

Jekyll & Hyde

And Psychoanalysis

Basic Introduction to Theory

In Literature, you are required to develop your theoretical understandings as part of the ATAR course.

This is basically understanding various reading practices (or strategies) and being able to apply various reading practices (or strategies) to when interpreting and responding to texts.

This can also be called applying a reading or theoretical **lens** to a text.

Applying different practices/strategies/lenses can also be called forms of criticism, usually with a defining adjective in front of the word criticism, e.g. 'Marxist criticism' (based on Marxist theory), or, 'feminist criticism' (based on feminist theory).



Basic Introduction to Theory

There are actually a lot of different theoretical lenses, which can be overwhelming at first.

You do not need to know them all, and you do not need to know absolutely everything about even just one of them. Nobody is in this position.

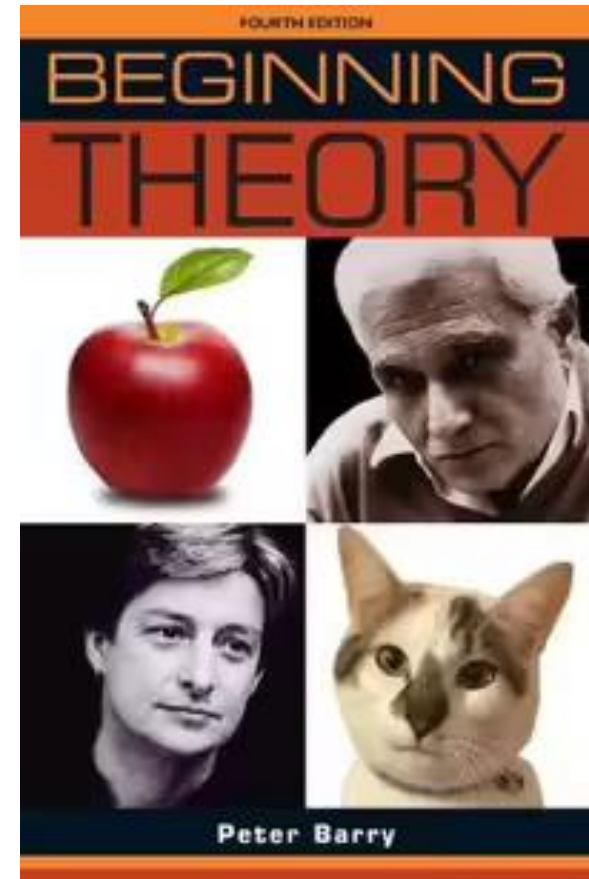
But you do need to know about some, and you do need to know a decent amount about a small number.



Basic Introduction to Theory

Some common or popular theoretical lenses include:

- Psychoanalytical
- Feminist
- Marxist (or class)
- Postcolonial
- New historicism (American) and/or cultural materialism (Britain)
- New criticism (or close reading)
- Queer theory



Psychoanalysis

Although one of the more challenging lenses to apply (and write a decent essay as result of this application) for high school students can be a psychoanalytical theoretical lens.

This is mostly because we/you are not psychiatrists or psychologists, as much as well all love to go around diagnosing people.

So what is psychoanalytical criticism?



Psychoanalysis

Put simply...

“Psychoanalytic criticism is a form of literary criticism which uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of literature.” (Peter Barry)

Psychoanalysis itself is a form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorders “by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind” (Oxford Dictionary).

The classic method of doing this is to get a patient talking freely, so that repressed fears and conflicts (that are causing problems) are brought into the conscious mind and ‘faced’, rather than keeping them ‘buried’ in the unconscious.



Psychoanalysis

But why psych stuff in English/Literature?



