Introduction

A Cultural History of Neurosis, From Diagnostics to Poetics

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In 1994, the handbook of the American Psychology Association – the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* – dropped neurosis from its medical vocabulary. This deletion constituted the end of a psychoanalytical concept that had shaped medical discourse for the better part of the twentieth century but became obsolete and deemed too elusive for a proper diagnosis of psychological disorders. In "Where Have All the Neurotics Gone?" (2012), journalist Benedict Carey explains that, as "scientists […] began to slice neurosis into ever finer pieces, like panic disorder, social anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder" (Carey), the concept lost its analytical value. Subsequently, Carey recalls its broader cultural relevance for postwar middle-class Americans when, instead of indicating "merely being anxious" or "exhibiting […] hysteria," neurosis actually designated a person as "being interesting (if sometimes exasperating)" (Carey). In the end, however, neurosis may not have vanished as completely as present-day medical discourse and nostalgia for the past may imply.

After all, Carey reasons, people continue to experience their everyday life as disquieting and distressing, while the five-factor model of personality indicates that among college students the "neuroticism levels have increased by as much as 20 percent" (Carey) since the 1950s. Similarly, some of the features of neurosis, and particularly the use of talk therapy for its treatment, may have simply been absorbed into mainstream since "[p]eople of all ages […] are awash in self-confession, not only in the reality-show of pop culture but in the increasingly public availability of almost every waking thought, through Facebook, Twitter and other social media" (Carey). In this view, neurosis did not disappear but came to be an integral, often unnoticed part of contemporary daily life.

Whereas neurosis slowly disappeared from medical and public discourse, trauma and trauma narratives rapidly gained prominence after the terrorist at-

tacks on September 11, 2001. To understand the events of that day, a plethora of journalistic as well as popular and literary texts adopted the notion of trauma as their predominant frame of reference.[1] Neither journalists nor writers, artists, politicians, or even scholars, however, appropriated trauma in its narrow medical definition, as the adaptation of a vague notion of trauma allowed for a larger variety of cultural narratives, Susan Faludi asserts in *The Terror Dream* (2007). Trauma became a trope in popular and scholarly attempts to understand September 11 as well as the cultural and literary productions in its wake. Even when texts did not explicitly refer to the collapse of the World Trade Center, the portrayal of emotional distance or numbness, for example, was read in light of a 'September 11 trauma.' According to Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman in *The Empire of Trauma* (2007), the general idea guiding most post-9/11 publications presumed that "both survivors and witnesses, but also television viewers and residents of the United States in general were suffering from exposure to a traumatic event" (2).[2] The study of trauma eventually helped to develop a lan-

1 Initially, trauma studies developed out of scholarship interest in understanding the (psychological) consequences of the Holocaust. Later, trauma also became an essential concept to think through the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the experience of slavery, and its aftermath in the twentieth century.

2 In *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (2005), for example, E. Ann Kaplan introduces a broad, ubiquitous notion of trauma to bring together a wide variety of texts from World War II representations to Hitchcock films, media images of Rwanda and the Iraq War, indigenous cinema, and narratives of September 11. For Kaplan, trauma extends from an immediate to a highly mediated experience: "At one extreme there is the direct trauma victim while at the other we find a person geographically far away, having no personal connection to the victim. In between are a series of positions: for example, there's the relative of trauma victims or the position of workers coming in after a catastrophe, those who encounter trauma through accounts they hear, or clinicians who may be vicariously traumatized now that increasingly counseling is offered to people who survive catastrophes. People encounter trauma by being a bystander, by living near to where a catastrophe happened, or by hearing about a crisis from a friend. But most people encounter trauma through the media, which is why focusing on so-called mediatized trauma is important" (2). Fritz Breithaupt labeled this mediatization "the plot of trauma" (72), in which the staging of September 11, 2001 as a trauma in the media "serves as the central axis of organizing the diverse information material in such a way to bring about the said response in the audience. In short, the media themselves responded to the attack by creating that which they perceived as the outcome of the attacks: 'a trauma.' At the same

guage and establish a discourse about the events of September 11 in the American public. Whether this suffering was understood in the psycho-analytical sense of "traces left in the psyche" or in the popular notion of "an open wound in the collective memory" (2), the prevalent mainstream narratives initially tended to frame the collapse of the World Trade Center as an exceptional rupture and trauma as an inhibition of daily life that necessitates healing and closure (see Däwes 1-5).[3]

The animation film *Finding Nemo* (2003) follows trauma narratives of the kind gestured to above in the underwater world of the Great Barrier Reef. If the personal journey of one character, Marlin, unfolds a narrative of healing, however, the film includes a plethora of psychologically wounded minor characters who have learnt to coexist with their disorders and, unlike Marlin, are offered no closure. The presence of these characters marked by quirks and eccentricities make *Finding Nemo* as much a story about neurosis as about trauma, and one that invites questions about preponderant fictions of normalcy.

The film opens with the clownfish father Marlin moving into the coral reef equivalent of a suburban home with his wife Coral. When a barracuda ravages their home killing his wife and almost all of their brood, Marlin develops a fearful attitude about life because of "the traumatic attack" (Whitley 130). Consequentially, Marlin raises his only surviving son, Nemo, on the idea that life outside the anemone and in the ocean "is not safe" (*Finding Nemo*). *Finding Nemo* underscores this traumatized view of the world when other parents ask Marlin to tell a joke, presuming that he, as a clownfish, has to be particularly humorous.

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time, the media recommend themselves as therapist, as the agent of national healing" (67).

3 In trauma studies, the aspiration to heal the (psychological) wound or pain similarly presupposes a wholeness of identity and – as Allan Young maintains in *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (1995) – is expressive of late nineteenth-century Western views informing 'trauma.' For Stef Craps, this notion of healing can privilege forms of psychological restoration "over the transformation of a wounding political, social, or economic system," as normative trauma discourse may disavow "the need for taking collective action towards systemic change [and] […] serve as a political palliative to the socially disempowered" (50). In *Ground Zero Fiction* (2011), Birgit Däwes offers a nuanced reading of the American 9/11 novel not only as perpetuating narratives of national hubris, American heroism, and xenophobic fear. Instead, the genre "provides the narrative agency to name and possibly replace the semantic absences that the Trade Center Towers left behind, but it also resists the authority of closure" (7).

