Chapter - I

Cultural Cross-Currents & Dysfunctionalities

Indications of the dysfunctionalities as a result of the cultural cross-currents are quite evident whenever there is a conflict between two different types of cultures. The term *dysfunctionalities* finds dramatic space in Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's third novel *Esmond in India* (1958). Prior to this she wrote two novels, *To Whom She Will* (1955) and *The Nature of Passion* (1956).

In this chapter on *Esmond in India* stresses and strains of the Indian and European characters have been analytically discussed from the psychological and sociological perspectives in tandem, due to dynamics of interaction existent between them, and creative or dysfunctional tensions and complications arising therefrom. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, as a writer, makes the cultural cross-currents a significant part of her novels such being her own personal experience in India, engendering creative tension. Her works deal with the urban lifestyle, the setting generally being Delhi and its suburbs, the places she knows firsthand. However, she portrays both ignorant and bourgeoise characters. Therein Western cultural dominance, to a certain extent, predominates.

Before venturing into analysis proper, perhaps it would be pertinent to briefly summarise the novel.
Esmond in India is a highly deceptive title (possibly misleading at first glance) as it may lead one to believe that it is merely the story of an Englishman visiting India - a great fallacy, a jump to an unwarranted conclusion. The prime focus of the novel *Esmond in India* is, instead, on three families and lives: Har Dayal, his wife Madhuri, daughter Shakuntala, son Amrit and daughter-in-law Indira; freedom fighter Ram Nath, wife Laxmi their his son Narayan; and Uma the widow sister of Ram Nath who is actively managing her household even after the death of her husband. The novel opens in Har Dayal's house, who is sophisticated high-class social hustler. The damsel Shakuntala, his pampered daughter, is influenced by the lofty ideals of her father. She has just come back from hostel after completing her graduation. In those good old days a graduation meant a lot. Thus Shakuntala feels elated for being a graduate, she doodles her name suffixed with B.A. and just feels great. She always remains in her reverie, feeling excited for nothing. She is born with silver spoon in her mouth and the wine of her youth and money makes her feel exuberant. She is a pampered child of an upper-middle class opulent Hindu family who is obsessed with her own self and her fantasy world. Her father Har Dayal leads a modern life full of luxuries, speaks sonorous English and organises high profile social meetings. These meetings are supposedly organized to enhance Indian values, goals, norms, behaviour and cultural patterns. Esmond Stillwood is an active participant in the so called literary and cultural societies patronised by Har Dayal, as he has a lot of knowledge about Indian culture, literature and heritage.
Shakuntla is impressed by the personality of Esmond and falls in love with him, despite the fact that she knows that Esmond is married to Gulab, her school time friend. Gulab is Uma’s daughter, who in her maiden youth was love-sick for Esmond and marries him against her mother’s wishes, hence Esmond becomes important by virtue of that tie. So, the novel has a unique cohesive character, Esmond, whose position is interlinked importantly in the novel’s overall context. As a character, on the surface he is charming and has made an impression in the literary and cultural circle. In addition, he is a popular invitee at *nouveau riche* Har Dayal’s parties, which are characterized by superficial and pretentious discussions on Indian Heritage. Esmond manages to impress everyone with his English accent, delivery and ‘grasp’ of certain aspects of Indian culture, especially with reference to Kalidas’s *Shakuntala*. At one juncture, when he falls in love with Gulab (his wife), he must have projected on her the sensuous aspect of Kalidas’s *Shakuntala*. But the fact of the matter is that neither she is Shakuntala, nor is Esmond Dushyanta. Later, he succeeds in impressing Har Dayal’s daughter with his knowledge of the great Epic poem *Abhigyan Shakuntalam*. Actually Esmond as a typical Englishman, represents Neo-colonialism, manifested in his desire to exercise influence and control of a moulding nature over the Indian natives — even with respect to pontificating on their ancient culture. He, therefore, attempts to cast Gulab in such a preconceived mould. He does not want their little son to sleep with her (Gulab). His relationship with his wife finally turns into that of a sadist.
Ram Nath's family, despite the lack of communication between husband and wife, is essentially Indian. Their son, a doctor, an idealist like his father serves altruistically the suffering and neglected tribals in a remote area. Ram Nath's wife Lakshmi feels dejected as her husband's active participation in freedom struggle has given them a life full of hardship and neglect. Moreover, she feels insecure when her son leaves for a tribal area. She criticises her husband for not providing her with basic amenities, while his friend Har Dayal and his wife are enjoying riches. Madhuri, Har Dayal's wife considers them to be low middle class people and dislikes their company. Thus there is a tension between the sexes, particularly that emanating from the women is primary, in *Esmond in India*. In this light, obvious lack of even elementary courtesy on Madhuri's part towards Uma and Lakshmi, when they visit her house separately is glaringly evident. So, the very question of merits, gunas, numinosities does not arise. In macro-sociological terms, the distance between wealthy and not-so-wealthy has in fact multiplied in free India since 1947.

Uma, Ram Nath's sister, represents ancient India in which one goes beyond the confines of one's family and extends oneself to embrace the people who do not belong to us biologically. She has a maid servant Bachni and has given shelter to a Sadhu for the past five years in her sprawling house. The novel is remarkable for the way in which Ruth Prawer Jhabvala succeeds in *meshing up* three stories and making them into a significant whole.
So far the chapter has essentially expounded on the major characters and their relationships. Now it is time to examine them rigorously using certain concepts. In this endeavour the concepts are taken from Freud which are:

1) Pleasure Principle;
2) Reality Principle;
3) Polarity Principle;
4) Eros (Love Principle); and
5) Thanatos (Death Principle).

Before undertaking rigorous application to arrive at core insights, a basic definition of these five principles would be in order. The pleasure principle is mainly the instinct found among children. A child feels pleasure in playing, watching T.V., reading comics or eating its favourite dish. But as the child matures, by and by, a transition to reality principle follows. This is generally initiated by parents during successive childhood stages and emphasises the awareness of the surrounding environment and the resultant necessity to responsibilities in proper time and order. So, maturity lies in balancing reality and pleasure. In this light, life has two diametrically opposed poles: happiness and sadness, elation and disgust, love and hate, admiration and envy. A proper balance of these opposing states needs the polarity principle. Generally, it may be argued that Indians are more adept in so far as the polarity principle is concerned.
The fourth principle is Eros, both the width and depth principle. In its most incipient form it is the love principle. It may transmute into the all-embracing deeper soul principle — in its most powerful manifestation of an altruistic nature.

Now to focus on the Freudian view of the death principle or Thanatos. Thanatos emerges from denial of Eros, usually a self originated state, which results in weariness and depression, and resultant purposelessness and a journey towards psycho-emotional and possibly, even psycho-intellectual death. Freud presents Eros and Thanatos as opposite poles. Where Eros diminishes, Thanatos surges. According to him, inter alia, there are three chief agencies of the Psyche: Id, Ego and super-Ego. Id is that of primary instincts and their gratification, of which the 'sexual' and 'aggressive' are basic constituents. He differentiates between 'sexual' and 'aggressive'. Sexual instinct is used by him in broader sense approximately in the same way as the patristic writers mentioned 'Carmalis Concupiscentia' or as we use the verb 'to love'. The 'aggressive' comprises the connected impulses of hatred, hostility and destruction. The aforesaid aspects are of the Id, a seething cauldron of chaos emanating from the very basic instinct.

The ego is organized around sensations and perceptions of physical needs on the one hand and releasing motor actions on the other to fulfill them. The strong ego manages to act as a medium for securing these.
Now to focus on the super-ego of which conscience — the inner voice — is an integral component. It finally balances individual-cum-social duties when in conflict with pleasure and its gratification. It crystallizes the consequences into a perceivedly tangible form of which anticipation is part and parcel and inseparable. So, conscience, as a valuable individual-cum-social/societal scale arises directly due to super-ego. The super-ego supervises and controls the ego with and by severe moral standards and is thus the wellspring of genuine morality, representing its whole spectrum.

Category-wise, the super-ego has five levels: (a) Parental level; (b) Social level (in behavioural sense); (c) cultural-Traditional level; (d) Existential level; and (e) categorical level (in the Kantian sense).

