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## Literature and psychiatry

### Femi Oyeboode

Reading works of fiction and attending to the language, the dialogue, the mood is like listening to patients. In both activities, we enter into other worlds, grasp something about the inner life of characters whose motivations may be unlike our own. D. H. Lawrence referring to this aspect of the novel wrote: 'It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead. Therefore the novel, properly handled, can reveal the most secret places of life'. Is this not also, partly, the task of psychiatry?

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