As Marlin stammers and mumbles erratically and eventually fails to deliver the punchline, the scene captures his social anxieties about the world outside his home; Marlin is unable to function within expected social parameters. The Pixar film portrays him as a traumatized figure, in the words of Ruth Leys, "unable to recollect and integrate the hurtful experience in normal consciousness" (2). Instead, the murder of his family has frozen Marlin in time as the memories of the event continue to shape his behavior in the present. In this sense, Marlin exemplifies the notion of trauma as "a disorder of memory" ensuing from "emotions of terror and surprise caused by a certain event," in which the mind "is unable to register the wound to the psyche because the ordinary mechanisms of awareness and cognition are destroyed" (2). It is when a scuba diver captures Nemo that Marlin decides to conquer his anxieties and venture into the ocean, beyond his coral home, to find his son. As he meets numerous benevolent and supportive sea animals on his journey, Marlin eventually comes to appreciate the necessity to listen to and work with others and eventually changes from an angst-ridden into an assured, poised, even humorous father. In this sense, *Finding Nemo* offers a narrative of healing trauma through communal, transspecies cooperation.[4]

At the same time, this trauma narrative of closure or healing also includes a variety of characters who do not mend their emotional or psychological wounds.[5] In its emphasis on learning to live *with* their impulses, the narrative of neurosis in *Finding Nemo* deviates from early trauma schemas. For example, the surgeonfish Dory lives with a severe condition of short-term memory loss as she cannot remember any immediate information. As her amnesia allows Dory to be-

4 With its narrative about an unprovoked assault on the home(land), the killing of the innocent, and the psychological pain the father endures, *Finding Nemo* animates a trauma script prevalent in post-September 11 narratives. By portraying the white suburban family as an innocent victim of a villainous assault for which the surviving but traumatized father Marlin eventually finds closure, *Finding Nemo* participates in what Breithaupt labeled the "fabrication and ritualization of 'trauma' in September 11" (67). However, as Marlin also befriends a variety of fish, birds, and mammals who help him find his son, the film suggests that neither fear nor anxiety should guide Marlin in his approach to life after the shocking event.

5 *Finding Nemo* also introduces characters with physical disability. The young clownfish Nemo is born with one very small fin and the Moorish Idol Gill possess one several injured fin. The film portrays both as courageous, persevering, and witty in their attempt to escape human captivity.

friend even the most threatening sea creatures,[6] she becomes essential for Marlin in finding Nemo. As she embraces threatening sharks or gigantic whales with an open mind, for Jack Halberstam in *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011), Dori embodies "a new version of selfhood" (80) founded on transspecies trust and cooperation. Similarly, the three sharks Bruce, Anchor, and Chum desire to adhere to a vegetarian diet. Yet, their exuberant grinning as well as the extensive display of their teeth indicates the psychological tensions and aggression underneath their excessively cordial behavior. On the other hand, the young clownfish Nemo encounters a variety of compassionate and urbane fish after his abduction from the coral reef brings him to the aquarium of a dentist in Sidney. In their highly technologized environment, the fish tank inhabitants developed an obsession with their mirror image, a preoccupation with bubbly water, or an intense fear of germs. Since all characters with neurosis have learned to live with their impulses and manage their daily life with some ease, the animation of neurosis in *Finding Nemo* appears to challenge narratives of normalcy. However, even as the (involuntary) expressions of their neurosis renders these characters often charming, amiable, and complex, *Finding Nemo* also uses their non-conforming behavior for cheap laughter. Dory's short-term amnesia furthermore leaves her vulnerable to the manipulation by others who coerce her into life threatening situations. As characters with neurosis remain vulnerable to abuse and suffering or function as targets of ridicule and violence, their animation asks us to explore the notion of normalcy informing the portrayal of neurosis – particularly in contrast to the depiction of the innocent father mastering the trauma of an exceptional assault.

Seen in this light, we understand neither trauma nor neurosis in this volume as primarily medical or psychoanalytical concepts. This introduction and the following contributions address neurosis as an analytical category that builds on, but eventually moves away from the premises of trauma studies. Following the adaptation of trauma theory for cultural and literary study, this book aims to disentangle neurosis from its medical, psychoanalytical, and psychiatric context and entangle it in debates about culture and literature. Since neurosis in its psychoan-

6 Since for Freud, a person with neurosis may turn from its "exciting cause" and "consign […] it to amnesia" ("The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis" 4095), Dory's chronic forgetfulness may similarly exemplify her attempt to manage neurosis. The sequel *Finding Dory* (2016) sheds further light on the history of Dory's forgetfulness showing that she experienced short-term memory loss from a very young age. The sequel, however, documents the neurotic behavior resulting from the memory loss and the emotional toll exerted on Dory in even greater detail. Finding closure for (the origins of) her neurotic behavior becomes the main narrative device of the plot.

alytical or even Freudian understanding has been substituted with a host of anxiety disorders anchored in biogenetic research and has virtually disappeared from medical discourse, this volume aims to re-visit neurosis as a cultural rather than a medical concept. Since the 1970s, neurosis proved to be less and less useful in psychological research as denominations that are more specific supplanted a concept many considered too elusive for an exact medical diagnosis and unhelpful for therapeutic treatment. Particularly discoveries in neuroscience and an increasing knowledge of genetic processes contributed to the demise of neurosis in psychological, medical, and eventually popular discourse (see Carey). However, this volume posits that what has been considered too elusive in the fields of medicine and psychology may have not ceased to matter in textual analyses.

In cultural and literary studies, texts and images hardly ever lend themselves to neuroscientific or genetic analyses. Even an exact or detailed medical diagnosis of anxiety disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder or obsessive-compulsive behavior may often be impossible when analyzing fictional texts. Fiction, in fact, shows very little concern for diagnostic exactness, as mental disorders are routinely romanticized or vilified, bent to suit aesthetic and narrative choices. Questions about a character's mental well-being or the portrayal and function of anxiety disorders in a text, nonetheless, continue to offer analytical paths to understanding literary and cultural texts. Debates about what qualifies as mental well-being, furthermore, question and highlight the social constructedness of the narratives of normalcy embedded in psychological discourses. As the close reading of *Finding Nemo* and the contributions to this volume demonstrate, the elusiveness of neurosis allows analyzing the portrayal of psychological conditions and notions of mental well-being beyond medical diagnoses.

Moving beyond (exclusively) psychoanalytical notions of neurosis in *Human Experience: Philosophy, Neurosis, and the Elements of Everyday Life* (2003), John Russon grounds neurosis in a (Western European) philosophy of embodiment, temporality, and intersubjectivity (see 1-2). The experiences, the expectations, and the tensions of everyday life, Russon asserts, contribute to the formation of neurosis as an expression of moments "when some sector of a person's life cannot function compatibly with the demands of intersubjective life […] in other sectors of that person's life" (81). This incompatibility finds its expression in everyday practices of walking, sleeping, eating, remembering, toileting, and sex – or telling a joke, we could add, thinking of Marlin – so much so that neurosis prohibits the individual from participating in "patterns of behavior that stand at odds with the patterns one would otherwise choose" and are generally considered "normal" (85). This assumption about what a culture deems normal is eventually at the heart of his re-interpretation of neurosis as a cultural and social phe-

nomenon. For Russon, "the very existence of neurosis gives the lie to the narrative of the normal self" (85) because the latter presupposes a rational subject able to function entirely in compliance with cultural expectations, and without questioning the validity of social norms. Seen in this light, neurosis speaks to the tension between the individual (corporeal and emotional) experience of daily life and the pressures to conform. Rather than manifesting an illness that necessitates medical or psychological care, then, expressions of neurosis ask us to question the narratives of normalcy that function to brand patterns, behaviors, and individuals as neurotic (see 91).