The Parental level is the super-ego’s first layer of parental authority or other authority figure which protects a child from erring and lights up the right path. In this parents and/or other elders are mentors at the initial stages of development. Over time, this relationship between parents and children becomes more intellectual based on reason — when assent and dissent are not arbitrary and without apparent basis. So, the super-ego is a result of behavioural modeling.

At the social level, the Super-Ego is well defined and encompassed in conscious reality. No individual is ignorant of the reason of his/her actions—whether he/she acts responsibly or irresponsibly. To a certain extent, the root causes of this can be found in childhood with its imprints of do’s and don’ts on
the conscious. Social values are transmitted at that stage from generation to
generation, which are the dynamic realities of duty, socio-cultural, obligation,
and others in like view.

This project employs Super-Ego as the prime carrier and conveyor of
cultural tradition and the overall psychodynamic realities which spring from the
Super-Ego. It must be remembered that none of these — the Id, the Ego, the
Super-Ego — are static structures but rather dynamic realities.

There is a subtle relationship between Id and Ego. Ego serves as the
foreground to the Id and the latter is the hidden inner layer, the main body of
psychic life. Sometimes, there is a conflict between Id and Ego. Robert Waelder
describes this struggle, on the basis of Freud's findings and theories of spycic
phenomena, in The Living Thoughts of Freud:

In this struggle of the ego against the instincts, the ideal solution
would be to permit gratification to those of the instincts which are
compatible with an adequate social adjustment and are approved
of by a mature conscience; and to deny gratification to all the rest.
However only a person who can endure discomfort is able to carry
this out — only a "strong ego", as one says in psychoanalysis.
(Waelder 10)

Freud expounds in detail the structure of personality in his
psychoanalytical theories. This structure is inseparable from the varied agencies
which shape psychic life. Discussing in detail about reality and pleasure
principle, one finds that there is an unmistakable relation between the instincts
and pleasure principle as well as the ego and the reality principle. With respect
to instincts, they demand, as agencies of Id, immediate gratification. To quote Hans Hermas:

These instinctual tendencies — if such metaphoric language will be excused — know only the pain or displeasure of want, and the pleasure when satisfaction is forthcoming; they act as though pleasure were the only principle in the world that counts, and as though the world “owed them a living,” as though all one has to do to get pleasure is to seek it. Hence, it has been said that they function in accordance with the pleasure principle. (Herma 7)

But the Ego is a higher level and stage and thus does not behave in this manner. It checks the reckless Id, regulating it after replacing the predominant pleasure principle with the reality principle. With regard to a socially well-adjusted individual, the ego and Id are in a state of proper balance. Generally, as long as the ego discharges its duties fully, its relations to Id are maintained cordially and nervous disturbances do not develop. It is called syntonic-ego, which is mature, efficient and properly functioning. On the other hand, the poor-ego desires to control, bind or dominate the thoughts of a person and is called non-syntonic ego. So, the syntonic ego restrains the Id, controlling its passions and urges to postpone their gratification.

The ego which fails to mediate between the demands of the outer world and inner world for purposes of interaction, surfacial or deep, is, naturally, not syntonic. If the ego is not fully developed, the said individual may fall into a traumatic condition with is blind gratification of urges, this is mal functional ego.
In case the organization and efficiency of ego are not hampered in any way, it is well in a position to exert its influence over Id. In an illustration of Freud's psychoanalytical theory Robert Waelder states thus:

As long as the ego discharges its duties fully, and its relations to the Id are maintained in a satisfactory manner, no nervous disturbances will develop. However, disturbances are liable to arise at some unsuspected spot. This will not surprise the well-informed pathologist, but merely confirms the fact that the most essential developments and evolutions contain the very germ for diseased conditions and the breakdown of functions.

... Any primitive being who has not developed a sufficiently strong ego organization, is subject to all these "traumata". Such a primitive being will achieve no more than just a "blind" gratification of its urges, frequently being destroyed in this way. (60)

A conflict between Id and ego in which the ego suppresses certain parts of id as unsuitable, can result in Neurosis. Such conflict is generally between the Id and the outer world.

The ego being truthful, takes the side of the outer world. When the conflict between reality and id becomes unavoidable, ego has to balance and control matters as the mediator. In the case of a weak ego which cannot successfully do so, neurosis is the outcome due to the neurotic ego. At the top of the structure is the super ego, the source of steady wisdom, which, of course, regulates and restrains gratification properly.

Repression is an important defence mechanism of the ego. This takes the following forms:
**Projection** — perceiving in another person (or the outer world in general) what is actually within oneself, e.g., in the words of the Bible seeing the mote in another’s eye but not the beam in one’s own.

**Regression** — expressing an instinctual impulse belonging to a later stage of development in a form which is characteristic of an earlier stage, e.g., a toilet-trained child who, on the arrival of a new baby, expresses his need for love by reverting to wetting the bed, instead of demanding more affection from the parents or being satisfied with less.

**Identification** — feeling and behaving as though one were the person (or one with him) whom one loves or fears instead of having a conscious feeling of love or fear of him.

**Rationalization** — advancing for one’s behaviour (or thoughts) an inadequate reason which serves to hide an unacceptable motive.

**Sublimation** — channelizing a crude instinctual impulse into socially acceptable forms of activity and thus giving expression to it in a more refined (“sublimated”) form. (Herma 9,10)

Waelder shows the structure of the psychiatric apparatus in the following diagram:

![Diagram of the psychiatric apparatus](image-url)
These psycho-agencies form the personality of a person. However, there are two other major components which have an effect on the personality of an individual, moral and social values. Existentially, moral value or being true to oneself is authenticity, and social value corresponds to sincerity. The patterns of these values are not uniform but vary from culture to culture. Value is substantially a web of emotions, ideas, feelings and cultural constraints, which are communicated as routine. Thus an individual learns the values of life during everyday communication. The individual who does not associate himself/herself with one’s own culture deprives oneself of cultural values, as these are transferred through communication, sharing, freedom, helpfulness, environmental awareness, mindfulness, love and kindness and samdrishti.

To encapsulate the foregoing extended definition, the Pleasure Principle belongs to the infantile stage of development, that is the first stage. The second stage is that of the Reality Principle, which, as already stated, is acutely responsible to the outer world. Now it would be worthwhile to focus on Jhabvala’s characters within the matrix of the above cartography.

We are in for a big disappointment as Har Dayal is not into the pleasure principle, except in a passive way; he is deriving superficial satisfaction from literary meets, not actually receiving any real stimulus. Thus no growth is at work. To quote the text:

Har Dayal was keenly interested in all cultural matters and he enjoyed presiding over committees. He made indeed an excellent Chairman for he gave courteous, even deferential attention to all
proposals and always managed to keep a fine balance between conflicting points of view. He was very tactful. But sometimes he could not help feeling that the members of various committees on which he served were not too well chosen. They did not seem to be very much interested in or knowledgeable about the cultural matters they were gathered to discuss. And their aesthetic sense, reluctantly he had to admit was often at fault. (42)

Thus meetings are supposedly organized to enhance Indian values, goals, norms, behaviour and cultural patterns, but bear no constructive results. In fact, Har Dayal is a representative of a new society, the ‘nouveau riche’ having connections with both Western and Indian culture. On the one hand he propagates himself as the torch-bearer in spreading, promulgating and elevating Indian culture in post-independence India, while on the other hand his own family and linked lifestyle is immersed in westernization. He is actually a parody of the western culture and norms as is evident from his attempts to improve the poor and illiterate gardener in sonorous English with poetry of Keats and Wordsworth. His naïve daughter Shakuntala, however, misperceives this as worthy of admiration. To quote the text:

And her father in his golden dressing-gown. He was standing talking to the gardener. She could see that the gardener was not listening; probably Daddyji was lecturing to him about the beauties of nature, he was waving his arms so that the wide sleeves of the dressing - gown fell back from his wrists. Bye and bye he would forget that he was talking to the gardener and break into sonorous English, quoting Keats or Wordsworth. (8)

This ridiculous spectacle is merely the whim of a rich and educated person just to satisfy his Id. He obviously lacks super-ego, the superficial ego
making him a 'Lettered Exhibitionist' and satisfying the primitive Id. In like category falls his elocution of English translation of Sanskrit verse, especially before English people, unaware and uncaring of apish Indians like Billimoria sisters and Parsi girls, who possess scant or rather little knowledge of Indian literature. The scene is well worth describing in Shakuntalas' words:

When Daddyji had smiled all round, he became quite serious. He waited for a short time till it was very very quiet, and then he began to recite:

O swollen hath the mango, sprouted and budded and bloomed!

