

**Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article**

## **REPRESENTATION OF TRAUMATIC MEMORY IN *THE WHITE HOTEL***

**Hülya YILDIZ\***

**ABSTRACT:** One of the concerns of D.M. Thomas in his 1981 novel *The White Hotel* is to make connections between the personal and the collective trauma. But, as the narrative structure of the novel subtly affirms, this connection cannot be made through understanding and representing history in linear, causal narratives. The novel suggests that literature is an access to human suffering and traumatic memory, which, in turn, is communicated to others in narratives. The novel also exemplifies that memory is a historical and political site where meaning is constructed, reconstructed, and recollected. In this article, I examine the representation of traumatic memory in relation to the palimpsest narrative technique of *The White Hotel*. The article aims to show how Thomas in *The White Hotel* revises and challenges Freudian psychoanalytical approaches towards traumatic memory, and instead offers a literary construction of traumatic memory, in which he suggests a more complicated approach that takes both the individual and the historical context of trauma into account.

**Keywords:** *The White Hotel*; traumatic memory; representation of traumatic memory in history and fiction; postmodern novel and representation of traumatic memory

### **BEYAZ OTEL'DE TRAVMATİK HAFIZANIN TEMSİLİ**

**ÖZ:** D. M. Thomas'ın 1981 tarihli *Beyaz Otel* adlı romanındaki ana meselelerden birisi kişisel ve kolektif travma arasında bağ kurmaktır. Ancak, romanın anlatı yapısının da gösterdiği üzere, bu bağ, çizgisel, neden-sonuç ilişkisine dayalı anlatılar yoluyla anlaşılabilir ve temsil edilemez. Roman, edebiyatın, insanın acısına ve travmatik hafızaya ulaşmanın bir yolu olduğunu, bunun da anlatı yoluyla diğer insanlara aktarılabilirliğini önermektedir. Bu anlamda, roman, hafızanın, anlamın kurgulandığı, yeniden kurgulandığı, ve hatırlandığı tarihsel ve politik bir alan olduğu fikrinin altını çizer. Bu makalede, *Beyaz Otel*'deki travmatik hafızanın temsiline, romanın çok katmanlı anlatı yapısıyla olan ilişkisi incelenmektedir. Bu çerçevede, makale, Thomas'ın *Beyaz Otel*'de Freudyen psikanaliz yaklaşımının travmatik hafızaya yaklaşımını nasıl eleştirdiğini ve bu yaklaşımın yerine, travmanın hem kişisel hem de tarihsel bağlamını göz önüne alan edebiyatın travmatik hafızayı kurgulayışını göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Beyaz Otel*; travmatik hafıza temsili; edebiyat ve travma arasındaki ilişki; postmodern roman ve travma temsili

---

\* Dr. Öğretim Üyesi, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü, [huyildiz@metu.edu.tr](mailto:huyildiz@metu.edu.tr) <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6625-575X>

**Geliş Tarihi (Received): 08.11.2018**

**Kabul Tarihi (Accepted): 25.04.2018**

“I could say that the motivation was to write about the real history of the twentieth century, which flows through the humanism of Freud into the desolation of the Holocaust; from that very personal landscape where people were studied individually with great care and a good deal of insight, into the time when masses were wiped out for no good reason. But I don’t actually think that the answer occurred to me at the time. It probably emerged later, as the theme of the book. What excited me at first was reading Anatoly Kuznetsov’s *Babi Yar*, quoting an eyewitness account.”<sup>1</sup>

This is how D.M. Thomas responds to a question asked by Laura de Coppet about his motivation for writing his 1981 novel, *The White Hotel*.<sup>2</sup> As understood from the above extract, it seems that at least one of the concerns of Thomas in *The White Hotel* is to make connections between the personal and the collective trauma. In this sense, the novel seems to suggest that literature is an access to human suffering and traumatic memory, which, in turn, is communicated to others in narratives. But, as the narrative structure of the novel subtly affirms, this connection cannot be made through understanding and representing history in linear, causal narratives. The novel connects the personal trauma of Lisa, protagonist of the novel, which is analyzed through psychoanalysis, with the collective trauma of the Holocaust, which is written based on the historical eye-witness account of a survivor as written in Anatoly Kuznetsov’s novel, *Babi Yar* (1967/1970).<sup>3</sup> As such, it not only questions the failure of recognizing the historical context in psychoanalysis but also offers new ways of acknowledging and representing the collective and historical trauma such as the Holocaust. Within this context, in this article, I suggest that trauma theory, which sees traumatic experience as an access to personal and collective tragedies like the Holocaust, can be insightful in understanding the palimpsest narrative technique of *The White Hotel*. Trauma theory is also relevant to *The White Hotel* especially because the novel is very closely engaged with Freudian theory, in specific Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), the first book where Freud started developing his ideas with reference to trauma theory.<sup>4</sup>

