Chapter IV
SOBERING EFFECTS OF NEUROSIS
Introduction:

Chapter four examines the sobering effects of neurosis on group of characters like Sita of Where Shall We Go This Summer, Srojini of A Silence of Desire and Jaya of That Long Silence! All the characters discussed in this chapter experience neurosis which is traumatic but they could exercise a kind of restraint and self control and come back to their poised self for a harmonious and peaceful living. Sita reconciles with her husband and comes back from the Iceland to live with her husband. Sarojini is weaned away from Swami and reconciles with her husband, nurtures him during his illness and live with him happily thereafter. Similarly Jaya after experiencing a lot of psychic upheavals comes back to her house to live with Mohan peacefully.

Hypothesis:

Neurosis has a stage where the victim feels his life threatened and
this stage is known as traumatic neurosis. Traumatic neurosis is usually resulting of an emotional shock, which the victim has undergone in the past. Traumatic neurosis may be characterized by rumination of the traumatic event, insomnia, recurrent nightmares and dreams, feelings of detachment and disorientation and relative lack of control over one’s actions. Victim’s inherent incapability to fight and adjust with adverse circumstances compelled him to negotiate and the result is that his actions become sober and harmonious.

Anita Desai’s *Where Shall We Go This Summer?:*

Unlike Maya in *Cry, the Peacock*, Sita, in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, is a girl child who had been deprived of the love of the father and conducive, familial environment, which is necessary for the healthy growth of a child. Maya was over-loved; Sita was under loved or unloved. Maya grows under the over-protective attitude of her father. Except father, Sita has no one else in the family with whom she could share her feelings. She has no feeling of belonging. A sense of belongingness is a conditional prerequisite for the healthy growth of a person. This sense of belongingness, Sita is unable to realize. S.S. Anant has observed that:

> Belongingness..... means a subjective feeling of personal involvement to the extent that one feels himself to be an integral and indispensable part of the system. (Anant, 1979:108)
For the lack of the sense of belongingness Sita feels insecure. She experiences neglect and rejection. Her father has no time for his children. Her father is a public figure. He is loved and feared by the people around him. His children, too, fear to approach him. There is always an "impossibility of talk between her and her father" (Desai, WGS:1975:79).

He does not love even his son, Jeevan. He considers Jeevan and Sita as equal to his psychophant chelas and devotees. But he loves Rekha, the eldest daughter. Rekha is the adopted daughter. When this fact is disclosed to Sita, she felt "like acid felt tem burn wherever. She caught an exchange that heavy-bidden look between father and daughter, of his arm in its fine white sleeve lie fondly across her round shoulders" (Desai, WGS:1975:79). The relationship between the father and the adopted daughter smacks of incestuousness. It must be pointed out here that the relation of incest is not very clear, still it could be read between the lines;

But her father – too quite clearly for it was always the big girls heavy shoulders that he fondled, her face that he scanned as she sat singing across the room from him..... "Sisters should be a little alike".... But you are not sisters. "She is only your step sister". Perhaps because she never found him alone – always with Rekha silent at side, or in the centre of a ring of young, fanatic brilliant – eyed chelas who also were homespun, walked barefoot, and respected, admired, and adored him. She told herself she could never approach him to ask to such private and somehow secret matters. As an adult – later she asked herself, had there been no opportunity ever talking alone to him? Ah, she remembered, with an instinctive shrinking from
the shock and the pain, a few strange moments, 
still unexplained. (Desai, WGS:1975:78)

In Kamala Markandaya's novel, The Two Virgins Appa also discriminates between his two daughters. He showers more love and favour on his youngest daughter and grants her more privilege in most of the matter. But he does not love his eldest daughter with the same intensity of feeling. The youngest daughter is beautiful to look at where as the eldest is slightly repulsive, but there is no reference to any incestuousness in the relationship between Appa and any of his daughters. The eldest daughter also does not feel hurt and wounded because of this discrimination. In case of Sita, the father neglects her to love Rekha, which engenders a feeling of insecurity, deprivation and of course jealously in the mind of Sita. Sita is totally rendered alone. She is alienated and isolated. The character of Sita stands in contrast with Maya. Maya is overloved; Sita does not get adequate notice of her father. Sita feels constantly that her father has neglected her. Her entire childhood is spent in gloom, frustration and loneliness. And for a person “The feeling of being isolated and helpless in a world is conceived as potentially hostile” (Horney, 1965:18). For Sita the feeling of isolation and helplessness proves hostile for her growth and healthy living. Sita deviates from her normal self to become neurotic. Horney classifies neurosis as a deviation from a normal pattern of social behaviour …..
Most neurosis involved, along with other complex determinants, ungratified wishes for safety, for belongingness and identified wishes for safety, for belongingness and for respect and prestige. (Horney, 1965:219)

Anita Desai does not merely present the happenings of the society, meaning thereby that her concern is not simply the study of the character in relation to the society in which he/she lives but, in fact, she is more concerned with ascertaining the intensity of impact of social and familial ambience on the psyche of the character. Desai indulges in the study of the neurotic self of the protagonists. She condemns the Indian novelists who evince interest in the outer world only. Anita Desai writes;

My writing is an effort to discover, underline and convey the significance of things. I must seize upon that incomplete and seemingly meaningless mass of reality around me and try and discover its significance by plunging below the surface and plumbing the depths, then illuminating those depths till they become a more lucid; brilliant and explicable reflection of the visible world. (Asnani, 1978:78)

For the effective and adequate representation of the real self Desai claims to have employed in her novels, the language of interior. For example Where Shall We go This Summer? has multiple use of adjectives such as “The lazy idle, leisurely pace of a relief, a lull, bored, dull, unhappy, frantic.” (Desai, WGS:1975:125)

Sita, in Where Shall We Go This Summer? explains: “If reality were not to be borne the illusion was the only alternative” (Desai,
The death of the father in the family leads to the disintegration of the family. Only Sita stays on there to marry Raman. Even her brother, Jeevan leaves the place very shortly after the death of his father. The family disintegrates because there has been no sense of belongingness. Sita has always felt that her life has started in the centre of a crowd.

With calm eyes she has watched the surge and flow of such masses, listened to endless speeches on one subject, swaroj, had her chin chucked, collected, discarded garlands and played with the tinsel till she fell asleep against a hostler and was carried away to someone's house to sleep always a different someone, it scarcely mattered which one. She belonged, if to anyone to this whole society that existed at that particular point in history..... like a lamb does to its flock and saw no reason why she should belongs to one family alone. (Desai, WGS:1975:55)

Sita has been brought up in an adverse condition. The sense of deprivation and rejection creates in Sita the basic anxiety which tends to make her neurotic. Sita has to suffer the neglect of her father because Rekha, the stepsister of Sita, gets special attention of father. Thus, Sita suffers from the sense of loneliness, non-attachment and non-affection. It is correct that women have been both culturally and emotionally dependent on man. Any disruption of attachment may lead not only to the loss of relationship but actually to "A total loss of self" (Miler, 1978: 87) this total loss of self is then considered as neurosis. According to Erich
Fromm attachment and security are psychic needs of an individual, he says:

Man's existential conflict producers some psychic needs common to all men. He is forced to overcome the horror of separateness of powerlessness, and of lostness and find new forms of relating himself to the world to enable him to feel at home. I have called these psychic needs as existential because they are rooted in the very conditions of human existence. They are shared by all men, and their fulfillment is as necessary for man's remaining sane as the fulfillment of organic drive is necessary for his remaining alive. (Fromm, 1977:304)

Women are supposed to be very tender by nature and physique. Attachment, love, affection are the only pillars which sustain their life if the thread of attachment is broken the very meaning of life is lost for them. Simone de Beauvoir has rightly contended:

Woman is always prepared to take an attitude of frustration towards the world because she never accepted it.... It takes only a real trouble to remind woman of the hostility of the universe and the justice of her lot. Then she hastily retires of her surest refuge herself. (Beauvoir, 1960: 399-40)

