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(Late)-modern Paths into Dreamscapes of Deep Meanings?

(Alfred Kubin, Sylvia Plath, Terézia Mora)

Jung's doctrine which combines archetypes and individuation starts in his *Liber novus* with a scene of loss of speech: "The spirit of the depth took my mind and all my knowledge and put them at the service of the inexplicable and the absurd." (L.N.: 229) This space of the otherness notably concerns literary outsider characters with possible mental disorders walking between the fluid borderlands of waking – and dream states where also the norms responsible for the perceived social exclusion become visible. The 20th century transition from authoritarian states to democratic – liberal societies was accompanied by a process of increasing individualization, which caused a replacement of the formerly dominant neuroses by the widespread disease "depression" which is described in Alain Ehrenbergs *La Fatigue d'être soi*.

My lecture focusses on literary representations of dreams by three authors covering this era whose oeuvres make use of surrealistic, fantastic and paradoxical dream elements operating at the limits of the unspeakable.

Alfred Kubin's *The Other Side* (1909) takes its readers from modern Munich to the dream – realm of Patera which functions according to pre – modern absolutist rules, where so – called "Traummenschen" with "longing for depth" seem to be continuously dreaming. Consequently, the first – person narrator awakes only after the appearance of the American Hercules Bell and a surrealistic vision of the breakdown of Patera. In contrast, the first – person narrator – a depressive psychiatric secretary – in Sylvia Plath's *Bible of Dreams* (1977) already looks back on the downsides of modern societies in her meta – dreams: Therein, she sees all the patients' nightmares she has archived, which pour out as streams into the depths of a gigantic dream – lake lined with ancient dragons. In Terézia Mora's *The monster* (2013), the aesthetic of depth already results from the division of the pages by a horizontal line which symbolizes the frontier between two worlds and two timelines. The perceptual world of the Hungarian migrant Flora relies significantly on a paradoxical, insoluble dream logic.