*The White Hotel* is an example of postmodern fiction, with its multiple narrative styles and perspectives, mixing of different genres (letter, poem,

---

<sup>1</sup> Laura De Coppet, “Interview with D.M. Thomas”, *Interview*, (June 1982), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> D.M. Thomas, *The White Hotel*, Penguin, New York, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Anatoly Kuznetsov, *Babi Yar*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1989.

psychoanalytic case study, narrative realism, magic realistic/fantastic elements), challenging the distinction between history and fiction, questioning the role of the author, authority, and authenticity. The novel does not follow a linear chronology. Because it displays most of the characteristics of postmodern fiction, it has been mainly studied from a postmodern perspective.<sup>5</sup> In addition to its using postmodern fiction techniques, the novel closely deals with psychoanalysis. In that sense, two major literary achievements of the novel is that it questions the capacity of psychoanalysis to register truth and traumatic memory as well as questioning the nature of narrative representation. In essence, *The White Hotel* is concerned with how we make meaning in history and fiction.

Before I go into details of the discussion of my argument, I would like to lay out the organization and the content of the novel briefly to clarify the following discussion on the novel. The novel includes six parts. “*The Prologue*” consists of fictional letters exchanged between Sigmund Freud, Sándor Ferenczi, and Hans Sachs. Although the letters are fictional, the authors are the same with historical figures and the content of the letters include historically real events and refer to historically real texts. The letters also refer to a patient of Freud, to whom he refers as someone suffering from hysteria. Freud’s letters also include texts produced by this fictional patient; texts that Freud refers to containing explicit sexual content, as hallucinations of a neurotic patient. The letters also introduce the issue of merging the historical and fictional text that we see throughout the whole novel.

The second part of the novel entitled “Don Giovanni” contains a poem, with sexually implicit content, that the aforementioned patient of Freud had written. The following part titled “*Gastein Journal*” includes a description of the same events referred in the poem, but this time in prose form. Both the poem and the journal are written by a patient named Anna G., a pseudonym given by Freud to Lisa Erdman, which is also typical of historical Freud’s procedure in his real life psychoanalytic treatments. The case study of Anna G. is presented in the style and form of a real Freudian case study. It starts with her treatment in 1919.

In the fourth part, the novel presents Lisa’s life from 1929 to 1936, during which she becomes an opera singer, marries a Russian Jew, and

---

<sup>5</sup> Among others, Hutcheon offers a reading of the novel as an example of postmodern historiographic fiction, see Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York, 1988, pp. 165-177; Waugh also discusses *The White Hotel* as a borderline example of metafiction, see Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction. The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. Methuen, London, 1984, p. 103.

adopts his son, Kolya. This section also includes letters between Freud and Lisa since he asks for her permission to publish her case story. This is also the part, where, readers learn crucial bits of information that Lisa kept from Freud during her therapy, which will be discussed in detail later in the article.

In the fifth part, narrated in the realist mode, Lisa is in Kiev in 1941, living in the Podol ghetto with her stepson, and she is forced into moving out, with the other Jews, where she will be shot at Babi Yar. This section entitled “The Sleeping Carriage” describes Lisa being raped with the bayonet of a Nazi soldier and dies in the pit at Babi Yar. This is the controversial section, closely based on Anatoly Kuznetsov’s novel, *Babi Yar*.<sup>6</sup> In this section, the occupation of Kiev by the German troops is narrated, and, Lisa, as a half-Jew, is ordered to come to the train station with her stepson, Kolya, along with other Jewish population of Kiev.<sup>7</sup> When they go to the station, they think that they would be sent to Palestine. However, as we find out later in this section, they are all brought to a ravine near Kiev, called Babi Yar, where all of them are shot. This is also the scene where the reader finds out the cause of her pains in her ovary and left breast from which she had been suffering during all her youth and adult life.

