

## On the Interaction Between Literature and Psychology

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### Abstract

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study literature across national borders, across time periods, across languages, across genres, across boundaries between literature and the other arts (music, painting, dance, film, etc.), across disciplines (literature and psychology, philosophy, science, history, architecture, sociology, politics, etc.). Defined most broadly, comparative literature is the study of "literature without borders". Literature, which intertwines within such fields as history, philosophy, sociology, psychology and so on, is a discipline wherein language is used as a medium of expression so as to interpret man, existence and culture.

The relation between psychology and literature is a bilateral relation. Human's soul makes the literature and literature nourishes human's soul. Human's psychological receptions take into consideration the human and natural life perspectives and provides references of literal works; on the other hand, literature also take into account the life's truths to make clear the perspectives of human's soul. Literature and psychology both, pay attention to fancy, thinks, feelings sensations and soul psychological issues. Past writers and poets by detecting "unwilling conscience" psychological unwilling and reflecting many of psychological contention had found the meaning of this problem in their works.

The paper is trying to consider the relation between literature and psychology by means of psychological criticism in categories such as psychoanalysis the author, reader and text also the Psychology and the creative process, Psychoanalysis and biography by using psychoanalysis.

**KEYWORDS:** comparative literature, literature and psychology unwilling conscious and psychological criticism.

## Introduction

English Languages and Literature has been offering different courses on literary theories and criticism. These courses expose students of literature to different views and inter relation in other disciplines. Among them, comparative literature could be one of them. Aiming at developing insights into the literature and culture in a comparative context provides a rich environment for the development of a perceptive, well-rounded reader, writer, and thinker.

Comparative literature to give the literature students learn to interpret and evaluate literary and cultural products from multiple origins and in languages other than their own. We are trained to present persuasive arguments, to master and use different theoretical and methodological tools, and to engage in dialog with scholarly voices both within the field of Comparative Literature and in other modern and classical language fields.

The course of Comparative Literature as a discipline has been slow and difficult and dealing with the study of literature and cultural expression across linguistic, national, and disciplinary boundaries. Comparative literature "performs a role similar to that of the study of international relations, but works with languages and artistic traditions, so as to understand cultures 'from the inside'". <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

It is an interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study literature across national borders, across time periods, across languages, across genres, across boundaries between literature and the other fine arts (music, painting, dance, film, etc.), and across disciplines (literature and psychology, philosophy, science, history, architecture, sociology, politics, etc.). In short, comparative literature is the study without borders. The initial idea this term paper was studied this course and it was for the partial fulfilment of this course. Thus, this study focuses on literature and psychology; what is the relation between literature and psychology and in comparative literature history?

In general, comparative literature cannot be separated from other disciplines. The point is usual usage of literature is highly crucial through other inter disciplinary.

## Theory of comparative literature

What comparative literature means today is very different from previous discourses in global context. Today boundaries of comparative literature have been expended by comparative cultural studies. Of course, we have some chance to learn or know progress, methods, and approaches of comparative literature by means of theoretical and practical/applied books we mention above or the other books; however, it can be said that we understand neither its theory and practice nor contributions. From past today many things have been said on comparative literature up to now, but it will be important to focus on what we will compare.

It is very clear that we do not know "what, why or how" we will compare, 'which works or writers' literary worlds must be compared. Firstly, we must answer these questions if we want to study comparative literature. As well as necessity of a well-defined methodological frame, we must also argue its coverage and search for answers to the questions such as "to whom/what will we compare us /ours? How will we compare the texts? In other words, which texts/writers will we compare? Who are we in the eyes of the others or who are the others in our eyes?" Even though in Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* the questions "How many are we?" "Who are they?" (Spivak, 2003, p. 70) that she highlights should be observed for the New Comparative Literature which leads us towards comparative cultural studies crossing borders nowadays.

