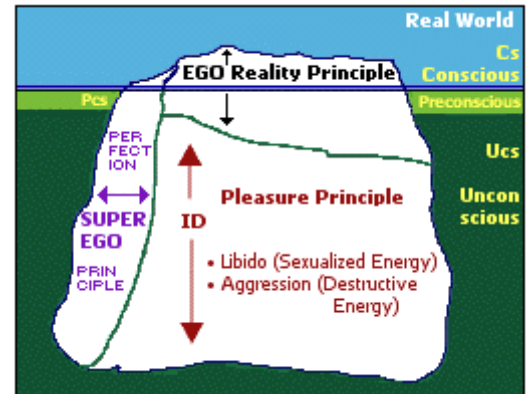


- **Concave Images**, such as ponds, flowers, cups, and caves = female symbols.
- **Convex Images**, such as skyscrapers, submarines, obelisks, etc. = male symbols
- **Actions**, such as dancing, riding, and flying = sexual pleasure.
- **Water** = birth, the female principle, the maternal, the womb, and the death wish.
- **Oedipus complex** = a boy's unconscious rivalry with his father for the love of his mother
- **The Electra Complex** = a girl's unconscious rivalry with her mother for the love of her father
- Critics may also refer to Freud's psychology of child development, which includes the **oral stage (eating)**, the **anal stage (elimination)**, and the **genital (reproduction)**.



Advantages: A useful tool for understanding some works, in which characters manifest clear psychological issues. Like the biographical approach, knowing something about a writer's psychological make up can give us insight into his work.

Disadvantages: Psychological criticism can turn a work into little more than a psychological case study, neglecting to view it as a piece of art. Critics sometimes attempt to diagnose long dead authors based on their works, which is perhaps not the best evidence of their psychology. Critics tend to see sex in everything, exaggerating this aspect of literature. Finally, some works do not lend themselves readily to this approach.

Checklist of Psychological Critical Questions

- What connections can you make between your knowledge of an author's life and the behavior and motivations of characters in his or her work?
- How does your understanding of the characters, their relationships, their actions, and their motivations in a literary work help you better understand the author's life, or the actions and motivations of the author?
- How does a particular literary work—its images, metaphors, and other linguistic elements—reveal the psychological motivations of its characters or the psychological mindset of its author?
- To what extent, if any, do you employ the concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis to understand the motivations of literary characters?
- What kinds of literary works and what types of literary characters seem best suited to a critical approach that employs a psychological or psychoanalytical perspective? Why?
- How can a psychological or psychoanalytical approach to a particular work be combined with an approach from another critical perspective—for example, biographical, formalist, or feminist criticism?

(b) Jungian Approach: <http://www.sonoma.edu/users/d/daniels/Jungsum.html>

Jung is also an influential force in myth (archetypal) criticism. Psychological critics are generally concerned with his concept of the process of **individuation** (the process of discovering what makes one different from everyone else). Jung labeled three parts of the self:

- **Shadow** -- the darker, unconscious self; rarely surfaces, yet must be faced for totality of Self
- **Persona** -- the public personality/mask (particularly masculine)
- **Anima/Animus** -- a man's/woman's "soul image" (the negative that makes a composite whole)
- A **neurosis** occurs when someone fails to assimilate one of these unconscious components into his conscious and **projects** it on someone else. The persona must be flexible and be able to balance the components of the psyche.



Mythological / Archetypal: A mythological / archetypal approach to literature assumes that there is a collection of symbols, images, characters, and motifs (i.e., **archetypes**) that evokes a similar response in all people. According to the psychologist Carl Jung, mankind possesses a "**collective unconscious**" (a cosmic reservoir of human experience) that contains these archetypes and that is common to all of humanity. Myth critics identify these archetypal patterns and discuss how they function in the works. They believe that these archetypes are the source of much of literature's power.