Chapter Four

Psychoanalytical Study of Characters

I believe that the persistence against all the odds, of psychoanalytic perspectives in literary study must ultimately derive from the conviction that the materials on which psychoanalysts and literary critics exercise their powers of analysis are in some basic sense the same: that the structure of literature is in some sense the structure of mind.

(Peter 336-37)

Psychoanalysis is the systematic study of human psychological functionary and behaviour. The idea of Psychoanalysis is first developed in Vienna in 1890 by Sigmund Freud, a neurologist who was interested in finding an effective treatment for patients with neurotic or hysterical symptoms. It is the forceful form of psychology which has developed as a “means of analysis and therapy for neurosis but soon expanded it to account for many developments and practices in the history of civilization, including warfare, mythology and religion, as well as literature and the other arts” (Abrams 248). It has three functions namely (a) a method of investigation of the mind, (b) a systemized set of theories about human behaviour and (c) a method of treatment of psychological or emotional illness.

Sigmund Freud wished to understand religion and spirituality to deal with the nature of religious beliefs in his writings. He wrote several important essays
on literature, in which he explored the psyche of authors and characters, to explain narrative mysteries, and to develop new concepts in psychoanalysis. Psychoanalytic theorists Carl Jung and Jacques Lacan were passionate readers and followers of Freud and they used literary examples as illustrations in their works.

Freud believed that the answers to what dominated daily actions inhabited in the conscious mind. Sexual instincts or drives have deeply concealed in the unconscious mind, so instincts act by giving vivacity and eagerness to the brain through meaning and intention. The ranges of instincts are in great numbers and Freud expresses them in two categories. One is Eros, the self-preserving life instinct containing all passionate delights. Other is Thanatos, which is death instinct such as self-destructive sexual behaviour and unconscious desire to die. Freud feels that instincts being linked with representative idea:

I am in fact of the opinion that the antithesis of conscious and unconscious is not applicable to instincts. An instinct can never become an object of consciousness – only the idea that represents the instincts can. Even in the unconscious, moreover, an instinct cannot be represented otherwise than by an idea. If the instinct did not attach itself to an idea or manifest itself as an affective state, we could know nothing about it. When we nevertheless speak of an unconscious instinctual impulse or of a repressed instinctual impulse, the looseness of phraseology is a harmless one. We can only mean an instinctual impulse the ideational representative of
which is unconscious, for nothing else comes into consideration.

(177)

Freudian theories quote that the adult problems can be traced and solved by knowing the unsettled disagreements from certain phases of childhood and adolescence caused by fantasy. Freud, through his clinical studies with patients suffering from mental illness, believes that childhood experiences and unconscious wishes influence one’s own behaviour. Based on his observations, he developed a theory that described development in terms of a series of psychosexual stages. According to him, conflicts that occurred during each of these stages could have a lifelong influence on personality and behaviour.

Psychoanalytic theories are an extremely powerful force during the first half of the twentieth century. According to these theories, human mind can be classified into three systems. They are the conscious mind, subconscious or preconscious mind, and unconscious mind. Conscious mind consists of everything that we are aware of. This is the part of our mental processing that we can think and talk about reasonably. The preconscious mind refers to information that is available for cognitive processing, but presently lies outside conscious awareness. It can be retrieved easily at any time and brought into our awareness. He feels that the unconscious mind continues to influence our behaviour and experience, even though we are unaware of these underlying influences. He relates these three levels of mind to an iceberg. The top of the iceberg that people can see above the water represents the conscious mind. The part of the iceberg that is submerged below the water, but is still visible is the preconscious. The bulk of the iceberg lies unseen beneath the waterline represents the unconscious.
The unconscious is the portion of the mind of which a person is unaware of. Freud expresses that the unconscious exposes true feelings, emotions and thoughts of an individual. There are a variety of psychoanalytic techniques used to access and understand the unconscious mind, ranging from methods like hypnosis, free association and dream analysis. Dreams allow us to explore the unconscious. According to Freud, they are the royal road to the unconscious. Dreams are composed of latent and manifest content. Latent content is the underlying meaning of a dream that a person remembers upon waking and can be analysed by a psychoanalytic psychologist. Manifest content of a dream consists of actual images, thoughts, and content contained within the dream. Dreams can provide access to the unconscious that is not easily accessible. Goethe observes, “Man cannot persist long in a conscious state, he must throw himself back into the unconscious, for his root lives there. Men are to be viewed as the organs of their century, which operate mainly unconsciously” (Whyte 128).

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud reports that dreams are messages from the unconscious implied as wishes controlled by internal stimuli. The unconscious mind plays the most essential role in dream interpretation. When one dreams, the unconscious makes an effort to deal with conflict. There are four steps needed to convert dreams from latent or unconscious thoughts to the manifest content. They are condensation, displacement, symbolism, and secondary revision. Ideas first go through a process of condensation that takes thoughts and converts them into a single image. Then, the true emotional meaning of a dream loses its significance in an element of a displacement. This is followed by symbolism representing latent thoughts in a visualised form.
A special focus on symbolism is given in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. All dreams are highly symbolic with an underlying principle meaning. The symbolic stage focuses on sexual connotations. Freud thinks that all human behaviour originates from sexual drives and desires. In the final stage of converting dreams to manifest content, dreams are made sensible. The final product of manifest content is what we remember when we awake from our sleep.

Sigmund Freud determined that each person possesses a certain amount of psychological energy that forms the three basic structures of personality namely the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. These three structures have different roles and operate at different levels of the mind. Id is the aspect of personality that is driven by internal, basic drives and needs. These are typically instinctual, such as hunger, thirst, the drive for sex, or libido. Id is the only element of personality that exists from birth. According to Freud, ‘Id’, “Contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is laid down in the constitution – above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate from the somatic organization and which find a first psychical expression here (in the id) in forms unknown to us” (376).

The ego is the part of the mind which means sense of self. It develops from the id during infancy and acts according to the reality principle. It makes defense mechanisms to prevent oneself from becoming overwhelmed by anxiety. It mediates between id and superego. Charu Steel Singh states:

Freud says that it is first the ego which becomes aware of the external stimuli; it stores up external experiences in the memory since it has a voluntary movement at its command. The ego is able to perform a threefold function by avoiding strong stimuli
(through flight), by adapting itself to modern stimuli, and by meaningfully accomplishing an activity that brings external experiences to its own advantage. (169)

The superego develops during early childhood and is driven by morality principle that it works to act in socially acceptable ways and it aims for flawlessness. It is the moral part of the personality that includes the values, social rules and morals of society which are learnt from an individual’s parents and others. It’s main function is to control the id’s impulses such as social prohibitions, taboos, sex and aggression. It can make a person guilty when the rules are not followed. T.K Seung says:

The binary distinction between the conscious and the unconscious is the structural universal that appears in the first layer of Freud’s psychoanalysis. The scope of this universal layer may be unlimited. The triardic distinction of ego, superego, and it is the structural universal that emerges in the second layer of the same analysis. Even this universal may be applicable to all human beings, and it is not even a new structural model. Freud’s triardic schema is a reformulation of Plato’s tripartite division of the human soul, namely, intellect, spirited element (feeling), and appetites (desires). This theory has been the ultimate paradigm for the various Western conceptions of the human soul from ancient Greece through medieval Christianity down to our own day. (163-64)
Psychoanalytic literary criticism refers to literary criticism which, in method, concept, theory, or form, is influenced by the tradition of Psychoanalysis. There are at least twenty-two different theoretical orientations regarding the underlying theory of understanding of human behaviour and human development under the broad umbrella of psychoanalysis. Critics see the text as if it were a kind of dream through the mirror of literary approach. This means that the text represses its real (latent) content behind obvious (manifest) content. Psychoanalytic criticism argues that literary texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires, anxieties, and conflicts of the author, and that a literary work is a manifestation of the author’s own neuroses. One may psychoanalyse a particular character within a literary work, but it is usually assumed that all such characters are projections of the author’s psyche.

Lacanian psychoanalysis is a departure from the traditional British and American psychoanalysis and is primarily Ego psychology. Lacan is a French psychoanalyst and his first contribution to psychoanalysis is *The Mirror Stage*. *The Mirror Stage* explains the formation of Ego through the course of objectification. He defines that Ego is the result of conflict between one’s comprehended visual appearance and one’s emotional experience. He calls identification as alienation. He also differentiates between desires and drives. According to him, desire is only one and drives are many. Drives are the incomplete expressions of desire.

