CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGY & LITERATURE
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Psychology is an offspring of the subject Philosophy. In other words it has its roots in Philosophy. The word psychology is derived from Greek psyche [mind, soul or spirit] and logos [discourse or study]. Literally, then, psychology is the ‘study of the mind’. In simple terms Psychology can be defined as the science of mind and behavior. Psychology is really a wide discipline that investigates human being thoughts in order to find out why individuals act, believe, as well as really feel the way they do. A brief account linked with psychology dates back to 1879, when the German born psychiatrist Wilhelm Wundt opened the first psychological laboratory at the University of Leipzig in Germany. Wundt with his co-workers attempted to investigate ‘the mind’ by observing and analyzing the structure of their own conscious mental processes through introspection. William James, the first prominent American psychologist and author of the psychological view of functionalism, argued that humans perceive things in a continuous stream of consciousness.

Later his theory of introspectionism was challenged by the early twentieth century American psychologist, John B. Watson who had the thinking that the results of introspection could never be proved or disproved. Consequently, Watson in 1913 originated new form of psychology which was known as behaviorism that enabled that psychologists should confine themselves to studying behavior, since only this is measurable and observable by more than one person and human behavior was largely the product of training or conditioning. A reaction against both introspection or structuralism and behaviorism came from the gestalt school of psychology, which emerged in the 1920s in Australia and Germany. Gestalt psychologists were mainly interested in
perception, and believed that perceptions couldn’t be broken down in the way that Wundt proposed. The gradual divergence of this subject from philosophy to science has been responsible for the change in its meaning from time to time.

Keeping aside all the names the twentieth century was highly influenced by two thinkers who have most influenced life and literature in this century are Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. The difference in their thinking was that Marx was primarily concerned with society and Freud with self. Marx was the father of communism—an ideology which has changed the face of half the world. On the other hand, Freud was the father of psychoanalysis which has transformed the science of psychology. The discovery of this new branch of science has had a profound effect upon literature as writers of the late nineteenth century and early to mid-twentieth century’s were influenced by many famous psychologists. Psychology became a topic of great intrigue and interest for many people.

The major contribution to psychology is said to be of the most well-known psychiatrist Sigmund Freud who was an Austrian who started the actual area associated with psychoanalysis. He was one of the most dynamic figures of the new-born psychological scene, who had a profound influence on the common thinking of the day with his psychodynamic theories of the power of the unconscious mind.

The psychologists became widely known and respected and their ideas, in turn, began to have a strong influence upon American literature too. Their theories and discoveries have changed the way that authors write. Their ideas have given rise to a new type of literature, a literature that seeks to incorporate psychology into its fabric.
The psychological ideas of the day made a great impact on the technique and style of many authors, as well as the characters portrayed by these authors.

Various theories of psychoanalysts have been applied by a range of writers in their works. Psychoanalysis is a wide term originated by Sigmund Freud to a system of interpretation and therapeutic treatment of psychological disorders. Psychoanalysis began after Freud studied (1885–86) with the French neurologist J. M. Charcot in Paris and became convinced that hysteria was caused not by organic symptoms in the nervous system but by emotional disturbance. Off lately in association with Viennese physician Josef Breuer, Freud wrote two papers on hysteria (1893, 1895) that were the precursors of his vast body of psychoanalytic theory. Freud used this method primarily to treat clients suffering from a variety of mild mental disorders classified until recently as neuroses (see neurosis). Freud was joined by an increasing number of students and physicians, among whom were C. G. Jung and Alfred Adler. Both made significant contributions, but by 1913 ceased to be identified with the main body of psychoanalysts because of theoretical disagreements with Freud's strong emphasis on sexual motivation. Other analysts, including Melanie Klein and Jacques Lacan, also have contributed greatly to the field.

Another concept of a dynamic unconscious mind, grew out of Freud's observation that the physical symptoms of hysterical patients tended to disappear after apparently forgotten material was made conscious. He found out that the unconscious had a major influence on personality and behavior of a person, which operated with material not subject to recall through normal mental processes. Freud also added that there were a
number of defense mechanisms—including repression, reaction-formation, regression, displacement, and rationalization—that protect the conscious mind from the unconscious whose aspects of reality it may find difficult to accept. He also said that the major defense mechanism is repression, which induced a forgetfulness for harsh realities. Primarily Hypnosis was the earliest method used to probe the unconscious, but due to its limited effectiveness, it was soon condemned and free association was opted in place of it. He also tried to interpret dreams for his study and found them to be symbolic wish fulfillments and major means to the unconscious, and their analysis was an important part of Freudian therapy.

