The present study employs a psychoanalytical approach to examine seven neurotic women characters in the novels by contemporary Indian women novelists, namely, Maya in Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock*, Dimple in Bharati Mukherjee’s *Wife*, Sarla Devi in Jhabvala’s *Get Ready for Battle*, Simrit in Nayantara Sahgal’s *The Day in Shadow*, Sita in Desai’s *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Sarojini in Kamala Markandaya’s *A Silence of Desire* and Jaya in Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence*. The aim is to focus on women’s psyche and experiences as women in contemporary Indian society, which is in a transitional phase – holding on to the traditional views, yet inclining towards the forces of modernity like globalization, materialism, consumerism, feminism. Efforts are made to record the emerging female voices using the tenets of Freudian psychoanalysis and the new women-centered psychologists, which, it is felt, suit the Indian cultural context.

These Indian women writers have distinguished themselves with their innovative style, depiction of social realities, advocacy of the emancipation of women and portrayal of feminine sensibilities. They have delved deep into the psyche of their characters to reveal
various dimensions of their personalities. They have rejuvenated the realistic novel by using it to explore and share their experiences and put forward their own point of view on life, especially through their female characters with all their pain, agony, helplessness, exploitation and suffering. A psychoanalytic approach to these characters would certainly enrich the experience of the readers.

Psychoanalysis, in the second half of the twentieth century as a mode of literary analysis, gained wide acceptability among the critical and intellectual circles. The psychologists believe that every individual has an intrinsic nature, which is the outcome of different factors, and it is unique in itself and because of different intrinsic nature, individual’s response to various situations is also very different. Some individuals remain normal even when the situation is adverse, some of them adopt a different attitude to it, whereas others tend to withdraw themselves into their own imaginative ideal world, where they consider themselves to be more protected and their ego is more glorified. Psychoanalysis studies the behavioural pattern of all the persons, and particularly, the behavioural pattern of those who deviate from the normal way of living. This deviation from normal pattern of
behaviour is termed as neurosis. A neurotic is characterized by a
trigidity of personality, lack of flexibility in facing difficult situations
and discrepancy between actual achievement and the potentiality for
achievement. Neurosis degenerates into psychosis when mental illness
becomes most serious. For example, the fundamental difference
between neurosis and psychosis lies in the fact that the neurotic
person has fundamentally maintained his adoption to reality. In
psychosis the situation is changed, and the person fails to adopt
himself to reality.

The second generation of Indian women novelists has shown
keen interest in the changed psychological realities of life. They have
been led to treat the neurotic phenomena in their works consistently.
Their natural feminine sensibility and introspection have imparted a
human touch and psychological depth to their observation. The major
protagonists in the representative works of these novelists find the
social values and norms detrimental to their healthy growth and
survival. Society’s values imperceptibly enter the unconscious of the
characters in these novels. The characters grapple with the psychic
conflicts of personal origin. These conflicts and traumas become too
pronounced at a particular point of time in their lives that a part of their psychic apparatus refuses to submit to repression. In the resultant neurotic struggle against several cathexes they manifestly display three distinct tendencies: some move from neurosis to psychosis, others arrive at a compromising solution to their problems and yet another group sets out to become compulsive idealists because they find the realities of life too harsh, almost unbearable, or even repulsive to put up with.

Sigmund Freud, (1856-1939) the father of psychoanalysis, acknowledged that poets and philosophers discovered the unconscious long before he did. For this purpose, Sigmund Freud emphasized the need of psychoanalysis to reach the reality, and therefore, he advised psychoanalysis as the central factor to study literature. This study may serve to the writers as a part of their training. In the same direction, Meredith Anne Skura goes a step further and argues:

the poets have discovered not just the unconscious but psychoanalysis before Freud did, and that at its subtlest and most wide ranging ... is not the mere presence or expression of primitive and unconsciously apprehended elements but the attempt to come to terms with them and to work them into the texture of conscious experience that makes the poets, the predecessors of Freud (1981 : 4).
Peter Brooks views the literary critic’s job to be not very different from that of the psychoanalyst:

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 power of analysis are in some basic sense the same that the structure of literature is in some sense the structure of mind (1987: 336-337).

It is now clear that the structure of literature and the structure of mind are parallel. Therefore, there is inherent tendency to reflect mind and its reality in literature through analytical methods. In this respect, Freud’s contribution to literature is great. Definition and analysis of meaning of Neurosis and Psychosis have been attributed to Freud. Before Freud, neurosis was considered meaningless. Freud shows that neurotic symptoms are due to the self-defense of the individual against odd situations, hostile factors, and controversial situations, tendencies, desires and experiences which are not in accordance with the conscious adoptions of the personality, i.e., with the ego.

Psychosis can be defined as severe mental disorders that tend to shatter the integration of the personality and disrupt the individual’s
social relationships. The behaviour of the psychotic is too bizarre, unreasonable, and inappropriate to be understood by a normal person. It is necessary to supervise closely, or hospitalize psychotic patients, because they are incapable of adequate self-management and their peculiar and unpredictable actions constitute a potential threat to the welfare of others. Psychotic individuals are so unbalanced mentally that they are not legally responsible for their actions. In the eye of law, they are insane. In psychoses, normal inhibitions and cultural restraints are severed, and one indulges in his whims and phantasies unchecked by rules of logic, common sense, or social frame. As a result the psychotic goes on to imagine that he is a multi-millionaire or the beloved of some movie star and it is so.

The forerunner of psychosis is neurosis. Karen Horney, one of the neo-Freudians, in her book *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1987) lists three characteristics that she found in nearly all neurotic individuals: first, a rigidity of personality and a lack of flexibility in meeting difficult situations; second, a discrepancy between actual achievement and the potentiality for achievement; and third, a pervasive personal unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life. Further,
she adds that most neurotics are plagued by the feelings of ‘inferiority’ and ‘self-doubt’ (1987: 63).

Such neurotics show a tendency of self defeating pattern. Whatever the neurotic desires becomes so idealized a goal that it is not humanly attainable. These needs and strivings, being overdriven, are characterized by the following: first, the drive or motive is compulsive and insatiable; second, frustration of the motive leads to a disproportionate emotional reaction; and third, the drive is marked by indiscriminateness. Such a person seeking affection begins to suppose that every one loves him, and whenever he is ignored or criticized, he begins to feel a complete lack of love and affection. He behaves like a child, and shows extreme anger, repulsion, jealousy, and is upset.

