Chapter II

Defining Psychoanalysis and its Criticism

Psychoanalytic criticism is the interpretative perspective of literature by applying some techniques of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is a form of therapy propounded by the Austrian Psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in order to treat patients of hysteria and neurosis during the late nineteenth century. “Psychoanalysis itself is a form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorder by ‘investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind’” (Barry 96). This treatment was based on the observation that the root of neurosis and other mental symptoms could be effectively determined by encouraging the patients to talk and recall memories and ideas, however seemingly unimportant. An emphasis is particularly given to infantile sexuality. During the verbal interchange between the patient and therapist, the latter encourages the former to freely express forgotten, suppressed or repressed memories which ultimately presents an insight into the patient’s neurosis or mental conflict. This cure has aptly been described as the “talking cure” by one of Freud’s patients (Surprenant 199). It may be noted that the patient’s willingness and trust to reveal all to the therapist is detrimental towards this cure.

Psychoanalysis and its criticism is a widely debated and controversial topic for a variety of reasons. “Of all the critical approaches to literature, this has been one of the most controversial, the most abused and least appreciated”
The root cause of the reason for its disrepute is because the very science of psychoanalysis developed by Freud is considered to be flawed and narrow. “There is a growing consensus today that the therapeutic value of the method is limited, and that Freud’s life work is seriously flawed by methodological irregularities” (Barry 96). Granted, many of Freud’s theories, particularly the ones relating to aspects of sexual behaviour may seem limited in its approach. However, to debunk an entire science because of a few flaws is highly imprudent. Accordingly, with regard to the psychoanalysis theory, it is axiomatic to recognize that no single critical approach to literature, be it traditional, formalistic or psychological, is complete in its interpretative powers. When applied correctly to the relevant literary work, each approach can prove its worth and capacity. Freud’s idea of the “unconscious”, on which all his theories are based upon is a major breakthrough towards understanding the complex human psyche which was previously ignored by other theorists. “The Foundation of Freud’s contribution to modern psychology is his emphasis on the unconscious aspects of the human psyche” (Guerin 127).

It is pertinent to keep note that the notion of the “unconscious” is not a new concept introduced by Freud. “Freud was not the discoverer of the unconscious” (Barry 96). Early philosophers such as Aristotle during the fourth century B.C., referred to the unconscious in his classic definition of tragedy plays and the effect of catharsis by combining the emotions of pity and terror in such plays. Similarly, Plato’s barring of poets from his republic as an act of revolt against the arousal of misleading passions is also a psychological theory. Long before Freud could discover the unknown forces and drives in the mental structure of man and name them as the unconscious, literature had borne out of the testimony of their existence. To take an example that has now become cliché: the enigma of what
deflected Hamlet from carrying out his intention of avenging himself on his stepfather and threw him instead in a slough of despond? (Palkar 166).

The history of literature has presented to us the idea of the superiority of the human facility of imagination by eminent romantic poets such as S. T. Coleridge, William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley. These early ideas are reminiscent of psychoanalytic theories. This also includes the Renaissance man, Sir Phillip Sydney’s beliefs on the moral effects of poetry (Guerin 126). As seen above, the importance of the unconscious, the unseen human psyche was always emphasised upon in order to understand human actions and thereby, understand and produce worthy literature. “In this sense, then, virtually every literary critic has been concerned at some time with the psychology of writing or responding to literature” (Guerin 126). It only chanced to happen that it was Sigmund Freud who labelled the unconscious and brought it under the purview of the science of psychoanalysis.

It is interesting to observe that the essence of psychoanalysis has always existed in the field of literature. Greek mythology is rife with descriptions of mentally disturbed characters which reveal an extraordinary and early insight into the concept of psychoanalysis. Literary greats such as Proust and Thomas Sterns Eliot explored the realm of the psychic by applying tools of symbolism, metaphors, allusions and many other seemingly psychoanalytic influences. The imminent literary critic Lionel Trilling states;

Yet I believe its is true that Proust did not read Freud. Or again, exegesis of The Waste Land often reads remarkably like the psychoanalytical interpretation of a dream, yet we know that
Eliot’s methods were prepared for him not by Freud but by other poets (Trilling 42).

