “bears,” “is born” – Rico’s account of the child-parent bond epitomizes lyrical poetry in that it expresses the personal in verse form. Rico neither engages in dialogue nor does he function as the narrator; he presents, rather, a meditation based on his experience.

A semiotic and psychoanalytic view may shed light on other important aspects of this lyrical poem. The description of the parent-child bond conspicuously mirrors how Freud, and later his followers, Klein and Winnicott, delineate the development of the psyche.[[14]](#footnote-14) Although the individual’s fate in the novel deviates somewhat from this developmental process – “he shares his cot with his father and his couch with his mother” – at the same time, the fatal repetition of the parent-child relationship in the text, and the breaching of the romantic boundary, characterize the oedipal triad. The purpose of the current discussion is not to illuminate parallelisms between psychoanalysis and Oz’s novel, in general, but to point to similarities in the processes of symbolization within them. The argument is that the lyrical poem “Rico thinks about the mysterious snow-man” functions as a symbol, which in turn, fosters an understanding of the place of familial relationships in Oz’s oeuvre. A striking example of this symbolic function occurs in Oz’s seminal work, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*,[[15]](#footnote-15) in which the first stanza of “Rico thinks about the mysterious snow-man” appears at the end of the fifth chapter.

To understand the meaning of symbolic function, we turn to Peirce’s definition of the symbol:

A *Symbol* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of **a law**, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object. It is thus itself a general type or law [...] **As such it acts through a Replica**. Not only is it general itself, but the Object to which it refers is of a general nature.[[16]](#footnote-16)

A symbol is a type of sign that is linked to an object by way of a “law” of repetition. In other words, its agency is constituted in the creation of a general universal constant, which points to an aspect of human nature. The oedipal nature of the quote from *The Same Sea* – “he shares his cot with his father and his couch with his mother” – can therefore be understood as a symbol that anticipates *A Tale of Love and Darkness.* Notably, the replication of the poem in the later novel has so far received no mention in the literature on Oz. Moreover, given that Chapter Five of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* was not included in any of the novel’s many translations, raises the issue of its symbolic function within a particular cultural context.

In Chapter Five of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* Oz poses the question “So what after all is autobiographical in my stories, and what is fictional?” to which he then offers a response shaped as a direct address to the reader in which he instructs them on how to read his books:

Those searching for the heart of the story in the space between the work and who wrote it is mistaken: it is worthwhile not to search in the space between what is written and the writer, but rather precisely in the space between what is written and the reader [...] The field that the good reader would prefer to plow while reading literature is not the terrain between what is written and the author, it is rather between what is written and you. [...] You, the reader, put yourself in the place of Raskolnikov, [...] in order to draw a comparison (whose outcome will be kept secret) [...] between the character in the story and your hidden, dangerous, miserable, mad, and criminal self, this is the horrifying creature which you imprison always deep-deep within your most darkest vessel, so that no man will ever guess, God forbid, that it exists, not your parents, not your loved ones, lest they flee from you in terror like fleeing from a monster [...] so that the books can comfort you somewhat against the tragedy of your disgraceful secrets.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Given the absence of any formal explanation for the decision to exclude Chapter Five from translations, it can be argued that this limiting of readership to Hebrew speakers constitutes a semiotic maneuver on the level of communication. One can argue that this decision to address Hebrew-speaking readers only is a semiotic choice in terms of the second dimension of Peircean semiotics, that is, communication. The decision to address Hebrew-speaking readers reflects on the one hand, a sense of the author’s frankness and honesty, which coincides with a compulsion to “warn” his readers against inaccurate interpretation, on the other.[[18]](#footnote-18) Taking into account that here Oz discloses for the first time his hitherto hidden “disgraceful secrets,” this need to caution his readers is understandable. This attempt to forge a type of contract between the author and his readers may also explain the decision to limit readership as reflecting Oz’s sense that he can trust Hebrew-speaking readers more than those outside their shared cultural context. It is possible, that this is indeed the case in light of the gap between the esteem and respect the novel received outside of Israel.

*A Tale of Love and Darkness* marks a watershed in Hebrew literature in general, and in Oz’s oeuvre, in particular. Critics view the novel as an intersection between Oz’s autobiography and the history of Israeli society in the early years of the State of Israel’s independence. The novel was an international best-seller, and Oz received infinite messages from readers expressing deep appreciation and identification.[[19]](#footnote-19) Oz’s effective intertwining of the personal and the national has been explored in the literature against various contexts (political, gendered, historiographic, etc.),[[20]](#footnote-20) and discussed as well in terms of the emotional effect it had on many diverse readers.[[21]](#footnote-21)

This unique nature of the novel underscores the importance of its symbolic function. In the excerpt quoted above, the narrator instructs his reader not to be satisfied with an understanding on the literal levels – the autobiographical and the national – but view the novel as a means to elicit a psychological response in them. The novel’s capacity to function on three levels simultaneously (the autobiographical, the national, and the symbolic, in the sense that it communicates with the reader’s psyche) calls attention to Oz’s deliberate construction of its complex symbolic agency. Perhaps the most prominent symbol in the novel is the image of the mother, and how the son, the narrator, perceived her. While, as mentioned, this is Oz’s first autobiographical novel in which he provides a candid depiction of the mother’s mental deterioration which ended in her suicide, the symbolic nature of the mother-image, in which her abandonment is emphasized, is already formed in his previous novel, *The Same Sea*.

## 1.c. *The Same Sea* as a narrative poem

So far, I have reviewed several aspects of *The Same Sea* as a narrative poem from a general vantage point of literary analysis. In what follows, I turn to explore how the novel’s hybrid genre facilitates Oz’s account of coping with the main trauma of his life, his mother’s abandonment. The following excerpt complies with the definition of autobiographical lyric narrative and introduces the mother as a female character who overshadows all the other female figures in the speaker’s life. The difficulty in coping with the mother’s behavior and with separating from her corresponds with Melanie Klein’s seminal discussion on the topic.[[22]](#footnote-22)

A pioneer of object-relations theory, Klein highlighted the infant’s anxiety when faced with the complexity of the mother figure (“good” and “bad” aspects simultaneously). As a result, the infant may experience difficulty in consolidating an integrative relationship with the mother, which in turn, would enable their separation from her. In normal development, Klein contends, a balance between love and hate is achieved, and the intensity of these feelings is diminished.[[23]](#footnote-23) By way of employing different female characters, the hybrid literary work can facilitate the representation of such contrasting psychological positions regarding the mother.

In the following excerpt from *The Same Sea*, Oz’s experience of the mother’s abandonment and his difficulty in overcoming it is verbalized for the first time. In this poem, titled “Dita offers,” Oz introduces 26-year-old Dita, a fictional female character. Dita is Rico’s girlfriend, and her relationship with the narrator is platonic. Dita castigates the narrator for being trapped in the trauma of his mother’s abandonment:

People are constantly being ditched. Here in Greater Tel Aviv

for example, I bet the daily total of ditchings is not far short of

the figure for burglaries.  
In New York, the statistics must be even higher. […]. Why don’t

you try and see it my way for a moment: I’m twenty-six and

you'll soon be sixty, a middle-aged orphan who goes knocking

on women's doors and guess what he’s come to beg for. […] It’s

high time you gave her the push. Just the way she chucked you.

Let her wander round her forests at night without you. Let her

find herself some other sucker. It’s true it’s not easy to ditch

your own mother, so why don't you stick her in some other

scene, not in a forest, let’s say in a lake: cast her as the Loch

Ness monster, which as everyone knows may be down there or

may not exist.[[24]](#footnote-24)

This text functions simultaneously in the framework of a dialogue between Dita and the narrator and as a lyrical meditation of sorts on the most substantial event in the narrator’s life, his mother’s suicide and his inability to come to terms with the abandonment. Hybridity is constituted also in terms of both the discourse and the genre: the discourse includes narrative components, dialogue which is monologue, and a speech-act that integrates five of the six speech-act functions formulated by Jakobson:[[25]](#footnote-25) the phatic (the speaker employs linguistic devices to call the narrator’s attention); the conative (she instructs the narrator on how to behave); the referential (she describes the situation of ditches in Tel Aviv and New York); the poetic (tension between different linguistic registers); and the most dominant function, the emotive.[[26]](#footnote-26) The excerpt deals with the narrator’s feelings of anxiety and anger over his mother’s abandonment. In none of Oz’s writings is there a direct reference to the psychological ramifications of his abandoned orphan status. Even in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, which is considered Oz’s major autobiographical work, there is no handling of the emotional dimension of the event, only a realistic-minimalist description.

Thus, *The Same Sea*’s hybridity enables Oz to address the emotional dimensions of orphanhood. The combination of poetry and prose invites the integration of the speaker’s experience of abandonment and its place in the narrative rendition of his life. This hybridity invites a combination of functions and forms a type of container in which the emotive function is manifested to its full capacity. This is in contrast to the otherwise reserved language and tone that characterizes Oz’s oeuvre. It is important to note that as a self-proclaimed interdisciplinary scholar, Jakobson viewed his six speech-act functions as applicable to all forms of language use, from the colloquial to the literary. Although Jakobson focused primarily on poetic language, his taxonomy of speech-acts facilitates a reading of the present text as a harmonious conglomerate of poetry and narrativity.