O swollen hath our love, sprouted and budded and bloomed!

Daddy Ji often recited it. There were four poems he had translated from the Sanskrit, and usually recite one or another of them. Actually it was not he who had translated them (his Sanskrit had never been good) but Ram Nath Uncle, many years ago when they were together at Cambridge; but it was Daddyji who had put it into proper English verse with rhyme and metre and everything.

It is a piteous reflection on Har Dayal that he takes credit for the translation (the actual translator being Ram Nath); a true patriot, leading a life in oblivion. Therefore, Har Dayal is a neurotic due to the Malfunctional Ego. He takes refuge in the self-improvement semblance of "active vigorous pleasure", an apparent stimulator which endangers creative thoughts. He glitters like Bengali 'BhadraLoka', in a state of dazzling, but does not meaningfully gleam. Actually he is unhappy with his family, but is too weak and tamsik to formulate
his unhappiness or dissatisfaction and correct the matters. Supposedly Indian in outward western veneer, no creative tension can develop between his given cultural personality and entire cultivated western orientation. In order for any cultural creative tension to take place, one has to postulate intrapsychic creative tension, meaning thereby that one has to be aware of different sectors in one’s personality such as Eros and Thanatos, Reality and Polarity principles, otherwise stasis results. So in Har Dayal’s case mediation between his eastern personality and western outlook does not arise.

All the values of Har Dayal’s own culture acquire no niche in his veritable existence. As his lifestyle is completely westernized, the question of high thinking, integrity and patriotic feelings does not arise. In fact, the whole family is markedly affected by occidental ideas. Har Dayal is actually a representative of contemporary Indian society which is matrix of different classes, castes, creeds and religions. The apish attitude of the so called elite class he belongs to, epitomizes their failure to disseminate the cultural values to the next generation. Thus Har Dayal too fails to impart the moral values of Indian culture to daughter Shakuntala; rather their *modus vivendi* is totally Westernized.

It is erroneous to believe that any culture or religion has less moral values than another. Rather, it depends on the said individual and his/her outlook. Therefore, the adaptability is essential to avoid misrepresentation and miscomprehension of the other culture. In post-colonial India, the people like Har Dayal, who are pharisees pose like a veritable godfather of Indian culture.
But in real terms they are out of touch with it, even unaware of the basic ethics of their own culture. This is reflected in the excessive freedom he has given to his daughter and feels exhilarated in her taking part in Western-style parties, drinking, smoking and even going alone with the troupe of foreigners. The following passage shows this:

There were cocktails, and Shakuntala, tasting one, thought she liked it. Someone also offered her a cigarette, which she took and smoked fairly successfully. She had smoked before, at college very secretly, but this was the first time in public. When Daddyji saw her he shook his finger at her from the other side of the room and then he gave her a great sweet wink. All the ladies round him laughed, they looked from father to daughter and were delighted. Shakuntala also laughed and the man who had given her the cigarette, a large red English man now squatting informally on the side of her armchair, said, ‘I hope I shan’t be getting into trouble with your Daddy’. (61-62)

But such superficial behaviour on nineteen years-old Shakuntala’s part is but natural. She has lurching emotions, swayed by passionate desires, which lead to the nadir of her life. The annexation of freedom to her wool-gathering leads to her debasement. Her character is dominated by ‘Id’, with no active function of conscience, that is Super-Ego. That is why she is unable to take even minor decisions on her own. She is dominated by the Pleasure Principle. She thus remains in reverie and fantasises about the future. Though it is common among the youngsters of her age group, the lack of proper guidance and direction results in unsteadiness of her mind. To quote the text:

The music flowed over and filled her with vague but strong emotions. She wondered what things were going to happen to her
in fulfilment of her great longing and anticipation. She would like to have been a great dancer... she would be a poet...

So she thought of other things: of all the people she would meet. She tried also to think of the man with whom she would fall in love, but this was more difficult. Though she could well imagine herself falling in love, she could not imagine herself doing so with anyone in particular. Young men were so inadequate, she could not imagine how other girls managed to be satisfied with them. (12)

Psychoanalytically, she lacks Super-Ego at the parental, social and cultural-traditional levels. She is more attached to her father than mother. She is her father's favourite, who initiates her into high society, plastic for the most part, despite its parading an interest in Indian heritage, culture and literature. Unfortunately, Shakuntala indulges in fantasies rather more than normal — an antithesis of the real. The psychological basis for this is her ruinous closeness to her father. In addition, this is compounded by her upper-middle class status, where she had no household chores to attend to when the servants are working hard.

Generally, Har Dayal always appreciates the views and behaviour of his daughter indiscriminately. She owes her superficiality to her father. Her mother Madhuri is not only superficial but pretentious too and can be no source of emulation, far less, inspiration.

Psychoanalytically, Shakuntala’s father fixation is definitely that of an ‘Electra’, wherein the father—daughter relationship is marked by a strong sexual component dominating the personality and mother—son closeness, more widely
known as ΩEdipus complex in which there is a strong but undefined sexual current between mother and son. In the Freudian sense the following is relevant:

No other manifestation in the sex life of the child is more important than the fact that sexual desires of a child always aim at persons most closely related to him. Such inclinations lean primarily towards the father and the mother; secondarily, towards sisters and brother. While for the boy, the mother is the first object of love, for the girl it is the father, unless bisexual tendencies favour different inclinations. (Waelder 74)

This stage of development is quite normal during the early years of childhood and mainly subconscious and unconscious as time progresses. It is the part of the cycle of nature for survival, and an essential part of rearing. At the conscious level, both the Electra complex and ΩEdipus complex are resolved over time, disappearing in healthy individuals (in any case their natal manifestations can be viewed as Darwinian).

However, if either of the complexes continue till adulthood, it negatively affects the concerned individual's personality. In this context it would be pertinent to quote Waelder:

Normally, an ΩEdipus Complex should be abandoned or thoroughly changed simultaneously with the termination of early sex life. The results of this transformation of the ΩEdipus complex are destined to bring about great achievements, to play a big part in later psychic life. (75)

Like her father Har Dayal, Shakuntala is a hollow soul. Degeneration has been passed down the line as there are no proper familial behaviour barriers.
Father and daughter share their feelings and thoughts and when there are no moral values, only degenerated thoughts will be transferred. This is a direct result of failure to instill moral values. Thus Shakuntala exhibits great ideologies, praises Ram Nath for his Indianness and cultural views, also expresses interest in cultural upliftment programmes. But this is actually mere frivolity as she is brainwashed by Western culture and passion for Esmond Stillwood. Therefore the manners and code of Indian culture are alien to her:

...she thought of Gulab, who was to have married Amrit but now as Gulab Stillwood. Strange, that is should be Gulab, whom as a child she had always laughed at and would perhaps even have despised if it had not been for her great beauty — that now it should be Gulab of whom she thought with admiration and perhaps even some envy, because Gulab had been so brave and had refused to let herself be satisfied with the ordinary. (12)

This quotation from the text aptly and clearly reveals her lack of indigenous moorings and cultural identity. However, at the same time, it emphasises her hollowness, reflected in her desire to become second wife of Esmond. Her Anglophilia, along with that of her family’s, rejects any marriage alliance with Ram Nath’s son Narayan. Being ruled by Id, she believes in ‘instant pleasure’ — the sole activation of the underground pleasure principle.

Textually, Ram Nath is the genuinely Indian both culturally and morally as is his son Narayan (Both are idealists). And, almost all the characters belonging to Har Dayal’s family are governed mostly by the pleasure principle. There is a constant struggle between ‘Ego’ and ‘Id’ in Har Dayal and naturally a
marked lack of the reality principle. So his Id dominates both his Ego and Super-Ego. Though he is somewhat learned, and has literary taste, but the novel suggests that he lacks the pillar of moral and emotional support from his family, especially from his wife Madhuri.