In order to study human psychology Freud considered the human personality as a whole, divided it into three functional parts: id, ego, and superego. According to them the id as the deepest level of the unconscious, dominated by the pleasure principle, with its object the immediate gratification of instinctual drives. The superego, originating in the child through an identification with parents, and in response to social pressures, and is the crucial cause to repress the urges of the id. The ego, on the other hand, is seen as a part of the id modified by contact with the external world. It is a mental agent mediating amid three contending forces: the outside demands of social pressure or reality, the libidinal demands for instant fulfillment arising from the id, and the moral demands of the superego. The ego constitutes the major part of what is commonly known as consciousness. Freud asserted that conflicts between these often-opposing components of the human mind are crucial factors in the development of neurosis.
Freud also stressed on dreams as a major reflection our own personality and experiences that either we are going through or as premonition of any future events and later many writers based their whole works on dreams.

Psychoanalysis also studied on childhood, put forward that many of the conflicts which arise in the human mind develop in the first years of a person's life. Freud demonstrated this in his theory of psychosexuality, in which the libido (sexual energy) of the infant progressively seeks outlet through different body zones (oral, anal, phallic, and genital) during the first five to six years of life.

As a result of its widespread acceptance as a scientific field, psychology has played a major role in the style, technique, and content of many authors of the late nineteenth century, as well as those of the modern era. It is deep rooted as the modern man had different ways of thinking after the consecutive events affecting them on a large scale not only physically but also mentally. It has integrated itself into much of the literature from that time. Consequently, the birth of the modern psychological field has caused literature to be more realistic and representative of the human experience and human mind.

"This new subject-matter was revolutionary, and was shocking to many. The traditional structure of human activity and of motive-decision-action-result was wiped out by freud’s theory of the unconscious. Dark impulses and hidden instincts took the place of speeches, conscious intentions, public behavior and manners which gradually become
irrelevant. Thus there was a radical change of emphasis from the description of external reality to an attempt at description of the inner feelings.” (Qtd. A.J.Khan, 39)

This accurate portrayal of the human experience, as the noted critic W.D. Howells asserts, should be the author’s ultimate goal. He declares that in literature "the only beauty, is truth to the human experience" (Qtd. Howells 243).

It is observed that Freudian psychology has influenced English novel much more than poetry and drama. As a genre, the novel has a greater scope for the representation of the thoughts and human behavior. The first Freudian novel in English was Sons and Lovers (1913) which was written by D.H. Lawrence and was based largely on his own life-experience. It is a case history of the young Lawrence, ridden by Oedipus complex and mother-fixation. It will be Interesting to note that while writing this novel Lawrence was not aware of Freud's theories which is now treated as a locus classicus of Freudian fiction.

In the novel Paul Morel (Lawrence) is the son of a coal-miner and an educated, sensitive, and possessive mother who is brutalized by her husband. They have three sons, including Paul, and two daughters-make a "united front" against their father. After the death of his elder brother, Paul becomes a "mamma's boy" and her surrogate husband. On growing to adulthood, mother-fixated as he is, he is unable to form satisfactory relationship with Miriam, the girl that he meets. After a long Platonic courtship, he breaks up with her, blaming her with being overly possessive and spiritual. In fact, the blame lies with him. For a brief while he goes steady with Clara who has quarreled
with her husband, who reclaims her however. When Paul's mother dies of a cancer, he contemplates suicide but then decides to live on.

Another author who was very much inclined by psychological ideas is Henry James. James, the brother of the famous psychologist William James, incorporates many psychological concepts into his work "The Beast in the Jungle." A very introspective work, the book explores the mind of John Marcher. It is the story of an individual, Marcher, who has lived all his life waiting for some great event to happen to him which he thinks will mark his life. Marcher says that he is waiting for a symbolic "crouching beast" that he thinks is "destined to slay him or [by which he will be] slain" (Qtd. James 349). Marcher has a friend, May Bartram who is the only individual to whom Marcher will reveal his thoughts and expectations of what will happen to him. Through his interaction with May, Marcher’s thoughts and expectations are made known to the reader. Ultimately Marcher spends his whole life searching for this imagined beast. He realizes too late that May is the thing that he has been waiting for. He has missed out on the opportunities he could have had to love May and have a life with her. Before her death, May realizes that she is what Marcher has been waiting for.

The book is different because it deals primarily with the evolution of their thought processes through the years. Throughout the work James tries to portray closely the essential quality of events and human experience. He does this by spending most of the work describing the thoughts of Marcher, and describes accurately the internal thought processes and resulting conflict that occur in Marcher’s mind while he seeks and struggles to find the beast in his life. In this story James is definitely influenced by the
burgeoning field of psychology and his brother as he utilizes James’ concept of stream of consciousness and explores the thought processes and the cognition of the human mind. Throughout the work, Marcher’s thoughts and emotions are closely related, for the most part inseparable, which occur in a fluid stream of consciousness.

