The Indian women novelists of the second generation have shown awareness to the changed psychological realities of life in the post-independence era. The women novelists, who have aired the secret wishes of the vast majority of Indian women, are Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukharjee and Shashi Deshpande. Thus, the present study has identified seven novels of Indian writing in English featuring neurotic women characters and attempts a psychological analysis of these characters. The psychological thinkers who have contributed in a very significant manner to the study of psychoanalysis in India are Erik Erikson, Erich Fromm and even Sudhir Kakar who were prompted to evolve their theories after those of Sigmund Freud, Karen Horney and Abraham Maslow.

Neurosis may be defined as deviation from normal human behaviour. In his explanation of neurosis Jung utilizes the concept of psychological equilibrium. Neurosis arises out of a clash between an individual attempt to adjust to some situation and his constitutionalabilities to meet the challenges. In most of such cases, a neurotic arrives at a compromise situation of the problems. In some cases neurotics consider themselves rejected and neglected when their qualities are not recognised by others. Under such circumstances, the neurotics begin to live in the realm of fantasy. They develop an idealized image of the self...
and thus their neurotic pride is satisfied. The deviation from normal pattern of behaviour is termed as neurosis. A neurotic is characterized by a rigidity of personality, lack of flexibility in meeting difficult situation and discrepancy between actual achievement and the potentiality for achievement. Neurosis degenerates into psychosis when mental illness becomes most serious. The fundamental difference between the neurosis and the psychosis lies in the fact that the neurotic person has fundamentally maintained his adaption to reality. In psychosis the situation is changed, the person fails to adopt himself to reality. The forerunner of psychosis is neurosis.

There are social values and norms which are meant to regulate the behaviour of person. But sometimes they prove detrimental to healthy growth and survival of some of the individuals because the values and ethos imperceptibly enter the unconscious of the individuals and there ensues a sort of psychic conflict, in the individuals. These conflicts sometimes become too pronounced at a particular point of time in the lives of individuals when a part of their psychic apparatus refuses to yield to repression. In the resultant neurotic struggle some individuals arrive at a compromise solution for their problem.

The major protagonists in the representative works of these novelists as discussed in the present thesis find the social values and norms detrimental to their healthy growth and survival. The values and
ethos imperceptibly enter the unconscious of the characters in these novels and from there they regulate their behaviour. The characters grapple with the psychic conflicts of personal origin. These conflicts and traumas become too pronounced at a particular point of time in their lives when a part of their psychic apparatus refuses to submit to repression. In the resultant neurotic struggle against several cathexis they manifestly display three distinct tendencies: some move from neurosis to psychosis, others arrive at a compromise solution for their problems and yet another group sets out to become compulsive idealists because they find the realities of life too harsh or repulsive to put up with.

Maya in Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock* and Dimple in Mukharjee’s *Wife* are the characters who move from neurosis to psychosis. The neurotic character of Maya owes its genesis to the situations and circumstances in which she is brought up. She is pampered from her childhood by her father so much that she is incapable of leading an independent existence. Maya deviates from normal pattern of behaviour because she fails to understand reality. Her character can be contrasted with that of Dimple in *wife*. In case of Dimple, it is withdrawal of love by her father that makes Dimple suffer in order to create her own idealized self in the society. Maya expects some emotional and physical satisfaction in married life but both of them are denied to her, one by Gautama’s cold intellectuality and the other by his age. Maya’s longing for the sensuous enjoyment of
life is dampened by tenets of the Gita philosophy of non-attachment. The death of Toto is a spiritual catastrophe in Maya's life. Maya feels miserable and isolated as she fails to receive Gautama's sympathy and understanding. Maya seeks her redemption in the killing of Gautama which turns her life into a tragedy. The neurosis degenerates into psychosis. Gautama is killed in a cold-blooded manner by Maya.

In Mukherjee's *Wife* Dimple's deviation from normal pattern of behaviour originates from her feeling of disapproval of being called Nandini by her in-laws. Her disliking for name and house signified the abnormality of her psyche. Dimple Dasgupta, the chief protagonist of *Wife* becomes neurotic because there is existed a wide gulf between desire and fulfillment. If anyone's psychological needs are not fulfilled then he or she tends to abandon his real self. Dimple wanted to destroy everything that would ruin her happiness. Carrying the child in the womb might spoil her prospects of going abroad. The baby in her womb is disliked by her for two obvious reasons; one is that her dislike of Amit, the second is that her pregnancy would prove a hindrance to her much sought after freedom achieved through economic independence. In a stunningly calm and cool manner she takes out the knife from the kitchen drawer and dives it down on a spot near his hairline repeatedly hitting at the same place seven times. Thus, she punishes her inattentive husband.
for his lapses and unceremoniously ends up her disharmonious marital life.

Jhabvala has portrayed the psychology of Sarla Devi so aptly and minutely that her being an Indian is strongly attested. Sarla Devi was legally wedded to Gulzarilal and was the mother of Vishnu. She could not adjust herself with the life-style of Gulzarilal, her husband and hence she was alienated from him. Unlike Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* and Dimple in *Wife*, Sarla Devi has not formed an ideal notion of her life with her husband. Excessive attachment to any idealism, at the cost of the normal living pattern, certainly, amounts to neurosis in case of Sarla Devi. When Sarla Devi finds that she is not able to control her son, she feels hurt. Her pride is hurt. A normal mother would never do so. The fact is that whenever her ideologies are rejected, her neurotic tendencies are aggravated. She reacts by disowning and condemning all such attempts irrespective of whether the person concerned is a near kin - husband or a son. She reacts by disowning and condemning all such attempts irrespective of whether the person or the figure concerned is a near kin - husband or a son.

In *The Day in Shadow* Simrit finds herself as fish out of water in her husband’s house because her husband is devoid of feeling and emotion, which to her are indispensable for the making of a perfect man. Som, her husband would never pay heed to her even in making ordinary
decisions of everyday life. She is unable to cope with the materialistic and mechanical attitude of her husband. She becomes neurotic because she is suppressed and her imaginary ideals about ideal relationship between husband and wife crumble into pieces. Som, her husband, treats her merely as a sexual object.

Sita of *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, Sarojini of *A Silence Of Desire* and Jaya of *That Long Silence!* All the characters discussed in this thesis 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. 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 strongly necessary for the healthy growth of a child. Maya was over-loved; 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.
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. 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. 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.

Jaya of That Long Silence seeks shelters in neurosis because she has developed a wrong perspective towards the realities around her. She also 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 woman with certain willingness to compromise with life’s problems. 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. 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 fulfilment 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.

The concluding part of the thesis is designed to provide new vistas of knowledge that may help future researchers along this line of thought.