Monika Fludernik redefines narrativity in cognitive terms as “a function of narrative texts which centers on experientiality of an anthropomorphic nature.”[[27]](#footnote-27) Fludernick relates to narrative as a communication-act that may contain an element of human experientiality. This element may appear in poetry as well as in prose given that, as she argues, “narrative is usually illustrated in reference to a minimal plot of two or three events.”[[28]](#footnote-28) On close examination of *The Same Sea*, we find that the chapters written in poetic form indeed include two or three events. Put differently, they are written as narrative discourse, not as prose. Following Fludernik, Brian McHale[[29]](#footnote-29) argued that there is a need to continue his predecessor’s exploration of narrativity in poetry.[[30]](#footnote-30) In McHale’s words, motivation for this course of inquiry stems from the idea that

A theory of narrative in poetry might shed light on segmentivity in other narrative forms. […] It might even shed some light on segmentivity in the novel itself. The illusion that prose is a continuous medium, unsegmented, is a powerful one, with an almost ideological force; nevertheless, it is demonstrably untrue […] Poetry has its metrical feet, lines, stanzas, and so on, prose fiction has its own formal segmentation.[[31]](#footnote-31)

In the excerpt from “Dita offers,” the narrator’s response to Dita’s rhetorical questions and rationalizations is characterized by his use of the figurative device of metaphorical embodiment. This in turn, highlights the segmentivity of the narrator’s life.[[32]](#footnote-32) The narrator communicates the abstract feeling of abandonment by way of the tangible metaphor of a pilot’s attempt to abandon his plane after it has already crashed: “Ditch her,” you say, it's easy for you to say it, bail out like a fighter pilot ditching a plane that's in a spin or on fire. But how can you jump from a plane that's already crashed and rusted or sunk under the waves?"[[33]](#footnote-33)

The metaphor illustrates why the speaker is unable to free himself from the experience of his mother’s abandonment: the abandonment caused a crash and insurmountable harm. The combination of the poetic and prosaic genres in the novel establishes for the first time a basis for the expression of the trauma. This poignant expression, however, brought to the fore another profound question: Why and how are formative life events engraved in the psyche so as to prevent their resolution over many years? And, even when the trauma can be expressed in words, why are certain events amenable to expression through linguistic or poetic forms, while others remain forever incised in the psyche, without any option for change.

These questions deviate from the conventional course of literary studies and warrant answering by way of the two fields employed in this book: semiotics and psychoanalysis. Semiotics sheds light on how processes of symbolization occur, including the symbolization of traumatic events. The psychoanalysis of object-relations focuses on how the human psyche develops within the context of the child’s relationships with close individuals. Oz himself regarded *The Same Sea* as a novel that surprised him many years after it was written and is therefore the only novel to which he repeatedly returned. In one of his last interviews, he claimed, as mentioned, that the writing of the book was like “A cow giving birth to a seagull.”[[34]](#footnote-34) The seagull is a metaphor for Oz’s amazement at the fact that he had indeed authored the novel, but could not explain the mechanism of its writing. This stood in contrast to his other works, which he never re-read because the mechanism of their writing was clear to him (“either I would have thought that I could have written them better, or there would be nothing to improve”). That said, Oz relates briefly to the novel’s unique genre. Writing in this genre was a singular event and, in general, is rare in modern Hebrew literature.[[35]](#footnote-35)

This raises the question as to how specifically poetic devices contribute to the symbolic manifestation of deep mental states. While Karti Shemtov has pointed to transitions between the first-person singular and the first-person plural, as such a device,[[36]](#footnote-36) I propose that Oz’s own reflections on the original poetic devices he employs in the novel offer a new perspective on this issue. In the interview mentioned above, Oz noted several existential explanations: this is a book about life and death, frustration, despair, and dreams, as well as courage: the courage to desire, and to write. The novel, according to Oz, is simultaneously comical and heartbreaking, and this effect is created by way of its unique style of writing: everyone knows in real-time what all the characters are doing. Moreover, the author appears for the first time as a character, so that total transparency prevails – there is no omniscient narrator, because “everyone knows.”

In effect, by employing a simple vernacular, Oz depicts the elimination of the boundary between reality and imagination, and between fantasy and fact. Oz noted that he was writing a gallery of characters who were alone, however, despite the distance between them, it was as if they were all together in the same bed: “I wrote an orgy,” Oz claimed, “every one of the characters would occupy the entire stage; like an Italian film.” The author’s role in the novel is organizational: they assume control in order to enable everyone to speak. Thus, he (the author) is susceptible to the characters’ criticism, just like any other character. For example, Oz the narrator comes to Albert, Rico’s father. Albert not only tells him about an article written by Oz, but criticizes it as well, recommending, finally, that he, Oz, “distance himself from the parade.” Write quietly.

From this perspective, one sees how Oz deliberately devises an intimacy between the narrator and the characters which in turn, enables the characters to say things that nobody, including the narrator himself, had ever dared to say to him. For instance, one sleepless night, the narrator meets Dita who proceeds to criticize Oz’s novel, *To Know a Woman*. Later, she speaks to him candidly about his childhood abandonment, and as previously mentioned, scolds him for his difficulty in detaching himself from the experience. At the same time, Oz points at characters who circuitously embody his own traits. For instance, Dubi, who is characterized as a repulsive caricature of a loser-harasser, represents Oz in that they are both *yaldei hutz* – city-raised children sent to live and be educated on a kibbutz. This literary maneuver bolsters the narrative aspect of the hybrid genre.

One thing that stands out for the reader and calls for additional methods of interpretation outside traditional literary analysis is the fact that the novel is unusual in Oz’s corpus in that it contains philosophical-psychological insights. While these insights are verbalized by the characters, they are constructed on a level parallel to the level of the plot and fulfill two roles. On the one hand, they provide a quasi-explanation for the narrative’s events. On the other hand, they are not integrated into the characters’ consciousnesses and do not impact their actions. Thus, a gap or tension emerges between these insights and the characters’ inability to realize them in the plot. This gap carries an interpretive effect which clarifies why, as Oz describes in his interview, “each one of the characters remains alone.” A distinctive example of how these two levels are constructed in the novel can be seen in the following excerpt, titled “And what is hiding behind the story?”:

The fictional Narrator puts the cap back on his pen and pushes away the writing pad. […] He asks himself how on earth he came to write such a story. Bulgarian, Bat Yam, written in verse and even, here and there, in rhyme. […] He is almost sixty, this Narrator, and he might sum it up roughly as follows: there is love and there is love. In the end, everyone is left alone. […] We go and we come, we see and we want until it is time to shut up and leave. And then silence. Born in Jerusalem lives in Arad looked around him and wanted this and that. Since he was a child he has heard, impatiently, time and again from Auntie Sonya, a woman who suffers, that we should be happy with what we have. We should always count our blessings. Now he finds himself at last quite close to this way of thinking. Whatever is here, the moon and the breeze, the glass of wine, the pen, words, a fan, the desk lamp, Schubert in the background, and the desk itself. […] The Tibetan mountains will last for a while, as will the nights, and the sea. All the rivers flow into the sea, and the sea is silence silence silence. It’s ten o’clock. Dogs are barking. Take up your pen and return to Bat Yam.

In this excerpt, the fictional narrator contemplates what motivated him to write the novel as a narrative poem. The reader cannot help but wonder why Oz “endows” the fictional narrator with common-knowledge biographical details, when it is also common knowledge that this is a biography of Oz himself – from the time the novel was written, through his adolescence on a kibbutz, his mature life on a kibbutz, his move to Arad, etc. The answer is constituted in the double-tiered structure of the text: Oz combines the literary-fictional level with realistic facts and by doing so formulates existential and universal statements, such as, “There is love and there is love. In the end, everyone is left alone,” “we should be happy with what we have,” and “All the rivers flow into the sea, and the sea is silence, silence, silence.”

Thus, the narrator represents, more than any other character, multiple and often contrasting meanings. Each one of the other characters operates according to a particular plot line, while the narrator’s character splits, repeatedly. This multiplicity of meaning is a fundamental aspect of the sign, in general, and of the sign in a literary work, in particular, as I will demonstrate later.

Framed as a reckoning of the narrator’s life, in “Magnificat” Oz virtually assembles all of the figures in his life, his father and mother, children, and grandchildren, as well as the various incarnations of the narrator and fictional characters in the novel – combining them all in a single narrative. He identifies his children and grandchildren by name, assigns each a role, and titles the poem “Magnificat” (Canticle of Mary, mother of Jesus Christ). The poem carries an existential complexity: on the one hand, the narrator takes a physical inventory (the number of his children and grandchildren, including the total number of their fingers) and is content with the tangible aspects of his life. On the other hand, there is an internal struggle between a sense of obligation to be grateful for what exists, and the aspiration to achieve, at least through writing, the “same sea.”[[37]](#footnote-37)

In this text, the sea clearly references the novel’s title, and perhaps other instances in which it is mentioned throughout the work. *The Same Sea* functions as an undeciphered symbol as the plot develops. While this fact strengthens the significance of the lyrical-poetic aspect of the novel itself, it at the same time encourages us, as readers, to solve the mystery: why was yet another novel needed to cope with the mother’s abandonment and with the inability to accept the childhood trauma.