Now it would be worthwhile to examine the character of Lady Madhuri: she delights in her upper-middle-class status, steeping herself in both luxury and narcissism. With respect to these, the following passage illustrates her mental state well thus:

There she lay, in her chaise-longue, after her bath, fresh and fragrant with talcum powder and cologne water and wearing one of her exquisite silk saris which never seemed to fade or fray because she kept them so beautifully. (20)

So, she loves the style befitting a queen. Parasitical hierarchy is one of its glaring hallmarks. Her 'Eros' is limited, basically confined to her sons — Amrit, the elder, earning a four figure salary, and the younger Raj, studying at Cambridge. Her disinterest in Har Dayal and his pursuits is to the point of extremity — she never ever cooks for him, and even ignores his taste in food, preferring Western one. Her sons’ Cambridge education is a source of pride for her unevolved Id. The reason for her false pride is detailed thus:

‘Of course for other things also’, Madhuri gravely agreed. For instance, so that he could come back a gentleman with the sort of nice manners that boys only seemed to acquire abroad. She was a great believer in going abroad. Though she did not believe in staying there for good. Europe, England, even America, were all right for education or sightseeing but one always had to come back to one’s own dear India. It was here that one’s roots were, here that
one could get the best positions, here that one enjoyed one's money and property and one's proper social status. It was safe here, comfortable. (22)

Comfort and power are paramount to her, emanating from the pleasure principle. But comfort and power of this kind can only be had in India - after a foreign jaunt and degree. So, we can see her superficial nature does not allow her ego to mediate with the real demands of the outer world. Her character lacks Super-Ego, especially that layer which is culture-rooted and transmitted.

Now to briefly elucidate the concept of Samskaras as these have some relevance to the project. Family-Samskaras come from parenting, upbringing, early socialization within the extended relational kinship web. According to one generally accepted view (culturally), Samskaras represent pre-inherited dispositions going back to countless previous lives. They can not be know or experienced directly in most cases. However, they can be indirectly felt and perceived at an indistinct level. One's Svabhava can provide vital clues to the same. From this perspective Samskaras are the source of one's cardinal personality. Madhuri is a hollow-chickpea and has an underdeveloped ego. She takes pleasure in luxurious-bath, dressing and believes in mannerism. The following paragraph from the text shows how her maid makes arrangements for her bath:

... in five minutes' time she had to prepare her mistress' bath set out the Olde English soap, the talcum powder, the oil for massage. (11)
This shows her Rajasi Swabhau which is only superficial, as she lacks Rajo Guna like generosity. At the most, she can be viewed a fragile mixture of Rajo Guna and Tamo guna. She is actually a simulacrum as she lacks a substance.

Madhuri largely lacks the relationship matrix preferring identification with wealth and power - a refuge without intrinsic authenticity. She shares a remarkable parallel with the blue parrot in a brightly polished cage, confined on the balcony of her house. But the crucial difference is that she is a prisoner of her self through delusion. Like the caged parrot figuratively, she has imprisoned herself in her riches with the trapping of wealth and power. She therefore, enjoys commanding the servants. She is like a blue parrot.

A blue parrot put out to enjoy the early morning sun on the veranda pecked at a chili stuck through the bars of his brightly polished cage. (11)

The symbolic comparison with the ‘Blue-Parrot’ is apt as a parody and is surely perjorative. The blue parrot is thus her theriomorph (animal-personality) archetypally. Generally and positively the ‘Parrot’ is a widely disseminated symbol of love and Eros enshrined in Indian folklore and culture. Here this positive aspect is negative as her love - and Eros - is caged and arrested, even adversely affecting her erotic-libido. Therefore, sexually she is frigid and thereby unsublimated, lacking the all embracing love. Relatedly, in Indian mythology, Matangi, the Goddess of Eros, has a parrot — a potent symbol and archetype of Vatsalya. Madhuri lacks such Vatsalya at functional levels. As a
parrot, Madhuri is metaphorically a vacuous mimic. The blue colour of the parrot distinguishes itself as a quality of rare beauty. But Madhuri is different from others and beautiful only to the point of its being skin-deep, mixed in artificial status-consciousness and the state of being aloof. Her soul is more concerned with proverbial make-up and the dust under the carpet. Carl. G. Jung contends the animal or theriomorphic element is an essential part of personality:

> Theriomorphic elements are lacking in Christianity, except for remnants like the dove, the fish, and the lamb, and the beasts representing the Evangelists. The raven and the lion symbolized definite degrees of initiation in Mithraic mysteries. Since Dionysus was represented among other things, as a bull, his female worshippers wore horns, as though they were cows. (Jung 57)

These are the positive aspect of the theriomorph elements.

When the theriomorph unites the personality of a person, his basic nature can be discerned from face reading. In theological term the tiger is the theriomorph of the *Devi*. This theriomorph roars and terrifies demons, representing the Devi’s power. The theriomorph of Lord Ganesha is a mouse, who represents mind; that of God Shiva, the *bull*, who represents the power of action which is bridled or unbridled to effect, more often than not, destruction of the unholy. Indian scriptures abound with theriomorphs of Gods and goddesses. Psychologically, the theriomorphs signify the spectrum of one’s valency of qualities. Theriomorphs thus play a major role in the development of the personality of a person, irrespective of whether this is positive or negative.
These are interconnected and interlinked with the instinctive process. According to Jung:

Hence if one looked long enough, one would expect that a living being would form itself out of the fiery image, a "constellation" in the form of a man or animal— for libido-symbols do not stop at sun, light, and fire, but have a whole range of other expressions at their disposal. (Jung 95)

It is clear from the above that every individual possesses some animal instinct or the other; it can be on positive side or on negative side. Madhuri’s character is effected by a blue-parrot and is reflected in her behavioural pattern perceptibly. She is not ‘sweet’, as her name (Madhuri) symbolizes. Her conversation is knife-edged as if she too has enjoyed the bitterness of green chillies in the same manner as her parrot does. The parrot within her is negative to the point of fettering and creating a schism from genuine relatedness and overall relational dynamics as she is self-encaged in the prison of affluence like king ‘Midas’. Even her daughter Shakuntala is antipathic to her idiosyncrasy and defies her. Perhaps this is the cause of the soft-corner she has for her son Amrit and daughter-in-law Indira.

She looked at her daughter, still learning in a not very ladylike manner against the balustrade, her housecoat wide open, her hair straggling over her shoulders very wild and free. And from her she looked at Indira, so neat and charming in a sari with a pattern of tiny green and red checks and blouse to match, her smooth hair meticulously parted in the centre. Madhuri was pleased to see her daughter-in-law so well-groomed; but less pleased by the contrast she presented to her own daughter. (25)
The contrast between her daughter and daughter-in-law shows how the latter has adjusted herself well with Madhuri while the former defies her as the favourite of her father, the Electra. Psychologically, Indira too is like a void as she has made herself an echo and extension of Madhuri. She has become a copy and an imitation — a simulacrum of a simulacrum, because both have no substance.

Mother-son and father-daughter attachment is evident in the family. Though Shakuntala is closer to Har Dayal, Madhuri’s word of praise and caring attitude goes in favour of Amrit and his wife. Amrit too, is largely uncaring of Har Dayal, even not bothering. He does not even wait for him on the dining table and talks derisively about him. Shakuntala on the other hand is solicitous and acts as a saviour of her father at this juncture. To quote the text:

When Amrit came home to lunch, the committee meeting was still going on. Amrit said, ‘Well, I cannot wait, I have work to do’. ...She [Shakuntala] said, ‘You might have waited for Daddyji, you know he is busy with a meeting.’ ‘Drat his meeting’, Amrit said ‘None of you seem to realize that there is also important work to be done in the world.’ (43)

Though Amrit is a thumbnail character in the novel, yet a brief examination of his character would be pertinent and relevant. His views are as unidealistic as Ram Nath’s and Narayan’s are idealistic, divorced as he is from sincerity and sacrifice.

His overbearingness and superiority complex emanates from the hollow western atmosphere of the equally hollow western environment he inhabits,
along with his office and status in a large British firm. There seems no logic in sacrificing the basic luxuries of life to Amrit.

'I have always been suspicious of this Simple-Living-High-Thinking sort of thing. What is wrong with having a motor-car, good clothes, a good bank-balance? Who would not accept these things if they came to him? It is only those to whom they do not come who say they would not.'(73)

So, he is a callous materialist and an anglophile to the very core, swearing and dominated by the Pleasure Principle, and lacks basic norms of giving regards to his father, and his father's friend Ram Nath.

Thus Har Dayal's family is swollen with the surficial glitter and superficiality — love and mutual respect markedly absent. In this light Har Dayal's participation in the pseudo-literary cultural meet is a refuge from a loveless home. In both Har Dayal and Madhuri, love is displaced from spouse to the children of opposite sexes.

