<div align="center">**Lecture 2: Psychoanalytic Theory**</div>

Learning Goals and Objectives:

- Introduce students to terminology related to psychology

- Reading and analyzing a literary text relying on psychology

- Develop in students a working knowledge of the nature of psychology

- Students learn to examine and evaluate literature and literary themes through a lens facilitated by their understanding of human development, human personality

Introduction

Psychoanalytic criticism is a type of literary criticism that employs some psychoanalytic techniques to interpret literature. Psychoanalysis is a type of therapy that tries to treat mental illnesses "by looking into the interaction of conscious and unconscious aspects in the mind" (as the Concise Oxford Dictionary puts it). The traditional approach is to encourage the patient to speak freely so that the suppressed anxieties and conflicts that are creating the issues can be brought into the conscious mind and publicly confronted, rather than remaining "buried" in the unconscious.

This lecture will demonstrate that psychoanalytically viewing the world can be simple without being simplistic. We can begin to see the ways in which these concepts operate in our daily lives in profound rather than superficial ways if we take the time to understand some key concepts about human experience offered by psychoanalysis, and we can begin to understand human behaviors that may have seemed utterly baffling until now. And, of course, if psychoanalysis can assist us in better understanding human behavior, it must also be able to assist us in comprehending literary pieces that deal with human conduct. The foundations of psychoanalysis created by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), whose theory of the psyche is frequently referred to today as classical psychoanalysis, are the basis for the concepts we'll explore here. It's important to remember that Freud developed his ideas over a lengthy period of time, and many of them altered as he did. Furthermore, he acknowledged that much of his thinking was hypothetical, and he anticipated that others would continue to develop and even correct some of his ideas over time. As a result, the goal of this chapter is to highlight the aspects of classical psychoanalysis that are particularly valuable to literary criticism, as well as to demonstrate how this view of human behavior is pertinent to our understanding of literature.

Basic Concepts

1.   Family

According to psychoanalytic thought, our adult personalities are the product of our emotional experiences as children. And the family (which can range from a traditional two-parent family to group-living in an orphanage) is the most important source of our early emotional experiences—both those that affirm our being and those that harm us psychologically—because it is in the family that our sense of self and way of relating to others is first established.

"I'm the failure"; "I'm the perfect child"; "I must constantly 'come in second' to my brother"; "I'm unlovable"; or "I'm accountable for my parents' troubles" are just a few examples of how we view our place in the family and how we react to this self-definition. All of the popular conceptions of old-style Freudian theory (such as sibling rivalry, penis envy, and castration fear) are essentially descriptions of the prevailing ways in which family conflicts can be lived. They just serve as a starting point for comprehending individual differences. In some families, for example, sibling rivalry (competition with siblings for a parent's attention and affection) can exist in a significant way between a parent and a child. If I'm envious of my partner's love for our child, it's possible that I'm reenacting an unresolved childhood rivalry with a sibling I thought was more loved by my parents than I was. That is, witnessing my partner's love for our child brings back some or all of the pain I had when I watched my parents' love for the sibling I thought they favoured. As a result, I'm now competing with my child for my partner's attention.

It's crucial to remember that oedipal attachments, sibling rivalry, and other developmental stages are all regarded normal. To put it another way, we all go through these things, and they're a normal and healthy part of growing up and forming our own identities. We encounter problems when we don't grow out of these conflicts. Here's an example that many ladies can relate to. If I'm still competing with my mother for my father's affection (a competition that can continue in my subconscious long after one or both parents have died), I'll probably be drawn to men who already have girlfriends or wives, because their commitment to another woman will allow me to replay my competition with my mother and "this time" win. Of course, I may not win the man this time, and even if I do, I'll lose interest in him once I've won him. His attractiveness is based on his attachment to someone else, even if I'm not aware of it. He's no longer interesting once he's mine. If, on the other hand, I felt as a child that I "stole" my father's affection from my mother (which he may have given me as a way of punishing or avoiding my mother), I may be attracted to men who already have girlfriends or wives (and who don't appear likely to leave them) because I believe I need to be punished for "stealing" Dad from my mother.

Repression and the Unconscious

When we look at the world through a psychoanalytic lens, we find that it is made up of individual human beings, each with a psychological history that begins with family

experiences as a kid, and each with teenage and adult behavior patterns that are a direct outcome of that early experience. Because the purpose of psychoanalysis is to assist us in resolving our psychological issues, often known as disorders or dysfunctions, the focus is on damaging patterns of behavior. We use the term "patterns of behavior" because our repeated harmful behavior suggests the presence of a substantial psychological problem that has most likely been influencing us without our knowledge for some time. For this reason, we must begin our discussion with a fundamental idea in psychoanalysis: the existence of the unconscious. One of Sigmund Freud's most profound findings was that human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, anxieties, needs, and conflicts of which they are ignorant - that is, unconscious – and that this concept still controls traditional psychoanalysis today.

