

PERSONAL FREEDOM VERSUS SOCIETAL CONSTRAINTS: A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF SHAHRAZ'S A PAIR OF JEANS

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Abstract

This research paper, based on a short literary fiction, A Pair of Jeans (1998) by Qaisra Shahraz, analyzes the internal psychological conflict of a young female protagonist Miriam, who desperately tries to maintain a balance between her personal freedom and societal constraints for gaining the approval of her future in-laws. Using Freud's Psychoanalytic theory (1896), this research paper explores how the protagonist fights against the rift between her Id and Superego and employs defense mechanisms of repression and sublimation to get rid of the feelings of guilt, fear, shame, and anxiety caused by the society. This research paper asserts that the young female individuals can revolutionize their lives and destinies if they show courage, strength, and resilience, focusing on their personal preferences amidst societal pressures.

Keywords: Psychological conflict, patriarchal norms, psychoanalytic theory, female protagonist, Id, Superego

Introduction

It is the desire of every human being to lead their lives according to their personal choices, individual preferences, and subjective likings. Depending upon the regions they live in, the situations they face in life, and the roles they perform, every individual prefers to choose their attires, careers, and lifestyles willfully (Hakim, 2002) without any external interference. This desire of individuals to act on the basis of their free will is viewed as their personal freedom and individual liberty. Tomlin (2018) defines personal freedom as the capacity to make individual choices in life, act without coercion, and pursue one's own desires to achieve ultimate satisfaction and gratification. Attaining personal freedom from social restrictions and communal expectations is essential for healthier development of an individual and a society as a whole (Demirkan, 2023). For this reason, both the external personality and the unconscious mind of individuals yearn to achieve personal freedom for leading a happy and contented life.

Despite the significance of personal freedom in the life of an individual, they often encounter unexpected constraints and pressures from their society which destroy physical development and psychological peace of these individual. Sinkovics et al. (2015) define societal constraints as the limitations, pressures, and norms imposed by social structures, institutions, and values that restrict individual freedom of human beings. Although the unfair social constraints harm the progress of every individual equally, the feminine gender faces more obstacles and problems than the masculine gender due to patriarchal setup of the developing regions (Jeptum & Mwihia, 2024). It is the reason that women are often judged and criticized by their male-dominant societies if they desire to exercise personal freedom and individual liberty in their attire, education, and profession.

These societal constraints upon the female gender create an internal conflict in their minds, leading to a prolonged struggle to appease their patriarchal culture while keeping their inherent personality satisfied. The battle between the unconscious desires of an individual's personality and the social pressures thrust upon them is discussed by various prominent psychologists in their works like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Erik Erikson. Freud's *An*

Outline of Psychoanalysis (1940), Jung's *Psychological Types* (1921), and Erikson's *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968) highlight the plight, pain, fear, and anxiety of young individuals, trying to adjust in the cultures and societies that oppose their personal freedom and individual choice (Tomlin, 2018). In this aspect, Freud's Psychoanalytic theory (1896), revolving around the concepts of Id, Ego, Superego, defense mechanisms, and psychological distress, plays a vital role in understanding the rift between an individual's unconscious needs and their outward appearances (Singh & Khan, 2025). It is observed that the primitive cultures, norms, and traditions; such as, patriarchy, feudalism, and orthodox religious beliefs significantly contribute to wage this war in the mind of an individual, forcing them to lead their lives in accordance with their society by ignoring their free will and preferences.

This research paper analyzes the short story, *A Pair of Jeans* (1998) by Qaisra Shahraz in the light of Freud's Psychoanalytic theory (1896) to identify, explore, and understand the internal conflict between the protagonist's desire to live and dress freely and her struggle to snub societal expectations and pressures around her. *A Pair of Jeans* (1998) by Qaisra Shahraz builds its narrative around the unjust confrontation, unfair clash, and unexpected judgement faced by the modern women in patriarchal societies. Revolving around the personal attire and lifestyle of a young British-Pakistani protagonist, Miriam, the short story reflects how her traditional future in-laws called off her engagement after seeing her in skinny jeans and short tank top. This cruel and judgmental attitude of her future in-laws persuades Miriam to destroy her jeans as it has destroyed her future happiness (Batoool et al., 2022). Using Freud's Psychoanalytic theory, the short story is analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the societal constraints of a patriarchal culture create an internal conflict between a young girl's personal desire (Id) and social expectations (Superego) from her, often indulging her in a lifelong guilt, fear, and anxiety.