Northrop Frye was the first to provide a comprehensive account of the ways symbols functioned in literature, focusing on two, in particular, centrifugal and centripetal.[[38]](#footnote-38) One can argue that the sea in the novel constitutes a symbol that functions in both ways – it connects us as readers to extra-narrative meanings of the sea, and creates a linguistic pattern broader than the word itself – in the novel itself.

In “The Symbol as a Medium of Exchange,”[[39]](#footnote-39) Frye surveyed the dual nature of the concept of *symbol*, a term derived from the Greek words *symballein* and *symbolos*. *Symballein* means “to put together” or “to throw together,” and its derived noun, *symbolon,* refers to either one of two halves of a broken object, which are identifiable as one part of a complete form. In contrast, *symbolos* (wonder, omen, sign) is a chance phenomenon or object that points to something not fully comprehended (a bird’s nest). The shift between these meanings – breaking and throwing together; part and whole – underlies Frye’s assertion that, especially in literature, a symbol does not represent an object or idea but is instead constituted in relationships. Every symbol has multiple functions – as a word that must match its other half, as the conventional meaning supplied by the dictionary or memory, and as a meaning that refers to its context, which alludes to the literal sense in which the word is only a part. A symbol has a dual nature, as something that is completed by the context in which it appears and by its relationship to something external to the real world, that is, words. Therefore, according to Frye, literature cannot be detached from the dimension of direct representation and become abstract.

To clarify how symbolization functions in the novel, the discussion will focus on two main types of symbolization in the framework of interpersonal communication: symbolization in the pragmatistic context and in the psychoanalytical context. In pragmatistic terms, the symbolic dimension includes the ways different types of symbols enable communication, while in psychoanalytical terms, the symbolic dimension fosters the transformation from the emotional to the linguistic order, which enables interpersonal communication, including communication between the speaker and the reader.

To summarize, in symbolic terms, *The Same Sea* occupies a special place in Oz’s oeuvre. In terms of its structure, the hybrid genre of the narrative poem constitutes a form that, on the one hand, enables the representation of a continuum of mental-experiential events. On the other hand, its poetic lyricality allows for the representation of autobiographical mental processes hitherto absent in Oz’s work. The narrative representation reflects transparency and the lyrical reflects thematic obscurity and invites diverse interpretations of the narrator’s entrapment. The symbol of the sea signifies the pseudo-fact that life flows in a certain direction. At the same time, just like the sea is unpredictable, so is life. To determine the different modes of representation, I will return to Peirce and his contribution to understanding the problematic nature of the concept of the symbol.

## 1.d. Peirce on dialogical thought and types of signs

Peirce’s semiotics begins with his definition of grammar as the “general theory of the nature and meanings of signs.”[[40]](#footnote-40) His particular contribution is the distinction he draws between three types of signs – icon, index, and symbol –and their functions. According to Peirce, the icon generates meaning without an object; the index constitutes meaning without an interpreter; and the symbol creates meaning on the basis of a relationship between a sign, an object, and an interpreter. The specific characteristics of each type of sign enable us to understand the nature of relationships between states of consciousness and their representations. Before explaining the nature of these connections, Peirce clarifies how they are manifested within the individual consciousness:

All thinking is dialogic in form. Your self of one instant appeals to your deeper self for his assent. Consequently, all thinking is conducted in signs that are mainly of the same general structure as words; those which are not so, being of the nature of those signs of which we have need now and then in our converse with one another. […] These non-symbolic thought-signs are of two classes: first, pictures or diagrams or other images ([…] *Icons*) such as have to be used to explain the significations of words; and secondly, signs more or less analogous to symptoms ([…] *Indices*) of which the collateral observations, by which we know what a man is talking about.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Peirce asserts that the way signs function in consciousness is primarily internal and includes signs that make it possible to explain a meaning. Due to the human capacity for interpretation, the signs call attention to various relationships between themselves and the objects they represent; a triangular relationship is formed between the sign, the object signified, and the consciousness created in the mind.[[42]](#footnote-42) The icon, index, and symbol generate meaning either within consciousness or through a connection between consciousness and external elements, such as other individuals, society, or the world.

An *Icon* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such Object actually exists or not. It is true that unless there really is such an Object, the Icon does not act as a sign; but this has nothing to do with its character as a sign. Anything whatever, be it quality, existent individual, or law, is an Icon of anything, in so far as it is like that thing and used as a sign of it.[[43]](#footnote-43)

The icon is a two-dimensional sign with a visual representation that is similar or analogous to the object. For example, a photograph of a person bears similarity to the photographed person (object), and this resemblance can be perceived as factual. Thus, according to Peirce, the icon facilitates a neutral and non-interpretive relationship between the sign and object. However, when an icon warrants interpretation, the sign is transformed from the dyadic to the triadic. A clear example of the obligatory nature of such a symbolic relationship is found in Christopher Bollas’s “The Functions of History”: “A patient tells us that when he was two years old a brother was born. This is a fact […] When he was six his grandfather died. That is a fact. Fact […] first of all means ‘a thing done or performed,’ in the neutral sense of action, deed, or course of conduct.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

Bollas emphasizes that the description of fact does not necessarily require an actor, or in Peirce’s terms, an interpreter; hence a neutral description is possible. An analysand’s utterances may include facts independent of interpretation. Despite Peirce’s argument that the process of creating meaning must include an interpreter; it is important to be able to distinguish between neutral meaning, which is not dependent on an interpreter, and meaning generated by an interpreter. Peirce recognized that every symbolic activity has a different number of parts. The importance of the distinction between these aspects of symbolic agency will be demonstrated below in my analysis of the following passage from Freud’s lecture “Symbolism in Dreams”:

The essence of this symbolic relation is that it is a comparison, though not a comparison of *any* sort. Special limitations seem to be attached to the comparison, but it is hard to say what these are. Not everything with which we can compare an object or a process appears in dreams as a symbol for it. And on the other hand a dream does not symbolize every possible element of the latent dream-thoughts. […] We must admit, too, that the concept of a symbol cannot at present be sharply delimited: it shades off into such notions as those of a replacement or representation, and even approaches that of an allusion.[[45]](#footnote-45)

For Freud, the essence of the symbol is that it is based on a comparison; however, when facing cases in which a common denominator between the elements could not be identified and that the dreamer may not be aware of the comparison, he concluded that the concept of the symbol might “shade off” and merge with other mechanisms (representation or allusion) and turn into a riddle. However, if, following Peirce, we accept that in the case of the icon, comparison is only one of a number of potential relationships between sign and signified, we need to identify the particular characteristics that motivate the comparison. This “quest” however is contingent on the agency of an interpreter, because three elements are required in order to understand the icon-symbol (like every symbol). If the interpreter, that is, the analysand (whether *ab initio* or *post factum,* after the analyst has proposed an interpretation), is unable to discover the basis for a comparison, meaning should be sought out in a different type of sign and the relationship it forges with the signified.

John Muller also emphasizes the importance of the distinction between two and three parts: the infant’s glance is experienced as a primal and immediate experience in which it searches for and identifies the source of satisfaction for its need;[[46]](#footnote-46) as well as any other object it senses is lacking. This awareness is iconic because the infant considers the missing object to be part of itself, and the discovery that the object is absent leads to existential anxiety, as Melanie Klein has described so well.[[47]](#footnote-47) As the infant matures, it develops a symbolic ability to separate itself from the world, which results in the gradual moderation of its existential fear. It is at this stage, however, that Klein (as well as Segal) fails to explain how the development of symbolic abilities, or, in Peirce’s terms, the capacity to transition from icon to index and/or symbol, fosters individuation. Nevertheless, we should recognize that Klein was the first to formulate and emphasize the importance of symbol-formation, or symbolization, in the development of the ego.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Before moving on to Klein, I would like to take a moment to introduce Peirce’s conceptualizations of the index and the symbol, as a means to bring into sharper focus what is lacking and ambiguous in Freud’s, and later Klein’s and Ogden’s discussions of symbols. According to Peirce,

An *Index* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object. It cannot, therefore, be a Qualisign, because qualities are whatever they are independently of anything else. In so far as the Index is affected by the Object, it necessarily has some Quality in common with the Object, and it is in respect to these that it refers to the Object. It does, therefore, involve a sort of Icon, although an Icon of a peculiar kind; and it is not the mere resemblance of its Object, even in these respects which makes it a sign, but it is the actual modification of it by the Object.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Like a demonstrative or relative noun, an index calls attention to a particular object, however, without describing the object. As such, the index requires a more advanced stage in the development of symbolization than the iconic stage, despite the fact that in both this process is not mediated by any verbal or language-based form of communication. The significance of the index is in its constituting the first expression of individuation: the sign points to the object through a connection of similarity, but also of separateness. Therefore, it corresponds with the situation in which the infant has already recognized that the mother’s breast is not part of itself but something separate. A similar process occurs at a later developmental phase in which the transitional object is perceived as simultaneously both part of and separate from the infant. The infant has learned how to deal with the paradox of connectedness and separateness by means of indexical symbolization. The ability to use the index-sign is the capacity to identify the object that provides satisfaction or, alternatively, entails danger. This identification is achieved by recognizing the target of the indexical sign. The icon-sign is based on similarity, which means that it is motivated by a desire for symbiotic unity, whereas the index-sign is based on contiguity, which entails the ability to distinguish between cause and effect. This is important because it brings manifestations of communication deficits, especially in children with autism, into clearer focus.

