

## PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO LITERATURE: FREUD

Пинчукова Татьяна Петровна

Могилевский государственный университет имени А.А. Кулешова  
(г. Могилев, Беларусь)

*Психологический подход к изучению литературы ассоциируется с психоаналитическими теориями З. Фрейда, основанными на изучении бессознательного в человеческой психике. Методология способствует глубокому исследованию человеческой природы, предлагает научно обоснованные интерпретации литературных произведений.*

**Ключевые слова:** психологический подход, психоаналитическая литературная критика, теория психоанализа, подсознательное.

*The psychological approach to literature is associated with psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud that explore the unconscious aspects of the human psyche. It provides deep insight into the human nature, offers not unsubstantiated interpretations of literary works.*

**Keywords:** psychological approach, psychological literary criticism, psychoanalytic theory, unconscious aspects.

The psychological approach to literature has been one of the most controversial of all the critical approaches. It is common knowledge that no single approach can exhaust the manifold interpretive possibilities of a literary work. Each approach has its own limitations. Though the psychological approach is an excellent tool for

reading beneath the lines, it can seldom account for the beautiful symmetry of a well-wrought poem or a fictional masterpiece.

During the twentieth century psychological criticism has come to be associated with psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud. The foundation of Freud's contribution to modern psychology is his emphasis on the unconscious aspects of the human psyche. He demonstrated that, like the iceberg, the human mind is structured so that its great weight and density lie below the level of consciousness.

One of the most instructive applications of Freudian literary criticism is the well-known essay "In Nomine Diaboli" by Henry A. Murray, a psychoanalyst and literary critic. In analyzing Herman Melville's masterpiece "Moby Dick" with the tools provided by Freud, Murray explains the White Whale as a symbolic embodiment of the strict conscience of New England Puritanism (that is, as a projection of Melville's own superego). Captain Ahab, the monomaniac who leads the crew of the ship to destruction through his insane compulsion to pursue and strike back at the creature who has injured him, is interpreted as the symbol of a rapacious and uncontrollable psyche. Starbuck, the sane Christian and first mate who struggles to mediate between the forces embodied in Moby Dick and Ahab, symbolizes a balanced and sensible rationalism.

One of the most widely known psychoanalytic studies of literature is Marie Bonaparte's "Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe". A pupil of Sigmund Freud, Bonaparte is one of those rare critics who have combined a thorough professional knowledge of psychoanalysis with a grasp of her literary subject. The main thesis of her book is that Poe's life and works are informed throughout by the Oedipal complex: hatred of father and psychopathic love of mother. The rejection of authority forms the core of Poe's critical writings: the mother fixation (the death wish or longing to return to the womb, manifested, for example, in his obsession with premature burial) is the matrix for Poe's poetry and fiction, in Marie Bonaparte's opinion.

Even his fatal weakness for drink is explained as a form of escape that enabled him to remain faithful to his dead mother, through a rigidly enforced chastity that was further ensured by alcoholic overindulgence. As Bonaparte writes, "since Poe was three, he was doomed by fate to live in constant mourning, because of his fixation on a dead mother" [1, p. 54].

Using such psychoanalytic theories as her foundation, Bonaparte proceeds to analyze Poe's works with a logical consistency. "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Tell-Tale Heart" are seen as tales of revenge against the father. "The Fall of the House of Usher", in the author's view, is a psychoanalytic model of the Oedipal guilt complex. Madeline Usher, the vault in which she is prematurely buried, and the house itself are all, according to Freudian symbology, mother images.

So, some psychoanalytic interpretations, handled by qualified critics, are not unsubstantiated. They are based upon psychological insights, often derived from and supported by actual case histories. They are difficult to refute. Furthermore, regardless of their factual validity, such theories have had a tremendous impact upon

modern writing in the works of such creative artists as James Joyce, Eugene O'Neil, Tennessee Williams, and Philip Roth.

But to see a great work of fiction only as a psychological case study is often to miss its wider significance and the essential aesthetic experience it should provide. A number of great works do not lend themselves readily to the psychoanalytic approach, and they cannot be studied exclusively from the psychological perspective.

Literary interpretation and psychoanalysis are two distinct fields, and they can in to sense be regarded as parts of one discipline. However, those readers, who reject psychoanalysis deprive themselves of a valuable tool in understanding not only literature, but human nature as a whole and their individual selves as well.

### **Литература**

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