Carl Jung is one of the most eminent, most complex, and most controversial psychological theorists. He is the founder of school of analytical psychology. Analytical psychology is the term used by Jung to define his theory
and practice of psychology. He invented this term to differentiate it from Freud’s psychoanalysis. Jungian psychology focuses on establishing and fostering the relationship between conscious and unconscious processes. According to him, dialogue between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche enriches the person. Jung believes that without this dialogue, unconscious processes can weaken and even endanger the personality.

Among all Jung’s concepts, introversion and extroversion have probably gained the widest general use. Jung found that individuals can be characterized as primarily inward-oriented or outward-oriented. The introvert is more comfortable with the inner world of thoughts and feelings. The extrovert feels comfortable with the world of objects and other people. No one is a pure introvert or a pure extrovert. Introverts see the world in terms of how it affects them, and extroverts are more concerned with their impact upon the world. Most of the characters of Namita Gokhale’s fiction are extroverts.

According to Jung, the anima and animus can be defined as the totality of the unconscious feminine psychological qualities that a male possessed and the masculine qualities possessed by the female, respectively. In the unconscious of the male, there is feminine inner personality called anima. In the unconscious of the female, it is expressed as a masculine inner personality called animus. He believes that every woman has an analogous animus within her psyche, i.e., a set of unconscious masculine attributes and potentials. Paro has the masculine traits such as determination, courage, will power and competitiveness or as T.S. Anand says, with animus, “Paro fits into the mould of a pretty woman seized by what
Jung called the Animus that is why she is headstrong and her opinions have the character of solid convictions” (206).

Psychoanalysis and literature are closely related intellectual disciplines. In the second half of the twenty-first century, psychoanalysis gained wide recognition among the critical and intellectual circles. Feminist theories of psychoanalysis also appeared towards the second half of the twentieth century in an effort to articulate the feminine, maternal and sexual difference and development from the point of view of female subjects. Feminist psychoanalysis is mainly post-Freudian and post-Lacanian with theories of Toril Moi, Joan Copjec, Juliet Mitchell, Teresa Brennan, and Griselda Pollock.

Women were the chief upholders of a rich oral tradition of story-telling, through myths, legends, songs and fables. The novel was not at first a common form, perhaps because the majority of women had less access to education than men. Jane Austen was the first one to pioneer the theme of psychology in her novels. The other women novelists who make a psychological study of women’s psyche are George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Bronte Sisters, Dorothy Richardson, and Virginia Woolf.

George Eliot’s *Adam Bede*, *Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner* are the novels of psychological interest and significance. She is basically a novelist of inner life engages in delving deep into the souls of her characters from an intellectual and feminist point of view. Elizabeth Gaskell portrays the miseries of working class women. Bronte Sisters makes indepth studies of women characters in their novels. Dorothy Richardson surpasses others in depicting feminine psychology. As an advocate of women’s movement, she is widely read and
admired by women. In the same line of exploration and study of women’s mentality, Virginia Woolf stands unrivalled. She experiments and exploits both the theories of stream of consciousness and psychoanalysis to impart greater magnitude to her novels. In her novels *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Jacob’s Room* and *To the Light House*, she portrays the inner struggles of women as accomplished artists of characterisation.

In the last two decades, there has been an astonishing flowering of women writing in English. The authors are mostly western-educated, middle-class women who express their discontentment with the plight of upper caste and traditional Hindu women trapped in repressive institutions such as child marriage, dowry, prohibitions on women’s education, arranged marriages, *sati* and enforced widowhood.

As early as in 1894, Kamala Krupabai Satthianadhan explored the cultural clash suffered by Hindu women who are given western education in India. The experience of being caught between two cultures has remained a prominent theme in the writings of Indian women. A number of Indian women novelists made their debut in the 1990s, producing novels which revealed the true state of Indian society and its treatment of women.

The Indian women novelists, who have risen to celebrity status and won global recognition in literature for their psychoanalytical approach are Cornelia Sorabji, Iqbalunnisa Hussain, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, R.P. Jhabvala, Attia Hossain, Nayantara Sahgal, Santha Rama Rau, Kamala Das, Rama Mehta, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy and Namita Gokhale. These novelists seem to have
derived inspiration and influences from the British in respect of art and device in writing novels.

The first two Indian women writers who made a pioneering venture in the depiction of the oppressed mind of Indian women were Cornelia Sorabji and Iqbalunnisa Hussain. In their stories *Love and Life behind Purdah* and *Purdah and Polygamy; Life in an Indian Muslim Household*, they unveil the silken curtain of * purdah* and eschew the sentimental and emotional crises of married women in Hindu and Muslim families. These two novelists expose the plight of women who live like encaged animals deprived of freedom and discretion in the world. They delineate the social predicament in which these passive women endure all sufferings i.e. physical and psychological by their virtue of tolerance and patience. Both Sorabji and Iqbalunnisa have portrayed women’s miseries from a women’s point of view.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is a woman novelist who is concerned with the psychological state of mind of the Indian women who undergo unutterable sufferings in their marital life. She points out in her novels how painful the heart of these women which is a result of frustration in love, infidelity, betrayal, divorce and disintegration in their marital life. Her novels *Esmond in India, A Backward Place,* and *Heat and Dust* deal with the themes of psychological crisis.

Anita Desai is widely recognized as the pioneer of psychological novel in modern Indian English literature. The most prominent feature of her is the art of characterisation. She penetrates psychologically into the inner working of women and externalises their passive reaction. In this respect, she approximates to Fyodor Dostoevsky, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and Henry
James. *Cry, the Peacock* is the story of an Indian woman Maya who undergoes considerable traumatic experiences obsessed by forebodings and mental tension. Anita projects the psyche of Indian women through Maya. In the second novel *Voices in the City*, Anita Desai psychoanalyses the inner heart of three characters namely Nirod Ray and his two sisters Monisha and Amla. These characters feel utterly frustrated like Maya in *Cry, the Peacock*. She uses the Freudian theory of psychoanalysis in order to unmask the enigmatic darker mind of men and women.

Another revolutionary women novelist is Kamala Das who projects in her poetry and novels her own self without inhibition and hesitation. She revolts against the male dominated Indian society and reveals her feeling in a confessional disposition. Her novels *Alphabet of Lust* and *A Doll for the Child Prostitute* are the ironic expression of physical and psychological harassment meted out to married women. Her *My Story* is an autobiographical novel in which she explores how the life of Indian women is restricted and suppressed in the Indian society.

There are many Indian women writers who are living in the USA, Canada, Britain, and other parts of the world. Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meera Syal, Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Baldwin, Chitra Banerji, and Kiran Desai are immigrant writers who deal with psychological conflicts in cross-cultural contexts. Some are recent immigrants, while others such as Jhumpa Lahiri are second generation immigrants. These writers write about their psychological conflicts in cross-cultural contexts.
Arundhati Roy won the Booker Prize for literary achievement and her *The God of Small Things* evaluates the abnormal psychology of men and women. She unfolds the psychology of some of the major characters in the novel. She focuses on the traumatic experiences of Ammu, who is terribly shocked and upset due to her foolish marriage with a Bengali young man. She develops contempt for her drunkard husband and falls in love with another man Velutha. Her frustration in marital life provokes her terrible psychological reaction which manifests in her mental reflection and rumination. Roy has used the psychoanalytic theory of Freud to construct her characters.

Most of the Indian women writers are primarily concerned with the psychological crises in the lives of Indian women who are subjected to physical and psychological torture in the patriarchal society. These novelists have expressed their skill in projecting the painful heart of the victimized women convincingly. Their portrayal of women characters has authenticity in their feminist approach, outlook and perspective. Their keen observation of the lives of Indian women and their interest in the study of psychoanalysis are evidenced by their vivid and panoramic portrayal of their plight.

Indian women novelists in English are psychologically concerned with the tragic life of Indian women who desperately commit suicide due to inhuman attitude meted out to them. As there was a necessity to kindle public consciousness about their trials and tribulations for the purpose of their emancipation and amelioration of their condition, the women novelists have made their novels as an instrument for bringing social reform in the interest of suppressed Indian women.
Namita Gokhale’s novels are basically psychological in tone. She is psychologically concerned with the tragic life of all her characters who desperately commit suicide or attempt suicide by inhuman impositions upon them. Paro attempts suicide twice and succeeds in the second attempt. In one of the dinner parties, Lenin calls Paro a whore. She becomes angry and attempts suicide, but she escapes in this attempt. Her intention is merely to present herself as a liberated woman but the liberation she chooses for herself is hollow and false. Paro realises her mistakes and repents for the role that she has played throughout her entire life. Later, she changes, and in good terms with her ex-husband B.R. Her death is a plea to society to think positively about a new kind of existence for its women by bringing reforms that would liberate the women from the clutches of tyrannical conventions. Paro dies in her second attempt of suicide during her struggle for existence.