Sita is driven to a nervous breakdown or to a neurotic state of mind because her affiliation and identify with the individual closest to her is broken. It has been argued that the characters of Anita Desai have “a near neurotic quality about them” (Sharma, 1994:90). Talking about the
difference between the neurotic condition of Desai’s protagonists and that of Margaret Atwood, Sunaina Singh writes:

One significant different between Atwood’s and Anita Desai’s protagonists is that Atwood’s protagonists go through a phase of neurosis to reach the ultimate because they are unable to adjust to their domestic environs. (Singh, 1994:90)

Having lost the support of her father Sita looks to Raman for a kind of psychological prop. Raman is Deedar’s son. He gives Sita the desired security-social as well as psychological. To her, Raman is;

A tired manager drawing the curtains together, locking up the empty theatre …. it was as though he has been expressly sent by providence to close the theatrical era of her life, her strange career and lead her out of the ruined theatre into the thin sunlight of the ordinary, the everyday, the empty and the meaningless. (Desai, WGS:1975:100)

Raman supports her psychologically and emotionally. Sita poses herself to be good to Raman. She hopes that other will also treat her well. Raman marries her not of love but; “Out of pity, out of lust, out of a sudden will for adventure, and because it was inevitable.” (Desai, WGS:1975:90) Sita expects that Raman will love her for her good qualities. Initially, she was happy with Raman. She bore her four children; “With pride, with pleasure sensual, emotional Freudian, every kind of pleasure.” (Desai, WGS:1975:138)

Sita begins to make neurotic claims. She deviates from normal behaviour. She begins to consider herself as something invaluable to
Raman. It is true that the neurotics indulge in a glorified self-image. Sita glorifies herself. She expects Raman to be like a lover. She does not behave like an ordinary married woman. In India, the married women enjoy a subordinate position, man is the one she is the other. Sita, too, is subordinated to a secondary position. But she thinks that her individuality and dignity are put at stake. She develops a sense of insecurity and helplessness. Sita has constitutional inability to accept the values and attitudes of the society. Raman, however does not honour the claims of Sita. Her dream is never realized. Raman is a practical man. He shifts his energies to his business to avoid any kind of interpersonal conflicts. He is sincere to his duties and obligations,

Everything was so clear to him and simple; life must be continued and all its business. Menka’s admission to medical college gained, wife led to hospital, new child safely brought forth, the children reared, the factory seen to, a salary earned, a salary spent. (Desai, WGS:1975:139)

Very soon, Sita and Raman begin to drift apart. “Raman is a perfectionist” (Desai, WGS:1975:140) He desires that everyone should; “line up to his standards of perfection and despises them for failing to do so” (Horney, 1965:196). Raman is fair, just and dutiful. He expects Sita to be the same. But Sita, being neurotic, lives within a world of illusions. Thus, the relationship between them begins to be strained. Raman is unable to understand her rebellious nature, Sita’s hope of getting love is
Neurotic Women Characters in the Representative Novels of Desai, Jhabvala, Markandaya, Sahgal, Mukherjee and Deshpande

frustrated. Sita tells him, “I thought I could live with you and travel alone .... mentally, emotionally. But after that day, that was not enough. I had to stay whole. I had to” (Desai, WGS:1975:148). Here the word ‘whole’ refers to the glorified self of Sita. Raman does not give more importance to the glorified self of Sita. As a result her neurotic pride is hurt. She becomes vindictive and revengeful. She begins to complain about the people, about surrounding just in order to feel elevated. Horney has commented:

Neurotic claims give rise to tension as he is torn by inner conflicts. In extreme cases, all this may lead to vindictiveness. Which form it takes depends upon individually temperament and the damage done. (Horney, 1965:197)

The neurotic claims make Sita vindictive. She finds that the majority of members of the society live life which is full of dullness, boredom and deadness. Sita says, “They are animals, nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex and money matter” (Desai, WGS:1975:32) Sita detests the vegetative existence lived by the women of Raman’s family. She regards their colourless and soulless existence as quite abhorring and even a threat to her own existence. In order to show her superiority and achieve her neurotic triumphs she starts smoking and begins; “to speak in sudden rushes of emotion, as though flinging dorts at their smooth, unscarred faces” (Desai, WGS:1975:32). Being a neurotic Sita is unable to adjust herself to her husband’s family. In order to avoid family discord

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and tension, her husband moves into a flat. Sita’s in-laws are accommodating and considerate but she takes perverse delight in teasing them. Sita is worse than Maya. Commenting on the family and familial relationship in the novels of Anita Desai, N.R. Gopal writes:

We find that family and familial relationships play important part in her fictional world. But what is remarkable is that more often than not the familial relationships are not harmonious. We cannot find a single family in any of the novel, which can be called good, if not perfect. This implies that, she writes realistic novels and though in the world the institution of family continues to exist. Yet we seldom find a harmonious family one may do well with friends or non-familial relationships. But we are at daggers drawn without own flesh and blood relationships. But this is the way of world and none can help it. We have to accept familial relationship whether good or bad. (Gopal, 1995: 45-46)

In this family of Raman no one smokes, particularly the females are very averse to smoking. In traditional Indian family women are not allowed smoking. Sita challenges the accepted pattern of social behaviour; smoking tends to fulfill her pride. She considers herself as superior to others. She enjoys a sense of superiority, and thus enjoys a glorified self-image. Women in the novels of Anita Desai have normally a desire in them to be heard and taken seriously. In this connection a critic like Sunaina Singh has rightly commented:

There is a compelling urge in them for a particular way of living. All life full of love,
respect and dignity. But it is said that all these three things are denied to them, because they are ignored despite their repeated efforts at being acknowledged, because they are unloved and being taken for granted, that the extreme sensitivities of the protagonists turns into frustration. The Indian situation and their upbringing leave little scope for either total break up for freedom. (Singh, 1994:20)

But what is remarkable in the character of the female protagonists in the fiction of Anita Desai is that they seek for freedom not outside the household. These female protagonists do not cross the thresholds of the house. They are unlike the characters of the modern novelist Shobha De, who unhesitantly cross the boundaries and denigrate all the family traditions to which they are the part. In Shobha De’s *Socialite Evening*, the married woman Karuna goes abroad with a friend of her husband to overcome the boredom and ennui of the married life. But nothing of this sort of desire to cross marital restrictions can be seen in the character of Sita is not very clear, still it could be read between the lines as:

.............. too quite clearly for it was always the big girls heavy shoulders that he fondled, her face that he scanned as she sat singing across the room from him..... “Sisters should be a little alike”.... But you are not sisters. “She is only your step sister”. Perhaps because she never found him alone – always with Rekha silent at side, or in the centre of a ring of young, fanatic brilliant – eyed ‘chelas’ who also were homespun, walked barefoot, and respected, admired, and adored him. She told herself she could never approach him to ask to such private and somehow secret matters. As an adult .......... (Desai, *WGS*:1975:78)
Sita begins to feel tense and she begins to consider her surrounding as full of boredom. “She herself, looking on it, saw it stretched out so fast, so flat. So deep that she scrambled about it, searching for a few of these moments that proclaimed her still alive, not quite drowned and dead” (Desai, WGS:1975:33-34). Sita is so much deviated from the normal pattern of behaviour that she even does not stop passing unacceptable remarks to her husband and his business. Raman is totally stunned by this behaviour of his wife. The more Raman feels hurt and annoyed, the more Sita feels victorious and triumphant. One more example of Sita’s behaviour which causes anxiety to her husband, is Sita speaks of the hitch-hiker; “She not only thought again and again of that wanderer’s mirage like appearance and disappearance but spoke too often and too much of him.” (Desai, WGS:1975:52)

