

Responsible Creativity: Combining Clinical Report and Literary Writing in The Psychodynamic Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Though deeply embedded in psychoanalytic history, the case study has, until now, lacked theoretical conceptualization and consideration as a genre in its own right. I argue that the psychodynamic case study combines elements of medical reporting and literary writing to create a unique and sophisticated hybrid genre. It resembles other types of creative non-fiction, such as memoirs, historical novels, or biographies. In all these genres, the described reality does not claim to be identical to reality itself. Although analysts do not fabricate information, they use their imagination and writing skills to elicit their readers' identification with the therapeutic process. This storytelling approach allows for richer learning by capturing the essence and deep structure, leaving a more lasting impression than a dry report. However, clinicians don't have the creative freedom of memoir writers and biographers. Writing an engaging story is secondary to helping patients and broadening the community's knowledge. The blurring of boundaries between facts and creativity presents some pertinent questions: How much creative freedom can writers of case studies take? The paper introduces the term "responsible creativity" to suggest how two seemingly opposing qualities – creativity and facts – can coexist harmoniously within the genre of psychodynamic case studies.

Keywords: Psychodynamic case study, literary genre, psychoanalytic writing, clinical report, psychodynamic formulation