Neurosis cannot be regarded as a sign of degeneracy, for not only the same stuff produce geniuses and neurotics side by side, but genius neurosis is all too frequently combined in the same person. This first attempt at solving neurotic conflicts has a decisive influence upon the further course of the neurotic development. Changes in personality occur not only towards others but changes take place within man himself. According to his main direction, the child
develops certain appropriate needs, sensitivities, inhibitions and he becomes aware of moral values. The child who is predominantly aggressive shows his strength and capacity to endure and to fight. This early solution chiefly aims at a unification of relations with others and since the child is still divided, he needs unification of relations with others. The constant need to feel protected drains his inner strength and makes large areas of his personality unavailable for constructive uses. Lack of confidence makes him feel insecure, so he is not well equipped for life. Living in a competitive society, and feeling isolated and hostile, he must strive desperately to live.

This need to evolve artificial, strategic ways to cope with others has forced him to become alienated from himself and to override his genuine feelings, wishes and thoughts. When safety becomes paramount, innermost feelings and thoughts must recede in importance. Since his feelings and wishes cease to be determining factors, he is led astray. He no longer knows where he stands, what he stands for or who he is. The psychological need to become meaningful to himself and to get a feeling of power and significance, he gradually and unconsciously sets himself to work through his imagination and
creates in his mind an idealized self-image and he alienates himself from social surrounding.

When the neurotic looks at himself, he ignores what he actually is, but rather sets to work to mould himself into a being of his own creation. He should be able to endure everything, should like everybody, should love his parents, his wife, his country, or he should not be attached to anything or anybody, nothing should matter to him. He should never feel hurt and he should always be serene and unruffled. He should always enjoy life or he should be above pleasure and enjoyment. He should know, understand and foresee everything. He should be able to solve every problem on his own or of others in no time. He should be able to overcome every difficulty of his as soon as he sees it. He should never be tired or fall ill. He should always be able to find a job. He should be able to think at once and without effort which can actually only be done by engaging himself in any work. A person operating under the yoke of the ‘should’ feels the strain in terms of disturbed human relations and impaired spontaneity of feelings, wishes, thoughts and beliefs.
The individual develops an impulse to take revenge for the humiliation he suffers. The neurotic must develop a system of private values to determine what to like and accept in himself, what to glorify and what to be proud of. This system of values by necessity also determines what to reject, to despise, and to hate and what to be ashamed of. The hatred results from awareness of the discrepancy between what a person would be and what he actually is. Self-loathing results in feeling guilty, inferior, cramped and tormented.

In a forward moving analysis, as the individual outgrows his neurotic egocentricity, he will become more aware of the broader issues involved in his particular life and in the world at large and will come to experience himself as part of a bigger whole. Whether it be in the family, in the community or even in a larger activity he will be willing and be able to assume his share of responsibility in it, contributing constructively in whichever way he is capable. In this way, through active participation he not only widens his personal horizon but also achieves the feeling of belonging. He finds a place for himself and accepts it in the world.
Apart from this, however, the woman is properly more closely bound in her emotional attachments than in the man. This applies both in her childhood and in adult life. The age incidence of neurosis is by no means definite, in fact, at any age, when there is a special call for new adaptations, whether biological or environmental, the onset of neurosis becomes imminent. Puberty and menopause are periods at which neurosis is especially prone to develop. During late adolescence neurosis may also develop for it is at this age that new responsibilities have to be undertaken and the shelter of the home has to be let and the buffers of the outside world have to be met. But crisis may occur at any age, and if adaptations are not accomplished, neurosis will manifest itself in some form or other. The form of neurosis will largely depend on the type of personality who is subjected to the conflict.

Now the problem, which deserves to be dealt with here, is the relationship between neurosis and psychosis. It is well known psychiatrically that many patients tend to be what are called ‘mixed’ states. Neurosis and psychosis differ in the degree of severity of illness only, or both disorders are present simultaneously. The ‘mixed’ case is that neurotics, as they get more neurotic, in other words, as their
illness progresses and becomes more severe, develop more and more psychotic symptoms, which finally displace the original ones. It is a continuum believed by psychoanalysts to be one of ‘psychosexual regression,’ in which psychotics are most regressed, neurotics less so, and normal not at all. A ‘mixed’ case is, therefore, one in which the patient finds himself in ‘transit’, as it were from one category to another, if he is becoming more severely ill he may already be showing psychotic symptoms, while still retaining some neurotic ones, and conversely if he should be recovering from a psychosis, he might have to show some neurotic symptoms on route to normality.

Neurotic persons suffering from depression or excessive fatigue suddenly commit suicide. Neuroticism is not a state, which is distinct from the normal but that all stages of it are represented along a continuum. There is only an arbitrary line of demarcation on one side of which people are called ‘normal’ and to the other side of which they are considered neurotic. Psychotic’s neuroticism denotes a continuum from the normal to the extreme neurotic. Neurosis is also defined as “functional derangement caused by disorder of the nervous system or by something in the subconscious mind” (Horney:1965:166).
Freud believes “neurotic problems are caused by unconscious conflicts left over from early childhood…” (1973:109). He thought that these inner conflicts involve battles among the Id, Ego and Superego, usually over sexual and aggressive impulses. Freud theorized that people depend on defense mechanism to avoid confronting the conflicts, which remain hidden in the depths of the unconscious. However, he noted that defensive measures often lead to self-defeating behaviour. Furthermore, he asserted that “defenses tend to be only partially successful in alleviating anxiety, guilt and other deterring emotions” (Lloyd: 2000:467).

Neurosis begins when the real self is forsaken. A neurotic is not flexible. He is driven by the compulsive nature of these inner necessities whereas a healthy man is flexible. The difference between neurotic drives and healthy striving is one between spontaneity and compulsion: between recognizing and denying limitations, between a focus upon the vision of a glorious end-product and a feeling for evolution, between seeming and being, fantasy and truth. In his search for glory, the neurotic starts making neurotic claims on the world. Whatever grandiose image he has created of himself must be
recognized by the world. He cannot realize that he is harbouring an illusion. He lives in the realm of the fantastic. He ‘should’ be as he has visualized himself to be. There are inner dictates that enumerate his standards for him.

Typically, they are mental manoeuvres that work through self-deception. A common example is rationalization, which involves creating false but plausible excuses to justify unacceptable behaviour.

Repression is the most basic and widely used defense mechanism. Repression involves keeping distressing thoughts and feeling buried in the unconscious. People tend to repress desires that make them feel guilty, conflicts that make them anxious and memories that are painful. Repression is ‘motivated forgetting’.

Regression involves of reversion to immature patterns of behaviour when anxious about the self-worth. Some adults respond with childish boasting and bragging. Such bragging is regressive when it is masked by massive exaggerations that anyone can see through. Identification involves bolstering self-esteem by forming and imagining as real alliance with some person as group.
Whenever the neurotic connects him with his imagined idealized self, he begins to suffer and his pride suffers a blow. This state of mind results into great tension which makes him vindictive. Changes in his temperament depend on his personal traits. The clash begins when he differentiates himself from society and he fails in fulfilling his expectations that he needs more love and that he is different from others. The clash between his psyche and the social climate increases.