For example, in his famous interview with autistic scientist Temple Grandin, Oliver Sacks is amazed by her phenomenal ability to understand signs and indices when communicating with animals. By contrast, Grandin is unable to communicate effectively with human beings, because her ability to create symbols – Peirce’s third stage of symbolization – is insufficiently developed.[[50]](#footnote-50) Peirce’s elaborate semiotics facilitates the precise identification of communication deficits and, consequently, to develop a more effective treatment. In this case, such treatment would involve making the shift from index to symbol –that is, from interpretation based on causal relations to interpretation based on “lighting up an aspect” –more fluid.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Anne Alvarez points to problematic parent-child relationships stemming from faulty symbolic development – particularly the inability to distinguish between index and symbol – as a cause for communication malfunctions.[[52]](#footnote-52) Following Winnicott, Alvarez refers to the object of play as the first non-I item the child controls.[[53]](#footnote-53) A frustrated child who lacks parental mediation (faces, voices) is liable to reach the transitional stage without any shared experience, and with a sense of *symbolic emptiness* which makes the object seem unattainable. Therapeutic interpretive mediation can positively enhance how the child experiences the object, and consequently lead the child to trust the therapist and see them as a protector. With the therapist’s assistance, the child can be brought to understand that overcoming loss requires not only facing up to it, but also having faith that there is something else of importance, that life is still meaningful, and that not all is lost.[[54]](#footnote-54) Alvarez advises the therapist to facilitate transitions between the types of symbol-formation: to move, with the help of the transitional object, from the stage of symbolic emptiness to the capacity to perceive similarity (with the assistance of the symbolic equation), then to iconic symbol-formation followed by the realization that the therapist creates a supportive and enabling environment (indexicality), and finally to the development of a capacity for individuation and faith in the importance of the existence of the self (symbolization). Peirce’s definition of the symbol can help us understand the practical and epistemological aspects of the development of the capacity for symbol-formation.

A symbol is an expression of an individual’s ability to interpret reality beyond what is provided to their consciousness through the senses. In other words, symbolization can be an expression of what the senses trigger in the unconscious, but it can also be a thought that is not based on sensory experience, such as an idea about beliefs or judgments. According to Peirce, a symbol is a general name or description that represents its object by linking ideas (association) or by forging a routine connection between a noun and a quality that is represented.[[55]](#footnote-55) Hence, in language, the process of interpretation involves an associative mechanism that links an object or event to a certain interpretive law. The stages of symbol-formation vary in terms of their complexity, the first of which is based on the recognition that the thinking self is separate from the object it is interpreting. To conclude, Peirce’s three categories of the sign can facilitate our understanding of Klein’s theory according to which symbol-formation is the necessary foundation for individuation and ego-development.

## 1.e. Melanie Klein: The importance of symbol-formation and the ambiguity of the symbol

In her groundbreaking paper, “The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego,” Melanie Klein emphasized the central and crucial role of symbolization in the processes of individuation that enable the development of the ego. Following Ferenczi, who asserted that “identification [is] the forerunner of symbolism,”[[56]](#footnote-56) and Jones, who showed how the pleasure principle creates a similarity that makes it possible to link different objects and activities, Klein defined the symbolization process as follows:

Symbolism is the foundation of all sublimation and of every talent, since it is by way of symbolic equation that things, activities and interests become the subject of libidinal phantasies. […] Side by side with the libidinal interest, it is the anxiety arising in the phase that I have described which sets going the mechanism of identification. Since the child desires to destroy the organs […] which stand for the objects, he conceives a dread of the latter. This anxiety contributes to make him equate the organs in question with other things; owing to this equation these in their turn become objects of anxiety, and so he is impelled constantly to make other and new equations, which form the basis of his interest in the new objects and of symbolism. Thus, not only does symbolism come to be the foundation of all phantasy and sublimation but, more than that, upon it is built up the subject's relation to the outside world and to reality in general.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Klein sheds light on how the first stage, the iconic, functions in the process of symbol-formation. Anxiety activates the mechanism that identifies and compares objects, and this iconic process of creating new “equations” continues as long as anxiety persists. Klein states that this is the basis for symbol-formation and links the latter to the infant’s or child’s relationship to the world. To exemplify, Klein recounts the case of Dick, a child she had treated: “Symbol-formation in this child had come to a standstill” as a result of his dreading his father.[[58]](#footnote-58) Klein writes that she had no difficulty in overcoming the child’s speech deficiency because by employing her “play” technique, she was able to access the material she sought. In addition, Klein came to the realization that symbolism could be expressed in behavior as well. The interpretive crux appears, though, in her repeated assertion that “symbolism had not developed in Dick,”[[59]](#footnote-59) because he showed no affect with regard to the objects around him. Klein explained Dick’s deficient symbol-formation as follows,

He had practically no special relations with particular objects, such as we usually find in even severely inhibited children. Since no affective or symbolic relation to them existed in his mind, any chance actions of his in relation to them were not colored by phantasy, and it was thus impossible to regard them as having the character of symbolic representations.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Later Klein recounts how Dick responded when she set two trains in front of him and called them “Daddy-train” and “Dick-train.” His reaction demonstrated that he possessed the ability to create icons, while he experienced difficulty in the transition from iconic symbolization (the train is Daddy; the train is Dick) to indexical symbolization, and then to the creation of symbols related to the real world. Klein intuitively led Dick from the first to the second stage of symbolization in which his anxiety was initially replaced by dependence (he cried when his nurse left him) and then by “remorse, pity and a feeling that he must make restitution.”[[61]](#footnote-61) In Peircean terms, this complex relationship to the world is a feature of the third stage of symbolization.

In conclusion, what Klein intuitively identified as a deficit in Dick’s symbolic capability can be understood, following Peirce, as a deficit in communication, which prevented him from carrying out the first, that is, iconic, stage of symbolization. The realization of this stage by means of communication facilitated by incorporating play into the therapeutic process made it possible for Dick to complete the first stage and advance to the next stages. As noted, it was Klein’s clinical intuition that enabled her to lead Dick from one stage to the next. Conceptually, however, her description is incomplete and makes it difficult to employ her innovative technique. Peirce’s contribution is the distinction between several types of sign-object relationships, from the icon’s concrete proximity to reality to the possibility in the symbol-object relationship of total disconnection.[[62]](#footnote-62)

A sign represents an object through one (or more) of the following types of relationship: similarity, contiguity, convention, habit, or the combination of these four in a concrete usage. Recognizing the relationships between sign and object – the basis of symbolization –enables us to devise a technique for manifesting such relationships in therapy, and consequently, outside the therapist’s clinic.

## 1.f. The symbolic process: How does interpretation come about?

In my discussion of Klein’s paper, I noted Dick’s transition from the indexical stage (a causal relationship: his nurse left and he started crying) to symbolic interpretation (remorse and a desire for restitution as an expression of “thirdness”: Dick, the world, and his relationship with the world). To complete the discussion of the symbolic process and understand how the relationship with the world is created, I return to the Peircean model. According to Peirce,

A *Sign,* or *Representamen,* is a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its *Object,* as to be capable of determining a Third, called its *Interpretant,* to assume the same triadic relation to its Object in which it stands itself to the same Object. The triadic relation is *genuine,* that is, its three members are bound together by it in a way that does not consist in any complexus of dyadic relations. That is the reason the Interpretant, or Third, cannot stand in a mere dyadic relation to the Object, but must stand in such a relation to it as the Representamen itself does. […] No Representamen actually functions as such until it actually determines an Interpretant, yet it becomes a Representamen as soon as it is fully capable of doing this; and its Representative Quality is not necessarily dependent upon its ever actually determining an Interpretant, nor even upon its actually having an Object. [[63]](#footnote-63)

Peirce conceptualized modern semiotics as an activity constituted by a complex of emotional, sensory, and verbal signs (corresponding to the three stages of symbolization). Semiotics deals with signs and the interpretation of signs which endow our thoughts and actions with meaning. Interpretation is effectively a result of the triadic relationship between sign, object, and interpreter. This allows us to clarify the ambiguous place of symbolization in Winnicott’s discussion of the development of individuality.

