Chapter V

CONCLUSION
Conclusion:-

During later half of the twentieth century women writers in India who wrote in English, gradually began to realize that their secondary positions in society have been ascribed to them by the social and cultural norms hitherto prevalent in the society. Therefore they chose to explore the psychic status of female mind, which renders them vulnerable to the pressure of social and cultural milieus. At times they even prefer to suggest remedies to the problems regarding their roles and status that have become endemic to the female species particularly in India. What these female writers have planned, it appears, is that they want a total transformation of the role models. Several critics in India have attempted to study the works of these female writers in the light of aforesaid view of transformation of role models. Various critics have studied this sense of...
transformation from the point of view of neurosis. So far as the study of neurosis and application of neurotic theories to one’s character is concerned, the name of Mr. M. Rajeshwar deserves special mention here. It was Mr. Rajeshwar who discovered the neurotic phenomenon in the temperamental dispositions of female characters as created by the Indian female novelists who wrote in English. In this respect Professor M.K. Bhatnagar’s remark on Anita Desai’s fiction would be worth quoting here:

Anita Desai’s fictional achievement has been subjected to close critical scrutiny by a number of critics. O.J. Thomas terms her vision of human possibilities and potential as ‘a grain of sand in an Oyster’. M. Mani. Meitei presents a micro-study of Where Shall We Go this Summer? from a scholarly psychoanalytic perspective. Q. F. Inamdar takes up her first novel Cry, the Peacock to analyze her sending of neurosis. S.P. Swain finds the novelist’s fictional universe peopled by uprooted, alienated beings. M. Rajeshwar casts his net even wider and discovers the neurotic phenomenon having been taken up in diverse artistic ways in most of the novels of Indian English Women Writers. S.P. Swain isolates Clear Light of Day as a novel for a detailed study of the alienated self therein. The good old world of R. K. Narayan has been invoked by Partick Swinden with special focus on the role of gods, demons and other kindred spirits. M. Rajeshwar turns to a rather disquieting novel by Kamala Markandaya, A Silence of Desire to study the manner wherein unconscious desires and their fulfilment have been dealt with in the work. Besides, two feminist studies have been attempted of Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things by Bimaljit Saini and of Shobha De’s
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Socialite Evenings by S.P. Swain. Another novelist taken up for critical examination is Rama Mehta by A.G. Khan, who contends that the novel Inside the Haveli presents a slow and silent but nevertheless all-embarassing and total transformation of being. (Bhatnagar, 1999:2)

The study of neurosis paves way for probing into the inner crises that the characters suffer from. Precisely speaking, the study of inner crises cannot be completed without exploring neurotic dispositions of the characters. There are host of writers who put themselves to the delineation of inner crises of their characters. The women novelists in India writing in English, particularly of the second generation, indulge in exploration of the psyche of their characters. Dr. Sashipal has rightly observed:

The delineation of inner crisis has been dealt with by American novelist Herman Melville, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and Saul Bellow. This theme has been touched upon by Indian novelists in English also such as Mulk Raj Anand and Kamla Markandeya. But it has been extensively dealt with by Nayantara Sahgal, Arun Joshi and Anita Desai. In Desai’s novels most protagonists are exiled from the world, from society, from families, from parents and even from their own selves. Almost every Indian-English novelist, particularly those who have been to Europe and America and have been exposed to foreign cultures, has dealt with the theme of exile either on surface level or mental level. To name a few Raja Rao in the Serpent and the Rope, Kamla Markandeya in Nectar in a Sieve, Some Inner Fury and Possession, Bhavani Bhattacharya in A Dream in Hawaii, Manohar Malgonkar in

