Chapter 03:- Psychoanalytic Study

3.1 Introduction

This chapter follows a formula of $03+07=10$. It means three stories of each writer have been dwelt upon at length, investigating all key aspects of them whereas seven stories of each writer have been studied in a nutshell by brief analysis of the points of psychoanalytic interpretation in them. The first three stories are analyzed in detail. The logic is that after a thorough study of all the stories, the researcher has felt that those nine stories have the maximum potential for Freudian studies as compared to the rest twenty-one stories. However, the remaining stories do have specific points for interpretation and hence they have also been studied properly. Apart from that, this research work is not just a psychoanalytic study of stories but it makes ‘a comparative psychological exploration of select short stories’ and these nine chosen stories are more fruitful for comparative study in contrast to other twenty-one stories. Below chart mentions which stories by the three authors have been studied in detail and which stories have been studied briefly in this chapter.

These nine stories have helped the researcher in developing pattern of comparative study by linking the three writers. Moreover, it has also been observed that these nine highly acclaimed stories are some of the most recurrently anthologized works in collections like:-

- Famous Tales of Mystery and Horror – Edgar Allan Poe (Rupa Publications)
- Twelve Short Stories – Edited by C.M. Sharma (Oxford University Press)
- Selected Stories by Edgar Allan Poe (Rupa Publications)
- Chekhov ni Shreshth Vaartao [Best Stories of Chekhov] – Edited and Translated by Jayant Pathak and Raman Pathak (Shabdlok Publication)
- Jayant Khatri no Vaartavaibhav (Best Stories by Jayant Khatri) – Edited by Sharifa Vijliwala (Gurjar Publication)
Structure of Psychoanalytic Study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Detailed Study</th>
<th>Brief Study</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poe</td>
<td>01) The Tell-tale Heart</td>
<td>01) The Masque of the Red Death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02) The Black Cat</td>
<td>02) A Tale of the Ragged Mountains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03) The Fall of the House of Usher</td>
<td>03) The Premature Burial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>04) The Purloined Letter</td>
<td>05) The Facts in the case of M. Valdemar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>06) The Cask of Amontillado</td>
<td>07) The Gold Bug</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chekhov</td>
<td>01) The Lady with the Dog</td>
<td>01) The Darling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02) Kashtanka</td>
<td>02) Death of a Clerk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03) Ward No.06</td>
<td>03) The Malefactor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>04) The Chorus Girl</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>05) Chameleon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>06) Vaanka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>07) The Schoolmistress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Psychoanalytic Study

Here is a psychoanalytic interpretation of three stories (in detail) and seven stories (in brief) by Edgar Allan Poe, Anton Chekhov and Dr. Jayant Khatri. Freudian concepts have been applied to the characters’ dialogues and deeds, language and body language to examine their personality. Each section commences with a brief note on the respective writers.

3.2.1 Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) is considered a father figure for the genre of short story as he was one of the earliest writers of short fiction. Despite being a poet, editor and literary critic, his prime contribution has been to the formation of short story in America. Generations after generations of writers in the world have been inspired and influenced by his theory of short story and by his stories as well. His most recurring themes deal with questions of death, including its physical signs, the effects of decomposition, concerns of premature burial, the reanimation of the dead, and mourning. Poe’s early detective fiction tales featuring C. Auguste Dupin laid the groundwork for future detectives in literature. This chapter will make an extensive study of the
chosen short stories of Poe from the perspective of psychology and will draw out certain remarkable features regarding the same.

I. ‘The Tell-tale Heart’

Poe’s best known fiction works are Gothic – a genre he followed to appease the public taste. M.H. Abrams explains the term:-

“The term ‘Gothic’ has also been extended to a type of fiction which lacks the exotic setting of the early romances, but develops a brooding atmosphere of gloom and terror, represents events that are uncanny or macabre or melodramatically violent.”

(Abrams 118)

His most recurring themes deal with questions of death, including its physical signs, the effects of decomposition, concerns of premature burial, the reanimation of the dead, and mourning. Poe wrote much of his work using themes specifically catered for mass market tastes.

During his lifetime, Poe was mostly recognized as a literary critic. He was also known as a writer of fiction and became one of the first American authors of the nineteenth century to become more popular in Europe than in the United States. Poe is particularly respected in France, in part due to early translations by Charles Baudelaire. Baudelaire’s translations became definitive renditions of Poe’s work throughout Europe.

His early detective fiction tale featuring C. Auguste Dupin laid the groundwork for future detectives in literature. The Mystery Writers of America have named their awards for excellence in the genre the “Edgars’.

It is firstly required to elucidate the concept of ‘Psychological criticism’.

“The endeavor of psychology is much like that involved in solving a crossword puzzle. It involves evaluating and interpreting the available clues and using what you already know to fill in the gaps. Furthermore, the clues themselves have to be derived from careful observation, based on accurate measurement, analyzed with
all possible scientific rigour, and interpreted using logical and reasoned arguments which can be subjected to public scrutiny.”

(Butler 04)

Even though ‘The Tell-tale Heart’ is one of Poe’s shortest stories, it is nevertheless a profound, at times, vague investigation of a man’s paranoia. It manifests the narrator’s attempt to rationalize his irrational behavior. The story commences with the narrator confessing that he is a “very dreadfully nervous” type. This type is found throughout all of Poe’s fiction, the narrator here believes that his nervousness has chiseled his senses rather than destroying them. Thus, he begins by stating that he is not mad, yet he will continue his story and will expose not only that he is mad, but that he is terribly mad. His sensitivities allow him to hear and sense things in heaven, hell, and on earth that other people are not even aware of. His over-sensitivity becomes in this story the ultimate cause of his obsession with the old man’s eye, which in turn causes him to murder the old man. Ironically, the narrator offers as proof of his sanity the serenity with which he can relate the story.

The story begins as:

“I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold, I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture, a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me my blood ran cold; and so by degrees, very gradually, I made up my mind to take the life of the old man and thus rid myself of the eye forever.”

(Poe, Famous Tales of Mystery and Horror 01)

Without any actual motivation, then, other than his psychotic obsession, he is hell bent on taking the old man’s life. Even though he knows that we, the readers, might consider him insane for this decision, he plans to prove his sanity by showing how ‘wisely” and with what extreme precaution, foresight, and dissimulation he executed his deeds.

“You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded. With what caution, with what foresight, with what dissimulation I went to work!”
Poe, Famous Tales of Mystery and Horror 02

He hopes, how thoroughly objective he can be while commenting on the atrocious deed he committed. For seven nights, he opened the door ever so cautiously, then when he was just inside, he opened his lantern just enough so that one small ray of light would cast its tiny ray upon what he calls ‘the vulture eye’. The following morning, he would go into the old man’s chamber and speak to him with cordiality and closeness.

On the eighth night, he decided it was high time now to commit the deed. When he says that he chuckled at the very notion, we know that we are indeed dealing with a highly disturbed personality – despite the fact that he seems to present his story very coherently.

On this particular night, unlike the preceding seven nights, the narrator’s hand slipped on the clasp of the lantern, and the old man immediately jumped up from the bed smelling the rat. He could see nothing because the shutters are all closed. Here, as in most of Poe’s stories, the crux of the action of the story happens within a closed surrounding – that is, the murder of the old man is within the confines of his small bedroom with the shutters closed and in complete darkness.

When he saw, to use his own term ‘hideous veiled eye’ he became ferocious. But he warns the reader not to mistake his over-acuteness of the sense for madness because he says that suddenly there came to his ears a low, dull, quick sound. It was the beating of the old man’s heart. It is at this point in the story that we have our initial vagueness based upon the narrator’s oversensitivity and madness. The question is whose heart does he hear? In moments of trauma and fright our own heartbeat zooms up so rapidly that we feel every beat. Consequently, from the psychological point of view, the narrator thinks that he is hearing his own increased heartbeat.

As he waits, the heartbeat which he heard excited him to uncontrollable terror, for the heart seemed to be beating louder and louder. The narrator was suddenly conscious that the old man’s heartbeat was so loud that the neighbors might hear it. Thus, the time had come. He dragged the old man to the floor, pulled the mattress over him and slowly the barely audible sound of the heart ceased to beat.
Again the narrator attempts to show us that because of the wise precautions he took, no one could consider him to be mad, that he is, in fact, *not* mad. First, he dismembered the old man, and afterward there was not a spot of blood anywhere. The mere narration here shows how the narrator, with his wild laughter, has indeed lost his rational faculties. Likewise, the delight he takes in dismembering the old man is an act of extreme abnormality. It is a ghastly, cold-blooded act of inhumanity.

After dismembering and the cleaning up were finished, the narrator carefully removed the planks from the floor in the old man’s room and placed all the parts of the body under the floor. As he surveyed his work, the door bell rang at 4 A.M. The police were there to investigate a shriek.

The narrator admitted the police to the house with a relaxed heart since the old man’s heart was no longer beating, and he let the police thoroughly search the entire house. Afterward, he bade the police to sit down, and he brought a chair and sat upon “the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim”. The officers were convinced that there was nothing to be discovered in the apartment that could account for the shrieks that they sat around chatting idly. Then suddenly a noise began within the narrator’s ears. He grew restless and spoke with a heightened voice. The sound increased; it was “a low, dull quick sound”. We should note that the words used here to describe the beating of the heart are precisely the words used only moments earlier to describe the murder of the old man.

As the beating increased, the narrator formed and became delirious. In contrast to the commotion going on in the narrator’s mind, the police continued to chat pleasantly. The narrator wonders how it was possible that they did not hear the loud beating which was becoming louder and louder. He can stand the horror no longer because he believes that they were mocking his horror, that anything was better than that agony. Thus, as the beating of the heart becomes excruciating, he screams out to the police:-

“Villains! I shrieked, ‘dissemble no more! I admit the deed! Tear up the planks! Here, here! – it is the beating of his hideous heart!”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 213)
It is established at the beginning of the story that he is hyper-sensitive – he can hear and feel things that others cannot. At the end of the story, if there really was a beating heart up under the floor boards, then the police would have heard it. Clearly, the narrator, who has just finished the gruesome act of dismembering a corpse, cannot cope with the highly emotional challenge needed when the police are searching the house. These two factors cause his heart rate to accelerate. His heartbeat is pounding in his ears so loudly that he cannot stand the psychological pressure any longer. Thus he confesses to his horrible deed. The narrator’s “tell-tale” heart causes him to convict himself.

One of Poe’s most popular and anthologized stories, ‘The Tell-tale Heart’ is considered a stunning example of the deep connections between the Gothic tale and modern fiction, especially in its innovative use of the subjective narrative and its psychologically rich portrayal of a human situation that remains simultaneously strange and familiar in its intimacy. The psychological complexity of both the content and the form of ‘The Tell-tale Heart’ has continued to grip both the critical and popular imagination, and anticipates more recent fictional explorations into the secret intricacy of the human condition.

The behavior of the narrator demonstrates attributes that are associated with people with obsessive-compulsive disorder and paranoid schizophrenia. When Poe wrote this story in 1843, obsessive compulsive disorder and paranoia had not been discovered. However, in modern times the traits demonstrated by the narrator lead people to believe that he has a mental illness. He demonstrates classic signs throughout the story leading the reader to believe that this character is mad. Most psychiatrists believe that when a person suffers from paranoia they most likely have paranoid schizophrenia. People with paranoia tend to believe that they have super sensitive hearing. They hear inanimate object talking to them or voices that don’t actually exist. In the case of this narrator, he showed symptom of paranoia. The narrator comments that he liked the old man but didn’t like the eye. The narrator justifies the murder by believing that the old man will vex him. The irony here is that the old man is murdered because he is considered a madman by one who is himself insane. The narrator believes that by killing the old man he can get rid of the curse that the eye possesses.

In the story under scrutiny, the narrative persona thinks that he has done the right thing by killing the old man and that he got rid of the ‘evil eye’. The protagonist is very confident for what he
has done and thinks that he had a very good reason for killing the old man: – he disliked the way his eyes looked and because he thought that the one eye was evil. This is by no means a justified or even a justifiable reason for slaying an innocent human being. The character had a lot of conversations throughout the story but all the conversations were with his psyche. The disease he talked about could be split personality. The narrator himself mentions that in the light of day, he talked to the old man with sheer reverence and modesty but it was only in the night that he felt like murdering the old man. After he has murdered the old man and when he is sitting down in the room where the old man is dead under the floorboards, and he is chatting with the police, all of a sudden he starts to hear a heartbeat, which is getting louder, louder and louder. This heartbeat may represent the character’s guilty conscience and shows us that the character is actually nervous about what he has done.

One of the most fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis, as propounded by Sigmund Freud, is the concept of

**Id (Pleasure Principle)**

**Ego (Rationality Principle)**

**Superego (Morality Principle)**

Id is that realm of the human unconscious which is chock-a-block with boundless, primal instincts; that Id is curbed by Ego and Superego, causing a lot of repression. These bottled up desires find free play either in dreams or day-dreams (fantasies). Moreover, when a person commits an act driven by his primal instinct (Id) like revenge, his conscience, his (Superego) Morality Principle pricks him and nags him. Consequently, the subject feels sandwiched between Id and Superego. The same, it seems, is the case with the narrator of the story under discussion. He feels an irrepressible urge to get rid of (what he calls) ‘the evil eye’ by assassinating the man but after fulfilling that instinctual, venomous desire, he is haunted by a sense of wrongdoing. Thus, the beating of the hideous heart at the end can be nothing but his piercing superego which leads him to the confession at the end of the story.
The murder is carefully calculated, and the murderer hides the body by dismembering it and hiding it under the floorboards. Ultimately, the narrator’s guilt manifests itself in the hallucination the man’s heart is still beating under the floorboards.

It is unclear what relationship, if any, the old man and his murderer share. It has been suggested that the old man is a father figure, or that the narrator works for the old man as a servant, and that perhaps his vulture eye represents some sort of veiled secret, or power. The ambiguity and lack of details about the two prominent characters stand in stark contrast to the specific plot details leading up to the murder. The first word of the story, “True!” can also be construed as admission of his guilt. This introduction also serves to immediately grab the reader’s attention and pull him/her into the story. From there, every word contributes to the purpose of moving the story forward, possibly making “The Tell-tale Heart” the paramount example of Poe’s theories of a perfect short story.

The story is driven not by narrator’s persistence upon his innocence but by insistence on his sanity. This, however, is self-destructive because in attempting to prove his sanity he fully admits he is guilty of murder. His denial of insanity is based on his systematic actions and precision – a rational explanation for irrational behavior. This rationality, however, is undermined by his lack of motivation (“Object there was none. Passion there was none”). Despite this, he says the idea of murder, “haunted me day and night”. The story’s final scene, however, is a consequence of the narrator’s feelings of guilt.

Thus, this analysis guides the researcher to some concrete observation. Firstly, Poe was way beyond his time in depicting the inscrutable workings of the human mind. The way he has dealt with countless psychological phenomena in his works compels us to think that he had an unsurpassable knowledge of human psychology and that too when ‘psychology’ was not established as a systematic science as it is now. Add to that, “The Tell-tale Heart” is an immortal classic in its genre. It has immense potential to be transformed into a film, an animation etc and the same has also been done more than once. The story is remarkable not simply because of its myriad literary qualities but also by the fact that it conveys a universal truth of human existence: - Human mind is so unimaginably complex and unfathomably profound that it cannot be simply compartmentalized as black or white. There are grey areas in human behavioral patterns which must be identified and understood methodically. One has to take into
consideration the grey areas in character’s dialogues and deeds and analyze them through the prism of psychoanalytic literary criticism.

II.  *The Black Cat*

“…perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart – one of the indivisible primary faculties or sentiments which gives direction to the character of Man.”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 106)

*The Black Cat* is a soul-stirring tale of murder and inhuman violence. In a feat of ferocity and influence of alcohol, the narrator once plucks out an eye of his favorite and adorable pet cat, hangs her to death and later on kills his own wife simply because she attempted to resist his violence. In this story, Poe plunges into the darkest recesses of human mind and presents before us the most startling yet the most realistic portrayal of human mind. Far from all the rosy, idealistic notions of a human being as a supreme creation of God, ‘*the paragon of animals*’ in Shakespearean term, Poe pictures ‘*the quintessence of dust*’ as mirrored in the behavioral patterns of an ordinary person. It is depicted in first person narrative and that gives it a touch of authenticity and credibility. The narrator depicts some ghastly acts he has committed but interestingly, he ponders over madness in the commencing paragraph. The actions presented by him undoubtedly make readers feel him to be an insane, perverse person but the way he describes with minute details, makes the reader realize that it is a case of *method in madness*. In order to make candid confession before his death, the narrator explains how his personality witnesses an unexpected change. A human being is “normal” largely due to the social inhibitions upon him. Socio-cultural values play a watchdog for the actions and emotions of a person but beneath that surface of sophistication lays a creature as wild and dangerous as any other. As they say: Man is a social animal – that is true but ultimately he/she has an animal lying dormant within the psyche. Certain events of a person’s life may throw open the lid of *Morality principle* and the vices start crawling out of the Pandora box of human mind.

Just like the narrator of *‘The Tell-tale Heart*’, this man also raises questions about his psychological health by making self-contradictory statements. The narrator is at war with his
own self. He is tormented by immense remorse but at the same time nothing could stop him from acting like a fiend. Poe very beautifully draws the graph of the narrator’s personality, from someone who had always been gentle and affectionate towards animals to the one who can be unimaginably brutal to them. Poe, the champion of brevity in a short story spends an entire paragraph in projecting personality of the narrator as a compassionate, affectionate and animal-loving man before the events take place. Everything goes well until a black cat is brought to their home. On the surface, the narrator manifests his disbelief in the superstition of a black cat as a witch (that’s what his wife tells him) but it seems that he is possessed by this baseless belief. Superstition, naturally, is an outcome of a weak human mind. Pluto, the cat was too close to her owner but the more affection she showed, the more the narrator got weary of it, allergic of it. At this juncture, his downfall from a gentle human to an obsessed, pervert criminal commences.