## 1.g. Winnicott: Symbolism in the process of development and actual therapy

In his seminal book *Playing and Reality* Winnicott invokes symbolization both in his use of therapeutic methods in a clinical setting and in his description of the development of the ego. However, he views it as an already well-established phenomenon that does not require detailed description.[[64]](#footnote-64) In the context of Winnicott’s theory of development, symbolism is a condition for the infant’s crucial transition from subjectivity to objectivity, as he wrote in the section headed “Relationship of the Transitional Object to Symbolism”:[[65]](#footnote-65)

The term transitional object […] gives room for the process of becoming able to accept difference and similarity. I think there is use for a term for the root of symbolism in time, a term that describes the infant’s journey from the purely subjective to objectivity; and it seems to me that the transitional object […] is what we see of this journey of progress towards experiencing. [[66]](#footnote-66)

Notably, Winnicott avoids investigating the nature of symbolism, despite its importance, due to what he implies is its perpetual dynamism:

It would be possible to understand the transitional object while not fully understanding the nature of symbolism. It seems that symbolism can be properly studied only in the process of the growth of an individual and that it has at the very best a variable meaning. For instance, if we consider the wafer of the Blessed Sacrament, which is symbolic of the body of Christ, I think I am right in saying that for the Roman Catholic community it is the body, and for the Protestant community it is a substitute, a reminder, and is essentially not, in fact, actually the body itself. Yet in both cases it is a symbol.[[67]](#footnote-67)

Thus, Winnicott links symbolism not only to the ability to accept difference and similarity but also to the ability to identify an experience as subjective and know that it is not objective reality. In addition, although he distinguishes between the various ways a symbol can function. for instance, as signifying the object, as a substitute, or as a reminder, he does not explore the characteristics of the symbol that enable these functions. This avoidance becomes problematic in situations in therapy that call for the use of the “symbolic realization” mechanism. This need, as I will demonstrate below, emerges intuitively. Elsewhere in *Playing and Reality*, Winnicott emphasizes that a child’s use of the transitional object is also their first use of a symbol,[[68]](#footnote-68) which in turn enables the child to reach the object-relations stage of emotional development.[[69]](#footnote-69) In practice, Winnicott asserts, the use of symbolism fosters the separation process constituted in two stages: “I am,” which is important because it fulfills a person’s need to reach being; and “I do,” which receives its meaning only after the existence of the outside world has been recognized.[[70]](#footnote-70)

## 1.h. Symbolic realization

Winnicott defines “symbolic realization” as a process “which means enabling a real thing to become a meaningful symbol of mutuality in a specialized setting.”[[71]](#footnote-71) This, according to Winnicott, is the foundation of mutuality in the communication between the mother and infant: “The mother and her attitude and her capacity to make real what the baby is ready to reach out for, to discover, to create,”[[72]](#footnote-72) are what make it possible for the infant to transition from *me* to *not-me*.

The interpretive process that Peirce describes, which comprises a triad of sign (in its various categories), object, and interpretant, is especially relevant for explaining the phenomenon which Winnicott called “the symbols that fade.”[[73]](#footnote-73) He uses this term to describe a situation in which a young patient experienced a gap between symbols and the reality they represented:

From this it seemed possible for us to reach to an idea which was rather new from my point of view. Here was the picture of a child and the child had transitional objects, and there were transitional phenomena that were evident, and all of these were symbolical of something and were real for the child; but gradually, or perhaps frequently for a little while, she had to *doubt the reality of the thing that they were symbolizing.* That is to say, if they were symbolical of her mother’s devotion and reliability they remained real in themselves but what they stood for was not real. The mother’s devotion and reliability were unreal.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Winnicott coins the term “disappearing symbol” and identifies an important aspect in the function of symbols: the distance between the symbol and the object it represents determines the nature of the sign. In other words, the symbol does not always function as an icon or index, nor does it disappear for even a moment. On the one hand, given the patient’s uncertainty as to the triadic connection between herself as interpreter and the symbol, and her sense of its disappearance, the symbol functioned as an icon that corresponded to her feelings. On the other hand, when her interpretation sharpened the sense of the symbol’s concreteness, it was transformed from iconic to indexical.

Elsewhere Winnicott provides examples of symbolic interpretation that is neither only iconic nor indexical. In practical terms, this enables the therapist to employ a therapeutic technique aimed at developing an interpretive distance from the indexical process of cause and effect relations. Winnicott describes how the concretization of a symbol allows the therapeutic process to be even more effective than the interpretation. When the analyst faces an expression of a false self that conveys its role to the analyst, by means of transference, according to Winnicott,

One characteristic of the transference at this stage is the way in which we must allow the patient’s past to *be* the present. This idea is contained in Mme Sechehaye’s book and in her title *Symbolic Realization.* Whereas in the transference neurosis the past comes into the consulting-room, in this work it is more true to say that the present goes back into the past, and *is* the past. Thus the analyst finds himself confronted with the patient’s primary process in the setting in which it had its original validity.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Winnicott demonstrates this interpretive process by analyzing the case of Sechehaye’s patient: “When we attempt to assess what Sechehaye (1951) did when she gave her patient an apple at the right moment (symbolic realization) […] the important thing was that the patient was able to create an object, and Sechehaye did no more than enable the object to take apple-shape so that the girl had created a part of the actual world, an apple.”[[76]](#footnote-76)

Object-formation is a symbolic process that stems from the psychoanalytic technique of interpretation, not from a causal event in the world. The possibility of creative deviation prompted by way of the symbolic technique bolsters its effectiveness in therapy. The revival of the past in therapy is a symbolic process, and literary works make extensive use of this type of symbolization.[[77]](#footnote-77) Indeed, psychoanalytic thought, from Freud to Klein, Winnicott, and others, has often drawn on literature, not to mention Thomas Ogden’s deliberate and conscious switch to novel writing. However, the distinction between the possibility of non-causal transference and causal transference, as proposed by Peirce, has not yet been made.

The attempt to revive the past as a means of reconstructing and understanding its meaning, while leaving open the possibility of non-causal symbolization, is exemplified in Amos Oz’s novel *A Tale of Love and Darkness.* Alongside its aesthetic dimension, this work constitutes a process of reinterpretation, both in the reshaping of Jewish history in Jerusalem and in the development of the narrator’s self, that is meaningful for our discussion of the nature of symbolization in the psychoanalytic context.

## 1.i. Symbolism and individuation in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*

For many years, Oz has drawn on the facts and landscapes of his life for his novels. What made “A Tale of Love and Darkness” an event is the power with which it entwines the intimate story of an immigrant family – […] with the larger historical story: Europe’s rejection, the frantic search for refuge among Arabs in Palestine, the idealism and the disappointments, the establishment of Israel and the war that followed. Amos […] is a boy who plots the history of a new country with toy soldiers and maps spread across the kitchen floor. The book is a digressive, ingenious work that circles around the rise of a state, the tragic destiny of a mother, a boy’s creation of a new self. “I was, if you wish, the Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn of history,” Oz said. “To me it was like sailing alone on a raft on the Mississippi River, except it was a river made of books and words and stories and historical tales and secrets and separations.”[[78]](#footnote-78)

In this interview with David Remnick, Oz acknowledges the complexity of the novel, its interweaving of fiction and reality, and the intertwining of the consolidation of both personal individuality and the history of the Jewish people. Before the publication of *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, Oz’s oeuvre was typically divided into literary works, on the one hand, and polemic essays, on the other. Leading this trend was Oz himself, as is described in different contexts.[[79]](#footnote-79) However, as Dubnov has pointed out, in this novel the political and personal points of view are united.[[80]](#footnote-80) Oz’s ability to weave the novel’s plot from several vantage points indicates – alongside all other aspects addressed so far in the literature – two additional aspects mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: indexicality – the relationships between signs, and communication.

The words featured in the novel’s title – *tale*, *love*, *darkness –* function as symbols. Readers do not have to be cognizant of the fact that Oz had written 2500 pages, of which he selected approximately 600 to form the novel, to understand that, despite the novel’s realism and autobiographical elements, the plot functions in a symbolic fashion. In other words, the chosen material embodies an individual system of rules, which, in Peirce’s terms, is one characteristic of the symbol.[[81]](#footnote-81) The novel evokes questions with ramifications on both the literary and psychological levels: how can memory be recreated so that it enables the retroactive immersion in the past experience? How are two levels –the description of the events and the processing of the experience of individuation – manifested in the novel? And finally, what characterizes the narrator’s individuation? Why and how does the use of symbols enable the reinterpretation of key events in this process of individuation (the suicide of the narrator’s mother, his father’s abandonment of the family, and his relocation from Jerusalem to the kibbutz).

The narrator fashions history as a “singular object” of interpretation. Although, as Peirce argued, an interpretant presents only the characteristics that they can recognize, the symbol attains meaning based on convention. Therefore, all readers are capable of understanding and repeating it. The account of the historical events of Israel’s first years of independence is intertwined with the narrator’s first-person account of his life. This duality forges explicit and implicit symbolic links between the two levels. A key question of individual development, from a Kleinian perspective, arises here: how does the symbolic level provide the first opportunity for the narrator to face and deal with the traumatic separation from his parents and facilitate his individuation, including the capacity to sustain ambivalence and forgiveness?