The unconscious holds those painful memories and feelings, as well as wounds, phobias, guilty urges, and unsolved conflicts that we don't want to know about for fear of being overwhelmed. The unconscious is formed while we are very young as a result of the repression, or removal from consciousness, of these distressing psychological events. Repression, on the other hand, does not make our painful events and emotions go away. Rather, it gives them power by making them the organizers of our current experience: we unconsciously act in ways that allow us to "play out" our conflicted thoughts about the painful events and emotions we repress without admitting it to ourselves. In psychoanalysis, the unconscious is a dynamic phenomenon that interacts us at the deepest level of our being, rather than a passive store of neutral material, as the term is sometimes employed in other disciplines and in common language.

We hold on to our repressed wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts in disguised, distorted, and self-defeating ways until we find a means to know and address the underlying cause(s) of our repressed wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts. For example, if I don't recognize that I still yearn for the love I never received from my long-dead, alcoholic father, I'm likely to choose an alcoholic, distant mate in the hopes of reenacting my connection with him and "this time" making him love me. Even when I am aware that I have a psychological problem with my father, it is difficult for me to identify when I am "playing it out" with someone else. Indeed, I'm unlikely to notice the profound resemblance between my father and my beloved; instead, I'll concentrate on the surface distinctions (my father has dark hair and my beloved is blond). In other words, I'll feel the same way about my negligent father as I do about my present idol. I'll believe that I'm madly in love with my present lover, possibly even desperately so, and that all I really want is for her to love me back.

The repetition of self-destructive behavior, such as choosing unhealthy friends or romantic partners, displaying inappropriate social behavior (for example, habitually dominating conversations or throwing temper tantrums in response to disagreements), engaging in unwarranted violent behavior, engaging in substance abuse, and the like, is the clearest sign that an emotional problem is being repressed. The majority of these destructive behaviors manifest in our interactions with others, according to psychoanalytic theory, since

we enact, or play out, our psychological difficulties with others. A tendency to act defensively when certain themes come up in conversation, as well as the recurrence of a troubling dream, could be indicators of the existence of an unconscious problem.

The Defenses

The defenses are the mechanisms by which we prevent ourselves from being aware of the repressed events. Many of our emotional defenses emerge during childhood as a means of self-protection. Our defenses, on the other hand, become more harmful as we get older because they prevent us from comprehending — and so mending — our own psychological scars.The most common defenses include the following:

Mechanism	Description	Example
Repression	Blocking difficult thoughts from entering into consciousness, such as a trauma survivor shutting out a tragic experience.	A child, who faced abuse by a parent, later has no memory of the events but has trouble forming relationships.
Selective Perception	Hearing and seeing only what we feel we can handle	A teacher may have a favorite student because he/she is biased by in-group favoritism. The teacher ignores the student's poor attainment. Conversely, his/her might not notice the progress of his/her least favorite student
Intellectualization	The overemphasis on thinking when confronted with an unacceptable impulse, situation, or behavior without employing any emotions whatsoever to help mediate and place the thoughts into an emotional, human context.	If person A is rude to person B, person B may think about the possible reasons for person A's behavior. They may rationalize that person A was having a stressful day
Denial	believing that the problem doesn't exist or the unpleasant incident never happened	After the unexpected death of a loved one, a person might refuse to accept the reality of the death and deny that anything has happened
Projection	ascribing our fear, problem, or guilty desire to someone	You might hate someone, but your superego tells you

	else and then condemning him or her for it, in order to deny that we have it ourselves	that such hatred is unacceptable. You can solve the problem by believing that they hate you
Regression	the temporary return to a former psychological state, which is not just imagined but relived	A child may begin to suck their thumb again or wet the bed when they need to spend some time in the hospital
Rationalization	Justifying a mistake or problematic feeling with seemingly logical reasons or explanations	When a person finds a situation difficult to accept, they will make up a logical reason why it has happened. For example, a person may explain a natural disaster as 'God's will'.
Avoidance	staying away from people or situations that are liable to make us anxious by stirring up some unconscious – i.e., repressed – experience or emotion	A person might know that they are due to give a stressful presentations to colleagues at work, and take a sick day in order to avoid giving it
Displacement	"taking it out" on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt, frustration, or anger	Someone who is frustrated by his or her boss at work may go home and kick the dog

2.   Core Issues

When our defenses fail for a little moment, we experience anxiety, the unsettling, often overwhelming sensation that something is wrong or that we are in danger. Anxiety is a valuable experience because it can disclose our basic concerns, the psychological issues that are at the foundation of our self-destructive conduct. Examples of core issues include, among others, the following:

• **Fear of intimacy:** the chronic and overpowering feeling that emotional closeness will seriously hurt or destroy us and that we can remain emotionally safe only by remaining at an emotional distance from others at all times.