Wellek quotes Van Tieghem's definition of comparative literature in his theoretical book "the object of comparative literature is essentially the study of diverse literatures in their relations with one another" (Wellek, 1970, p. 15) with Van Tieghem's definition. Such an idea opened the doors of different language, culture and literatures behind the boundaries to the scholars. From perspective of comparative literature they began to consider the forerunners, their masterpieces and their influences on each other's in world literature. In this respect, we can discuss American poet Edgar Allain Poe's influences on world poetry. For instance, a study of Poe's influence on French poet Charles Baudelaire, Baudelaire's influence on English poet T.S. Eliot or Turkish poet Tevfik Fikret. Such a study will be important comparisons between literatures. If the national literatures are isolated from world literature; literary texts' influences, echoes, aspects and values cannot totally be analyzed, detected and judged or evaluated.

Comparative literature is a key opening all doors beyond the national, cultural, linguistic, historical, social or political boundaries, when we turn our attentions to world literature, we recognize echoes of a masterpiece on our literature or a work of the other nations' literatures as translations and imitations, frequently by second-rate authors, or to the prehistory of a masterpiece, the migrations and the spread of its themes and forms." (Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature, 1949, p. 40)

Hence, comparative studies will brighten the perspective of literary criticism and research. But still, the scope and methodology of comparative literature has been a subject of dispute for many critics. Comparative literature, as a subject of study the comparators must keep a balance between expansion and concentration, make use of new tools and techniques for analysing the features of a work, get benefit from the insight formed in the discoveries of other disciplines such as Anthropology, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, History of Art and most important of all in this field - Linguistics, Bijay Kumar Das while giving his opinion about the nature of study of comparative literature remarks that:

Comparative literature analyses the similarities and dissimilarities and parallels two literatures It further studies themes, modes, conventions and the use of folk-tales, myths in two different literatures or even more.

Comparative literature is a study of relationships between two or more literatures. For example - English literature, American literature, Canadian literature, Australian literature, Indian English literature and Caribbean literature all are written in English language.

Above all, what defines comparative literature is its open-ended spirit of inquiry. Students of comparative literature create their subject matter by determining the meaning and method of their comparative approach. Comparative Literature is dedicated to the study of literature in the broadest possible framework inter linguistic, intercultural, and interdisciplinary. Defined broadly, it is the study of "literature without walls." So it's about making comparisons and connections between all sorts of literary and cultural realms.

## **The Interaction between Literature and Psychology**

Literature and psychology are two branches of science that study human soul. Psychology researches human behaviours and their causes while literature depicts human behaviour through fiction. These two sciences studying human behaviour are interrelated and mutually beneficial. And the basic building block of the correlation between literature and psychology is a literary work. Literary works study human beings and describe their inner world with all its aspects. The reason is that a literary work is at the same time a product of a certain psychological condition. A literary work supports psychology in terms of depicting human psychological conditions, as we see in the example of Dostoevsky's characters. At the same time, Jung noted, psychology also provides insights into literature by exploring mental processes.

Studies of the science of psychology directed to literature, literary works and writers that were introduced by Freud continued with other outstanding theorists of psychology such as Adler, Jung, Lacan, Fromm, Reich and Klein. Likewise, writers and literary theorists such as N.Holland, Lev Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Virginia Woolf contributed to the psychology of literature.

A literary work benefits from psychology in terms of successfully presenting characters, expressing their moods, and bringing the reader into the psychological dimension of human reality. Psychology and study of literature meet in their focus on phantasies, emotions and human soul. Thus there exists a two-way relationship based on mutual interaction between literature and psychology, in the form of evaluation of a literary work with the resources of psychology and obtaining psychological truths from a literary work.