Against the foil of trauma as an exceptional event and the notion of restoring an ideal status quo, this introduction sets out to address two apparently contradictory aspects of neurosis. In the first place, it aims to demonstrate the empowering potential of neurosis by looking at *Finding Nemo*. As various characters with neurosis help Marlin to overcome his trauma, *Finding Nemo* animates neurosis as a routine, even valiant form of daily life. Since the film marginalizes the vulnerability and the precarious life of its characters with neurosis and exploits their situation for cheap laughs, however, the introduction also aspires to highlight the ways in which *Finding Nemo* animates narratives of normalcy. The following passages provide a broad sketch of the historical development of neurosis from medical to psychological to cultural concept, exemplarily animated in *Finding Nemo*.

OF TOXIC VAPORS, AMERICANITIS, AND FAILED SUBLIMATIONS

In *Historical Origins of the Concept of Neurosis* (1983), Jose M. Lopez Pinero traces the contemporary use of neurosis back to the development of medical discourses and science at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The concept emerged "as an alternative to the Galenic doctrine that considered hysteria as caused by vapours that emanated from corrupt humours in the womb and hypochondria as resulting from vapours originating from 'atrabilis'" (4),[7] and functioned as a neologism for "nervous disease." While speculative medical science continued to shape notions of neurosis in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

7 Galen of Pergamon (129 AD – c. 200/c. 216) was a Greek physician. Meaning "black bile" in Latin, "atrabilis" was one of the four bodily humors that were believed to trigger different emotions: this one was responsible for melancholy or irritability (see *Merriam Webster,* "atrabilious").

century, Pinero locates a shift in the medical perception of neurosis in the advent of the Anatomoclinical School of Paris and its practice of anatomical lesion in the middle of the nineteenth century. The first neurological or pre-psychological notions of neurosis developed parallel to this physiological perspective. With his work on the psychogenetic origins of hysteria in the late nineteenth century, Jean-Martin Charcot eventually "started a new period in the history of neurosis" (x).

In his history of neurosis, Pinero not only chronicles its shift from a physiological to a proto-psychological phenomenon in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, but also suggests that neurosis never functioned as a purely medical concept. On the contrary, neurosis needs to be considered in its historical contexts as its meaning altered with cultural, legal, medical, political, or social changes. In the United States, for example, George Miller Beard popularized the idea of tired nerves as a consequence of modern, industrial life under the name neurasthenia. In the late nineteenth century, Andrea Tone explains in *The Age of Anxiety* (2009), the idiom functioned as "a catchall diagnosis for a range of nonpsychotic emotional problems that included worry, headache, fatigue, indigestion, muscle pain, inability to concentrate, and more" (8). Due to the absence of coherent medical diagnosis at the time, neurasthenia indicated a presumed fatigue and exhaustion of nerves. Its popular name "Americanitis," however, speaks to the narrow cultural context Beard and his followers ascribed to the diagnosis. Although similar diagnoses were popular in Germany, England, and Russia, they framed neurasthenia in an explicitly national context.[8] For Beard, the idea that nerve diseases plagued Americans in particular illustrated the cultural and technological superiority of the country since the United States was "an empire in which neurasthenia was not just a disease but a 'possession'" (Campbell 163). In this logic, (white) upper-class Americans were particularly vulnerable to nerve diseases because of their immediate exposure to the consequences of

8 In his essay "From Shock to Schreck: Psychiatrists, Telephone Operators and Traumatic Neurosis in Germany, 1900-26" (2003), Andreas Killen examines the emergence of "traumatic neurosis" in the early twentieth century within "the context of contemporaneous debates in Germany about work, social insurance, gender, and the accidents, shocks and afflictions of industrial society" (201). After its diagnosis in 1889 and its subsequent introduction to German insurance law, which entitled patients to financial compensation, "traumatic neurosis" developed into a widespread disease in the early twentieth century. With increasing financial expenses and monetary compensations particularly for female telephone operators, the German state eventually "legislated [the illness] out of existence in 1926" (201).

modernity from the steam engine, and the telegraph to innovations in science, media, and education. Neurasthenia, thus, played a fundamental role in the formation of American national identity in the nineteenth century: "Much more than a simple disease," Brad Campbell writes, "neurasthenia was a veritable force of Americanization" (164) as its diagnosis eventually linked modernity to (a particular form of) nerve disease and citizenship. Popular view considered neurasthenia "as the price Americans paid for their stunning success" (Tone 9). These notions continued to inform widespread understanding and medical scholarship even as the physiological approach of the nineteenth century yielded to psychoanalytical perspectives in the twentieth, and neurasthenia to neurosis (see Campbell 164, 168, 175).

In his early work, Sigmund Freud proposed to separate those disorders linked to the body and those he attributed to entirely psychological origins. In his essay "On the Grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description 'Anxiety Neurosis'" (1895), he distinguishes anxiety neurosis from neurasthenia as the latter originates in situations "when normal coiton, carried out in the most favourable conditions, is replaced by masturbation or spontaneous emission" while the former "is the product of all those factors which prevent the somatic sexual excitation from being worked over *psychically*" (109; emphasis added). This essay and his *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) both helped to establish modern notions of neurosis as distinctively detached from physical conditions for which "[r]est cures, diets, electric gadgets, and other somatic therapies would not help […] [since neurosis] was a disorder rooted in the workings of the mind" (Tone 16). Although Jean-Martin Charcot and Pierre Janet had already associated neurosis with "intrapsychic process," Freud popularized the notion of neurosis as a psychological disorder and "established psychoanalysis as a mainstream therapeutic approach" (16).

Particularly his distinction between neurosis and psychosis helped to dissipate widespread worries about psychological disorders and legitimize their treatment. Whereas psychosis referred to "schizophrenia (also called *dementia praecox*) and manic-depressive disorder" (18), neurosis illustrated for Freud "the everyday worries and character foibles that troubled his otherwise normal patients" (15). In contrast to the often delusional and hallucinating behavior observed in psychosis, neurosis produced a sense of emotional or psychological "turmoil" (18) but allowed for daily life otherwise. With his conception of neurosis as anxiety disorder and its therapeutic treatment, Freud shaped the field of psychology for decades to come. "Freud," Tone explains, "had his greatest impact in the United States, where psychoanalytic teachings (based on the work of Freud and his many disciples) became fashionable in the 1920s and 1930s and

became a staple of psychiatric medical training from the 1940s to the 1970s" (19). The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* from 1952 attests to the popularity of his views:

> The chief characteristic of these disorders is 'anxiety' which may be directly felt and expressed or which may be unconsciously and automatically controlled by the utilization of various psychological defense mechanisms […]. In contrast to those with psychoses, patients with psychoneurotic disorders do not exhibit gross distortion or falsification of external reality (delusions, hallucinations, illusions) and they do not present gross disorganization of the personality. Longitudinal (lifelong) studies of individuals with such disorders usually present evidence of periodic or constant maladjustment of varying degree from early life. Special stress may bring about acute symptomatic expression of such disorders. (*DSM* 31)

Not only did Freud shape psychological and medical discourse of the twentieth century, his vocabulary also transitioned into popular culture and became part of everyday language. Multitudes of 'neurotic' New Yorkers, for example, populate Woody Allen's films, each of them endowed with a colorful array of phobias and obsessions. The figure of the urban neurotic, mostly played by Allen himself, contributed to the self-fashioning of a recognizable persona and to the constitution of a Woody Allen character type. Allen's oeuvre, or at least his Manhattan stories, connect life in New York to the development of low-intensity, essentially comical forms of neurosis that never become impairing, neither for the subject nor for the characters that gravitate around him. In fact, Allen's Manhattan neurotics show the resilience of neurosis understood as a metropolitan disease. The aquarium inhabitants in *Finding Nemo* exhibit a similar urban habitus and reveal a rebellious spirit when the clownfish boy Nemo strands in their fish tank.