The feeling of kinship with the stranger by Sita stands for Sita’s quest urge. This shows the hostile-aggressive drive of Sita. Her presumed victory over Raman soothes her neurotic pride. The neurotic condition of Sita’s mind is reflected through different images and symbols in the novel. One such incident is found in the crows attacking an eagle on Sunday morning. The crowd of crows has wounded the eagle. They have torn to eagle to pieces with their beaks. The situation objectifies Sita’s conflict in her own life. Sita identifies herself with the proud and defiant
eagle. Despite all her attempts to protect Eagle, it is killed, signifying the triumph of her husband, because her husband and her son were watching this incident and were exulting over it. What is normal and usual for other is abnormal and unusual for Sita. The playing of her daughter does not make Sita happy. Mere play for Sita represents the excellence and hatred, which she finds all around her in the society. Other day-to-day incidences appear to Sita as abnormal. Her daughter Menka destroyed the drawing, she had so carefully made – the ayahs fighting like animals represent to her mad and violent society. Thus, Sita is far removed from the normal pattern of behaviour. She shows psychic fragmentation. On the one hand, she poses herself as helpless and a suffering, seeking for the love of Raman; on the other hand, she behaves like a rebel. There is an inability in Sita to view herself in wholeness and this represents the contradiction, which is inherent in her personality, for Sita everything is gloomy and life is meant for waiting alone;

It was not a pure colour. It was tinged at times with anxiety. At others with resignation, other with frenzy, patience, grimness through her, flowed along every smallest capillary till she herself was turned to the colour of the waiting, was turned a living monument of waiting” (Desai, WGS:1975:54-55)

There is a clear contrast between the character of Raman and that of Sita. Raman is normal; the normal for Raman is represented by regularly in life and by familiar patterns. Whatever is abnormal and
shocking for his wife is normal and natural for Raman. Raman has
developed a sense of acceptance;

To certain people there comes a day when they must
say the great yes or no, he who has yes ready within
him, reveals himself at once, and saying it crosses
over to the path of honour and his own conviction.
(Desai, *WGS*: 1975:101)

Sita on the other hand has adopted an attitude of defiance and
noncompliance. She refuses to meekly accept the authority of society.
"He who refuse does not repent. Should he be asked again, he would say
no again. And yet that no... the right no.... crushes him for the rest of
life." (Desai, *WGS*: 1975:100)

Sita’s mental equilibrium is disrupted because as a neurotic she
loses control over her impulses and feelings. The automatic control
system in a neurotic fails to respond. In Sita the automatic control system
has totally failed as a result what is produced is a fearful response. Sita
has been totally frightened. She has begun to experience illusions. In this
connection Horney has observed:

that in 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 but the neurotic cannot realize that he is
harbouring an illusion. He lives in the world of
fantasies. (Horney, 1965:62)

The abnormal behaviour of Sita reflects her neurotic dispositions
and she expects the people to accept her behavioural patterns as ideal
ones. But this is practically not possible. Sita begins to harbour a terror about the child, which is yet to be born. She thinks that the strategies adopted by her to ensure detachment from the family would be frustrated. Further, her aura of superiority, which she has developed in the family, would be damaged if the child is allowed to be born. People would think that she has not exercised self-control in sexual desires. So she suffers from a sense of self-reproach. She feels denigrated. Her anxiety and rage indicate her neurotic state. Anita Desai writers:

It was as touch for seven months she had collected inside her all her resentments, her fears, her rages, and now she flung them outward, flung them from her. (Desai, WGS: 1975:33)

Sita does not want to give birth to the child. Her desire to keep the child inside her is meant to continue her suffering. She hopes that the birth of her child could be prevented. This is no doubt a neurotic claim. Only a neurotic imagine controlling the natural process like the birth of the child. Once conceived the woman has to deliver her child. The child cannot be held inside beyond the prescribed time limit. Any attempt of a man to defy the natural process may prove fatal. It may be possible that Sita wants to continue her suffering and suffering may be a part of her mental makeup. Horney calls this a vindictive satisfaction and as the self-inflicted pain. Sita was to inflict pain upon herself or she wants to undergo sufferings. The fact is that Sita is averse to reality and thus she
lives in an illusory life. The neurotics take the illusion as reality. Sita goes
to Manori where she thinks the birth of the child could be prevented. She
goes to the island at an advanced stage of pregnancy. A neurotic lives in
the world of illusion. Sita also lives in the world of fantasy and illusion;
she desires to prevent the biological process of delivery. She thinks she
could achieve it by going the island. She has passed her childhood on the
island, so the memory of the childhood and the island appear to her
miraculous. She does not want to give birth to the child because she
shudders at the thought of experiencing the birth pangs for her;

Children.....Through her mind flowed a white,
flattening succession in nappies, vests, and
something quite extraordinary called ‘booties’
that would have to be gathered together. She
could see the expressionless faces of the night
nurses in the gynae ward...in the greenish night
light, regarding her as she came in ravaged by the
first pains. She could see the impassive face of
nurses who would stay by her in the theater, now
and then glancing at her large, flat watch, bored
by yet another, woman’s panic stricken labour
(Desai, WGS:1975:153-154)

Thus, because of neurotic disposition Sita “continually broke apart
into violent eruptions of emotions” (Desai, WGS:1975:19). Her mental
condition deteriorated day by day so much so that control was, “an
accomplishment that had slipped out of her hold” (Desai, WGS:1975:32).
Her attitude, her outbursts of anger, her appearance all substantiate her
whimsical approach. Moses asks, “is really Sita mad?” (Desai,
WGS:1975:32) Sita antagonizes her children. As a result, the children gravitate to the side of their father. All the solutions Sita contemplates like self-effacing, aggressiveness, defiance and even meek-suffering does not bring out desired result because they are all abnormal conditions. Sita’s mind is perverted. Sita tends to disappoint her friends and husband by her arrogant and vindictive behaviour. She cannot give a spontaneous love and also she cannot respond to the natural love, which is given to her mean only; “anxiety concern pessimism. Not happiness” (Desai, WGS:1975:147). She goes to the island of Manori where she had spent her childhood with her father who had become a legend during his lifetime. It is this island in which memory and desire, romance and reality, the beautiful and the sinister are intricately mixed together.

After twenty years, she goes to the island. This was her second journey. It symbolized her neurotic attempt to relive and recreate the past. She tries to recapture the rains and spring which is a matter of past. She has in her mind the romantic and heroic picture of her father, but the reality was something else, which Sita failed to understand. Even years after his death Sita remembers: “the incidents some had related about her father” (Desai, WGS:1975:66) Sita is incapable to understand her father, which is analogous to her inability to understand the past. Several examples are there in the novel to substantiate that now Sita fails to understand the real nature of her father. Deedar, who tells her about a
strike organized in a school, where Sita’s father studied narrates one such incident. A boy was arrested in connection with this strike. He was considered to be the mastermind of the strike. But after much questioning and torture, it was revealed that the ring leader of the strike was not the boy but Sita’s father;

The ring leader has been father, a boy so quiet, so withdrawn, so ugly and strange that neither the teachers nor the principle had thought him capable of organizing an incident of revolt. (Desai, WGS:1975:98)

Her second visit to the island does not prove fruitful. The old charm of the island cannot be recaptured. Even the Moses who is much involved with Sita and her children is no longer young and handsome. The passage of time has ravaged the beauty of the small island. The violent eruptions of emotions of Sita cannot be subdued on the island, as she had expected. Sita discovers that the island is not really picturesque. The tank in the village is overflowing with dirty water. The old house is a dirty and full of dust and cobwebs.

Sita had described two things from her village Manori – the one is freedom from boredom and anxiety and the two is that she would prevent child from being born. The fact is that Sita does not have a healthy concept of freedom. For her freedom, means escape from reality. This escape from reality provides her only freedom from conflicts. She escapes just to forget her real self and to maintain the identity of her
glorified self. In this connection, Erich Fromm has opined that escape is the other course, which provides a temporary relief from an unbearable situation. He writes:

   The other course open to them is to overcome loneliness by eliminating the gap that has arisen between his individual self and the world..... It assuages an unbearable anxiety and makes life possible by avoid panic; yet it does not solve the underlying problem and is paid for by a kind of life that often consists only of automatic and compulsive activities. (Fromm, 1977:140-141)

   Sita’s husband Raman comes to take her back, she refuses. Finally, when Raman comes for the second time, she finds no other way than compromising with the situation. Sita’s compromise is a sure step forward to recognize reality. The awareness that life is not meant to be stunned but to be experienced is significant. Participation in act of living leads to the acceptance of a fuller responsibility. Symbolically when she walks back home placing her feet in Raman’s footmarks on the sand, she decides to contribute positively to their lives.