Psychological content appears in a wide range of literary forms, from poetry to short stories, plays and novels. However, the most explicit reference to the human mind is to be found in psychological novels which deal with individuals' inner experiences, thoughts, feelings, emotions and introspections. Centuries ago, Aristotle fashioned a term that brought literature and psychology face to face: catharsis (psychological or mental purification of the feelings). From that time onwards, literature and human psyche have been correlated either by various writers, philosophers, critics, or by means of several techniques or movements. Not only was it tragedy

that combined the elements of psychology with literary production, it was also novel, poetry, short story and even some psychoanalytical theories that brought psyche and literature together.

Academic Ismet Emre (2006, p. III) gave the following explanation of the relationship between the two disciplines: Beside literature and psychology there is no other branch of science which is engaged so much in the study of the relationship between human body and soul with its contradictions and dilemmas, making efforts to define the relationship in terms of certain rules, to know the mysterious aspects of the human soul and its subconscious areas by means of long and detailed journeys: at the same time both branches have been struggling in their existence between arts and science for about a century. Although approaching literary works with the scientific data of psychology is the result of the 19th century positivism, the relationship between the two mentioned disciplines goes back to the Ancient Greeks.

*And we can safely affirm that Freud is the most obvious example of the connection between literature and psychology. For not only did he quote literature in his hypotheses (we know that Oedipus complex is named after a character from a work by famous ancient Greek writer Sophocles), but even now - many years after he died – many writers and poets are still inspired by his ideas. (Psikoloji Edebityattır'dan Edebityatta Psikoloji'ye, 2014)*

According to Holland (1990, p. 34), Freud in his letter dated 15 October 1987 mentioned that he was trying to identify his father's jealousy and his mother's love as Oedipus complex and that he was studying the unconscious forces behind Shakespeare's writing of Hamlet. Thus Freud in his work titled *Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming* developed a powerful model for the literary process. According to that model writers are excited by wishes, their wishes are unconsciously enriched beginning from their childhood and are shaped in a literary form that can convince the audience. Using that model Freud wrote lengthy analyses of Leonardo Badegül Can Emir Da Vinci's and Dostoevsky's works; he interpreted the dreams in Jensen's novel *Gradiva* and at the same time in this way he analyzed Hamlet-type characters.

It is well known that literature is an important source of inspiration for the science of psychology which tries to explain human emotions, behaviours and mental processes from a scientific perspective. According to N. Holland (1990, p. 34) literature has played a significant role in

Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis. It will not be wrong to say that psychologists benefit from the study of literature in their analysis of certain concepts, phenomena and theories (Nayki, 2014, p. 9). Each and every literary character qualifies as a case for psychological study. It was Samuel Richardson who carried the earlier features of sentimental novel and the early flashes of psychological novel through his *Pamela*. It was Henry James who borrowed the stream of consciousness technique from psychology and introduced it to be used in literature, and then was subtly employed by James Joyce in *Ulysses* and by Virginia Woolf in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Charles Dickens, with his famous industrial novel *Great Expectations*, reflected the well-established norms of psychological realism. George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* was named after the mythological figure of Greek Pygmalion, and the name was also adapted into the Pygmalion effect to emphasize the observable phenomena related to the psychology and performance of men. Similarly, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* became a focal work that impacted the birth of Lolita complex. Friedrich Nietzsche's (just as it is employed by Bernard Shaw in *Superman*), Martin Esslin's theatre of the absurd (employed by Samuel Beckett in *Waiting for Godot*), Antonin Artaud's theatre of cruelty (employed by Edward Bond in *Saved*) and etc. all could be tackled in terms of interrelation of human psyche and literariness.

Let us see the poem of William Wordsworth

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky:  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man,  
So be it when I shall grow old;  
Or let me die!  
**The child is the father of the man;**  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

A century before Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, formulated his psychoanalytic developmental theory, the English poet William Wordsworth wrote about nature and nurture, "The Child is father of the Man." It is commonsense knowledge that from birth on the child undergoes physical maturation (e.g., sexual maturation) and the development of body, mind, and

character (e.g., psychological growth, social interaction, and adaptation). Therefore, the literature is significant to reflect psychological conditions in this real world.

