

Unconscious on the Page: A Freudian Reading of Alan Gratz's *Refugee*

Dr. Rohini Arya

Assistant Professor, English, Shaheed Nandkumar Patel Vishwavidyalaya, Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, India

Abstract:

Freudian psychoanalysis emphasizes the role of the unconscious in shaping human behavior. According to Freud, the unconscious mind stores repressed fears, traumatic memories, forbidden desires, and unresolved conflicts. In literary texts, these unconscious things often come on the surface through dreams, silences, symbolic actions, and fragmented memories.

This paper examines Alan Gratz's novel *Refugee* through the psychoanalytic perspective of Sigmund Freud, arguing that the novel brings the unconscious not merely as a psychological condition but as a narrative force, which are within language, silence, and symbolic imagery. The intertwined journeys of Josef (Nazi Germany), Isabel (Cuba), and Mahmoud (Syria) dramatize how war and displacement fracture not only physical geographies but also the structure of the psyche. Drawing upon Freud's concepts of the Id, Ego, and Superego, the paper contends that the refugee experience intensifies internal psychic conflict. The seas, borders, and journeys function as symbolic representations of the unconscious vast, unstable, and threatening annihilation while at the same time it offers the possibility of rebirth.

Finally the paper argues that "The unconscious on the page" reminds us that the narrative carries a second story beneath its surface, a story shaped by memory, repression, desire, and loss. To read psychoanalytically means to listen carefully for that quieter, deeper voice within the text, and perhaps within ourselves.

Keywords:

Unconscious, Freud, Repression, Dream-work, Id, Ego, Superego, Symbolism, Trauma, Psychoanalytic Criticism.