

INDISPENSABILITY OF PSYCHOLOGY TO LITERATURE

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Abstract

The influence on literature of Freud and his followers-Jung, Bergson and others has been profound, far reaching and all comprehensive. Freudian psychology is a body of thought of great subtlety complexity, interest and tragic power. However it would be wrong to say that Freud is the “discoverer of the unconscious” as it was discovered by other thinkers much earlier. Freud’s contribution and discovery is the use of scientific methods for the study of unconscious. His is the only systematic account of the working of the human mind. In this respect Freud stands almost alone among the large number of psychologists in the field. The current paper highlights the role of psychology and the impact of it on the reader as well as the writer. I have tried to highlight the relation of literature with psychology in general.

Among the Greeks and the superior power possessed by a poet was explained by the theory that the poet was inspired or possessed by some god or spirit. And that is how he got the superior power of writing. There was a belief that some writers possessed extra sharp senses because of certain physical handicaps. It was a belief that God compensated such men by giving them an advantage in other senses. Milton was blind, Pope was hunchback, and Byron had a clubfoot. God compensated for their defect by giving them some extra sensitive power to their senses. But this belief has no scientific or rational base. The idea of being possessed is explained in different ways by saying that the writer is a neurotic but if the writer is a neurotic how his writing can be intelligible to other people.

Freud says that the writer is not a quite steady. And the writer is neurotic who, by his creative works, keeps himself from a crack up. The artist converts a reality into a fantasy in his

mind then reconverts the fantasy into art. So the poet is a day dreamer who publishes his fantasies. The artist's contemplative results are alterations in the outer world by readers of the novelists. While the day dreamer forms his fantasies in his mind, the actual writer gives a local habitation and a name to the fantasies. Most writers do not want to be cured of their neurosis because if they are cured, they fear they will lose the power of writing. As Auden says, the artist should be as neurotic as possible.

Is neurosis another name for imagination? As a child tells a romantic story so an artist converts the world of reality into the fantasy of hopes and fears. Some novelists like Dickens say that their characters speak to them and sometimes take control of the action of the stories. The artist thus retains the archaic trait of the race. He feels and sees his thoughts.

Another gift assigned to writer is the synaesthesia or the capacity of the combining sensory perceptions. A writer may see colour and the smell of the object. In fact, synaesthesia is a literary technique. According to T.S. Eliot, a poet has in his sub-conscious mind the race history and also the memory of the childhood. The artist is thus more primitive as well as more civilized than his contemporary. The pre-logical mentality persists in civilized men but it becomes available to us only through a poet. In other words, beneath the individual lies the collective unconscious, the blocked memory of our racial past. The extrovert and introvert are two types of writers who are sub-divided on the basis of the thinking, feeling sensation and intuition. All writers are not necessarily introvert.

Subjective or objective writers are not necessarily single types; there are romantic poets who are lyric poets and there are poets who are dramatic and epic poets. In other words the poets are subjective writers and novelists are the objective or the poets can be called "possessed" and novelists can be called as "makers". The professionally trained bards are the poets of the Renaissance. And the makers of the neo-classical period lay emphasis on their mechanical side of the work of the creation. But in the case of the great writers like Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky we find both elements of the maker and the possessed in the same writer.

Imagination has been divided by a French psychologist in two parts; plastic (shape giving) and different (symbolic). Symbolic poet is a writer of romantic tales who is entirely subjective. Dante's visual imagination has the same essential quality of Milton's "auditory imagination".

There is a distinction between the mental structure of the poem and the composition of a poem. According to Croce, an object of art creates a vivid impression on the mind of the artists. Once the impression is created, the work of the artistic creation stops. When a writer tries to put his impression on paper he is expressing his impressions and that is expressionism. Can impression be induced? Can the writer become possessed or go into a trance with the help of the objects other than imagination? Coleridge wrote *Kubla Khan* under the influence of opium. De Quincey was an opium eater but there is no true evidence that drugs help in creative work. Others use ritualistic devices to induce the spirit of the possession. Balzac wrote in the robes of the monk. Some people prefer night time for writing. Dr Johnson that a man can write at any time if he is determined to write.

On the creative side not much has been found profitable to literary theory. Some authors write analytically about their art; psychologists try to find the common factor in originality invention philosophical and aesthetic creation. The process of the creation will depend on the

conscious and unconscious state of mind. Romantic and expressionistic periods depends upon the conscious whereas realistic periods depend upon the conscious mind intelligence.

In the case of the narrative writers, we think of characters and inventions of the stories. They are either original or inspired. Yet even in the most original writers like Dickens the narrative techniques are chiefly traditional. In the creation of the of the characters literary types, persons observed and self are used. The realist observes the behaviour of the people whereas the romantic writer projects himself but it is doubtful if mere observation can suffice for like characterization

What is the relation between the novelist's character and his actual self. Shakespeare for example disappears into his plays and the characters of the poet have no self. The poet has no identity. All this belongs to the psychology of the writer. The psychology can classify the poet according to the psychological types. They may explore his sub conscious mind. Can psychology evaluate a literary work? Psychology can illuminate creative process or the habits of the author of revisioning and rewriting. We should not give much importance to such anecdotes of a writer's life. A study of the process of composing of a writer's works throws light on the composition of the work; it does not help us to evaluate the work. Its only interest is that the details of the writer may set into relief the qualities of the writer. But may the same end be achieved by other means? They do not help the evaluation of what actually passed through the author's mind.

Now let consider the question of the psychology in the actual work. The characters in the novel may be psychologically true. Sometimes a psychological theory fits a character of the situation. For example a psychologist has tried to show that Jauques in '*AS YOU LIKE IT*' is a case of the unnatural melancholy produced by the excess of phlegm. Sometimes a psychologist seems to fit a figure or situation. Walter Shandy could be shown to suffer from the disease of the linguistic and associations. Freudian psychoanalysis is used by novelists like Conard, D.H. Lawrance and others. Can we say that the author has succeeded in incorporating psychology into his figures? Statements have no meanings. The attempts to fit *HAMLET* into some scheme of Elizabethan psychology seem mistaken because Hamlet is more than a type. These books are not psychological motivation. Even in the stream of the conspicuous novel one finds that there is no actual reproduction of the real mental process. Hence we say that an author's characters have psychological truth. Do we really say that such truth has any artistic value in the psychological works with improbable situation like the demand of the social realism? Psychological standards do not have universal validity. In the case of the systematic theory of the working of the mind. Psychology is unnecessary to art and has no artistic value. At the most some artists may underline their sense of reality to sharpen their powers of observation. But at last psychology is only preparatory to the art of creation and not to the work itself.

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