It is therefore important to grasp that psychoanalysis and particularly, psychoanalytic criticism is not at all a revolutionary twentieth century discourse as widely believed. William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, is testament to mankind’s understanding of the complex human psyche long before Freud. Freud is often credited for comprehensively explaining the indecisiveness, mental torment and lack of will in Hamlet in avenging his murdered father, through the psychoanalysis theory, “Oedipus Complex”. This idea denotes the emotions that are retained by the unconscious mind of a boy who views his father as an enemy and wishes to sexually possess his mother. Following the same idea, Carl Gustav Jung, another leading psychoanalyst introduced the “Electra Complex” for girls. Jung’s label is deprecated however, by Freud who insists that his Oedipal complex applies to both sexes; Freud believed girls experienced homosexual desires. Understandably, such theories have sometimes drawn flak and scathing comments from certain critics. Whether considered plausible or otherwise, it is certainly worth noting that all these ideas which are considered revolutionary or new age is actually not so. “But the term that Freud used to explain Hamlet’s psychic problem was again borrowed from a well known Greek myth and its renowned literary version, *Oedipal Rex*, which provided him with the notion of Oedipus Complex” (Palkar 167). It is therefore important to note that literature has always contained the essence of psychoanalysis.

Throughout the ages, writers have strived to explore the complexities of the human mind through literature. Many dramas and plays have traced the development of psychological behaviour with clinical accuracy. Shakespeare’s *Othello* provides an insight into the subjective qualities of obsessive, violent
jealousy. A psychoanalytical interpretation of Lady Macbeth’s symbolic hand washing and sleepwalking in Macbeth reveals her guilt reaction over the murder of King Duncan. Cervantes’ Don Quixote is another extraordinary example of a work of literature which explores the mind’s vast capacities. The hero Don Quixote’s imagination turns windmills into castles, gallery slaves into gentlemen and believes himself to be a real knight. Don Quixote is a remarkable character whose endearing follies and delusion can only be comprehensively understood through a psychoanalytic reading. The eminent writer Franz Kafka’s protagonist Joseph K in his novel The Trial explores the bizarre world of schizophrenia. Literature and psychology evidently therefore, appears to go hand in hand. This does not imply that literature can aid to the science of psychoanalysis but it can indeed assist psychologists in understanding human experiences throughout history.

Of course, literature cannot provide either the theoretical or practical basis for understanding and treating specific cases of abnormal behaviour, but it does complement psychology in giving a different kind of understanding of such behaviour. Literature yields valuable information, for example, about personality dynamics, about mental disorders prevalent during a particular historical period, and about the inner experiences of those who have undergone such disorders (Coleman 8).

Freud may be credited with the understanding that our actions are largely influenced by the mental processes of the mind. This remarkable psychologist brought forward a multitude of groundbreaking ideas, each relating to the unconscious. The following are all under the aegis of Freud’s concept of the realm of the “Unconscious”. Before going further into the literary aspect of psychoanalysis, it is important that an understanding of the
major ideas of psychoanalysis is grasped. This is due to the reason being that, “Psychological criticism in the present context will, by and large, mean psychoanalysis” (Singh 164).

The Id, Ego and Superego: This theory is perhaps Freud’s most popular psychoanalytic idea. According to this concept of personality structure, a human being has three psychical apparatus which may be categorised as “Id” “Ego” and “Super ego”. The illustration below is a diagrammatic representation of the Freudian theory of human personality.

![Diagram of the Id, Ego, and Superego](www.e-james1114-dc.blogspot.com)

The id is considered to be the primary source of all psychic energy. The Id freely and randomly follows instinctive urges without any consciousness of rational, moral or censorious awareness.

Id, Freud says, ‘contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is laid down in the constitution- above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate from the somatic organisation and which find a first physical expression here (in the id) in forms unknown to us’ ” (169 Singh)
Because of this free compulsion and association of thought processes, the Id is also known as the “pleasure principle” (Guerin 129). There is no unified will in the realm of the Id.