*The Yellow Wall-Paper* a short story written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s was influenced by the psychological theories of the time. It is based upon real-life experiences of the author and attempts to provide a grimly deeper portrayal of an individual suffering from severe depression. The story revolves around John and his wife who is suffering from depression-probably postpartum depression--after the birth of her child. The woman and her husband, who is a physician, are spending the summer in a large "colonial mansion, a hereditary estate" (Qtd. Gilman 657).

Her husband, believing in the conventional medical theories and prescribes a rest cure for her, the most common way of treating depression. However, John’s wife does not respond well to the rest cure. She feels as if she is being restrained and kept prisoner because she is not allowed to participate in any creative activities such as writing or painting. The title of the book comes from the room where the woman resides. The walls of this room are covered in garish yellow-orange wallpaper. In this room John’s wife spends most of her time. However, as her depression deepens, she begins to hallucinate. She thinks that there are people behind the wallpaper.

The woman asserts that:
"Sometimes I think that there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over". (Qtd. Gilman 666).

Apart from her hallucinations, the woman displays a classic example of a Freudian coping mechanism, regression to a prior stage in development, suggesting that Gilman was likely influenced by some of Freud’s theories. She begins to pace around her room on all four limbs, much as a toddler would do. This maladaptive coping mechanism is only one of the many that Freud had proposed during this time period.

The detailed descriptions that Gilman gives of John’s wife’s mental illness are not typical of the societal customs of the day. This topic was not one that was spoken of during this time. Psychological disorders were considered taboo topics that were not to be broached. However, this work is not merely a description of an individual with a serious psychological illness. It is also a condemnation of the medical ways of treating psychological illnesses during this time. The woman in this work repeatedly states that the rest cure her husband has prescribed is not working and is possibly making her depression worse. Throughout the work Gilman has tried to point out the ineptness and ineffective nature of the treatment of mental illnesses during this time. This work is burdened with psychological influences and a person trying to deal with them. As a result of its accurate description of psychological illnesses, it was on the cutting edge in its day.
Early psychological concepts even saturated the works of some of the most famous and widely read authors, such as Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway’s well known work *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* is one of the example.

Hemingway has integrated psychology into the literary framework and technique of the piece in his wok *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, and shows that Hemingway was also influenced by the new field of psychology. The book basically deals with a man, Harry, and his wealthy wife, who are on a safari in Africa attempting to photograph animals.

While on their adventure tour, Harry gets a minor scratch that becomes infected. And because of the pain Harry becomes cynical about his life. And puts the blame on his wife for causing him to lose his literary potential by pampering him and by giving him anything he wants. He starts having flashbacks about his past life. Hemmingway has put these flashbacks in especially in italics in order to set it apart from the rest of the work. These sets of italics are stream of consciousness skipping from place to place and from setting to setting with no apparent structure. It is to some extent different from Gilman’s *The Yellow Paper*, in which she tries to portray psychology through her characters and plot. The stream of consciousness is in accordance with the functionalist views of William James.

Hemingway’s *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* is very representative of the effect that psychology had on the style and technique of many authors at the end of the time period. The end of this work also has a very psychological grounding. Hemingway chooses to let Harry die while Harry is asleep and dreaming.
Hemingway has also utilized Freudian dream interpretation at the end in which he tries to use dreams to depict Harry’s death. We know that Freud placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of dreams and their hidden, symbolic meaning. Freud asserted that dreams were representative of unconscious thoughts and desires. What Freud quoted about dreams was:

“Our scientific consideration of dreams starts off from the assumption that they are the product of our own mental activity. Nevertheless the finished dream strikes us as to something alien to us. We are so little obliged to acknowledge our responsibility for it that [in German] we are just ready to say ‘mir hat getraumt’ [I had a dream] ” (Qtd. Freud 80)

In the end Harry dreams of flying over Mt. Kilimanjaro as he dies: "all he could see, as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro" (Qtd. Hemingway 1703).

In the list of the authors influenced by psychology the next name is of William Faulkner. Faulkner was evidently greatly influenced by the work and ideas of William James, as Faulkner’s work is teeming with incidents of the stream-of-consciousness technique. At times, Faulkner will go for a page or more without using a period in his attempts to mimic the scattered and continuous way that the human mind works in perceiving situations.
This is no surprise, for Faulkner was one of the foremost and most successful of the writers who utilized this specific literary style. Faulkner’s story "Barn Burning" is a good example of his psychologically oriented technique.

