CHAPTER VI

SEMIOTICS OF SYMBOLISM

6.0  Semiotics: Meaning
6.1  Psychic
6.2  Situational
6.3  Socio-Cultural
6.4  Emotional
6.5  Vocative
6.6  Referential
6.7  Imagery
6.0 Semiotics: Meaning

Semiotics is the study of signs and sign systems in general. Semiotics is defined in various ways by various scholars. John Locke defines that semiotics is a doctrine of signs, it is the doctrine that could properly be called logic while C.S. Peirce defined as a "quasi-necessary or formal doctrine of signs it is the doctrine of the essential nature and fundamental varieties of possible semiosis." Rolland Barthes has taken it as "a part of linguistics more precisely the part concerned with big meaning-units." Symbol, unit of semiotics, communicates its symbolic meaning coming forward from common meaning. Christian Metz gives another dimension saying that "semiotics is a formalization of the natural sciences while semiology is a formalization of humanities." Following Metz A.J. Greimes explains that "semiotics are sciences and semiologies are humanities, both of them are to be analysed with respect to research procedures which are applied in each of them." G. Mounin describes that "semiotics is a class of nonverbal communication systems, while semiology is a general science of all kinds of sign-system. Umberto Eco notes that "semiotics is a formalized and formalizable system of signs, while semiology is a general theory of communica-
tion phenomenon, i.e. of creating messages on the basis of conventional codes." Thus semiotics comes in the system of symbols. It can be named as a scientific study of symbol-systems. (Rao, 1994 : 284-285)

The Stoic theory of sign, delineated in the 4th and 3rd century BC, could be called, even if there are some important anticipations in Aristotle and the Megarian Logic, the first fully elaborate theory of sign in the Western tradition. And yet it is open to dispute whether it is at all a part or even more the starting point of that tradition which finally led to the modern concept of semiotics as a "general theory of signs, sign processes and sign systems in nature and culture." For it is true, that the Stoic theory of the sign in its proper meaning or its technical sense (semeion) was never designed for such a general purpose. And even more, such an objective would have been hardly conceivable for the Stoics as well as for any other ancient philosophical school. Because that presupposes a concept of sign which is not - at least not as a technical term - to be found in Greek or Latin antiquity, namely a concept that would include both the natural sign of inference (the indexical sign) and the conventional linguistic sign (the symbol) as instances or 'species'. (Meier-OESER, 13)
It was Augustinus at first, who, in the late 4th century, introduced the general notion of sign which later became effective in the western tradition of semiotics and ultimately stimulated or made possible the development of semiotics as a comprehensive science of all kinds of sign in nature and culture. Augustinus has used two notions 'semanion' (the linguistic sign) and 'semeion' (the inferential sign) related to semiotics and further explains them. Thus 'semainon' or the linguistic signs deal with the spoken sentence, e.g. "This man has a wounded heart", (Meier-Oeser, 14) the meaning or proposition expressed by the sentence; and that what happens, i.e. the heart of the man being wounded. 'What is said' or the meaning is incorporeal whereas the other two elements are corporeal. "This fact puts the 'lakton' in an exceptional position within the physicalistic or materialistic ontology advocated by Stoics attempting to describe everything - even things like God soul, wisdom, truth or thought as material bodies." (Ibid)

Now come to the semeion. On hearing the word 'sign', we first think of things like traffic lights, footprints gestures or linguistic expressions. But the Stoic sign is defined as "a proposition which forms the (pre -) antecedent in a valid conditional
(that is a complex proposition of the form "if this, then that") which serves to reveal the consequent." (Meier-Oeerer, 14-15) Sextus empiricus explains this by giving a list of four criteria of a sign: (1) A sign is an axioma, that is a statement or proposition expressed by speech. (2) It functions as the antecedent proposition in a conditional that begins and ends in a true proposition. (3) It is able to reveal the consequent or to convey some information. (4) (A criterion that at first sight must seem strange): the sign is always a present sign for something present that is to say the sign and what is indicated by it must be temporally present against each other. (Ibid., 15)