The second apparatus, i.e., the “Ego” serves as a medium between the Id and Superego. It is the voice of reason and rationality. The Ego ensures that not all the psychic activity in the Id is expressed or followed through, as some impulses within the Id may prove to be harmful to the individual. “Whereas the Id is governed solely by the pleasure principle, the ego is governed by the reality principle” (130). The Ego therefore, goes through a process of selection and chooses which part of the Id to express and what to discard or retain within. The Ego thus, acts as a regulating agent which protects a person from becoming too self indulgent. The Ego acts as the voice of reason and controls the Id’s unbridled instinct for self gratification.

The Superego is an extreme version of the Ego. Whereas the Ego serves as the rationale agent, the Superego is driven by a strong moral conscience and is therefore known as the “morality principle” (131). Largely unconscious, the Superego strives towards an unattainable human perfection. “Freud attributes the development of the Superego to the parental influence that manifests itself in terms of punishment for what society considers to be bad behaviour and reward for what society considers good behaviour” (131). The Id and Superego are extremes of each other and the Ego serves as the regulating agent between the two. Just as it is dangerous to give free rein to the Id factor, too strong a Superego is just as harmful.

The Id is the influence of heredity, the superego the influence, essentially of what is taken from other people- whereas the ego is principally determined by the individual’s own experience, that is
by accidental and contemporary events. To this three tiered division of the psyche Freud associates three psychical qualities— the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious (Singh 170).

By popular or layman understanding, we can refer to Id as untamed passions. This is best explained by the example of a young child who has yet to develop an Ego i.e., the rationale conscience and therefore acts on all whims and impulses without a thought for consequences.

**Penis Envy & Castration anxiety**: The former is applied to women and the latter to men. As can be expected by the suggestive terminology alone, both these theories are highly controversial. According to Freud, boys resolved their issues through “castration anxiety” and girls through “Penis envy”. He further proposed that unsuccessful resolutions might lead to neurosis, paedophilia and homosexuality. Understandably, these ideas were debunked in later stages. Penis envy is much derided by feminists who often accuse Freud of being a misogynist due to his somewhat derogatory views of the female sex, the concept of penis envy, not being the least. During the later stages of his life, Freud admitted that his understanding of women was inadequate.

**Hysteria**: The seed of this theory largely evolved from Freud’s work with patient Bertha Pappenheim, commonly known as Anna O, who suffered from various mental symptoms including hallucination, amnesia and partial paralysis. At that time Freud worked alongside a colleague, Dr. Joseph Breuer. During the patient’s sessions with Dr. Breuer, the former would describe her experiences and expressing her feelings seemed to alleviate her symptoms, much like a catharsis. This led the patient to dub the method as the “talking cure”. Both Freud and Breuer believed that hysteria in a woman had meaning and that this meaning could be uncovered by encouraging the patient to express
her feelings and experiences, repressed or otherwise. The concept of hidden meanings and symbols in dreams called “Dreamwork” is also applied here.

Freud made abundant use of “free association” which led the patient from symptom to the thought to the memories—beyond the conscious to the preconscious and the unconscious. This obviously paved the way for the patient’s release (166).

Freud soon separated from Breuer due to difference in ideas and methods. He later branched out separately and referred to his ideas and methods as Psychoanalysis.

**Dreamworks**: This Freudian terminology refers to a therapy in which an individual’s hidden desires can be revealed through his or her dreams. Freud believed that analyzing a person’s dreams will result in understanding aspects of the personality as dreams are realted to pathology. Symbolic representations are important in deciphering the meaning of dreams. Such symbolic representations can be in the form of “displacement”, where one the actual object is represented by another. “Condensation”, is the event where a number of meanings are represented by a single image in the dream. Freud revolutionized the study of dreams through his literary work, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899).

**Eros (sexual drive/ creative life force) & Thanatos (death force/destructiveness)**: Freud postulated that human beings are controlled by these two basic drives. Eros is the human instinct to live and is thus concerned with the preservation of life and of the species. Although similar, Eros is not to be confused with libido as it refers strictly to the sexual component of our life. Both Eros and Thanatos are empowered by Libido energy, which is the life
force. Eros seeks to create as well as safeguard life and is associated with positive emotions of love through sexual drives. In his celebrated essay, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud states that Eros strives to lengthen life and promotes pro social behaviour.