Priya’s life is shattered after her miscarriage. Suresh is preoccupied with his business. After that they are separated when Suresh comes to know about her affair with B.R. In her parental home, she is alone regretting her faults. She attempts suicide by taking thirty Calmposes tablets, but she fails to pass away into eternal sleep, as she admits:

Two days of near starvation made me feel euphoric. I went to the chemist and bought thirty Calmposes. I was sure that was enough to push me into death and oblivion. I swallowed them one by one, and contemplated leaving a suicide note. I decided my manuscript could speak for itself and did not need any addendum or apologia. I left it prominently beside my bedside and changed into a new
chiffon sari. I sat before the spiteful old mirror and made myself up carefully. I wanted to look beautiful and triumphant in death.

My eyelids were growing heavy and pendulous. (PDP 139)

Priya resolves to make another attempt of drowning into the sea, but a jelly fish bites her and she returns back to the sea-shore. She wants to get victory from her living death through real death. Gudiya’s Mamaji hangs himself in the mango tree because of some very bad incidents that is not mentioned in the novel. Anand hangs himself with a rope attached to the ceiling fan because he cannot tolerate the infidelity of Rachita. He wants to be a novelist, a filmmaker or a great dramatist, but his ambition shatters by his act of suicide. Anand’s suicide note makes a deep impact on Rachita’s mind. Rachita feels guilty of Anand’s death and this guilt leads her to loneliness. According to critic Lester, “Suicidal people often feel that others have been very unfair, and they express anger at this situation by showing loved ones just how bad they had been” (405). A fairly ample number of people attempt suicide to manipulate others and get others to do what they wish to do. Rachita’s guilt conscious is further deepened by the acid attack and disfigurement of her face. The minor character Narangi’s husband commits suicide to escape from the murder case.

Namita Gokhale has applied deconstruction theory in all her novels. All her protagonists are the reflection of deconstructed femininity. She deals with the psychological struggles of the female characters in her fiction. The efforts, desires and failures faced by women in the traditional society of India are the essential elements of her novels. The novelist explores the conscious, subconscious and unconscious mental state of her characters. Being a woman
novelist, she has thoroughly unfolded the inner feelings of women. She has also applied the concepts of Freud very skillfully.

The term ‘deconstruction’ was coined by French philosopher Jacques Derrida in the 1960s. The term denotes a particular kind of practice in reading, a method of criticism, and a mode of analytical inquiry. When asked what deconstruction is, Derrida stated, “I have no simple and formalizable response to this question. All my essays are attempts to have it out with this formidable question” (4). Deconstructionist approach came in vogue in France towards the end of sixties and the beginning of seventies. This approach is, in fact, a post-structuralist approach. Structuralist approach aimed at objectivity, technicality, precision and real technical analysis of a text. Structuralists pre-supposed the death of the author. Deconstructionist approach is in turn the reversal of structuralist approach. Deconstruction focuses on the ‘absences’ and ‘gaps’ in the text. The approach has been so useful in modern feminist criticism.

Feminist critics have through the use of intertextuality deconstructed the representatives of women in cultures – the images, stereotypes and archetypes. They have found women as the beautiful Other, as aesthetic object of eros, glamour and fashion, as a mother whose will and power if checked and directed will succor; as a schemer whose will and power if unchecked will devour. (Stimpson 117)

Deconstructionist element is necessary in any optionally functioning analytic therapy and contemporary psychoanalysis. According to structuralists, every word is a sign which is made up of two components – signifier and
Signifier is a mark which is either written or spoken and signified is the concept behind it. Whenever a signifier is broken into its concepts, a new set of signified is released. It is just like a chain reaction. This relationship between a signifier and signified is deconstructive in nature. It is not a permanent or final relationship, but a temporary, arbitrary and relative one. This relationship can be deconstructed and then again reconstructed. This approach aims neither at construction of a particular meaning nor at deconstruction of that meaning. Its main argument is that meaning of a particular sign can be deconstructed. There is neither affirmation of a meaning nor negation of a meaning but a constant postponement of meaning. The very process in which the relationship between signifier and signified is postponed is deconstructive in nature.

According to deconstructionists, all cultural, social, literary courses have lost their meanings as they are now open for deconstruction. According to them, concepts like goodness, purity, naturalness and truth are arbitrary and tentative. All the concepts which were earlier presumed to be self-evident and correct are now bound to be deconstructed. Derrida observes, “since the center does not belong to the totality, the totality has its center elsewhere” (395). It means the center is not the centre. The very concept of a center is arbitrary. The center is not “a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions come into play” (Davis 395).

Derrida and other deconstructionists assert that the full meaning of any word, phrase or text will never simply stop for there will always be a further suggestion to pursue. Deconstructionists have been influenced by the great German philosopher Wolfgang Muller Nietzche’s assertion that the same text
authorises innumerable interpretations. He says, “Ultimately man finds in things nothing but what he himself has imported into them” (Davis 430).

Deconstructive approach follows from the basic ideas of Derrida about textuality, undecidability and strategy. Just like Derrida, Muller asserts that text is nothing more than, “innocent marks on a page” (433). These marks do not carry any fixed meaning in themselves. The reading imports some meaning in those marks. So the meanings assigned to those marks are arbitrary and are not final. As M.H. Abrams points out that while interpreting a text, we are about to grasp a particular meaning, “the bottom drops away” (Davis 435) and we can never get any final meaning of the text.

Deconstruction is confined not only to the literary texts but as pointed out earlier, this approach can be applied to all the concepts whether they are social, philosophical or literary. All these concepts are arbitrary and hence open to deconstruction. All dichotomies in the areas of culture, literature, arts are tentative. Same is the case with gender dichotomies. Categories like ‘man’ and ‘woman’, ‘male’ and female’, and ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are all tentative. One cannot derive a final meaning out of this sort of categorisation. Thus femininity, which aimed at docility, modesty, chastity, and sacrifice on the part of women, is also open to deconstruction.

Namita Gokhale has deconstructed the very concept of femininity through Paro in Paro: Dreams of Passion. The concept of femininity is aimed at women being meek, obedient, virtuous and modest. In contrast, Paro in Paro: Dreams of Passion is shown to be a rebel who revolts against the social and moral codes assigned to women. She is neither chaste nor submissive as is expected from a
woman. She revolts against social codes, traditions, authority and all those things which force a woman to become a prisoner of her own sex, but through this she has been able to get an individuality of her own. Deconstructionists feel that, all the terms related to femininity are arbitrary and manmade and cannot be taken as final. Femininity in itself has no definite meaning. It has been assigned a particular meaning by a male dominated society which can be deconstructed.

Priya describes Paro’s unconventional ways of behaviour on her day of wedding. She does not resemble any traditional Indian bride in her manners. A bride behaving in such a careless manner and taking wine is against the concept of femininity. Shakuntala in *Shakuntala: The Play of Memory* also tastes wine and observes that, “Sipping it, I felt an exaltation I had never before experienced, a limitless freedom. Like the bird in the sacrificial altar, I too could soar across the sky” (*SPM* 54-55). Instead of becoming repulsive, Paro becomes a sort of attraction for others. Priya admires, “She circulated through the room with an assured catlike grace. One mehndied hand carelessly held on to, horror of horrors, a glass of gin! The other was graciously bestowed on B.R., who followed in her wake, a slightly glazed look in his fine eyes” (*PDP* 10-11).

Paro’s outgoing nature helps her to become a social celebrity. She comes out of the areas which are allotted to women and succeeded in making a place for her in a male-oriented society. She comes out of the traditional image of a woman, who is forced to remain inside the house and is expected to do nothing other than household chores, child-bearing and child-rearing. On the contrary, Paro’s child is looked after by an aayah. Her child is not at all a hindrance for her journey.
Paro’s manner of speaking becomes an obsession for Priya. Priya always dreams herself as Paro. She feels, “subconsciously I would find myself mouthing her words; phrases that were not mine would spill unsuspecting from my lips; gestures that were hers would enact themselves in involuntary mine” (16). Paro has been able to make such a place in society that girls like Priya starts taking her as their model. Paro’s style of dressing is also not traditional. Unlike a traditional woman who is wrapped in a sari, she prefers wearing dresses like “a black sequined off shoulder kurta, which left one shoulder completely bare, almost naked” (PDP 24). Priya tries to follow Paro and starts smoking, visiting beauty parlours and wearing modern dresses, but Suresh objects it. He wants Priya to be a typical Indian woman, dresses up in saris only. Unlike Paro, Priya obeys her husband’s words and wears sari throughout the novel.