Maslow terms neurosis as “a deficiency disease” (1968:33) and Horney classifies it as “a deviation from normal pattern of social behaviour” (1987:61). “Most neuroses involved with other complex determinants ungratified wishes for safety, for belongingness and identification for close relationships and for respect and prestige” (Maslow 1968 : 21). The ego is the decision-making component of personality that operates according to the reality principle. The ego mediates between the Id with its forceful desires for immediate satisfaction of these forceful desires and the external social world.

Freud assumed that behaviour is the outcome of an on-going series of internal conflicts. He believed that the three components of
personality interact to create constant conflicts and that the conflicts centering on sexual and aggressive impulses are likely to have far reaching consequences. Freud thought that these two aspects are complex and ambiguous social controls than other basic motives. The norms governing these are subtle and sufferers often get mixed messages about what is appropriate. These two drives are the source of much confusion. These drives are thwarted more regularly than other basic biological urges. Most psychic conflicts are trivial and are quickly resolved one way or the other. Occasionally, however, a conflict will linger for days, months and even years creating internal tension. Indeed, Freud believed that lingering conflicts rooted in childhood experiences cause most personality disturbances. These conflicts deepen in the subconscious of the individual who suffers psychic tensions. These unconscious conflicts may slip anxiety to the conscious awareness. In order to get rid of this unpleasant feeling of anxiety, people adopt different defense mechanisms.

Unconditional love is essential for the healthy growth of child. Many factors hamper the flow of warmth and affection to the needy child. Dominating, ever protecting, intimidating elders endanger a
child’s free use of his energies and damage his sense of self-instinct and self-reliance. Man’s values, desires and fantasies are his strongest unfulfilled needs.

In this context, Maslow has coined a term ‘basic threat’ which is an outcome of basic anxiety. This anxiety causes to hamper the growth and makes the child feel as being isolated and he begins to feel sense of helplessness and this state finally leads him to become a neurotic. The child becomes neurotic when he is denied genuine love and is deprived of the sense of belonging.

Karen Horney’s concept of “basic anxiety” and Abraham Maslow’s theory of basic needs provide a systematic analysis of the evolutionary nature of man. Horney describes basic anxiety as the “feeling of being isolated and helpless in a world conceived as potentially hostile” (1987:18). These feelings arise in childhood when one does not get favourable conditions to grow according to his individual needs. Children whose parents do not give them genuine love, lose the sense of belonging, the “we” feeling, and develop “profound insecurity and vague apprehensiveness” (Ibid).
Erich Fromm also recognizes the importance of relatedness and the dread of isolation. He describes the emergence of individuation as the process of growing aloneness, with the physical emotional growth of the child. A child shirks his primary ties and becomes independent. This is a delicate period of his life as he feels powerless, insecure and isolated because the sense of security offered by primary ties is suddenly withdrawn from him and he becomes aware of himself as a separate entity. The result of this anxiety can be twofold. A child may submerge himself in the outside world and give in to hostile feelings or he may develop in a productive way and may establish a spontaneous relationship with man and nature and society at large.

Abraham Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of basic needs also emphasizes man’s fundamental desire to belong. According to him, all men feel necessity of survival. On the psychological plane this necessity includes primarily for safety, for love and for self esteem and an individual searches for the material actualization of the above needs. Love serves as the emotional fountain of fulfillment of desires.

If one of the needs is not fulfilled a more sensitive person feels isolated and withdrawn from society. In such a state, his behaviour
deviates from the normally accepted behavioural pattern of common man. Among the above needs, the most basic is the need for safety and once the child feels safe and secure, he grows into a healthy child. Next to it comes the feeling of belonging. Safety and love result into giving him self-esteem. Maslow feels that the needs at the upper end of the hierarchy are weak and depend on the gratification of the lower needs. He, therefore, postulates that man is an evolutionary creature whose higher nature seeks actualization just as surely as does his lower nature. Sickness arises when this upward evolution is blocked. This higher nature includes the need for meaningful work, for responsibility, for creativeness, for being fair and just, for doing what is worthwhile and for preferring to do it well. This is in contrast to man’s lower nature. This lower nature seeks to gratify the animal instincts, the fulfillment of basic biological needs. In a sense, these needs are basic because they are integral to the biological nature of man. If the above needs are left unfulfilled, this causes frustration resulting into neurotic conditions. In such a state, the healthy and normal growth of a child is hampered and he feels alienated from his real self.
Both Maslow and Horney regard real self as the foundation of personality. This real self which is the central inner force, is common to all human beings and yet it is unique in each case. Under favourable conditions, an individual will develop his potentialities. As Horney observes:

The unique alive forces of his real self: the clarity and depth of his own feelings, thoughts, wishes, interest; the ability to tap his own resources, the strength of his will power; the special capacities or gifts he may have; the faculty to express himself to others with his spontaneous feelings. All this will in time enable him to find his set of values and his aims in life (1987: 17).

Given favourable environment, warmth of affection, inner security and inner freedom, the child learns to live according to his real self. A child’s urge for safety, warmth, and love are so strong that he can abandon his real self if these psychological needs are at stake: “The primary choice is between others and one’s own self. If the only way to maintain the self is to lose the other, then the ordinary child will give up the self ”(Maslow :1968: 50). Neurosis begins when the real self is forsaken.

Basic anxiety produces in a child, what Maslow calls, basic threat. His basic needs are frustrated and he dreads the environment
which is hostile and unfair to him. As a result of this fear, his attitude
towards himself and his environment changes. He becomes self-
productive and relates himself to others not by his real self but by
compulsive drives. His likes and dislikes, wants and wishes, trust and
distrust are all governed by strategic necessities. According to Horney,
“he cannot simply like or dislike, trust or distrust, express his wishes or
protest against those of others, but he automatically devises ways to
cope with people and to manipulate them with minimum damage to
himself” (1987: 22). This is how he abandons himself in order to
protect himself, but in the process the real self is weakened. When the
real self becomes weak, the environment becomes more threatening.

A threatening environment evokes in him a dread of others and
of self. Repression of hostility has its other repercussions he feels
helpless and defenseless in the hands of a dangerous world. He feels
weak, impotent and unlovable. In order to retain his chance of
remaining meaningful to himself, he adopts the defense tactics of self-
glorification. The desire is to “lift oneself above others”
( Bande 1988: 16).
This he does by adopting interpersonal strategies of defense. The *three* solutions are: his move *towards* people, *away* from people and *against* people.