- **Low self-esteem:** the belief that we are less worthy than other people and, therefore, don't deserve attention, love, or any other of life's rewards. Indeed, we often believe that we deserve to be punished by life in some way.

- **Insecure or unstable sense of self:** the inability to sustain a feeling of personal identity, to sustain a sense of knowing ourselves. This core issue makes us very vulnerable to the influence of other people, and we may find ourselves continually changing the way we look or behave as we become involved with different individuals or groups.

- **Fear of abandonment:** the unshakable belief that our friends and loved ones are going to desert us (physical abandonment) or don't really care about us (emotional abandonment).

- **Fear of betrayal:** the nagging feeling that our friends and loved ones can't be trusted, for example, can't be trusted not to lie to us, not to laugh at us behind our backs, or in the case of romantic partners, not to cheat on us by dating others.

- **Oedipal fixation (Oedipal Complex):** We all pass through a natural period of oedipal attachment to a parent of the opposite sex during youth, but it is outgrown as we mature emotionally. An oedipal fixation (or complex) is a dysfunctional bond with a parent of the opposite sex that we don't outgrow and that doesn't permit us to mature into adult relationships with others. (Tyson 16)

The most important thing to remember is that core issues define who we are. They aren't made up of fleeting unpleasant emotions like insecurity or low self-esteem. Core issues, on the other hand, follow us throughout our lives and, unless adequately treated, can shape our behavior in harmful ways that we are usually unconscious of. In other words, because we are nervous in situations when our basic concerns are at play, anxiety can reveal a lot about ourselves. For example, when one of my friends goes to the movies with another friend, I get concerned because it reminds me of the abandonment I felt as a child from a neglectful parent, whether or not I recognize the link. That is, I feel abandoned now because I was wounded by feeling abandoned as a child, and I am anxious because I don't want to admit to myself that, in some important way, I was abandoned by my parent. So I become hurt and angry with my friend without consciously knowing why. My unconscious knowledge of the reason why is what makes me anxious. In this way, anxiety always involves the return of the repressed: I am anxious because something I repressed –some painful or frightening or guilty experience – is resurfacing, and I want to keep it repressed.

3.   Dream Symbolism

It's thought that our defenses don't work the same way when we're sleeping as they do when we're awake. The unconscious is allowed to express itself when we sleep, and it does

so in our dreams. However, there is some censoring, some protection against frightening insights into our suppressed memories and emotions, even in our dreams, and that protection takes the form of dream distortion. Through processes termed displacement and condensation, the "message" our unconscious sends in our dreams, which is the dream's underlying meaning, or latent content, is transformed so that we don't recognize it. When we employ a "safe" person, event, or object as a "stand-in" for a more hazardous person, event, or object, we call this dream displacement. For example, I might have a dream that an elementary school teacher is assaulting me to express (and escape) my unconscious knowing that one of my parents has assaulted me. When we use a single dream image or incident to represent more than one unconscious trauma or conflict, we call this condensation. My dream in which I'm fighting a vicious bear, for example, could reflect psychological "battles" or problems at home and at work. Alternatively, my dream that I am being molested by an elementary school teacher could represent my unconscious fear that my self-esteem is being attacked by a variety of family members, friends, and coworkers. (Thus, a single dream experience could be the result of both displacement and condensation.) The processes of displacement and condensation are collectively referred to as primary revision since they occur while we sleep. The dream's manifest content is what we actually dream after primary revision has obscured the unconscious message, or the dream's latent content. The visuals of an elementary school teacher assaulting me and me fighting a huge bear described above are examples of manifest content. The latent substance of the dreams is what these visuals actually mean, and that is a subject of interpretation.

Freud's Id, Ego and Superego

Human personality, according to Sigmund Freud, is multifaceted and contains more than one component. According to Sigmund Freud's famous psychoanalytic theory, personality is made up of three elements: the id, ego, and superego. These factors combine to produce complex human actions (Boag,1). Each component contributes to personality in its own way, and the three interact in ways that have a significant impact on an individual. Each aspect of one's personality emerges at a distinct time in one's life.

a-   The id: Meeting Basic Needs

The id is the impulsive (and unconscious) component of our psyche that reacts to instincts instantly and quickly. It is the sole aspect of one's personality that exists from birth.