Research Questions

This research study is based on two questions:

How does the westernized physical attire of the protagonist lead to a conflict between her Id/Ego (personal desire) and Superego (societal expectation) in the light of Freud's Psychoanalytic theory?

How do the internalized patriarchal constraints in Shahraz's fiction develop the feelings of guilt, fear, repression, and anxiety in the protagonist?

Theoretical Framework

This research study employs Psychoanalytic Theory (1896) by Sigmund Freud to explore the character of the protagonist in the selected fiction. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is a renowned and influential Austrian psychologist whose theory of psychoanalysis refined the concepts of unconscious human mind, clash between Id, Ego, and Superego, defense mechanisms, and dream world (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2026). Freud's famous works, *The Interpretations of Dreams* (1900), *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), and *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1940) significantly contribute to understanding and analyzing the inner psyche, internal conflicts, and repressed desires and feelings of individuals (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2026). Freud's Psychoanalytic theory highlights several important aspects of an individual's personality including:

Id, Ego, and Superego: Freud states in his theory that the structural model of human personality divides the mind into three distinct components called Id, Ego, and Superego. The Id comprises of the unconscious and pleasure-seeking desires present at birth, the ego balances the Id with reality, while the Superego acts as the moral conscious of an individual (Freud, 2014).

Psychological Conflict: According to Freud (2014), psychological conflict arises in an individual's mind due to the internal struggle between Id, Ego, and Superego. It is observed that these three parts of an individual's psychological personality often remain in clash with each other, trying to take control of an individual's actions, behaviors, and choices in life.

Defense Mechanisms: Freud's defense mechanisms refer to the unconscious psychological strategies used by Ego to reduce stress caused by painful experiences in an individual's life. These defense mechanisms include repression, projection, denial, sublimation, and displacement used by an individual to overcome anxiety, fear, and guilt in life (Freud, 2014).

Fear, Shame, and Guilt: Freud (2014) asserts that fear, shame, and guilt are the three interconnected emotional responses caused by the moral constraints of Superego, the defense mechanisms of Ego, and the primal anxieties of Id.

Psychological Anxiety and Distress: Freud (2014) views psychological anxiety and mental distress as the disagreeable inner conditions caused by the Ego's failure to manage conflicts between the personal impulses of Id and the moral restrictions of Superego.

The key concepts of Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory (1896) provide a sound foundation to identify, analyze, and understand the inner psyche, feelings, choices, and psychological condition of the protagonist in the selected fiction of Shahraz. Freud's theory not only assists in comprehending the psyche, feelings, and attitudes of the female character scrutinized by the patriarchal society, but it also plays a great role in acknowledging the defense mechanisms adopted by Shahraz's protagonist to eradicate fear, shame, guilt, and anxiety from her life.

Literature Review

The life of an individual becomes prosperous and satisfactory only if they are allowed to live it freely and independently without the interference of others. Personal freedom and individual liberty play a key role in making an individual successful, contented, and healthy in life. Jafarzadeh & Beheshti (2012) believe that exercising personal freedom is one of the most essential human needs that act as a core driver for human development, social welfare, and economic progress. This significance of personal independence in life is highlighted by several literary authors in their literary fiction, including Kate Chopin, Charlotte Bronte, Aldous Huxley, and Margaret Atwood. Chopin's *The Story of an Hour* (1894) captures the explosive joy of autonomy and satisfaction of freedom felt by Mrs. Mallard after receiving the news of her husband's death (Wan, 2009). Similarly, Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) reflects on the importance of women's independence and equality in Victorian society by appreciating Jane's struggle to achieve self-actualization and autonomy in life (Zhao & Jian, 2024). Moreover, Huxley's *A Brave New World* (1932) and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) highlight that happiness and progress cannot exist without attaining personal freedom and individual liberty in life (Jafarzadeh & Beheshti, 2012). All these literary pieces shed light on the significance of personal independence to lead a successful life.