The sixth section, “*The Camp*,” written in a fantastic mode, takes place at an imaginary place, most probably in Palestine. It is a place for healing; the tone is hopeful and optimistic. The novel ends with Lisa realizing that her breast and her pelvis have not hurt that day. As can be understood even from this brief outline, *The White Hotel* challenges the reader not only with its unconventional narrative structure but also with the layering of historical and fictional events and styles on top of each other.

In the rest of the article, I would like to give an overview of the psychological understandings of traumatic memory, including that of Freud’s, to show, later in the article, how Thomas in *The White Hotel* revises and challenges such psychological approaches towards traumatic memory, and instead offers a literary construction of traumatic memory, in which he

---

<sup>6</sup> Thomas has been accused of plagiarizing from Kuznetsov’s novel in writing this section of the novel. For the details of the controversy, see Lynn Felder, “D.M. Thomas: The Plagiarism Controversy”, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Yearbook 1982*, Gale Research, Detroit, 1983, pp. 79-82.

<sup>7</sup> Thirty-three thousand people were murdered in Babi Yar on September 29-30, 1941. For details of the Babi Yar in Soviet history, see Edith W. Clowes, “Constructing the Memory of the Holocaust: The Ambiguous Treatment of Babi Yar in Soviet Literature”, *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 3 (2), 2005, pp. 153-182.

suggests a more complicated approach that takes both the individual and the historical context of trauma into account.

### **On the Origins of Traumatic Memory**

In *The Harmony of Illusions* (1995), Allan Young problematizes modes of viewing trauma and traumatic memory and discusses the origins of traumatic memory and the mind/body dualism that accompanies the history of this term.<sup>8</sup> Young posits the origin of traumatic memory at the intersection of the somatic trauma of “*nervous shock*,” suffered by railway accident victims and the psychological foundation of trauma, dating back to the end of the eighteenth century’s discourse around “*repression*” and “*dissociation*.”<sup>9</sup> The somatic school of thought, sparked by John Erichsen, holds the body responsible for mental symptoms of trauma. The psychological school, consisting of Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud and others, holds the mind responsible for physical symptoms of trauma. Though these two theoretical bents represent dualistic ways of looking at trauma, and are inadequate standing alone, both schools of thought place fear, whether a physical or mental assault, at the center of traumatic experiences.<sup>10</sup>

Out of fear, the self responds to trauma in varying ways. The Erichsen line, through George Crile, Walter Cannon, and Ivan Pavlov, maintain that the manner in which victims respond to trauma is chemical in origin. Pavlov’s theory focuses on “*unconditioned*” or “*spontaneous*” responses versus “*conditioned*” responses, through which victims attempt to avoid harmful stimuli or suffer from “*learned helplessness*.” Neo-Pavlovians propose an additional option of victims seeking to replicate their trauma because of their addiction to endorphins released by painful memories.<sup>11</sup> Though located in a different theoretical place, neo-Pavlovian arguments resemble Freud’s theory of compulsion repetition, which will be discussed next.

### **Freud’s understanding of traumatic memory**

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1989), Freud revises some of his previous theories and proposes the concepts of “*compulsive repetition*” and “*death instinct*.” He maintains that the compulsion to repeat is pleasurable because humans instinctively seek to restore an earlier state of being. He

<sup>8</sup> Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions. Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> A. Young, *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> A. Young, *ibid.*, pp. 13-42.

<sup>11</sup> A. Young, *ibid.*, pp. 26-28.

links the compulsion to repeat with a “*death instinct*,” arguing that life’s path is circuitous in that it ultimately seeks to return to an inorganic state. According to Freud, “*the pleasure principle follows the principle of constancy*”—the mental apparatus seeks to maintain a constant state of excitation.<sup>12</sup> His argument is thought provoking but its main flaw is its dualistic nature—opposing death instincts/ego instincts to life instincts/sexual instincts—where sexual instincts seek to preserve and death instincts to destroy. Freud maintains that sexual instincts too are compelled to repeat. Reproduction lends humankind a sense of immortality, but this argument presumes that all of humankind tends towards reproducing itself. Freud’s admission that “*life has been continuous from its beginning upon earth*” further undermines his dualistic argument.<sup>13</sup> Conclusively, he admits that death instincts are libidinal and sexual instincts have a destructive element. Though he criticizes Jung’s monistic theory of libido, a dualistic concept that sets up two interrelated instincts as opposing instincts does not pan out either.