The adoption of these defense strategies depends upon the temperament of an individual, which is conditioned by social factors and the conditions of his family. Moving against people denotes an aggressive trend; whereas those who move away from others are detached persons. These inter-personal strategies of defense do not relieve a person of his basic anxiety, one of the elements involved in basic anxiety still remains; helplessness in compliant solution, hostility in aggressive solution, and isolation in detachment. A person may move from one solution to the other in order to get some sense of wholeness but he will not be able to resolve the conflict. The inner battle continues leading to further confusion and division.

Freud viewed neurosis to be an inconvenience of biological origin. Freud’s three-tier structure of personality is by common consensus the first comprehensive theory of personality. Id, ego and super-ego are the three components of personality. Id is the contact point between the psychic structure and the instinctual energy
emanating from the body. It is the store-house of psychic energy – “a cauldron full of seething excitations” (Freud 1973: 106), operating by the ‘pleasure principle’ it always aims at the gratification of the instinctual urges of the organism in total disregard of objective reality. Ego, which comes next, obeys the “reality principle” (Ibid:97). While Id blindly seeks satisfaction of instincts, ego is highly discriminatory. After taking stock of the external world it lays down “an accurate picture of it in the memory-traces of its perceptions” (Ibid: 106). By exercising the “function of reality testing” it regulates the satisfaction of instincts so that the organism is not harmed. The mode of its operation is termed “secondary process” (thinking in realistic terms) and all higher mental functions are placed at its service. The last of the psychic systems, super-ego, is an internalized version of the ideals and moral expectations of society. In Freud’s words, super-ego is “the representative … of every moral restriction, the advocate of striving towards perfection” (Ibid: 98). Super-ego constantly strives to block the gratification of instinctual urges setting high priority on “the higher side of human life” (Ibid). In a broad sense, Id, ego and super-
ego may be treated as representatives respectively of the body, mind and society in the psychic structure of man.

An individual has to continually depend on the external environment and that holds him two important possibilities: reduction of tension through gratification of instincts, if the sufferer finds external surrounding which is conducive to enable him feel free. Thus, the external atmosphere has a vital role to condition the inner mounting conflicts of a man. In case he finds the external situation insecure or unfavourable it results into frustrations. If this frustration is left unchecked, the man develops anxiety. One of the forms of this anxiety is neurotic anxiety and in such a situation, his ego is strained too much to maintain balance. If the ego is not so well developed as to effectively manage the crisis through ordinary means, it has to resort to what are called defense mechanisms. If the individual has to put up with an excess amount of repression the defense mechanisms fail and the situation will be ripe to pave the way to neurosis. Neurotic symptoms provide a substitute satisfaction for the unconsciously repressed person. Interestingly enough, a neurotic is often aware of his
obsessional acts but he is unable to balance his mental disturbances and stability.

Neurosis can, thus, be seen as a desperate attempt on the part of the ego to deal with deep-seated conflicts. If the unconscious conflicts are too powerful to cope with, and the process of neurosis goes beyond the control of an individual, id takes over and the contact with reality is snapped. The resulting pathological condition is termed “psychosis.” A systematically constructed delusional reality is characteristic of all psychoses.

In his later life, Freud became more and more sociologically-oriented. He began to treat cultural, religious and philosophical questions from the psychoanalytic standpoint. Freud had supported the belief in the essential good nature of human beings. He believed that by birth human nature is good and this belief led him to think positively to analyze psychological behaviour of individuals. He held that people group together primarily to satisfy their needs which is not possible in isolation and common hatred can unite them in love. This view cannot be easily dismissed because there is no concrete scientific evidence to prove that human beings are either good or bad by nature.
Men are, therefore, perpetually in search of pleasure and the wish to be away from misery. The purpose of life is determined by the “programme of the pleasure principle” (Freud: 1964: 163). But all the “regulations of the universe” (Ibid) embodied by civilization “run counter to it” (Ibid). Man has to grapple with at least three important sources of suffering – from his own body, from the external world, and from human relationships. The last of these is artificial and avoidable but the most painful at the same time. As a natural reaction to this, man may seek refuge in voluntary isolation (the extreme form being the annihilation of all instincts), sublimate his instincts (and get a qualified satisfaction), or create an alternate delusional world where the ugly and unpleasant features of reality find no place.

Freud wonders “why the regulations made by ourselves should not … be a protection and benefit for every one of us” (1964: 274). He holds civilization, as it means today, responsible for this unhappy state of affairs. Civilization which stands for “the whole sum of the achievements and the regulations which distinguish our lives from those of our animal ancestors” (Ibid: 265) is supposed to serve two purposes. It, while protecting men against nature and adjusting their
mutual relationships, manifests in several forms of organized institutions. Each of these forms – religion, culture, family, justice – restrict human instinctual life. The most natural reaction to this ‘killing’ of instincts is to direct one’s urge for freedom against civilization as a whole. The restrictions of civilization have reached such a point that man’s two most natural instincts – sexuality and aggressiveness – which are capable of a high yield of pleasure have been thoroughly suppressed. The civilized society is inclined to tolerate sexuality only because no other means of preserving the human species has been found so far. It does not tolerate the direct expression of aggressiveness either. Hence, the ego will direct it against the self, resulting in the return of the organism to the inorganic state. Super-ego has not a little to contribute in interjecting this aggression and destroying the self.

A consideration of the above basic postulates of Freud vis-à-vis neurosis reveals that neurosis is not just a behavioural abnormality; but it is invested with great unconscious significance. It is not an accident but a way of relating to the world, however inconvenient.
Neurosis is the result of failure of a person’s attempt to get related to the world. If an individual fails to get adjusted to the outside world, it results into neurosis.

Many later psychoanalytic thinkers have developed the ideas of self and unconscious and discussed psychic reasons for neurotic reaction. The ‘discontents’ of civilization that go into the formation of super-ego and watch over the individual’s every mental process like a “garrison in a conquered city” are termed by Karen Horney. She describes basic anxiety as “a feeling a child has of being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world,” (1945:41) which is primarily constituted by unfeeling parents.

Erich Fromm, who has much in common with Horney, adds a historical dimension to neurosis. He thinks that man’s intellectual attainments have alienated him from the rest of the universe with which he enjoyed a ‘cosmic unity’ for a very long time. The subsequent lopsided social developments, collapse of the ethical and religious values and the modern cut-throat competition, increasing individuation and isolation have caused the feelings of being orphan in this wide world. All the above factors are greatly responsible for
isolating an individual from the social relational currents. As a result of this, the man feels extremely alone, unprotected and begins to suppose that he is an unlovable commodity. To modify physical loss and to control over nature can throw a man into an ‘existential dichotomy’. And to resolve this conflicting position, he may develop a destructive attitude neurotically and may begin to guard rather zealously against all possible rates.

