



CMPS

Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies

Extension Division Presentation

Pace, Space, and the Other in the Making of Fiction

The turn toward an embodied metaphorical understanding of human thought in the cognitive sciences and other disciplines has reconfigured the idea that narrative is a purely linguistic phenomenon that begins with language acquisition. Some researchers have even interpreted early fetal movements as the grounding for narrative imagination and the newborn's imitative behaviors and protoconversations as forms of storytelling with clearly marked introductions, developments, climaxes, and endings. Siri Hustvedt argues that human narrative ability is rooted in the prelinguistic, sensorimotor, emotionally charged dialogical experiences of timing in infancy and the learned patterns of those early exchanges. Prenatal life may be important to what will become narrative, but fetal experience must be understood in relation to the rhythmic motions and sounds of the maternal body. The development of a narrative imagination requires movement both from the co-constructed patterns of felt timing in infancy with a real other to represented time in the language of a particular culture and from situated immediate experience with a real other to the imaginary spaces of mental imagery in memory and the creation of imaginary others in fiction. These overlapping temporal and spatial developmental trajectories are crucial to the emergence of the fictive imagination. Virginia Woolf's comments on rhythm and writing, as well as a drawing illustrating the form of *To the Lighthouse*, provide a door for thinking through the many unanswered questions about narrative and the writer's movements in imaginary time and space.

2 CE Credits for Licensed Psychoanalysts, Social Workers, and Psychologists

■ FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2018 • 7:30 - 9:30 PM ■

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PRACTITIONERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC: \$20 | STUDENTS: FREE



Siri Hustvedt, PhD, is a lecturer in psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College. She is the author of a book of poems, six novels, a work of nonfiction, and four collections of essays, most recently *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women: Essays on Art, Sex, and the Mind*. In 2012 she was awarded the Gabarron International Award for Thought and Humanities. Her most recent novel, *The Blazing World* (2014), was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize and won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction.

CONTINUING EDUCATION INFORMATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Participants will be able to (1) describe the implications of the argument that narrative and the narrative imagination have prelinguistic origins in the rhythmic interactions of the fetus with the mother, and are not, as is often assumed in the cognitive sciences, products of language acquisition; and (2) describe how fictional characters emerge within an experience rooted in the most primitive interactions of mother and infant.

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