As it is seen, even though the relationship between literature and psychology goes back to the earlier centuries, it really developed only in the 20th century with Sigmund Freud's discoveries in the area of psychoanalysis. Psychological content in literary works covered a broad area of genres from poetry to short story, from novel to drama, however the most open exposition of the human mind can be seen in novels. Not only S. Freud (1856-1939) did psychological studies related to literature, literary works and literary critics; studies in this area were done after him by other leading psychologists.

Psychological analysis in a literary text is made based on the four main elements mentioned by Abrams. The psychology-based study of literature aims more at studying the influence of social conditions on the emotions, thoughts and behaviours of the characters in the story or novel, the analysis of the characters' personalities, the process of a literary work formation and the psychology of creativity.

The fountainhead of the subjective movement in fiction was James Joyce, the Irish novelist, whose portrait of the Artist as young man projected the developing mind and consciousness of the artist on five distinct levels: sensation, emotion, physical, passion, religious passion and finally the level of intellectual awareness. Told with a remarkable symbolic use of language, this novel represented a turning point in modern English fiction.

Psychoanalysis has contributed important aids to three facets of literary study: 1) to criticism by itself, 2) to study of the creative process in literature, and 3) to writing of biography. In addition this is helping illuminate a tangential literary problem which belongs essentially to the field of aesthetics: the relation of the reader to the work.

### **Psychology and criticism**

Two notable approaches exist in literary criticism, and both are used a great deal today in elegies of a given text, a) the study of psychological elements within the work itself, without relating these in any way to the origin or history of the work; b) the study of possible myth and archetypal patterns in the work.

Psychoanalytic literary criticism is based on the argument that if literature is the expression of the author's 'persona', human behaviour must be analyzed to find the interaction of the conscious and unconscious elements of the mind in it. There are three phases in the development of psychoanalytic literary criticism.

The first one is **the psychoanalysis of the author**. According to Ernest Jones, the author's psychological condition affects his work because of the purpose of the art is the secret gratification of a forbidden infantile wish.

The second phase **the psychoanalysis of the reader**. Norman Holland pointed out that reading recreated the reader's identity and therefore, his defences, expectation, frustration, and transformations, and recreated during the activity of the reading.

The third phase **focused on the language and the text**. According to Jacques Lacan, the first modern psychoanalytic theory and criticism, the unconscious is structured like a language and literature is a product of language.

### **Psychology and the creative process**

Much literary scholarship in the pre-Freudian period was devoted to tracking the sources, both Biographical and literary, of a given work. A vast literature exists in which the books read by certain writers and the events of their lives have been explored to demonstrate how these influenced the works created. Writers, artists, and other creators have long argued that inspiration is a key motivator of creativity. Over the past decade, scientists have tested and found strong support for these claims. Scientific progress has required overcoming a number of challenges, including definitional ambiguity, difficulties of operationalization, ambiguities about discriminant validity, and scepticism about the importance of inspiration relative to perspiration. By developing an integrative conceptualization, operationalizing inspiration with the IS, establishing discriminant validity, and addressing scepticism with empirical evidence, these challenges have been largely overcome. Although additional challenges face the neuroscientist who wishes to study inspiration, similar challenges have already been overcome in relation to insight and other constructs. We believe that the stage has been set for a rigorous neuroscience of

inspiration. Inspiration has the power to effect change not just for individuals, but also for societies. Technological advancements, cures for diseases, and solutions to environmental problems first emerge as promising ideas. It is difficult to overstate the importance of figuring out why, how, and for whom creative ideas to societal problems fire the soul and inspire the idea actualization process.