It is clear from the above discussion that psychoanalytic theorists of different persuasions from Freud onwards have given prime place in their theoretical formulations to neurosis and discussed from different angles how it is the most natural result of the friction between the individual and society. The pendulum of emphasis is found swinging between biological and social determinism. All the psychoanalytic theorists have implicitly advocated to evolve a more humane social order so that man is liberated from psychic disorders.

Psychoanalytic formulations on neurosis have been readily assimilated by literary criticism for the study of characters. In literary critical vocabulary, ‘character’ has always been a device to humanize the writers experience by giving it a solid existence. From the days of
Aristotle onwards ‘character’ has been the focal point and central object of critical attention. The analytical methods of critically analyzing ‘character’ have undergone various changes and the latest methodology that is available is psychoanalysis which attempts to throw light on ‘character’ studies, which had remained only as a literary puzzle for ages. In this respect psychoanalysis has proved a successful convenient tool of knowing the characters thoroughly. It helps to know the inner psychic world of a character in a literary piece of work. In contrast the conventional criticism and its methods fall far too short to reveal mysterious and complex mental under currents of a character but even then Freud has remarked that poets and philosophers understood the uncanny workings of the unconscious long before him. Perhaps, their literary creations can be best elucidated only by those who have a fairly good grasp of the unconscious processes.

Recent developments in psychoanalytic criticism have added new dimensions to character study. ‘Character’ is now viewed both as a “product of life and art” (Tennehouse : 1976: 12). Psychoanalysis no more studies ‘character’ in total isolation, plucking it away from its
fictional matrix, but “the nature of the external world which the character encounters and the kinds of demands that the external world makes as the character struggles to deal with the range of his or her needs” (Ibid 13). To put it in an analogy, ‘character’ can be seen as one’s own image in a mirror, while the surrounding phenomena, that of necessary gets reflected, as the fictional matrix. ‘One’ cannot be properly contextualized in the absence of the ‘other’.

Psychoanalytic thinkers from Freud onwards have not only viewed religion cynically but dubbed it as an instrument of oppression. Freud thinks religion to be “patently infantile, so foreign to reality” (1973: 107). As one with a friendly attitude to humanity he finds it painful that the great majority of people will continue to believe the falsehoods propagated in the name of religion. He, therefore, interprets it as a collective childhood neurosis of mankind. Fromm puts it the other way round. Freud, however, thinks that neurosis grows out of a sort of conflict between personal and social. He is of the opinion that “we can interpret neurosis as a private form of religion, more specifically, as a regression to primitive forms of religion conflicting with officially recognized patterns of religious thought”
(Ibid 108). The women novelists have shown an almost uncanny awareness of the untenable claims of religion and exposed them by creating neurotic characters who seek religious solution. In the process, neurosis and religion become indistinguishable, thus, proving the contention of psychoanalysis without ever intending to do so.

As discussed earlier, a person adopting a move towards people is compliant individual for whom salvation lies in love. Under this strategy, there are (i) the self-effacing, and (ii) the morbidly dependent. A self-effacing person must not feel superior to others; he must subordinate himself to others in the most appeasing manner; he cultivates qualities of helplessness and martyrdom and expects protection and love in return. He minimizes them and in the process becomes self-minimizing. It is beyond his purview to be arrogant, conceited or presumptuous. These crippling checks affect his normal human capacity to fight against all odds for the sake of self-interest. Horney calls it the shrinking process. He feels secure in his worthlessness. Because it will bring love, approval, acceptance and appreciation. He values his lovable qualities and expects that others value him for them. But, when others do not stand upto his
expectations, he retaliates. Since he is a self-effacing person, he cannot be violent to others. So, he wallows in self-pity, sense of guilt and personal inadequacy. His neurotic pride is hurt, self-hate is generated. His shoulds and neurotic claims give rise to tension and he is torn by inner conflicts. In extreme cases, all this may lead to vindictiveness. What form it takes depends upon individual temperament and the damage done to him.

A morbidly dependent individual is lured by erotic love. For him, it is a ticket to paradise. He is also a composite of all lovable qualities. He feels deeply hurt if his qualities are not recognized as he wants them to be; it means total rejection of his own self which he cannot tolerate. He fears rejection. He reacts in a violent, self-destructive way, if he is disillusioned. Being loved immensely provides him pleasure, sense of satisfaction, and strength.

On the contrary, an aggressive personality, who follows move against people, wants to master life. He is his very grandiose self. He is assertive, aggressive and self-aggrandized. He wants to overcome all obstacles, master fate, get over all difficulties. But, one cannot call him a strong and healthy personality. It is with compulsive rigidity that he
strives to maintain a subjective feeling of superiority. Among the expansive type Horney lists three types: “(i) the Narcissistic, (ii) the perfectionist and (iii) the arrogant-vindictive “(1987: 46).

The narcissistic wants to master life by “self-admiration and the exercise of charm”(Ibid 212). The perfectionist seeks to attain the highest perfection and excellence in everything he undertakes, and the arrogant-vindictive has a compulsive need for vindictive triumph. Persons following any one or all these sub-types of expansive drive are flagrantly disrespectful to anything that speaks of softness, love, compassion or considerateness. They disown all softer feeling as a threat to their whole structure of living. These people do not count on the world to give them anything, probably because their experiences have been bitter in childhood; so they wish to stand by their own visions of life and fight all softness, lest it gives rise to their self-loathing.

A detached individual strives for freedom. He places a complete check on his inner and outer demands, and wants neither love nor mastery over life. He lives in an ivory tower above others and feels proud of his detachment. He resents any intrusion on his well-guarded
citadel of privacy and feels consciously superior to others in his self sufficiency, independence and stoicism. This is, in fact, a flight from responsibilities. In his search for glory, the neurotic starts making neurotic claims on the world. He cannot realize that he is harbouring an illusion. He lives in the realm of fantastic. The idealized self image is made to give a feeling of significance to an individual. It is invested with immense power. But, it is humanly impossible to live up-to the standards laid down by the image. When it is not realized, a person feels worthless and develops a disposed image. This is his despised self. In the bargain, a neurotic has to counter four selves; the real self, who is already banished; the idealized self who is impossible to attain and is only imaginary; the despised self; and the actual self, which is what he has actualized at the given moment. In a self actualized person, the distance between real and actual selves is minimum; in a self – alienated individual the gulf is wide.