Herbert Read wrote about the ways a symbol can function and of the latent potential in its use:

There is a very general distinction to be made between those uses of the word which on the one hand retain the sense of a throwing together of tangible, visible objects, with each other or with some immaterial or abstract notion, and those uses which […] imply no such initial separation, but rather treat the symbol as an integral or original form of expression. A word itself may be a symbol in this sense, and language a system of symbolism.[[82]](#footnote-82)

In other words, while a symbol may be evidence of a combination of terms from different semantic fields or different levels of experience, it can also stand alone as an utterance that reflects not unification but something else, like an early emotional pattern, which is not necessarily bound to a representative function. Freud’s, Klein’s, and Winnicott’s descriptions of ego-formation are based on some form of causality, whereas according to Peirce, symbolization can also take place despite the fact that a causal origin cannot be identified. In these terms, the symbolization in Oz’s novel can be perceived as abduction,[[83]](#footnote-83) as exemplified in the following description of the night after the State of Israel’s declaration of independence in May 1948:

And very late, at a time when this child had never been allowed not to be fast asleep in bed, […] I crawled under my blanket in the dark fully dressed. And after a while Father’s hand lifted my blanket in the dark, not to be angry with me […] but to get in and lie down next to me, […] My father lay beside me for a few minutes and said nothing, although normally he detested silence and hurried to banish it. But this time he did not touch the silence that was there between us but shared it, with just his hand lightly stroking my head. As though in this darkness my father had turned into my mother.

And still in a voice of darkness […], my father told me: […] from the moment we have our own state, you will never be bullied just because you are a Jew and because Jews are so-and-sos. […] I reached out sleepily to touch his face, […] and all of a sudden instead of his glasses my fingers met tears. Never in my life, before or after that night, not even when my mother died, did I see my father cry. And in fact I didn’t see him cry that night either: it was too dark. Only my left hand saw.[[84]](#footnote-84)

In this passage, darkness, one of the novel’s key symbols, has three recurring functions: first, it represents the historical event; second, it represents the routine circumstance of the narrator’s bedtime; and third, it represents the narrator’s inner wish, which is granted through the individual use of the symbol in a manner contrary to what we might expect (precisely how a singular symbol functions, according to Peirce). Thus, this simultaneous triple function of the symbol “darkness” constitutes what Winnicott coined “symbolic realization.” By intermingling reality and imagination, the literary work functions as a transitional space in which reality and imagination can be separated. The symbol of darkness serves to unite a concrete object with the abstract, as both a structured expression and an intersection that reflects and permits a process of separation from the individual and national history of 1940- 1950s Israel. This separation is evidence of another system of rules associated with the symbol in the interpretive process: the possibility of transformation. The thematic axis of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* is its unique integration of individual and national histories. The reality outside the verbal world is not only part of the thematic dimension, but it also enables and constructs it.

In her account of the internal and external states that make it possible to find the familiar in the unfamiliar, Klein was the first to link symbol-formation to separation within the field of psychoanalysis. The familiar “good” breast is replaced by an unfamiliar symbol, and this transformation enables the development of a complex attitude toward the other.[[85]](#footnote-85) Following Klein, Marion Milner expanded upon the dual function of the symbol as not only creating a substitute that can soothe the infant’s anxiety at the loss of the object but also as a result of the need to constitute a relationship with the real world.[[86]](#footnote-86) If we look at *A Tale of Love and Darkness* from a Kleinian perspective, we can see how symbolization functions to re-produce an effect of emotional separation.

In the novel, symbolization operates on both the narrative level in which it constitutes an aesthetic choice whereby fiction prevails over mimesis, and on the psychological/ emotional level where it enables the reader to locate what Scottish psychoanalyst Donald Fairbairn referred to as “the found object.”[[87]](#footnote-87) Fairbairn discusses the aesthetic experience of both the author/creator and the spectator/reader, claiming that a particular object has a symbolic meaning for the former in their everyday life, which is not inherent to the object itself, but rather is constituted in certain characteristics of the object that represent the fulfillment of the artist’s emotional needs. For the artist, the discovery of such a meaning in an object is like the discovery of a new object; the object then takes on the aspect of a found object. However, the found object is not something perpetually present that is discovered momentarily, rather its significance is contingent on its ability to represent the fulfillment of a desire. The found object can therefore be either any tangible object in the outside world or the product of the fusion of several objects that are not connected in the outside world. An aesthetic experience can be defined, accordingly, as that which appears in reader’s/viewers’ mind upon discovering an object that serves the symbolic function of fulfilling their unconscious emotional needs.

Peirce’s contribution to the understanding of the invented found object is in his account of the process of recognition as including various relationships between different types of signs, the individual’s thoughts, and the world. Consisting of both invention and discovery, this process is based on symbolization, which is the simultaneous product of abduction and deduction. In *A Tale of Love and Darkness,* the key symbols of love and darkness function in this manner, as demonstrated in the following passages. First, in the narrator’s grandfather’s description of love:

I’m not such a believer in universal love. Love of everybody for everybody—we should maybe leave that to Jesus. Love is another thing altogether. It is nothing whatever like generosity and nothing whatever like compassion. On the contrary. Love is a curious mixture of opposites, a blend of extreme selfishness and total devotion. A paradox! Besides which, love, everybody is always talking about love, love, but love isn’t something you choose, you catch it, like a disease, you get trapped in it, like a disaster. So what is it that we do choose? What do human beings have to choose between every minute of the day? Generosity or meanness.[[88]](#footnote-88)

The grandfather deconstructs the symbol of love in terms of its symptoms. Nothing remains of the conventional paradigmatic view (in Saussure’s terms) of the concept. As a replacement for love, he proposes a more explicit, concrete, and pragmatic process of choosing either generosity or meanness. Peircean pragmatism, in this instance, is embodied both in the possibility of changing the nature of the symbol to accommodate personal choice and in the steering toward practical conduct. Later, the narrator links the paradox of love with the novel’s second key symbol, darkness:

We were bound and stuck together that autumn like three prisoners sharing the same cell. Yet each of us was on his or her own. For what could my parents know about the sordidness of my nights? […] How could my parents know that I warned myself over and over again, with my teeth clenched in shame, If you don’t give that up, if you don’t stop it tonight, then I swear by my life that I’ll swallow all other’s pills and that’ll be the end of it. My parents suspected nothing. A thousand light-years divided us. Not light-years: dark years. […] A thousand dark years separated everyone. Even three prisoners in a cell. […] when Mother sat with her back against the tree and my father and I laid our heads on her knees, one head on each knee, and Mother stroked us both, even at that moment, which is the most precious moment of my childhood, a thousand lightless years separated us.[[89]](#footnote-89)

In the narrator’s psyche, love and darkness function as both familiar and original symbols, with each incorporating a paradox: love involves selfishness and devotion, while darkness involves the most intense sense of loneliness as well as closeness. These excerpts demonstrate American pragmatist Susanne K. Langer’s assertion that symbolization in literature is an emotional experience that is also paradoxical. According to Langer, a problematic situation arises when we are called upon to understand the literary account as a process that plays out on multiple layers simultaneously:

What such a symbolic form presents cannot be expressed in literal terms, because the logic of language forbids us to conceive the pervasive ambivalence which is characteristic of human feeling. […] and to indicate such feeling by a paradoxical name is about as much as philosophy can do with it.[[90]](#footnote-90) Art works *contain* feelings, but do not feel them.[[91]](#footnote-91)

The symbol “resolves” this problem when it appears in a literary work to arouse an emotional response, not by evoking objects that produce the feeling itself, but by weaving a pattern of words – words charged with meaning and colored with literary associations, like the dynamic pattern of the emotion. Here the word “emotion” denotes more than just a particular “situation” given that it is a process, which may develop simultaneously on several levels, rather than on a sequential axis. The question arising in *A Tale of Love and Darkness* is how such processes of symbolization operate and how they create a new reality. For our present purposes, we need to broaden our perspective to include the novel’s reception.

In *The Cult of the Writer and Religion of the State*,[[92]](#footnote-92) Yigal Schwartz describes the two ways in which Oz’s work has been received over the years, that is, with admiration and appreciation, on the one hand, and with enmity and derision, on the other. According to Schwartz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* was praised and venerated by the reading public. This reverence was largely based on readers’ deep identification with its integration of a retelling of Israeli history in the early years of statehood and the first ever candid rendition of Oz’s autobiography. In my opinion, readers’ identification with the work derives from the accounts of the narrator’s separation from both his parents and from the young State of Israel – experiences they share with the narrator.