Namita Gokhale also deconstructs femininity through Parvati in A Himalayan Love Story. Parvati’s relationship with Salman and with her brother-in-law, Parvati’s mother’s relationship with Shrikrishnj are beyond the limits of femininity. Adeline’s and Pasang Rampa’s use of sexuality as a tool to find a provider is just opposite to that of feminine qualities. In Priya In Incredible Indyaa, Monalisa and Paromita are bold characters. They do not hesitate to approach their future mother-in-law regarding their marriage proposal which is totally unconventional and unfeminine.

Suresh enters into Paro’s life when she is facing a number of legal problems. Suresh is using her contacts for making more clients, but he falls into the trap of Paro. She starts visiting his house frequently and during one of her visits, she tells Priya about her past. Paro becomes a victim of the brutality of her
art master, but shockingly she enjoys the so-called rape. She herself says, “Funny thing is that I wasn’t raped, I loved every moment of it” (PDP 33). Paro is a woman of loose morals without any sense of guilt, or shame for being so. The notion behind a ‘rape’ is deconstructed here.

Paro makes all the drama to capture the attention of others. She is very much enthusiastic about showing off her beauty to people around her. In one of the cocktail parties, Paro happens to meet a rich and handsome man. To capture his attention, she throws down her sari pallav and wraps it around her waist like lungi style. Then she lies on the grass and her two long beautiful white legs point towards the night sky. All men in the party look at her including Priya, Suresh, and Lenin. As Priya states, “Her enthusiasm was almost a primitive exhibitionism, actually she would show off her skills to all and sundry, quite unmindful of the suitability of the occasion” (61). Her behaviour is obviously against the norms of femininity. But Paro is not at all embarrassed or ashamed of her act. She simply says, “We were just talking about Yoga” (PDP 63). But the other people attending the party were really shocked to see such an unfeminine attitude of Paro.

Paro’s perversities awaken again and she takes Shambhu Nath Mishra into her clutches. In her very first encounter with him, “she was responding feverishly, obscenely, like a cat in heat” (77). She never likes to be tied up with a single man. She has gone to America with Shambhu Nath Mishra, but when her passion is spent, she returns to India. Once again she goes back to ‘Bucky’ Bhandpur. When Lenin finds Paro’s growing indifference towards him, he plans to marry. After his marriage, Paro feels lonely and joins the theatre with the help
of a young Krishen Narain Singh. She plays the role of Clytemnestra, who is shown to be a passionate and strong woman with a creepy husband. She kills her husband and in retaliation is killed by her son. Clytemnestra is the character in Homer’s *Odyssey*. According to Greek mythology, she is a wife of Agamemnon. She has an affair with another man when her husband is participating in the Trojan war. When he returns back, she murders him to fulfill her desires. It is in the play Paro attacks male chauvinism. She observes, “It’s all the male types, it’s because of the social framework. You know all the fucking freedom of men, and none for women” (*PDP* 105). In order to get equality with men, she revolted against all the moral codes and virtually deconstructed the norms of femininity.

Paro’s adventurous and unpredictable nature is evident when she remarries a European Cinema celebrity, Loukas Leoros. He can never satisfy her because he is a homosexual. She confesses, “I feel like a cat on a hot tin roof; I’m in heat; I need a man; And Loukas, as we all know is a woman” (*PDP* 156). Paro has tried to achieve the equality and individuality by denying the social codes of femininity. Paro asserts her femininity, but at the same time she does not behave in a masculine manner. The type of feminism which Paro propagates is self-destructive as it does not lead to any harmonious relationships between men and women which is the ultimate aim of feminism.

Namita Gokhale deconstructs femininity through the hypocritical nature of Priya. Priya has illicit affairs with B.R. hiding the fact from her husband and others. She is attracted towards wealthy, lustrous, luxurious status of B.R. as well as his magnetic charm. She is excited further by the wine offered by B.R. She explains the moment, “He led me like a princess into his bedroom. Gently,
he poured me some wine in a stemmed glass. It was my first taste of alcohol. It
tasted heady and strange, as did everything else in the incredible new world that
was unfolding bravely about me” (PDP 4).

Abnormality refers to unusual behaviour that is different from the normal
behaviour. Paro’s abnormality is evident in her association with Avinendra. She
wants to marry him, but he calls her a whore in a party. As a result, they have a
big fight. After that she exhibits her body to everyone. Paro is a center of
attraction on that day, “her blouse was quite ripped over from the front, and her
breasts were completely naked, the nipples two compelling eyes in their vast
‘blankness’ ” (PDP 54). Everyone looks astonished at her display. Lenin’s anger
changes immediately, the fascination of Paro’s moonlike body holds him in as
complete thrall as ever before. He bends down and begins feverishly to kiss her
feet. She gives him a hand kick on his face, then on his groin. She then runs into
a room and locks it. When the door is forced open, Paro lays on the bed, quite
motionless.

In terms of Jungian Psychology, B.R. suffers from the ‘Masculine mother-
complex’, which results in his Don Juanism and thus he seeks his mother in every
woman he meets. B.R. is the sewing machine magnate, and first legal husband of
Paro. He always feels insecure. He is in pursuit of love from beautiful women
who seldom provide him love. B.R. poignantly remembers his mother who is
very real. Regretting his marriage with Paro he thinks, “It was not me she wanted.
It was the fixtures and fittings that came with me” (PDP 38). She hurts him by
trying to use him, licking his wounds. He marries Bubbles just six months after
Paro leaves him. He tries to solve his psychic ailments through sex. For him, sex
is more than a sport, a duty, a vocation, a calling, “and it was with sex alone that he reached out to the world, and it was with sex that he shut out thought, emotion and feeling” (PDP 40). Women come to him for comfort and healing. He abuses every female he meets, it is his eternal search to locate his sexual counterpart, the anima what Jung calls “the unconscious femininity” (78) with “the help of an inherited collective image of woman in his unconscious” (79).

It is a well-known fact that sexual subjugation can lead to mental illness. Namita Gokhale not only describes the mental ailment of her protagonist Parvati, but also a whole generation of her female ancestors. Parvati’s insanity is the reflection of the inhuman treatment that she suffers at the hands of the homosexual husband, and the society. Social unresponsiveness makes Parvati insane. Mukul, ex-lover of Parvati observes:

   Mental illness runs like a secret rivulet through the genetic pools of Kumaon. No one is secure from its visitations. From where could Parvati have got that plunging line in her palm? Could it have been her father’s sister who came from Dubkia, and was kept chained in a cowshed until she died? Or was it from the maternal side of her family? (137)

Mohan Mischief, friend of Mukul, states, “Parvati’s widowhood and breakdown had met with no compassion. ‘She was abandoned, Mukul. She was in bad shape and no one wanted to have anything to do with her suffering’ ” (HLS 138). At last Parvati and her daughter Irra are desolated by Mukul, the devoted lover of Parvati, who leaves in an oscillation “country and conditions do not permit”
(HLS 207). When the question is raised to remark upon “country and conditions do not permit,” the author answers:

By ‘Country conditions’ I meant the hopeless situation in India in terms of poverty and illiteracy and the caste system. Parvati symbolizes all these. Mukul influenced by the western culture was sympathetic to her, yet he would not think of giving protection to Parvati and her daughter. I have focused on a situation when India deserved only sympathy from the international community that would comment: “Oh, India is full of Parvatis and India is full of pain”. Fortunately that situation has changed for the better as India is shining among the nations of the world. (qtd. in Brahmavathi)

Too much of sadness and remembrance of the acid attack creates abnormality in Rachita’s behaviour. Rachita leaves Delhi to take shelter in a remote house in the Himalayan foothills. The house was constructed over a century ago and she lives alone. Lohaniju, the old caretaker of the house looks after her daily domestic needs. Rachita identifies herself with the lonely surroundings around her. She cannot sleep and spends her night by reading and imagining about something. She also recalls her happy babyhood days. Long days of depression and insomnia make her insane. She hopes that if she closes her eyes, she would see Anand’s sister’s face. She says:

I keep my eyes open to shut out the image of her face from my mind: it tends to float up in my interminable hours of half-sleep. I bury myself with other occupations: I play solitaire, I knit, I redo
my nail polish, and as a last resort I count and recount the rafters. \((BS\ 24)\)

Love is the basis of lovers’ mutual trust and compatibility. But Anand has the “tendency to take recourse to extreme action upon the slightest provocation” \((BS\ 6)\). He is very possessive and considers Rachita to be his property. Even his sister who teaches chemistry in a college has the same kind of intense temperament. Rachita thus says, “Insanity obviously ran in their family” \((BS\ 6)\).