   Kamala Markandaya’s *A silence of Desire*:

   Kamala Markandaya’s *A Silence of Desire* depicts the unconscious desire of Sarojini. To protect herself and her identity in the marital relationship, she (Sarojini) protests against the mechanical living to which she is subjected by her husband. Her mechanical living almost tends to deteriorate herself. Her protest is manifested in her desire to seek cure
through faith healing. Her husband, Dandekar is shocked bitterly with the defiant attitude and behaviour of his wife. In fact, Dandekar begins to feel jealous about her self-sought freedom. Sarojini’s protests against the imposing desire of her husband are revealed when she shows her distrust in the medical science and medical treatment. Her preference for a faith healer “healing by faith or healing by the grace of God” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:87) against the desire and advice of her husband shows that the whole effort of Sarojini’s psyche has been to voice her protest against the imminent loss of herself. Sorojini is a typical neurotic character. Here, neurosis implies a silent protest of the character against the repressions of her instincts by the society. It is in the neurotic state of mind that the victim finds an expression of his wish to subvert the life negating values of civilization.

Sarojini’s neurotic state on mind is a result of a rigid religious tutelage, which Sarojini has received. Her refusal to seek medical treatment is rooted in her belief that her mother and grandmother have undergone treatment and consequently died because the medical treatment could not alleviate their disease. Therefore, she refuses to recognize the tremendous advance made by the medical science. Another important reason for her disbelief in medical science as well as in the advice of her husband is that fifteen years of married life has failed to provide her pleasure and change. Her life has become so mechanical and
routine that she attends to her household chores with a predictable regularity, which Dandekar likes. The tumour, she has developed in her womb is also symbolic of her repressed anger against the person responsible for the meaninglessness of her life.

Dandekar has always treated Sarojini as an inanimate object. For him the Tulsi plant and Sarojini are one and the same. The house where Dandekar and Sarojini live has in the centre a fixed Tulsi plant. Sarojini worships the Tulsi plant. For Dandekar, the plant and Sarojini are merely immobile objects. For him Tulsi is an ordinary plant, in the same way as Sarojini’s disease is a common one, which could be cured in the hospital.

Similarly, Dandekar recognizes the identity of Sarojini only in terms of the job she renders in the house. Dandekar has his own concept and vision of a wife. A wife should remain within the four walls of a house. So long as Sarojini remains within the confines of the house, she pleases Dandekar but the moment she transgress the limit Dandekar is hurt. It is mobility of women, particularly a wife, which enrages Dandekar. Apart from Tulsi, Sarojini is associated with kitchen, more appropriately with the sound of a kitchen. A wife is, according to Dandekar, expected to be the kitchen queen.

For Dandekar, as for other a wife’s presence in the house is characterized by her movement in the kitchen. Sound emanating from kitchen shows a normal life to Dandekar. It is absence of sounds from the
kitchen, which makes Dandekar realize that something was missing. For him, his wife’s movements, the noise of cooking wares were part of his homecoming. Sarojini’s presence gives warmth to the household. Her absence makes the place “pale and chill like an unlit lamp” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:107). Dandekar’s domineering behaviour in the capacity of a husband tends to ruin and destroy the existence of the self in Sarojini. Being a wife, Sarojini must remain subordinate to him. Dandekar has all praise for Indian women, who never flaunt their beauty before men other than their husbands. “A married woman did not have men friends who were not known to the husband’s family.” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:34)

Regarding the character of wife Dandekar is ruled by traditional ideologies, which require a wife to be submissive, subordinate and non-significant. So Dandekar does not allow Sarojini to move out of the thresholds of the house. Thus, the personal feelings of Sarojini were repressed. Being a wife, she has to suffer silently because open protest by a wife is not recommended by the society. She protests unconsciously. In this connection, M. Rajeshwar has rightly commented:

Kamala Markandaya’s *A Silence of Desire* depicts the unconscious desire of a housewife, Sarojini, to fight the decay of herself within the marital relationship, she protest unconsciously, but in a manner, approved by the society against her husband and by extension against the whole society, for giving her a listless and mechanical life which her psyche perceives quite clearly as
being responsible for her fast deteriorating self.  
(Rajeshwar, 2002:99)

Dandekar does not grant her freedom to go out alone. He advises her to go to a hospital for the removal of the cancerous growth from her body. He opposes Sarojini’s preference for a faith healer because her interaction with a faith healer would be a threat to the virginity of his wife. For Sarojini, it is quite shocking that Dandekar could not understand and appreciate the loyalty of his wife. She is shocked when she knows that her husband spied on her, “so you watched me” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:71). She also says, “You listened to this office gossip and you spied on me” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:72) Dandekar is suspicious of the fidelity of his wife. Sarojini lies and Dandekar’s discovering a stranger’s photograph in her trunk strengthens his suspicion. Dandekar is so tormented by the thought of Sarojini having a lover. He calls her: “thrifty whore” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:70) and denounces her “Shameless affair”( Markandaya, ASD:1960:71) He thinks that: “A disloyal woman is no good to anyone not even to her children.” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:72)

Sarojini reacts sharply when she finds that her fifteen years of loyalty to her husband is being rewarded in the form of reprimand and chastisement. She grumbles: “The man whom I worship as God, cannot be degraded as being her lover” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:72). Sarojini is
compelled to repress her desire to go to a faith healer. Her husband advises her to go to the hospital. Sarojini is afraid of medical intervention because her mother and grandmother died after surgery. So, for curing the tumour in her womb, she turns to the Swamy. She does not disclose her visit to the Swamy to her husband. She starts meeting the Swamy regularly. The treatment offered by the Swamy to Sarojini is based upon the theory of enhancement of the individual against the community. Sarojini is completely taken in by the Swamy. The swami’s company soothed her. It provided her relief from the ailment realization of which was so painful to her.

Enhancement of the individual provides relief to the persons who have had to repress their desires for the common good. Sarojini is married for fifteen years without any single moment of pleasure in married life. All most all the time she has to work in the kitchen. The sounds of the kitchen and existence of Sarojini have become identical for Dandekar. Her desire to live for herself, for the own identify is suppressed in the male dominated society and she suddenly becomes aware of it when she is consistently persuaded by her husband to seek medical treatment for her cancerous growth. Sarojini does not want to flout the norms set for a traditional Indian wife. She is a woman of faith representing Indian tradition and culture. She knows duties are more important in Hindu marriage then personal desires. Therefore Sarojini has to keep suppressed
her desires for freedom. Because Sarojini, being an Indian wife cannot clamour for freedom as Indian culture does not allow a wife to make claims for freedom in marital life. Sarojini cannot separate herself from the culture to which she is tethered since birth. In fact, there can be no real separation. Commenting on the impossibility of complete separation between individual and culture, Lionel Trilling says:

It is not possible to conceive of a person standing, beyond his culture. His culture has brought him into being in every respect except the physical has given him categories and habits of thoughts, his range of feeling, his idiom and tones of speech. No aberration can effect a real separation; even the forms that madness takes.... Are controlled by the culture in which it occurs.

(Robson, 2011:51)

Therefore, to act against the wishes of her husband would be impermissible for Sarojini. Sarojini knows this. She decides to go out to the swamy without intimating Dandekar. She begins to abstain from her household duties. When routine is disturbed Dandekar feels disturbed. About Sarojini’s absence endless questions on the possibilities and probabilities are formed in the mind of Dandekar; “why had Sarojini lied? Had she?, was she paying some matrimonial games ?, was it conceivable?

Feasible that she might?” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:43)

Dandekar becomes suspicious and asks Sarojini for the key of the trunk in which, he accidentally finds the photograph of the swamy and
assumes it to be that of Sarojini’s lover. Sarojini is unable to explain. She thinks that her entire effort of finding a faith cure would be spoiled if she disclosed her allegiance to the Swamy. Sarojini tells her husband that the discovered photograph is that of her music teacher. Sarojini does not lose control of herself while giving explanations to her husband even though she is upset. This is the most typical example of the neurotic state of Sarojini’s character.