The pleasure principle drives the id, which seeks instant fulfilment of all desires, wants, and needs. 1 If these demands are not met right away, a condition of uneasiness or tension develops. An increase in hunger or thirst, for example, should prompt an immediate attempt to eat or drink. However, meeting these requirements right away isn't always practicable or even viable. If we were solely guided by the pleasure principle, we might find ourselves snatching items from other people's hands in order to satisfy our own desires. This is both disruptive and socially inappropriate behavior.

Eg: Yasmine was thirsty. Rather than waiting for the server to refill her glass of water, she reached across the table and drank from her friend's water glass, much to his surprise.

a-   Ego: dealing with Reality

The ego deals with reality by attempting to meet the idesires d's in a socially acceptable manner. The ego understands that other people have needs and goals as well, and that being selfish isn't always the best course of action.

In many circumstances, the id's urges can be met through a process of delayed gratification, in which the ego eventually agrees to the conduct, but only at the right time and place.

The id, according to Freud, is a horse, and the ego is the rider. The rider gives direction and guidance while the horse provides power and propulsion. Without its rider, the horse is free to roam anywhere it pleases and do anything it wants. To get the horse to go where the rider wants it to go, the rider offers it directions and commands.

Eg: Yasmine was thirsty. However, she knew that her server would be back soon to refill her water glass, so she waited until then to get a drink, even though she really just wanted to drink from her friend's glass.

b-   Superego: Adding Morals

The superego is the last to form, and it is founded on morals and judgments of good and evil. Even if the superego and the ego arrive to the same conclusion about something, the superego's judgment is based on moral ideals, whereas the ego's decision is based on what others would think or the potential repercussions of an action.

The superego's job is to keep the iimpulses d's under control, especially those that society forbids. It also persuades the ego to pursue moralistic goals rather than just practical ones, and to strive for perfection.

The conscience and the ideal self are the two systems that make up the superego. The conscience can punish the ego by instilling remorse in it. If the ego caves in to id demands, the superego may make the person feel awful by instilling guilt in them.

The ideal self (or ego-ideal) is a fictitious representation of how you should be, representing career goals, how to treat others, and how to behave as a member of society. The superego may use guilt to penalize behavior that falls short of the ideal self. When we behave 'correctly,' the super-ego can reward us by making us feel proud through the ideal self. If a person's ideal self is set too high, then anything they do will be viewed as a failure. The ideal self and conscience are mostly formed by parental beliefs and how you were raised as a youngster.

Eg: Sarah knew that she could steal the supplies from work and no one would know about it. However, she knew that stealing was wrong, so she decided not to take anything even though she would probably never get caught

II.   Freud and Literature

Freud's concept of the unconscious, as well as the connection between dreams and repression in the artistic process, helped to construct psychoanalytic theory.

Critics who take a psychoanalytic perspective view the book as if it were a dream. This means that the text hides its true (or latent) meaning behind obvious (manifest) meaning. The transition from latent to manifest content is referred to as dream work. To reverse the process of dream work and arrive at the underlying latent thoughts, the critic examines the language and symbolism of a book.

How do the operations of repression structure or inform the work? That is, what unconscious motives are operating in the main character(s); what core issues are thereby illustrated; and how do these core issues structure or inform the piece? (Remember, the unconscious consists of repressed wounds, fears, unresolved conflicts, and guilty desires.)

1.   Are there any oedipal dynamics—or any other family dynamics—at work here? That is, is it possible to relate a character's patterns of adult behavior to early experiences in the family as represented in the story? How do these patterns of behavior and family dynamics operate and what do they reveal?

2.   How can characters' behavior, narrative events, and/or images be explained in terms of psychoanalytic concepts of any kind (for example, regression,crisis, projection, fear of or fascination with death, sexuality—which includes love and romance as well as sexual behavior—as a primary indicator of psychological identity, or the operations of ego-id-superego)?

3.   In what ways can we view a literary work as analogous to a dream? That is, how might recurrent or striking dream symbols reveal the ways in which the narrator or speaker is projecting his or her unconscious desires, fears, wounds, or unresolved conflicts onto other characters, onto the setting, or onto the events portrayed?

4.   What does the work suggest about the psychological being of its author? Although this question is no longer the primary question asked by psychoanalytic critics, some critics still address it, especially those who write psychological biographies

(psychobiographies). In these cases, the literary text is interpreted much as if it were the author's dream. Psychoanalyzing an author in this manner is a difficult undertaking, and our analysis must be carefully derived by examining the author's entire corpus as well as letters, diaries, and any other biographical material available. Certainly, a single literary work can provide but a very incomplete picture.

5.   What might a given interpretation of a literary work suggest about the psychological   motives of the reader? Or what might a critical trend suggest about the psychological motives of a group of readers (for example, the tendency of literary critics to see Willy Loman as a devoted family man and ignore or underplay his contribution to the family dysfunction)?

Practice: Analysis of *Snow White*