In this respect Waelder's depiction of Freud's psychological interpretation of mythology is relevant:

Mythology records that the myths, not only of the Greeks, but of all nations, supply an over-abundance of amorous relations between father and daughter, and even between mother and son; cosmology, as well as genealogy, of royal families was founded on incest. (Waelder 76)

Therefore, it can be seen that the displaced love of Har Dayal from Madhuri to Shakuntala plays the pivotal role in her moral degradation. As evident, none of the characters belonging to Har Dayal's family has developed a sufficiently
strong ego, and are thus subjected to 'traumata' and there is only blind gratification of urges.

The worst affected by all this is teenager Shakuntala, who comes close to Esmond Stillwood, as there is lot of latitude from her father's side while her mother being uncaring and uninterested. Another negative factor is her brother, being busy in his own selfish world of *amour-propre*.

Esmond Stillwood, a non-colonial representative, wants to mould the whole of India into his own image. Intellectually, he understands all the aspects of Indian culture, but has no actual connection with the same. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala portrays him as one who has neither assimilated into India nor allowed Indian culture to be assimilated into him. The causal reasons for this and his family background are not mentioned and thus can not be elucidated and should not be unduly dwelt upon as this would be mere speculation. May be he received no love from his parents in his childhood or at adolescent stage. But, whatever the reasons may be, he does mistreat his wife Gulab, even prevents her from giving and showing motherly affection to their son, Ravi.

According to Erik Erikson, a Neo-Freudian, there are seven psychosexual stages, (the word 'sex' being used in a broad sense). These seven stages are - (a) Oral (b) Anal (c) Oedipal (d) Latency (e) Genital (f) Procreative (g) Generative. It is necessary that one should go through all these stages properly to avoid chaos.

It appears that there is some malfunctioning in these stages in the life of Esmond, which in turn has adversely affected his personality. The most badly
affected is the genital stage, as he appears to be a flirt who married Gulab due to her voluptuous looks and later deserted her, and then took advantage of Shakuntala’s infatuated vulnerability.

Gulab, in the early years of their marriage, had held him spellbound. But her charms eventually lost their magnetic appeal, thus Esmond later feels repelled. To quote the text:

In the beginning, five years ago when they were first married, he had taken her everywhere. She hated going out, he knew, but he had forced her — gently forced her, then — to accompany him to all his parties. ... He found that her absence was far more impressive than her presence. It gave him the opportunity of implying that real Indian ladies, from the best old Indian families, still stayed secluded at home; which thrilled his foreign friends by giving them a glimpse of the India they thought they had so far missed... (34)

So, he proves an anglocentric male chauvinist pig in the end. Outwardly he praises Indian culture and life style but actually prefers and lives by the way of the occident. As such he dislikes Indian cuisine, and even forbids Gulab to serve any of Indian dishes like Carrot-Halwa or fired food to their son Ravi. He wants Ravi to be brought up in English manners. But Ravi loves his mother and maternal grandmother and wants to experience and live a free bird life and uncharted freedom.

But Esmond’s autocracy knows no bounds in its attempted and dictatorial moulding:

[Esmond] remembered Ravi (he was always remembering Ravi; he was a conscientious father), so he went to have a look at him. The boy was sleeping in the brightly - painted cot which stood under
the window; Esmond’s own sleeping-couch was against the opposite wall. He had insisted that Ravi should sleep in his room. He knew that if the child slept with Gulab, there would be far too much petting and unhygienic sharing of beds. (34)

There is no doubt that he has a great deal of knowledge about India and its cultural heritage, which is the main source of his income as a tutor and guide.

He lived by giving private tuitions, and it was these foreign ladies who mostly engaged him. He taught them whatever they wished to learn: Hindustani or the History of Indian Art or the History of Indian Literature. He had worked out a complete course on Indian culture, which was very useful to ladies who were only in the country for a short time but wished to take strong impressions back with them. He also sometimes acted as a kind of very superior guide, taking small parties to the Red Fort or the Juma Masjid, or to Kutb where in the winter they sat down to picnic lunches. (33)

But this does not vibrate in the core of his personality. Even his marriage with Gulab was an outcome of his superficial interest in the Indian epic Shakuntala. She initially epitomized this epic-herione in his eyes. But disillusionment follows as a result of cultural disparities and his own philandering nature, engendering several dysfunctionalities.

Gulab belongs to a traditional and conventional family while Esmond belongs to comparatively permissive society free from ritual bondings. No harmony exists between the two and petty tensions arise on rituals like ‘Mundan’ (head shaving) ceremony and even the type of food to be given to the toddler as well as accepted forms of affection. Hugging and kissing of mother and son is strictly forbidden by Esmond. This troubles Gulab deeply as she has an
affectionate mother Uma, who brought her up with lot of caressing love and passed down Samskaras, naturally during upbringing. But these very Samskaras make her view her husband as her God (Pati-Parmeshwar). She thus mutely accepts her fate in the hands of Esmond. She is a sheepish and diffident type of girl. To quote the text:

Esmond looked down on the top of her meek, still head. They stood very close to one another; they had not been so physically close together for a long time and her pungent body smell maddened him. She is like an animal, he thought. He shouted aloud, 'Animal!' and then grabbed her upper arm and began to twist the flesh. 'You animal' he muttered through clenched teeth, 'why did you go away when I told you to stay at home', but he was hardly thinking what he was saying because all his consciousness went into twisting the flesh of her arm. He felt it soft and full in his hand and he twisted harder and harder. She had given only one cry of pain, which shock had forced out of her. After that she kept quiet; she did not want to frighten Ravi. (164)

Esmond is a malevolent man, who finds petty excuses to quarrel with her, cultural disparity emerges as the bone of contention between them. Peevish Esmond’s virulent behaviour makes Gulab’s condition excruciating. Her mother, Uma, is naturally worried about her. She insists Gulab to jettison her husband and nestle in her maternal house. But each time she repudiates the proposal made by her mother. The sudden transformation comes in her life when she is molested by her servant. The reason is simple – the latent energy is released and she is able to accurately assess the situation. She was in the state of Entropy, that is the energy was there but not available to her.
Now to examine the theory of the *Gunas* there are three types of *Gunas*—*sattwa Guna*, *rajas Guna* and *tamas Guna* (Prabhavananda *Spiritual Heritage of India*, 213). *Tamas Guna* is inertia. The person who is dominated by *Tamas Guna* is lazy and languorous like a sloth. To analyse Gulab, it is necessary to focus on the four kinds of ladies, defined by the Shashtras, viz. (a) *Padmini*; having purity and chastity; no hankering as such with man, (b) *Chitrani*; who is very pretty and enjoys the projection of man, and is very playful. (c) *Shankhini*; whose body is like a Shankh and is erotic and aesthetic, (d) *Hastini*; with a stout build, heavy body and marked by laziness. Gulab is lazy, lethargic and physically unclean. She dislikes bathing, grooming and keeping the household environment clean. At the later stage, she is stubborn and enjoys defying Esmond. The lazy elephant remains inert but has tremendous energy within, which surfaces due to an external stimulus, like danger. Resultantly he becomes dangerous. Similarly, the servant's attempted molestation of Gulab spurs her to leave Esmond as he cannot protect her unassailable chastity. To see how this transformation occurs, it is necessary to quote the text:

She watched him [the servant] moving towards her and she saw that his eyes were fixed on her ... When he came nearer, he stretched out his hands. His lips were still moving and he was repeating the same sound over and over. He was very near now and she recognized that what he was saying was, 'My dearie, my dearie'. His hands were held out like sleepwalker's. One hand he laid, very reverently, on her breast, where it came swelling out of her low-cut blouse; he was still saying. 'My dearie, my dearie.' For a moment his hand lay on her flesh and she looked down at it because she could not believe it, though she felt it there.
But next moment she leapt up. She stood pressed against the wall and her whole body was tensed to attack.... Then she flung back her head—mouth open, exposing all her sharp, strong teeth and pink expanse of palate and tongue—before jerking it forward again to spit at him. She spat in one great spurt of rage. The servant gave a choked exclamation of both fear and surprise and put up his hands to shield himself from the evil she was spitting at him. All her softness and beauty had been transformed into one ball of tigress fury. (198,199)

The servant’s touch and the fury with which she beat it off is highly symbolic, for there is no difference between his and Esmond’s touch. Both touches are despoiling and desecrating. In terms of the relationship between Gulab and Esmond, the servant knows that she is not getting any gratification from Esmond. Esmond had physical relationship with Gulab in the initial flush of passion, but it appears that for a long time Esmond holds Gulab in derision and contempt. Contempt is a tell-tale sign of superiority and denotes a withered heart. This has led to Gulab’s inertia. But the attempted molestation extinguishes her Tamas, and Rajas comes in heightened energetic state and thus she decides to leave her husband, Esmond.