Now coming to the Peircean theory of signs we find that the word 'semiotics' (originally 'semiotic') actually originated in Greek medicine for diagnosis by means of bodily symptoms and Peirce's definition of semiotics is based on his assumption of the term 'sign', He writes:

"A sign or representation is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody that is creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands

(137)
for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representation." (Peirce, 1931 - 5: 227-228)

Although some other writers use the words 'symbol' and 'sign' interchangeably, suggesting that the 'symbol' functions as a 'sign' by virtue of a convention explicit or implicit between its users. Saussure regarded a 'sign' as a lexical unit which entails a 'signifier' and a 'signified'. It combines a 'signification' (meaning) and a 'significans' (its phonetic manifestation). In certain contexts their may be the expressions 'sign', 'signal', 'marker', and 'emblem' used more or less synonymously. (Critchley, 1975 : 53)

According to Cherry (1957) the form of the information exchange in language is semiotic, relying mainly upon signs or in a few instance upon symbols. (Moerk, 1977 : 102)

There are different types of signs. Pierce has classified the signs on the basis of the way in which meaning and sense are expressed. He singled out three types of signs: iconic, symbolic and index. (Borev, 1981 : 284) :

1. Iconic signs resemble the objects denoted giving an idea of the outline of the object, a concrete sensuous image.
Symbols are related to the object by association. They are artificially constructed signs which carry full-scale, sometimes conceptually loaded information, presenting a whole system of concepts in a generalized way. That category usually includes heraldic symbols (coats of arms) trademarks signs on coins, pointing signs, postage stamps, advertising poster and publishing signs, etc. Representing a high degree of generalization and conceptual expression, the symbol sign play an important role in the birth and evolution of artistic culture.

The index sign is naturally and physically linked to the object and presupposes the presence of the object denoted. Thus, in that system of classification lightning is an index sign of thunder. It would be accurate to say that in this case it is not a sign but an indication, an extra-linguistic sign. (Ibid., 284)

For Peirce a symptom is sub-species of sign, namely, the index of one of his three canonical categories. It is a kind of sign and Peirce gives an example that I would prefer to label a clue: "Such, for instance, is a piece of mould with a bullet-hole in it as sign of a shot; for without the shot there would not have been a hole; but there is a whole there, whether
anybody has the sense to attribute it to a shot or not." The essential point here is that the indexical character of the sign would not be voided if there were no interpretant, but only if its object were removed. An index is that kind of a sign that becomes such by virtue of being really connected with its object "Such is a symptom of disease." All "symptoms of disease", furthermore, "have no utterer", as is also the case with "signs of weather". We have an index, Peirce prescribed in 1885, when there is "a direct dual relation of the sign to its object independent of the mind using the sign ------ Of this nature are all natural signs and physical symptoms." (Copeland, 1984 : 216)

A further detail worth pointing out is that Peirce calls the 'occurrence of a symptom of a disease ---- a general type of a definite character', but "the occurrence in a particular case is a sinsign", that is to say, a token. A somewhat cryptic remark reinforces this : "To a sign which gives reason to think that something is true, I prefer to give the name of a symbol; although the words token and symptom likewise recommend themselves." (Ibid.)

Symptoms, in Peirce's usage, are thus unwitting indexes interpretable by their receivers without the actuality of
any intentional sender. Jakobson likewise includes symptoms within the scope of semiotics, but cautions that "We must consistently take into account the decisive difference between communication which implies a real or alleged addresser and information whose source cannot be viewed an addresser by the interpreter of the indications obtained." (Ibid.)