It is a measure of her innate strength, her conviction that her action had been just in the circumstance that explain her dignified controlled replies. While obviously upset, she is composed enough, the next day to carry on with her domestic chores. (Markandaya, ASD:1960: 151)

Sarojini suffers a deep sense of conflict. On the one hand, she desires for a secure home life and a husband who is there to support her and on the other her personal freedom to prefer faith healing to surgery. But her desire for freedom is being undermined because of her husband’s pressure upon her. That is why she goes on telling him lies and keeps her outings, a secret.

You would have sent me to a hospital instead called me superstitious, a fool, because I have beliefs that you cannot share. You wouldn’t have let me be – oh! You would have reasoned with me until I lost my faith... (Markandaya, ASD:1960:87)
The neurotic state of Sarojini's character has been caused largely because her faith in traditional values, norms and religion came into conflict with the modern science and rationalism. Dandekar represents reason and rationality, Sarojini represents traditional faith and religion. Sarojini develops under a strict religious surrounding.

Her 'religious tutelarge' has been rather more earnest than his own... she often had answer to the conundrums... not of course, that she would supply them, until she had indicated that, perhaps she might. (Markandaya, ASD:1960:5-6)

That her faith in religion is deep and active, as the wall of the dining room is rich with prints of;

Gods and goddess, singly and in groups, tableaux that showed than holding court in their heavens, or warning or being miraculously born of the earth or the sea. (Markandaya, ASD:1960:11)

As Sarojini's basic faith upon which her entire self exists, is demolished, she alienates herself from her essential duties. Her value system is damaged. She accepts neurotic values thereby developing neurotic wants, which are destructive both for herself and for her family. Her tensions issue from a conflict between traditional faith and rational explanation. Dandekar is opposed to old faith and superstition because he claims that science does not endorse superstition. Sarojini believes in superstition and tradition. She does not find that medical science can be useful for treatment of diseases, because her mother and grandmother

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died during treatment in the hospital. Sarojini, therefore, prefers faith cure. She is constantly dissuaded by her husband from going in for faith cure. Dandekar expects his wife to follow his advice. He desires his wife to be obedient and faithful. He is of the firm conviction that medical science alone can provide appropriate treatment but his wife is a woman of faith representing Indian tradition and culture, therefore she prefers to go to the Swamy. Sarojini suffers from an anxiety. She has realized that her inner turmoil can be removed if she frees herself from all wishes, ambitions and efforts of her husband. She rejects her husband by rejecting his advice. At the same time, her moving out from the house proves destructive. The family and the house are neglected. She finds that the peace and tranquility of the house is destroyed. But she can’t help going to the Swamy because her entire movement is directed to frustrate her husband who desires to control her in order to turn her mind to medical science. Dandekar fails to persuade his wife because he thinks; “once she sees reason she won’t have left faith.’ (Markandaya, ASD:1960:97)

To divert Sarojini of her faith is almost like destroying her existence. It is her faith which provides her stability as well as that to the family. To disrupt her faith would be sort of undermining her existence. Without faith she would remain nowhere. She would lose faith in God. In fact, Sarojini feels humiliated and insulted. She feels unwanted, isolated and be-little because Dandekar does not respect and approve the kind of
faith Sarojini upholds. She lies to her husband. She keeps her visits to Swamy a secret. She frequently goes to the Swamy. Her husband desires to bring her back. The conversation between Dandekar and Sarojini reflects the intensity of concern with which he persuades his wife to undergo a medical treatment. The conversation takes place as:

It's innocent and it's curable, he said stubbornly. The doctor said so. She said if you had the operation now. "No." "Why not? You must-you must be cure. I can't-" "I will be cure, in my own way." "By this-this faith healer?" "Yes, I have faith in him and he will cure me. She spoke deliberately, strangling the protesting words that were already forming in his brain. There's nothing I can do, be thought, frozen, helpless. I can't move, I'm trapped. (Markandaya, ASD:1960:37)

Sarojini feels elevated because she is being searched for to bring back home. She develops a feeling that she belongs to him that she is wanted. This feeling relieves her anxiety. Thus, she manages to get the much needed attention of her husband, which she otherwise fails to attract. Dandekar feels helpless in bringing Sarojini back. When he fails, he decides to take help of Rajam to influence Sarojini, Rajam is a cousin of Sarojini but to the surprise of Dandekar, cousin Rajam appears to be equally influenced by the swamy and the miraculous tales about the Swamy. Rajam affirms her faith in the swamy. Rajam is surprised, how the Swamy has cured her when the doctors failed in curing her pains. It was her faith in God that cured her. She thinks that even Dandekar's
illness is a result of ‘The Evil Eye’ (Markandaya, _ASD_:1960:78). Even her aunt Seeta who is afflicted by a similar disease is cured by a priest. Rajam proposes to burn camphor everyday in his same until the evil is lifted from him. Dandekar feels extremely frustrated, as he could not prevent Sarojini from going to the wamy. Dandekar decides to follow Sarojini to the wamy’s house. Dandekar goes after Sarojini:

Dandekar has stopped when Sarojini stopped now he ran, his blood fevering until he reached the house and here he was brought to an abrupt halt. He had expected a closed door, barred to him, her husband, and he would have batted against this until his fury drew forth some reply. But there was no door; only an archway, hung with a screen that swung lightly in, out, in, out with every puff of breeze. It seemed to mock him, that screen, moving incessantly yet never so much that he could look beyond. He seized it roughly in both hands to thrust it aside, but then he held back was he to go in now after his wife? Follow even so far as their tryst, their bed? He closed his eyes and flesh cringed before the image. It was grotesque, undurable, a gross and violent immodesty that the body he knew should open naked before another; yet he acknowledged that however stark his imagining the reality would be worse. (Markandaya, _ASD_:1960:78-79)

On the other hand, Dandekar, who is exposed to the modern ideas, does not reconcile with the notion that treatment can be sought in religion. Sarojini however appears to have profound faith in traditional matters by rejecting and disbelieving Sarojini’s trust in faith cure. Dandekar tends to deny the real self of Sarojini and neurosis begins when
the real self is forsaken. The rejection of real self creates a kind of ‘basic anxiety’, which results in ‘Basic Threat’ in the person. In this regard Usha Bande has rightly observed:

Basic anxiety produces in a child, what Maslow calls, ‘Basic Threat’. His basic needs are frustrated and he dreads the environment, which is merciless and unfair to him. As a result of this fear, his attitude towards himself and his environment changes. He becomes self-protective and relates himself to others not by his real self but by compulsive drives. His likes, dislikes, wants and wishers, trust and distrust. All are governed by strategic necessities. (Bande, 1988:28)

She finds her husband and surrounding merciless and unfair to her and so, her attitude towards herself and environment changes. She becomes self-protective. She abandons her family and home in order to protect herself. She begins to feel helpless in the hands of her husband; therefore, she adopts the method of self-glorification. Sarojini goes to the Swamy for the glorification of the self. The Swamy does a kind of enhancement of the individual. Sarojini begins to feel protected and secured in the company of the Swamy as a child feels secure in the company of the parents. The event becomes a symbolic enactment of a similar experience in childhood. In this context, Sudhir Kakar has opined:

The whole transformation process has its roots in, and is a replication of, psychic events in that early period of childhood he the face of the many narcissistic hurts and disappointments that the ending of infancy brought in its wake, sought a
new route, where he projected his greatness into the idealized image of a parent and then part of it himself by setting up a configuration in the psyche: “you are great but I am a part of you.” (Kakar, 1982:198)

Here in the novel the Swamy replaces the father. The guru (the Swamy) is idealized and internalized by Sarojini, she is asked to meditate upon the guru’s face. Thus, Sarojini is completely taken in by the Swamy. The detailed healing rituals are not described by Kamala Markandaya, however some evidences is offered. Under the influence of the Swamy Sarojini feels better. She feels that the pain is there but it does not touch her in the Swamy’s presence. She has strong faith in Swamy’s magical powers. What actually Swamy does is that he alleviates the pain in her psyche experiences. Sarojini’s psyche experiences the pain born of a sense of neglect and worthlessness. Her neurotic need for love and self-importance are greatly attended to by the Swamy. It produced a temporary excitement, which neutralizes the physical pain for the time being. Sarojini does not know that the cure the Swamy would offer is not of a permanent nature. She lacks the necessary maturity to discriminate between the needs of her body and the needs of her psyche. She falsely believes that “without faith I shall not be healed.” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:87)