The aquarium inhabitants, Gill, Bloat, Peach, Gurgle, Bubbles, Deb, and Jacques, express a profound understanding of their technologized environment and human conduct (and engage in detailed considerations of dental procedures). Their knowledge allows them to anticipate and manipulate the dentist's behavior to help Nemo escape the fish tank. Their plan consists of tempering with the computerized laser scanner that monitors water temperature and pH level in the aquarium, and then polluting the water so that the dentist will be forced to place the fish outside of the aquarium and provide them with an opportunity for escape. While their strategy to sabotage the high-tech machinery and anticipate the dentist's behavior suggests deep knowledge of human culture, life in this technologically mediated space has left its marks on the animals in the form of irre-

pressible ticks, impulses, and obsessions: Deb obsesses over her mirror image, Bubbles stares mesmerized into bubbly water, and Gurgle panics at the slightest mention of germs.

In a nod to Freudian notions of psychoanalysis and to early notions of neurosis as the price to pay for modernity, *Finding Nemo* links neurosis to life in a highly technologized, yet alienating environment. While neurosis develops out of "a conflict between the ego and its id" (Freud, "Neurosis and Psychosis" 4065), particularly the ability to sublimate biological drives designates what Freud sees as "civilized people" ("A Short Account of Psycho-Analysis" 4110).[9] With its fast-talking, anxiety-ridden characters living in a Sidney aquarium, *Finding Nemo* animates this culture in the urban or metropolitan tradition of Woody Allen. As "the capacity for sublimating is limited, and as the intensive suppression of primitive drives without sublimation may lead to neurosis," the urban context of the aquarium speaks particularly to Freud's (and Allen's) notion that "the growth of civilization must inevitably imply a growth of neurosis" (Horney 229). By using animals born and raised in captivity, *Finding Nemo* exemplifies the Freudian notion of neurosis as "the price humanity has to pay for cultural development" (229) and as intimately linked to urban life and "civilization."[10]

Although the film animates its anxious aquarium inhabitants as good-hearted characters and illustrates its psychoanalytical references in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, the portrayal of neurosis also possesses a troublesome undertone. After all, the aquarium inhabitants spend their entire life confined to a fish tank. Furthermore, the fish live in constant fear of becoming a present to the dentist's niece who treats her pets crudely and violently. When the young girl ferociously shakes the plastic bag with a goldfish she received from her uncle and thereby (unintentionally) kills the fish in her excitement, we can wonder as to whether neurosis is merely a consequence of life in a highly technologized environment. While the niece episode functions as an (eco-critical) example of how *Finding Nemo* "casts humans as careless and crude, unable to share space and resources" (Halberstam 80), the death of the goldfish also illustrates the social structure governing the fate of the aquarium inhabitants. Their anxiety does not merely

9 With biological drives, Freud mostly refers to sexual drives. Unsurprisingly, there is hardly any trace of those in *Finding Nemo*. Among the most prominent biological drives that undergo repression in the film, one finds the sharks' natural desire to feed on meat.

10 The fact that *Finding Nemo* uses animal characters to illustrate this Freudian idea further emphasizes its biologistic logic.

arise from an 'unnatural' space but from the continuous threat of death, as neither the dentist nor his niece seem to be entirely concerned with the fish's well-being. Although cheerful in tone, *Finding Nemo* animates the fish as vulnerable to human carelessness. Life in the captivity of an aquarium and the constant danger of violence speak to the social and historical contexts shaping anxiety disorders.

In highlighting the social contingencies shaping the formation of neurosis, Karen Horney questioned the Freudian concept of neurosis as ahistorical in the 1930s. Since "neurosis is due not simply to the quantity of suppression of one or the other instinctual drives, but rather to difficulties caused by the conflicting character of the demands which a culture imposes on its individuals" (230), Horney advocates a socio-cultural approach to neurosis. In her view, what one culture deems neurotic may be completely normal in another: scholars in the 1930s and 1940s often refer to Nazi Germany to assert the cultural and social volatility of neurosis. As George Devereux explains: "No one will deny that a person who, in the current sense of the word, is well adjusted in Nazi Germany is and must be a neurotic, because the Nazi socialcultural environment is an extremely clearcut example of a social neurosis, if not psychosis" (849). Following Horney's and Devereux's argument, anyone who proves able to manage or adjust to the competing demands of a particular culture "shares in the neurosis of his society, although he may not present any additional neurotic symptoms of his own" (Devereux 849). With their interventions, Horney and Devereux advanced and enhanced the Freudian model of neurosis with reference to the social and cultural spheres; through the animation of a trio of vegetarian sharks living in a derelict military submarine, *Finding Nemo* also illustrates an understanding of neurosis as socially contingent. The portrayal of the sharks as decidedly working-class characters further illuminates the ways in which neurosis functions as a form of social structuring.

With their pledge "I am a nice shark, not a mindless eating machine. If I am to change this image, I must first change myself. Fish are friends, not food" (*Finding Nemo*), the three sharks Bruce, Anchor, and Chum aspire to embrace a vegetarian diet. The sharks desire to adjust to the norms of fish society as they hold regular meetings to count the days they have spent without eating fish and renew their support for the vegetarian cause. Because of their frightening appearance and their exuberant grinning, which exhibits endless rows of sharp teeth, however, the sharks' friendliness possesses a pathological quality. Underneath their pleasant demeanor lurk their barely sublimated, biological drives – the skeletons and bones of former "friends" scattered in their submarine home suggest the inadvertent violation of the "friends not food" statute. In Freudian

terms, this tension between the sharks' id and the fish society's superego explains their neurotic cordiality. Moreover, when Bruce inhales a drop of blood, his aspiration to adhere to social conventions cannot suppress his drive any longer and the shark goes on a violent rampage in his attempt to eat the horrified Marlin.

Finding Nemo, however, animates the violent hunting scene in a tongue-in-cheek fashion as the sharks resort to psychoanalytical jargon to elicit sympathy for Bruce's behavior. Bruce "really doesn't mean it," they apologetically exclaim, "[h]e never even knew his father" (*Finding Nemo*). The dialogue conveys the humorous tone of the scenes, yet also speaks to the reflexivity of the cinematic text, its psychological premises, and, indeed, to the idea that "[i]n a given culture, those persons are likely to become neurotic who have met these culturally determined difficulties in accentuated form, mostly through the medium of childhood experiences; and who have not been able to solve their difficulties, or have solved them only at great expense to personality" (Horney 230). With its vegetarian sharks, the film animates a culturally contingent notion of neurosis yet also exhibits the ways in which neurosis inscribes and structures social norms.