Thanatos is the death drive which continually yearns for a tension free and almost lifeless state of life. It opposes Eros and pushes a person towards self-destructive behaviour. In the later part of his work, Freud emphasised on the opposition between Thanatos and Eros which are constantly in tussle in the human psyche. “Eros and Thanatos shows how continually relevant the struggle between external storm and inner drive has remained for humanity over the centuries” (Kraftner. www.freud-museum.at/cms/tl_files). While Eros is associated with positive emotions like love, caring, nurturing, cooperation etc., Thanatos is associated with negative emotions like hatred, fear, anger and other anti-social activities. Freud saw psychic life as an interplay of these two ever-interpenetrating forces, Life and Death.

**Oedipus/Electra & Jocasta Complex:** These three psychoanalytic theories revolve around the same principle, although it appears that the Oedipus Complex is by far the most popular or at least, the best known of the three. Oedipus Complex was propounded by Freud himself. This controversial idea is derived from Greek Philosopher Sophocles’ tragedy of the youth Oedipus who kills his father in order to wed his mother and in self-punishment, blinded himself. Freud believes that all children fall in love with one parent and feel hatred for the other. He described these stages as the “phallic stages” of a child’s development. “Freud holds that the first choice of mankind for any object is an incestuous one directed at mothers and sisters, and the most harsh, stringent measures are required to prohibit it” (172). Freud believed that this tendency exists within all children but was more marked in neurotics. As the
child knows the danger of acting out these impulses, he/she represses this feeling which in turn leads to anxiety. “Freud only says that both boy and the girl can shift their objects of libidinal desires; they cannot get rid of it” (172). This means that the child can shift or transfer the object of desire but not get rid of it.

This idea took form with the study of a young boy known as little Hans. In 1909, Freud’s paper, “Analysis of a Phobia in a Five year old boy”, shared the idea that little Hans’ fear of horses is actually due to the boy’s internalised anger towards his parents. Following the same idea, Carl Gustav Jung, another leading psychoanalyst introduced the “Electra Complex” for girls. Jung’s label is deprecated however, by Freud who insists that his Oedipal complex applied to both sexes; Freud believed girls experienced homosexual desires. In the event where the mother is apathetic towards her need, the girl child may shift her desire to the father figure. However all in all, where girls were concerned, Freud appeared more concerned with “penis envy”. In 1920, eminent Swiss Psychoanalyst Raymond de Saussure proposed the term “Jocasta Complex” which defines the incestuous sexual desire of a mother towards her son. As evident, this term is derived from Jocasta, the Greek mythological queen who has a sexual relationship with her son, Oedipus. This term is often used to cover varying degrees of mother son attachment including domineering but asexual mother love, which is often prevalent with an intelligent son and absent/weak father.

It may be noted that besides other post Freudian psychoanalytic theories, an exhaustive number of psychoanalytic complexes has evolved over the years such as Adonis Complex, Lolita Complex, Don Juan Complex, God Complex, Matryr Complex, Cleopatra Complex, Hero Complex and many others. However, as this study does not specifically require the application of all these
theories and also due to obvious constraints, the scholar has chosen to describe only the pioneering and most groundbreaking theories.

**Defence Mechanisms:** Amidst much debate and controversies, there are certain psychological processes which are generally agreed upon by all psychologists alike. This is the understanding that people use defence mechanisms to reduce their feelings of anxiety and guilt. “Freud used the term defence mechanisms to refer to unconscious processes that defend a person against anxiety; they protect against external threats or against internal anxiety arousing impulses by distorting reality in some way” (Hilgard 442). These mechanisms come into play during conflicts of the Id, Ego and Superego and other psychological processes as described above. The mental processes termed as defence mechanisms are as listed below:

- **Repression:** According to Freud, “Repression is the fundamental technique people use to allay anxiety caused by conflicts” (Morgan 588). Repression is the process in which a person may “forget” or repress into the unconscious, any thoughts or memory which arouses anxiety. In this operation, the subject repels and denies conscious representations of thoughts, images and memories that are disagreeable because they are incompatible with the Ego.