The acid attack upon Rachita takes her to the world of insanity. She begins to live in the world of fantasy. Her mind floats in the imaginary world. She starts talking and visualising different people and places in her dreams. Her abnormality is noticed when she says:

\[
\text{One night, as I was brushing my hair in the dressing room, I had a curious experience. I was overtaken by the sensation that my feet were not where I expected them to be. The ground below me had lost its authority, it no longer exercised the inexcitable pull of gravity. The jute matting beneath me had abandoned faith and logic and assumed a life of its own. I felt weirdly disembodied; I was flailing and my senses were overshooting themselves. It was as if I was receiving no information from my peripheries. (BS 25-26)}
\]

Sometimes, she wants to come out from this dilemma. To ease her sufferings, she wants to become a writer, “I’ll write a best seller and go for the launch in a black lace mantilla and have all the men in the audience wildly in love with me” \((66)\). Sometimes, she herself feels that her behaviour is not normal
at all. She tries everything to comfort herself, but everything is fruitless, “Nothing is what it seems to be. Even my arithmetic is dismayed. Mathematics is sanity, especially when it moves towards increasing levels of abstraction. It battles change and disequilibrium. And now, these anomalies, these confusions. What is happening to me?” (BS 67).

Rachita’s sister encourages her to write a fiction. First, she thinks it as foolish idea, but later she considers, “Today I distinctly heard an inner voice speak. It whispered from the debris of clamorous emptiness that is my centre. It said to me, ‘Hang on. Just hang on, okay?’ ” (BS 212). Her sister says about a visit of a renowned plastic surgeon of Indian descent from Austin, Texas coming to Delhi. She expects Rachita to visit him to remake her face which was tormented in the acid attack. At this juncture, Rachita recalls the line from Shakespeare’s Julius Ceasar, “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves” (216). She does not know whether it is good or bad. She realises that problem is in her. She decides to see the doctor as she remarks:

If you lose if one loses – one’s sense of self, there is no remedy but to proceed on a simulated model. All self-image is anyway a construct of circumstance. If you lose an arm or a leg, you cannot forget what you have lost, the phantom pain is there to remind you, but if you have lost your sense of selfhood things are quite different, for (this is the important part) you are no longer there to know it. Who will find you again? (216)
She anticipates her future, “the garden will bloom again, the roses by the veranda, the weeds and forget-me-nots by the gravel path. I think I know that I will remain” (BS 232).

The ancients thought that dreams were messages from the Gods. Today dreams are recognised as messages from a deep source of wisdom and understanding within oneself. Every dream is a message from some deeper unconscious part to the more conscious part of an individual, expressed in a language that needs to be learnt and understood. It is believed that the dream is the window to the soul. Dreams make one looking down into a deep chasm of the soul. The frank discussion of dreams is especially important in the promotion of healthy individuals which will lead to social harmony.

The interpretation of dream is taken up as part of psychoanalysis at the end of nineteenth century. Dreams are defined as mental activity of the dreamer. Dreams have a disguised meaning, more sweeping and penetrating. Dreams are considered as supernatural communication, divine intervention or omens of particular significance by ancient people. The Greek physician Hippocrates deals with the relation of dreams to illness. Aristotle knew that dreams give a magnified construction to small stimuli arising during sleep.

The process of forming dreams happen by the totality of the sensory stimuli generated during sleep from various sources which arouse in the mind in the form of ideas, hallucinations or illusions. The stimuli may be internal or external. These ideas become linked together according to the law of association and according to the same law, call up a further series of ideas or images. The whole of this material is then worked over, by the organising and thinking
faculties of the mind. Dreams derive their basic material from reality and from the intellectual life experienced internally or externally. Dreams are subjected to distortion, as the meaning manifest in the unconscious. Dream sequence expresses an individual’s unresolved conflict, some urgent message from the unconscious or forgotten traumatic memories. Daydream, a visionary fantasy experienced while awake, can be constructive and connected with some emotion.

In modern times, various schools of psychology have offered theories about the meaning of dreams. Interpretation of Dreams focuses on Freud’s theory of the unconscious with respect to dream interpretation. He also feels that one simple symbol or idea in one’s dream has several interpretations. The interpretation of dreams is therapeutic and can lead to holistic self and community development.

Namita Gokhale’s novels have dreams with a latent meaning which is a unique personal experience. She makes use of visual, auditory and olfactory perceptions in psychosis. Most of the daydreams are about ordinary, everyday events and remind of ordinary tasks. Mental imagery creates during daydreaming helps to gain insight into mental state and to make diagnoses.

In Paro: Dreams of Passion, there is an interplay of reality and fantasy. The novel clearly indicates that reality can be rendered acceptable with the help of fantasy. Priya’s husband Suresh, who is always busy with his clients, is an unromantic person. Priya frequently fantasies about her youth, her favourite author Daphne du Maurier and her favourite novel Rebecca. She loves to read the mushy romance of “Mills & Boon” (PDP 61). Priya’s favourite fantasy star is B.R. She herself describes her dream:
I was myself. Sometimes I was B.R. devouring Paro, and then B.R. tenderly loving Priya, and then I became Suresh who was ravishing Paro, and then Paro with Suresh in slavish possession, and intermittently Suresh copulating with Priya who was actually Paro. I was all these people fragments of their thoughts, feelings, terrors passed through my writing body. (*PDP* 60)

Dreams about B.R., Priya’s ex-boyfriend, are symbolic of the positive qualities she experiences during that relationship like excitement, freedom, and youthfulness. Since these are recurring dreams, there may be some unresolved conflicts in that relationship. Priya has a sexual relationship with B.R. for a short while when she is estranged from her husband Suresh, probably to resolve the issues before, she finally goes back to being the wife of Suresh. Fantasy is an integral part of Priya’s character. For her, it means attaining the unattainable, even if it means an imagined sexual satisfaction with another person, who was somebody else’s husband. Fantasy is also a mode of acquiring what one desires.

Gudiya in *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, has a vivid dream about her childhood. She dreams that she is a baby again, in a room with lights and chandeliers. The dream of baby signifies that she has many warm friends. Seeing a baby also means requited love. Gudiya initially thinks that Kalki loves her, soon she realises that it is not so. In her dreams, she sees as if she is in the arms of a very tall man whose face she cannot see. A faceless man indicates that Gudiya has a distorted dream with things turning into other things and she could not see them clearly. This also shows her aspiration to have a father figure in her life.
Gudiya sees her Ammi in her dream due to her excessive affection towards her. The past torments her in many occasions and she is unable to forget her mother and grandmother. Frequently, she sees her mother’s spirit along with Shambu, Saboo and Magoo’s. She narrates:

I dreamt of grandmother that night. It was a vivid dream, which featured two groups of sultry belly dancers, who between them held a veil which concealed a precious object. After much laughter and music, the veil was moved to revealed my grandmother, seated in the lotus posture as she had been at the time of her internment, with the Amber Chunni draped about her white sari. She summoned me towards her and, cupping my chin affectionately in her gnarled hands, asked me how I was keeping.

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Shakuntala also often sees her dead brother in her dreams as she describes, “Sometimes in my dreams, I saw my little brother, wrapped in a shroud, lying still below the unceasing motion of the river” \((SPM\ 10)\). This shows that the death of her little brother affected her psyche. Dream of Shakuntala is to see an elephant and also to see and experience the distant world.

Shakuntala’s desire to see an elephant symbolises all the things she wants to achieve in life. Elephant represents Lord Ganesha, the Hindu deity, who has a human form but has the head of an elephant. He represents the power of the Supreme Being that removes obstacles and ensures success in human endeavours. The large head of an elephant symbolises wisdom, understanding, and a discriminating intellect that one must possess to attain perfection in life. The wide
mouth represents the natural human desire to enjoy life in the world. The large ears signify that a perfect person is the one who possesses a great capacity to listen to others and assimilate ideas. The trunk and two tusks with the left tusk broken signify there is no known human instrument that has an operating range as wide as that of an elephant’s trunk. It can uproot a tree and yet lift a needle off the ground. Likewise, the human mind must be strong enough to face the ups and downs of the external world and yet delicate enough to explore the subtle realms of the inner world. The two tusks denote the two aspects of the human personality, wisdom and emotion. Right tusk represents wisdom and the left tusk represents emotion. The broken left tusk conveys the idea that one must conquer emotions and wisdom to attain personality. The elephant’s eyes are said to possess natural deceptiveness that allows them to perceive objects to be bigger than what they really are. The eyes of elephant symbolise the idea that even if an individual gets bigger and bigger in wealth and wisdom, he should surrender his pride and should have humility. The four arms indicate that the Lord is omnipresent and omnipotent. The left side of the body symbolises emotion and the right side symbolises reason. Shakuntala’s tale ends with the conclusion to all her desires in order to get Moksha.

