



**Psychoanalytic Perspective: An Exploration of Id, Ego, and Superego in Samrat
Upadhyay's *The Guru of Love***

Author: Ms. Mirali R. Solanki

Research Scholar, Department of English,
Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Mehta University, Junagadh

Co-Author : Dr. Rupa B. Dangar

Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Mehta University, Junagadh

Abstract

This paper explores the novel *The Guru of Love* by Samrat Upadhyay using Sigmund Freud's theory of the id, ego and superego. The novel depicts the internal struggles of characters. It reveals the constant tension between personal desires, rational thought and moral responsibility. This paper also discusses about Freud's theory of the id, ego and superego. Freud's concept of the id, representing raw desires, the ego which balances reality, and the superego which holds moral values helps us to understand characters' inner battles. Upadhyay's characters experience these struggles as they grapple with love, lust, familial duty and moral imperatives. By analyzing *The Guru of Love* through Freud's theory, this paper will show the journey of characters which reflect deeper psychological conflicts and the universal struggle between personal desires and ethical constraints.

Key Words: *Id, Ego, Superego, Society, Internal Conflict, Morality*

Introduction

Nepali English literature has carved a unique place within the landscape of South Asian writing. This literature reflects Nepal's historical transitions, distinct cultural and social dynamics, cultural conflicts, and the modern challenges of globalization and identity. The literature often captures the struggles of navigating between tradition and global modernity, depicting characters that experience cultural conflicts, social upheavals, and personal transformations. Influential writers like Samrat Upadhyay, Manjushree Thapa, and others have brought Nepali stories to a global audience. Their works explore personal and political struggles of Nepali society. It offers readers insights into the rich tapestry of Nepali life through an English literary lens.

Samrat Upadhyay's novel *The Guru of Love* (2003) explores the complex intersections of desire, morality, and societal expectations in contemporary Nepal. The novel set against the backdrop of Kathmandu, the story talks about the life of Ramchandra, a middle-aged math teacher whose affair with a young student disrupts his family life and brings forth a series of moral and emotional dilemmas. Upadhyay examines the inner lives of



his characters, portraying them with depth and vulnerability. Through Ramchandra's struggles, Upadhyay describes the pressures of a traditional society grappling with modernity. The novel shows the intimate details of Nepalese culture, family structure, and social norms. The novel's blend of personal and societal conflicts offers readers a nuanced look at human frailty and resilience, while also inviting broader questions about love, loyalty, and self-discovery. By presenting characters who navigate complex relationships and societal expectations, the novel illustrates the universal challenges of love, guilt, and redemption. This story not only provides a portrait of one man's emotional journey but also reflects larger socio-cultural shifts, making it a valuable work for both literary and psychoanalytic analysis. The psychoanalytic theory, developed by Sigmund Freud, has had a significant impact on literary analysis by helping to uncover the psychological complexities of characters and stories. Freud's model of the mind is divided into three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. The id represents our basic, instinctive desires; the ego works to balance these desires with reality; and the superego enforces societal rules and morals. Together, these elements explain the internal conflicts that drive human behavior. By applying this theory to literature, we can gain a deeper understanding of how characters deal with their psychological struggles, providing new insights into their motivations and the emotional challenges they face. By applying Freud's psychoanalytic lens, this research paper aims to uncover the psychological aspects of Upadhyay's characters, highlighting the protagonist's conflicts with self-identity, desire, and moral values.

Objectives:

- To study Sigmund Freud's theory of id, ego, and superego.
- To examine the psychological dimensions of the characters in *The Guru of Love* through Freud's theory of the id, ego, and superego.
- To explore the conflict between personal desires and societal norms in *The Guru of Love*.

Research Methodology

This research follows a qualitative method with descriptive approach. It focuses on textual analysis through the lens of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. This research aims to explore the psychological dimensions of the characters in *The Guru of Love*, specifically the manifestations of the id, ego, and superego.



Sigmund Freud's theory of id, ego and superego

Sigmund Freud, often regarded as the father of psychoanalysis, revolutionized our understanding of the human mind and its complexities. Among his many contributions to psychology, the structural model of the psyche comprising the id, ego, and superego is perhaps the most influential. This tripartite division offers a framework to understand the inner workings of human behavior, conflict, and personality development. By exploring each component, we can comprehend how these elements interact and influence human actions.

The Id: The Reservoir of Instinctual Desires

The id is the most primitive part of the psyche and is present from birth. Freud describes it as a reservoir of unconscious energy that operates based on the pleasure principle. The id seeks immediate gratification for its desires, such as hunger, thirst, and sexual impulses, without consideration for consequences, logic, or social norms. It represents our basic, animalistic instincts and is driven by what Freud termed the libido, or psychic energy. For example, an infant crying for milk or attention is acting under the influence of the id. The infant has no concern for the caregiver's comfort or the time of day; it simply demands satisfaction. The id knows no morality, ethics, or reason—it is purely instinctual and operates in the unconscious mind.