- **Sublimation:** Freud introduced the possibility that initially conscious awareness such as unresolved conflicts, un admitted desires or traumatic past, if suppressed or left unaddressed by an individual, will ultimately shift into the individual’s unconscious. An individual may also shift such suppressed desires into something grander i.e., more sublime than it actually is in reality.
“For Freud, sublimation was the highest level of ego defense. It consists of a redirection of sexual impulses to socially valued activities and goals” (590). For example, a writer may divert some of his or her libido into the creation of a literary work.

- **Reaction Formation**: This is the situation where a person undergoes a transference of motives or reaction. A person who is too modest, too affectionate or too solicitous may actually harbour the opposite emotion. “The implicit principle is that the best defence is a good offense” (589). Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* has captured the essence of reaction formation with the quote, “The lady doth protest too much methinks” (Shakespeare Act 111 Scene 11). For example, a mother who lacks maternal instincts and resents her child may anxiously deny her actual impulses by behaving in a very concerned or overprotective manner towards the youngster.

- **Projection**: It is natural for human beings to have certain undesirable traits or qualities which we may not wish to acknowledge, even to our own selves. The unconscious mechanism that protects us from acknowledging these unwanted traits is referred to as Projection. “In projection, we protect ourselves from recognizing our own undesirable qualities by assigning them in exaggerated amount to other people” (Hilgard 444). People who obsessively projects may develop a disorder and experience a whole new system of thinking. They project their own hostile feelings to others and become paranoid that other people are out to get at them.
Rationalization: There is a popular Aesop fable where the fox could not jump high enough to reach the grapes and finally comforts himself by thinking that the grapes must be sour anyway. This is a fine illustration of rationalization by the fox. This defence mechanism substitutes an acceptable conscious motive for an unacceptable unconscious one. “Rationalization serves two purposes: (1) It eases our disappointment when we fail to reach a goal- ‘I didn’t want it anyway’- and (2) it provides us with acceptable motives for our behaviour” (443). Rationalization does not necessarily mean that we are lying as a person may actually believe his explanation.

Intellectualizing: This defence mechanism involves reasoning and is related to Rationalization. “In intellectualization, however, the intensity of the anxiety is reduced by a retreat into detached, unemotional, abstract language” (Morgan 590). This is a process whereby a person involved in an emotionally threatening situation attempts to deal with it in abstract intellectual terms by becoming emotionally detached. This kind of defence is a necessity for people who deal with life and death situation on a daily basis such as people in the medical profession. Although an amount of intellectualization is necessary for people in certain professions, the same may prove to be damaging for a person who is not required to do so.

Emotional Insulation: This is related to intellectualization. “Here the individual reduces his emotional involvement in situations that are viewed as disappointing and hurtful” (Coleman 126). Since disappointments in life are inevitable, people learn to
contain their expectations and hopes, thereby forming a protective emotional shield. This is natural. However, in extreme cases, a person may become resigned, isolated, uninvolved and become scared to live. Chronic schizophrenics and people suffering from other mental disorders practice an extreme and unhealthy amount of emotional insulation.

Regression: “In the face of a threat, one may retreat to an earlier pattern of adaptation, possibly a childish or primitive one. This is called regression” (Morgan 590). This is a way of coping with anxiety and stress. For example, a child who is upset about the arrival of a new baby may go back to earlier behaviour such as thumb sucking, baby talk, refusal to walk etc. Adults too, may sometimes revert to childish dependency when faced with a stressful situation and is unable to cope.