As their voice acting may already announce, *Finding Nemo* animates Bruce, Anchor, and Chum as decidedly working-class characters whose inability to sublimate their biological drives speaks to the normative portrayal of class in the film. The large and muscular bodies of the sharks along with the physical violence the bulky Bruce exacts as he tears through thick metal doors appropriates stereotypical notions of male working-class characters popular since the 1970s. The trope of the muscular blue-collar body with its "touch of violence, glimpses of brawn, an[d] aura of primitivism" (Biskind and Ehrenreich 214) still aptly describes the sharks.

Even as Hollywood may continue to romanticize the male working-class hero from time to time, the sharks' home in *Finding Nemo* emphasizes their marginal position. Constantly on the brink of giving in to their carnivorous instincts, the sharks reside in a scrapped military submarine located in the middle of a minefield at the periphery of fish society. When his previously sublimated drives erupt, the large, muscular Bruce regresses into an animalistic state, tears metal apart and bursts doors open, and is only brought to his senses after realizing that his violent frenzy led to the detonation of the entire mine field. The dark, gloomy, and menacing-looking mine field as well as the military submarine at its heart foreshadow the eruption of violence, yet, as mechanical devices responsive to physical contact, the hulking machinery of iron and steel also mirrors the physicality of its inhabitants. The deep-sea equivalent of a junkyard comes to

symbolize the sharks' psychological state as a volatile equilibrium permanently on the verge of explosion. Bruce's inability to sublimate his biological drives leads to a relapse into an animalistic state of uncontrollable, corporeal violence and thereby illustrates the destructive dimension of neurosis. The disastrous implications of the failed sublimation – the sharks' "violence," "brawn," and "primitivism" – exemplify the working-class clichés and stereotypes informing (not only) *Finding Nemo*.

The grime depiction of the minefield yard and the corporeal illustration of its inhabitants introduce violent counterparts to the urban aquarium inhabitants in their sanitized and technologized environment, with their in-depth debates about dental surgery, and their non-violent forms of neurosis. The illustration of space, the animation of bodies, the dialogues, and the voice acting in *Finding Nemo* portray the sharks as blue-collar figures unable to sublimate their biological drives while the aquarium inhabitants stand in for the urban experiences in a technologized world. Particularly the animated sharks illustrate the inherent carnal brutality of (Freudian) neurosis lurking underneath a thin layer of social order: irrespective of his aspirations to treat "fish as friends," and the psychological tongue-in-cheek explanation for his behavior, the working-class Bruce transforms into a menacing, instinct-driven animal. *Finding Nemo*, thus, uses working-class stereotypes to remind audiences of the instinctual and beastly nature of its blue-collar characters. Eventually, the minefield and the aquarium function as transitional spaces for Marlin and Nemo since the family returns to their suburban anemone and happily concludes its adventure at home.

As a story about male traumatization, *Finding Nemo* animates its narrative of healing as a journey to different sea-communities, all of which are home to diverse casts of figures with anxiety disorders. Despite its moments of othering, the film also breaks out of normative narrative patterns. For one, *Finding Nemo* does not end in a happy, heterosexual romance with a re-united nuclear family. Instead, the concluding shots celebrate a diverse fish community of assured single parents, vegetarian sharks, and fish with disabilities living happily ever after. Jack Halberstam reads this ending as a progressive moment since "the father-son dynamic is dependent upon the queer 'helper' fish, Dory, and can never simply resolve into a patriarchal bond" (79). Due to her short-term memory loss and ensuing neurosis, Dory, voiced by entertainer and LGBTQ activist Ellen DeGeneres, dis-orders the ideal of the heterosexual, nuclear family model, because the surgeonfish embodies "a queer version [of selfhood] that depends upon disconnection from the family and contingent relations to friends and improvised relations to community" (80). In undoing a community organized by paternal structures, as Halberstam suggests, Dory (and to a lesser extent the sharks) ex-

poses the norms informing the discourse of neurosis in the Pixar film, an endeavor that Frantz Fanon had undertaken in the field of psychology at the height of Freudian theory in the mid-twentieth century.

THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF NEUROSIS

Writing in the 1950s, Frantz Fanon uses psychoanalysis in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) to illuminate the psychological consequences of Western imperialism in the Antilles and the Antillean experience. He questions the narrow assumptions of what qualifies as 'stable' or even 'normal' in Freudian thinking. For Fanon, the psychoanalytical assumption of a semblance between childhood, family, and society (or, indeed, nation) is a quintessential Western notion: "In Europe and in every country characterized as civilized or civilizing, the family is a miniature of the nation" (109). For Black families, however, this connection does not hold true since "[a] normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world" (111).[11] As a result, psychoanalytical frameworks automatically qualify Black experiences as deviant and eventually neurotic. Whereas for Horney, Devereux and others, Nazi Germany illustrated the ways in which neuroses may not necessarily signal mental or psychological illness but questionable social norms, in Fanon's post-colonial writing the West becomes the neurosis-producing point of reference; not only within national borders but as a global, transnational phenomenon.[12]

11 As the white family structures the French nation (and vice versa), Black French people are torn between their individual families and the desire to be part of the nation. Fanon explains: "[T]he Antillean family has for all practical purposes no connection with the national – that is, the French, or European – structure. The Antillean has therefore to choose between his family and European society; in other words, the individual who *climbs up* into society – white and civilized – tends to reject his family – black and savage – on the plane of imagination, in accord with the childhood *Erlebnisse*" (115; emphases in the original). Rather than having to choose to "*turn white or disappear*," Fanon announces that "my objective […] will be to put him [the Black man] in a position to *choose* action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict – that is, toward the social structures" (75; emphases in the original).

12 In *Crazy like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche* (2010) Ethan Watters continues this line of reasoning by looking at the emergence and transformation of different mental illnesses in various cultures around the globe. Watters observes a "flat-

For Fanon, Freudian notions of sublimation, neurosis, pathology, and trauma only begin to offer an understanding of Black experiences in a world shaped by white people. When people of color "come into contact with the white world," this first encounter or *Erlebnis* fosters an "inferiority complex" as they live in a society that "proclaims the superiority of one race" (74). Subsequently, the ubiquitous encounters with and internalization of deprecating notions of Blackness prevalent in white culture, then, "work their way into one's mind and shape one's view of the world of the group to which one belongs" (118), and eventually foster, in Fanon words, "neurosis […,] abnormal manifestation […,] affective erethism" (117). What Fanon describes as identification with white culture – and later thinkers would label *interpellation*[13] – leads to "the formation and crystallization of an attitude and a way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white" (114). This form of alienation fosters "an obsessive neurotic type" or positions people of color in "a complete situational neurosis" (42-43).