Although every individual desires to exercise personal freedom in life, a majority of people fail to lead their lives willfully due to primitive religious ideologies, unfavorable traditional customs, and unfair public norms rampant in the societies they breathe in. According to Beinke et al. (2015), societal constraints is one of the most influential factors that make it difficult for both young and adult individuals to psychologically adjust in their

environments. These societal pressures are often caused by the orthodox systems like patriarchy, where males are given undue importance while females are treated as the inferior gender (Sultana, 2010). Due to the continued prevalence of patriarchal constraints in the world, several authors like Jane Austen, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Bapsi Sidhwa highlight the troubles encountered by female characters due to societal expectations and unfair pressures. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) portrays how women are forced to marry in a well-established family without their consent because the society expects them to lead their lives as domestic wives (Mare et al., 2025). Similarly, Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) sheds light on the psychological trauma of its female protagonist caused by the patriarchal constraints that snatch her personal freedom and autonomy by forcing her to remain silent and passive throughout her life (Raushanfikr et al., 2024). Likewise, Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) reflects on the themes of female oppression, forced marriage, and domestic violence in a patriarchal setup to seize the protagonist's right of personal freedom (Sultana, 2010). Due to these societal pressures and patriarchal constraints, some individuals develop identity crisis, fear, and guilt, as illustrated by Chopin in *The Awakening* (1899) through the character of Edna Pontellier (Pradhan, 2025). On the other hand, some individuals try to rebel against the social pressures by preferring their personal desires over societal expectations, as highlighted by Walker in *The Color Purple* (1982) through the character of Sofia (Shandil, 2024). Through these instances, it can be observed that female gender often bears the brunt of giving up her personal freedom and unconscious desires to get accepted in a patriarchal society with unfair social constraints. This turmoil of female gender forms the basis of several research studies conducted on Shahraz's short story, *A Pair of Jeans*. Kurniyati (2019) states in her research that Shahraz's protagonist, Miriam, faces the backlash of her future in-laws because she believes in having her own stance and voice in the personal matters of her life. Similarly, Ali et al. (2022) assert that women, like Miriam, are considered monsters outside homes and angels inside homes because they are expected to lead their lives as submissive and docile beings, dependent upon their male patriarchs. Adhering to the notion of female as the other being, Gul et al. (2024) conduct a research on the victimization of Shahraz's protagonist. They opine that women, like Miriam, often become the victims of the taunts and ridicule of their patriarchal societies on the basis of trivial things like their dress code and physical attire. While all these studies explain the trauma faced by Miriam due to her personal preferences in life, these works seem to neglect the psychological conflict developed in her mind due to societal pressures. The current research paper focuses on this internal conflict of the protagonist in the light of Freud's Psychoanalytic theory to understand her character, feelings, and emotions in a better way.

The psychological conflict inflicted upon the minds and lives of individuals, like Miriam, due to such unfair expectations is also described by Sigmund Freud in his Psychoanalytic theory. Basing his theoretical framework of Psychoanalysis on Id, Ego, Superego, defense mechanisms and the feelings of guilt, shame, and distress, Freud explains how an individual's personal pleasures often collide with moral standards of the society, forcing them to either adopt defense mechanisms of repression or sublimation or develop guilt and shame while trying to break free from the societal constraints (Freud, 2014). The literary narratives like *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson portray the conflict between Id, Ego, and Superego through the characters of Ralph, Jack, Jekyll, and Hyde, highlighting the troubles and destruction caused by this psychological war (McLeod, 2026). Freud's Psychoanalytic theory significantly

contributes to understanding the psyche and personality of individuals, particularly the young girls desperately trying to lead a peaceful life amidst social pressures.

Though many authors, poets, theorists, and research scholars have incorporated the themes of personal freedom, societal constraints, and patriarchal restrictions in their studies, there seems to be a very limited research conducted on the internal conflict between personal autonomy of an individual and societal expectations from them, particularly in the light of Freud's Psychoanalytic theory. This research paper has tried to bridge the gap between the research works done on the impact of social constraints on personal freedom and the rift caused in the mind of individuals due to unjust patriarchal expectations by analyzing the character of Shahraz's female protagonist using Freud's Psychoanalytic theory. On the whole, this research paper explores how the social constraints, rampant in patriarchal societies for ages, negatively impact the personal choices of women, destroying their psyche, personality, and future by waging an incessant war between their individual preferences and worldly expectations.

Analysis and Discussion

The literary fiction, *A Pair of Jeans (1998)* by Qaisra Shahraz revolves around the life of a young university girl named Miriam whose seemingly happy life turns upside down when her future in-laws break off her engagement with their son on the pretext of her westernized attire and modern dressing style. This incident creates a conflict between her personal choice and social restrictions, persuading her to seek refuge in one while leaving the other.