The Swamy treats only imaginary diseases. But Dandekar tends to antagonize Sarojini all the more by telling her that the Swamy cannot
cure her disease. His dismissive attitude to her faith creates a kind of feeling of helplessness in Sarojini’s mind. That is why Sarojini does not tell him about the disease and about the Swamy. Dandekar surprisingly asks, “Why could you not tell me?” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:87). She replies that he would have called her supristitious, a fool and then reasoned her out until she lost all faith. Thus, Dandekar offends the egoistic self of Sarojini, she begins to feel helpless and defenseless and it is her feeling of rejection, which takes her to the Swamy. Dandekar is intent upon seeing that Sarojini is rescued from the Swamy. He is still swayed to the side of reason, despite knowing that Sarojini’s determination to be healed through her faith had something to do with the fact that her grandmother and mother had not been saved by surgery. He still cannot realize that for Sarojini going to the Swamy is a natural and even inevitable course of action. Dandekar again tries to persuade Sarojini to have an operation, but she is reluctant to agree because it would mean total demise of her faith:

It is innocent and it’s curable. He said stubbornly, The doctor said so, she said if you had the operation now....
No.
Why Not? you must – you must be cured I can’t I will be cured in my own way.
By this – this faith healer?
Yes, I have faith in him and he will cure me. She spoke deliberately, strangling the protesting words that were already forming her in her brain. There’s nothing I can do, he thought frozen,
helpless, I can’t move, I’m trapped.
helpless, I can’t move, I’m trapped. (Markandaya, 
ASD:1960:108)

The influence of the Swamy on Sarojini is massive, Sarojini feels relieved in the company of the Swamy. She develops a feeling of self admiration in the presence of the Swamy. Fifteen years of her married life has rendered her completely disillusioned and useless, she was no better than the Tulsi plant. She had been living a mechanical life. Her recourse to the Swamy provides a kind of relief to her from her mechanical, disillusioned and routine life. As a neurosis, Sarojini desires to stand by her own vision of life. That is why she rejects quite indifferently the attempt of her husband to change her mind for operation. The psychologist, Horney observes that a neurotic person strives to maintain a subjective feeling of superiority. There are three types of neurotics. (1) The narcissistic (2) The perfectionist & (3) The arrogant vindictive. Sarojini comes under the third category i.e., arrogant vindictive.

Distinguishing among the three types, it is observed by a critic that.

The narcissistic wants to master life by ‘self-admiration’ and exercise of charm. The perfectionist seeks to attain the highest perfection and excellence in everything be undertaken and the arrogant vindictive has a compulsive need for vindictive triumph. Persons following any one or all those subtypes of expensive drive are flagrantly disrespectful to anything that speaks of softness, love, compassion or considerateness. They disown all softer feelings as a threat to their whole structure of living these people do not call

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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-hate. (Bande, 1988:31)

In fact, “despite their differences”, (Markandaya, ASD:1960:137) Sarojini strives to retain the domestic harmony for the sake of growth of their children. Dandekar prevents their daughter Ramabai from going to the milk bar upon which Ramabai talks defiantly. Dandekar’s worries begin to appear endless. His problems continue to multiply. He is short of money. He rejects the offer of loan from Shastri. He goes to the courtyard and talks to Tulsi, “If you were god, you tell me what to do, show me the way, some reasonable way out.” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:145)

The neurotic behaviour of Sarojini has spoiled not only the peace in the family but also it precipitated an economic crisis the family. The silvery ashtray presented to Dandekar by Wilson is given by Sarojini to the Swamy. Dandekar sells his watch to meet the Dipawali expenses. A few weeks later, he discovers that his son’s gold chain has been given to the Swamy. Dandekar goes to the Swamy and asks him desperately. “But you take.... Sarojini, gives and gives and you do not stop her” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:155). Most surprisingly, Dandekar himself donates a five-rupee note to the Swamy. “I did not know.” Said Dandekar gently “I did not realize” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:158). Now, Dandekar
what understood Sarojini meant when she said that in the Swamy’s presence nothing material or physical mattered but he remains firm in his decision to detach Sarojini from the Swamy’s influence.

Sarojini’s erratic behaviour troubles Dandekar to such an extent that Dandekar comes down with shingles. The doctor suggests that he has been worrying a lot and that his body is fed up and making its protest. Dandekar lies in the dark room with “arms and leg sprawled wide on the bed with the sweat crawling down each limb” (Markandaya, ASD: 1960:182) Sarojini continues to minister him but quite indifferently. Now, she caters to his needs. She does not allow his illness to interrupt her visits to the Swamy.

...Quite suddenly in the strange clarity of his racked state he knew that she was not really seeing him, that often, as now, he no longer existed for her, although some mechanical process made it possible for her to face and converse with him rationally and even to accord him some gentleness. (Markandaya, ASD: 1960:183)

She serves her with a feeling of detachment. This behaviour of Sarojini is “In fact a flight from responsibilities and is far from the healthy non-attachment” (Bande, 1988:31). Dandekar is served by Sarojini with an “Acting tenderness” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:191). Fourteen days after the attack Dandekar recovers. He attains a new maturity. It was Sarojini’s compromising attitude that made her serve her
ailing husband and that made her return to her responsibilities. She returns finally to her duties at home. She does not rebel against Dandekar or hurt him any longer. She serves him during his illness. Furthermore, with the departure of the Swamy, she accepts the scientific spirit of the age. She embraces the philosophy of acceptance though she might have learnt it from the Swamy. She agrees to undergo an operation. Her submission to the surgical treatment is one of the best examples of how a neurotic can arrive at a compromise. Her compromising attitude has gone far to such an extent that she develops the sense of breaking attachments. The Swamy in this novel teaches that freedom is to remain free through the total activity of the self. This freedom corresponds to the ideal of positive freedom of Fromm’s concept where the total and integrated personality should function effectively through love and work as creation (Fromm, 1977:25). Though, the Swamy leaves suddenly, Sarojini remembers his words and says, “If the Swamy chose to do it was his decision” (Markandaya, ASD:1960:217). And finally, Sarojini moves back to the circle of family, home and duty.

Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence*:

*Jaya of That Long Silence* seeks shelter in neurosis because she has developed a wrong perspective towards the realities around her. She suffers but her suffering has a beneficial effect on her. It initiates the process of self-discovery. She emerges at the end of the novel as a cordial

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woman with certain willingness to compromise with life's problems. Jaya Kulkarni has a loveless married life. She married Mohan and was blessed with two children Rahul and Rati. Mohan has crushed both the woman and the writer in Jaya as he neither loved her nor encouraged her. Jaya has every reason to be bitter with him, for he has been responsible for her misery. Jaya discloses that her relationship with her husband is quite mechanical. She and her husband are yet to live as wife and husband even after seventeen years of married life. Nothing can be more frustrating and depressing than this. The married couples are like "A pair of bullocks yoked together" (Deshpande, *TLS*:1989:11) and the husband is said to be like a "Sheltering tree." (Deshpande, *TLS*:1989:11)

This disgust of living with a man, who does not love woman, causes great loss not only to Jaya but also to Sarojini of *A Silence of Desire*. Sarojini has been told to suppress herself and suppression of self results in neurosis. Maya, too, in *Cry, the Peacock* experiences dissatisfaction regarding sex and emotion in her married life because Gautam is so indifferent to her. Similarly, Jaya has to suppress her instinctual urges because her husband is so cold and non-caring. Almost every night at home, she deliberately arouses desire in Mohan and makes fierce love to him in an apparent displacement. In her case and in the case of many others, she reasons, the man-woman relation, especially within the boundaries of marriage, is dictated by treachery, deceit and betrayal.
Yet the pretence has to be maintained. Perhaps it is the same realization, which makes her behave callously on the death of Kamat.