Dream images are a source of wisdom and personal growth. Dreams arise from some sources other than ordinary conscious mind and, the emotional re-experiencing and dramatisation of dreams can lead to creative integration of the personality. Dreams can be shaped and controlled through positive group therapy. They contain a mixture of elements from one’s personal identity which are familiar along with a quality of otherness in the dream images that carries a
The bizarre and nonsensical characters and plots in dreams point out to deeper meanings and contain rational and insightful comments on waking situations and emotional experiences.

The unconscious dream of the authors’ are expressed through their characters. Namita’s unconscious is expressed through the expression of Shakuntala. Shakuntala is the story of Gokhale’s personal myth. The story projects author’s reactions, inner dynamics onto the world outside through the filter of how she feels and thinks. Her psyche mirrors structures between the inner and the outer realities. Even though Shakuntala dies in the end, the psyche has to be clear about the rights and wrongs she has lived through during her life in this world. They convey the message that Shakuntala’s spirit is liberated even though the body dies in the process.

The individual ego has the illusion that is acting out of ‘free will.’ However, the archetypes, the energies that in psychological language called the Gods and Goddess are the energies of the deeper unconscious that guide our actions of which we are unaware of. They operate out of their own wish and force an individual to act in certain ways. The archetypes are the bedrock that defines human nature, regardless of the culture in which one lives. Rashna Imhasly, a transpersonal psychoanalyst, remarks:

Archetypes are in general dual in nature, they bring out the full spectrum of the light and dark forces of human nature. The archetypes are part of our life force energy they give the impulses so that we can live our lives creatively. The power of archetype
allows Shakuntala to shirk her individual responsibility as a wife and mother. (e-mail source)

In Jungian psychology, the shadow or shadow aspect refer to an unconscious aspect of the personality that the conscious ego does not identify it. Shadow archetype consists of the sex and life instincts. It describes the darker side of the psyche such as wildness and chaos. Shadow appears in dreams and takes a variety of forms. According to him, ego is able to follow the command of the inner voice – the self, in spite of the rules and law of the constricting society, but it does not damage the self and fall into the impulse of shadow. According to this principle, it is perfectly right on the part of Shakuntala to go through the whole Yadhuri stage and live through the shadow archetype. She ripens through the process. She takes a decision of leaving the Yavana at the end because she does not want to be the wife of anyone and she crosses the river to visit Kashi. The fact that she is matured is evident through her decision.

Individuation describes the manner in which an individual is different from other human beings. According to Jung, “In general, it is the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated [from other human beings]; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology” (par. 757). The inner dialogue between the ego and the inner self called as Dharam Sankat, and it is the process where individuation takes place in the internal court. Shakuntala has to live through the different circumstances of the environment that she grows up in and has to start to rebel against what her inner voice knows to be right. In the
first few chapters, author’s mocking at the Hindu rituals that Shakuntala’s brother caught in is her ‘Dharam Sankat.’

The culture that Shakuntala grows up in is still caught up in the ancestral thoughts and experiences, which continue to affect the existing members of both genders. But Shakuntala will not allow herself to be immersed in the existing patterns. She is a free spirit and the thoughts and experiences she brings in, can add and modify the old behaviour patterns. She is not just born to die with the same mindset. Her change evolves through her interaction with life and her perceptions of change.

Shakuntala has moved towards integrating her feelings which are rooted in wisdom which give a healthy sense of self-awareness, emotional autonomy and intellectual capacity where she is at the end, able to navigate herself without being dependent on the ‘other’. She has to break the habits of the past to be able to create the possibilities for the future.

Freedom demands inner not outer authority. Shakuntala attains this by holding on to the presence of mind, heart and soul, which work together. She learns her mistakes through her experience. Finally she becomes an individual who is no longer disrupted by the outer events of her life, but reaches the point where she can view them from the perspective of a mystic. At the end, she repents that her life has no value to her as well as to the world. At her departure to the other world, a nun spoke to her very patiently:

The world has abandoned you, and perhaps it is now time for you to abandon it. Fate has brought you to the sanctuary of the Deer Park, the most blessed spot on the face of the earth. There is a
pattern to fate’s tricks. Why else have you been brought here but for your salvation as a crow might pick up a piece of bread! (SPM 195)

Equality is something that Shakuntala is aspiring towards in a culture that is fiercely unequal. By liberating herself, she casts off the oppression that represents the old order. She seeks freedom so that she is filled with fury and rage. This is because she is unable to achieve what she aspires for. Shakuntala depends on her intuition rather than her rational thoughts. Rashna interprets:

Intuition is a sudden insight, an apprehension of a complexity of life processes that one grapples with. Intuition forces her into action, the ideas about the choices in her life are clear and they demand immediacy of action. Her actions are not processed through a rational thought process. They demand force of action as her ideas come to her as a revelation. (e-mail source)

Intimacy opens one up to the most vulnerable parts of oneself, parts that we do not share with anyone else, to share this space with another is felt as a betrayal. In this case, the trust of the life partner is broken. All seeming hurts, which may seem traumatic at the present moment, can be transformed and integrated through time. Time heals all wounds, the scar tissues remain as reminders of one’s maturity. Shakuntala feels that Srijan has betrayed her and shares the intimate space that they had with another. Srijan thinks it is his birthright as it is the collective consciousness he is brought up in.

Shakuntala acts out of her intuition that poses a way out of her present dilemma, but it does not mean that it is the right action or the accurate perception
of a situation. This becomes self-evident in the moves she makes such as moving away from Srijan. Her intuition acts as the force to seek the escape route by falling in love with the Yavana. It opens up her field of perception to a much larger experience of life and the world that she discovers through him. It broadens her perspectives about it.

Each one is caught up in a morphogenetic field of energy, which is socially based pattern of a society. Karma is a kind of force of conscience, a visible force generated by a person’s actions, resulting in ethical consequences that not only affect the individual’s present existence, but the character and fate in future existence. Hindus believe that souls return to earth to resolve the transgressions of previous existences. A person’s Karma is interpreted as a collection of memories, habits and perspectives in the morphogenetic field that come together to create the physical and psychological profile of a person challenged to alter the field itself. Rati Oberoi in the article “Operation of Karma” writes:

The laws of Karma are intricate and have an element of interpretation as these are filtered through an individual’s consciousness. The desire and challenge of every individual is to live in harmony with the laws of Karma. Wisdom is a part of spiritual inheritance, offering free choice and the will to act the choice. (31)

Successful working out of one’s Karma transforms dysfunctional elements in the morphogenetic field, an act that ultimately benefits future generations too. Shakuntala’s story tells readers that she is not just born to die.
She wants to be an acting agent that contributes to shift the morphogenetic field for future events, but she has to change herself first. She has to live through the experience with the Yavana too, the darker side of her life in order to experience life’s another side. Shakuntala has to ripen through the triple experiences of life, from the bud stage to becoming a full human individual. She now understands the power of the instinctive forces of life, which led her into acting out the way she did, which were also governed by instinct.

Shakuntala’s path is different from Guresvara’s path. Guresvara is caught by the morphogenetic thought forms of his time, to go in a certain direction in his life, where his sensual and intuitive feelings of enthusiasm of his own life are given no space to develop. Shakuntala chooses the harder way of living life. She has to experience the challenges of the differing Goddess energies that possess her in the midst of overwhelming cultural conditioning. It is the third goddess Athena, or in Indian mythology Saraswati that matures later within her, through the experience of life. She is a fully developed Goddess in her own right. She then reaches post-conscious rationality, unlike Guresvara’s repressed and disconnected male rationality. Her mind is able to control her body. She knows the archetypes as she has lived through them but is beyond them. Her consciousness survives death, and the God within has evolved through her interactions and perceptions.