The Conflict between Id, Ego, and Superego

Shahraz's fiction deals with the psychological conflict between Miriam's personal freedom and societal constraints by highlighting the clash between her Id, Ego, and Superego, as described by Freud in his theory of Psychoanalysis. The westernized attire of the female protagonist, Miriam, comprising of "jean-clad legs and the short vest" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 55), functions as a powerful symbol that triggers an intense internal conflict between her Id/Ego (personal desire for freedom) and Superego (internalized patriarchal expectations). The protagonist's desire to wear a westernized dress represents her Id, which yearns for comfort, pleasure, and a sense of individual identity as a young Western-educated girl. This modern attire also represents Miriam's personal freedom and her desire to shun the strict traditional restrictions of her patriarchal culture. For this reason, the protagonist feels that "they were just the type of clothes she had needed to wear today; for hill walking in the Peak District, in the North West of England" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 55), deeming them essential for her comfortable travel with friends.

As opposed to her personal desire (Id), the protagonist's Superego represents rigid and orthodox patriarchal norms imposed by her future in-laws, who believe that Miriam's westernized attire is indecent and immoral, "I thought you told me that she was a very "sharif", a very modest girl. Was that naked waist what you would call modest?"... "Sharif! Dressed like that! God knows who has seen her" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 61). This stark difference between Miriam's Id and Superego significantly contributes to creating an internal conflict in her personality, forcing her to maintain a balance between these two opposing forces to satisfy her Ego. At one occasion, Shahraz's protagonist tries to achieve this balance by dressing modestly in front of her future in-laws to gain their approval, "She was neatly acting out a role, the one that her future in-laws preferred. A role of a demure and elegant bride and daughter in-law-dressed modestly, with her body properly covered" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 58). On another occasion, the protagonist thinks that her westernized clothes "are only clothes. I am still the same young woman they visited regularly-the person that they have happily chosen as a bride

for their son in their household? (Shahraz, 1998, p. 57), giving preference to her personal choice over social customs.

Miriam's conflicted attempts show her desperation to lead her life by pleasing others and herself simultaneously. The protagonist's conflict between her personal freedom (Id/Ego) and societal constraints (Superego) is explained by Freud in his theory by stating that an individual often finds themselves confronting their personal preferences and social expectations (Freud, 2014). They want to maintain a balance between the two contradictory aspects of life, often failing to bridge the gap between them. Freud opines that the failure of individuals to avert this psychological clash often makes individuals mentally agitated and emotionally vulnerable in life.

Psychological Distress

The conflict between an individual's desire to attain personal freedom and their need to fulfill the societal expectations often leads to psychological distress, mental anxiety, and emotional turmoil, as described by both Shahraz in her short story, *A Pair of Jeans* (1998) and Freud in his theory of Psychoanalysis (1896). Shahraz's female protagonist, Miriam experiences intense psychological distress and emotional betrayal when her future mother-in-law breaks off her engagement with her son, Farook due to her westernized attire, "Miriam paled. Her heart had now sunk to the pit of her stomach. "Why, Mother?" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 66). Her psychological distress manifests itself as the feelings of uneasiness and self-consciousness, when she realizes that her future in-laws have seen her in her western dress, "Too late! They were already here. Her heart was now rocking madly against her chest and the clothes burned her. She wanted to quickly rush inside her home and peel them off" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 55). The fact that a trivial thing like her dressing style has become the root cause of her unforeseen tragic future adds fuel to fire, igniting a deep sense of psychological discomfort in Miriam.

The protagonist's mental anxiety also causes her to suffer from rootlessness and a sense of realization that her acceptance in her society is very fragile, as it entirely depends upon her outward adherence to traditional culture. As long as Miriam abides by her social customs of "smartly but discreetly and respectably dressed in a traditional shalwar kameez suit" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 57), she gets the approval of her patriarchal society. However, she will only be judged as an immodest and immoral girl if her society "glimpsed a tightly jean-clad Miriam with an inch of midriff showing!" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 57). This unfair attitude of society towards a young independent girl enhances Miriam's psychological distress to the extent that the protagonist blames her western clothing for her disastrous future instead of questioning her judgmental society, "She pulled off from the hanger the repugnant looking article and threw it on the floor, as if it burned her to hold it" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 66). Miriam's deep-seated psychological frustration and tension is explained by Freud in his Psychoanalytic theory by asserting that an individual faces immense psychological tension and emotional agitation, when they realize that they have violated the rules and laws of their society to fulfill their personal desires (Freud, 2014). Freud further states that this psychological distress deteriorates the personality of an individual, turning their individual strength into emotional vulnerability.