This man has otherwise been an animal-loving, tender-hearted human being; if at all one can trust his words. After a paradigm shift in his personality, he develops bizarre and sadist tendencies. His temperament and character spiral down from the height of humanity towards an abyss of inhuman violence. He confesses:-

“I grew, day by day more moody, more irritable, more regardless of the feelings of others. I suffered myself to use intemperate language to my wife. At length, I even offered her personal violence.”

(Sharma 15)

Initially, however, Pluto - the black cat is spared from the horror of the abovementioned transformation. Just like the narrator of The Tell-tale Heart, this man also considers such tendencies as a "disease". Unlike that narrator, this person blames alcohol for it. It has been noticed world over that the effect of alcohol is dangerous, a drunkard loses his psychological equilibrium and even the most horrible of crimes have been the repercussions of alcoholism.

However, it can be stated that far more than alcohol, this person's psychological illness is to be blamed for the series of gruesome acts in the story. That is because the narration of his wife’s murder doesn’t mention effect of alcohol on him. There are sufficient evidences for his psychological illness. For example, the depiction of his first attack on the cat manifests what goes within his head. There is no denial of the fact that he got furious due to high intoxication.
Under the misconception that the cat has neglected him and the cat's slight wound acting as a trigger, he seizes the cat and plucks out its eye with a pen-knife. The entire incident is depicted by Poe with such pictorial narration that it sends a shiver down the reader's spine, without fail. Just by reading it, one can get disturbed but sadly, this cold-blooded, ruthless narrator seems to stay unaffected. This is not to say that he is not at all bothered by the evil rising within him but it is evident that he is helpless, the righteousness within him is eclipsed by the devilish side of his mind. It is interesting to note the self-contradiction in his words:-

“I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen this damnable atrocity. When reason returned with the morning, - when I had slept off the fumes of the night's debauch - I experienced a sentiment half of horror, half of remorse, for the crime of which I had been guilty, but it was at best a feeble and equivocal feeling, and the soul remained untouched. I again plunged into excess, and soon drowned in wine all memory of the deed.”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 16)

Poe's self-explanatory narrative suffices to trace the whirlpool of complex thoughts in the narrator's mind. It would be strikingly significant to contextualize Freudian concepts of Id - Ego Superego. Id is Pleasure Principle (Raw/animalistic desires), Ego is Rationality Principle (Watchdog) and Superego is Morality Principle (Socio-cultural values). Freud presents human mind as a tripartite structure and human sanity depends on the equilibrium between all of them. Sheema Aleem – Assistant Professor of Psychology at Jamia Millia Islamia University, interestingly explains these concepts in ‘Theories of Personality’:-

“The id is the storehouse of primitive biological urges and is totally unconscious. These urges strive for expression in all human beings and includes the need to eat, sleep, the desire to have all kinds of sexual stimulation and the tendencies to be aggressive and destructive. … It has no regard for logic or morality. … The ego is thus said to be the executive of personality. … It balances the demands of the id, external reality and superego. … Superego is the moral wing, and tries to evaluate all the activities of the individual against its moral standards and value system.”

(Aleem 30-31)
Call him a man of weak moral fiber or a man with brittle ethical values, or a man with Id-dominated mindset; the narrator is an apt analogy for the aforementioned Freudian ideas that is for sure. This insanity or abnormality in general terms is his inability to come to terms with his own volcanic violent self. One can't help but appreciate the transparency and frankness with which he unleashes his heart. For the time being, he manages to behave sympathetically, like a normal, social animal but soon the pervert self blows away all lids of sophistication and he indulges into debauchery of inexplicable perversity.

While discussing perversity, Poe presents his own in-depth understanding of human psychology. Human mind is extremely unpredictable, as unfathomable as an ocean. The law of causality does not always apply to human behavioral patterns. One may violate rules; perform violent deeds just for the sake of doing them, without having accurate justification. Poe mentions that philosophy takes no account for such a perversion. Breaking a taboo or going against a rule has a thrill of its own. As they say, forbidden fruit is always tempting. A person's nature, the 'humor' in Ben Jonson's term, may have such dark shades. Poe's narrator says:-

“It was this unfathomable longing of the soul to vex itself - to offer violence to its own nature - to do wrong for the wrong's sake only - that urged me to continue. and finally to consummate the injury I had inflicted upon the unoffending brute.”

(Sharma 16)

One could have given a benefit of doubt to this man, had he seized to commit such malicious crimes even after that one incident but his sadism knows no bound. The dictionary of psychology defines sadism as:-

“Derivation of pleasure as a result of inflicting pain or watching pain inflicted on others, especially sexual partners (see: sexual sadism), and is crucial to sexual arousal and function. Animal abuse or torture may also contribute to pleasure attained in this manner. Usually chronic and seen primarily in men, resultant of conscious or unconscious motivations or desires, and can lead to rape, torture, and murder.”

(What is Sadism?)
As per this definition, the narrator is undeniably a victim of strong sadist tendencies. It is perhaps beyond the realm of human understanding how one can ever hang an innocent cat till death! Poe pens:-

“One morning, in cold blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree; - hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes: and with the bitterest remorse at my heart;- hung it because I knew that it had loved me, and because I felt it had given me no reason for offence;- hung it because I knew that in doing so I was committing a sin - a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it.”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 106)

The use of words likes 'sin', 'immortal soul', 'Most Merciful', 'Most Terrible God' etc gives a touch of spirituality to this spine-chilling tale. A sin is expectedly followed by suffering. Freudian concept of Superego (Morality Principle) finds a specific mention at this juncture.

Call it a consequence of his unpardonable sin or a mere chance, his house catches fire on that very night. However, the narrator considers it a 'weakness' to link the disaster and his atrocity. As a scrupulous narrator, he depicts each event with minute and elaborate detailing.

Getting rid of the cat doesn't help the man get rid of his nagging, tormenting conscience. The happenings dominate his fancy day and night. This validates Freud's notion that even the most monstrous criminal has some sort of conscience to pull him back to human kindness. C.M. Sharma has this to say about this pivotal character:-

“He continues to perpetuate unimaginable horrors on the physical plane. But on the spiritual plane, he remains conscious losing his grip over his soul. The psychological appeal of the story lies in the continuous broodings of the protagonist even when he is in the midst of committing the most heinous crime.”

(Sharma 24-25)
He visualizes the figure of a gigantic cat engraved on the wall and people expressing bewilderment at it. However, it seems to be his hallucination. This is akin to Macbeth viewing a dagger hanging in the air in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

This intelligent speaker of the story says that he received a deep impression of this fancy and fails to get rid of that phantasm for days. He undoubtedly feels some sort of sentiment but that is far from being what we call 'remorse'. Poe perplexes the readers even more when he makes his narrator get another black cat despite such bloodshed. It requires just a pinch of salt to realize that the narrator is caught in the tentacles of his own obsession. Oxford dictionary defines the term ‘obsession’ as ‘something that you cannot stop thinking about’. He, it seems, is haunted by the thoughts of the cat and that creates a chain of reactions. He brings home another cat that looks exactly like the previous one except the white spot on the body. Initially, all goes well but then slowly and surely, he develops aversion to it. This speaks volumes for the weirdness of mind. Human emotions can never be categorized in distinct binary oppositions. Water-tight compartmentalization can't be practiced in dealing with human emotions. There are certain blur, grey areas in a person's psychological constitution. In the vortex of his own puzzling, paradoxical sentiments, the character develops an irresistible urge to wound that another innocent cat. To quote his own words:-

"I soon found a dislike to it arising within me. This was just the reverse of what I had anticipated, but - I know not how or why it was --its evident fondness for myself rather disgusted and annoyed. By slow degrees these feelings of disgust and annoyance rose into the bitterness of hatred. I avoided the creature; a certain sense of shame, and remembrance of my former deed of cruelty, preventing me from physically abusing it."

(Sharma 18)

This indicates that the lid of Superego - sophistication, social values, human tenderness etc doesn't stay for long on the Pandora box of the conscience in such a man. By this time, the cat has captured his spirit for each moment. His mind is flooded with thoughts, voices and images of the diseased creature. Similar to the narrator's obsession with the old man's eye in The Tell-tale
Heart, this fellow is obsessed with the black cat. Caught in the vicious circle of his own obsessed thoughts, the narrator's psyche is drained off all rationality and normalcy.

The story reads:-

“Beneath the pressure of torments such as these, the feeble remnant of the good within me succumbed. Evil thoughts became my sole intimates - the darkest and most evil of thoughts. The moodiness of my usual temper increased to hatred of all things and of all mankind; while, from the sudden, frequent, and ungovernable outbursts of a fury to which I now blindly abandoned myself, my uncomplaining wife, alas! was the most usual and the most patient of sufferers.”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 110)

In the second half, the author holds the reader's attention and cautiously escorts him into the step well of crime psychology. It manifests to which extreme one can go in a feat of rage. At one point, he makes up his mind to murder the new cat as well but his wife interrupts him. Her dissuasion infuriates him and proves fatal for her. He slays his beloved wife with an axe. Had there been any drop of compassion left in this brutish beast, he would not have planned to dispose of her corpse. Interestingly, he calls it a "project" for tentative options to dispose of her dead body. He walls up the corpse in a cellar. He enjoys sound sleep after this act of cruelty.

After assassinating his wife, he hunts for that unfortunate cat that unknowingly triggered this macabre murder but the cat is nowhere to be found. He is hell bent on ending the life of that cat to be free from the shackles of his unbearable obsession. It is bizarre to note that this character can be at ease even after atrocious acts and that is largely due to his freedom from that creature. He says:-

“It is impossible to describe or to imagine the deep, the blissful sense of relief which the absence of the detested creature occasioned in my bosom. … Once again I breathed as a free man. … My happiness was supreme! The guilt of my dark deed disturbed me but little.”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 112)
During police officers’ investigation, the narrator feigns innocence and that makes him fall in his own grave. He audaciously tapes a cane on that very wall where he hid his wife’s corpse. His crime is all out! The police recover the dead body but strangely, the black cat is also found walled there. Poe closes the story with a kind of poetic justice. Crime must not go unpunished; sin must be followed by suffering.

As Pamela Thruschwell discusses in her biography of Dr. Sigmund Freud, Freud studied people’s comments, their gestures and postures to dig deep into their psyche. Crime always manifests itself in each movement of the culprit. It would not be insignificant to sum up with these words of the father of human psychology:-

“He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his finger-tips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore.”

(Thurschwell 27)

III. ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’

‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ has a narrator who is invited to see his old childhood friend at his isolated abode. The story famous for its series of fantastic ideas – such as Usher believing the house to have ‘sentience’, coupled with the impending death of his sister, horrible and gruesome atmosphere, unexpectedly nerve-wrecking incidents etc. Critics have also focused on the possibilities of the theme of incest in this story.

This is one of the most renowned and oft-studied tales of Poe – replete with archetypal Poe elements like horror, bloodshed, death, macabre atmosphere, supernatural elements, burying alive, various psychological abnormalities rather the “disease of the soul” and likewise. Before dissecting the tale for interpretations, it would be fair to have a bird’s eye-view on the exterior, i.e., storyline.

Roderick Usher and his sister Madeline are the last heirs to the famous Usher family. He invites his friend (anonymous narrator) to come and stay with them for some time and to help him come out of excruciating agony that he has been suffering. Through the narrator’s eyes, the author
describes bizarre, gloomy surrounding and the equally gloomy house itself. Renowned for the precision and pithiness of prosaic style, Poe justifiably spends so many paragraphs in creating the ambience of terror and sinister sequences. Call it sixth sense or telepathy or intuitive awareness, the narrator feels gloomy and depressed at the very sight of the house and narrates each facet of the locale with utmost sincerity. When the narrator meets Roderick, he finds him tremendously disturbed physically and psychologically. He looks pale and thin like a victim of the sheer of age. He is suffering from acute mental disturbance but another major reason for his ‘malady’ is that his sister Madeline is moribund and her suffering makes him sick as well. Roderick is troubled by the fact that Madeline suffers from catalepsy (a sickness involving seizures) and will soon die. He is also superstitious, thinks that his creepy house is sentient (able to perceive things) and has a great power over him. The narrator attempts to divert and soothe his mind by indulging in distractions such as music, literature etc but in vain. After few days, Roderick comes up with expected sad news that Madeline has passed away and appeals the narrator to help him bury her in the house itself. They both entomb her in the mansion of the house and days pass on. The narrator not just miserably fails to console and comfort Roderick but he also begins to get tormented by such unavoidably frightening happenings. After few days, the narrator and Roderick pass a gloomy, sleepless night by reading a story from a book. It cannot be a mere co-incidence that the story pertains to a haunted house. Quite bizarrely they both begin to hear the sounds mentioned in the story, in the house itself. After a while, Roderick jumps up with a shocking revelation that they had actually buried Madeline alive and that he can sense her trying to come out of the closet. To the reader’s utter surprise, the lady actually comes up in a gory, bruised, blood-stained look, walks towards Roderick and falls on him. Aghast by such awful incident, the narrator flees from frightening spot. Roderick dies there and the narrator looks back after running away. He finds the fissure in the house mentioned earlier in the story, widening and then the entire house crumbles like a castle of cards.

Poe believed that in a short story, the author has power to present ‘the full design’ of the story without interruption. His aim must be to create ‘a certain single effect’ and that each word must correspond to ‘his preconceived effect’. Poe propounds that in the very first sentence, the author must strive to lead the reader to this ultimate aim and in the entire write up there should not be a single word which doesn’t lead to ‘the one pre-established design’. Likewise, the first sentence of the story under discussion consists of words such as ‘dull’, ‘dark’, ‘dreary’, ‘melancholy’ etc.
This unfailingly helps the reader create a mental picture of something sinister to follow in the pages he is going to read. Language of the story has a lot of clues for this puzzling plight of the Ushers. As soon as the narrator reaches Usher’s house, his heart is engulfed in an inexplicable yet ‘insufferable gloom’. The entire house seems to him nothing less than a microcosm of depression. Poe, the master story-teller has employed an unsurpassed range of relevant words in order to create excellent ambience of agony and anxiety. It also helps one in conducting psychoanalytic study of characters in this story. Hence, the researcher has noted down some such crucial phrases and expressions which help in attaining that ‘pre-established design’.

- The bleak walls
- An utter depression of soul
- An unredeemed dreariness of thought
- Mansion of gloom
- Sorrowful impression
- Dull, sluggish, faintly discernible
- A want of moral energy
- An excessive nervous agitation
- Morbid acuteness of the senses
- Intolerable agitation of soul
- Prostrating power of the destroyer
- A settled apathy
- A gradual wasting away of the person
- A ghastly and inappropriate spleandour
- A rapid ghastly river
- This region of horror
- Heavy and horrible beating of her heart
- Blood-red moon
- Atmosphere of sorrow
- Sickening of the heart
Apart from above expressions, there is a recurrence of words like ‘horror’, ‘terror’, ‘macabre’, ‘gloom’, ‘sorrow’, ‘ghastly’, ‘disease’, ‘horrible’ etc. This phenomenon speaks volumes for the elements of abnormal psychology prevalent in the characters. In the initial segment, Poe hints at it when the narrator mentions the letter of Roderick Usher inviting him at the House of Usher.

“The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness – of a mental disorder which oppressed him – and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best, and indeed, his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady.”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 116)

Malady, disease or weakness of the human mind is the crux of this story. One such weakness is belief in superstition. When the narrator arrives at the house, he first beholds the reflection of the house (inverted house) in the nearby lake and that gives him a sense of danger and lurking fear. In a way, it can be analyzed as a prophetic moment. Further, Roderick also mentions a superstition that this house has a sentient tendency. Interestingly, both these superstitious notions find significance at the end of the story when the house collapses after the death of brother-sister duo. What does it indicate? Does it suggest that the author himself believed in superstition? Does it emphasize autobiographical elements which critics have time and again construed in Poe’s works? There can be one speculation that just as Shakespeare employed supernatural elements in his plays to appease Elizabethan audience, Poe did the same service to his readers. The Soothsayer’s warning that Caesar should ‘beware of the Ids of March’ which comes true later in ‘Julius Caesar’, prophesy of the three witches at the commencement of ‘Macbeth’, appearance of the ghost of King Hamlet to instigate his son for avenging his murder in ‘Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark’, so on and so forth. Such recurrences mirror contemporary Elizabethan society in Shakespeare’s plays. However, unlike Shakespeare, Poe’s world of stories doesn’t reflect the trends of the time. Instead, he has his own world of mystery, imagination and horror. His characters manifest traces of psychological disorders as investigated by Dr. Sigmund Freud; disorders such as depression, anxiety, neurosis etc. Anxiety is a state of uneasiness, indecision, and fright which stems from the anticipation of a realistic or fantasized frightening occurrence or situation and many a times it impairs physical and psychological functioning of an individual.
This stands in stunning significance to the character of Roderick Usher who is frightened to the core and is desperate to get rescued out by the narrator. Not just his words but even his silence conveys his excessive nervous agitation. His appearance, gestures, postures, facial expressions etc communicate the same. The narrator finds Roderick to be a slave to an anomalous species of terror. Roderick confesses that he shudders at the thought of even a trivial incident. It would be interesting to read Poe’s own words here:-

“To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. ‘I shall perish’, said he, ‘I must perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect – in terror. In this unnerved – in this pitiable condition – I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR.”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 121)

Notably, Roderick’s words come true at the end of the story. He actually succumbs to superstition and terror, abandons life and reason together and surrenders to FEAR when Madeline comes out of the tomb and falls on her. He loses life out of ultimate fright. That moment witnesses zenith of his anxiety. This unusual and extreme anxiety or phobia for some unreasonable threat is a symptom of acute neurosis. On a closer look at the behavioral pattern of Roderick, one can’t fail to realize that his character constitutes almost all symptoms of what medical science now terms as ‘Neurosis’. Here is a definition of ‘Neurosis’: -

“Any of various mental or emotional disorders, such as hypochondria or neurasthenia, arising from no apparent organic lesion or change and involving symptoms such as insecurity, anxiety, depression, and irrational fears, but without psychotic symptoms such as delusions or hallucinations”

(Psychoanalysis Glossary)
Roderick Usher himself confesses his auditory nerve and states that he can hear voices which are not so intensely audible to others. His ‘*morbid acuteness of senses*’ resembles with the over acuteness of senses present in the protagonist of ‘*The Tell-tale Heart*’. This tendency to hear nagging sounds and be repelled by them is frequently mentioned in the story. This character also contains traces of what is now called ‘paranoid schizophrenia’. This psychological disorder is a subtype of schizophrenia in which the patient has delusions that a person or some individuals are plotting against them or their relatives. Patients of paranoid schizophrenia tend to have auditory hallucinations – they hear things that are not real.