In this context at this juncture the following is illuminating:

Gulab was never, in anything, undecided. Probably because she did not form decisions about anything but followed whatever her instinct dictated to her. And just as before her instinct had told her that she must, whatever he might do to her, stay with Esmond since he was her husband therefore her God, so now it told her that she must leave him. She was quite sure about it: so sure that she did not have to sit and reflect about it at all, but could at once start getting her things out, ready to pack them.
It was a husband's right, so her instinct told her, to do whatever he liked with his wife. He could treat her well or badly, pamper her or beat her — that was up to him, and it was not her place to complain. But in return there was one thing, only one, that he owed her, and that was his protection: it was his duty to see that she was safe in his house and that no stranger could cast insulting eyes on her. Esmond had failed in that duty; so now he was no more her husband. Nor she his wife: since she considered herself defiled, she could not remain in his house any longer but had to return, as was the custom to her own people. (199-200)

So, the very real threat effects a metamorphosis.

This is the only creative tension in the novel, as a result of which, Gulab finally liberates herself due to a horrible external factor. She becomes dynamic again, jettisoning stasis, refusing to be a dummy any longer. She can no longer tolerate Esmond and re-emerges as her mother's daughter, honouring those samskaras which had gone inert but are now reactivated. Her mother's constant support and exhortation over the years proved a heavy anchor. Her real personality once again comes to the fore; confidence and boldness is the result of this.

To refocus on Esmond, he is deficient in Eros, stuck as he is in the crude genital stage. His fascination for ladies is artificially archetypal, he deluding himself that each is like Kalidas's Shakuntala in his theory-dominated psyche. But his philanderous nature cannot find genuine fulfillment in either Betty or Shakuntala (Extramarital flings). As is rightly said, a fling is a sling, it does not do anything for the heart or the soul. However, a meaningful relationship,
marital or extramarital, sows the seeds of Eros. If the seed grows, it becomes, to use the Indian symbol, a mighty wish-granting tree.

Esmond’s deficiency in Eros makes him a deluded Don Juan for whom woman is an object of conquest. Once the biological urge is consummated and the object conquered, Don Juan moves on to new pastures. But there is no genuine gratification of the nurturing and creative kind. Outwardly, Esmond manages to make an indelible impression on Shakuntala’s heart. In his company she can escape the oppressive and inhibitive culture that curbs personal freedom and subordinates it to social regulations. To backtrack, she felt envious of Gulab’s marriage to an intellectual, smart Englishman (Esmond). Her urges and anxiety towards and fascination for the outward glitter of Esmond become so compelling that she unhesitatingly offers herself physically to Esmond. To her, Esmond’s married status is unimportant. She even hopes that he will divorce Gulab and does not think twice over marrying Esmond even then. Shakuntala’s infatuation has certain spark of creative tension, she is an infatuated maiden in her desires. But the creative tension proves debasing as Esmond’s attitude is merely one of callous misuse. Her naiveté knows no bounds:

‘Esmond, I know you are married and also you have a child, but I tell you all this means nothing to me. I only know you have come into my life and now it is my duty to give everything I have to you, to adore you and to serve you and to be your slave.’

He drew her closer and looked down at her, ... He said, ‘You’re so sweet.’
She whispered, ‘Let me be your slave, please allow me, I want to humble myself before you’.

‘I give up’, he said, and kissed her long and expertly on the mouth. So that night he allowed her to stay with him, and her bed in Betty’s room remained empty. (148)

Shakuntala believes it to be love, but ‘Eros-lacking’ Esmond cannot really love anyone. In his relationship with Betty, the English lady, no emotional feelings are involved. Actually he does not have any English friend or relative except Betty, whom he uses as a solace, and convenient mate, who can provide him the food, drink and atmosphere of his taste. He even thinks of borrowing money from her to go back to England. While tuitioning Shakuntala and her sister-in-law Indira, he becomes fascinated with Indira and imagines her a perfect Indian wife while simultaneously thinking about Betty and responding to Shakuntala’s stupid questions. The following lines throw light on his wandering mind:

‘How old our literature is’, said Shakuntala, admiringly.... [Esmond replied], ‘The Suktikarnamrta of Cridharadasa, son of Vatudasa, can be dated at Circa 1205.’ Esmond also was thinking of other things. He was thinking of Betty, who was going back to England. She had said, ‘Why don’t you pack up and come along? and then, ‘I’ll lend you the money, if that’s what you’re worried about.’ It had sounded so easy as she said it....

‘What a charming girl she [Indira] is.’ He meant it. So neat, so courteous: he could not help thinking that if he had to take an Indian wife, why could he not have taken someone like Indira. (182-183-186)
Thus Esmond's character constantly flies unrealistically and artificially in his thoughts and feelings. The fact is he is an unabashed opportunist at the core, always putting his own interests above others. He is a product of the Malfunctional Ego, impressing with scant knowledge a blind man leading the other blind man. His western exterior and supposed knowledge of Indian culture are the tools of self-delusion which are simultaneously deluding others. The pleasure principle is its sole agent. He finds all women alike and denigrates all he comes into contact with. From Betty he wants money and companionship, from Shakuntala he satisfies his sexual urge, from Indira his 'aesthetic feelings' find solace, and from Gulab his animal instinct finds the food for his exploiting mindset, the source of relaxation and satisfaction. Jhabvala analyses his exploiting nature and personality thus:

It was not only from his vocation that Betty allowed him to relax. It was also from his wife. The strain of living with Gulab was becoming more and more intense. He was like the tiger who has once tasted human blood: for, since that day when he had twisted the flesh of her arm, he felt himself wanting, almost irresistibly wanting, to hurt her again. Often, when he lay on his bed at night and knew her to be sunk in what he thought of as her animal sleep in the next room, he imagined himself dragging her down from her bed and beating and squeezing and pounding that soft, abundant flesh of hers. He would dwell on the scene and the sensation it gave him with such relish that he quite forgot himself, losing his identity of the man of culture, courtesy and refinement; so that, when he returned to his normal self, he hated her more than ever for bringing him to such a state. And then, hating her, it started all over again as he imagined what he would like to do to her. (185)
Thus it can be seen that he has a weak, underdeveloped ego which possibly is compensated for by false pride. So no positive and honing influence exists in the real sense to exercise control and restraint over the id. This results in inevitable trauma of a constantly predominating and prevailing nature. In essence it is harmful not only to the person who suffers from Malfunctional Ego but also to other persons who come in contact with him. Such a person is caught in the web of delusion and continuously fails to recognize merit, talent and numinosity and other positive qualities of others. Esmond is, therefore, stuck in a self-destructive and cynical groove.

At one instance, Esmond’s shoes are stolen in Agra at the Taj Mahal. He responds arrogantly and snobbishly berating the poor shoes’ caretaker boys. But he must bear the brunt of laughter like a mock-epic hero. Still his underdeveloped personality takes refuge in his superiority complex; in fact, he is not actually superior. The missing shoes may well symbolize reality as head is cerebrality and feet represent reality, which touch the ground and hold a person firmly on it. Esmond’s swollen head is stuck in illusory clouds. This whole shoes incident illustrates his being absolutely out of touch with Indian ground realities in all genuine aspects.

A cultural contrast in the novel is the character and life of patriotic Ram Nath, once a close friend of Har Dayal. He was Har Dayal’s persona-grata during the yester years at Cambridge. Their return to India is marked by participation in the freedom struggle. Ram Nath immerses himself in the
movement while Har Dayal is rather a passive observer. Ram Nath was sentenced to jail for nine years and in the meantime Har Dayal who was a pseudo-activist of freedom struggle took advantage from both Britishers and Indian Democratic Government, on his freedom fighter status. The stark reality of urban lower middle class families, whose life is seared by deprivation and suffering is represented by the trials and travails of Ram Nath and his family, especially the idealistic partiarch’s sacrifice of everything valued for the sake of the freedom of his country. This everything included his necessities, business, pleasure and even the prime time of his life, because to him the freedom of the country was more precious and sacred than personal life. But this does take its toll; he is reduced to a pessimist who has lost charm in his life. But the flame of altruism continues in his son Narayan who is following his footprints. Narayan, who is a doctor by profession decides to serve in a remote village to help sunken swarms.