In contrast to the imperialist Western models of family, society, and individuality Fanon analyzes as particularly destructive for Black communities, exclusion in *Finding Nemo* stays within the framework of an entirely white culture. The absence of ethnic or racial diversity in a cinematic text set in the Southern hemisphere speaks exactly to the hegemony of whiteness Fanon aimed to dispel. Although *Finding Nemo* engages with some forms of neurosis, this inclusion eventually privileges white experiences. Tellingly, all characters are not "marked as anything other than white and Western (based on the voice-over dialects, our knowledge of the actors who perform those voices)" (Brydon 135). Although "the film features a virtual ocean menagerie of cooperative species" (Halberstam 79) and a diverse portrayal of anxiety disorders all of which suggests an inclu-

tening [of] the landscape of the human psyche" (1) in the past thirty years as American notions of mental illness and their treatment came to be considered global standards. As his research demonstrates, mental illnesses are culturally and temporally contingent, and their diversity and complexity is disappearing. While "[a] few mental illnesses identified and popularized in the United States – depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anorexia among them – now appear to be spreading across cultural boundaries and around the world with the speed of contagious diseases," Watters asserts, "[i]ndigenous forms of mental illness and healing are being bulldozed by disease categories and treatments made in the USA" (3).

13 With its examination of cultural norms perpetuated in "books, newspapers, schools and their texts, advertisements, films, radio" (118), *Black Skin, White Masks* draws attention to questions of representation as an essential feature of fostering Black neurosis.

sive narrative, Fanon reminds us that psycho-analytical phenomena (and their animation) adhere to logics of visibility and invisibility.[14] The heart-warming, tongue-in-cheek, or even uncanny portrayals of fish with neurosis in *Finding Nemo* all revolve around the experiences of white characters.

In demanding fundamental social change, Fanon aimed to disrupt the psychology of imperialism in which the internalization of racist stereotypes and a colonial gaze fosters the formation of an inferiority complex (see Sardar x). His psychoanalytical approach to culture and literature, furthermore, offered novel possibilities to interrogate the perpetuation of normative discourses with the help of Freudian vocabulary. Particularly the 1960s and 1970s emerged as a period in which film theorists from Jean-Louis Baudry to Christian Metz and Laura Mulvey utilized psychoanalytical insights and neo-Marxist political theory to develop an understanding of the viewing experience in the space of the cinema as prescribed by the male gaze (of Hollywood productions) and the technical apparatus of screening film (in the cinema). Although *Black Skin, White Masks* anticipated many ideas prominent in apparatus theory, from examinations of the gaze to questions of alienation, internalization, and inferiority, the psycho-analytical thinking of Jacques Lacan with its exploration of the mirror stage and its focus on misrecognition primarily informed cinematic theory in that period.

In their attempt to demonstrate the totality of the capitalist system and the male gaze, film scholars of the 1960s and 1970s may have looked for stronger clinical taxonomies than anxiety disorders, "obsessive neurosis," or "situational neurosis" could offer. Even as the adaptation of Lacan's work further introduced neurosis to literary and cultural studies, the concept slowly began to lose its analytical and intellectual pertinence. As literary and cultural studies increasingly moved to interest in aesthetic frameworks, phenomenological thinking, or reception theory among others,[15] scholars increasingly considered psychoanalytical approaches reductive in their conceptualization of agency, culture, individualism, and broader economic, political, and social systems. This shift followed a wider transformation in the field of psychology in which practitioners and scholars increasingly considered Freudian psychoanalysis in general and his notion of

14 For a detailed discussion of race and psychoanalysis, see, for example, Christopher Lane *The Psychoanalysis of Race* (1998).

15 See, for example, Dick Hebdidge *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), Stuart Hall "Encoding / Decoding" (1980), Miriam Hansen *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (1991), Steven Shaviro *The Cinematic Body* (1993), or Jackie Stacey "Feminine Fascinations: A Question of Identification?" (1994).

neurosis in particular to be inapt and outdated in light of the shift to genetic and neurological research.

"WHERE HAVE ALL THE NEUROTICS GONE" AND WILL THEY BE BACK?

Beyond literary and cultural studies, ideas about anxiety disorders as well as psychology transformed fundamentally in the 1970s and 1980s. As the latter shifted to exploring the biological dimensions shaping mental and psychological conditions, the former lost their analytical and medical value (see Tone 18). Indeed, much of the Freudian vocabulary and the notion of neurosis in particular came to be seen as increasingly vague and old-fashioned; after all, neurosis was deemed ill-suited to properly differentiate between various disorders whether these derived from, for example, social anxiety or obsessive-compulsive behavior. In 1994, the *DSM* dropped neurosis from its medical vocabulary.

Today, a detailed catalogue of anxiety disorders has not only supplanted the notion of neurosis in medical discourse but its study has shifted from a psychological perspective to neuroscience and genetic analysis, and its treatment from talk therapy and the analysis of the unconscious to the extensive use of prescription drugs. With the vanishing of Freudian ideas, neurosis has also lost its validity in psychology and its popular appeal. Some bemoan this disappearance as a loss of "the romance with neurosis" (Carey) when having a neurotic personality "meant being interesting" and signaled cultural or intellectual sophistication as illustrated in the works of Woody Allen or Alfred Hitchcock. While this "romance with neurosis" minimizes the psychological suffering and social exclusion intimately linked with neurosis, its elusiveness may offer a path for a productive retrieval.

In literary and cultural studies, we would be hard-pressed to adapt most of the current medical and genetic insights in psychology for textual interpretations. Few texts allow for a neuroscientific diagnosis or the study of a character's genetic history to interpret their anxiety. We can appropriate panic disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, or obsessive-compulsive behavior for close-readings and literary analyses. However, while the medical vocabulary offers novel reading opportunities, its evocation of contemporary psychological discourse may not allow for an exact diagnosis at all times. Whether obsessive-compulsive behavior, for example, aptly describes the sharks in *Finding Nemo* or whether post-traumatic stress disorder applies to the aquarium inhabitants is hard to assess with the little information viewers receive. In describing these fish as wrestling

with neurosis, however, we can appropriate an elusive vocabulary to situate their behavior in the context of anxiety disorder. While a precise medical vocabulary functions to diagnose the everyday experiences of mental conditions, neurosis can be productively employed to address their various fictional reconfigurations and spectacularizations, which can be found in films, media, TV shows, novels, news coverage, and other texts.

This appropriation offers the possibility to separate neurosis from its psychoanalytical history and entangle it in debates about its cultural implications and meanings. To put this differently: in using a medically elusive concept, we aim to shift attention away from the psychoanalytical context of neurosis to concentrate on its portrayal and function in a text**.** In doing so, we do not aspire to rehearse Freudian notions of psychoanalysis for understanding either neurosis or culture. Instead, we propose a conceptualization of neurosis as a form of embodiment, intersubjectivity, and temporality.