Displacement: This defence mechanism is the process in which a person reduces his or her anxiety by venting out his or her anger and frustration towards an object, other than the original target. “In displacement a motive whose gratification is blocked in one form is directed into a new channel...Freud felt that displacement was the most satisfactory way of handling aggressive and sexual impulses. The basic drives could not be changed, but the object toward which the drive is directed could” (Hilgard 447). For example, a person who is angry with his boss but cannot vent out his frustration for fear of being fired, may go home and vent his anger by shouting at his unsuspecting wife or children.
The human mind is fragile and highly complex. Defence mechanisms therefore acts as protective armours which shields our psyche and help us to cope with reality. Every person resorts to the above listed mechanisms from time to time. When used sparingly without causing harm to others, defence mechanisms are healthy and even beneficial. However, psychological problems arise when a person exaggerates these mechanisms or comes to depend on them too frequently. Such a person may develop a phobia and become delusional, neurotic, obsessive or paranoid.

It is not a matter of surprise that Freud’s theories are a subject of much heated debates. Many of his ideas seem far fetched and bizarre to say the least. Freud’s insistence of the unconscious as the centre of most human actions and basing a select study and its discovery as a representative of the en masse human race seems to have compromised his psychoanalytic discourse.

For instance, the fiction of ‘penis envy’ which is hard to take if you are a woman. Feminists are often outraged by this kind of ‘phallic discourse, but even if a woman does not subscribe to the feminist ideology, she is likely to be amused or bemused by these male fantasies that psychoanalysts doles out to us with the serious air of scientific truth (Palkar 166)

It must however be acknowledged that Freud was the genius behind the establishing the genre of psychoanalysis. Although the concept of the unconscious always existed, it is Freud who established this idea as a distinct school of thought and thereby, laid the foundation for various new branches of study based on existing psychoanalytic theories. Gradually, Freud’s psychoanalytic theories were further developed by other leading psychoanalysts through the ages. In Freud’s own lifetime, there were many
who disagreed with his theories, as popular as they were. “Prominent among them were Adler and Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Adler broke away from Freud in 1911 and Jung three years later” (Singh 176). Jung had a more mystical and religious approach to psychoanalysis which Freud differed with. Consequently, later psychologists such as Jung, Alfred Adler, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan and others proposed their own modifications to Freud’s theory. In this way, the psychoanalysis epistemology grew and evolved.

An eminent theorist of psychoanalysis is Jean Jacques Lacan and his popular theory of the “Mirror Stage” where he proposed that the human child, between six to eighteen months, first acquires the concept of the self upon his image in the mirror. Also, “For Lacan- unlike Freud- the unconscious partakes of both and the super ego, and therefore contradiction is inscribed in the human psyche, which Lacan conceives as a text” (Palkar 172). Likewise, various psychoanalysts had different interpretations of Freud’s theories as well as developing new ideas pertaining to the complexities of the realm of the unconscious.

There are various stages to the vast and ever expanding genre of the psychoanalysis discourse. The first stage is dominated by the pioneers namely Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Northrop Frye, Kenneth Burke among others. Then came the second phase which was more theoretical in nature, contained in the works of Richards, Empson, Ransom Brooks, Tate and Winters. The third phase came with revolutionary discourse in the works of Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Harold Bloom and Jacques Lacan whereby structuralism, post structuralism and deconstruction evolved. The fourth stage is the discourse of the feminist take on psychoanalysis. The fifth stage is the present ongoing debate on psychoanalysis and the focus on merits and demerits of the same
(Singh 165). The very fact that the psychoanalytic discourse is still in process to this day is a testament to the vitality and ever exhaustive nature of this field of philosophy.

As understood, Psychoanalysis initially started as a therapeutic technique but later expanded into the literary realm. “The conceptual edifice of psychoanalysis could not have developed without philosophy, the arts and most recently, linguistics and poetics” (Huguet 280). Looking back, this eventuality is quite inevitable as this branch of science involves the human psyche and culture where everything becomes meaningful and calls for interpretation. And where better to apply psychoanalysis than in the field of literature which is constantly on a quest for new and alternative interpretations. In due course of time therefore, psychoanalysis has led to the evolution of psychoanalytic criticism specifically referring to literary criticism which in method, concept or theory, is influenced by the tradition of psychoanalysis begun by Sigmund Freud. It may seem that the science of psychoanalysis is as much indebted to literature as literature is to psychoanalysis.

Freud was an avid student of literature and his love of literature is mirrored in the modern discourse of psychoanalysis, very many concepts of which sound more fictional and bizarre than the fictions that literary discourse spin out for us (Palkar 167).