The story is about a Colonel, Sartoris Snopes, or Sarty, who cannot accept his father’s violent and vindictive personality. As his father has been fired at all of his previous places of employment their family keeps on going from one place to another. In the most recent example, his father has been told to leave the town for allegedly burning the barn of his last employer. Sarty and his family move to a new farm where his father has obtained work. However, Sarty’s father gets into a dispute with his new employer over a rug that Sarty’s father has ruined. As a result of the employer’s promising to dock the father’s wages, the father goes to burn the barn of the employer. Sarty’s conscience will not allow him to sit by passively. Thus, he warns the employer who ultimately shoots the father. Partly out of guilt and partly out of a desire to escape his father’s way of life, Sarty does not return to his family.

Faulkner has employed the most utilized stream-of-consciousness technique in order to portray Sarty’s turbulent experiences of life. He has described Sarty’s thoughts when his father dies as

"stumbling, tripping over something and scrabbling up again without ceasing to run [. . .] running among invisible trees, panting, sobbing, ‘Father! Father!’" (Qtd. Faulkner 1642).
In his work Faulkner endeavors to imitate and represent closely the way that the human mind processes information. For Faulkner, psychology is the basis and essence of his style. Freud's influence may also be seen on various other English psychological novelists like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf and many more modern writers including Philip Roth. The stream-of-consciousness technique used by these novelists combines perceptions of everyday reality with reverie, dream, and fantasy. Works like The Sound and the Fury (1929) by William Faulkner, The Outsider (1942) by Albert Camus, Catcher in the Rhye (1951) by Salinger, and Portnoy's Complaint (1969) by Philip Roth and many more are some of the best examples of psychological fiction. Many other writer like Gogol, Kafka Swift and Roth had used dreams as the mere basis of their stories.

Freud's impact is more on literary criticism as compared literature. Though there is no area of literature which Freudian theories have left untouched, yet it must be admitted that they have influenced literary criticism (both theory and practice) much more than creative literature. In other words, Freud has not only influenced authors in literary writings but also helped more to understand them. It has been influential in appreciating existing poems, novels, and plays than to write new ones.

So far as English poetry and drama are concerned, the impact of Freud is discernible only here and there. D.H. Lawrence's poem Snake, which is avowedly a narration of a personal experience, is a Freudian (or Laurentian) acknowledgement of the potency of the sex instinct which is repressed by the ego into the dark layers of the unconscious from which it emerges now and then into the open (that is, consciousness),
only to be forced to scurry back into its dark abode. The sex instinct is the snake in the poem. Eliot's poems like *The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock* and *The Waste Land* are structured on the basis of free association and make use of the technique of interior monologue. Prufrock is evidently a victim of repression. His song remains unsung.

Talking about drama, absurdist writers like Beckett and Pinter show a penchant for dramatizing the absurdity of existence as well as the interplay of subconscious drives. Explicit sexuality with an uninhibited use of four-letter words and violence characterize the work of the most important of contemporary English dramatists, Edward Bond (1934—).

In 1920s Freudian Psychoanalysis was challenged by Otto Rank, Sandor Ferenczi, and Wilhelm Reich; later, in the 1930s, by Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, and Harry Stack Sullivan. These critics of Freud stressed the interpersonal aspect of the analyst-patient relationship (transference), and placed more emphasis on the processes of the ego. Despite a number of detractors and a lack of controlled research, Freudian psychoanalysis remained the most widely used method of psychotherapy until at least the 1950s.

To some, Freudian theories seem weak, and ultimately fail to initiate standards for treatment. A number of modern psychologists have pointed out that his theories of psychoanalysis were too much dependant on ambiguities for its data, such as dreams and free associations. Critics also pointed out that Freud's theoretical models arise from a homogeneous sample group—almost exclusively upper-class Austrian women living in the sexually repressed society of the late 19th cent. Such a sample, many psychologists contend, made Freud's focus on sex as a determinant of personality. Other problems with
traditional psychoanalysis were, the psychoanalyst required frequent sessions with a client over a period of years.

Alike to them one more the critic of Freud’s concepts was A C. Ward, who condemns in his *Twentieth-Century English Literature* (1964):

"Freudianism in all its imperfectly understood manifestations and speculations has become rooted in the very substance of much contemporary fiction, drama and verse. Whatever light psychiatry may throw upon mental problems...it has led to much disorder in imaginative literature as it has contributed to the disintegration of individual personality. A new trade has imposed itself on the community and is sub-served by much modern literature that exploits abnormality."
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