Years before the systematic science of Psychology evolved, Poe perfectly presented the various elements of psychological disorders. For instance, the narrator clearly mentions the ‘*morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer*’. The narrator was expected to help his friend get out of this turmoil of the mind but instead, he himself seems to be slowly pulled in the vortex of sinister sequences. While he reads out the ballad, he confesses to be driven away by a train of thoughts about the sentience of the house. The use of plural pronouns – ‘*us*’, ‘*we*’, ‘*our*’ etc suggest that he has begun to identify with the pathetic condition of his friend Roderick.

Satish Kumar observes that with the purpose of creating unity of effect, Poe preferred certain stylistic devices. He was concerned with creating a damp ambiance of delusion, despair, death and intangible terror. The scholar has this to say about this story:

“…his best story in this manner is a rhapsody of terror which grips on like a nightmare. Nothing can surpass the skill with which little by little, an atmosphere of horror is created, until the reader is ready to thrill through every never – and then the sound of the footsteps of the lady, buried alive and rearisen, is heard outside the door. It is a scene of horror that cannot be excelled.”

(Kumar 27-28)

IV. ‘*The Masque of Red Death*’

‘*The Masque of Red Death*’ pertains to the inevitability of death. It commences with Prince Prospero’s desperate efforts to avoid fatal plague known as the Red Death by hiding in the abbey. As the paw of death comes closer, guests in each chamber get more and more terrified.
Ultimately, death consumes them all and that includes Prince Prospero as well. When death approaches the revelers, disguised as a gruesome guest, Prospero gets seriously offended and scared. As it is said, fear is the root of anger, he infuriates at this unexpected arrival but he is helpless. The story also points at general human tendency of escapism. People generally try to run away from danger or threat but in the case of death, it is simply inescapable. Poe has designed entire story in quite metaphoric manner in a sense that the seven chambers, colors in them etc symbolize human life. Prospero’s attempt to avoid death is an embodiment of usual human tendency to stay alive for as long as possible. The seventh and last chamber is black – color which signifies death. When the clock rings at every hour, it is so loud that the music has to be stopped for a while and it can also be construed as a bell that tolls for the guests’ death.

Prince Prospero can be analyzed as an embodiment of Life Wish. As mentioned earlier, his yearning and desperate attempts to avoid death represents escapism about death prevalent in almost all human beings. Death, however, is the ultimate reality. Freudian concept of Life Wish and Death Wish deserves a mention here. Every human being undergoes this conflict of contradictory feelings and one’s intense craving for life is an outcome of struggle to survive. Death is unavoidable and the only definite truth of life. Be it an ordinary person (the poor peasants who die in the story) or a prince like Prospero, death engulfs them all alike.

V. ‘A Tale of the Ragged Mountains’
‘A Tale of the Ragged Mountains’ takes the reader through an eerie tale of unexplainable happenings. It illustrates certain scientific discoveries of Poe’s day, such as Mesmerism. The story also employs age-old Indian concept of rebirth of the soul. This story also contains the practice of mesmerism, fantastic description, role of supernatural elements etc. Just like ‘The Facts in the case of M. Valdemar’, mesmerism plays pivotal role in this story but unlike that story, this one exploits the theme of reincarnation. Human endeavors to control and rule over sleep, memory, death etc have often resulted into disasters. This open-ended story leaves readers baffled as to whether the startling similarities between Bedlo and Oldeb are merely coincidental or is it a case of rebirth of the soul. This ambiguous and puzzling nature of the story has been criticized by the scholars.
VI. ‘The Premature Burial’

‘The Premature Burial’ is a story on the theme of being buried alive. It elaborates upon several incidents of this horror of burial before death, before the narrator recounts his burial. The story deals with concepts like claustrophobia, catalepsy, dream of death and premature burial, paranoia, terror etc. Before presenting a spine-chilling account of his own cataleptic experience, the narrator dwells upon some other such cases. However, it is evident that the narrator has also developed an acute phobia of being buried alive mistakenly due to his disease and makes all possible attempts to be surrounded by friends. As phobia is an unjustified fear of something or someone, the narrator suffers from an incomprehensible fear of being buried alive. Madeline Usher, a patient of catalepsy in ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ is buried alive by her neurotic brother Roderick and the narrator. Similarly, this story presents account of premature burial. Moreover, this story presents psychological aftermaths of accounts of such premature burial. It is predictable from the narrator’s account of other victims of being buried alive, that he is going to elaborate upon his own experience. However, against the reader’s anticipation, the author makes his narrator confess that what he experienced is not actual premature burial but only a case of fantasy.

It exemplifies usual human dread of death and desperate attempts to avoid it. The story also makes an irony on such human efforts in a sense that by being obsessed with the thought of death, an individual spoils his life. Even outside Poe’s world of the grotesque and the arabesque, it can be perceived on a larger scale of human life in general. While worrying about death which is still a matter of future, a person sometimes spoils his safe and secure present. The narrator of this story is an apt example of the same.

Years before theories on the powers of unconscious mind came into being; Poe conveyed it through his stories that the flow of thoughts can lead an individual into an abyss of devastation which can be far more gruesome than the actual death.

VII. ‘The Purloined Letter’

A highly acclaimed work of Poe, ‘The Purloined Letter’ is an early forerunner of the modern detective story which tells the tale of a woman of royalty who is blackmailed by a cabinet
minister. When the police fail to unlock the mystery of stolen letter, it is Dupin who solves the riddle by the virtue of unsurpassed intellect. One of the masterpieces on crime psychology, the story revolves round a fabulous concept presented by the detective: - the real key to cracking a crime lies in entering the mind of the criminal and that’s precisely what Dupin does. The police official leaves no stone unturned to detect the stolen letter but he fails. He thoroughly investigates every nook and corner of the suspect’s house to the extent of checking the binding of books and dismantling furniture. Actually, the police officer employs all principles and concepts of police investigation but he is unable to think like the convict. Dupin has this strategy to think like the suspect and this strategy is the crux of the story. He explains: -

“When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see, what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression.”

(Poe, Tales of Mystery and Imagination 427)

Another interesting psychological phenomenon that the author employs is that people generally tend to ignore what lies in front of them out in open, like huge hoardings beside the roads and it is taken for granted that something can be hidden only by placing it to a distant, unapproachable area. Despite the fact that the police officers explore all avenues to find the purloined letter, they fail because the letter has been deliberately placed by the minister on a card-rack with some visiting cards, to give an impression that it is an insignificant paper lying carelessly on the pasteboard. Detective Dupin skillfully replaces it with an analogous letter.

VIII. ‘The Facts in the case of M. Valdemar’

‘The Facts in the case of M. Valdemar’ is the story of how a mesmerist puts a man in a suspended hypnotic state at the moment of death, seeking to blur the lines between fiction and reality. Just like ‘The Masque of Red Death’, this story also conveys a message that death is unavoidable despite all human strivings to survive. It deals with theme of using mesmerism to avoid death for as long as one can. It is an influence of the prevalent attempts at the suspension
of death through mesmerism. The story is replete with archetypal Poesque elements – decomposition of human body, constantly lurking fear, characters swinging between life and death, arousal of uneasiness and anxiety, Gothic atmosphere etc. Poe explores the implications of dangerous science which attempts to challenge the laws of Nature. One can recall Mary Shelley’s timeless novel ‘Frankenstein’ which also pertains to human attempts of overpowering Nature through scientific advancements. Like Mary Shelley, Poe also questions misuse of science and warns at its devastating repercussions. End of the story arouses strong sense of disbelief, disgust and distress at once.

IX. ‘The Cask of Amontillado’

“If in many of my productions terror has been the thesis, I maintain that terror is not of Germany but of the soul.”

(Rans 20)

Aforementioned statement of Edgar Allan Poe perfectly suits ‘The Cask of Amontillado’ which is a story of dreadful, avenging soul. It is about Fortunato who has insulted the narrator and now Montressor is out to avenge it. He cajoles Fortunato to come to his home as a connoisseur to check the veracity of a rare brand of Amontillado. The narrator leads Fortunato deeper and deeper into the graveyard, getting him drunker and drunker along the way. The narrator chains Fortunato until he begs for mercy. After Fortunato cries out Montresor’s name, Montresor walls Fortunato alive. Then Montresor finishes the job and leaves him there to die. At last, Fortunato’s cry for help and the recurrent mention of Amontillado are heard. It is a startling story of how much one can get offended by a friend’s taunting remarks and to which extent one can go to avenge his humiliations.

Poe’s understanding and presentation of human psychology is unrivalled. The narrator very well knows that his victim is proud of his connoisseurship of liquor and exploits this aspect. Moreover, he also expresses, more than once, his wish to contact Fortunato’s rival for testing Amontillado that he has bought. He pretends to be worried about his victim’s health and requests to drop the plan. This is an indirect instigation to a person and it works. Ironically, the name Fortunato in Italian language means ‘fortunate’ person. It is interesting to note that the motive or
propelling factor for murder is more or less petty, unjustified and even bizarre in Poe’s stories. At the same time, it is equally interesting to note how scrupulously the characters plan and execute their ‘project’ or ‘good will’ or ‘task’ as they call it. The narrator of ‘The Tell-tale Heart’ slays his master for his so called evil eye, the narrator of ‘The Black Cat’ plucks out eye of a cat in sheer perversity propelled by debauchery of liquor and he then assassinates his own wife simply because she attempts to resist his horrendous acts. The narrator of the story under scrutiny walls alive Fortunato because he is enraged by the latter’s insults. Such is the mystery of human mind!

X. ‘The Gold Bug’

‘The Gold Bug’ is a story of William Legrand who was stung by a gold-colored bug. His servant, Jupiter, doubts that Legrand is probably turning insane and seeks help of Legrand’s friend, an unnamed narrator. He consents to come to his old friend’s home. Legrand pulls the other two into a thrilling enterprise after decoding a secret message that will lead to a buried treasure. With the theme of cryptography, the story is a forerunner of the genre which is now known as detective fiction. Belonging to Poe’s sub-genre – Tales of Ratiocination, ‘The Gold Bug’ is akin to other detective stories of the same author in nature and narration. It deals with Legrand’s treasure-hunt enterprise and he resorts to cryptography in order to locate the hidden treasure worth millions of dollars. In this story also, Poe has sustained his signature style of sinister and supernatural atmosphere. Like his other tales, ‘The Gold Bug’ makes human intelligence play a crucial role in unlocking the riddle of a hidden treasure. To sum up, Edgar Allan Poe has presented a kaleidoscopic picture of human mind ranging from crime and crime-detection, adventure, treasure-hunt, scientific inventions and likewise. Psychotic obsession, madness, perverseness, neurosis, paranoia… Poe’s stories have them all, so far as psychoanalytic study is concerned.
3.2.2 Anton Chekhov

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860 -1904) is one of the most celebrated Russian playwrights and short story writers. His career as a dramatist produced four classics: The Seagull, Uncle Vanya, Three Sisters and The Cherry Orchard; and his best short stories are held in high esteem by writers and critics. His originality consists in an early use of the stream-of-consciousness technique, later adopted by James Joyce and other modernists, combined with a disavowal of the moral finality of traditional story structure. The short story collection At Dusk (V Sumerkakh) won Chekhov the coveted Pushkin Prize "for the best literary production distinguished by high artistic worth". Despite Chekhov's eminence as a playwright, some writers believe his short stories represent the greater achievement. Vladimir Nabokov once complained of Chekhov's "medley of dreadful prosaisms, ready-made epithets, repetitions." But he also declared The Lady with the Dog "one of the greatest stories ever written" and described Chekhov as writing "the way one person relates to another the most important things in his life, slowly and yet without a break, in a slightly subdued voice."

I. The Lady with the Dog

'The Lady with the Dog' by Anton Chekhov is a moving tale of extramarital union of two people who struggle to find their way out of the labyrinth of social life. Dmitri Dmitrich Gurov is a philanderer with a cool, carefree attitude towards life. A father of three kids, Gurov is least interested in his matrimony and roams around in Yalta where he happens to meet Anna Sergeyevna. Anna is also a married woman with similarly dissatisfied conjugal life. She interacts with Gurov and they quickly get involved in a relationship. This story has much room for psychological excavation especially in these two major characters.

Chekhov explores the flow of thoughts of Gurov and Anna throughout the story which facilitates the researcher to analyze these characters. By a beautiful presentation of the graph of their relationship, the author has dealt with various concepts of human psychology through the characters of these two lovers. It would be apt to explore psychology of these characters on the basis of their dialogues, acts and workings of mind from the first to the last statement of the story.
By nature, they both are diametrically opposite. Gurov is a typical, chauvinistic male with a high misogynist tendency whereas Anna is a lady of heightened Morality Principle. Gurov considers women as *the lower race* and always looks at them with some sort of scorn and triviality. Not unexpectedly, he has long been unfaithful to his wife. A sensible reader would immediately realize that for Gurov, a woman is nothing but an object of need gratification. Largely driven by carnal desires, he goes on having multiple affairs and switches over from one relationship to the other until he meets Anna. As he has undergone pangs of complications arising out of affairs with women, he believes in the theory of once bitten twice shy but ultimately fails to resist temptation of tantalizing relationships. Thanks to his hunting tendency, he targets Anna and successfully entices her. After making love with him, Anna is agonized by a nagging guilt of illicit union. Fed up of her barren matrimony, she understandably succumbs to her Id, her desire for both carnal and emotional satisfaction but her Superego, her guilt of cheating on her husband torments her. It is evident that disappointment of marital life leads to extramarital relationships but there is usually an undercurrent of guilt for breaking the socio-cultural taboo and for cheating on her husband. The author has made a charming presentation of Anna’s inner turmoil by her expressions of intense self-humiliation. Her tears and sobs convey a strong sense of wrongdoing and she laments:-

“How can I justify myself? I’m a wicked, fallen woman. I despise myself and have not the least thought of self-justification. It isn’t my husband I have deceived, it’s myself. And not only now, I have been deceiving myself for ever so long. My husband is no doubt an honest, worthy man, but he’s a flunkey. I don’t know what it is he does at his office, but I know he’s a flunkey. I was only twenty when I married him, and I was devoured by curiosity, wanted something higher, I told myself that there must be a different kind of life. I wanted to live, to live… I was burning with curiosity… you’ll never understand that, but I swear to God I could no longer control myself, nothing could hold me back. I told my husband I was ill, and I came here… and I started going about like one possessed, like a madwoman… and now I have become an ordinary, worthless woman, and everyone has the right to despise me.”

(Chekhov, 101 Short Stories 160)
Despite the fact that there is a lot in common between them, there are some distinct differences as well. Even though both have grown weary of their spouses, Gurov quite casually and comfortably indulges in affairs with women. There had been many women in his life but he has never been emotionally tied to any of those bonds. He does not seem to be guilt-ridden by his infidelity to his wife. On the other hand, Anna is incessantly tormented by crushing guilt leading her to the point of self-humiliation, calling herself a madwoman, an ordinary, worthless woman etc.

“...there was a feeling of embarrassment in the atmosphere, as if someone had just knocked at the door. Anna Sergeyevna, ‘the lady with the dog’, seemed to regard the affair as something very special, very serious, as if she had become a fallen woman, an attitude he found odd and disconcerting.”

(Chekhov, 101 Short Stories 159)

Needless to say, Anna is a classic case of heightened Superego leading to constant self-humiliation. She represents countless women who feel frustrated by monotonous matrimony, insatiate erotic and emotional desires and are thus compelled to cross threshold of socio-cultural norms. Quite contradictory to Anna, Gurov fails to identify with this conflict and he feels bored to death listening to her sorrow. He finds her remorse unexpected and out of place. Just as many men, he is unable to unravel the intricacies of a woman’s heart. He takes this relation for granted and feels that soon even the memories of it would fade away but life proves him wrong.

Notably, not many of such thoughts are expressed through dialogues and larger segment is revealed through the narration of their thought patterns. Due to this quality, the story has a rich potential for psychological study because the author prefers to depict the flow of thoughts by both Anna and Gurov. For instance, after Anna’s departure Gurov tries to console his grief-stricken heart by considering it as one of the many adventures in his life and presumes that it would soon be nothing but a memory.

It is this memory that haunts him later and makes him realize that he has fallen in love head over heart. Chekhov portrays fragile feelings of this love-sick man. On the exterior, he involves himself, although mechanically, into the routine activities of his daily life, he is engrossed in Anna’s thoughts each moment. Naturally, he is overwhelmed by an irrepressible urge to share his
delicate emotions but he can’t as it is not a socially sanctioned love relationship. After their intense yet abrupt encounter, they both depart and believe that there’s an end to it but life proves them wrong. Gurov took it for granted that very soon he will be able to bury this chapter into the depths of his unconscious but by and large, he gets caught in the whirlpool of Anna’s memories.