Similarly, the works of Lacan reflects his interest in surrealist literature. The object of psychoanalytic literary criticism can be defined in the simplest manner, as the psychoanalysis of the author or his/her literary character. This approach believes that the true meaning of a book may be understood from the point of view of the unconscious and early childhood experience. Freud’s psychodynamic structure of the personality suggests that our behaviour is
influenced by ‘id’, ‘ego’ and ‘super ego’, representing the ‘unconscious’ ‘conscious’ and ‘reality principle’. Basing then, on Freudian theory, psychoanalysis basically involves three techniques:

1. A method of mind investigation, especially of the unconscious mind;
2. A therapy of neurosis inspired from the above method
3. Formulation of a new discipline based on the knowledge acquired from applying the investigation method and clinical experiences.

Psychoanalytic criticism often aids in providing clues to baffling characters, situations, symbols and actions. There are numerous literary marvels which have been ingeniously interpreted with the tools of psychoanalytic ideas. To date, the most popular psychoanalytic criticism of a literary work is Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. No other theory of literary criticism seems to define Hamlet’s much debated delay in avenging his murdered father. "Freud, the founding father of psychoanalysis, claimed the credit for solving the mystery of Hamlet’s inaction and paralysis of will" (Palkar 166). Psychoanalytic critics also depicts Hamlet’s almost misogynistic behaviour towards Ophelia as a classic case of a neurotic and repressed figure. Another popular example of psychoanalytic interpretation is Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, where extreme rebellion against parental figure is depicted. This literary novel is not by any means, a psychological novel but rather, a social one. “However, Mark Twain showed a remarkable pre Freudian insight when he dramatized this theme of rebellion in the portrayal of Huck’s detestable father as the lowest common denominator of social authority” (Guerin 138).

Lacan’s concept of the “Mirror stage” has been a defining factor in twentieth century literature, especially in the stream of consciousness novels.
The projecting space of mirrors is, of course, literally and metaphorically, of great importance for novelists and poets.

It is no accident that the first chapter of Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (1927), a novel structured according to the transformations of the specular image into the social ‘I’, is entitled ‘The Window’. Its idyllic figure of ‘mother and child’ works as a centre of attraction and identification for everybody in the house, guests included (Huguet 281).

Where psychoanalytic criticism of literature is concerned, Freud was of the view that the work of literature can be understood by analysing the psyche or biography of the creator. Whereas, Jung argued that a work of literature is not necessarily an extension of the soul of its creator; that in essence, art had a separate life of its own. “The artwork is neither biologically psychological nor does it yield to causalistic psychology. The poet is at best a verbal medium, the instrument of certain archetypal and universal forces (Singh 179). Freud had often accused Jung of bringing mysticism into psychoanalysis which for the former was a purely scientific and clinical field. However, to Jung’s credit, he has predicted literary theorists like Roland Barthes and his acclaimed Deconstruction essay “Death of the Author”, which is uncannily similar to Jung’s idea. Jung helped greatly in developing gaps in psychoanalysis. In time, psychoanalysis has been increasingly refined by other leading psychologists that the Freudian system has become better understood and valued. In essence therefore, the present enduring science of psycholoanalytic criticism is the fruit of not just one but many psychologists. “Psychological criticism is meant the criticism (practised in relation to human personality or literary text) as developed by Sigmund Frued, C.J. Jung, Northrop Frye, Kenneth Burke, among many others” (Singh 165).
Psychoanalysis theories may seem highly farfetched to many and for good reason too. However, it cannot be denied that this genre of interpretation has had a tremendous impact on world literature. Many major literary works have also been effectively deciphered through psychoanalysis. The crucial point is to apply the relevant psychoanalytic idea or concept to the appropriate literary work. If this is done, then new meaning such as never been understood from other tools of criticism may be unveiled. After all, psychoanalysis stems from complexities of the human life which affects the psyche and what is literature but a reflection of life. Psychoanalytic reading has been practiced since the early development of Psychoanalysis itself and has now developed into a rich and heterogeneous interpretive tradition.
WORKS CITED