That night, while having dinner, I had thought, someone I know is dead, I saw him dead. And I had been detached from that woman who had seen him, remote from that experience. (Deshpande, TLS:1989:157)

Mohan had always wanted to marry an educated girl who could speak English, so he consented to marry Jaya despite her dark complexion and Jaya had agreed because her brother had been in Mohan’s favour on account of his good fair looks, professional qualifications and a good steady government job. However, the waiting period for girls does not end with their marriage. Instead of waiting for some boy to say ‘yes’, now they wait for their husbands to return home, however, late they may be.

Mohan had clearly defined views about what a wife may do or may not do. He had wanted his wife to be ‘Suhasini’ (Deshpande, TLS:1989:32) and not ‘Jaya’(Deshpande, TLS:1989:32), so Jaya tried to fit herself into that Suhasini image. It gave her at least freedom from guilt, if not happiness. She tried to cut off those bites of Jaya which did not fit into Suhasini image. At her father’s home Jaya had never restrained herself, instead she had let herself go as their quibbles had always exploded into laughter in which everybody including her father had joined. But Mohan had felt so much hurt by her laughter that she
dared not laugh in his presence. She gradually learnt that his mood was best met with silence. She would say only that which she knew. In due course, she learnt that if Mohan’s sisters offered to mend any lapse they noticed in the upkeep of the house, it was meant to reflect on her inefficiency. Jaya had always been a bold and fearless person. But she tried to behave like Suhasini, a nervous incompetent woman needing male support all the time.

She did not like these changes but considering them to be inconsequential; she did not mind them much. But what really upsets was the fact that in order not to damage her marriage, she did things, which she would otherwise be ashamed of doing. She has acted as sparrow who kept the crow waiting outside in the rain. Her baby sparrow was sleeping and ‘crows’ (Deshpande, TLS:1989:142) entry would cause disturbance. The crow got completely drenched in rain outside. Jaya lastly allows the crow to enter and in order that he may dry himself, she made him sit on the hot oven. The crow was burnt to death. And all this is done to ward off disturbances from her sleeping baby. Jaya’s married life has been lived almost on the same lines as the sparrow’s,

She has built an edifice of security around her husband and children believing it to be a burrow into which she can crawl, reptile like, and feel safe (Deshpande, TLS:1989:148).
Attending to the needs of the husband, tending, and caring for the children become her full-time occupation. She states “in unequivocal terms that Mohan is her profession, career and means of livelihood” (Deshpande, TLS:1989:75) and as Kamat points out, she desires a strange satisfaction in making him dependent on her. Like Sita who followed her husband into exile, she follows Mohan into the “concrete Jungle that is Bombay” (Deshpande, TLS:1989:11). Once there, like a faithful wife she takes to wearing huge dark glasses, gets her eyebrows shaped and hair cut short to look exactly like the wife of an executive. In the process she becomes dwarfed and annihilated as an individual but it all goes unnoticed even by herself. Her protest, largely unconscious, remains wrapped in an uneasy wordlessness finding its occasional expression in such acts as her adamant patronage of Kusum, whose feeble mindedness she seems to borrow for a while.

Her absorption into the family fold is so total that from a fiercely independent girl she gradually degenerated into the “stereotype of a woman; nervous, incompetent, needing male help and support” (Deshpande, TLS:1989:76). The thought of the collapse of marriage, particularly those relating to the possibility of Mohan’s death, keep constantly haunting her:

I had lived in constant panic that he would die. I had clung to him at night, feeling with relief the warmth of his body, stroking his chest, letting my
palms move with his even deep breaths. The thought of living without him had twisted my insides. His death had seemed to me the final catastrophe. The very idea of his dying had made me feel so bereft that tears had flowed effortlessly down my cheeks. If he had been a little late coming home, I had been sure he was dead. By the time he returned, I had, in my imagination, shaped my life to a desolate widowhood. (Deshpande, TLS:1989:96-97)

In fact, apprehension of disaster has always been active in the depths of her unconscious. She quite often wonders why it is that wars always took place in other countries, tidal waves and earthquakes occurred in far-off, unknown places, that murder, adultery and heroism had their places in other people’s lives, never in ours? (Deshpande, TLS:1989:4)

And the disaster does take place in her life in the shape of a serious threat to her much prized and carefully built marriage and its temple, home. Mohan gets involved in a shady deal and consequently faces enquiry into charges of corruption. If the enquiry is carried on, he will stand every possibility of losing his well-paid job, which will mean terrible insecurity. Jaya is at once reminded of the army wives, Mohan has told her about the people who were reduced a destitution on their husband’s being thrown out of jobs and arrested later. In the Indian context, it is imperative to understand why Mohan has resorted to corrupt means of making money. Sudhir Kakar views:

Super-ego, the moral agency, is weakly differentiated and insufficiently idealized in
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Indians. Whereas in the west an individual’s behaviour is constantly regulated by the proscriptions of the super-age, in a Hindu it is regulated by what he calls ‘communal conscience’. (Kakar, 1981:135)

He explains that communal conscience which comprises family and norms,

is a social rather than an individual formation: it is not ‘inside’ the psyche. In other words, instead of having one internal sentinel an Indian relies on many external ‘watchmen’ to patrol his activities and especially his relationships in all the social hierarchies. (Deshpande, TLS:1989:135)

This creates a situation in which clandestine infringement of moral and social norms is a thing not to be much worried about. In this light “dishonesty, nepotism and corruption as they are understood in the West are merely abstract concept” (Deshpande, TLS:1989:125) for an Indian. It is the primacy of relationships that pervades through the life of an average Indian rather than primacy of healthy social values. Mohan is by no means an exception. He has been a dutiful son, and a dutiful husband. He regularly sends money to his family, and makes it a point to attend the death anniversary of his father every year, and even bears the entire expenditure of it. While working at Lohanager as a small time engineer he makes himself a scapegoat in the corrupt deals of the CE for securing spacious living quarters for his family. And after moving to Bombay, encouraged by his colleague Agarwal, he accepts illegal gratification

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again so that his family might live in comfort and his children might attend good schools. He says: “It was for you and the children that I did this. I wanted you to have a good life; I wanted the children to have all those things I never had” (Deshpande, TLS:1989:9). They move from their posh Churchgate House to the small flat in Dadar to evade the enquiry. Mohan takes the misfortune in his stride. At the most, in an apparent case of “projection he accuses Jaya of being indifferent” (Deshpande, TLS:1989:116) and storms out of the house. To Jaya the experience turns out to be traumatic. The insecurity caused by the possibility of Mohan’s losing his job; his subsequent disappearance comes as a terrifying shock to her. The carefully built sparrow-house appears to be cracked and the insides cruelly exposed:

It was like a house collapsed during the monsoon. “There was something desolating about the ease with which that had seemed so substantial fell away, almost contemptuously leaving behind an embarrassing nakedness. (Deshpande, TLS:1989174)

She considers, “like a rational individual, several options for dealing with the crisis such as suicide” (Deshpande, TLS:198911) and “plain confession of the crime” (Deshpande, TLS:198931) and dismisses them all as impracticable and ultimately lets her psyche take its own measures to manage the crises. She lives several days in a traumatic state. Her thoughts go back and forth in time triggered by the slightest
prostration but constantly return to the traumatic event. Traumatic neurosis is usually a result of an emotional shock wherein the subject feels his life threatened. Sometimes it acts as a precipitating factor and reveals an already existing neurotic structure. On account of the low level of tolerance that Jaya is bestowed with, an earlier traumatic experience that of her father Appa’s sudden death, is precipitated by the present exceptionally intense stimulus. Both have shattered her equilibrium. Appa meant a great deal for her and his death was premature and sudden and it occurred at a crucial time in her life – when she was writing her school final examinations. His death rendered Jaya’s family homeless and left her bereft of an emotional support. But at that time, although she took seriously ill, the comforting hand of her elder brother saved her from further psychic crisis. The present loss of her second home, which she has so carefully nurtured, apart from being of traumatic proportions, comes as a repetition of it.

But now there is none who she can turn to, not even Kamat. She is required to grapple with the trauma all by herself even if it means an upset of her equilibrium and emotional poise and it must be said to her credit that she emerges triumphant, crowned with a new understanding of herself and the world, at the end. After experiencing the trauma Jaya seems to become at once excessively concerned about the moral side of
what she has done so far and what she should have done but did not.