With the banishment of the real self, alienation takes hold. Self-hate and inner conflicts create a rift in the personality and a war starts within. Horney maintains that the “power and the tenacity of self-hate is astounding” (1987: 114). A neurotic may regard himself as a
disembodied spirit; he may try to kill his hated self. The onslauds of self-condemnation, self-accusation and self-hate are difficult to bear. Bonds with reality are severed and deteriorating process starts. There is no spontaneous integration, no ability to give goal direction to life; only a futile and hopeless battle against the world. It is a kind of pact with the devil and the result is tragic and disastrous.

Both Horney and Maslow agree that “most neurosis involved, along with other complex determinants, ungratified wishes for safety, for belongingness and identification for close relationships and for respect and prestige” (1968: 21). Although Third Force psychologists do not deny the role of childhood environment in shaping the neurotic drives of an individual, they lay more stress on the present structure of the psyche and refute the Freudian theory that adult reactions are a repetition of infantile experiences. In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1987), Karen Horney makes it clear that childhood experiences determine conditions for neuroses but they cannot be considered the only cause of later troubles. Later, his particular system develops under the influence of external factors, such as familial atmosphere, social and cultural exigencies. His internal
necessities to feel whole and the external pressures, mould his adult character.

Psychoanalysis has been introduced to India by Sudhir Kakar. He threw light on the psychology of Indians in terms of their myth literature and popular culture. He has made significant contribution to the discovery of Indian personality structure in psychoanalytic terms. The Indian equivalent of the ‘Id’ according to Sudhir Kakar, is formed with the combination of ‘Chitta’ and the ‘Guna’. ‘Id’ is not considered as angry instinct but as aiming at altruism and moving towards the realization of the purpose of human life. In Indian cultural and literary scenario it has been received in positive light. There are three types of Guna - ‘Sutra’, ‘Rajas’ and ‘Tamas’. And when ‘Ragas’ becomes the dominant drive, the individual has to control it. Otherwise, he becomes guilty of practicing ‘Adharma’.

There is a great difference in the concept of ego among the Indians as compared to that of the West. Indians have a passive ego; their ego is less differentiated whereas ego in the West is a synthesizing and integrating activity. Super-ego appears to be weakly
differentiated and insufficiently idealized in Indians. Sudhir Kakar is of the view that super-ego in Indians is regulated by “communal conscience” (1982:6). Basically because most Indians are religious-minded and God fearing. Most Indians, therefore, are religious in outlook. They believe in rebirth. They have developed a leisurely attitude toward everything; they do not easily get disturbed over delays and failures. They are governed by detached attitude and as a matter of community habit they take everything lightly, they never mind postponing things without much regret. For them life, is a continuum spread over several births. They live mostly in the open, enjoying nature’s bounty in an easy and relaxed atmosphere. Indians are hospitable, peace loving, non-aggressive and tolerant because of a weakly differentiated ‘super-ego’ and the ‘joint family system’. Indians often exhibit a strange admixture of inhibition and compromise. Because aggressive nature is discouraged in the social practices and religious teachings. Even in the face of oppressive and provocative circumstances, they don’t lose their poise. Such behaviour of peace and relaxation is rarely found elsewhere in the world.
There are, however, some negative traits among Indians. Indians lack integrity and honesty. They disapprove sincerity and direct statement of facts. Under the influence of joint family system and the ‘Jati’ bonds, they regard corruption, nepotism and dishonesty as near, abstract concepts. Dignity of neighbour is conspicuously absent in Indian society. These traits of Indian personality have contributed to the shaping of Indian consciousness. Apart from these enumerated traits of Indian personality, Indians have a unique vision of reality. In the words of Sudhir Kakar, this vision of reality is:

combination of the tragic is romantic. Man is still baffled by fate’s vagaries and tragedy is still the sap and woof of life. But instead of ironic acceptance, the yogic vision offers of romantic quest. The new journey is a search and the seeker, if he withstands all the perils of the road, will be rewarded by an exaltation beyond normal human experience (Ibid).

Other psychological thinkers who have contributed in a very significant manner to the study of psychoanalysis in India are Erik Erikson and Erich Fromm.

Erich Fromm considers the psychology of Indian personality in the light of sociological factors which determines in toto the behaviour of Indian mind. He affirms that even the most beautiful and most ugly
inclinations of man are not a part of his biologically fixed nature, “but result from the social process which creates man” (1941:12). After all, man is the product of social ethos. Cultural, linguistic, religious, political and even geographical factors shape the personality of the man. Man’s self-consciousness enables him to contemplate himself as a whole and his interaction with other members of society enable him to bring himself within his experiential purview; “and thus he can consciously integrate and unify the various aspects of his self, to form a single consistent and coherent and organized personality” (Ibid:13).

It follows that the basic human nature is common to the entire species of man, only its expression and habitat varies from country to country, culture to culture. He combines within himself both weaknesses and strong points. Weak is one who can be easily suppressed or masked and the strong is one who cannot be destroyed. In both cases, man strives for self-realization.

The above cited behavioural patterns of an Indian individual are found in the Indian women novelists of the second generation who show not only awareness of the changed psychological realities of life
but also show deep interest in focusing on the inner psychological dimensions among the characters in their literary works.

These women novelists also seem to be aware of the concepts promoted by the women-centered psychologists like Judith Jordan, Alexandra Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene Stiver, Janet Surrey, Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan. The women-centered psychologists share common motions which are central to their works. These notions are: women’s relational sense of self, the relational path of women’s development, and the importance of empathy and responsiveness in relationships. They have found care-giving and allied values like empathy, affiliation, nurturing and a collective vision of social life to be central to the female experience. This new psychology challenges the traditional male idea of self-in-relationship. Jean Baker Miller, in *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, recognizes the difference in starting point for women’s development. According to her, “women stay with, build on, and develop in a context of attachment and affiliation with others” (1978:83). And, therefore, for many women, “the threat of disruption of an affiliation is perceived not just as a loss of a relationship, but as something closer
to a total loss of self” (Ibid). They embrace a different approach to living, which values relations more than self-enhancement.

Gilligan, in her *In a Different Voice*, notes:

Women’s difference is rooted not only in their social subordination, but also in the substance of their moral concern, sensitivity to the needs of the others and the assumption of responsibility for taking care lead women to attend to voices other than their own and to include in their judgment other’s point of view. Women’s moral weakness, manifest in an apparent diffusion and confusion to judgment, is thus inseparable from women’s moral strength, an overriding concern with relationships and responsibilities. (1982: 17).

It is very saddening that women’s innate strength is hardly given any recognition and men devalue their virtues in favour of success, power and careerism. This devaluation of feminine virtues makes women feel bad internally. Their intrinsic goodness is not only overlooked, but is also not given its due worth. Their strengths become tools of exploitation.