The Superego: The Moral Compass

The superego is the moralistic and idealistic part of the psyche, embodying societal norms, parental expectations, and ethical values. It develops during early childhood as the individual internalizes the rules and prohibitions of caregivers and culture. Freud divided the superego into two parts:

1. The Conscience, which punishes the ego with feelings of guilt or shame for behaviors that violate moral standards.
2. The Ego-Ideal, which rewards the ego with feelings of pride and self-satisfaction for actions that align with ideal behavior.

The superego functions on the morality principle, often in direct opposition to the id's desires. For example, while the id might encourage an individual to steal food out of hunger, the superego would invoke feelings of guilt for considering theft. Freud believed that an overly strict or punishing superego could lead to excessive guilt and anxiety, whereas a weak superego might result in selfish or immoral behavior. The superego is both a guiding force and a source of inner conflict, as it often imposes high standards that are difficult to achieve.

The Ego: The Mediator

While the id is purely instinctual, the ego emerges as a rational force that operates on the reality principle. It develops as the individual interacts with the external world and learns to delay gratification in favor of long-



term benefits or socially acceptable behavior. The ego is primarily conscious and acts as a mediator between the id's demands, the superego's moral constraints, and the reality of the external world. Freud viewed the ego as the "executive" of the psyche, responsible for making decisions that balance the conflicting forces within the mind. For instance, while the id might urge a person to eat an entire cake impulsively, the ego considers practicalities such as health, hunger, and social appropriateness. A key function of the ego is to employ defense mechanisms, which protect the individual from psychological distress or conflict. These mechanisms, such as repression, denial, and sublimation, serve to manage the tension between the id and the superego. For instance, a person experiencing unacceptable aggressive urges might channel this energy into competitive sports, a form of sublimation.

An Exploration of Id, Ego, and Superego in Samrat Upadhyay's *The Guru of Love*

Samrat Upadhyay's *The Guru of Love* explores the emotional and moral struggles of its protagonist, Ramchandra, as he deals with his relationships and the expectations of society. Ramchandra is a school teacher in Kathmandu, he lives a modest life with his wife, Goma, and their two children. Though he has wife and children, he indulges in physical relations with his student, Malati. When Goma comes to know about his extra marital affair with Malati, She leaves him and goes to her parents' house with children. Ramchandra doesn't even stop her and doesn't feel guilty about it. He starts living with Malati in the same house where he lived with Goma and children. It shows that his id is very powerful. Goma says to Ramchandra that –

"Sometimes, these days, you seem to think about her more than about us, about Sanu and Rakesh."(Upadhyay, 103)

It shows that he is being dominated by his id, his desires. When he wants to fulfill his own desires, he doesn't think about anything else. He doesn't think about his wife and children. He never thinks how his immoral behavior will affect his children's life. He just wants to do what gives him pleasure.

Ramchandra finds about his colleague, Shailendra's affair with his student Namita. He advises Shailendra that –

"...It is not good when people talk about you. It is not good for a teacher to have any kind of extracurricular relationship with a student."(Upadhyay, 75)

It shows that Ramchandra knows that teacher's affair with student is completely immoral, it is not acceptable in society and one should not indulge in any kind of extracurricular relationship with a student. Despite knowing what is right or wrong, he just chooses to fulfill his desires. Ramchandra's superego is most visible when he feels guilt or moral conflict about his actions. Even though he is having an affair with Malati, his conscience often reminds him of his roles as a husband, father, and teacher. He knows that his actions are



hurting his wife, Goma, and may affect his children, which shows the influence of his moral compass. A clear example of the superego's role is Ramchandra's internal struggle. While his desires push him to continue the affair, his superego forces him to think about the consequences. These moments of self-reflection cause him to question his choices, though he does not always change his behavior. This shows the limits of the superego, as it cannot always overcome the stronger urges of the id. Additionally, Ramchandra faces a conflict between his public and private life. As a teacher, he is expected to be a moral role model, but his affair with Malati goes against those expectations. This gap between his actions and his moral beliefs shows how the superego tries to guide him but can be ignored when personal desires take over.

Ramchandra's ego is evident in his constant attempts to balance the conflicting demands of his personal desires and societal expectations. His affair with Malati, a student, is an indulgence of his id, yet his ego compels him to keep this relationship hidden from his wife, Goma, and the broader community. A key instance of his ego's operation is his decision to bring Malati into his household under the guise of helping her financially. This act shows the ego's characteristic pragmatism; Ramchandra rationalizes his actions as a practical solution to Malati's problems while also fulfilling his personal needs. However, this decision creates a precarious situation, as his wife and children are forced to coexist with his mistress, highlighting the ego's limitations in fully reconciling opposing forces.