Ram Nath’s sister Uma, (Gulab’s mother) makes a proposal of the marriage of Narayan with Shakuntala. But the pseudo-patriot Har Dayal does not respond though it was the right time for Har Dayal to pay his gratitude to Ram Nath. As is evident from the text that Har Dayal is unethically benefited at the expense of Ram Nath’s sacrifice. But the marriage proposal dies its inevitable death spurned solely for material reason of comfort and luxury. In fact, his whole family, especially his sophisticated wife Madhuri, views the proposal as substandard and unbefitting their family’s status. When Ram
Nath's sister Uma goes to Har Dayal's house to take initiative in arranging the marriage of Narayan with Shakuntala as stated earlier, she is not welcomed as materialism and luxury being the sole yardstick.

Indira, sitting demurely beside her mother-in-law, also made a very critical survey of their visitor. She was quite shocked by Uma’s negligent attire: one would hardly think, she told herself that, she was a woman of our class. (93-94)

So the false sense of superiority wins the day. Though Uma is quite rich but her rooting in tradition is seen as an extremely negative factor, she being one who does not even care to dress herself properly. Her appearance becomes an eyesore to the prospective bride’s family as she is a Hindu widow who is prohibited to wear good dresses and look good after the death of husband. Madhuri and Indira’s reactions and responses show that they are narcissistic, marked as they are by rudeness to both first Uma and later Lakshmi. Quite contradictorily and superficially, Shakuntala and Har Dayal often talk much about their sacrifices superficially as they have no genuine convictions nor the strength to back them up, devoid as they are completely of Super-Ego. So traditional, universal values like hospitality and tolerance, besides sacrifice, have no place in their scheme of values, certainly not in their traditional Hindu aspect. The whole family is out of touch with their religion and culture — indeed, out of touch with the reality principle — from which awareness and recognition of the native environment can only be at a great peril.
Hinduism propagates that liberation (Mukti) is a result of purification and Christianity too stresses the importance of faith, hope, charity and sacrifice. Sacrifice is a sacred act: one should be prepared to sacrifice for the sake of something which is considered to be more precious, more dear and more sacred. The lives of all religious founders are replete with inspiring examples of great sacrifices for the sake of humanity. The great seers like Mahavir Swami and Gautam Buddha sacrificed all the luxuries of royal life to find ways and means to help humanity to reach the ultimate truth. Jesus Christ sacrificed his life and died an ignoble death on a cross to save humanity. Mother Teresa the great social worker left the security and comforts of convent life to save the destitute and the abandoned. She was supported, in her work, by thousands of like minded great souls. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, could have lived a happy and comfortable life as a barrister, but sacrificed all these comforts and a successful career for India's liberation from the British. There were thousands who did the same for their country and countrymen. Ram Nath too falls within the category of a freedom fighter who sacrificed greatly without proper due. He has devoted and sacrificed all the pleasure of his life and even after independence got no acknowledgement. He refused the offer of a high position in government after independence, perhaps it falling far below his idealistic standards. To quote the text:

She [Shakuntala] had heard it said that in '47 he had been offered a high position in the government and had—she did not know why refused it. Ordinary people did not refuse such things. You had to
have, she thought, very high ideals to refuse such honours. Ram Nath uncle was an idealist; and even if you were nobody, as he now was, it was always a great thing to be an idealist. (41)

This may perhaps be due to his uncompromising nature. Perhaps when he came out of the prison he could not reconcile to the fact that the persons who used to be his like-minded friends during pre-independence era had acquired a lot of wealth and status and forgotten him.

The phrase ‘like-minded’ in the preceding paragraphs is of great importance. Ram Nath did not have any person ‘like-minded’ when he came out of jail; even his wife Lakshmi creates tension for him which is again not creative. She criticizes him incessantly, blaming him for not providing her basic amenities of life.

In fact his anguish is due to the ideals, which he lived by and now he feels sad as those very ideals have been eroded. Perhaps a comparison for deeper understanding of his mind can be made with Nehru. Unlike Ram Nath, Nehru had his wife Kamla’s unflagging and constant support, but Ram Nath becomes marginalized – possibly a result of poor bonding which is further eroded by his absence due to jail, not solidified as in Nehru and Kamla’s case. This may be due to the lack of ‘Eros’ in its genuineness in Ram Nath and Lakshmi’s case. To be in this kind of state, the ego must balance the pleasure principle with the reality principle. But at the same time the pleasure principle should not be discarded as it is the Ras or nectar of life, however it does need to be bridled. In
Ram Nath and Lakshmi’s case it has fallen by the wayside amidst the pressures. Lakshmi is deficient in the reality principle insofar as balancing it with the pleasure principle is concerned—perhaps due to frustrated ambitions. The case may be Ram Nath’s training as a barrister at Cambridge, a promise of material comfort, nipped in the bud by the idealism of freedom upon his return. Comfort and luxuries were denied at its altar, leading to Lakshmi’s dejection. The thoughts and reaction of Lakshmi becomes evident from the following:

The courtyard belonged to Lakshmi, since she lived downstairs, and she certainly did not care to be overseen in this way. She considered the other tenants, and especially their wives, considerably beneath her. They were ordinary lower-middle-class people, government clerks, teachers in primary schools, municipal inspectors, salaried salesmen. Whereas she herself came from a wealthy, well-known family, and had it not been for misfortune and an obstinate husband, would certainly have lived—as she often assured herself and her neighbours—in a large house of her own with many servants. (26)

This state of affair leads Lakshmi to bank upon her son Narayan. But he has inherited his father’s idealism, thus Lakshmi’s desires remain, once again, unfulfilled. Worldly pleasure denied and privations suffered become the focus of her life. Hunger and passion are two very powerful agents in this world. The instinctual drives want to satisfy the needs of our body. In case the urges of id are not satisfied intolerable conditions develop. The mediation of ego is must for the management, so to speak, without which the coveted goal could never be reached. So, Lakshmi has suffered in this sense and has unsatisfied id, lacking
markedly a proper super-ego, which is essential to forge forward in proper personality development of which reality principle is a solid pillar.

Analysing Narayan on the Freudian scale, he is as idealistic as his father is. To quote the text:

Narayan was small and spare and quick. He had never asked his father to introduce him to anyone and would probably have refused if Ram Nath had offered to do so. He never consulted anyone about what he intended to do, but only announced his decisions when he had made them; ‘I shall become a doctor’; had been the first; the second; ‘I am joining a Community Health project and shall live and work in small villages in backward areas.’(50)

The Samskaras are deep-rooted in Narayan’s soul. He definitely has both ego and super-ego like his father in Freudian sense. By and large in vital areas there should be sharing and communication. Because it is with communication that parents transmit their moral values and cultural values. Transmission is automatic and values can never be taught by discourse. Only by emulating, one has to understand them. Then at the right time when one comes to authenticity, a flick of flame is sufficient. Such is the case of Narayan who had seen all the sufferings of his father, his dedication towards the country, the parting agony of his mother who remained separated from her husband when he was in jail. His tender soul got an indelible impression of all this and the moral values like truthfulness, sacrifice and perseverance were deep rooted in his mind.

Thus he became a dedicated doctor and decided to serve the downtrodden, the lepers and the marginalized who are starving in remote areas.
He is the real hero who is prepared to make sacrifice for others. Otherwise a doctor in those good old days could have opted for a luxurious life in Delhi, after marrying an educated rich girl, whose parents would have given him a handsome dowry and a lot of money to open his own clinic for private practice. But like his father he firmly turns his back on luxury. To quote his mother who still feels him better off in the proposed matrimonial alliance with Shakuntala:

'I am sure Har Dayal will give a fine dowry with her, one lakh at least, besides great wedding celebrations — but we are not so much interested in that. What is of greater interest to us is his influence in the best circles, and also I know he has several pieces of property here in Delhi of which he will want to settle one on his daughter and her husband, so that they can live in comfort.'(108)

She is somewhat right in thinking all this. But her hopes are dashed by the superficial superiority and pseudo-ideologies of Har Dayal and his family. Both of them though praise Ram Nath and Narayan for their dedication towards the country and the downtrodden and their high moral values, but when the time comes to opt for these values in their own life they are shaken and fail to prove that they are true patriots and benefactors of their society. Had he been in the city, doing private practice and earning riches, Har Dayal and his family would surely have married their modern daughter to him.