Shakuntala’s story is a changing phase of the woman’s psyche today. A new Shakuntala is emerged and she has learnt from her past experiences. She is governed by pre-conscious behaviour, her fears, anger and her passion that are still in a quite defused state. It is instinct that governs her when she presses
forward or when she backs off. She is not able to negotiate relationships of equality. Suppressed emotions do not evaporate; they evolve into toxic thoughts and complex behaviour patterns, which begin to mal-function and remain stuck. Shakuntala blames Srijan unconsciously for the loss of the sacred space that has dissolved between them.

Shakuntala learns through the process of individuation and learns to live according to her own insight. Rational insights never satisfied her. She is neither afraid to live life’s irrational elements nor she allows herself to be dominated into shame or guilt. She has to find her own way home and her challenge is to integrate body, mind and spirit. Shakuntala shares her insights with her readers through her own growth process. Her ability to make out the bewildering elements of her own life helps others to deal with the tyrannical rules and clutches of the society. Healing the self by making a change in perception is essential to her behaviour that is willing to question the most basic rules of society. By reading the novel *Shakuntala*, a reader can navigate his or her own mindscapes into transforming, giving new possibilities of change.

Literary criticism has been flooded with different variants of psychological criticism which include studying the work in terms of its characters, the author’s mind and the reader’s mind. Psychoanalytic criticism deals with the author of the work, the work’s contents, its formal construction, and the reader. Analysis of author’s life, emotions and the literary work is often called psychobiography. A literary text, according to psychoanalytical critics, hides or represses its real content behind manifest content. Freud’s theories focused upon the relation between authors, readers or characters in
psychoanalysing literature. All psychoanalysts developed psychological theories and applies them as a standard to interpret and evaluate a literary work. The developer of the theory and the details of the theory may vary, but the theories are all universal in appeal.

Namita Gokhale’s unconstrained self is projected in her novels as well as in her articles and interviews. Although she had a passion for literature, it is ironic that she could not fulfill her dreams to study English literature. Before the unfortunate incident in college which ruined her academic career, she was “a really serious literature student. I wanted to teach, to get a Ph.D” (Gokhale 1). She also says that “I’ve always had this thing for literature . . . in college, it seemed as if I was on a perpetual high. I just wanted to read and read. It was all I lived for” (Gokhale 43). Her affinity towards literature, whether it is in English or regional languages, comes through in many novels. The indifferent attitude of the nuns at her college made her to discontinue her degree and this would make us believe that she could have started having an aversion to English literature. This may be contrary to her real thoughts and feelings. A closer look at The Book of Shadows tends to give support to this fact.

In The Book of Shadows, Rachita Tiwari is an English Lecturer at Jesus and Mary College, Mumbai, the same college in which Namita Gokhale studied. Rachita becomes the victim to an acid attack. She takes refuge in the hills to heal her physically and mentally wounded self. She spends her days by reading, listening to Lohaniju’s tales and taking walks in the nearby forests. In the house, she feels the presence of strange persons lurking in the shadows and she attempts to fight the fears that confront her both consciously and unconsciously.
Her thoughts are often interspersed with lines from the poems of Emily Dickinson, Mahaswati Devi and other literary giants, which begin to get on her nerves:

Where did that come from? Bits and pieces of all that I had learnt and studied dart about my head like shrapnel. I dodge these high words, this alien language, and seek refuge in Lohaniju’s soft and consonated Pahari. The Kumaoni language, Pahari, is dismissed as a mere dialect, yet its sounds reassure me, silence my puzzlement and pain. (BS 12)

Rachita seeks refuge in the language of her birth just like her creator, Namita Gokhale, who has an inclination towards her Pahari dialect. Later, as she comes across the missionary’s journal in the house, she says, “It is a contradiction of my situation and of many other academics, that we have to write and study a language which is not primarily our own. An adoptive and imitative idiom hinders the sensibility” (BS 33). These views are really Namita Gokhale’s who believes the English language is, “a barrier from the subject you write about, and then the whole experience and its baggage, which you have to dissociate yourself from” (Gokhale 2).

Rachita spends her days in the old house reminiscing her past and the shadow that haunts her. Rachita remembers her student, Zenobia Desai, who has a passion for English literature and is intelligent though slightly a despicable girl, “In every classroom in the world, there is one disconcerting student with the gift of being right at the wrong time . . . .” She also describes her as “my least favourite student, the bane of my academic life” (BS 220). After the unfortunate
incident in her college with her attendance and her optional paper, she says that it puts her, “in reverse gear against the academic profession,” but, she recovers and says, “in retrospective, it was the best thing that has happened to me. As a reaction I went into publishing and the rest followed” (BS 2).

_The Book of Shadows_ was written when Namita Gokhale had been going through a lot of pain and trauma owing to the death of her husband, and the novel was an outcome of the pain and anger that was inside her. She further says:

I didn’t realise that this was a book about pain. It’s only after I finished the book that I saw its purpose. In the book, Rachita, the connecting link of the story, feels a lot of anger. I had lost my husband some years ago. And although on the surface, I looked graceful, there was a lot of anger inside me. That’s what I fuelled Rachita with. (Gokhale 18)

Rachita is filled with a lot of anger and is hurt as Anand’s sister splashed a beaker full of acid on her face, disfiguring her physically, mentally and emotionally. Rachita’s stay in the mountains is filled with pensive and philosophical thoughts which pervade the novel right from the first page when she relates herself to the old house:

This house belongs to me, as I belong to this house . . . we have closed ranks together, me and the house. We have become as one spirit; it is us against the world. All day I sit and stare at the blinding shadows of the snows. I sit here by the window and shelter in the certainty of these presences, so different from the bewildering world below. (BS 1)
Rachita is in a state of confusion and disorientation. She is unable to come to terms with her disfigured self and looking into a mirror is an impossible and tortuous attempt for her. She cuts off all ties from her fast paced city life and society, preferring to spend her time in “solitude and soliloquy to come to terms with what had happened” (7). She comes to the hills, “to heal, to hide, to forget. To forgive, to be forgiven” (6). Namita Gokhale reveals her feelings upon her husband’s death in an article, where she says, “. . . I was grieving in an internal way that was eating my insides, leaving me sick, bulimic, raw and corroded . . . I inhabited an endless tunnel of grief and I was travelling it alone” (106). She felt empty and alienated even though she had her two young daughters with her. She says she sensed something cloying in her mourning, “My stubborn refusal to look at sunsets, sunflowers, soap operas, or seductive men – that was fear not grief – fear that my love for him, the only bulwark of my life, might also collapse in the ceaseless flow of the present” (BS 106). Like Rachita, who prefers to hide and soak in her grief in the old house, rather than confront her insecurities, Namita Gokhale had also abandoned all sense of hope and restoration after her husband’s death.

A psychoanalytical analysis of the author enhances our indepth understanding of the text, apart from getting closer to the writer’s mind. It also enables us to bring out the uniqueness possessed by a writer as compared to others due to the varied experiences lived out by them. Beneath the surface of The Book of Shadows, lie a lot of revelations about Gokhale’s personal feelings. The angst felt by Rachita Tiwari is an expression of Gokhale’s own angst at losing her husband, her affinity to her roots and her inclination to her dialect and
they are revealed in the course of this book. The book reveals a lot about Gokhale’s own state of mind.

Namita Gokhale admits that writing a novel was a therapeutic experience and may be this novel helped her ease the grief and anger she felt after Rajiv’s death. She compares Rachita’s situation to that of her own in an article where she says:

Initially, I had thought that at the end of the novel, Rachita would go back to the city, perhaps have a plastic surgery . . . and live on. But somewhere along the way, I realized that this wouldn’t happen. She would live on in that house in the hills. This is symbolic of my living on in the world of – well, I won’t say psychic because I mock the obviously psychic – let’s say, in the world of the spirit. In a sense, it is also about rebirth. (Gokhale 18)

Namita Gokhale’s escape from cancer of the uterus as well as the death of some of her loved ones can be the cause of her constant reference to death and morbidity in her writings. She remarks, “A small reminder of death in my work of art adds to the pleasures of life. I’ve been sitting with death for a long time” (Gokhale 1). She has often been asked whether Priya in Paro: Dreams of Passion is her alter ego. In an interview with Swapan K. Banerjee, she tells that “Priya is not my alter ego, she is a carefully constructed character. I have never kept a diary, and am not careful about filing, maintaining, preserving notes” (Gokhale 2). But there are some instances in the novel which correspond to Gokhale’s real life habits. For instance, Priya describes how she would write fervently about Paro:
I would write everywhere, in my sleep, over my tea, hunched over the commode, in the shop, in the crevices of my mind . . . I covered sheet after sheet with my heat spiky handwriting . . . I scribbled on the backs of envelopes, on notepads, with my eyebrow pencil on the back of a letter, anything to contain the flood of memories when the dam broke. (PDP 121)