Feelings of Guilt, Fear, and Shame

Miriam's internal conflict and psychological anxiety, caused by her failure to create a balance between her personal desires and societal constraints, develop the feelings of guilt, shame, and fear in her. The guilt of Shahraz's protagonist is evident in the beginning of the fiction, when "she pulled the jacket close to her body, becoming suddenly very self-

conscious about her jean-clad legs and the short vest she wore beneath it...All day she had kept pulling it down to cover her midriff. Strange but she felt odd in her clothing" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 55). Though Miriam likes to wear modern clothes, her discomfort in western clothing arises from the guilt that she has disappointed her family and future in-laws by not adhering to the norms of her patriarchal society and culture. It is because of this deep-seated guilt within her that she blurts out her anger and resentment on her jeans. Blaming the piece of clothing for her failed engagement creates a sense of guilt, "Then with her foot she gave it a vicious kick...The shabby-looking and much worn pair of jeans lay nonchalantly near the end of the bed, blissfully unaware of the havoc it had created in the life of its wearer" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 66) that pushes Miriam to the brink of disappointment. Freud (2014) explains the feeling of guilt accumulated in individuals after breaking the rules of their society by asserting in his theory that this guilt often remains deep-rooted within the unconscious mind of individuals. It leads to the creation of a vacuum in the lives of young individuals, destroying their personality.

Besides the feeling of guilt, Miriam develops a sense of fear in her mind and heart that her mother and her future in-laws will disapprove of her western attire because of the orthodox patriarchal norms of her society that strictly believe in the notion, "Muslim girls do not go outdoors dressed like that, especially in the short jacket, which hardly covered her hips, and a skimpy vest" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 57). Another reason for Miriam's fear is the stereotypical views about modernized women inculcated in her mind by her patriarchal society, "For they weren't the docile, the obedient and sweet daughters-in-law that they preferred. On the contrary, they were seen as a threat and portrayed as rebellious hoydens, who did not respect either their husbands or their in-laws" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 57-58). This fear plays a key role in creating a sense of loss in the life of the protagonist, causing her to feel both offended and overwhelmed after losing her fiancé, Farook. Freud (2014) opines that the feeling of fear in individuals often leads to trauma and anxiety, persuading individuals to repress their desires.

Moreover, this inbuilt guilt in individuals significantly contributes to developing the feeling of shame, as illustrated by Shahraz through the character of Miriam. When her future in-laws, Begum and Ayub, selfishly judge the protagonist's character due to her westernized attire, Miriam experiences intense shame, "On spotting the colour of the car and the person behind the wheel, her step faltered-colour ebbing from her face" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 55). From the beginning of the literary narrative, the protagonist appears to be drenched in shame on her modern dressing, "she was very conscious of her appearance and hoped that she would not meet anyone she knew" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 55). This feeling of shame emerges due to unexpected and unjust societal constraints that forbid women from dressing in modern western clothes, calling them immoral and imperfect if they do so. Moreover, the internalized patriarchal constraints rampant in Miriam's society label a simple piece of clothing as a symbol of moral failure, drowning her in immense shame in front of her future in-laws, "Miriam found herself unable to look either of them in the eye. A watery, hesitant smile played around her mouth. She did not know what to do, or how to act. Her cheeks burnt in embarrassment; poise now very much lost" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 56). This feeling of shame is explained by Freud in his Psychoanalytic theory, where he opines that shame in individuals act as a protective layer, suppressing their desire to attain personal autonomy and sexual freedom.