NEUROSIS AND NARRATIVES OF NORMALCY

In *Finding Nemo*, characters with neurosis challenge narratives of normalcy and indicate the possibility for an inclusive community. In contrast to the preoccupation with closure in trauma narratives, Dory, for example, finds a home in the coral reef community without having to master or transcend her short-term memory loss. Whereas the search for Nemo restores a sense of (masculine) wholeness in Marlin, Dory manifests a "queerness" – to borrow from Jack Halberstam – that seemingly subverts the narrative of male empowerment. The blue surgeonfish "ends up 'knowing' all kinds of things that go against received wisdom but that facilitate Marlin's quest to find his son. So while Dory suffers from short-term memory loss, she also reads human texts, speaks whale, charms sharks, and understands the primacy of friends over family" (79-80), as Halberstam explains. Many of Dory's feats, however, do not merely stem from her knowledge of aquatic life. Instead, as she constantly misreads the awkwardness or even danger of a particular situation, she is able to engage with the most fearsome sea animals: the surgeonfish's forgetfulness allows her to plunge blissfully into conversation with menacing sharks and colossal whales unbiased. Her amnesia-induced open-mindedness enables her to find friends in the most unexpected situations and thereby make the search for Nemo possible.

Her knowledge and competence in combination with her short-term memory loss question the narrative of normalcy and the patriarchal family model Marlin's trauma experience symbolize. With her inclusion in the coral reef commu-

nity at the end of the film, suburban paradigms of normality come into flux as boundaries of inside and outside, wisdom and ignorance, competence and helplessness begin to dissolve. In disrupting a community organized by patriarchal structures, Dory initiates the formation of an inclusive underwater society. As a consequence, *Finding Nemo* animates neurosis not as a detriment to personal or communal fulfillment but as a contingent experience – and thereby animates neurosis "as a socially constructed category that derives meaning and social (in)significance from the historical, cultural, political, and economic structures that frame social life" (Erevelles and Minear 132). Rather than an individual or social liability, neurosis functions as a source of agency and knowledge beyond suburban spaces and experiences.

Nevertheless, even as Dory possesses autonomy and agency, *Finding Nemo* also animates her amnesia as a source of vulnerability, consigns her to a liminal social space, and weakens her subversive potential. When Dory, for example, tries to convince Marlin that travelling through a seemingly haunting underwater ravine is completely safe, anxious Marlin exploits her forgetfulness and distracts her long enough for her to have no memory of what her initial plan was. Ignoring her warnings, Marlin steers Dory into a swarm of jellyfish eventually poisoning and nearly killing her. Although Dory warned Marlin of the dangers a detour poses, his conscious decision to manipulate her speaks to the vulnerability of her condition. In addition, *Finding Nemo* infantilizes Dory as the film often shows her to be closer to children than adult characters: she blissfully plays hide-and-seek with little ocean turtles and spends her time in the coral reef kindergarten at the end of the film. As Dory, furthermore, contributes decisively to restoring Marlin as the head of the family, her function in the narrative dilutes the subversive potential of her queerness: only because of Dory and her neurosis is Marlin able to physically and emotionally endure the journey, is the father figure eventually re-masculinized, and is a functional patriarchal order restored. Whether we disqualify these gestures as instances in animation in which "the politics of rebellion can be cast as immature, pre-Oedipal, childish, foolish, fantastical, and rooted in a commitment to failure" or read *Finding Nemo* as a "real and compelling possibility of animating revolt" (Halberstam 52) continues to be a broader debate.[16] For our purposes, however, the Pixar film animates neurosis not as a

16 In contrast to the queer reading Halberstam proposes, David Prescott-Steed sees a perpetuation of "the dominant voice of heteronormativity" at work in *Finding Nemo* since the animation omits important "marine-biological information" about clownfish and thereby "obscures a range of gender-minority voices, particularly those pertaining to gender-ambiguous subjectivities" (34). Prescott-Steed especially highlights "the ab-

wound that necessitates closure or an illness that requires curing, but as a quintessential feature of daily life Dory and the coral reef community learn to cope with. Eventually, Dory exemplifies the potential neurosis holds in shaping a diverse and inclusive community.

At the end of *Finding Nemo*, the suburban community welcomes Dory in a gesture of care that is, to appropriate David Russon's formulation, "responsive to the troubles and tensions that animate th[e] neurotic posture" (121). As neither Marlin nor Dory can thrive in the isolation of an anemone or in aimlessly wandering the sea, their care for each other allows for a happy conclusion. Dependent on and responsible for each other, the clown fish and the surgeonfish exhibit a communal sense of life, and animate the notion that "singular existence is never won in isolation but is, rather, won only through participation and absorption in our surroundings" (90). *Finding Nemo*, hence, oscillates between an ethics of care and inclusiveness and the portrayal of its ideal community as white and suburban.

When Bruce, Anchor, and Chum pay a cheerful visit to the suburban reef community at the end of *Finding Nemo*, their appearance not only emphasizes the film's narrative of normalcy but also tests the boundaries of care; regardless of their friendly and sociable appearance, the sharks pose an ever-present menace. Although well meaning, the trio continues to be intimidating as their neurotic facial expressions hint at their failure to sublimate their brutal drives. Their visit, therefore, instills fear in some coral reef inhabitants – most prominently in a kraken who accidentally spills his ink – and functions as a reminder of the violence lurking underneath social pleasantries. Their appearance also evokes an earlier, life-threatening violence Dory and Marlin barely survived. In contrast to Dory and her integration into the coral reef community, Bruce, Anchor, and Chum continue to pose an eerie threat to its sense of order, shelter, and care. Indeed, the fish community can only extend its care to the sharks as long as their drives do not erupt violently and turn play into carnage. The rupture of barely sublimated violence speaks to the threat and destructive potential of neurosis.[17]

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sence in *Finding Nemo* of any mention of the fact that, being a clownfish, Nemo is a sequential hermaphrodite" (34).

17 *Finding Nemo*, however, does not end with Marlin and Nemo, with Dory and the fish kindergarten, or even with Bruce, Anchor, and Chum hovering about. Instead, the film concludes with shots of the aquarium inhabitants and their attempt to escape. After Gill and his friends manipulate the computerized monitoring system of the fish tank and pollute the water, the dentist places the animals in plastic bags while cleaning the aquarium. The fish launch their elastic entrapments through an open window, survive

As the meaning of neurosis slowly transformed from designating a failed suppression of biological drives to indicating the culturally contingent norms of a society, its taxonomy as an illness also changed. This is not to dispute the psychological and medical treatment people with anxiety disorders require; expressed in narratives and through fictional characters, however, neurosis allows seeing the subversive potential these often liminal figures possess. Particularly in contrast to notions of wholeness and restoration, narratives of neurosis offer glimpses into everyday modes of coping, caring, and accepting. While narrating the neurotic allows us to expose, question, and possibly transform narratives of normalcy, hostile forms of neurosis can also test an ethics of care.

The chapters in this volume address diverse manifestations of the poetics of neurosis across countries and disciplines, with special emphasis on the entanglements between the figure of the neurotic and the specifics of their place and time. In his contribution "The Lure of Space: Psychasthenia as Mnemonic Device in Michael Cunningham's *Specimen Days*," László Munteán introduces psychasthenia not only as a form of neurosis but also as a literary mode of mimicry. Rather than an imitation, Munteán follows Roger Caillois in conceptualizing psychasthenia as a form of assimilation to the environment and subsequent depersonalization. This assimilation is particularly visible in the opening novella of *Specimen Days* (2005), "In the Machine," in which its main character, Lucas, articulates his feelings and makes sense of his surroundings by quoting compulsively from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Although set in the late nineteenth century, Lucas's obsessive recital furthermore invokes mediated images of the attacks on September 11, particularly falling bodies, at the end of the novella. As a literary trope, then, psychasthenia functions as a mnemonic device to summon the traumatic memories of 9/11 without explicitly citing the event.