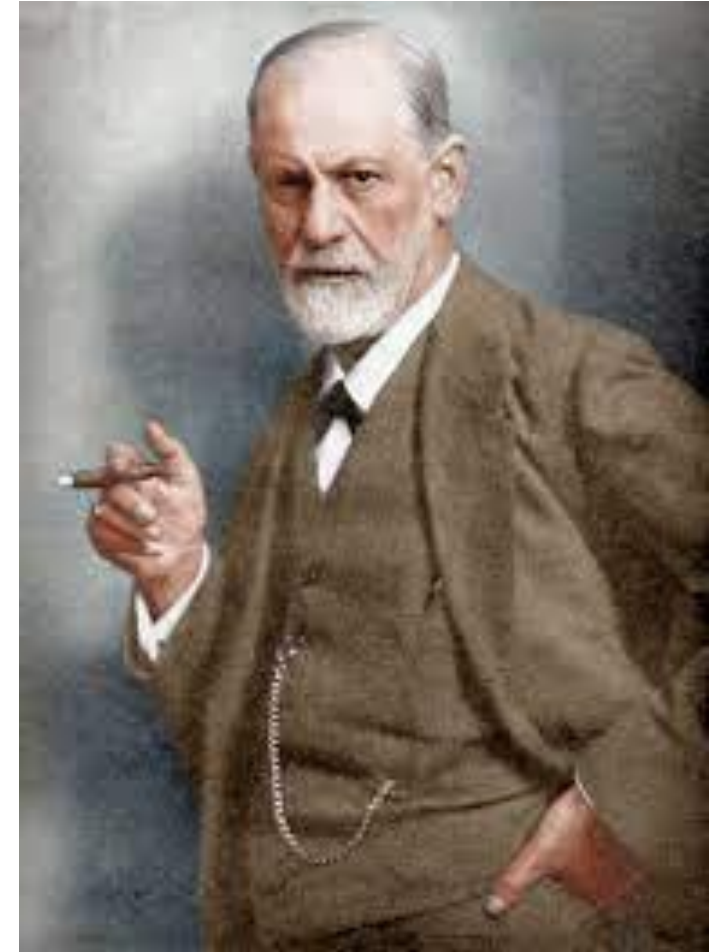
Sigmund Freud – The “Father of Psychoanalysis”

The practice of psychoanalysis is based on specific theories about how the mind, instincts and sexuality actually work.

The theories were famously developed by Sigmund Freud (Austrian, 1856-1939).

The growing consensus is that the therapeutic value of Freud’s method is limited, and his work is seriously flawed (e.g. methodological irregularities).

However, he was and still is massively influential, and remains a strong cultural force, so much so, that we use Freudian terms all the time (ego, subconscious, anal, oedipal complex, etc.). He has had a huge impact on the way we think about ourselves.



Freud's Dilemma

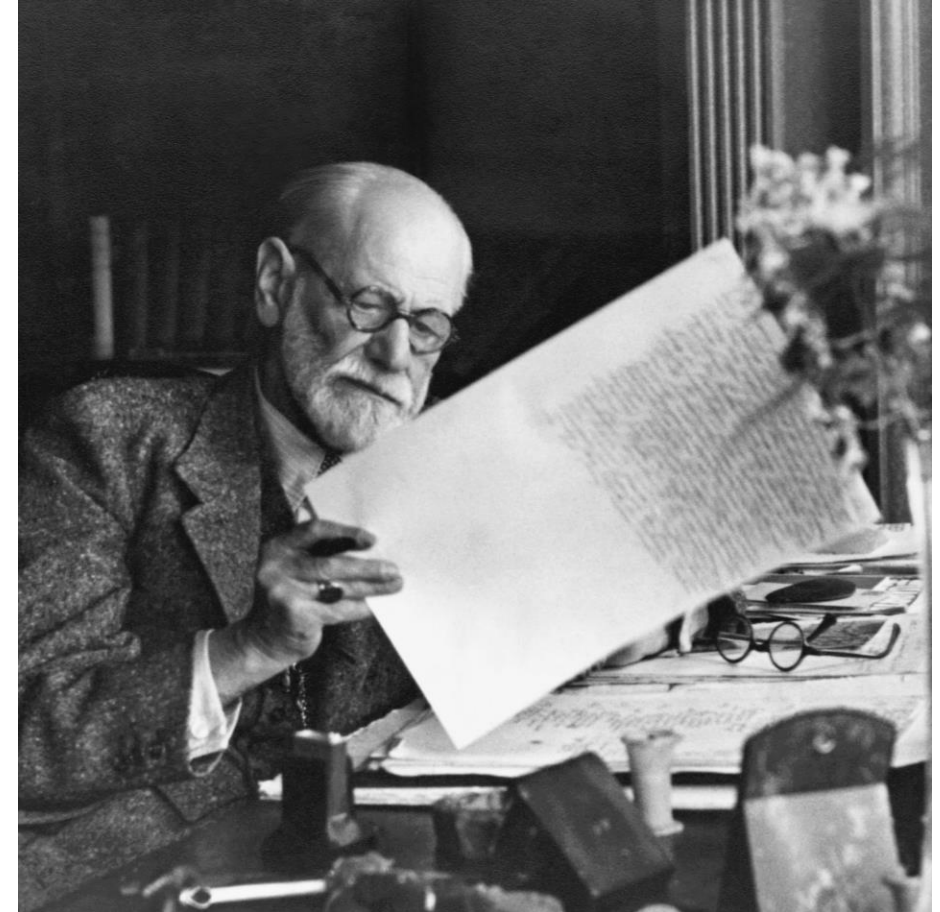
When dealing with patients, you have obligations of confidentiality.