“He had believed that in a month’s time Anna Sergeyvna would be nothing but a vague memory, and that hereafter, with her wistful smile, she would only occasionally appear to him in dreams, like others before her. But the month was now well over and winter was in full swing, and all was as clear in his memory as if he had only parted with Anna Sergeyevna the day before. And his recollections grew ever more insistent.”

(Chekhov, 101 Short Stories 163-164)

Similarly, Anna forces herself to forget the moments with Gurov and endeavors to immerse herself into the mundane activities of life. However, she fails to do so. Possessed by Anna’s thoughts and feelings, Gurov cannot resist reuniting with her and visits her town. Repeated mention of the grey fence at Anna’s house, ‘this accursed fence’ as the story reads, appears to be a metaphor for the smothering prison of her matrimony. Gurov catches her in a theatrical performance. On the very sight of the lady, his heart skips a beat or two. He realizes that Anna is his world; she means everything to him and that he can’t breathe in relief even once without loving this lady. When they are again face to face, Anna is startled to see him. She is so stupefied as well as terrified that she rushes from the place and pleads Gurov to leave this place.

Their reunion at the theatre is not confined to just an abrupt exchange of intimate words but it represents psychological struggle of the poor lovebirds. Anna feels divided between her husband and her love. The story contains a fascinating depiction of her agonized and sandwiched state of mind. Dread of being caught makes Anna impel Gurov to go away. She promises to return to Moscow to meet him.

If Anna feels divided between her husband and Gurov, Gurov also leads a double life. In public, he pretends to live the same life with his friend, family and acquaintances. He continues all his habitual activities of chatting with friends, discussions at the club, his derogatory remark on women as ‘lower race’, enjoying daily life with his wife etc but all these things remain only on
the surface or exterior of his existence. In the heart of his hearts, he pines for Anna. However, there is a remarkable change in his perspective now. He begins to judge people by his own self. He realizes that everyone is like a moon, having a darker side which they never show to others. Just as he has to wear a mask of fake smile and warm greetings, he believes that others also generally conceal the secrets of life under the camouflage of normal social life. He thus realizes that ‘every individual existence revolves around mystery’. When they meet again, they feel helpless in the shackles of their individual commitments and familial responsibilities. Their secret meetings and lurking fear of people make their life not just gloomy but fragmented.

The story is an acute observation of the prevalent patterns of relationships in the society. Initially, the story runs as a usual tale of illicit union but later on, the writer arouses sympathy in a reader’s mind for these star-crossed lovers. Moreover, it also points to the futility of such aimless, hopeless relationships which result from social institution called MARRIAGE.

At one juncture, both Anna and Gurov feel remorse for being already married. Love and marriage are two distinct ideas. Love is a natural, instinctual process of Nature whereas marriage is a social institution which may exist with or without the presence of love. In such cases, when there’s no love left in a marriage, it remains nothing more than a lifelong burden and chances for such extramarital relations invariably arise. The author presents a beautiful metaphor for such crestfallen lovers:

“He and Anna Sergeyevna loved one another as people who are very close and intimate, as husband and wife, as dear friends love one another. It seemed to them that fate had intended them for one another, and they could not understand why she should have a husband and he a wife. They were like two migrating birds, the male and the female, who had been caught and put into separate cages.”

(Chekhov, 101 Short Stories 170)

This feeling of being in a cage is an outcome of an important metamorphosis that both these characters undergo. Anna has initially been a law-abiding woman but dissatisfaction of marriage makes her cross the boundaries and her meeting with Gurov intensifies the realization of the same. Standing in stark contrast to the love of Gurov, her husband’s relationship seems to her far more futile than ever before. On the other hand, Gurov no longer remains a carefree womanizer

105
but finds himself completely transformed. Sadly, they both are powerlessly caught in the trap of social obligation and they strive to find a way out, but with no success. Chekhov sums up the story with an unresolved riddle of relationship. That is precisely where the charm of this story lies and that places it above all other romantic stories or stories of illicit union. Chekhov’s craft of characterization is one of the multiple reasons why ‘The Lady with the Dog’ is one of his most celebrated stories throughout the world. Note must taken of the fact that a stalwart like Vladimir Nabokov declared this literary work to be one of the greatest short stories ever written.

Chekhov is such a literary craftsman who is well versed with presenting workings of human mind. His pen is mighty enough to draw out idiosyncrasies and intricacies of the psyche in a metaphoric and artistic manner.

II. Kashtanka

‘Kashtanka’ by Chekhov is a sensible and touchy story of a female dog and her journey of life. On the surface, it reads more like an enchanting, long fable but it consists of the various facets of human nature. Divided into seven chapters, the story records the experiences of the character after she is lost and separated from her owner Luka Alexandrich (a carpenter) in the hustle and bustle of army parade in the street. She is found by a stranger. Throughout the story, Chekhov has attributed human behavioral patterns to the animals with such elegance that the reader gets swayed away with the flow of the narrative. The new owner is an artist who performs in a circus with some animals like a swan, a goose, a female pig etc. Interestingly, Kashtanka happens to find out her previous master while performing in a circus and joins them for home. That’s where the story closes. It is all about the trajectory of Kashtanka and what goes within her head during that phase. There is no denial of the fact that Chekhov is a sort of pearl diver in the unfathomable ocean of human psychology but this is a story where he also manifests his craftsmanship of plunging into the depth of animal psychology if one can call it so. It is really interesting to note how the writer has blended the traits of human behavior and that of a dog in one character. For instance, she is ecstatic to be taken out for a walk, rushes here and there, chases other dogs and thus communicates her élan.
When she is lost in the market, she anxiously fumbles for even a glimpse of her owner, tries to sniff his scent and by all such doggish gestures, she desperately endeavors to reconnect with her master but all in vain. For her, there exist only two types of human beings: masters and customers. The masters can beat her whereas the customers can’t. It is fascinating how Chekhov inspires a reader to peep into what a dog might be thinking like. However, at this juncture, one must not fail to notice the usual human emotions of anxiety and bafflement of being lost in a crowd.

This is how Chekhov pens it:-

“When it grew dark, Kashtanka was overcome by despair and terror. She cringed in a doorway and began to cry bitterly. The day’s journeying with Luka Alexandrich had tired her out. Her ears and paws were frozen and, on top of it all, she was terribly hungry. … If she had been a human being she would probably have thought: “No, I can’t go on living like this. I had better shoot myself!”

(Chekhov, Collected Works 414)

This is when she is received by that stranger and he soothes her by tender treatment. She has been given salubrious food and cozy bed. She tries to figure out which place has been more comfortable for her, this new one or the master’s home. Now this is a typical human tendency to compare situations and find out the plus and minus of both. Just as a human being can’t sleep comfortably at an unknown place, Kashtanka feels the same. By this character, Chekhov seems to have opined that no place on earth can replace ‘home’, no matter how luxurious the place is or how affectionate people are! She recalls the moments of her salad days at her home when the master’s little son played with her and pines to get there back.

The story reads:-

“…she suddenly felt very sad. She remembered Luka Alexandrich, his son Fedya, and the cosy nook under the bench. She remembered how during the long winter when the joiner was either planning wood or reading aloud from the newspaper, Fedya usually played with her. He would pull her out from under the bench by her hind legs and perform such tricks with her that everything would go green before
her eyes and she would ache in every limb. He would make her walk on her hind legs, he would pretend she was a bell, that is to say, tug at her tail until she barked and squealed. … And the more vivid the memories, the louder and more plaintive was Kashtanka’s whimpering.”

(Chekhov, Collected Works 417)

It is her nostalgia that draws reader’s attention and earns compassion for the poor dog. The dictionary of psychology defines nostalgia as:-

“1. A wanting to return to formative time or state of life recollected as being better than the current in some manner. 2. A wanting to return to a place to that one feels emotionally tied to.”

(What is Nostalgia?)

In the case of Kashtanka, it is more a wanting to her home which she feels emotionally attached with. This is precisely why she rushes to the previous master and his son in the circus in the end, regardless of all material comforts she has been enjoying at the new place.

Her craving for the bygone days is so intense that she dreams of Fedya, the son of her previous master. In the dream, the boy plays with Kashtanka and he turns into a dog and then they go home together. Dreams are almost always irrational, arbitrary, and rather absurd but they do bear a meaningful association with the flow of thoughts in one’s conscious state. Needless to say, this is an acute analogy for Freud’s theory of dreams.

“Freud believes that a dream is an escape-hatch or a safety valve through which repressed desires, fears or memories seek an outlet into the conscious mind.”

(Barry 99)

It is evident that while curing his patients, Freud shifted from techniques of hypnosis to what he called ‘free association’. Further, he began to focus on the dreams of patients to peep into their minds. In fact, it was his ‘The Interpretation of Dreams’ that has been considered his most noteworthy contribution. Freud propounds that the aspirations and expectations which fail to be
fulfilled in conscious state of an individual get pushed inside the unconscious and during sleep, in the absence of the watchdog of consciousness these unfulfilled desires begin to crawl out.

Earnest Jones, one of the most renowned Freudian scholars notes in his book ‘What is Psychoanalysis?’

“The associations obtained by analysis comprise all manner of mental processes, wishes, fears, hopes, arguments, and so on, but Freud holds that the real kernel of them which is indispensable to the formation of any dream is a wish fulfillment, the imaginary gratification of a (mostly repressed wish).

(Jones 50)

This is precisely the case with Kashtanka. She yearns to return to her own home, hopes to play with Fedya and that’s why she dreams of returning to home with Fedya.

When a human being really yearns for someone, he /she may have hallucination i.e., imaginative visuals of the desired person or place. Separation from the loved ones causes such psychological disturbances. Kashtanka sleeps into a sort of imagination and visualizes people belonging to her previous life and feels a strong déjà vu for them. Déjà vu is a state of mind when a person feels that he/she has been to a specific place or has met specific people in past, which may not be true. The figures Kashtanka sees in her imagination resemble to her previous master and his son Fedya.

The journey of Kashtanka, in actuality, epitomizes the life of an ordinary human being. Regardless of the surface reality, the agony and ecstasy of being separated from and reuniting with the loved ones as precisely depicted in the story are universal. It thus goes without saying that Chekhov is a matchless literary artist. That is because he not only presents psychological situations most acutely but also arouses compassion for characters as and when required.

Thus, the story makes an in-depth probing into the realm of human mind and brings forth the patterns of thought through the character of Kashtanka. Prominent principles of psychoanalysis such as nostalgia, hallucinations, déjà vu, dreams etc are prevalent in ‘Kashtanka’ and that would
suffice to realize that Chekhov is not just concerned with depicting what happens to the characters in outside world but he is also expects readers to plunge into the depths of psychological complexities of the characters. His stories are like a step well: an alert reader is supposed to read between the lines in order to catch connotations of the works. Only then can one realize the complexities of human behavioral patterns.

III.  Ward No. 06

Justifiably one of the most celebrated stories by Chekhov, Ward No. 06 is not just an account of lunatic asylum but a case study in paradox of what is commonly called ‘normalcy’ and ‘abnormality’, ‘sane’ and ‘insane’ behavior. Due to irresponsible management, corrupt system and inhuman approach of people from medical fraternity, the hospital is in a filthy state. Dr. Andrey Yefimitch Ragin gets appointed at the hospital which is in a state of complete disarray. He begins work with passion and dynamism but gradually becomes worn down by the dullness and obvious futility of the work. Ivan Dmitritch Gromov, once a noble man of around thirty-three is now a patient of paranoid delusions in the ward number six of the hospital. Doctor Ragin’s life witnesses a sea change by interacting with this intelligent young man. After disillusionment of his ideals of justice, virtue, dedication and commitment, the doctor avoids visiting the hospital except for ward number six. The ward is supervised by a young man called Nikita who is obsessed about order and discipline but ironically snatches away objects and food brought by the patients from the society. He beats them violently and has a vital role to play at the end of the story. Dr. Khovotov is appointed as an assistant to Dr. Ragin who tries to usurp his position slowly and plots against him. Filthy, inhuman and hopeless state of the hospital is a result of red-tape and corruption in the system. Dr. Ragin is like an odd man out in a sense that he believes in scientific, humanitarian treatment to patients, hygienic practices, devotion to the duties assigned etc but sadly he is surrounded by people with absolutely opposite mindset. Discouraged by such a dismal state of life, Ragin finds only one likeminded companion and that is Ivan. Ragin indulges into scholarly, intellectual discussions with Ivan about spirituality, human life, social injustice, relationships, suffering etc. Dr. Khovotov exploits this opportunity and makes false propaganda that Dr. Ragin interacts more than usual with a mad man and hence there is an undeniable influence of madness in the doctor himself. Without any systematic scientific investigation, Ragin has been declared insane and consequently unfit for the job. The
sincerest employee of the hospital is thus kicked out of it. On his return, Ragin finds his position completely usurped by Khovotov and ironically Ragin is shifted to Ward number six with Ivan. The story concludes on a tragic note when he has been caged in the same room as his patient friend. In a vain attempt to escape from this intolerable, hellish hospital, Ragin is resisted by Nikita and dies of a fatal blow from this sturdy guard. Quite a larger portion of the story is spent on erudite talks between Ivan and Ragin as issues troubling human life regardless of nationhood and social system. Divided into eighteen segments, this long short story pertains to blurring boundaries of ‘sanity’ and ‘insanity’, psychological abnormalities of characters and hence majority of happenings take place in the mind rather than in external world.

In the first segment, the character of Ivan is introduced. The author clearly states that the character suffers from ‘persecution mania’. It is a complex, irrational and obsessive feeling or fear that the subject is victim of collective hostility and ill-treatment of others. The patient strongly believes that people keep plotting against him/her and that soon he/she will be a prey to some deadly assault. In actuality, there exists no such threat at all. Such a phobia largely stems from some maverick, iconoclast ideology which is against the collective belief system of the society. Persecutory delusions are the most common form of delusions in Schizophrenia in which the patient believes that he or she is being tormented, spied on, or ridiculed. Such sort of complex may result into abnormal to aggressive behavior by the patient. Ivan expresses extreme anxiety as he believes that “they” are looking for him and will soon trap him. In actuality, there is no one who wishes to trap or torture him. His psychological unease is apparent in his behavior as he paces up and down the cell. However, Ivan is not just a case of insanity but he is a complex character. There are multiple hues of his personality that the author presents in the story. By heart, he is a benevolent and tender-hearted human being. Chekhov writes:-

“His speech is disordered, feverish, as in a delirium, disjointed and not always comprehensible, but something very noble can be heard in his words and his voice. When he speaks, you recognize the madman and the human being in him. It is hard to convey his crazy talk on paper. He talks of human turpitude, of violence trampling on the truth, of the beautiful life that will come on earth one day, of the barred windows that remind him every minute of the stupidity and
It is evident by above quote that Ivan once was a virtuous, decent and law-abiding citizen of the society. He had been a student at the University of St. Petersburg. The author calls him ‘well educated’, ‘well-read’ and ‘a walking encyclopedia’. As an excellent craftsman, Chekhov not only depicts Ivan’s madness but his journey spiraling down from a sane, reputable and prosperous man to a patient of severe madness. The catastrophic incidents of his life are responsible for such a splintered existence. Nearly a decade ago, he lost his brother and his father (his father was also put on trial for forgery and was jailed), all his belongings were auctioned and he was compelled to live a destitute life with his mother. Soon, he lost his mother as well. When an individual has to withstand such fatal blows of destiny, the person may be a victim of cardiac arrest, hyper tension, paralysis, hysteria, depression etc and in the case of Ivan, it is this madness. Technically speaking, his madness is actually a case of ‘Traumatic Neurosis’.

While studying ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ by Dr. Sigmund Freud (written in 1948), the researcher came to realize that the character of Ivan accurately exemplifies the malady of traumatic neurosis. Freud observes that the probable causes for this disorder are severe railway collision, fatal accident, war and likewise. In other words, it results from some severe shock of a mechanical nature in which danger to life is involved. Loss of the loved ones and decline from billionaire to beggar can cause an irreparable damage to the will power of an individual. Precisely the same has happened in the case of Ivan. The scientist calls it an ‘organic injury to the nervous system due to the operation of mechanical force’.

According to Dr. Sigmund Freud:-

“The clinical picture of traumatic neurosis approaches that of hysteria in its wealth of similar motor symptoms, but usually surpasses it in its strongly marked signs of subjective suffering – in this resembling rather hypochondria or melancholia – and in the evidences of a far more comprehensive general weakening and shattering of the mental functions.”
There is a tiny incident which triggers entire devastation: Ivan sees a criminal henpecked and being carried away by two police officers. He somehow thinks that he might also be jailed just like that criminal and the thought catches hold of his conscience each moment like some demonic force. All individuals who pass by his house seem to him detectives. He shudders at every ring and hides himself at a tiny movement. At a fragile moment, he rushes out of his home; he is hospitalized and later shifted to Ward number six.

Had it been just a story about a mad man in an asylum, it wouldn’t have been so enchanting. What entices a reader the most is the way Chekhov raises questions about abstract notions, the binary oppositions of ‘sanity and insanity’, ‘normalcy and abnormality’.