Women’s desire for affiliations is a ‘fundamental strength’, which helps in advancing humanity and making the world a better place to live (Miller: 1978:89). Maintaining affiliations against all odds becomes the source of many problems for,
“while women have reached for and already found a psychic basis for a more advanced social existence, they are not able to act fully and directly on this valuable basis in a way that would allow it to flourish. Accordingly they have not been able to cherish or even recognize this strength. On the contrary, when women act on the basis of this underlying psychological motive, they are usually led into subservience. That is the only forms of affiliation that have been available to women are subservient affiliations” (Ibid).

A woman, who has long been apprenticed in the gender role, internalizes the feminine virtues, therefore it will not be easy for her to relinquish the idea of disruption of affiliation, which may make her fall victim to a number of psychological problems, which may manifest in different ways.

In Indian culture, the segregation of sexes is customary. The masculine and the feminine codes of behaviour prescribed in the religious texts are literally revered and to liberate the mind from the shackles of these accepted prejudices is not easy, for it is deeply fabricated in the Indian ethos. Our culture idealizes female martyrdom and self-denying women are extolled in the various myths, that constitute a part of the Indian cultural legacy. There is a separate
religion and caste for women, i.e. the stridharma and the strijati. Women are conditioned and brought up through the examples of timeless feminine symbols of Indian womanhood like Sita and Savitri.

The women novelists of the second generation along with these psychologists question the Indian society for this devaluation to reach a better understanding of women.

In the post independence era, the Indian women have been portrayed by these women writers as sufferers because of the socially established norms and moral codes. This social backgrounds in which majority of Indian women survive has provided fertile ground for the Indian English women novelists to analyze psychologically the neurotic characters in their works. And this has been very persistently and consistently done by these women novelists in their works. These novelists have voiced the secret suffering and hidden wishes of the women kind among the Indian masses. Such Indian women writers in English are Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Shashi Deshpande.

These women writers have dealt with the neurotic phenomena among the Indian women characters in the Indian context and this has
led them to create a variety of such characters in different contexts. The above listed novelists are in the forefront in creating very real but interesting literary world of feminine characters in their writings.

Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock (1988)*, and *Where Shall We Go This Summer (1988)*?, Bharati Mukherjee’s *Wife (1993)*, Kamala Markandaya’s *A Silence of Desire (1961)*, Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence (1993)*, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s *Get Ready for Battle (1984)*, and Nayantara Sahgal’s *The Day in Shadow (1991)*, portray sensitive individuals in their moments of intense struggle and their efforts to seek solutions to their neurotic problems with the reality in which they have been placed. Their reaction to the situation depends on the degree of their affectability and pressure of the external circumstances. All these characters react neurotically in three different ways. The hyper-sensitive and deeply affected Maya of *Cry, the Peacock* and Dimple of *Wife* get their psyches corroded by unhealthy introspection and their feelings are clouded by the unfavourable and hostile circumstances. In the process to overcome this psychic burden these characters move too far away from the
routine and day to day ordinary course of life and at the end nose-
dive into the dark abysmal depth of psychosis.

On the contrary Sarla Devi of *Get Ready for Battle* and Simrit of *The Day in Shadow* follow almost an opposite neurotic course. This change in the attitudes of all these characters is not the result of genuine change of heart but it is rooted in the attitude of taking revenge against unfavourable surrounding. They how any prepare themselves to escape from their inner compulsions. Neurosis, however, has sobering effect on the other group of characters. Sita of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, Sarojini of *A Silence of Desire* and Jaya of *That Long Silence* make important discoveries about themselves during their neurotic suffering. They are able to find out a new way to solve their dilemma of getting adjusted with the world. Thus, we find in them a new dimension of positive workings in their inner world of psychic reactions to the outside world. This happens possibly because of the difference of temperament among the characters who are the victims of neurosis.

Carl Jung has pioneered the concept of psychological equilibrium in order to explain neurosis. He explains that Neurosis
arises out of a clash between an individual’s attempt to adjust to some situations and his constitutional inabilities to meet the challenge. In most of such cases, a neurotic arrives at a compromise solution of the problem. The neurotics arriving at a stage of compromise can be seen among the group of characters viz. Sita of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Sarojini of *A Silence of Desire* and Jaya of *That Long Silence*. Analyzed in the light of Sudhir Kakar’s psychoanalytical theory, these neurotic women characters like Sita, Sarojini and Jaya arrive at a compromise because they have a “passive and weakly differentiated ego” (Kakar:1981:11).

In some cases, neurotics take a third course, as Neurotics consider themselves rejected and neglected when their qualities are not recognized by others. Under such circumstances the neurotics begin to live in the realm of fantasy. On account of their feeling that they have been neglected and that their qualities however good are not recognized. These characters develop an idealized image of the self. To these characters the world begins to appear harsh, bitter, hostile and even repulsive. This feeling is so intense that these characters cannot get adjusted to the external reality. They are
basically the victims of ‘an idealized image of the self.’ As a result, they follow another course and engage themselves in doing jobs and shouldering responsibilities, they suppose that they are playing ideal role and thus their neurotic pride is satisfied. For example Sarla Devi in *Get Ready for Battle*, a middle-aged woman is separated from her husband Gulzari Lal because she is unable to accommodate and fit into Gulzari Lal’s scheme of things. Sarla Devi becomes a compulsive social worker. She keeps herself ever busy in playing the role of a social worker, and thus, is deviated from the effect of neurotic shade. Unluckily, her efforts prove futile and her actions remain unappreciated. Almost in the same way in *The Day in Shadow*, Simrit fails to get herself adjusted to the pretentious and sacrificial life of Som, her husband. On account of this type of behaviour of Som, Simrit gets herself separated from him and takes an opposite neurotic course and becomes an idealist. In case of both the protagonists, their idealism is born of an attitude of revenge and this happens because these characters are in search of finding a way out to escape from their present situations.
These women novelists in English have very ably treated the neurotic phenomenon in the Indian context by creating extremely interesting personages. They have been able to lay bare the oppressive and anti-human value system of the society. Through the sensitive portrayal of the psychic conflicts and the psychological contours of helpless people, the novelists seem to underline the importance of subverting the established values and replacing them with values which are more amenable to human nature and which promote happiness. For this purpose, the delinquent frame of the social structure, this forges and fosters these values, itself, needs an overall change. The women novelists bring home the necessity of bringing a socio-cultural change so that the ill treatment against women can be at least reduced. These women novelists have attempted to show that the society in which these women live, is indifferent, non challenged and vindictive towards sensitive women. These women are shown as the victims of great suffering at both levels, physical and mental. The novelists want to show that the cause of suffering of the individuals lies in the hostile attitude of society. So long as sympathetic attitude is cultivated, suffering of these women would continue.
The study analyses the select novels of the select novelists and examines the neurotic characters in detail in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter II deals with Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock* and Bharati Mukherjee’s *Wife*. The protagonists in these novels move from neurosis to psychosis.