Defense Mechanisms

The internal conflict between Miriam's personal choice of dressing in western clothes and the societal pressures bestowed upon her by her patriarchal society persuade Shahraz's protagonist to take refuge in Freud's defense mechanisms. After getting confronted by her future in-

laws, Miriam employs the defense mechanism of repression to gain acceptance and appreciation of her traditional society while suppressing her personal desire to dress in modern attire. For this purpose, she immediately transforms herself into a modest girl to conform to the role expected of her, "Going further into the room she peeled off her jacket, vest and tight pair of jeans, and let them fall, lying in a clutter on the woollen carpet... Her body was now modestly swathed in an elegant long tunic and baggy trousers" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 58). Furthermore, as an engaged girl, the only aim of the protagonist is to please and satisfy her future in-laws to lead a happy life in the coming years, "What mattered now were the two people downstairs. And they mattered! Her future lay with them" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 57). Therefore, Miriam tries her best to repress her inner desires by complying with the social standards and ignoring the unfair attitude of her in-laws. Miriam's repression is described by Freud in his theory, where he posits that repression, as a psychological defense mechanism, involves unconsciously pushing undesirable impulses, feelings, or memories from conscious awareness to avoid anxiety and confrontation of the society.

Besides repression, Miriam employs the defense mechanism of displacement to manage her intense emotions of anger, frustration, and shame after facing the rejection from her future in-laws. Upon realizing that her future in-laws have witnessed the modern side of her personality, "In her heart she knew. From that first moment she saw them that night in her jeans and short vest, she had had a dreadful premonition. She had known... that something was wrong or bound to go wrong." (Shahraz, 1998, p. 66), the protagonist blurts out her emotional energy towards a harmless, inanimate pair of jeans instead of challenging the unfair norms of her patriarchal in-laws. Going further, the humiliated protagonist "pulled off (her jeans) from the hanger (and) gave it a vicious kick" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 66) to displace her anger towards her clothes for satisfying her ego because she views her clothing the sole culprit of her misfortune. Miriam's use of displacement is viewed by Freud as an unconscious defense mechanism where an individual redirects negative emotions from an original threatening source to a safer target to relieve their anxiety.

Moreover, Miriam takes refuge in the defense mechanism of sublimation through a more reflective and planned procedure. Instead of succumbing to guilt and shame, Miriam decides to take control of her destiny by informing her fiancé about the cruel and selfish decision taken by his parents, "They can't do this to me!" her mind screamed. She didn't know whether Farook knew about this matter, but she was going to make sure that he definitely did" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 67). For this purpose, the protagonist transforms herself into a symbol of individual freedom and self-confidence by consciously wearing her favorite westernized attire to confront her fiancé, "I am going to see Farook, Mother"... Then placing one hand in the pocket of her faded pair of jeans, while the other held the short jacket tightly against her chest, Miriam began to walk away" (Shahraz, 1998, p. 70-71). Miriam's sublimation is explained by Freud as an unconscious defense mechanism where unacceptable impulses or aggressive urges are transformed into constructive, socially acceptable, and productive behaviors (Freud, 2014). The defense mechanism of sublimation employed by Shahraz's protagonist provides a ray of hope to women, encouraging them to empower themselves through courage and determination instead of submitting their personal freedom to the unfair social constraints and patriarchal norms.

Shahraz's *A Pair of Jeans (1998)* portrays the life of a young woman trying to manage the internal conflict between her personal identity and individual freedom and the societal constraints and patriarchal expectations. Through Miriam's character, the literary narrative

sheds light on the unfair pressures put on the women by her society, particularly her in-laws. Both Shahraz and Freud describe how the life of a once happy, satisfied, and confident girl is turned upside down when she tries to break free from the unjust societal expectations, destroying her personality. However, the self-confidence and courage exhibited by the protagonist in the fiction shows how the appropriate use of Freud's Ego and defense mechanisms takes an individual out of their misery, transforming them into a successful and resilient being.

Conclusion

In patriarchal societies and orthodox communities, the female gender is often forced to remain obedient and subservient by accepting the social norms and ignoring her personal desires. It is the reason that the young girls often face internal conflict between personal freedom and societal constraints while trying to create a suitable balance between the two. The selected literary piece, *A Pair of Jeans (1998)* by Qaisra Shahraz reflects on the psychological struggle of Miriam to please her future in-laws by neglecting her individual identity. The clash between the protagonist's Id and Superego and her strategy to use Freud's defense mechanisms to emerge as a triumphant and self-confident individual highlight the significance of giving preference to one's personal freedom amidst unfair social expectations for leading a better and contented life. This research paper concludes that both Qaisra Shahraz and Sigmund Freud assert that an individual should use their unconscious desires and psychological personality in an appropriate manner to secure a happy future, as did by Miriam in the selected literary fiction.

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