After adequately introducing Ivan, the writer acquaints the reader with personality of Ragin. A voracious reader, a man of refined interests and keen aesthetic sense, Ivan is highly inclined towards spirituality. He is a believer in ethical practices and compassionate treatment to all humans alike. Surrounded by scoundrels and idiots, he feels suffocated. He is unable to have delightful conversation with the people around and that also leads him to converse with Ivan. Interestingly, they both sail in the same boat so far as the need to communicate is concerned. One objective for putting a wrongdoer behind bars is to devoid him of all communication which is a stern psychological punishment in itself. However, through the character of Ragin, Chekhov points out that daily life of an individual in society can also be as smothering as a prison or an asylum. In Shakespeare’s ‘Hamlet’, the protagonist mentions that Denmark is a prison to him. The conversation goes like this:-

“Guildenstern: Prison, my lord!

Hamlet: Denmark’s a prison.

Rosencrantz: Then is the world one.

Hamlet: A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o’ the worst.

Rosencrantz: We think not so, my lord.
Hamlet: Why, then, ‘tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.”

(Shakespeare 71)

‘Ward No. 06’ can thus be construed as a mirror to Chekhovian Russia.

Strength of the story lies in a fascinating juxtaposition of these two characters: Ragin and Ivan. One is a medical practitioner and the other is a certified lunatic but the oppressing, menacing system of society brings them on the same pedestal. Both have been men of tremendous intellect and critical thinking. This is precisely why they are tempted to have prolonged discussions on the various aspects of life. In a way it would not be an exaggeration to state that Ivan and Ragin are like two sides of a coin. Ivan’s talk with the postmaster Mikhail Averyanych makes his intellectual vacuum evident because he opines that books can’t give solace to soul, they are nothing as compared to live conversation and communication. Further, he compares books with ‘written music’ and conversation with ‘singing’. For such a healthy conversation, one needs a likeminded person with matching frequency of tastes. Ivan, despite being a so called abnormal person serves as one such intelligent company for doctor Ragin who is fed up of the intellectual poverty of people surrounding him. Characterization of Ivan proves that Chekhov is well versed in presenting the labyrinth of human mind. Famous filmmaker, writer, painter and columnist Mr. Sanjay Chhel rightly calls Chekhov ‘a doctor who takes X-ray of human mind’.

Below mentioned thoughts expressed by Dr. Ragin largely point to what critics consider ‘Chekhovian Agony’:-

“Life is an annoying trap. When a thinking person grows up and comes to mature awareness, he cannot help feeling that he’s in a kind of trap from which there’s no escape. And indeed, he’s been randomly brought to life against his will out of non-being... Why? If he wants to know the meaning and goal of his existence, they don’t tell him or they talk rubbish; he knocks and it isn’t opened unto him. Death comes to him, also against his will. And so, as in prison, people led by common unhappiness feel better when they come together, so in life you don’t notice the trap when people with a penchant for analysis and generalization come
together and pass the time in the exchange of proud, free ideas. In this sense the mind is an irreplaceable pleasure.”

(Chekhov, Collected Works 286)

Through Doctor Ragin’s musings propelled by his philosophical reading, the author presents a profound vision of life. After mulling over the concept of immortality, Ragin thinks about the progress of medical science and that includes psychiatry. He notes that the contemporary methods of diagnosis and cure have evolved and improved enormously as compared to the past. In bygone years, cold water was poured on the heads of the insane and they were put in mustard shirts. Instead, they are now treated as human beings and that special shows of entertainment are organized for them.

This observation stands in stark contrast to barbarous treatment of the insane in Ward No.06. Far from being a home of treatment, it has rather become some sort of concentration camp for the inmates. Through this pungent satire, the reader comes to realize the approach of Chekhovian society to the patients of psychological disorders. It is a grave reality that the larger picture has not yet changed completely even in the twenty-first century India. Admittedly, there is an upsurge in the range of clinical research, treatment and medical practices in general but by and large, the general social attitude remains more or less the same. There exists much scope of improvement in this scenario by creating awareness about mental disorders and realizing the fact that one’s psychological or emotional health is equally, if not more, important as one’s physical health. Current research work is an earnest endeavor in this direction.

Interestingly, Ragin feels crushing guilt calling himself ‘dishonest’ for being unable to change the situation. He then realizes that he is not a partner in crime but a victim of ‘necessary social evil’. He feels that it would have been better if he had been born two hundred years later. Alas! Had he been alive today, he would have realized that the crime, evils, menaces that he witnessed have increased manifold. What the researcher wishes to assert is:-

A. Radical measures must be taken to create social awareness about psychological disorders.
B. Chekhov’s stories have eternal and universal significance.
As mentioned earlier, Chekhov raises some pertinent questions through the dialogues of Ivan and Ragin. One would hesitate for a moment to consider Ivan insane after reading below views. On being asked why Ivan is put behind bars, Ragin replies that he is ill. On hearing this, Ivan pours out his frustration as:-

“"Yes, I’m ill. But tens and hundreds of mad people are wandering about at large because you in your ignorance are incapable of telling them from the normal ones. Why have these wretched people and I got to sit here and suffer for them, like scapegoats? You, the assistant doctor and the supervisor and all your hospital scum are immeasurably lower in the moral sense than any of us, so why are we being kept here and you aren’t? What’s the logic of that?”

(Chekhov, Collected Works 292)

Ragin considers it ‘a matter of pure chance’ that he is a doctor and Ivan is a mental patient. There is no logic or morality in it. Since prisons and madhouses exist, someone is got to be kept in them. If not Ivan, then Ragin, and if not Ragin, then there must be a third person. So true! Isn’t this Chekhov himself expressing his ideology through Ivan as a mouthpiece? However, his ideology sounds utopian when he hopes for the time when the prisons and madhouses would cease to exist at all.

It is this hope for brighter future that keeps one alive. Despite life being analogous to living hell, one undoubtedly wishes to breathe in air of freedom, dignity and comfort. It is akin to Freudian concept of Eros (Life Wish).

Ivan realizes that he is suffering from persecution mania but then nevertheless loves life passionately. At times, he intensely craves for life despite that constant and agonizing terror within his head. It is surprising how much wisdom and understanding of life gets reflected in Ivan’s expressions. Doctor Ragin speaks at length about idea of pain, inner satisfaction, rationalization of life, so on and so forth but that is an echo of enormous reading. Ivan retorts that he hasn’t experienced the monstrous blows of destiny so his philosophizing can’t be trusted at all and he considers them merely words of any armchair critic. Ivan had undergone corporal punishment by parents not to mention other vicissitudes of life. It indicates that Chekhov had the first-hand experience of life. Dr. Jayant Khatri considers this a prime attribute of a literary artist.
In a letter to his intimate friend and a renowned writer Chandrakant Bakshi, Khatri denounces Suresh Joshi on the grounds of not having this firsthand experience of life. This is a vital point of comparison between Khatri and Chekhov.

Due to these profound and brainstorming sessions of Ivan and Ragin, Dr. Khovotov conspires and manages to put Ragin behind bars with Ivan. It is dangerous to be intellectual among morons, honest among scoundrels and genuine among frauds. Although Ivan and Ragin are considered and treated as insane, readers do realize that they are actually the only sane and sagacious characters.

It can be said that it is not ward number six which includes madmen and that outsiders are ‘normal’ people; it is rather the other way round. As a responsible artist, Chekhov has unavoidably questioned society by unveiling pathetic reality. Doctor Andrey Effimych Ragin represents the entire community of truthful, transparent and benign people of the world when he says:-

“There are few people who don’t experience what I’m going through towards end of their lives. When they tell you that you have something by way of bad kidneys and an enlarged heart, and you start taking treatment, or they say that you’re a madman or a criminal, in a word, when people suddenly start taking notice of you, then know that you’ve ended up in a vicious circle from which you’ll never escape. You’ll keep trying to get out and you’ll become even more lost. Give in, because no human efforts will ever save you. So it seems to me.”

(Chekhov, Collected Works 320)

IV. The Darling

It’s a story of a sensible, fragile-hearted gentle lady called Olenka. She rapidly moulds herself to fit into any given situation. It can be said that she is a love addict in a sense that she can’t survive psychologically without the backbone of emotional support of someone. She seems to be a sort of person who echoes each and every emotion, opinion or attitude of the individual’s personality whom she really loves. She has no identity of her own as such but just a reverberation of her
loved ones’ personalities. She believes in devotional, surrendering side of love and she has been a giver in all her love relationships.

It’s a tale of a tender-hearted woman’s sensibilities. She nurtures each and every relationship with her fragile emotions, constant caring and submissiveness. During the course of story, the reader feels that Olenka has no individual personality but she adjusts herself to those whom she loves. In other words, Olenka dissolves her existence into that of the man whom she loves, be it Kukin the manager of an open-air theatre or Pustovalov the timber merchant or Smirnin the tenant who was a veterinary surgeon. Chekhov clearly mentions that she could not live a year without some attachment.

Is she really a love addict? Well, it seems that being a sensitive and sensible woman, she needs at least one person to take care of her heart. She just can’t live in a vacuum of sensibilities. As mentioned earlier, she believes in devotional, unconditional, selfless love but fortune snatches it away from her every time and that’s precisely the reason why she gets frightened at the knocking on the door. As they say, once bitten twice shy, but Olenka is bitten more than once. In that sense, her fear of losing someone intimate and her commitment to that particular relationship in a given frame of time, both are not just understandable but commendable.

Dr. Sigmund Freud elucidates this attribute in his acclaimed book ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’. He uses a term ‘Repetition Compulsion’ for this psychological phenomenon. Freud observes:-

“… Thus one knows people with whom every human relationship ends in the same way: … men with whom every friendship ends in the friend’s treachery; others who indefinitely often in their lives invest some other person with authority either in their own eyes or generally, and themselves overthrow such authority after a given time, only to replace it by a new one; lovers whose tender relationships with women each and all run through the same phases and come to the same end, and so on. We are less astonished at this ‘endless repetition of the same’, if there is involved a question of active behavior on the part of the person concerned, and if we detect in his character an unalterable trait which must always manifest itself in the repetition of identical experiences. … In the light of such
observations as these, drawn from the behavior during transference and from the fate of human beings, we may venture to make the assumption that there really exists in psychic life a repetition-compulsion, which goes beyond the pleasure-principle.”

(Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle 22-24)

Renowned Gujarati writer and critic Suman Shah mentions in his collection of scholarly articles ‘Khevnapurvak’ that Leo Tolstoy – one of the stalwarts of Russian literature, was so moved by reading ‘The Darling’ that he was overwhelmed with emotions and wept to Chekhov while acclaiming this story. Tolstoy remarked that ‘It is like a lace woven by a virtuous maiden.’

V. Death of a Clerk

It is a universal phenomenon that the characters belonging to the lowest strata of the society have a peculiar mindset. They live with a constant guilt and inferiority complex just because society has compelled them to live an abysmal life. The clerk in the story is one such character. Throughout the story he is tormented with this sense of wrongdoing. This phenomenon is strikingly similar with the Dalit plight in Indian society. This story largely resembles to Khatri’s ‘Amari Sharamkatha’ which portrays guilt-ridden conscience of the Dalits. Excessive consciousness for one’s social status is an outcome of the prevalent class hierarchy in the contemporary Russian society. The repetitive desire of the clerk to apologize is largely due to the fear that if he doesn’t, it may cause him or his family some damage. Apart from that, he is also overtly conscious of his image and reputation in the society. Some of his expressions do reveal this deep-rooted programming in human mind about the supremacy of the Haves over the Have Nots. For instance,

“‘I came yesterday and troubled your Excellency,’ he mumbled, as the general looked at him interrogatively, ‘but not with the idea of joking, as your Excellency was good enough to remark. I wanted to beg your pardon because in sneezing I – I did not dream of joking. How could I dare to? To joke would be to show no respect for persons – it would –’ ”
Throughout the story, he lives in a complex state of mind and inhuman treatment of the General adds fuel to the fire. His heightened Superego plus society’s indifferent, insensible approach to him cause his unexpected and tragic demise. The clerk is basically a representative of the suppressed, downtrodden and exploited mass of Russia and their psychological status, their hopes and fears, agony and aspirations, grievances and guilt etc. Thus, intense super-ego resulted from the deep-rooted class consciousness in the mind of the character is the crux of this story. This is one of the most thought-provoking stories by Anton Chekhov.

VI.  The Malefactor

Just like the protagonist of ‘Death of a Clerk’, here is another victim of unjust socio-political system. Denis, ordinary peasant, has been treated as a convict of some serious offence. Throughout the trial, this gullible guy keeps arguing to prove his innocence but he is helpless against the power hierarchy and numbness of judicial system. Chekhov is a writer who, without being judgmental, arouses sympathy for characters in a reader’s mind. This story exemplifies Chekhov’s insight into inexplicably complex reality of human life.

VII.  The Chorus Girl

The researcher has observed that many of Chekhov’s characters are the victims of unjust, unequal and largely exploitative social forces. Without any crime or fault, they have to pay a heavy price for being members of such a society. Pasha, the chorus girl is a victim of wrath of Kolpakov’s wife. Although she had not been given any gifts from the man, she gives his wife those gifts attained from others. That is because she feels empathy for the lady. After the departure of his wife, Kolpakov insults the chorus girl, humiliates her, and tries to prove her inferior as compared to his dignified wife.

It is such an irony that the lady has been labeled as a prostitute and so even her act of kindness goes unnoticed and she is insulted without any fault. It is an insult added to injury that she has to lose her own objects or valuables and Kolpakov reminds her of her being a prostitute. At this
An juncture, the researcher recalls Jayant Khatri’s *Kharaa Bapor* and *Dhaad*. In both the stories, Khatri has depicted women victimized by brutal husbands not to mention vicissitudes of life caused by hunger, famine, poverty etc. The author has unveiled vanity and dimensions of class conflict in his archetypal style. Chekhov has depicted plight of the chorus girl with such panache that any sensible reader would be filled with agony and pity for her.

**VIII. Chameleon**

*Chameleon*, as the title suggests, is a metaphoric mockery of chameleon tendency of prevalent in human behavior, i.e., not to show true colors. Police inspector Ochumelov receives complain of a dog biting a man, he swiftly looks for the owner of the dog, just then he has been informed that it belongs to General Zhigalov – a man of high social rank. He dramatically alters his stance and thrashes the victim of the dog. There is a constant fluctuation in his stands depending on the altering predictions of the ownership of the dog. This fluctuation in his physical and mental conditions is an outcome of his corrupt mindset. His criticism of the dog also reveals his fearful and flattering nature for the officers of high rank. Chekhov is at his best in portraying power politics prevalent in the society. Chauvinistic behavior of rich officials and frustration of the victimized people characterizes his stories. Behavioral patterns of characters in Chekhov’s stories largely depend on the oppressive socio-political system and menacing cultural trends of the time.

**IX. Vaanka**

Vaanka is a really moving story of an orphan child. He writes a letter to his grandfather narrating the inhuman torture that he is subjected to at the house where he stays. This poor, gullible child posts the letter with just the name of his grandfather and the village on it. Chekhov’s command over child psychology is at its full bloom here. No sensible reader would be able to resist his eyes getting moist while reading this enchanting story. The story about the plight of nine years old boy, *Vaanka* is a classic case of Chekhov’s insight into child psychology. Apart from portraying the psychology of women, peasants, doctors, patients in an asylum, lovers etc, Chekhov portrays the workings of kids’ mind in stories like ‘*Children*’ and ‘*Vaanka*’. It sends a
shiver of agony down the reader’s spine to realize that Vaanka’s grandfather is never going to receive the letter as he has simply mention ‘At the village’ on the cover. Such gullible acts of a child and especially his dream of Grandpa reading his letter intensify tragic tone of the story. Jayant Khatri has also presented a child’s agonized state of mind in his remarkable story ‘Krushnjann’ though in an entirely different context. A victim of inhuman torture and exploitation, Vaanka earns reader’s sympathy especially by his vain attempt to get out of the hellish situation.

X.  *The Schoolmistress*

As a schoolmistress, life is a tedious journey for Marya Vassilyevna – the central character of ‘*The Schoolmistress*’ because she is fed up with the monotony of life. There are chiefly two parallel flows of her thoughts: - her life as a schoolmistress and her feelings for Hanov as present in her internal world.

Marya’s mind is flooded with thoughts of school-children, examination, unethical practices of officials etc. Despite being a dedicated and talented teacher, she is helpless against the policy paralysis of the government. Chekhov also depicts menaces of Red-tape and corruption in socio-political system.

Her emotional and physical desires are apparent in her thoughts. Marya’s attraction towards Hanov is expressed quite gracefully. She is distressed by a constant nagging realization of emotional vacuum in her life. Although she endeavors to immerse herself in her profession, the longing for someone’s affection surfaces her mind frequently. Despite the fact that she dreams of examinations, peasants etc, there is an irresistible craving to be loved, admired and cared for by someone. This pining for love is largely rooted in her secluded life. She takes a journey down the memory lane – where haunting memories and tender emotions of filial devotion overwhelm her. She is in dire need of someone’s emotional support as a life force to survive and Hanov is the man towards whom she feels an intense pull. There is an enchanting portrayal of the workings of female psyche by depicting her emotions and aspirations.

This story has a noteworthy narrative structure. From beginning to end, the narration keeps switching over from external actions of physical journey to Marya’s flow of thoughts and vice
versa. There are instances where she is lost in vision of her family and lost parents, and then back to gloomy condition of life. Through these two parallel flows of contradictory thoughts in Marya’s mind, the author intensifies the dichotomy of reality and fantasy. This makes the story more realistic, convincing, life-like and appealing.

3.2.3 Jayant Khatri

Dr. Jayant Khatri (1909-1968) was one of the most significant and noteworthy short story writers in the canon of Gujarati literature of the twentieth century. He won the prestigious Mahida Gold Medal in 1945 for his short story ‘Lohi nu Tipu’ (A Drop of Blood). He was also elected a leader of opposition for the Mandvi Municipality in 1951, and the vice-president of the Mandvi Municipality during 1954 to 1960. He was posthumously honored with the Uma-Snehrashmi Award in 1968-69 for his collection ‘Khara Bapor’ (Scorching Afternoons).