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The theme of exile is exploited by the authors gradually prompted them to study the neurotic minds of the characters which may be considered as a precedent of exile. Neurosis owes its origin to the psycho-analytical theories developed during 19th century especially by Sigmund Freud. Freud viewed neurosis to be an inconvenience of biological origin. To understand neurosis it thus becomes imperative to consider in some detail Freud’s theory of personality. *Id*. ego and *super-ego* arc 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 expiations” (Freud, 1973:106). Operating by the “pleasure principle” (Freud, 1973:106) 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” (Freud, 1973:97) 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” (Freud, 1973:106). By exercising the “function or reality testing” (Freud, 1973:106) it regulates the satisfaction of instinct so that the organism is not harmed. The mode of its operation...
is termed “secondary process” (Freud, 1973:107) (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”, (Freud, 1973:98). Super-ego constantly strives to block the gratification of instinctual urges setting high priority on “the higher side of human life” (Freud, 1973:98). 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 and insecurity as a result of frustration. 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. All defense mechanisms are unrealistic but they relieve anxiety all the same. If the individual has to put up with an excess amount of repression the defense mechanisms fail and the situation will be ripe for the onset on neurosis, Neurotic symptoms provide a substitute satisfaction for the unconsciously held repression. Interestingly enough a neurotic is often unaware of his obsessional acts but still he cannot help it.
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, *id* takes over and the contact with reality is snapped. The resulting pathological condition is termed “psychosis” (Freud, 1973:99) A systematically constructed delusional reality is characteristic of all psychoses. In his later life Freud became more and more sociological oriented. He began to treat cultural, religious and philosophical questions from the psychoanalytic standpoint. Freud had highly qualified belief in the essential good nature of human beings. 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, therefore, perpetually on the look-out for pleasure and long for the absence of misery. The purpose of life is decided by the “programme of the pleasure principle” (Freud, 1964:163). But all the “regulations of the universe” (Freud, 1964:163) embodied by civilization “run counter to it” (Freud, 1964:164). 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. Freud wonders “why the regulations made by ourselves should not... be a protection and benefit for every one
of us” (Freud, 1964:274). He holds civilization, as it obtains today, responsible for this unhappy state of affairs. 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 projecting this aggression and destroying the self. A consideration of the above basic postulates of Freud vis-a-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.

The “discontents” (Freud, 1964:160) 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” (Freud, 1973:160) are termed by Karen Horney, a non-Freudian of non-libido school, as “basic anxiety” (Horney, 1945:41). She describes basic anxiety as “a feeling a child has of being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world” (Horney, 1945: 45) 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" (Fromm, 1964:65) for a very long time. 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,” (Maslow, 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* (1951), 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.

It follows from the above discussion that psychoanalytic theorists of different persuasions from Freud onwards have given a 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. 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 writer’s experience by giving it a solid existence. From the days of Aristotle onwards, character as an object of critical attention has undergone various changes. But it is psychoanalysis which has shed a flood of new light on characters that have eluded explanation and remained literary puzzles for ages. Tools of conventional criticism fell far too short of unraveling the mysterious attraction attached to several literary characters. 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 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” (House, 1976:13) too are viewed in perspective. The importance of religion in shaping the conscious of an individual has been emphasized by the critics. Psychoanalytic thinkers from Freud onwards have not only viewed religion cynically but dubbed...
it as in instrument of oppression. Freud thinks religion to be “patently infantile, so foreign to reality” (Freud, 1973:107). He therefore interprets it as a collective childhood neurosis of mankind. Fromm puts it the other way round: “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” (Fromm, 1941: 103).

The theory of psychoanalysis has influenced thinkers all around the globe.

In India it was reinterpreted by Sudhir Kakar. He discussed 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 ‘Chita’ 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. There are three types of ‘guna’s – sutta’, ‘rajas’ and ‘carnal and when ‘rajas’ becomes the dominant drives the individual has to control it otherwise he becomes guilty of practicing “adharma” (Kakar, 198:10).