Elena Furlanetto's "Disintegrated Selves: Dissociative Disorders and Colonial Anxiety in Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*" illuminates the intersections of the colonial and the neurotic in Pamuk's 1990 novel, laying particular emphasis

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the crossing of a nearby street, and drop into the ocean. Filled with pride and joy, the fish quickly realize that they are bound to remain trapped as the plastic bags float neatly on the ocean preventing the fish from swimming away. Although the upbeat musical score frames the scene as a comical conclusion to the film, these characters will stay trapped in a technologized space without the possibility to escape. In its last shots, *Finding Nemo* animates a perspective about neurosis informed neither by an ethics of care nor by the threat of barely sublimated violence. Instead, the escape from the aquarium ends for the urbanites with neurosis in a (technological) limbo of plastic bags floating on the ocean.

on characters who suffer from amnesia, multiple personalities, and depersonalization – which the author of the chapter groups under the umbrella term of "dissociative disorders." Furlanetto shows how, within the economy of the *The Black Book*, these manifestations of psychological discomfort vehicle a critique of Westernization and address the controversial issue of Western cultural imperialism in Turkey. Additionally, Furlanetto indicates that this kind of disorders are poignant metaphors of the colonial condition, as they disturb the individual's sense of self and continuity with the past: the same principles that colonial domination seeks to undo at a collective level.

In "Reading Rap with Fanon and Fanon with Rap: The Potential of Transcultural Recognition," Jarula M. I. Wegner brings the work of Frantz Fanon in conversation with rap music. In particular, the chapter examines the inhibiting consequences of the past expressed in the form of colonial neurosis Fanon theorizes in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Similar to the colonial experiences Fanon draws from to challenge Western presumptions about the Antillean experience, the song "Street Corner" (2006) by Masta Killa (feat. GZA and Inspectah Deck) portrays "the hood" or "the ghetto" as a neurosis-inducing space. However, whereas Fanon urges to transform the future by re-inventing the past, the treatment of neurosis demands extensive engagement with the past – an appreciation of memory "Street Corner" vocalizes when drawing on the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Eventually, in reading rap music with Fanon Wegner demonstrates the continued relevance of colonial neurosis in contemporary popular culture, yet reading Fanon through rap music also indicates the ways in which the demand for re-invention of the past translates into the (continued) facilitation of counter-memories.

In "Neoliberalism, Terror, and the Etiology of Neurotic Citizenship," Ariane de Waal examines the security discourse shaping the experience of public spaces in London. Whether police posters asking citizens to maintain vigilance, apartment advertisements highlighting the security apparatus of a building, or the proliferation of SUVs, de Waal sees in these practices a neurotic notion of citizenship at work. Rather than a paranoid suspicion of public or private surveillance practices, the compliant engagement of white, middle-class Londoners in counter-terrorism culture speaks to their obsessive investment in adopting and perfecting a plethora of security measures. In doing so, de Waal questions the notion of rationality attributed to counter-terrorism policies to highlight the (displacement of) anxiety inherent in their expansion and privatization.

Derya Gür-Şeker's contribution focalizes on a German right-wing movement born in Dresden in 2014, known as an alliance of "Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes" (patriotic Europeans against the Islamiza-

tion of the Occident), or "Pegida." Through her linguistic analysis in "Pegida as *Angstneurotiker*: A Linguistic Analysis of Concepts of Fear in Right-wing Populist Discourses in German Online Media," Gür-Şeker shows that Pegida's rhetoric is marked by frequent references to fear (*Angst*), so much so that an anonymous internet user perceived this insistence as neurotic and ironically 'diagnosed' Pegida members as *Angstneurotiker*. Examining the statements by and about Pegida in media articles, social media posts, and speeches by key public figures, Gür-Şeker shows that Pegida strategically mobilizes a vocabulary of fear to establish itself as a political actor.

In "Ain't It Funny? Danny Brown, Black Subjectivity, and the Performance of Neurosis," ethnomusicologist Alex Blue V presents a reading of the video and lyrics to Danny Brown's song "Ain't it Funny" (2016), exposing the objectification of African American suffering. In the music video, directed by Jonah Hill, "Uncle Danny" (played by Danny Brown himself) is the only black member of an all-white family, within which he lives a marginalized existence. The sarcasm embedded in the song title becomes ever more palpable as "Uncle Danny" emerges a tragic figure suffering from substance abuse, ignored by his own family, and laughed at by a fictional studio audience, composed solely of white people, who consume his body and pain as entertainment. Blue reads "Ain't it Funny" through the lens of neurosis, voyeurism, and the "doubleness" that marks the everyday experience of African Americans in the United States.

Angelo Monaco's "Neurosis as Resilience in Jhumpa Lahiri's Diasporic Short Fictions" examines the portrayal of Indian American characters in "Mrs. Sen's" from *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and "A Choice of Accommodation" from *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008). In the two short stories he sees a neurotic tension at work between the pressure to conform to social expectations and individual experiences of diaspora as the Indian American protagonists wrestle with (adjusting to) life in the United States. "Mrs. Sen" captures a nostalgic longing the protagonist expresses through her routinized preparation of Indian dishes. Monaco reads the metonymies that describe her repetition-compulsion as the continual presence of the past, which eventually figures as an expression of vulnerability. "A Choice of Accommodation" aligns melancholia, not nostalgia, with the pains of growing up in the United States for protagonist Amit Sarkar, while metaphor and prosopopoeia figure as the main literary tropes. Both short stories, however, also describe moments of resilience thereby drawing attention to an aesthetics of neurosis that resist socio-economic pressures.

In "Allegories of Pathology: Post-War Colonial Expatriate and Imperial Neurosis in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* and Derek Walcott's *Omeros*," Sneharika Roy examines the white experience of postcolonial expatriation in fic-

tion. In *Tender is the Night* (1934) as well as *Omeros* (1990), Roy sees the familiar postcolonial literary strategy of portraying personal experience as national allegory. Both texts furthermore describe their protagonist as neurotics wrestling with psychological wounds: Nicole Warren, the protagonist of Fitzgerald's novel, responds to symbolic and visual reminders of the violence she experienced at the hands of her incestuous father with erratic behavior; Major Plunkett, a character in Walcott's poem who lives in the former British colony (and now independent island-state) of Saint Lucia, obsessively searches for past British military glory in historical archives to compensate for the physical damages he suffered in World War I. Their neurotic responses to physical and psychological wounds not only capture the white expatriates' experience of spatial and temporal dislocation, but also prefigure the first albeit ambiguous steps towards the possibility of healing. Indeed, as Roy carefully indicates, a continued exposure to their suffering may enable the white expatriate figures to come to terms with their neurotic behavior.

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