The novel *Cry, the Peacock* holds a mirror to show the inner, emotional world of Maya. The novel reflects in depth the mental agonies of Maya’s inner conflict and her dire need for warmth, love and companion- ship. Lack of these things haunts her mind with the thought of death. This novel is “an externalization of the interior of Maya’s Cocoon” (Shrivastav:2001:18). Maya is sensitive and solitary to the point of being neurotic. She has strange childhood from where she develops a negative self image and aversion. She becomes neurotic. Her neurosis arises out of various factors such as growth and development without maternal love. Maya grows as an unusual adult on account of her motherless childhood days. Lack of motherly love develops in her an extreme sense of loneliness and this develops to an extreme point when she comes across Albino, the temple and his
horoscope about her marriage. This neurosis further increases as a result of her father’s conflict with her brother, Arjuna. In view of Sudhir Kakar’s psychoanalytical approach ‘Tamas’ aggravates Maya’s neurosis. On account of further developments in the novel which are not in favour of Maya, her neurosis degenerates into psychosis and Maya finally kills Gautama by hurling him down from the roof in the fit of psychosis.

Dimple like Maya, also lives in a world of illusion. Therefore, she considers her ideal contemplation as real. As a neurotic, her abnormality becomes more pronounced which is reflected through her cravings and desires. When she finds the reality twice removed from her ideal and imagined self, she feels repressed and disappointed. Amit’s insensitivity aggravates the self destructive instincts present in her. The migration of the couple to America proves disastrous to Dimple’s hypersensitive nature.

Dimple dislikes living with the people unknown to her. Her unfavorable experiences in a foreign country had fractured her psyche and made her so frustrated that she wanted even to destroy the child in her womb. She is so disturbed that she begins to think that none has
consulted her before depositing the child in her womb. This clearly shows her deep rooted anger against Amit. The second reason for disliking her child is that her pregnancy would be a great hindrance to her much sought after freedom. Dimple’s protest against her pregnancy is unnatural. She finally betrays her husband and seduces Milt. She kills Amit out of frustration and to fulfill her fantastic desires.

Chapter III analyses the course taken by Sarla Devi of *Get Ready for Battle* and Simrit of *The Day in Shadow*. Sarla Devi is a middle-aged woman separated from her husband, GulzariLal for well over a decade. Ironically, their marriage has been by choice. Sarla Devi does not feel comfortable in the house of GulzariLal because he is a materialist. Any how their married life continues and Sarla Devi bears him a son, Vishnu. In this manner Sarla Devi falls a victim to neurosis. To make the matters worse, Kusum, her rival, proves more tactful and clever in managing to exercise an immense influence upon GulzariLal and also upon the members of his family. On being compelled to silently suffer the strain of life, Sarla Devi does not bite upon their heart but defies the social injunctions only to become compulsive
idealist. Whereas Simrit, the heroine of The Day in Shadow has been married for long to a rich industrialist, Som, who likes a hearty meal and healthy sexual life. He hankers after weather and a sexual wife, Simrit. Simrit because of her pretensions does not understand the needs of a man. She even crosses the limits of married life and seeks to satisfy her sex needs outside marriage. As a result, the divorce settlement provides her a new outlet to re-examine her position in the society. Thus, she too, follows a neurotic course like that of Sarla Devi.

Chapter IV examines the sobering effects of neurosis in Anita Desai’s Where Shall We Go This Summer?, Kamala Markandaya’s A Silence Of Desire and Shashi Deshpande’s That Long Silence. Sobering effects are found in the character of Sita who is the chief protagonist in Desai’s novel. She is shown as a disillusioned person who had been married to a Bombay Industrialist. Her married life proved unsuccessful inspite of the fact that the couple bore children and their financial position was sound. As a child she experienced happy days during her childhood in close contact with nature on an island, where her father exercised great influence on the people. After her marriage she finds a great gulf between the life style with which she lived on an
island and the practical, down to earth life of Bombay. This difference played havoc on her sensitivity. During her fifth pregnancy, an unconscious urge compelled her to go back to the island, where she wishes to live her childhood all over again. It is shocking that she desires to keep the child unborn at the same time she does not wish to terminate the pregnancy. This pathetic condition of her mental state is the chief and most dominant motif in the novel. The novel further indicates that Sita is seeking unrealistic solutions to the very practical problems. But at the end she improves her thinking and begins to think in terms of positive solutions and comes to the conclusion that she has to live life and thus returns back to Raman. This is how Sita’s character is indicative of the sobering effects of neurosis in her total behaviour.

On the other hand, Sarojini of *A Silence of Desire* seeks to halt the inevitable by invoking miracles. She hopes to get cured of a malignant growth by irrational means. In spite of the modern science, Sarojini seeks the help of a faith-healer. But her husband, Dandekar, is plagued by suspicion and later shocked by her illness. The secure world built around him appears to be falling apart. In the process of
persuading his wife to see the truth he himself undergoes a total transformation and redefines his relation with the world. At the end of the travail, Sarojini too frees herself to certain extent from the trap of her irrational beliefs and agrees to be operated upon for the removal of the tumor.

The novel *That Long Silence* depicts the loneliness and frustration of Jaya who failed to be closer to her husband mentally. Her husband could not understand her feelings, as a result of which she was torn within. Jaya considers her married life and her living with her husband as “a pair of bullocks yoked together” (127). Jaya feels lonely and says, “We were two persons. A man A woman” (43). The image of the pair of bullocks yoked together suggests that the bullocks so yoked shared the burden between themselves without knowing or loving each other. Jaya resents the role assigned to a wife in our country. The fact is, Jaya wanted to project an identity of her own. Her father called her Jaya, which meant victory. But after her marriage her name was changed to Suhasini, which she considered as an assault on her identity. She had higher expectations from her husband as she had been told, “husband is a sheltering tree” (37). She
begins to write but her husband objects to it on the ground that her writings obliquely referred to the family matters. She could not continue her writing. Jaya says, “I give up my writing because of you” (145).

Through the character of Jaya, Shashi Deshpande has expressed the ambivalent attitude of the contemporary educated Indian women who can reconcile themselves with the new changes. Such women neither can ignore their husbands, nor can they cast husbands who are ‘sheltering trees’.

Chapter V is the conclusion. Psychoanalysis helps us to have a better appreciation of the human situation and the marvelously created characters which these women novelists have presented in their works. It aims to suggest that the psychoanalytical approach helps in analyzing literary texts and fictitious characters, and in widening one’s perspective and sharpening of sensibility. One obtains a better, deeper and matured understanding of characters and situations by applying psychoanalytical methods to literary texts.