The psychoanalytic critic might be inclined to modify this to the statement that the artist is usually possessed by his subject but is capable of gaining possession over it. Notably Ernest Kris has helped to modify in recent years the trend toward 'reductive' analysis. While the revelation of unconsciousness process in art has largely interested the psychoanalysts who have used 'applied psychoanalysis' to diagnosis personality of the artist, most literary critics and biographers who used it have been concerned with the actual fabric of the artist's creation, the means which his verbal imagination gives form and structure to his materials.

### **Psychoanalysis and biography**

There have been biographies of writers by professional psychoanalysis, such as Marie Bonaparte's Edgar Poe or Phyllis Greenare's study of Swift, which are more clinical than literary studies, preoccupied with deducing the workings of the unconscious for the writings and the biographical evidence.

Literary biographers have tended, when using psychoanalytical theories, to concern themselves with the gaining of certain insights capable of being assimilated within their own rather than psychoanalytical discipline. Thus the biographer may learn from a slip of pen in a manuscript or letter much about the subject under the study; but where the psychoanalytically trained writer would use the slip as guide to the conscious, the literary biographer would be inclined to apply this particular slip to the revelation of verifiable facts. The use of psychoanalytic concepts in biography can enable the biographer to escape from web of his subject's rationalizations; and it can help to explain his predilection for certain subjects and themes. The psychologically oriented biographer also can catch the small and seemingly insignificant detail, which in the past would have been discarded, and use it to illuminate personality

Example: from John Milton's "On His Blindness"

"When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide,  
Lodged with me useless, though my sole more bent  
To serve there with my maker, and present  
My true account, lost he returning chide,  
"Doth God exact day labor, light denied?"  
If I fondly ask; but patience to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest,  
They also serve who only stand and wait."

The above poem is an autobiographical sonnet in which Milton meditates on his own loss of sight. In this poem we can see the psychological condition, thought and feeling of the poet at that time on which he suffered blindness. So that literature depicts unresolved emotions, psychological conflicts, guilt's, the author's own life and childhood traumas through the characters in the literary work.

## Conclusion

In academic respect since 19th century comparative literature has been developed and theorized, the science of comparative literature has been transformed in one side into the theories of comparative literature and literary criticism, comparative literature as an umbrella term has focused on world literature in some curiosity of knowledge the self and the other. Comparative literature is a unique tool for readers or academics or researchers who feel curious, enjoy reading and analyzing literary works about other languages, disciplines and cultures of the other nations, or interested in global studies and international relations. With regard to the issues found, Art comes from artists are unconscious. This works as dreams, myths and stories, back out of an

obsessive artist who is hidden in the conscious such a symbolic expression are they are stylized and promote the cause. Words can be wonderful because it meant art the mental filter, purification of the soul and conscience to be refined. Poets and writers of the past with the discovery of the unconscious mental conflicts are manifested in their works.

Literary images of the collective unconscious fit are old patterns. The old patterns are common inherited tendencies Humans in various situations of their shows. Poets and writers, mental status ranging from sadness and happiness of others, over all, and most of all I have. Because more people are looking into the soul needs. The literature is not something outside of psychology, and language can be said that the way to talk about his mental mining uses And this way, say literary psychoanalysis. Psychology and literature have a reciprocal relation; the psychology of the unconscious can be called literature, and is a dune mining approach to its foreign opinion, very familiar to literature and literary critics. In Psychological Review in depth stories, and techniques for induction made ploy it is. This function works the same dream in the literature, and function of the dream and its elements is in the form which is related to the literature. (hhh: [www.textroad.com](http://www.textroad.com))

It is clear that there is need a literature psychology in order to make a better analysis of a literary work. Despite the obvious need, except for some limited works, the area of literature psychology in the methodical sense has not yet been developed and is still remaining at the terminological level. Therefore it is necessary to provide literary psychology lessons in the university departments of literature and psychology in order to train specialists and to encourage research in this area. This will be an important step toward the goal of filling the existing gap in literature psychology. Such studies will open discussions about clear analogies between the study of literature and psychology making a contribution and setting a model for the newly developing researches in this area.

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