Namita Gokhale’s own confession about her compulsive writing in an interview with Mita Kapur is similar to Priya’s, “I got compulsive about writing. I wrote on backs of envelopes, scraps of paper. When I have to write, I can write anywhere – at airports, in crowded places. It’s a downloading experience” (Gokhale 2). Her experiences in life, beginning from her early marriage, her academic let down, her brush with death and her husband’s death had perhaps left her emotionally and mentally drained. By her own admission, she “had a very eventful life” (Gokhale 1). These events in her life could have led to her philosophical bent of mind where she tends to view everything philosophically. Talking of her grandmother Shakuntala Pande, she says that she married when she was just thirteen years old. She had been a tomboy cycling through Nainital in her sari, and a rebel, speaking her mind in a progressive manner. Gokhale says that she learnt “the value of doing your [her] own thing, unashamedly” from her grandmother (Gokhale 1). Perhaps her grandmother’s rebellious and independent streak of mind rubbed on to her which is also seen in her female characters like Paro, Shakuntala, Ammi, Phoolwati and Rachita. Gokhale’s characters are thus a reflection of her own independent and rebellious mind which emerges in her novels.
Jacques Lacan, gives more importance to the book, reading, and writing processes than persons, authors or fictive characters. The core of Lacanian criticism is not upon the unconscious of the character or writer, but upon the book and the association between the book and the reader. Lacan divides the psyche into three major structures that control our lives and our wishes which are The Real, The Imaginary Order and The Symbolic Order. The Real stage arises when the infant is obsessed by need for food, comfort and protection which he/she gets from his/her mother. Freud and Lacan think that the child must be detached from his/her mother and forms a separate identity in order to enter into development. This separation leads to some kind of loss. The child realises the difference between himself/herself and his/her mother and starts becoming an independent being.

Lacan’s Mirror stage states the stage in which a child is in love with his or her own image or body. In this stage, the child begins to identify his/her mirror image in the mirror. But Lacan says that this identification is a misperception:

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for all the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and lastly to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the infants entire mental development. (4)
In the mirror stage, the child begins to experience the fundamental alienation and finds himself/herself, artistically with images and objects. Lacan calls this phase The Imaginary Order because the idea of a self is created through an imaginary identification with the image in the mirror. The imaginary is a realm of images, whether conscious or unconscious. It is in the mirror stage that the child “enters into the language system, essentially a system which is concerned with lack and separation – crucial Lacanian concepts – since language names what is not present and substitutes a linguistic sign for it” (Barry 114).

Once the child enters into language and accepts the rules and regulation of the society, he/she is able to deal with others. The Symbolic Order is made possible because of one’s acceptance of laws and restrictions that control both desire and the rules of communication. As Lacan remarks, “It is in the name of the father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law” (67).

According to Lacan, The Real Stage concerns the need, The Imaginary Order concerns the demand and The Symbolic Order is all about desire. Theorist Dino Felluga opines:

[The Real and Imaginary], continue to play a part in the evolution of human desire within the symbolic order. The fact that our fantasies always fall before the Real, for example, ensures that we continue to desire; desire in the symbolic order could, in fact be said to be our way to avoid coming in full contact with the Real,
so that desire is ultimately most interested not in obtaining the object of desire but, rather, in reproducing itself. (17)

Rachita had been living in The Imaginary Stage where she had a career and a love though both turned out to be unfulfilling. We find a sense of absence and emptiness in Rachita’s life. Though she taught literature, she admitted that she was just “masquerading” and she sometimes felt that in her lectures she was “merely being clever” and “gassing a bit” (4). The first page of the novel opens up Rachita’s idea and awareness of The Imaginary Stage and she says, “We define ourselves by the people that we know, by the face we see in the mirror. In my case all the parameters have changed. I can feel the doors to self-knowledge banging shut upon me. Even the face I meet in the mirror is no longer mine” (BS 3).

The concept of Lacan’s Imaginary Stage in an individual is precisely the realm of images in which one makes identifications with objects and this is how the ego develops. Rachita has lost all sense of understanding and reasoning due to the crisis in her life. It is ironic how her normal life takes a new turn right in front of the mirror when she becomes a victim of an acid attack. She narrates the incident:

I had encountered her as I was re-contouring the shadow on my eyes in the misty mirror in the bogs next to the cafeteria. . . . This was my first day in college after Anand’s death. I saw her in the mirror, her face almost at my shoulder, and turned around in vague panic. And then it happened. As my vision blurred, as my consciousness dissolved in a river of searing pain, I could hear the
tinkle of her bangles, glass against gold, and the swish of her starched cotton sari as she walked out, leaving me alone in the toilet block. (BS 6)

This moment in Rachita’s life is symbolic of her journey towards awareness, where she would encounter the clash between Real and Reality in her development. Rachita’s life dwelt in the realm of The Symbolic, before her arrival at the house, where there was dissatisfaction and a sense of absence and loss. The house gives her a sense of belonging and a refuge from all the tormentors in the world of her “reality”:

My mother was from these mountains and I knew this house as a child, spent many happy summers here. . . . I already belong to it. It has been me in, enveloped my hurt. It soothes my hatred, hushes my sorrow. It had been hostile at first, angry that we had forgotten the sanctuary of its love. This old and gentle house . . . was a repository of my youth, the custodian of my dreams, I had been happy here as a child, and I am determined to be that again; to forget Anand’s indulgent and wanton act of self destruction, ignore his stupidity and restore my life to it’s own course once again. (BS 7)

The house represents The Symbolic State of happiness for Rachita. The social world of the imaginary order, consisting of Anand’s death, the pesky Zenobia Desai and Rachita’s pseudo academic life, is a world of unfulfilling desires. Rachita’s return to the house on the hill can be termed as a return to The Real, where she breaks away from all human contact and socialisation and
confines herself to the silence and peace of the house, surrounded by surreal images and the occasional interactions with Lohaniju, her servant. It is the house, with Lohaniju’s comforting presence, that Rachita’s growth as an individual begins. Her childhood days, filled with innocence and happiness are revived in this house and Rachita’s journey from the symbolic to the imaginary realm occurs here.

As the novel progresses and comes to an end, Rachita begins to find ways to start anew and get out from the stagnancy of the hopelessness and gloominess that surrounds her. She looks into the mirror for the first time in months and discovers that:

I looked just fine – quite nice really. I am thinner than I used to be, so the structure of my face showed better, and my shoulder length hair left loose covered up a great deal of the damage that the hydrochloric acid had perpetuated. A little foundation, a slash of lipstick, and I could surely face the world again. (*BS 218*)

The act of looking into the mirror is The Symbolic Act where Rachita moves from The Imaginary Stage to The Symbolic Stage. A sense of positivism begins to creep into Rachita’s attitude towards life. She had been living in a state of denial and refusal, where she could not come to terms with the changes in her life whether it was on the physical level or a more philosophical level. She realises:

My world had been undermined, taken apart, reduced to anarchy and chaos. And now, mysteriously, inexplicably, beautifully it had reintegrated into something more than the sum of its parts.
The most crucial matters continue to remain hidden because of their very ordinaries. We are unable to see the important things because they are right before our eyes. (BS 230)

Lacan’s emphasis on language, his theory of the individual’s growth and development as he/she journeys traversing The Real, The Imaginary and The Symbolic Stages are important aspects which have been employed by Namita Gokhale in *The Book of Shadows* and also helps in unraveling the underlying meaning of the author’s mental landscape.

Namita Gokhale reveals the psyche of all protagonists through their dreams. Their love, passion, emotion, rejection, miseries are revealed through dreams. They make things possible through fantasy because they know that their dreams are impossible in reality. Psychoanalysts believe that dreams are the manifestations of the unconscious.

This chapter highlights the psychoanalytical analysis of the characters that enhance the indepth understanding of the novels of Namita Gokhale. It also enables the readers to bring out the uniqueness of the characterisation of the author as compared to others. All the novels of Namita Gokhale obviously show the personal feelings of the writer. The frustration and loneliness experienced by all the characters is an expression of author’s own depression at the time of writing the novels. Freud’s theory of unconscious and dream analysis, Jung’s concept of Anima and Animus, Derrida’s deconstruction theory, Lacan’s emphasis on language and the notion of The Real, The Imaginary and The Symbolic Stages are important aspects which have been employed by Namita Gokhale in her novels.