Lakshmi’s ambitions about Narayan are a result of a displaced love from her husband to her son of which material and luxury are vital components. This is especially true as she cannot identify or understand Ram Nath’s idealism and becomes metaphorically, like ‘Kasturba Gandhi’. On the other hand, Ram Nath
is an embodiment of love and kindness. But he is denied these by his wife Lakshmi. However, this is still unlikely to be Ram Nath's fate, as he has passed on the touch-stone of altruistic idealism to their son Narayan. But, Ram Nath is presented as sorrowful and disillusioned, perhaps even to the point of cynicism. He is a continuous slippage as reflected in his withdrawal from relationships. This can be understood in a better perspective from the following:

    Ram Nath was sitting in his room with all the windows closed. The walls were lined with large, dark old books, his table was full of little piles of papers. (27)

The atmosphere of the room is more like a grave or a tomb reflective of morbidity and Thanatos, which go hand-in-hand. Thanatos has two manifestations: the first of passivity, withdrawal, entropy, shrinkage of personality, non-relatedness, bitterness and repression even during better moments. The second stage is aggression and violence which can be suicidal. Ram Nath is in the grip of the first when his marital relationship flounders and dissipates and due to lack of Eros between him and wife Lakshmi, an inevitable result of this can be seen in numerous case studies of Freudian and Jungian type. If Eros is lacking it leads to Thanatos, which is also called as death principle. So there are outward and inward factors as well which are heading him towards love with death. Ram nath's conflict is inner; he finds it impossible to reconcile to the society that has gone to rot. Thus he detached himself from the society as its 'ideal-less' reality is too agonizing to bear.
The change in psychological state of Ram Nath starts when he receives the letter from his son to find a wife for him. It manifests itself as somewhat dynamic (the death grip loosening). He still has worthwhile relationship with sister Uma and feels proud of his idealistic son — these act as a transient catalyst and give him a sense of purpose. His first reaction after receiving this letter was that his sleeping brain started thinking as to how he should begin the search for a perfect bride and to whom he should talk about this. If he talks about this to his wife she would be excited and react overwhelmingly. Thus he decides to visit his sister Uma. When his wife asks him where he was going, he replies: 'I am retiring to forest for contemplation. I feel my old age upon me' (49).

He knows that his wife will comment something unwarranted, so he never gives a proper answer to her. Considering the dysfunctionality between him and his wife, this is perfectly a right answer from him as there is a mechanical relation between them. His reference to the forest may be viewed as an illusion-cum-delusion of the Vanprashtha stage of life which is just extemporized, but for his rebirth he should in reality go to live with his son and serve the tribals. There his blocked channels will find expressions and he would come out of Thanatos.

The third stage is of his recovery and entry into the life again, due to structural personality change, a process of modification. Actually he shows much of his interest in past, a past which is already alive for him, eternally present, the actual present, just half-dead and imitative but on the bright side, he
still stands by truth, the impelling factor. Nevertheless, the positive does begin to emerge as hindsight, which is used to distill the dismal present and project a good outlook of the future. So he should go into the past and update it into gestalt. One remains ungenerated if one gives up the past. One has to project the future and understand the past thus making present worthwhile. It is only by understanding the past that transformation takes place. This transformation is taking Ram Nath towards recovery, who begins to enjoy little pleasures of life, and even starts admiring his wife.

Ram Nath, left behind in his stillroom, almost admired her for her great preoccupation with pickle jars and jars and spare sheets and the servant to be sent to the bazaar. There might be something ridiculous in it — as he so often found pleasure in pointing out to her — but, on the other hand, could any great preoccupation, whatever it might be with, be thought ridiculous? It meant, after all, participating whole-heartedly in the affairs of life and that, he was beginning to feel, was the most important thing of all. He was beginning to feel so because he had lately come to realize that he had allowed life — or, what came to the same thing, his interest in it — to withdraw from him. His past, as Uma had reminded him, had been so full; and his present was nothing. He had lost contact — not with the world of affairs, of politics, meetings; he did not mean that, because that he had relinquished deliberately — but with all the world, all life. Daily he walked through the streets but was not part of them: the children playing, the milk-seller pouring his milk in a long stream as if it were to be measured by the yard, tomatoes squashed in the dust, women suspiciously squeezing the vegetables offered to them by the shopman and turning them over and over in their hard hands, bullocks squatting in the road and quiet men sitting on wooden benches outside the food-stalls — daily he walked past them but with no more feeling for them than if he had been walking through a vacuum. (193)
Ram Nath’s rumination makes him see the world anew, in vibrant beauty due to his changed outlook. This initially stems, of course, from the spurning of the marriage proposal by Har Dayal and family—he truly recognizes it as valueless, offering no more than the illusion-cum prison of riches and luxury. This effects a profound change in his entire being as already referred to. The polarities of joy and sorrow are grasped. He begins to head the path of the polarity principle as he has reasserted reality.

*Esmond in India*, though rich in cultural cross-currents falls short of *A Backward Place, A New Deminion* and *Heat and Dust* comparatively.

This may be because Ruth Prawer Jhabvala was still relatively just a sojourner in India at the time of writing this novel. Considering India’s complexity of cultures in particular and overall complexity in general, this is not surprising. Fine attunement, forged in the smithy of experience and honed with a razor-sharp mind (devoid of preconceptions) is the necessary tool to lay bare a culture and civilization with roots more than 5000 years old. Besides labour, unusual sensitivity and fine sensibility are required, along with rare empathy. Mere theoretical knowledge can nowhere and no way suffice.

The cross-cultural currents in *Esmond in India* are more relevant as the characters therein can be viewed as case studies of malfunctionalism and dysfunctionalism psychologically, the upper middle class psychological baggage being the chief focus, a pastiche of Western culture. Superficial anglophilia with
a compensatory superiority aspect is therefore quite glaringly visible—in Esmond and Har Dayal, their convents and adherents.

To put the aforesaid into proper perspective, a brief overview of Western culture’s reality would be in order. It puts a premium on individuality. However, in modern times this often has the negative effect of minimal relatedness, as every coin has two sides.

The characters of Har Dayal and Shakuntala suffer from a lack of cultural identity though they are superficially westernized. Lady Madhuri, too, flounders on an empty cultural scape, caught as she is in the web of the brittle bug of Western materialism. She is representative of millions of the new generation. Naturally, her materialism cannot guide her to a genuine aesthetic plan of relationships or habitat.

Ram Nath is the only genuine old-world Indian in the novel. Superficial, Western values never creep into his being. He is initially essentially a genius, in his intellectual capacity and achievements academically at Cambridge. His immersion later in the Freedom Struggle suggests a vital being (those details have not been elucidated at length in the text but can be only inferred).

Esmond’s schism of a relationship with Gulab is an important part of the novel, rooted in lack of transplanting proper roots.

Yet, to specifically highlight the cross-cultural currents in the novel, these are, nevertheless, well drawn, the pastiche and deliberately ‘pasticized’ aspect notwithstanding. The superficial, privileged ‘Western sect’ has been aptly
portrayed. In this light, slavish apishness without comprehension is the bane of many modern Indians even in the current millennium marked often by an Esmond-like parasitism. *Esmond in India* can thus be seen as a work of East-West encounter, however most of it is a parody. The work has a definite relevance to current India, despite the gap of time between the publication of the novel and the present day. Of course, some may even say that the East-West encounter theme is more deeply explored by writers like Raja Rao, Anita Desai and Arun Joshi. However, this would be cultural discrimination in favour of geographical and social areas — tantamount to denying the universality of literature and a serious writer’s status as a citizen of the world. All in all, the psycho-social reality laid bare by Jhabvala is of a high order and of penetrating insight. As such, she must be given due, if not great, recognition for her vision, even though it began from the other side of the telescope. But this is no reason to deny its validity. A valid viewpoint advanced enriches cross-cultural connections and must not be ignored but acknowledged.