There is a great difference in the concept of Ego of the Indians and 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 inefficiently idealized in Indians. Sudhir Kakar is of the views that *super-ego* in Indians is regulated by “communal conscience” (Kakar, 1981: 6). 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 failure. They never mind postponing things without ranch 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. But there are some negative traits among Indians. Indians lack integrity and honesty. They disapprove sincerity and direct statement of facts. Under the influence of joint family atmosphere and the ‘jati’ bonds, they regard corruption, nepotism and dishonesty as near abstract concepts, Dignity of labour 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:

> a combination of the tragic and the romantic. Man is still baffled by fate's vagaries and tragedy is still the warp and woof of life. But instead of

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ironic acceptance, the yogic vision offers of romantic guest. The new journey is a search and the seeker, if he withstands all the perils of the dead, will be rewarded by an exaltation beyond normal human experience. (Kaka, 1981: 6)

Other psychological thinkers who have contributed in a very significant manner, to study of psychoanalysis in India arc Erik Erikson and Erich Fromm. Erich Fromm affirms that even the most beautiful and the ugliest inclinations of men are not a port of his biologically fixed nature, “but result from the social process which creates man” (Fromm, 1941:12). Man's self-consciousness enables him to contemplate himself as a whole and his interaction with other members of society enables him to,

bring himself within his own 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. (Fromm, 1941:13)

It follows then that the basic human nature is common to the entire species of man, only its expression and satisfaction varies according to cultures. His essential inner nature is both weak and strong It is weak in the sense it can be easily suppressed or masked. It is strong as it cannot be fully destroyed. Whether weak or strong, it strives for self realization. Thus, in the present Research Project an humble and sincere attempt has been made to understand various theories of psychoanalysis and their bearings on the neurotic phenomena.
Chapter one of the thesis is *Introduction*. It begins with the brief introduction and background of the study. It takes note of the *Hypothesis* wherein neurosis is defined as deviation from normal pattern of human behaviour. The Hypothesis speaks of three possibilities to which a neurotic can be disposed to. The first possibility is neurotic clashes with some situation to which his constitutional inabilities are unable to adjust to. In the second possibility a neurotic arrives at a compromise solution of the problem and in the third possibility the neurotic begins to live in the realm of fantasy and develops an idealized image of the self. In this section a detail investigation has been done to trace the origin and growth of psychoanalytical perspective of the study in India. The word ‘neurosis’ has been defined as deviation from normal pattern of behavior. The contributions of Karen Horney, Erich Fromm and Maslow to the neurosis also have been studied. Karen Horney has made pioneering contribution to study of neurosis and psychosis. She thinks neurotic pride is based on imagined attributes like self-hate and feeling of guilt. Maslow terms neurosis as a “deficiency disease” (Maslow, 1968:33). Freud contribution to a study of neurosis has been studied intensively. Freud believes that “Neurotic problems are caused by unconscious conflicts left over from early childhood” (Freud, 1973:109). Both Horney and Maslow agree that “most neurosis involved, along with other complex determinants, ungratified wishes for safety for belongingness and identification for
close relationship and for respect and prestige” (Maslow, 1968: 21). In *The Neurotic personality of our Time* (1951) Karen Horney makes it clear that childhood experiences determine conditions for neuroses but they cannot be considered the only cause of later troubles. Later, this particular system develops under the influence of external factors, such as familial atmosphere, social and cultural exigencies. Further the growth of Indian novels in English has been broadly studied and the neurotic women characters which have been delineated in the works of all female authors undertaken in the study have been distinctly analysed.

The study has four more chapters. Chapter Two deals with Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and Bharati Mukherjee's *Wife*. A group of characters has been dealt with in this chapter who move from neurosis to psychosis. Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* is hypersensitive. She finds it hard to live happily with Gautama, her husband Gautama is several years senior to her. He is a realist. Maya lives in illusion. Her suppressed self does not get glorified; as a result she is driven into a desperate situation where her sense of reality is completely lost. She kills Gautama who personifies insensitivity and all is detrimental to her life favourable to her unspiritual forces. A critic like R.S. Sharma is of the opinion that the dislike on the part of Maya for Gautama is because of inadequate transference of her love from father to Gautama. She fails to regain balance of mind; it is because of this imbalance and the neurotic state of
mind that she kills her husband Gautama and later on commits suicide. Like Maya. Dimple 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. She becomes as much frustrated that she wanted to destroy the child in her womb. She thought nobody had consulted her before depositing this child in her womb. Her dislike of Amit is reflected in her dislike of the baby in her womb. Another reason for disliking the child is that her pregnancy would prove a hindrance to her much sought after freedom. Like Maya of *Cry, the Peacock*, Dimple protests against the natural process of pregnancy and delivery. She betrays her husband and seduces Milt. She, finally, kills Amit out of frustration and to fulfill her fantastic desires.