It is an undeniable fact that Dr. Jayant Khatri (1900–1968) has been an underrated author in the arena of Gujarati short story writing despite the fact that he has gifted some immortal gems. There is a plethora of research available on the stories of Chunilal Madiya, Dhumketu, Zaverchand Meghani, Ishwar Petlikar, Suresh Joshi etc but very few research works have focused on Khatri’s craftsmanship as a short story writer.

He is a writer from the Post – Gandhian age in the canon of Gujarati literature. His stories are marked for the echo of various psychological principals as propounded by Freud and others. He has written stories painting vivid pictures of miseries and pressures of life. He is also known for his experimental technique of narration. While reading some of his stories like जल ‘Jal’ (Water), खळास ‘Khalaas’ (Finished) etc, the researcher has noticed emphatic presence of the traits of twentieth century English literature: traits like absurdity, existential anguish, dark humor in dialogues etc. He has a remarkable craft of employing symbols and metaphors in his stories for presenting the mindset of his characters, e.g., in ‘माटी नो घडो’ ‘Maati no Ghado’ (Earthen
Pot), the teenage infatuation and erotic pull of the characters has been presented through the metaphor of the pot. The story ends with a telltale remark by a young girl Raanal:—

“એના પર ચીતરામણ સરસ હત ક્યાં – એ ઘડો મને ગમતો, તેલો!”

(It was a beautifully chiseled pot. I liked that pot very much.)

(Khatri, Khara Bapor 44)

This story revolves round emotional and erotic bond between Saheb and Ranal and earthen pot is a metaphor for their relationship. Their relation is as soothing as cool water in an earthen pot. Just as a person strives to quench his/her thirst by that water, both Saheb and Ranal quench their thirst (emotional and physical) by this bond. However, the bond is as fragile and ephemeral as an earthen pot. In Indian spirituality, human body is metaphorically represented by an earthen pot. Made up of dust and earthly elements, it houses all desires but at last it is destined to break and merge with those same elements – just like an earthen pot.

She enters Saheb’s tent with an earthen pot to ask for some water but returns with the most blissful, intimate love a woman can have from a man. Far from being just a story of romantic relationship, Khatri makes it a tale of burning passions, vengeance and tender girlish sentiments. Through this story, Khatri proves that he is a master of depicting cryptic complexity of female psyche. Bandh Baarna Paachhal is another example of this trait.

I.  બુંધ બારણા પાછાલ Bandh Baarna Paachhal (Behind Closed Doors)

It is interesting to note that while reading Khatri, the stalwarts of the twentieth century like Freud, Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, Sartre etc hover at the back of the reader’s mind. The reason being, Khatri was a voracious reader and his reading of the modernists mirror in his work. He does not draw rosy pictures of romantic love nor does he deal with any sugary idealism. Instead, he presents the stark naked reality of life, be it ruthlessness of Nature or the eternal conflicts of human mind and that’s where Khatri stands apart from other wordsmiths. In a biographical video on Khatri prepared by the Gujarat Saahitya Akademy, Gandhinagar; the narrator says:-

124
“...And to discuss Das Capital, Freud, and western literature with Bakulesh and other intellectuals in the hotels of Mumbai, as in Paris, was not just a hobby but an intense passion for Dr. Khatri.”

(Jayant Khatri)

Interestingly, in a famous story *Ame Buddhimaano* (We, the intellectuals) Khatri’s aforementioned autobiographical event gets mirrored with panache. The characters living in the conch-shell of their own belief system, considered themselves ‘intellectuals’ and.....

“अमें भुख वांर्तु – ट्रिब्युस अने रात, ट्राममां अने ट्रेनमां, घर अने बाहर! कार्ल मार्क्स हमारा गुरु होता. हेवलॉक एलिस अने फ्लॉइड हमारे भाई तुरः होता.”

(We used to read voraciously – day and night, in the tram and in the train, at home and outside! Karl Marx was our guru. Havelock Ellis and Freud were our companions.)

(Vijliwala, Jayant Khatri no Vaarta Vaibhav 05)

Darwin, Nietzsche, Marx and Freud have been some of the most unforgettably influential thinkers of the twentieth century. They have made indelible impact on almost all the branches of aesthetics including literature. From D. H. Lawrence to Dr. Jayant Khatri, writers around the globe have acutely echoed the elements of psychoanalysis propounded by Dr. Sigmund Freud. According to Anthony Storr,

“During the twentieth century, psychoanalysis had a major effect upon both art and literature. Freud’s concept of the unconscious, his use of free association, and his rediscovery of the importance of dreams encouraged painters, sculptors, and writers to experiment with the fortuitous and the irrational, to pay serious attention to their inner worlds of dream and day-dream, and to find significance in
thoughts and images which they would previously have dismissed as absurd or illogical.”

(Storr 91)

Khatri is undoubtedly a disturbing writer. Most of his stories keep resonating in the reader’s mind after hours of reading and thus create ripples of agony and sometimes melancholy. His characters are so profoundly realistic that they keep a hold of the reader for days. One of the chief reasons is that his characters are not just vividly portrayed but they are so life-like, so realistic that the readers feel a sort of déjà vu. Almost all his characters are free from melodramatic behavior, hollow idealism or any such overstated treatment. He, it seems, paints his characters on the basis of his real-life interactions with the people around him.

Generally it has been conceived that literary theory contributes to a more enlightened comprehension of a literary work. However, it would not be an exaggerative statement to say that so far as Khatri’s stories are concerned, the reverse is also true. His stories present convincing instances for some of the pivotal principles of psychoanalytic literary criticism: Principles such as the three regions of mind, illicit union, cryptic complexity of feminine psyche etc.

Some of the most noteworthy attributes of Khatri’s craft of characterization is his unbelievable perception of patterns of human behavior and his insight into feminine psyche. Human mind is such a complex phenomenon that there never exists any water-tight compartmentalization in feelings such as good and evil, righteous and unrighteous etc. A person’s deeds, dialogues and development depend on myriad elements such as his entire nurture, the socio-cultural context, treatment of society, individual personality traits and so on and so forth. Khatri proves his mettle by portraying characters that are stripped of all the vanities and manifested as authentically as possible. Mansukhlal Jhaveri, a noted Gujarati scholar, has this to say:

“Khatri is superb in the delineation of elemental passions and conflicts raging within the human heart. He deftly handles the incidents of his stories and takes them to their climax.”

(Jhaveri 200)
Out of the rainbow of Khatri’s stories, the researcher wishes to narrow down his focus on ‘Bandh Baarna Paachal’ (Behind Closed Doors). It is a heart-wrenching story of a fallen woman. Marked for its probe into the deepest recesses of feminine psyche, the story is also noteworthy for its narrative technique. Written in 1939, the story employs the technique of implied author. Mangala (the protagonist) nags Dr. Khatri to heed her plight in the tale. Initially, Dr. Khatri dramatically presents his process of creative writing and the selection of characters. Apart from the beginning and end which is in the form of a conversation between the character and the author, remaining major portion is in the first person narrative by the lady.

Mangala is a prostitute and tells the author of her journey, spiraling downwards from a normal family life into an abysmal present. Generally a woman is either forcibly dragged into prostitution or she has to do it for the sake of livelihood but in this story, the reason is quite astonishing. Mangala’s elder sister Durga dies in childbirth complications & the family takes it for granted that Durga’s husband Champak will tie the wedlock with Mangala in due course of time but he doesn’t. Mangala has been building airy castles of her marriage with Champak and she is unable to accept it when Champak denies. She feels an immense, magnetic force pulling her towards that man. For this, the author has recurrently used a term ‘Umalko’ which means an expression of strong emotions. Gujarati lexicon dictionary defines it as:-

“Effusion of love or affection, ardent emotion or feeling.”

(Gujarati Lexicon Dictionary)

However, the researcher observes that it’s a complex whirlpool of emotional as well as erotic dissatisfaction. With the passage of time, Mangala remarry’s a man who is excessively pre-occupied with his business. Mangala is unable to come to terms with that deep-rooted longing and hence she endeavors to entice and seduce her husband but even that doesn’t work. Her husband doesn’t satiate her desires at all. Unable to cope with the gloomy reality, she begins to live in a world of day-dreams and fantasies. She has to suppress her fascination for that man but in the efforts, her desires retaliate. Freudian concepts like ‘Denial’ and ‘Repression’ are applicable here.

“Denial is a primitive ego defense mechanism that operates unconsciously to resolve emotional conflict, and to relieve anxiety by refusing to perceive the more
unpleasant aspects of external reality. ... in the long term, painful feelings and events must be acknowledged in order to avoid psychological and emotional problems.”

(Aleem 36)

Her denial leads her to suffocation and she keeps herself busy with humdrum activities of daily life but nothing soothes her. Socializing with neighbors, games, cinema…. She explores all avenues but nagging need of her body makes her restless. She vainly attempts to relive the moment of ecstatic satisfaction in day-dreaming Champak.

“... मैं विक्वल बनाई मुंजवी नावतो ये उमणकें कुरी जोशलेर घसी आयव्यो, में जातने ओरे ही. कुरी अने कुरी ये आड़ आवती गagate. अने अने पाण घसी आवतं अण उमणक नीवे, पति विनानी मारी रात सुबागरात बनी गagate. पकी तो अण द्वास्त्व अण गंहो में अमूल धन बनी गagate. दर राते, बारी दरार करो वगर भारा पति सुह्य जता त्यारे हुं अण भारा द्वास्त्व मां स्वेय़खाम्रे ओगली जती.”

(“I felt the same effusion rushing from within with a force that I grew restless and perplexed. I just lost myself. The memory of that moment kept reoccurring followed by that irresistible effusion and that made my night Bridal Night even without husband. That day-dream became a precious asset of my life. Every night when my husband went to sleep neglecting me, I willingly dissolved myself in that day-dream of mine.”)

(Vijliwala, Jayant Khatri ni Gadyashrushti 76)

She has no way out but to repress her libidinal drives. The author has beautifully narrated Mangala’s struggle within herself. Freudian concept of ‘Repression’ finds an acute manifestation in this character. According to Sheema Aleem,
“Repression is a means of preventing ideas, feelings or memory from reaching consciousness or awareness. All memories that are painful and cause guilt or anxiety are buried in the unconscious. The process is totally unconscious and automatic; it just happens whenever an idea or impulse is so painful and anxiety arousing that one must escape from it.”

(Aleem 37)

However, this unconscious repression takes a heavy toll on every aspect of her life. Her life-style worsens, she grows more short-tempered, and finally, she takes her first step towards prostitution: - Sexual perversion and exhibitionism. She indulges into vulgar chats with women around and tries to catch attention of men. She changes clothes in her room despite knowing that some men have been watching her from outside.

The character mouths her condition as:

“\textit{\textbf{हदिसे हदिसे मारा मिचारोमांય मिकૃમત આિા લાગી. આિા અમુક સ્ત્રીઓ સાથે બીકત્સ મજખરી કરવામાં મું ભલતી. મારી ઓરડીની સામેની આિામાં પુરંથો ઉભા હોય, મારી ઓરડીમાં નજર નાખતા હોય તો અણરાના રેમતા કપડા બહારથી મને શરમ આવતી નથી.}}\textit{\textbf{}}

(Day by day my thoughts also turned more perverse. I indulged in vulgar, adult jokes with neighboring women. I felt not a bit of hesitation or shame in changing clothes despite knowing that the men in front of my room ogle at me.)

(Vijliwala, Jayant Khatri ni Gadyashrushti 77)

This comes closer to the concept of exhibitionism – behavior which tries to attract attention especially by showing their private parts in public. Moreover, her thoughts revolve round her past adoration for Champak. She feels gripped by the very thought of him and this leads the researcher to trace the notion of ‘Fixation’ in the character under scrutiny. Fixation is a concept by Freud which means the state in which an individual becomes obsessed with an attachment to
another person, being, or object. Mangala’s strong attachment to Champak can clearly be termed as her fixation. In fact, this very fixation leads her life to devastation.

From the first to the last, she strives to satisfy herself with this day-dream until the moment of disillusionment when Champak himself once visits her as a customer. Mangala is bewildered to find him there but it seems Champak has not recognized her. This moment of coital intimacy and oneness with Champak has been her immense craving for so long but when he behaves in an animalistic way like other typical men, she finds it utterly unpalatable. This is the point of excruciating disillusionment for this miserable woman. In intense disappointment and frustration, she kicks him away during copulation. She pours out her frustration to the author. What she considered to be an invaluable asset turned out to be nothing more than a worthless, silly illusion. Khatri’s pen works wonders in depicting such ambivalence of emotions in characters in general and female character in particular. Written in 1939, this story is a classic case in the study of Freudian psychoanalysis.

II.  તેજ, ગતિ અને ધ્વનિ Tej, Gati ane Dhvani (Light, Movement and Sound)

A commendable study of feminine psyche, ‘Tej, Gati ane Dhvani’ pertains to Kastur’s journey of life, her mysterious emotions for Prasadji (the master), her husband Narpat and her father Vajesang. It is a detailed account of their interpersonal relationships. A story which focuses more on the ebb and flow of a character’s thoughts and impulses rather than their exterior humdrum existence, has tremendous room for psychoanalytic study. ‘Tej, Gati ane Dhvani’ is one such story. Khatri’s lucid, picturesque and poetic language offers myriad clues to unlock mystery of character’s behavior. His diction is flooded with devices such as metaphor, symbolism, irony, enchanting imagery, coinage of phrases, experimental expressions etc. This attribute has helped the researcher construe characters in a better light. For instance, the story commences with the phrase ‘ઊગતા સૂયાના હકરણોએ’ (Rays of rising sun) which symbolizes budding age of Kastur. She is introduced with a metaphoric statement referring to Prasaadji:- ‘એમની બાજ જેિી ચકોર આંખોએ કસ્ત રને જોઈ લીધી’ (His hawk-like eagle eyes have seen Kastur.) An aware reader would realize that hawk is a predatory bird and hence it is indicative of a game of predator and prey prevalent throughout the story.
First encounter of Kastur and Prasadji indicates an undercurrent of complex, mutual attraction which follows in the story. Vajesang refers to Kastur’s first menstruation cycle which makes Prasadji realize that she has grown young now. Prasadji has been living a life of solitude for last two and a half decades as his wife mysteriously left for maternal home forever after a brief matrimony of four months.

On first encounter with Vajesang and Kastur, Sethji (Prasadji) stares at this (in his own words) ‘beautiful girl’. The author has come up with a remarkable simile for Prasadji’s feelings for Kastur:

“As a mango tree blossoms after much toil and meticulous guarding, Kastur has now become woman (as acclaimed by scriptures). Prasadji suddenly realized this today.”

(Khatri, Jayant Khatri no Vaartavaibhav 141)

Eminent scholar and critic Sharifa Vijliwala interprets it as a sign of the fact that the man who guards mango-trees obviously aspires for fruits. For this reason, he has employed Kastur’s father and for the same reason he organized marriage of Kastur with his servant Narpat. Vajesang is unwilling to part with Kastur. Thus, the woman is surrounded by three men in her life till the end of the story. Portrayal of Kastur’s oscillating emotions amongst these three men makes the story so remarkable. Despite being a father-figure, Prasadji is disturbed by an inexplicable, instinctive pull towards Kastur and this complicated infatuation is bilateral.

The author depicts Kastur’s erotic aspirations with such panache that they neither become loud nor vulgar. Her behavior is natural considering the fact that she is at the pinnacle of her youth. She wishes to enjoy conjugal life to the fullest. Khatri mentions that her youth strives to grow more and more uninhibited day by day. Driven by unbridled erotic wishes, she convinces her husband to make love out in open – behind a large rock at the bank of a river. It can’t be a mere
coincidence that Prasadji passes by on his white horse and the couple feels embarrassed. Every day he drives his horse to the couple’s home with a pretext of asking their well-being. When Kastur and Prasadji look into each other’s eyes, both feel an unusual unrest. Characters are caught in the whirlpool of puzzling emotions and that is a remarkable attribute of Khatri’s stories.

Prasadji keeps track of each and every minute detail of the marital life of Kastur and Narpat by asking Narpat at the time of official work. Kastur gets infuriated at this breach of privacy and accuses that Prasadji keeps a close watch on her youth. She says: “मारी जुवानी पर तमारी शेठनो जेटलो जोखिममा भरसानी सहेजायो नपरो.” (I can’t tolerate your master’s watch on my youth.) It must be noted that she uses the word ‘जुवानी’ (youth) rather than the word ‘ज़िंदगी’ (Life). Her husband is startled at such sudden outburst and defends Prasadji stating that he hasn’t even looked at her. Interestingly, she blurts out: “Why doesn’t he look at me?” Is this a frustration of the master’s interference or an echo of her own unquenched desires? Isn’t she struggling with her own self? Isn’t she trying to come to terms with her inner turmoil? Multiple meanings of this verb “सामंज जोज” can be evidently applied to aforementioned statement of Kastur. According to the Gujarati into English dictionary published by the University Book Production Board, Gujarat State, the verb means:-

1. To take care of
2. To have regard or consideration for
3. Dare to Look at
4. Desire to have

(Deshpande 892)

So, what does Kastur actually expect from Prasadji – care, consideration or craving? This ambivalence of emotions is one of the prime qualities of Khatri’s stories.

Prasadji’s intervention to the couple’s romance is not just physical but symbolic and even psychological. At an intimate moment, Narpat is haunted by hallucination of a horse approaching
rapidly towards them and it spoils the bliss of the moment, Kastur remains dissatisfied and disturbed. She taunts him about his masculinity. When Vajesang remarks that Kastur is late, she retorts by saying that she is too late in life in all regards. Vajesang’s presence stings Narpat’s heart. It seems that there is an undercurrent of rivalry amongst these three men to catch complete hold of Kastur regardless of their relation with her. Each sentence of the story is more or less connotative and assists a researcher in unveiling the mystery of human mind.