Goma, Ramchandra's wife, exemplifies the superego, the moral and ethical aspect of the psyche. She represents tradition, familial responsibility, and societal expectations. Her behavior is guided by a sense of duty and adherence to cultural norms. Goma's willingness to tolerate Ramchandra's infidelity is reflective of her internalized societal values, which prioritize maintaining the family structure over personal grievances. However, this superego-driven mindset also makes her suppress her emotions, resulting in a passive approach to her husband's betrayal. At the same time, Goma's ego manifests in her practical decision-making. Despite her hurt, she manages her household and tries to maintain stability for her children. Her rational side tries to mediate between the moral demands of her superego and the emotional turbulence caused by her husband's actions. Malati, on the other hand, is driven primarily by the id, the impulsive and instinctual part of the psyche. She embodies desire, passion, and self-interest, seeking immediate gratification without much concern for societal norms. Her affair with Ramchandra is motivated by her own needs for intimacy and escape from her challenging circumstances. Malati's decisions are often spontaneous and emotionally charged, reflecting her alignment with the id. However, Malati also exhibits an emerging ego when she navigates her precarious life situation. As a single mother, she must balance her desires with the practical realities of her life, such as providing for her daughter. This reflects her attempt to mediate between the demands of her id and the constraints of her environment. The contrast between Goma and Malati highlights the tension between the superego and the id in the novel. Goma's superego prioritizes tradition and responsibility, often at the expense



of her personal happiness. Malati's id focuses on self-fulfillment, even if it means disregarding social norms. Ramchandra, caught between the two women, represents the ego, struggling to balance societal expectations (superego) and his desires (id).

Conclusion

From this research, Researcher comes to the conclusion that Freud's theory of the id, ego, and superego provides a compelling framework for understanding the interplay of instinct, reason, and morality within the human psyche. By exploring these components, we gain insight into the inner conflicts that shape personality and behavior. By focusing on the concepts of id, ego, and superego, the novel reveals the inner struggles of its characters as they navigate personal desires, moral dilemmas, and societal expectations. Ramchandra's actions, driven by his yearning for personal happiness and his sense of duty toward his family, illustrate the constant tension between individual desires and the moral codes shaped by culture and society. Similarly, the other characters in the novel reflect these struggles in their own ways. By analyzing the novel from a psychoanalytic perspective, this study sheds light on the intricate ways in which human emotions and decisions are influenced by the interplay of unconscious desires, conscious reasoning, and moral judgment. It also underscores the relevance of Freudian theory in understanding literature.

References

- Cherry, Kendra "Freud's Unconscious, Preconscious, and Conscious Minds." *Verywell Mind*, 15 July 2024, www.verywellmind.com/the-conscious-and-unconscious-mind-2795946. Accessed 21 January 2024.
- "Id, Ego, and Superego: Freud's Elements of Personality." *Verywell Mind*, 5 Mar. 2024, www.verywellmind.com/the-id-ego-and-superego-2795951. Accessed 21 January 2024.
- "Psychoanalytic Theory." *The Poetry Foundation*, 30 Apr. 2024, www.poetryfoundation.org/education/glossary/psychoanalytic-theory. Accessed 15 January 2025.
- Shrivastwa, Bimal Kishore. "Realism and Naturalism in Samrat Upadhyay's The Guru of Love." *ResearchGate*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350461739_Realism_and_Naturalism_in_Samrat_Upadhyay's_The_Guru_of_Love. Accessed 30 January, 2024.
- Sibi, K. J. "SIGMUND FREUD AND PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY." *LangLit*, Jan. 2020, www.academia.edu/43439177/6_SIGMUND_FREUD_AND_PSYCHOANALYTIC_THEORY
- Upadhyay, Samrat. *The Guru of Love*. Rupa Publication, 2013.



**MULTIDISCIPLINARY COSMOPOLITAN JOURNAL OF RESEARCH
(MUCOJOR)-2583-9829 (On-line)**

International Peer Reviewed and Refereed Journal

Certification of Publication

The Board of Multidisciplinary Cosmopolitan Journal of Research (MUCOJOR) is hereby awarding
this certificate to

Ms. Mirali R. Solanki

In recognition of the publication of the paper entitled
**Psychoanalytic Perspective: An Exploration of Id, Ego, and Superego in Samrat Upadhyay's
The Guru of Love**

Published in Volume 03, Issue 06, December 2025.

EDITOR IN CHIEF



**MULTIDISCIPLINARY COSMOPOLITAN JOURNAL OF RESEARCH
(MUCOJOR)-2583-9829 (On-line)**

International Peer Reviewed and Refereed Journal

Certification of Publication

The Board of Multidisciplinary Cosmopolitan Journal of Research (MUCOJOR) is hereby awarding
this certificate to

Dr. Rupa B. Dangar

In recognition of the publication of the paper entitled
**Psychoanalytic Perspective: An Exploration of Id, Ego, and Superego in Samrat Upadhyay's
The Guru of Love**

Published in Volume 03, Issue 06, December 2025.

EDITOR IN CHIEF