The *Chapter Three* 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 women separated from her husband Gulzarilal for well over a decade. Ironically, their marriage has been by choice. Sarla Devi does
not simply fit into Gulzarilal's scheme of things. He lays over-emphasis on wealth and obedience. Sarla Devi bears him a son, Vishnu. Thus, Sarla Devi follows an opposite neurotic course. Kusum, her rival, proves more tactful and clever in exercising an influence upon Gulzarilal and the members of his family. On being compelled to silently suffer the strain of life, Sarla Devi does not bite upon their hearts but defies the social injunctions only to become compulsive idealist. Whereas Simrit, the protagonist of Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow* has been married for long to a rich industrialist, Som, who likes a hearty meal and healthy sexual life. He is constantly after material wealth and a sensual wife. Simrit, because of her pretended intellectuality has never understood the real needs of a man, the artificial values she wears around her cannot withstand the penetrating force of her husband. In Som's presence, she fails to find a world whose texture is kindly and goes seeking it outside marriage. The consequent disastrous divorce settlement provides a fresh occasion for her to re-examine her place in society and 'find' herself in the process. Thus both, Sarla Devi and Simrit, follow an opposite neurotic course. When they find that they cannot cope up with the situation they find out unique solutions to their problems. Sarla Devi becomes an idealist and Simrit decides to stay with Raj.

The *Chapter Four* examines the sobering effect of neurosis on the other group of characters viz. Sita of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*
Sarojini of *A Silence of Desire* and Jaya of *That Long Silence*, Sita is greatly disillusioned with life. Her marriage to a Bombay industrialist is not a success in spite of children and financial security. As a child she happened to live a life close to nature on an Island where her father wielded great power. The incompatibility of the down-to-earth life of Bombay and her repressed childhood wishes centering on her father play havoc with her sensitivity. During the fifth pregnancy, unconscious urge leads her to the island where she seeks to live her childhood all over again. Her pathological desire to keep the child unborn becomes the single dominant motif in the novel. It is indicative of her seeking unrealistic solutions to her problems. At the end, she succeeds in mastering the present in terms of the past and returns to Raman. 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 she felt totally alienated and alone. Jaya considers her married life and her living with her husband as, “a pair of bullocks yoked together,” (Deshpande, *TLS*:1989:127). Jaya feels lonely, she says, “We were two persons. A man A woman” (Deshpande, *TLS*:1989:43). The image of the pair of bullocks yoked together suggests that the bullocks 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 is considered as change of her identity. The change of identity leads to suppression of her ego. But since she could not revolt openly against the set norms of the society she prefers to remain quite and calm which has been termed as the sobering effect of neurosis.

Thus, all the three characters – Sita, Sarajoni and Jaya are sent into the state of neurosis because of situations and circumstances which have been adverse and negative ever since they were born. Initially they desired to rebel against the social set up in order to protect and glorify their egos. Soon they found that it is no longer useful to protest and rebel against the currents of the society, they enter into a compromise with situation and circumstances which may be termed as the sobering effects.
of neurosis. And this aspect has been thoroughly investigated and analysed in Chapter Four of the thesis.

Finally, it may be summed up that the present work does, no doubt, justifiably analyse the origin and impact of neurosis on major woman characters very thoroughly and minutely. The findings of the thesis may prove of tremendous help to the researchers in future who desire to study and analyses several characters particularly women in the light of theories of neurosis. In the modern days when woman’s position in the society has become a matter of wider study and debate, only the study of this kind may provide fresh guidelines to the study with the help of which new policies can be framed to make the living in the society blissful and rapturous.
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