Khatri utilizes depiction of Nature to create ambience required for the mood and tone of the story. Nature plays a pivotal role in Thomas Hardy’s novels and seasonal variations are in accordance to changing temperaments of character’s life and destiny. Similarly, in Khatri’s stories Nature’s alterations are in tune with what goes on within particular character’s head. While Narpat is fast asleep, Kastur wonders how a young man can sleep like this without satiating carnal desires when his youth is at full bloom! Her sleepless nights and distressed days convey her restlessness. Critics have also explored possibility of nymphomaniac tendency in Kastur’s characters. For instance, when she washes clothes at the bank of a river and Prasadji arrives, she comes quite close to him in libidinal posture and in a husky tone she expresses desire to go with him. Khatri uses a phrase like ‘ઉગ્ર આભવનશીલતા’ (Intense Emotionalism) for Kastur’s nagging need of satisfaction.

However, climax of this conflict is when she goes at the river, takes off all her clothes and plunges into deep waters to bath. Just when she is lost in rapture of Nature, Prasadji passes by and he is stupefied to see her complete nude. However, there is not coarse sexuality in it but he is lost in reverie of his glorious past with his wife. Kastur’s impeccable beauty drives him nostalgic. Kastur is bewildered to notice Prasadji when she comes out of water stark naked but there is not just the feeling of embarrassment but a sort of warmth at heart. The story reads:-

“એના હૃદયમાં એક વાર ઉભા જન્મી અને પાછી આગ બધી! જ આગ અમુક એક લાગણીને એની અવયાલોના અણુમા ધૃતર મૂકી ગઈ. લાગણીના ઉમેર અનુભવના સારથી એ કપા પહારવાની ઉતારવન કરવાનું પૂલી. લીલા વાજભંધી પાણીના ટિપાં મોતી બનીને એ સાથમ પર ટપકી રહ્યા. એક કશો કશો નિસ્તી ન
Warmth arose in her heart and then burning sensation! That burning sensation left a feeling trembling in every cell of her organs. Burdened by intoxicated experience of emotion, she forgot to make haste to put on clothes. Pearl-like water drops fell from her damp hair on her thighs. Indecisive and clueless for a moment, Kastur became a sculpture of shyness and modesty. She finally put on clothes. Despite intense desire, she couldn’t dare to face Prasadji.

(Khatri, Jayant Khatri no Vaartavaibhav 153)

So it is evident that even after this embarrassing situation, she pines to come closer to Prasadji but her rationality prevents her from doing so. What Freud propounded as conflict between Id and Ego is apparent in Kastur’s character throughout the story. Her words and actions driven by annoyance signify repression of her libidinal drives. Throughout the story, her mind struggles with the conflicts resulting from her passionate desires. This conflict of human passions has been focal point for Khatri as a writer and it has been inspired by an incident of his own life. The writer narrated the creative process for this story in a letter to his close friend and renowned Gujarati writer Chandrakant Bakshi. Here is an excerpt from that letter:-

“…Some twenty years back I was a guest of wealthy Jagirder in Kutch and stayed in his Jagir for about two weeks. One day I went riding on one of his fine horses. The heat of mid-day of May was terrific. I went up a hill and down its out–stretching slope and came to a solitary place – a pool of water clustered around the periphery by exuberant growth of bushes and trees. I saw a young girl bathing naked, swimming, cutting across a still surface of the water with utmost ease. I was naturally excited. I hid behind a bush and watched the girl frolicking in the waters of the pool. I watched her, too, at close quarters when she ran up just a few feet away from me where her garments lay under a tree. She did not hurry to dress. She locked around –and looked spilling over with ecstasy of life. She stared
absent-mindedly at the beauty of the desolate landscape. She put on the dress with no apparent hurry. My holidays came to an end. But that vision of the girl took quarters in my mind. I wondered how she might be reacting to life around her! What sort of a life surrounded her? With those qualities of her youth and beauty and a lust for life her reactions may even be violent. This story ‘TEJ, GATI ANE DHVANI’ was born out of this incident – a ride on back of a very fine horse, at an unusual hour on an untrodden path with sun blazing fire and minor dust storm sweeping blackish skin, sapphire-like greenblue eyes – luminescent teeth and form of a venus! A horse, a woman, a hot noon of May, a pool of water and a writer left to himself – midst of these? Ten years after, visualized a story of conflicts of human passions.”

(Patel and Thacker 119-120)

Kastur’s name is derived from Kasturi Mrig (musk deer). Kasturi (musk) is expensive aromatic fluid which is produced by a gland present in its body. Not knowing where this mysterious fragrance comes from, the poor deer rushes here and there to find the source and ultimately dies. Similar is the plight of the female protagonist ‘Kastur’ in this story. In that sense, the name Kastur has a perfect significance with the thematic concerns of the story.

III. Naag (Serpant)

This story is a trajectory of love relationship of Kanji and Kashi. Kashi lives in a joint family and both these prominent characters have grown up together. Meghji is a spoilsport in their relation. He has recently returned from Africa and attempts to woo Kashi by his dandy gestures. However, Kashi’s love for Kanji (fondly called Kaana) is unflinching. After convincing family, Kashi and Kanji get married but Meghji is infuriated at this. He is hell bent on avenging this marriage and frequently harasses the couple. As a virtuous and mature woman, Kashi doesn’t make a fuss at Meghji’s hostile attacks. Kanji is well known for his craft of catching poisonous snakes. At one such adventure, he goes to leave the deadly creature at the outskirts of the village, never to return alive. Naturally, it has been assumed that he has died of a snake bite but Kashi smells rat when Meghji threatens her. She trains herself in her husband’s craft in order to avenge Kana’s murder but before she could kill Meghji, he dies of sheer fright of the snake. The author
has depicted an impressive portrayal of Kanji as a strong, educated young man who is not just good at physical toil but can also manage complicated documentation works. On the other hand, Meghji has been deliberately depicted as a filthy, evil-hearted, monstrous villain.

Initial segment of the story pertains to external happenings of their lives. Kashi’s youth is at full bloom and that is symbolically represented by cheerful flow of river as impulses of a newlywed woman. Just then Meghji molests and threatens her. As she doesn’t want anything to disrupt her smooth matrimony, she doesn’t utter a word about it. On her return, she realizes that the hullabaloo at home is due to a poisonous snake that her husband has trapped and sees him going to drop it outside village. When it’s too late, they search for him, only to find his dead body. It is taken for granted that the snake bit him in retaliation but Kashi is not fully convinced. Her beloved Kanji’s death is a point of metamorphosis for the character of Kashi. The writer clearly mentions that on the surface of existence, Kashi seems to have overcome the blow of destiny, at least other characters think so but at the deepest recesses of her mind, there is an incessant conflict, confusion and cacophony. That’s the beauty of human mind. Outward, conscious behavior of a person is just a surface reality or a ‘tip of the iceberg’ in Freudian term, but there exist volatile waves at the depth of oceanic unconscious. Those waves can be traced primarily by their reverberation in the person’s actions, his/her language and body language.

Despite being emotionally devastated, she makes up her mind to settle score with Meghji. The story is an acute example of the dread of a woman’s vengeance. It is said that when a woman makes up her mind to avenge any injustice, no one can prevent the disastrous repercussions. In her highly acclaimed novel ‘Krishnaayan’, Kajal Oza Vaidya has beautifully expressed volcanic fury of Draupadi when Duryodhan insults her in royal court. These are the words of ferocious Draupadi:-

“\textit{દ્રુયોધન, તે એક સ્ત્રી જોના અંતિમ સુધી ધસડી છે. ... અને સ્ત્રીનું વેર આદિમ હોય છે. ... કોઈ સ્ત્રી વેર લેવા સુધી કિટલબાહક કરવા અધરી દ્રૂયોધન. ... સ્ત્રી ક્ષમા છે, સ્ત્રી મમતા છે, સ્ત્રી વલલત અને સંદેખન છે. ... પરંતુ ... સ્ત્રીની ક્ષમા, મમતા, વલલત અને}
(Duryodhana, you have dragged a woman to her extremes. … A woman’s revenge is primitive. It is difficult to propel a woman to avenge, Duryodhana … Woman is mercy, woman is warmth, woman is love and sensibility … but on the other side of woman’s mercy, warmth, love and sensibility lies REVENGE – revenge like lethal poison… and today the color of that poison has engulfed all my veins.”

(Vaidya 161-162)

What a fitting remark for Kashi’s character! From Kurukshetra to Kutch, human predicament remains more or less same. Just as Krishna came to Draupadi’s rescue, Kanji (pun intended) in this story soothes Kashi by his emotional presence.

With the help of a snake-charmer, she learns to trap a snake in order to avenge his deceased love. Kashi learns to catch poisonous snakes and pluck out their front teeth. Kashi is gripped by a whim of catching snakes. She learns to grab a snake strongly by its jaws, to pluck out its teeth, and to squeeze poison out of its bleeding mouth. Soon, she earns expertise and fame in this task.

The concept of serpent is presented largely in two ways: - an innocent snake (like the one poison-less snake with the snake-charmer, whom she calls as innocent as a puppy) has been treated tenderly by Kashi whereas a snake with deadly sting of poison has been treated with caution, ferocity and aggression by the same Kashi. Snake-charmer’s snake is toothless, harmless and hence enticing for Kashi. When she holds that innocent creature, her face lights up radiantly with a pleasant smile for the first time after her husband’s demise:-

“કાશીના કંડાની મુલાયમ યાદરી પર નાગનું બદન સરી રહ્યું. નાજે વેના ખંડા પરબદરી લીધો ત્યારે કાશીના હાથમાં નાગે માું સહેિાય અને ગમે ચેયી રીતે દબાયા. બરકી નીચે દબાયાતની કાશીના હાથમાં અસુઢાણી ઉડાવાય. કાશીને ચેયી બીમી ને અસુઢાણીને પોતાના સારાય બદનમાં તેલાવી દીધી.”

137
Snake’s body slipped on smooth skin of Kashi’s wrist. When snake entangled her wrist, muscles of Kashi’s hands felt pressed pleasantly and tolerably. A burning sensation arose in her entangled hand. Kashi closed her eyes and let that sensation flow in her entire body.)

(Khatri, Khara Bapor 117)

Kashi returns with that snake. Whenever she catches a snake, Kana’s memory haunts her. Once under such piercing pang of reminiscences, she breaks down and laments for so long. While she cries, that snake slowly crawls on her body. This entire description speaks volumes for Freudian symbolism.

“... Nage ana kanda parshid petani puchid seridhi kashinide dekmain servii ane dek parshid sartti petani puchidine chhe nori khatari nage keshinide chhati par barde thiho.

Adek pass, matre chek jek kasho kasho kashini same ubelo dekno.

Taradi dica parshid male paryu cheshi kasho yahdi ane parivir avi. Chhati par levata baradao ane byaal avyo ke tarat j avyo. Aek aamade naagane dek parshil servii hath par lad thiho. ‘Besarma!’ lajih ane kolaalvayi che shah kashini mohamandhi sari patyo. Miki kolaalvayi gusavani kashi jugadaa dekdi jhul, baatle jhul padi. Harii dukaanjung andhaamhantum dilegani aniyo an jugadaa praveri shakti nahi tin.

Baatla par suunktis suuktins kalyap futhini naagane petanai padan par sarva drehi - kare thy ganane barde levai drehi! Anangaaniyo ane angudaami jhanvani thy sudhii avyo
(… Snake slid its tale from her wrist and hung it in Kashi’s neck and sliding from the neck, it brought the tail quite down and coiled around Kashi’s breast. For one moment, just for one moment Kashi visualized Kano standing in front of her. She was dazed and she swiftly raised her head from knee and felt bewildered. As soon as she realized snake entangling her breast, she moved it slowly from neck and held it in hand. ‘Shameless!’ she uttered a word of modesty and bashfulness. With affectionate and modesty-tinged anger, Kashi ran to her hut and lied on the bed. There was cosy darkness. Worldly gaze could not enter this hut. Lying on her bed, she let the snake crawl on her body freely and let it coil around wherever it wished. She held snake’s neck until her thumb and fingers were free from pain. Snake’s entanglement was filled with pleasant, cosy and crushing touch.)

(Khatri, Khara Bapor 123)

It also is a reaffirmation of snake as a phallic symbol. This is precisely what Freud has mentioned in his most vital work: ‘The Interpretation of Dreams’ as:

“Most of those animals which are utilized as genital symbols in mythology and folklore play this part also in dreams: the fish, the snale, the cat, the mouse (on account of the hairiness of the genitals), but above all the snake, which is the most important symbol of male member.”

(Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams 236)

On the next morning, there is an unexpected promptness, energy and noticeably carefree attitude in her body language.

The concept of ‘auto-eroticism’ (as propounded first by Havelock Ellis in ‘Studies in the Psychology of Sex’) is applicable to this character. It denotes that this undamaging snake represents Kanji’s love for her. However, the same lady is equally scrupulous and valiant in dealing with a poisonous snake. One such deadly snake is found around Meghji’s home. He is scared to death and climbs up a tree. Rather than catching the snake directly, Kashi retorts
Meghji and mocks his fright. She makes a striking statement. Readers can sense a tone of firm warning when she tells Meghji that no poisonous snake can escape her trap. Immediately after this predictive remark, Kashi traps the venomous snake and in no time plucks out its teeth. Then the same snake turns into an object of intimacy and erotic satisfaction for Kashi. Here is another instance where snake (again a phallic symbol) signifies her erotic desires:-

“અંદરે શોકલફિયો કડુફેલી પોતાના અંગે તરફ સોળિંપ થાય અને ત્રણ વજ્ઞાન પર, ત્યુંથી ચેટ પર અંદરે સાધન પર પાછ્છીના રેલા, નાગને ત્રણ વાંચાયું હતું અને ત્રણ અંગે અંદરે શોકલફિયો થયા. તરફ અંદરે છતીમાં હૂંફ ઘાણી આવી. અંદરે હવા શેરભિ ઘાણવા લાગયા. મંદીના શરમાઇ કાશી વાંચી તાજે માઠાની લીલા વાળી અસંભવ નાગ્ને જેવા બાજુમાં મૂલિ રહ્યા. કાશીના હ૊ક પર એક સ્મિત બિકર્યું. અંદરે હળિેકમા જયાના નદરણા દરવેલ. તરફ, આંદરે મુસુકચી છાતી નજર જાઈ.“

(She looked at her limbs with bashful curiosity. She saw water streaming in zigzag, serpentine motion from shoulders to bosom, from there onto stomach and on thighs. At once, her bosom was filled with warmth. Her heart began to beat rapidly. As she bent with embarrassment, her damp hair swung beside, like countless female snakes. Kashi’s lips smiled. She slowly and slantingly threw a glance at the snake-box.)

(Khatri, Khara Bapor 124-125)

At this moment of ultimate bliss and romanticism, Meghji appears to mar the charm of the moment. From the very beginning, he has been villainous to the relationship of Kashi and Kanji even after causing Kanji’s untimely death. Kashi frightens Meghji with the same snake that made her feel so blissful. Isn’t this Kanji metaphorically helping Kashi get rid of this pest? At some distance, Kashi comes across another snake. Her alert eyes realize that this is another dangerous serpent and as usual, she cages it in a box. Interestingly, it is the same spot where her husband died of a snake bite due to treacherous and unexpected assault of Meghji. While Kanji was going with a deadly serpent caged in an earthen pot, Meghji struck a huge stick on the pot and ferocious serpent stung Kanji thrice. Kashi contemplates Kana’s death. There is a repetitive use
of words and expressions pertaining to ‘death’ such as ‘મોત’ (Death), ‘જલ્લાદો’ (Butchers), ‘નાગાંશથી મરિાની યાત્રા’ (Anguish of dying with snake-bite), ‘મૃત્યુનાક’ (Terrible), ‘મૃત્યુથીયો’ (Death-shriek), ‘મૃત્યુ’ (Death), ‘મોતમાં પોટલી’ (Packet of Death) etc. By this, the author successfully creates ambience of fatal vengeance that Kashi is determined to take on Meghji.

Kashi cold-bloodedly goes to Meghji’s home with a lethal oath to pay back in his own coin. Quite contrary to her plan, that ‘cowardly Meghji’ dies of absolute dread when he sees sparkling eyes of a snake which Kashi holds as she moves stealthily towards him. The writer notes that Kashi is filled with hatred, annoyance, disgust, brutality and disappointment. Disheartened as she couldn’t avenge Meghji, she channelizes all volcanic fury towards the deadly serpent. She satiates her revenge instinct by killing pernicious serpent at the end of the story.

The researcher wishes to present two key points of interpretation at this juncture. Symbolism has always been a favorite device with writers including Dr. Jayant Khatri. Symbolic role of a serpent in this story is an evidence of Freudian influence on Khatri. Despite the fact that Freud analyzed symbols while interpreting dreams, it has also been noted that similar symbols prevail in cultural consciousness of the society. They appear in folk-songs, myths, rituals, literary works, films, paintings etc.

Professor J.C. Flugel classifies symbols in his book ‘An Introduction to Psychoanalysis’. He notes:-

“Symbols are, as will perhaps have been gathered by this time, extremely numerous and varied. … Among the more important symbols falling into the first class are long, pointed objects, weapons, knives and other instruments, serpents, fish, Zeppelins, all these being male symbols.”

