

*Psychotherapy, Prose, and Poetry – Deconstruction, Narrative Reconstruction and
Authorship: Learning to Wear an Uneasy Crown*

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With examples from notable poets and writers (e.g., *Paul Bowles, Herman Melville, WH Auden, Paul Muldoon, Robert Frost, e.e.cummings and Thomas Mann*) we will examine the process of interpretative understanding from the perspective of reader as well as listener/therapist and the coincident and simultaneous act of narrative reconstruction – the creative making of meaning – of which there is a parallel process in psychotherapy. In both the artistic and psychotherapeutic paradigms these functions highlight the philosophical question of ultimate authorship, which – though inevitable in our experience of literature – raises ethical concerns in the context of treatment. Can we then use our experience of literature to enrich our clinical work but also teach therapists to be alert to the unintended imposition of meaning when helping patients to create meaning through their experience of suffering and recovery?