Consideration of a number of phenomena, particularly the repetitive nightmares of shell-shocked soldiers of World War I, led Freud to claim that all living creatures possessed a “*death instinct*,” a desire to return to their former inorganic state of being. The new theory was first made public in 1920 in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Especially, in understanding how traumatic memory functions Thomas draws on Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In Thomas’s novel, fictional Freud relates the repetition pattern in Lisa’s case story to his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the text that he was working on at the time. For instance, in the novel, fictional Freud develops his theory of the “*death instinct*” based on the case study of Anna G. (Lisa Erdman). Fictional Freud states: “*I began to link her troubles with my theory of the death instinct. The shadowy ideas of my half-completed essay, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, began, almost imperceptibly, to take concrete shape, as I pondered the tragic paradox controlling Frau Anna’s destiny.*”<sup>14</sup>

In one of the letters which make up the Prologue to *The White Hotel*, fictional Freud writes of his conviction “*that I am on the right lines in positing a death instinct, as powerful in its own way (though more hidden) than the libido. One of my patients, a young woman suffering from a severe hysteria, has just ‘given birth’ to some writings which seem to lend support*

<sup>12</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, The Standard Edition. Trans. James Strachey, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1989.

<sup>13</sup> S. Freud, *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>14</sup> D.M. Thomas, *The White Hotel*, Penguin, New York, 1981.

to my theory: an extreme of libidinous phantasy combined with an extreme of morbidity.”<sup>15</sup> Fictional Freud’s case history remarks that his initial encounter with Anna reminded him of the faces of victims of battle traumas, the cases which first led him to form his new theory<sup>16</sup> Towards the end of Lisa’s/Frau Anna’s treatment, he writes: “I began to see Frau Anna, not as a woman separated from the rest of us by her illness, but as someone in whom an hysteria exaggerated and highlighted a universal struggle between life instinct and the death instinct.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, Thomas in *The White Hotel* both mimics Freudian style of psychoanalysis and questions some of its basic assumptions and methodology, as I discuss them further in the rest of the article.

The aim of psychoanalytic treatment, according to Freud, is the following:

*“In the further course of the treatment the patient supplies the facts which, though he had known them all along, had been kept back by him or had not occurred to his mind. The paramnesias prove untenable, and the gaps in his memory are filled in. It is only towards the end of the treatment that we have before us all intelligible, consistent, and unbroken case history. Whereas the practical aim of the treatment is to remove all possible symptoms and to replace them by conscious thoughts, we may regard it as a second and theoretical aim to repair all the damages to the patient’s memory.”*<sup>18</sup>

Here one of the main assumptions of the psychoanalytic method can be seen: that the case story of the patient presents events, including the origin of the traumatic memory, of which the psychoanalyst is able to give a meaningful account, as a result of which s/he diagnoses the reason of the trauma and through therapy leads the patient towards recovery from the symptoms suffered as a result of this prior traumatic event, that s/he may or may not be conscious of. But, of course, the narrative Thomas constructs challenges some of the basic assumptions of this approach: later in the novel, Lisa Erdman confesses to Freud, via letters, that she, in fact, concealed some important points in her story, which led Freud put a wrong diagnosis for the primal reason of her traumatic experience. The most important of these is that she had been sexually abused by a group of sailors when she was a young girl: as she puts it in her letter “*They [sailors] spat on me, threatened*

<sup>15</sup> D.M. Thomas, *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> D.M. Thomas, *ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>17</sup> D.M. Thomas, *ibid.*, pp. 128-9.

<sup>18</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Dora. An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, Touchstone New York, 1997, p. 11.

*to burn my breasts with their cigarettes, used vile language I'd never heard. They forced me to commit acts of oral sex with them, saying all I was good for, as a dirty Jewess, was to—But you'll guess the expression they used. Eventually they let me go. But from that time I haven't found it easy to admit to my Jewish blood. I've gone out of my way to hide it.”*<sup>19</sup>

