

CHAPTER II :

**THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF  
'SELF-DISCOVERY'**

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## Chapter II

### II : i : Theory of 'Self-Discovery' :

The compound word 'Self-Discovery' means the realization of self through self knowledge. Sometimes a character studies his personal life, his deeds, achievements, failures with self knowledge and reconstructs them later. In short, it is a personal survey done by him or her. It is a process in which one realizes the potentialities in due course of time and accordingly he tries to live in a changed world discovered by him or her. According to Encarta World English Dictionary :

Self-discovery is the process of learning about one's true Personality and Motives.<sup>1</sup>

It seems through this definition that it is a realistic survey of the character's past life as well as a record of what he has done. In this process, by getting sense of his past deeds, he plans his future motives and goes in that direction. This is a psychological process which takes place in our brain automatically. But this process cannot be completed because after death nobody knows what happens after his or her death. By recalling past memories,

incidents, one can get new clues for future. It is just like Shakespeare's tragic heroes who discover their tragic guilt at the end of tragedy when they looked into their past lives. By looking into past happy life with his wife, Othello discovered the principle that over suspicion is dangerous in life. The life will be a tree without roots if one didn't examine the past.

Third New International Dictionary of English Language defines 'Self-discovery' as the act or process of achieving self knowledge. It means that a character looks before and after and becomes happy for what he has achieved and pains for what he not obtained. Then he changes his past ways and makes choice of new.

According to the New Oxford American Dictionary :

Self-discovery is the process of acquiring  
insight into one's own character<sup>2</sup>

This definition makes it clear that with the help of 'self-discovery', one can examine insight, views in him and leave out unwanted things. This process helps to develop one's personality and to give shape to career by turning to good things.

## II : ii : The Meanings of 'self' :

The word 'self' has different shades of meanings according to different contexts. It explains a person with his whole nature or character. In short it indicates some one's behaviours, traits of nature, loyalty, pretending etc. 'self' is used to tell something about the identity. Another meaning of 'self' is related with dedication, sacrifice etc. He dedicated his whole 'self' on the sports of his daughter, where the speaker says with action to persuade others to know how he is. It is also used as a language of authority used by an officer saying about something.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English defines 'self' as :

'Self' is person's nature, special qualities, personality, one's better or worse things, one's interests or pleasures.<sup>3</sup>

Here 'self' indicates its vast area as a person's nature, his special qualities and better or worse things in his life. It is detailed study of one's character and the factors, good or bad which are responsible for shaping or moulding one's personality. On the

other hand, according to Cassel Concise English Dictionary 'self' is direct or indirect, reflective action as in self-command. Here action is performed independently without external agency as in self acting. When a person says 'leave on myself' it means he is able to do that work. Instead of this, Longman Modern English Dictionary defines 'self' as the same colour throughout or the same kind of material. New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language defines 'self' as :

'self' means a person or thing, with respect to this, his or its individuality or identity; as his religious self.<sup>4</sup>

Here 'self' refers to one's own individuality or his individual identity . When we say, 'he himself a is strong and bold man' it refers to his own personality trait and not of his son's or of anybody. On the other hand when we say 'I myself is religious person' goes to only my religious nature only. Through himself, herself, myself, themselves, it refers directly to temperament of an individual whether he is bold, coward, greedy religious, strong and

so on. In short, the word 'self' has much importance in spoken as well as written language to express the feeling.

## **II : iii : Psychological Uses of 'self' :**

Psychological meaning of 'self' is different from theoretical. According to A Critical Dictionary or Psychoanalysis, 'self' is regarded as an AGENT as being aware of his own identity and his role as subject and agent. When a person tells about himself, his achievements, about his identity, this 'self' takes birth in his brain. It is as some people boast about themselves, but it comes through their brain what to speak about himself and what not where the speaker's mind becomes an agent. If he is a person, he talks about himself considering as if he is man not a woman which he gets from his brain. 'Self' refers to the subject as he experiences himself. Freud, refers 'self' to the ego which cannot be recognized by the self as part of itself. In view of Freud, when we use self as myself, himself, it reflects egoistic nature of that person. It is as the person says that he himself is witness of that event, here we understand speaker's ego which takes place in his brain, so it is a psychological process.

Dictionary of Psychology defines 'self' as :

'Self' is an individual regarded as conscious of his own continuing identity and his relation to the environment.<sup>5</sup>

It makes clear as pointed out in earlier definitions that 'self' is related to individual identity'. When a person tells about himself he is conscious about his disclosing identity who he is. But while he discloses his self, he is tied to an environment around him. Self-psychology is the system of psychology which holds self to be point of reference. In it one's thoughts and feelings are examined with psychological phenomenon. In short, 'self' refers to an individual identity of a person who is conscious mentally of his own identity.

Thus, 'Self' is a frame of reference which gives past referces about one's life achievements. It represents specific mental and physical states in a person, by which others can understand who he was, his past deeds and achievements. The development of the sense of the 'self' is strongly influenced by psychosexual and ego development and by maturation from birth on.



In view of Encyclopaedia of Psychology Vol. III, 'Self' is an individual as subject to his own contemplation or action. It means one meditates alone in his mind about himself. He imagines, paints fantasies about himself and forgets the world around him. After contemplation, he knows his existence in this world because in this situation, he contemplates about only himself. Hegel, the well-known psychologist believes that consciousness first finds itself in self-consciousness, the notion of mind.