Frueed observes in this regard:

ill-luck—that is, external frustration — go greatly, enhances the power of the conscience in the super-ego. Al long as things go well with a man, his conscience is lenient and lets the ego do all sorts of things; but when misfortune befalls him, he searches his soul, acknowledge his sinfulness, heightens the demands of his conscience, imposes abstinences on himself and punishes himself with penances. (Freud, 1985:318)

Indeed Jaya pours out, during her neurotic spell, her innermost thoughts and makes an unqualified confession of her “sinful” (Deshpande, TLS:1989:112) acts, which she never confided in Mohan again for fear of jeopardizing marital security. She feels freshly guilty about her clandestine fictional endeavours:

I had written even after that confrontation with him.....I hadn’t been Mohan’s fault at all. And it had been just a coincidence, though it had helped, that just then Mohan had propelled me into that other kind of writing middles. (Deshpande, TLS:1989:148)

Her soul-searching, occasioned by the enforced leisure and coupled with a neurotic spell, makes her dig into the long forgotten past. She feels sorry for the third child. With the help of her brother, she happened to secretly terminate her third pregnancy. She now comes to think about it as her “great act of treachery against Mohan” (Deshpande,
As she probes deep into this significant event of her life, the guilt feelings assume greater sharpness and poignancy.

But now, as if it had been waiting for its cue all these years, a shadowy figure in the wings, guilt sprang out at me. I thought of the unborn child with dread and a piercing sorrow. I invested her—yes, it would have been a girl—with all the qualities, and I missed in Rahul and Rati. (Deshpande, TLS:1989:131)

Jaya is almost convinced at a point that the misfortune that had suddenly engulfed her family is “entirely of her making-of-her failure as a wife and mother” (Deshpande, TLS:1989:185). Apart from the unusual activation of the punitive elements of the super-ego, Jaya’s psyche sets a wide variety of painful reactions in motion. Every defense strategies that Jaya resorts to emanates from the traumatic event of the sudden disintegration of her conjugal life.

A relative lack of self-control over one’s actions is again quite justified in keeping with the logic of neurotic suffering. Jaya’s involuntary actions are almost always precipitated by a specific incident in the present. But at the same time they can be easily traced back to the one great affliction, that of the shocking disintegration of her home the security of which she has uncritically taken for granted. The beginning of it is precipitated by Mohan’s own disappearance. She experiences a fine quivering in her abdomen, which has always been for her a prelude to a panic. She does not have Kamat now to assure her of her significance and
sanity nor the distant relative, mad Kusum, against whom to test her sanity. Inevitably therefore her “sense of confusion” (Deshpande, *TLS*:1989:125) and turmoil meet her “with brutal force” (Deshpande, *TLS*:1989125). She asserts:

I could feel myself gasping, drowning in the darkness, the wild flailing, panic-stricken movements that I was making taking me lower and lower into the vertex.

Take you pain between your teeth, bite on it, don’t let it escape... I came floundering out of the depths, thinking – am I going crazy like Kusum? (Deshpande, *TLS*:1989:125)

In spite of her categorical assertion of her sanity on the next page she indeed sacrifices some of it to relieve herself of the excruciating mental pain forced on her by circumstances. Apart from such apparently “crazy”( Deshpande, *TLS*:1989126) actions as mumbling and speaking plain nonsense experiences a brief spell of utter mental confusion as things move to a finale. This time her witnessing a cruel scene at the bus stop triggers it off. After the secret visit to the Churchgate house, she waits for some time at the bus stop. It is raining heavily. She looks around and finds a very beautiful young girl smoking and two men roughly kneading her small breasts. Her imploration to stop the indecency evokes only a hearty laughter from the men. She feels so humiliated and helpless that she feels the scene as if pursued, in the pouring rain. In her unconscious, she identifies the girl at the bus stop with her daughter Rati
and the prospect of a similar future for Rati (apart of her secure home) drives her crazy. Somehow, she returns home, deliriously goes on ringing the bell of her apartment, the then bangs on the doors. It is ultimately Mukta who takes the key from her bag and opens the door. All along Jaya keeps raving incoherently. She continues to be in delirium even the next day. The impact of this specific incident coupled with the cumulative effect of the events of the past few days has been so deep on her that her psyche transfers some of its tension to her body, which reacts adversely under the pressure. She plunges headlong into high temperature. In fact, she has always reacted in a similar manner whenever under great stress. She happened to fall dangerously ill following Appa’s death too.

Thus, Jaya’s psyche reaches almost the point of total disintegration but she develops a defense mechanism in form of dreams and neurosis etc. Another defense mechanism that develops in Jaya’s experience of relieving that comes to her imagination is through her fighting. She indulges in a kind of self-discovery and finds a measure of fulfillment through recognizing her potentialities as a woman, as a writer, as a wife etc. In the process of self-revelation through writing Jaya comes to recognize herself as a failed writer because when she had continued writing, her stories had been rejected for lack of genuine feelings, which she has laid aside. She had also kept away the clamouring voices of women who wanted to find expression therein; for fear that, they may...
ruffle her domestic life. She comes to accept herself as a failed writer. She feels her identity effaced when she sees repeated images of herself as a person with variegated interlinked slaves, all alike and without any uniqueness of their own. She says, “I was so exactly like the other. I was almost invisible.” (Deshpande, TLS:1989142) In other words, she is self-alienated. Jaya’s creative urge and artistic zeal liberate her from her cramped and dubbed domestic and societal roles. It releases her from emotional turmoil. At length she resolves to break that long silence by putting down on paper all that she had suppressed in her seventeen year’s silence that long silence which had reduced herself to fragments:

I am not afraid any more. The panic has gone. I am Mohan’s wife, I had thought, and cut off the bits of me that had refused to be Mohan’s wife. Now I know that kind of fragmentation is not possible. The child, hands in pocket, has been with me through the years. She is with me still. (Deshpande, TLS:1989:191)

Through the image of a woman crawling into a hole, Deshpande describes the woeful plight of Jaya, unprotected and unshelled. Jaya says:

Distance from real life. Scared of writing. Scared of failing. Oh God, I had thought, I cannot take any more. Even a warm has hole it can crawl into. I had mine – as Mohan’s wife, as Rahul’s and Rati’s mother. (Deshpande, TLS:1989148)

Towards the end of the novel Jaya consciously acknowledges her writing as a kind of fiction and quotes Defoe’s description of fiction as a kind of lying. Hence she decides to plug that hole as said earlier by
speaking and listening and erasing the silence between her and Mohan. It is this removing of the silence that symbolizes the assertion and her feminine voice, a voice with hope and promise, a voice that articulates her thoughts. The novel doesn’t depict Jaya’s life as a totally dismal and hopeless struggle. It suggests hope and change for the better:

We don’t change overnight. It’s possible that we may not change even over long periods of time. But we can always hope. Without that, life would be impossible. (Deshpande, TLS:1989193)

Such an ending, suggests that traumatic neurosis can cause effect that are sober and harmonical for a peaceful living.

Conclusion:

All the three characters – Sita, Sarojini, and Jaya are pushed into neurotic state because of situations which are negative and harmful to the psychic requirement of these characters. But they have to compromise and the very act of compromise make them sober and polite. Sita’s psyche is hurt because of persistent neglect first by her father, second by her husband and lastly by her in-laws. She attempts to retrieve her lost image by activities which are unnatural, unsocial and even unwanted. Lastly, when she finds that she has totally failed in glorification of her image through these activities she is calmed down. She prefers to reconcile with her husband and comes back at his call to lead a sober and familial life. Sarojini in A Silence of Desire feels rootless and neglected.
She tries to bring back her lost self by going to swami because the swami tends to glorify the self of Sarojini through his philosophical teachings. Finally, her incapability to stand against the current of the society makes her reconciles with her husband. She begins to nurture her ailing husband which shows that she has become sober and polite at the end. In *That Long Silence!* Jaya due to lot of social and familial upheavals becomes neurotic but finally when she finds that her neurotic state is incompatible with her living in family she compromises and reconciles with her husband to live sober and normal life.
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