As can be seen here, Freud's psychoanalytic understanding of Lisa's trauma lead him to look for the source of it in her past in the symbolic/metaphorical form; however, as the novel presents it later, her pain is a literal expectation of a future trauma that Lisa later becomes victim of, along with thousands of other Jews. But in his diagnosis, Freud misses that Lisa herself will become a victim of the war—but the war in the future not in the past. Her suffering is not due to a traumatic event in her past but because of a vague sense of a traumatic future in which she will experience a violent death for being a Jew. Freud misinterprets Lisa's symptoms as hysterical but the reader ultimately finds out that they are foretelling. In the fifth part of the novel, readers find out that Lisa's pain is in the exact same places that will be hurt as a result of the violence at the hands of SS soldiers. In other words, she foresees her own murder. Thus, the psychoanalytic and the historical dimensions of the novel are connected through the character of Lisa. By locating the primary traumatic event not in the past, which is traditionally the case, but in the future, Thomas challenges both the fundamental assumptions of psychoanalysis and the causal rationality of traditional representations.

Therefore, Thomas's novel is also a fundamental criticism of Freudian understanding of how traumatic memory works. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* problematizes dualistic modes of viewing trauma and traumatic memory. Freud's theory and the overall psychological schema of trauma are based upon the presumption that traumatic memory causes psychiatric disorders. The traumatic memory acts as a “*pathogenic secret*” that victims seek to hide from the self and others. Therefore, Freud believes that when the memory is resolved, it will move into consciousness and act as any ordinary memory. In this regard, the aim of treatment, Freud writes, is to repair damage to the patient's memory, so that he or she can come “into possession of one's own story.”<sup>20</sup> And in a way, in *The White Hotel*, all of Freud's psychoanalysis sessions with Lisa can be seen as a process of accessing Lisa's traumatic memory, which includes not only the past and the present but also the future, so that she can rebuild a memory that would

<sup>19</sup> D.M. Thomas, *ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>20</sup> Steven Marcus, *Freud and the Culture of Psychoanalysis*, Allen & Unwin, Boston, 1984, p. 62.



enable her to continue her life without hysteria attacks. Such a project propels a narrative that would enable going backward and forward both in memory and narrative time. That is, retrieval of traumatic personal and collective memory needs a narrative, which is repetitive, interrupted, and resistant to signification, highlighting gestures that impede chronology. In other words, if memory is “*story-telling*” perhaps the answer does not lie in reincorporating the traumatic events into the life story, but in learning new ways of telling stories that militate against neatness. If trauma necessarily entails, as Cathy Caruth (1996) suggests in *Unclaimed Experience: “Trauma, Narrative, and History, a radical discontinuity between understanding and experience, if it is ‘the narrative of a belated experience’, then we may begin to bridge that gap by reconceiving the relationship between history and the individual and between the traumatic experience and its incorporation into personal narratives.”*<sup>21</sup>

Within this context, *The White Hotel* makes use of the palimpsest narrative where we read backward as we move forward, as a means of access to the inaccessibility and cyclic nature of the traumatic experience. Through repetition of images we experience no erasure; instead we have a revision of memory. The “*compulsion repetition*” is one of Freud’s key terms in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. And repetition, stunningly enacted in imagery that continually circles on itself, is the method Thomas uses in *The White Hotel*. Each narrative voice undermines its predecessor and seeks an authoritative interpretation through repetitive clues. However, the notions of authority and repetition become attached to a death force, culminating in the Babi Yar chapter, which defies the closure of the previous chapters and is in turn defied by the concluding chapter.

The novel continually presents patterns of repetition. In the “*Don Giovanni*” poem, Anna writes:

*“your son impaled me, it was so sweet I screamed  
but no one heard me for the other screams  
as body after body fell or leapt  
from upper storeys of the white hotel.”*<sup>22</sup>

In the Babi Yar chapter, these images are paralleled as “thousands of people are shot by the Nazis and fall into the ravine. Lisa jumps with Kolya before the bullets strike them. Lying amidst the carnage, her movements are

<sup>21</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1996, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> D.M. Thomas, *The White Hotel*, pp. 19-20.

detected and her breast is kicked before she is raped with a bayonet: “*Still very gently, Demidenko imitated the thrusts of intercourse; and Semashko let out a guffaw, which reverberated from the ravine walls as the woman’s body jerked back and relaxed, jerked and relaxed. ... Demidenko twisted the blade and thrust it in deep.*”<sup>23</sup> Lisa’s belief that the source of her breast and ovary pains was organic in opposition to Freud’s contention that they stemmed from her rejection of her lesbian impulses finds disturbing confirmation in this scene.