While the experience of darkness in the novel is descriptive, the experiences of love are formulated indirectly and interwoven in a way that hides more than they reveal. For example, when the child Amos confesses that Zelda was his first love, he uses the word “love” repeatedly: he focuses on his daily visits to her during that “honey summer,” depicting practices of love ranging from routine activities, from doing house chores to drawing lessons, writing, and reading poetry. In contrast, when, after considering sending her his novel *My Michael*, the adult author decides not to, he first claims that this is because he is uncertain of her address, followed by the more insightful or self-reflective understanding that “in any case, I had written My Michael to draw a line between myself and Jerusalem, not to reconnect with her.”[[93]](#footnote-93)

This statement corresponds with the existential underpinnings in the narrator’s aunt’s account of a letter she had written to her sister (his mother), in which she offers such adages as we are dealt the cards of our environment and heredity and can choose how to play our hand. Parallel to this axiom, however, the narrator conveys details of her youth and later life in an attempt to shed light on the choices she had made. The question implied in its title hovers throughout the book: why and how does darkness emerge in a circumstance of love? The title, which lacks a predicate, incorporates three objects: a tale, love, and darkness, which function as broad and rich symbols – the first, *tale*, as a symbol of aesthetic choice, the second, *love*, as a symbol of the emotional spectrum, and the third, *darkness*, as a symbol of actual life experiences. The focus of the last is silence, described from the speaker-narrator’s bird’s-eye view, a perspective that combines details from what Langer refers to as other “layers” in order to create a found object:

We never talked about my mother. Not a single word. Or about ourselves. Or about anything that had the least thing to do with emotions. We talked about the Cold War. We talked about the assassination of King Abdullah and the threat of a second round of fighting. My father explained to me the difference between a symbol, a parable, and an allegory, and the difference between a saga and a legend. He also gave me a clear and accurate account of the difference between liberalism and social democracy. And every morning, […] at first light there always came from the soggy bare branches outside the pitiful chirping of the frozen bird, Elise. […] I have hardly ever spoken about my mother till now, till I came to write these pages. […] After my father died, I hardly spoke about him either. As if I were a foundling.[[94]](#footnote-94)

Drawing on both Read’s and Frye’s understandings of the various functions of the symbol as well as Klein’s and Fairbairn’s observations about symbol-formation and the found object, respectively, we discern a parallel between the pitiful chirping of the bird, which is the narrator’s only anchor, or point of reference, in the outside world, and his silence regarding his parents, which is the constant element of his inner reality. The narrator skillfully links the theoretical topics his father discussed with him to the hidden and repressed emotional aspects of his psyche, but is in fact interwoven in the formal aspects and exposed through the grill of language. The pitiful chirping of the bird, which reminds readers of the bird in the hospital garden, is of course a repeated motif that exemplifies Oz’s statement, at the end of the novel, that “the psyche is the worst enemy of the body”:

Something in the twilight zone between the sublime, the tormented, the dreamy, and the solitary, all kinds of will-o’-the-wisps of “longing and yearning” deluded my mother most of her life and seduced her until she succumbed and committed suicide in 1952. She was thirty-eight when she died. I was twelve and a half. In the weeks and months that followed my mother’s death I did not think for a moment of her agony. I made myself deaf to the unheard cry for help. […] There was not a drop of compassion in me. Nor did I miss her. I did not grieve at my mother’s death: I was too hurt and angry for any other emotion to remain.[[95]](#footnote-95)

The twilight zone of the narrator’s mother’s mind becomes the novel’s liminal space, which spans from the past preceding his separation from her to his adult understanding of its ramifications. At the novel’s end, however, the narrator returns to that separation and reconstructs it, especially the last hours that preceded it, a passage in which his words and emotions are fused as he would have expressed them to his mother had he been given an opportunity to be at her side. The perpetual sense of calling to his mother is echoed in the novel’s last lines, with their metaphorical evocation of the bird: “From the branches of the Ficus tree in the garden of the hospital the bird Elise called to her in wonderment and called to her again and again in vain, and yet it went on trying over and over again, and it still tries sometimes.”[[96]](#footnote-96)

1. Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, vols. I–VI, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931–1935); vols. VII–VIII, ed. Arthur W. Burks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), § 5.314 (note if the emphasis is yours or in the source) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Amos Oz, *The Same Sea,* Translated by Nicholas De Lange (Orlando: Harcourt, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For example, since Kierkegaard wrote the following in 2014, there have been no other in-depth discussion on the topic: “It is remarkable that research in the autobiographical lyric poem is virtually nonexistent” (Stefan Kjerkegaard, “In the Waiting Room: Narrative in the Autobiographical Lyric Poem, Or Beginning to Think about Lyric Poetry with Narratology,” *Narrative,* 2014, 22(2): 185-202, p. 200). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Interview with Amos Oz, “*One Book: The Same Sea*,” February 19, 2019. https://castbox.fm/episode/- ספר-אחד-עמוס-עוז על-אותו-הים -id1449284-id130322961?country=us. Accessed November 14, 2020. This description appears as well in the collection of interviews, Amos Oz, *What Makes an Apple? Amos Oz with Shira Hadad,* Trans. Jessica Cohen(Princeton University Press, 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *One Book: The Same Sea.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Yigal Schwartz (2020) “Amos Oz: The lighthouse”, *Journal of Israeli History,* 38:2, 415-421, DOI: 10.1080/13531042.2020.1891498; Vered Karti Shemtov (2020) “‘Now we shall reveal a little secret’: first person plural and lyrical fluidity in the works of Amos Oz,” *Journal of Israeli History,* 38:2, 349-367, DOI: 10.1080/13531042.2020.1861498. Karti Shemtov referred to the novel’s genre as “prose poetry.” In my opinion, narrative poem is more accurate, as I will attempt to demonstrate. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “The term ‘hybrid genre’ is used to designate works of art whichtransgress genre boundaries by combining characteristic traits and elements of diverse literary and non-literary genres. […] Although hybrid genres are highly innovative and contribute significantly to the development of novel forms of art, little sustained effort has been made to discuss the impact of generic crossings or to systematize their recent proliferation” (*Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory,* Edited by David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan [New-York: Routledge, 2005], p. 330). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For this division, see for example, Monika Fludernik, “Genres, Text Types, or Discourse Modes? Narrative Modalities and Generic Categorization,” *Style*, 34:2, 2000: 274-292. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Shusha Guppy, “Amos Oz, The Art of Fiction No. 148,” *Paris Review* 140 (Fall 1996) <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1366/the-art-of-fiction-no-148-amos-oz>, pp. 250-251. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Oz, *The* *Same,* p. 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Monika Fludernik explore the manner in which narrative, as a discourse-type, is integrated in different genres. The narrative is constructed by the speaker and reflects their consciousness, as it operates on different levels of the experience. Narrativity also activates the readers’ experience when interpreting representations of the narrator’s consciousness, as they are expressed in the narrative’s time and place events. (Fludernik, “Genres”, pp. 288-289). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. “(1) somebody telling somebody else […] on some occasion for some purpose that something is—a situation, an emotion, a perception, an attitude, a belief.

    (2) somebody telling somebody else […] on some occasion about his or her meditations on something; […] The standard tense for lyric is the present. Lyricality, then, in contrast to narrativity is neutral on the issue of change for the speaker—it may or may not be present—and invested not in character and event but in thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, specific conditions” (James Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction: Judgments, Progressions, and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* [Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2007], pp. 22-23). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Oz, *The* *Same,* p. 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Freud summarized the Oedipus narrative and proposed an alternative to the traditional interpretation of a struggle between divine decree and man’s awareness and free choice. (Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), p. 741.

    In Freud’s view, the Oedipus myth reveals a natural process of development, which characterizes modern man as much as it did the men of ancient Greece: “If *Oedipus Rex* moves a modern audience no less than it did the contemporary Greek one, the explanation can only be that its effect does not lie in the contrast between destiny and human will, but is to be looked for in the particular nature of the material on which that contrast is exemplified. There must be something which makes a voice within us ready to recognize the compelling force of destiny in the *Oedipus*.