(Flugel 59-60)

It is Dr. Jayant Khatri’s craftsmanship that he has developed ‘snake’ as a symbol of sexuality and vengeance in perfect accordance with thematic concerns. It can be construed that the snake
represents Freudian concept of Eros and Thanatos, and it also represents Kashi’s relationship with these two characters: - Kanji and Meghji. It can be comprehended better by following chart:
Dimensions of Relationships

Kashi
(Female Protagonist)

Kanji
(Male Protagonist)

Meghji
(Villain)

Symbol
Toothless, Innocent
Snake

Feeling
Love, Romance,
Coziness, Thrill

Concept
Eros
(Life Wish)
Sexuality

Symbol
Poisonous, Deadly
Snake

Feeling
Hatred, Retaliation,
Ferocity, Disgust

Concept
Thanatos
(Death Wish)
Aggression
The story is all about interpersonal relationships of Kashi (Female protagonist), Kanji (Male protagonist) and Meghji (Villain). Apart from physical presence, Kanji’s role in Kashi’s life is symbolized by toothless, innocent snakes and she treats them with tenderness and intimacy. Contrary to this, Meghji’s role in Kashi’s life is signified by toxic, fatal snakes and Kashi treats them with resolution and vengeance. Appearance of innocent snakes arouses feeling of love, romance, coziness and thrill in Kashi whereas dealing with malicious snakes provokes feeling of hatred, retaliation, ferocity and disgust. From psychoanalytic perspective, Kanji is an embodiment of Eros (Life Wish) whereas Meghji is a representation of Thanatos (Death Wish). Quite literally, Kashi-Kanji relationship is an epitome of Sexuality whereas Kashi-Meghji relationship is a representation of Aggression. That is why there is red color in depicting Kanji in the chart whereas green color in the section of Meghji. Red symbolizes passionate love and intense erotic emotions of Kashi and Kanji whereas green stands for jealousy felt by Meghji (Green-eyed monster in Shakespearean term).

IV. ખરા બપોર  
Kharaa Bapor (Scorching Afternoon)

As the title suggests, the story is about burning, scorching afternoon both literally and symbolically. Chief characters significantly named just as ‘Purush’ (Male) and ‘Stree’ (Female) are in the afternoon of their youth. It is a story of conflict of human passions, struggle for survival and repercussions of starvation caused by famine. The male fails to earn livelihood. His inability to satiate physical and carnal hunger of himself and his wife infuriates him. He pours out his frustration on his affectionate and beautiful wife. Unable to tolerate abysmal reality, this oppressive man tortures and humiliates his wife who is still so calm and composed regardless of all odds of life. Moreover, he ventilates his bottled up rage onto an old beggar who denies going away. After insulting him, he slays the poor old man just because he persistently begs for food. Freudian concept of ‘Displacement’ as a defense mechanism is applicable at this juncture.

Sheema Aleem (Assistant Professor of Psychology at Jamia Milia Islamia) notes:-

“Generally the motive in all instances of displacement is aggression, which cannot be displayed on object or source of anger. For example, a person who is rebuked
by his/her boss cannot show his/her anger on the boss for fear of losing his/her job. Instead, he/she may walk out of the boss’s chamber and displace his/her anger on a subordinate in office, or on his spouse and children at home. It is a way of letting out the built up aggression by finding substitute outlets.”

(Aleem 37-38)

Repression of sexual urges gives rise to ferocity in this character. His wife and the old beggar are victims of this man’s psycho-sexual complications. Admittedly, slaying the beggar is an outcome of his anger but he is guilt-ridden at the end of the story. This master story-teller Khatri is well aware of the fact that there is not always black or white so far as human emotions are concerned but there are some grey areas. For instance, Khatri mentions that after burial of old beggar, wails are heard from his hut. So, who actually cries – the grief-stricken woman or man in a pathetic state of mind? Noted writer Satish Vyas points it out in his biographical play ‘धूलनो स रज (Sun of Dust) that even critics took it for granted that the woman wails after the death of the beggar but Khatri keeps it unstated that it may be the man crying on his own acts. Such a beautiful depiction of ambivalent emotions is an achievement of Dr. Khatri as a writer.

V. लोहीनु टीप Lohi nu Tipu (A Drop of Blood)

Another tale of troubles caused by basic instinct, this award-winning story pertains to the inheritance of evils. It is also an accurate example of successful balancing act of Id, Ego and Superego as well as imbalance of this tripartite structure in the characters of Bechar and his son Kanaiya respectively. Even after five and a half years of sexual starvation, he can curb his immense passion to rape Halima whereas Kanaiya’s unbridled erotic drive compels him to rape the same girl Halima. Khatri employs dramatic irony by the fact that Bechar (once a criminal) manages to control his eroticism whereas his own son, his own drop of blood fails to do so. Infuriated at the realization of Kanaiya’s crime, Bechar asks his wife whose son he is after all. His wife retorts him with the same question at the end of the story. When the story opens, Bechar has come out of jail after completing five years of imprisonment. He stays at a rest-house at night and comes across a beautiful young girl. When he sees irresistible sleeping beauty, his conflict of
desire and morality is at the climax. The same climax of beauty in front of him which causes turbulent emotions then helps Bechar return to normalcy. Halima has previously addressed Bechar as ‘Uncle’ and that precisely stops his instinctive drive to rape her. Transformation of characters at conscious level and especially at unconscious level is a noteworthy attribute of many stories by Dr. Khatri.

VI. ખલાસ Khalaas (Finished!)

‘Khalaas’ is a story written with stream of consciousness technique. Protagonist is a patient of insomnia and neurosis. His erratic flight of fantasy and wayward flow of thoughts are presented throughout the story with first person narrative. There is a blurring demarcation of sanity and insanity evident through expressions of the protagonist. Eminent scholar Dr. Bholabhai Patel remarks:-

"ડો.ખત્રીની માનસિક વ્યાપારોની સૃષ્ટી પણ કરી શકે છે તેની પ્રતીએત ‘ખલાસ’ વાતીમાં થાય છે. અનિદ્રાનો શિકાર બનાવવા પાવના મનોગતત્રણે વિશ્વ વિશ્વચો આવે છે. અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનાર પાત્રના મનોગતત્રણે વિશ્વ થાય છે. અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો \\

Abnormal તરંગો, સેલભેલ થાલ સ્વિટ્સ સફળ રીતે અને પાગલ બનાવની અંતમ પરિસ્થિતિઓને અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો \\

(ભાષા પરિસ્થિતિઓને અંદ્રાનો માશકાર થનારનો અંદ્રાનો \\

(The story ‘Khalaas’ is a realization that Dr. Khatri can also create a world of psychological activities. This world from within comes as it exists in the mind of victim of insomnia. A person’s madness is an outcome of the effect of external incidents taking place in his neurotic mind, its abnormal waves and intermingling world.)

This story stands apart from other stories thanks to the depiction of psychological situations. The protagonist is on the brink of insanity due to insomnia and sexual perversion lying dormant at some distant corner of his unconscious. Dr. Khatri has remarkably drawn the waves of the protagonist’s mind. Just as Chekhov raises questions on terms as ‘normalcy’, ‘abnormality’,

146
‘sanity’, ‘insanity’ etc through ‘Ward No.06’, Khatri’s ‘Khalaas’ is also an attempt in that direction. All these terms are by nature illusory, abstract, relative and variable. The protagonist in ‘Khalaas’ laments that his insomnia has been labeled as insanity, but other characters do find his behavior to be ‘abnormal’.

In this story, Khatri has hinted at snake as a phallic symbol as construed by Freud, the way he does in ‘Naag’. The protagonist thinks about his neighbor Shobha to whom he is erotically attracted:

“છેટર ક્રેટા કોઈ અહીં કાજાર નથી.... આ સીમાહીન કુલક... અને હું અને શોભા માટર! એક અંજીરનું વૃક્ષ! એક લથબથાતો નાગ!”

“Simply no one is present here… This endless sky… and me and Shobha only! A fig-tree! A snake embracing it closely!”

(Khatri, Jayant Khatri no Vaartavaibhav 209)

VII. કાલો માલમ  Kaalo Maalam (Kaalo the shipmate)

It is a disturbing story of accidental act of incest, resultant torment of guilt and cryptic construct of female psyche. Kaalo – the shipmate makes love to his younger brother’s wife in darkness of his cabin in the ship, under the misconception that the lady is his own wife. On realization of this horrendous folly, his piercing guilt crushes him every moment. However, far more than the shock of this accident, Kaalo Maalam is shell-shocked when his sister-in-law again approaches him this time advertently and expectantly. Unable to cope with the reality that his brother Osu’s wife again wishes to have sexual relation with him, he jumps into ocean.

Khatri has employed theme of incest but in his peculiar style. On one hand, Kaalo Maalam is psychologically devastated by the guilt of an inadvertently committed sin while on the other hand, Osu’s wife buries this mystery in depths of her heart. Not only that, her insatiate erotic need compels her to approach the man once again and later to the hotel-owner (who shares entire tale with the narrator). Freudian concept of ‘inadequately developed superego of women’ gets
mirrored here. A woman’s heart is as unfathomable as an ocean and it contains the darkest secrets that no one can ever unlock. There are some striking statements, which, if taken out of context, may seem misogynistic. For instance:

“औरतनु हिल छ, मास्टर! अने छेड़े नक्शी होतो के जिनी गाँठ वाली शक्ति! अने तो पाताली टोकार हो रहे छ, वे माम धर बर्द ज फूटको!”

(Such is a woman’s heart, master! It does not have an end to tie a knot with! It just has abysmal depth, where one has to bury oneself!”

(Vijliwala, Jayant Khatri no Vaarta Vaibhav 51)

VIII. शेर मातीनी बूझ Sher Maati ni Bhukh (Longing for a Child)

This is a soul-stirring story of a guilt-ridden, unfortunate woman. Even after years of conjugal life, Padmabhen is unable to conceive and her craving for motherhood gets more intense day by day. She receives a guest named Hargovind who stays in their house for some days. First time he makes her realize that her husband Harshadray is also equally responsible for her childlessness. Driven by her irrepressible urge to have a child, she sleeps with this man and conceives. However, her sense of wrongdoing mars the charm of her pregnancy. It is fascinating to note how, despite being a male writer, Khatri depicts the workings of female mind with elegance and utmost realism. The female characters of his stories can be another subject of research considering the depth and breadth of their personality. Padma’s depressive barrenness of life, her tremendous erotic drive towards Harshadrai, her tormenting guilt… each facet of her personality is commendably portrayed in the story. However, the culmination of her turbulent conscience is when she gives birth to Hargovind’s child. On that very day, her husband dies of pneumonia which darkens and deepens her guilt. She ultimately disgusts the child as a sign of her illicit union.
A group of young intellectuals get shattered with disillusionment of facing stark-naked reality of life. Reading of books of idealism and theories is one thing and implementing them is another. As it is famously said, dreams and ideals are one thing and their application quite another; when put into practice, they lose most of their glamour. That precisely is the case with these pseudo-intellectuals. The writers hint at the characters’ escapist tendencies. Navin commits suicide and others are on the verge of collapse. Female characters like Vasant and Chandrika blatantly convey that their carnal needs are far more pressing than pragmatic yet shallow discussions in coffee shops and gardens. Written before 1944, this story has influence of twentieth century trends on the author – trends and concepts such as existentialism, nihilism, futility of life, inferiority complex etc. this story marks an apparent influence of Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre, Darwin etc on a voracious reader like Jayant Khatri. Characters mention that they used to read like gluttons – day and night, in trains and in trams, at home and outside etc. They considered Carl Marx their guru and Havelock Ellis and Freud their companions. Thus, this story indicates that Dr. Khatri was far ahead of his time as a writer of Gujarati short stories.

A not so celebrated story by Dr. Khatri, ‘Aakdo ane Aaval’ is a loud and clear evidence of profound influence of Freudian principles on Khatri’s belief system. Apart from cursory references such as the protagonist Gordhan trying to teach Freudian concepts to his chef, thematic concerns also echo the concept of Tripartite Structure. Through metaphoric conversation of the two plants, Khatri portrays clash of ideology prevalent amongst some self-styled progressive thinkers and revolutionaries. Through the plant of cassia as a mouthpiece, the author opines that suppression of natural, instinctive forces is unscientific and leads to perversity. Repressed desires spring up in the form of psychological disorders and criminal acts. Protagonist Gordhan asks Chatur if he has read Freud. Chatur is accused of raping a girl named Vali in the village. Fed up of intellectual bankruptcy of the villagers; well-read and educated Gordhan lives in a make-believe world and converses with these two plants. He even involves Chatur in this imaginary game. The two plants symbolize the righteous and evil forces within one’s own head.
One can easily deceive perhaps entire world but not his own conscience. When in his imagination, Chatur listens to cassia accusing him of raping the girl, he uproots the plant but Gordhan sharply remarks that the plant would spring up again because no one can smother the voice of the nagging conscience. The protagonists of Poe’s ‘The Tell-tale Heart’ and ‘The Black Cat’ are apt examples of this reality, emphasized by Dr. Sigmund Freud. The author explains the concept in a plain and simple manner:-

“When in loneliness I sit at porch of this pippal tree, two opposite forces within me indulge in fierce fight – first quarrel, then abusing and then clasping! Do you understand two opposite forces? Let me exemplify. Suppose some day you wish to drink liquor but just then a voice from within would say: Beware! It’s a sin! These are two opposing tendencies. Now they fight a battle and after churning, you come to decide that there is nothing wrong in drinking little, once in two or four months when there is intense desire or that it is not a sin if you drink with caution of not being enslaved by addiction to liquor, that entire issue is different.

(Vijliwala, Jayant Khatri ni Gadyashrushti 586)
3.3 Conclusion

This chapter makes a detailed study of some of the most prominent stories of the three chosen authors: three stories in detail and seven stories in brief. The focus has been to trace the prevalence and relevance of Freudian concepts in the stories. The focus has also been on developing a pattern of psychoanalytic study from the prism of comparative study.

Edgar Allan Poe has been credited for being an inventor of detective fiction. Poe’s early detective fiction tale featuring C. Auguste Dupin laid the groundwork for future detectives in literature. Writing in the formative years of English short stories, Poe has also earned acclaim as a pioneer of the genre and has been influential on the generations of writers till date. His stories are famous for elements of the grotesque and the arabesque, nerve-wrecking gothic atmosphere, macabre murders, sinister sequences, nail-biting narration etc. Because of his theory of singular effect at the end of the story, he has succeeded in contributing some gripping stories. Stories like ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’, ‘The Black Cat’, ‘The Tell-tale Heart’, ‘The Purloined Letter’ etc are simply irresistible by virtue of their horrific and thought-provoking thematic concerns as well as matchless narrative techniques.

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov is one of the most celebrated Russian playwrights and short story writers. In the canon of Russian literature, his name stands at par with the doyens like Tolstoy, Dostoyvesky, Gorky, Turghnev etc. Reflection of contemporary society, compassionate portrayal of the downtrodden, stream of consciousness technique, deceptively simple style, convincing presentation of workings of human mind etc characterize Chekhov’s stories. Works like ‘The Lady with the Dog’, ‘Ward No.06’, ‘Death of a Clerk’, ‘The Malefactor’, ‘Vaanka’ etc have earned accolades from critics and connoisseurs alike because of their universal appeal.

Dr. Jayant Khatri (1900–1968) has been an underrated author in the arena of Gujarati literature. A considerably well-read man, Khatri has been aware of global trends of literature and has successfully echoed them in his stories. His works mark profound influence of the science of psychology in general and Freudian principles in particular. Vivid pictures of miseries and pressures of life, experimental technique of narration, poetic and picturesque descriptions etc are some of the major attributes of his stories. ‘Lohi nu Tipu’, ‘Bandh Baarna Paachhal’, ‘Tej, Gati ane Dhvani’, ‘Ame Buddhimaano’, ‘Kaalo Maalam’, ‘Khalaas’ etc have been acclaimed for their
unusual subjects and equally unusual and innovative treatment. Khatri has been credited with experimenting with technicalities and introducing trends of global consciousness to the gamut of regional writing i.e., Gujarati literature.

After meticulous examination of thirty select short stories, the researcher has been successful in identifying around ten to fifteen specific concepts of psychology in each writer’s stories. These are not merely Freudian principles of psychoanalysis but they are universally significant aspects in the macrocosm of human psychology. These concepts of psychoanalysis largely contribute to developing pattern of comparative study in the works of the chosen writers. Concepts mainly propounded by Sigmund Freud have been underlined in the below list. The underlined concepts are discussed in detail in subsequent chapters and presented in graphical form in Chapter 05.

The concepts are as under:-

i. **Edgar Allan Poe**
   01) Paranoia
   02) Psychotic Obsession
   03) Hypochondria
   04) Freudian Tripartite Structure of human mind
   05) Hallucination
   06) Sado-masochism
   07) Perversity
   08) Depression
   09) Claustrophobia
   10) Revenge Instinct

ii. **Anton Chekhov**
   01) Memory
   02) Guilt
   03) Psychological Transformation
   04) Anxiety
   05) Nostalgia
06) Dream as a Wish Fulfillment
07) Déjà Vu
08) Insanity
09) Persecution Mania
10) Traumatic Neurosis
11) Eros and Thanatos
12) Repetition Compulsion
13) Heightened Superego
14) Child Psychology

iii. Dr. Jayant Khatri

01) Emotional Conflict
02) Illicit Union (Conflict of Human Passions)
03) Female Psychology
04) Denial
05) Repression
06) Sexual Perversion
07) Exhibitionism
08) Fixation
09) Hallucination
10) Freudian Symbolism
11) Auto-eroticism
12) Life Wish and Death Wish
13) Insomnia
14) Incest
15) Id-Ego-Superego
Works Cited


*Gujarati Lexicon Dictionary*. January 2014. Web. 25 11 2014. <http://www.gujaratilesicon.com/dictionary/GE/%E0%AA%89%E0%AA%AE%E0%AA%B3%E0%AA%95%E0%AB%8B/>.