This poses problems for a man wanting to write and publish his theories for the world.

So...

Freud started psychoanalysing literary characters in order to illustrate his theories.

Thus, psychoanalytical criticism was born.



Further Reading – on Connect

There is quite a bit to the theory, and some of it can be quite complex, but if you want to do some reading of some introductory material to psychoanalytical theory, the following resources are recommended and are available on Connect (I have scanned them in).

- Section on psychoanalysis from Brian Moon's *Literary Terms*
- Selected pages from Ruth Snowden's *Freud: The Key Ideas*
- Extension – chapter on psychoanalysis in Peter Barry's *Beginning Theory* (or any other theory book you have)

Other Prominent Psychoanalytical Theorists

Jacques Lacan

Carl Jung

Alfred Adler

Michael Foucault

Jacques Derrida

Julia Kristeva (also feminist)

Some Basic Freudian Concepts (relevant to our study)

Id

Ego

Superego

Psychoanalytic Theory
Sigmund Freud
Four Major Assumptions

1. Power of the unconscious
2. Human mind has three provinces
 - a. **Id** - impulse, desire, pleasure
 - b. **Ego** - sense of self, realistic
 - c. **Superego** - control of impulse, conscience



Watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PW60gOFUoIE>

The Uncanny

Defined as: “strange or mysterious, especially in an unsettling way.” (Oxford Languages)

The uncanny is the term given to the psychological experience one has when faced with something strangely familiar, rather than just simply mysterious. It describes incidents where a familiar thing or event is encountered in an unsettling, eerie, or taboo context.

Ernst Jentsch set out the concept of the uncanny which Sigmund Freud elaborated on in his 1919 essay “Das Unheimliche” (trans. – “The Uncanny”), which explores the eeriness of dolls and waxworks. Freud argued that the uncanny locates the strangeness in the ordinary.

Freud uses the term *unheimliche* which is German and can also be translated to “unhomely” – he argues that the uncanny is something that is homely but unhomely, or strangely familiar; eerie.



The Uncanny

If you would like to read Freud's essay (translated into English) then you can find it here:

<https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>

A warning – you may have to let a lot of this ‘wash over you’...

If you want to read the story – “The Sandman” (Hoffmann) – that Freud is analysing in the essay, you are in for an entertaining read – a classic horror story, that certainly haunted Freud! – then you can find it here:

<http://art3idea.psu.edu/metalepsis/texts/sandman.pdf>



The Uncanny

Expanding on the idea of the uncanny, Jacques Lacan, who was a later, French, psychoanalytic theorist, said that the uncanny places us "in the field where we do not know how to distinguish bad and good, pleasure from displeasure", and that this results in an irreducible anxiety that gestures to the Real. (The Real is another concept Lacan theorises – it can be complicated/confusing).

The concept of the Uncanny has since been explored by a variety of thinkers and theorists, such as roboticist Masahiro Mori's and their discussion of the uncanny valley and Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection.



Application

Can we interpret any aspects of Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in light of our new (basic) understanding of Freud's notion of the uncanny and/or the conscious and subconscious (in relation to the Id, Ego and Superego)?



Application

In your groups:

- Find specific examples in the text that can be used as evidence for a psychoanalytical reading of the novella. Write them down.
 - You may want to put them in a table with some notes and analysis of the evidence you find
- Construct a working thesis (that outlines a psychoanalytical interpretation of the novel)

Individually:

- Write at least one “body” paragraph in support of the thesis you have developed.
 - Use the quotes/evidence/examples you have found to support your reading/argument
- Two would be good.
- A whole essay would be amazing!

Further Reading (Psychoanalysing Jekyll)

I have put some short essays/articles on the uncanny in J&H in our Connect Library.

Additional reading related to the subconscious and J&H can be found through following links:

- <http://www.actforlibraries.org/the-psychoanalysis-and-symbolism-of-stevensons-jekyll-and-hyde/>
- <https://britlitsurvey2.wordpress.com/2017/05/02/the-strange-case-of-the-id-the-ego-and-the-superego-jekyll-and-hyde-as-the-unconscious-mind/>
- <https://www.woroni.com.au/words/freud-jekyll-and-hyde/>
- [https://bu.digication.com/rpfin-de-Siecle/Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Through the Lens of Freud](https://bu.digication.com/rpfin-de-Siecle/Dr._Jekyll_and_Mr._Hyde_Through_the_Lens_of_Freud)
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2738358/>