    […]

    His destiny moves us only because it might have been ours - because the oracle laid the same curse upon us before our birth as upon him. It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father. […] King Oedipus, who slew his father Laïus and married his mother Jocasta, merely shows us the fulfilment of our own childhood wishes. But, more fortunate than he, we have meanwhile succeeded, in so far as we have not become psychoneurotics, in detaching our sexual impulses from our mothers and in forgetting our jealousy of our fathers. **Here is one in whom these primaeval wishes of our childhood have been fulfilled, and we shrink back from him with the whole force of the repression by which those wishes have since that time been held down within us. While the poet, as he unravels the past, brings to light the guilt of Oedipus, he is at the same time compelling us to recognize our own inner minds, in which those same impulses, though suppressed, are still to be found**" (Freud, ibid, p. 741; my emphasis). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness. Translated by Nicholas De Lange* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Peirce, *Papers,* § 2.249. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Amos Oz, *Sipur al A'hava Ve’choshech* *(A Tale of Love and Darkness*), (Jerusalem: Keter, 2003), pp. 38-40. [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. For a book written in response to Oz’s petition to his readers, see Avi Wimmer, *One-handed Clap: A Journey Into A Tale of Love and Darkness by Amos Oz* (Self-published, 2013). Wimmer followed Oz’s directive to read the novel actively, as a dialogue with the interpreter’s (reader’s) own life story. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Yigal Schwartz, *Vantage Point* (Or Yehuda, Israel: Kinneret, 2005), pp. 272-304 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See for example:Special issue, Nurit Gertz and Meir Chazan (eds.), *Israel* 7, 2005; Nehama Aschkenasy, *Israeli Fiction National Identity and Private Lives,* in Frederick E. Greenspahn (ed.), *Contemporary Israel: New Insights and Scholarship* (NYU Press, 2016): 139-158, p. 146, Arie M. Dubnov (ed.), *Journal of Israeli History,* 38:2, 2020, DOI: [10.1080/13531042.2020.1935332](https://doi.org/10.1080/13531042.2020.1935332)**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Yigal Schwartz, *The Cult of the Writer and Religion of the State* (Or Yehuda: Dvir, 2011) [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Melanie Klein, “Mourning and its relation manic-depressive states”, *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1940, 21, pp. 125-153. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Oz, *Same,* p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Roman Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics” in Thomas Sebeok, (ed.), *Style in Language* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), pp. 350-377. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Roman Jakobson, “The Dominant” in *Language in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 41-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Monika Fludernik*, Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* (London: Routledge), p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Fludernik, ibid, p. 243. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Brian McHale, “Beginning to Think about Narrative in Poetry” *Narrative* 17, no. 1 (2009): 11-30. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219288. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Following McHale, in 2014 Stefan Kierkegaard showed that there had been no significant change in the scope of scholarship on narrativity in autobiographical poetry (Kierkegaard, “In the Waiting Room”). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. McHale, “Beginning” p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Raymond Gibbs explained how sometimes “bodily experience is inherently metaphorical” and how metaphorical embodiment works” (Raymond Gibbs, “Metaphorical embodiment”, in *Handbook of Embodied Psychology,* Michael D. Robinson and Laura E. Thomas [Editors][Switzerland AG: Springer, 2021]: 101-126, p. 101). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Oz, *The* *Same,* p. 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Interview with Amos Oz, “*One Book: The Same Sea*.”

    This description appears as well in the book of interviews, Amos Oz, *What Makes an Apple? Amos Oz with Shira Hadad,* Trans. Jessica Cohen(Princeton University Press, 2022)*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. It should be noted that David Grossman’s Falling Out of Time (2011) is written in the narrative poem genre. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Shemtov, “Now”, p. 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. “Morning of orange-tinged joy, every wish is switched off and only delight**//** is alight. Grief fear and shame are as far from me today as one dream is from another. I take off my shoes, play the hose on my feet// my plants and the light, whatever I have lost I forget, whatever has hurt me has faded, whatever I have given up on I have given up on, whatever I am left with// will do. […] Later I'll go back to my desk and maybe I'll manage to bring back// the young man who went off to the mountains to seek the sea that was there all the time right outside his own home. We have wandered enough. It is time to make peace.” [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. “Whenever we read anything, we find our attention moving in two directions at once. One direction is outward or centrifugal, in which we keep going outside our reading, from the individual words to the things they mean, or, in practice, to our memory of the conventional association between them. The other direction is inward or centripetal, in which we try to develop from the words a sense of the larger verbal pattern they make. In both cases we deal with symbols, but when we attach an external meaning to a word we have, in addition to the verbal symbol, the thing represented or symbolized by it.” (Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of criticism* (Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Northrop Frye, “The Symbol as a Medium of Exchange,” in: *Symbols in Life and Art,* ed. James Leith (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 1987), pp. 3-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Peirce, *Papers,* §1.191. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ibid., § 6.338. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ibid., § 1.372. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid., § 2.247. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Christopher Bollas, “The Functions of History,” in *The Christopher Bollas Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 112-134, on 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Freud, “Symbolism in Dreams,” p. 3246 (is this the correct page number?) [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Muller, *Beyond the Psychoanalytic Dyad,* p. 56. (add full reference details) [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Melanie Klein, “The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 11 (1930): 24-39, on 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Peirce, *Papers,* § 2.248. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. John Muller discusses this case at length in *Beyond*, pp. 62-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. For my article on the contribution that Wittgenstein’s concept of “lighting up of an aspect” can make to psychoanalysis, see Dorit Lemberger, “Wittgenstein’s ‘Lighting Up of an Aspect’ and the Possibility of Change in Psychoanalytic Therapy,” *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 33 (2) (2017): 192-210. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Anne Alvarez, [*The Thinking Heart: Three Levels of Psychoanalytic Therapy with Disturbed Children*](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/041555487X/ref=ox_sc_act_title_2?smid=A1HNZ4TJ80K7EN&psc=1) (New York: Routledge, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., p. 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Peirce., *Papers*, § 1.369. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Klein, “The Importance,” p. 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid., pp. 25-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Ibid., p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid., p. 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid., p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. It is interesting to observe that the classification of types of signs by their proximity to reality appears in Foucault’s *The Order of Things*, where he describes the dominant epistemology of the Middle Ages. Whereas Foucault is writing about a historical-social worldview, Peirce describes a universal grammar. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock, 1970), 20-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Peirce, *Papers,* §§ 2.274–2.275. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. When Winnicott first describes the transition to symbolism, he takes it as something that is familiar or with an obvious meaning: “When symbolism is employed the infant is already clearly distinguishing between fantasy and fact” (Donald Winnicott, “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena” [1951], in: *Playing and Reality* [London: Routledge, 1971], p. 8). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Donald Winnicott, “The Location of Cultural Experience,” in *Playing and Reality*, p. 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Donald Winnicott, “Interrelating Apart from Instinctual Drive and in Terms of Cross-Identifications,” ibid., p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Ibid., p. 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Donald Winnicott, “The Mother-Infant Experience of Mutuality,” in *Psycho-Analytic Explorations* (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 255 n. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ibid., p. 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Winnicott, “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena,” p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Ibid., p. 32 (emphasis in original). [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Donald Winnicott, “Clinical Varieties of Transference” (1955), in *Through Pediatrics to Psychoanalysis,* 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1975), pp. 297–298 (emphasis in original). Winnicott is referring to Marguerite Sechehaye, *Symbolic Realization: A New Method of Psychotherapy Applied to a Case of Schizophrenia* (Oxford: International Universities Press, 1951). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Donald Winnicott, “Ego Integration in Child Development” (1962), in *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1965), p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. See a clear example of this is Ronald Briton, *Belief and Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. David Remnick, “The Spirit Level,” *New Yorker* 8 November 2004 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/11/08/the-spirit-level>.) [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. “I write articles not because I’m asked to, but because I’m filled with rage. I feel I have to tell my government what to do and, sometimes, where to go. Not that they listen. […] You see, I’m not a political analyst or commentator. I write from a sense of injustice and my revolt against it. But I can write an article only when I agree with myself one hundred percent, which is not my normal condition—normally I’m in partial disagreement with myself and can identify with three or five different views and different feelings about the same issue. That is when I write a story, where different characters can express different views on the same subject. I have never written a story or a novel to make people change their minds about anything—not once. […] I even use two different pens, as a symbolic gesture: one to tell stories, the other to tell the government what to do with itself. Both, by the way, are very ordinary ballpoint pens, which I change every three weeks or so.” (Shusha Guppy, “Amos Oz, “The Art of Fiction No. 148,” *Paris Review* 140 (Fall 1996) <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1366/the-art-of-fiction-no-148-amos-oz>); See shorter version in Dubnov, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Dubnov 2020, "Introduction: Amos Oz’s two pens", pp. 233-258, DOI: [10.1080/13531042.2020.1935332](https://doi.org/10.1080/13531042.2020.1935332) [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Peirce, *Papers,* § 2.293. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Herbert Read, “Psycho-Analysis and the Problem of Aesthetic Value,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 32 (1951): 73–82, on p. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Peirce supplements the two standard methods of inference, induction, and deduction, with a third method, which he calls “abduction.” He describes this as an original argument whose premises match its conclusions, but with no causal link between them. (Peirce, *Collected Papers,* § 2.96). The source of the argument is unknown, so it is viewed as a surprise. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Oz, *A Tale,* pp. 345-346. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Klein, “The Importance of Symbol-Formation,” p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Marion Milner, (1952), “The Role of Illusion in Symbol Formation,” in *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men* (London: Tavistock, 1987), pp. 83-113. Milner advances this assertion as an interpretation that unifies Klein’s discussion of symbolism with Ernest Jones’s discussion of this topic. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. “It is an object which is sought, even if, to be found, it has first to be made.” (Donald Fairbairn, “Object-Relationships and Dynamic Structure,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 27 [1946]: 30-37, on p. 32). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Oz, *A Tale,* pp. 144-145. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Ibid., p. 437. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art Developed from Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: Scribner’s, 1953), p. 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid., p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Schwartz, *The Cult of the Writer*. Full reference details [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Oz, *A Tale,* p. 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Ibid., p. 506. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Ibid., pp. 203-204. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Ibid., p. 517. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)