Lisa’s symptoms violate the linear concept of time and our usual notion of causality. The pains in her breast and abdomen are anticipatory signs stemming from the bestial treatment she receives in the mass grave. During Freud’s therapy, Lisa declares that she possesses a psychic gift, a gift in whose validity Freud believes. She explains that on several occasions she has had previsions of events that occur later.

It is interesting that throughout the novel Lisa becomes almost like a mythical figure in whom past, present and the future can be seen. Although she is presented under several various names—Erdman, Berenstein, Morozova, Konopnicka, Frau Anna G.--, there seems to be a strange uniqueness and continuity in her that Thomas underlies. The most vivid example of this occurs when Lisa visits Odessa where she spent her childhood after her marriage to Victor. First she feels estranged from her past,

*“She had the feeling that she was no more than a spectre. Herself was unreal, the little boy was unreal. She was cut off from the past and therefore did not live in the present. But suddenly, as she stood close against a pine tree and breathed in its sharp, bitter scent, a clear space opened to her childhood, as though a wind that sprung up from the sea, clearing a mist. It was not a memory from the past but the past itself, as alive, as real; and she knew that she and the child of forty years ago were the same person.*

*That knowledge flooded her with happiness. But immediately came another insight, bringing almost unbearable joy. For as she looked back through the clear space to her childhood, there was no blank wall, only an endless extent, like an avenue, in which she was still herself, Lisa. She was still there, even at the beginning of all things. And when she looked in the opposite direction, towards the unknown future, death, the endless extent beyond death, she was there still. It all came from the scent of a pine tree.”*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> D. M. Thomas, *ibid.*, pp. 249-250.

<sup>24</sup> D. M. Thomas, *ibid.*, pp. 213-4.

As can be seen in the above quotation, throughout the novel Lisa transforms from being an individual to a representative of the Holocaust victim. Her representativeness is reflected in the neutral and detached wording of Dina Pronicheva's eyewitness report, which is an example of collective testimony of the atrocities carried out at Babi Yar.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, *The White Hotel* criticizes some of the fundamental assumptions of psychoanalysis such as the idea that traumatic memory is a direct result of a real life prior event in the life of an individual, which psychoanalytic therapy aims to treat the patient by uncovering this prior trauma and making the patient encounter with it to overcome the unwanted after-results of it. It also criticizes psychoanalysis by imitating the language and style of a Freudian case study, as the protagonist of the novel is analyzed by fictional Freud, who resembles several identifiable characteristics with historical Sigmund Freud.

The novel also exemplifies that memory is a historical and political site where meaning is constructed, reconstructed, and recollected. In this case, it is Lisa's psyche and body that remembers the atrocities that will be enacted on her and thirty thousand other Jews (or people who were thought to be Jews) in Babi Yar. In other words, Lisa's psychic memory functions like an affective archive for what it means to experience the Holocaust. Literature such as *The White Hotel* leads us to think about the role of literature in dealing with traumatic events and traumatic memory. *The White Hotel* offers complex ways of both dealing with and representing the traumatic experience. First, it both mimics and questions the methods used by psychoanalysis in dealing with traumatic experience. Second, it raises the issue of representing such a traumatic experience. Third, it raises questions about the complicated relationship between history and fiction.

### REFERENCES

- Caruth, Cathy, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1996.
- Clowes, Edith.W, "Constructing the Memory of the Holocaust: The Ambiguous Treatment of Babii Yar in Soviet Literature", *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 3 (2), 2005, pp. 153-182.
- De Coppet, Laura, "Interview with D.M. Thomas", *Interview*, (1982, June), p. 32.
- Felder, Lynn, "D.M. Thomas: The Plagiarism Controversy", *Dictionary of Literary Yearbook*, Gale Research, Detroit, 1982.
- Freud, Sigmund, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, The Standard Edition. Trans. James Strachey, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1989.

- \_\_\_\_\_, *Dora. An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, Touchstone, New York, 1997.
- Hutcheon, Linda, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York, 1999.
- Kuznetsov, Anatoly, *Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel*, Trans. David Floyd, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1970.
- Marcus, Steven, *Freud and the Culture of Psychoanalysis*, Allen & Unwin, Boston, 1984.
- Thomas, D.M., *The White Hotel*, Penguin, New York, 1981.
- Waugh, Patricia, *Metafiction. The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*, Methuen, London, 1984.
- Young, Allan, *The Harmony of Illusions. Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995.