

THE FREUDIAN METHOD MODELS IN INTERPRETATION OF LITERARY WORKS

Summary

This study deals with two streams of data: 1) successive changes in Freudian-psychoanalytical theory; 2) evolving methodological approaches within literary criticism inspired by the former. The exploration of the methodological „feedback" between the two is considered from the theoretical and literary point of view. The main thesis of the study is that the „Freudian method in literary interpretation" has entered its fourth stage, i.e. the fourth model of analytical procedures, given the meaning of the model as „a coherent interpretation of terms, statements and methods of the Freudian theories applied to literary criticism".

The essential points of the argument are presented in four consecutive chapters of the dissertation: I. The Literary Work as Reflection of the Writer's Personality; II. The Literary Work as Psychological Record of the Characters' Personalities; III. The Literary Work as a Complex Joke Structure; IV. The Literary Work as the Reader's Realisation. Although four „consecutive models" of the interpretation are discussed, it is important to note, however, that the process in question does not entail the automatic elimination of the earlier approaches at the expense of the later. Instead there is a rather permanent coexistence and correspondence of the newly created model(s) with those already in operation. This has also brought about some variations of the traditional models.

As a point of departure I took an essay by N. N. Holland (USA) who is considered to be one of the leading minds in western contemporary psychoanalytical criticism. His comprehensive inaugural lecture (1976) provides a stimulating parallel between the development of Freudian psychoanalysis and literary criticism. Holland sees three phases of psychoanalysis and looks for parallels between them and three approaches to literary works. He demonstrates the parallels with an example chosen from Wordsworth's poetry. Holland's essay was meticulously analysed with respect to the main ideas of the present study. This analysis yielded the following tasks to be completed:

1. Outline the basic changes in development of Freudian psychoanalysis as related to psychoanalytic literary criticism.
2. Analyse Freud's attempts at interpreting literary works.
3. Provide a methodological explication of the four models in psychoanalytic interpretation of literature.
4. Compare the main stages in psychoanalytic literary criticism and the development of methodological approaches in general literary criticism.

The wealth of material under discussion was immense, therefore it was necessary to abandon the purely historical way of dealing with data at the expense of a more structural one which concentrates mainly upon the two distinctive poles of the process, i.e. the area of Freud's inspiration and the final, present-day procedures in psychoanalytic interpretation of literature.

The first chapter is preceded by an essay „Some remarks on Freud's theory" in which there is a succinct summary of Freud's essential points and his vision of culture. The essentials constitute the basic foundations for the first and second phase in development of psychoanalysis.

A more personal note is introduced a bit earlier (Introductory Remarks) when I share with the reader my impressions from close-reading of Freud's works (see his: micro- and macrostyle). It is also here where the important distinction is drawn between Freud's own ideas and those of his followers.

The results of investigations are summarized at the end of each of the four chapters of the study. Due consideration is also given to subsequent development of psychoanalysis with A. Freud's (1936) *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen* (ego psychology) and an important article by E. H. Erikson *The Dream Specimen of Psychoanalysis* (1954). The latter was an attempt of psychoanalytic insight into subconscious mechanisms of Freud himself! This attempt was made already in the framework of psychology of self.

In effect a new relation between the development of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic literary criticism has emerged. Thus, Holland's simple parallelism

which projected psychology of the subconscious, ego psychology and psychology of self into the realm of literature interpretation was finally extended to four main procedures on the side of literary criticism. The threefold analogy was broken at the point of ego psychology where I found two (instead of one) literary models of interpretation (see: chapter II and III). However, it is notable that model III (The Literary Work as a Complex Joke Structure) grows out of the early, although strikingly precursory book by S. Freud „*Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*“ (1905) which is still an important source of inspiration for psychoanalytic aesthetics.

The fourth model (The Literary Work as the Reader's Realisation) considers first and foremost Holland's last contribution to psychoanalytic literary criticism, and combines it with the disciplined terminology of the leading contemporary Polish aesthetician R. Ingarden.

It is also Ingarden's well-defined theory of possibilities and limitations for psychological criticism that lies behind the closing remarks on the psychoanalytic concept of literary work, reductionism and a broad comparison between the models discussed and the development in theoretical and literary criticism.

The study ends with a selected bibliography which reflects not only the main line of investigation, but also notes the most interesting essays on the subject written by Polish critics.