William James makes distinction between self as 'Known' and self as 'knower'. The self as known or me means an ego which is guided by only practical experiences and self as knower or 'I' means the pure ego. The person thinks about his awareness of himself, his personal existence and the total self of himself. In this respect, William James says :

Whatever I may be thinking of I am always at the same time more or less aware of my personal experience. At the same time it is I who am aware; so that the total self of me, beings it were duplex, partly known and partly

knower, partly object and partly subject must have two aspects discriminated in it, of which for shortness we may call one the 'Me' and the other the 'I'.<sup>6</sup>

With above views of William James, it gets clear that James has made distinction between self as known and self as knower while thinking anything, he is aware of himself and his personal existence. It studies the factors responsible for moulding one's character and factors which are responsible for making necessary changes in his or her life.

## **II : iv : Meanings of 'Discovery' :**

The adjective 'discovery' is derived from the word 'discover' which means to find out something which is already in existence. It is also to make known or disclose something secret, hidden and unknown. It also means to obtain for the first time sight of knowledge of something. The New Oxford American Dictionary defines 'discovery' as follows :

'Discovery' means to find some-thing or someone expectedly or in cause of search.<sup>7</sup>

It becomes clear that 'discovery' means to become aware of facts, situation, truth etc. 'Discover' means to perceive the attraction of an activity, subject for the first time. 'Discovery' also means to disclose an identity of someone. In view of The Oxford Reference Dictionary, 'discover' means to acquire knowledge of sight by efforts, to be the first to this in a particular case. The first thing is to 'discover' means to acquire knowledge which has need of heartily efforts and hard labour. Another thing is the knowledge acquired with first sight is delight of fruitful success by hard labour. Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines 'discovery' as :

'Discover' means to find or learn about place,  
fact for the first time.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, It can be said that 'discover' means to make known from the unknown. In short, the word 'discover' suggests something to find out, to come across, to learn the unknown facts or knowledge at the first time.

## **II : v : Meanings of 'Fantasy'**

The novelistic device of 'Fantasy' has gained importance in modern literature. George Orwell, the well-known novelist in the

20<sup>th</sup> century became known world wide by the use of novelistic technique of fantasy in his novel, Animal Farm. In fact, 'fantasy' is a free play of imagination, unrealistic yet it is useful to present realistic picture of society. Through this device, the world painted by novelist in his novel seems to be related with children, amusing, but it is useful to teach morality. George Orwell's world of animals in Animal Farm is amusing, but metaphorically it throws light on the communism in Russia. In the sense of this respect, Kathryn Hume quotes :

By 'Fantasy' I mean the deliberate departure from the limits of what is usually accepted as real and normal. <sup>9</sup>

Through above definition, it seems that 'fantasy' is a departure from the realistic world outwardly but inwardly it is stuffed with realistic world. Fantasy is treated with the mixture of realism, wittiness, mythology, super-natural elements etc.'. The term 'fantasy' involves a psychological process, a part of imagination which takes shape in the brain of that writer. It is a fanciful mental image, an activity of imagining things on which the

person dwells at length. The Oxford Reference Dictionary defines 'fantasy' as follows :

Fantasy is an imagination, especially when extravagant, a mental image, a day-dream. <sup>10</sup>

The Indian journal of English Studies defines 'fantasy' as :

'Fantasy' is generally regarded as a mode of non-realistic narration involving forms of fiction that are marked by their strong historical temper. <sup>11</sup>

It can be summed up that fantasy bears non-realistic narration which is closer to fiction. In view of Encyclopaedia of Psychology, the term 'fantasy' is derived, from the Greek word 'Phantasia' which means making visible or capacity for imaging. It is common experience that the fantasies are normally seen by night more than by day. Newton employs the power of 'fantasy' to see colours in dreams. The term 'fantasy' refers to imagining and hallucination.

## **II : vi : Freudian Theory of 'Fantasy'**

According to Sigmund Freud, 'Fantasy' is an imaginary and organized scene, episode. It is fulfilling conscious or unconscious

wishes. Fantasies can operate at either a conscious or unconscious level which are tied to repressed infinite desires. The conscious fantasies include day-dreaming and fictions which seem to be connected to unconscious wishes. The term 'fantasy' comes to mean, the person's inner world of unconscious feelings and impulse, the effective source of all human behaviour. It is believed that these fantasies are the unconscious content and begin with infant's life whose fantasies are connected with his need to satisfy unmet needs. His fantasies are elaborated as he grows. From changing reality of fantasies, they distinguish conscious fantasies from unconscious fantasies.

The most common form of fantasy is day-dreaming which has three patterns and each has its own emotional tone. The first pattern is unfocussed mind wandering, the second is marked by guilty and dysphoric effect and third is positive filled with both interest and joy which is marked by happy memories, sheer playfulness with stored images.

## **II : vii : Meanings of 'Fable'**

'Fable' is a novelistic device which has been used by a

number of writers. 'Fable' is a brief tale designed to illustrate a moral lesson. In fact, 'fable' is not realistic where animals and birds are characters yet it teaches morality, good thoughts. It is a weapon for human development. The well-known example of the fable is George Orwell's novel Animal Farm where animals like pigs, cows, bullocks are the characters but Orwell throws light on Russian communism. Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Literary Criticism defines 'fable' as follows :

'Fable' is any brief tale or fictitious narrative especially, when peopled by talking animals or objects' and aimed at teaching a moral lesson.<sup>12</sup>

It seems through above definition that 'fable' is a brief tale in narrative form where personification of animals is found and which aims to teach morality. It is a supernatural story which deals with the elements of myth and legend to show evils in the society where intention is social and moral development. These supernatural, legendary and mythical stories are not based on facts, but fiction to teach morality.

Longman Modern English Dictionary defines 'fable' as follows :

Fable is fanciful epigrammatic story,  
usually illustrating a moral precept or  
ethical observation. <sup>13</sup>

Through various definitions of 'fable' it becomes clear that 'fable' is a fanciful, in narrative form, which teaches morality with ethical observation.

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