First conceived in 1916 by Saussure, the semiotics as constituting systems of signification has developed fast, incorporating material and ideas from general information theory and from the experience of mass communication. Nowadays it constitutes an important aspect of the social sciences and has been described as a "second-order language." (Lennberg & Lennberg, 1975:11)

Charles Morr's has dealt with signs in terms of semiotic analysis. He has involved three kinds of analysis. The syntactic aspect of semiosis treats of signs in their relations to other signs. A sign exists by virtue of contrast with at least one other sign. Phonemes and morphemes are syntactic signs considered apart from sememes of the real world. In other way syntactic deals with combinations of signs. The semantic aspect of semiosis treats of signs in their relations to things signified outside of the linguistic or syntactic system. In other
way semantics deals with the signification of signs in all modes of signifying. (Landar, 1966 : 130) And the last aspect, the pragmatic is that portion of semiotic which deals with the origin uses, and effects of signs within the behavior in which they occur. (Dixon, 1956 : 60)

Charles Sanders Peirce has stated that a semiotic system consists of three components: syntactics, the relationships between signs, for example, the relationship among red, yellow and green in a traffic light system; semantics the relationships between signs and the outside world for example red's denoting 'stop', and pragmatics, the relationships between signs and behaviors, for example, the prudent driver's stopping on a red signal. Thus Peirce and Morris have defined the semiotics in the same way. (Lehmann, 1972 : 213)

There is another term akin to 'sign', i.e. signal which, however, differs, in its nature and interpretation. Apart from being used in its general sense of 'sign', signal is time bound according to Potter whereas 'symbol' is timeless. (1960 : 46) Sign may be a signal that carries meaning, consciously loaded information, it is an object related to another object which it denotes. The sign in cultural behaviour plays the same role as the tool in a working operation. The sign like the working
tool has the mediating function. The sign merely replaces the object without altering it. The sign is a sensuously perceived object referring to those who perceive it to another object. The sign does not replace but stands for the signified (the thing denoted). (Borev, 1981: 284-285)

Saussure (1916) views the relation between a sign and its signification arbitrary. This 'arbitrariness' is the basis for different signs for different objects in different languages on the one hand, and different interpretations of the same sign in the same language on the other. Thus, Saussure was insistent that 'meaning' was a relationship between two equally participating characteristics (the objects, ideas, etc.) on the one hand, and the language used to refer to them on the other. (Crystal, 1985: 161)

Semiotics deals with all signs, whether used by man or by other animals. Thus the signaling of bees on their return to their hive is a concern of semiotics. So are the communications of birds. Such communication may be less flexible than that of humans, but it too is used for conveying information. Bees perform dances to report on the presence of nectar, giving the direction and the distance. Birds use their calls to indicate claims over territory, to give warnings, and so on. In

(143)
this way semiotic study has provided a framework for the investigation of all forms of human communication, whether of gestures, the sign language used by the deaf or oral communication. Such patterns of communication also include simple systems like those of traffic lights.

The man-machine relationship became possible simply because of the science of signs, and thus according to Yngve (1967) the most exciting implication of computers to linguistics follows from the fact that both man and computer are symbol manipulators. (Srivastava, 1994 : 156) Semiotics structure is revealed as a stand from which all scientific objects may be viewed.

Linguists, notably Saussure, and philosophers, notably Charles Sanders Peirce, have dealt with human language within the broader scope of semiotics. "Accordingly language must be viewed as a system of arbitrary signs and their signification. Moreover, as Saussure pointed out, the study of language may be assisted by the findings of semiotics, the study of sign systems". (Lehmann, 1972 : 270)

The view of language as a system of signs has determined much of the course of linguistic study over the
past decades, for if entities of language are signs, it is profitable to determine how human beings use signs, whether in speaking or in other forms of communication. Further, if the meaning of signs is determined by relationships, it is essential to determine the various kinds of relationships possible in language. The pursuit of these aims has led to a productive concern with language in all its variety. (Ibid.)

The writer uses different device of expression for eloquence and elegance. One such is semiotics. In Anita Desai's novels, this device is aptly employed to create the artistic effect. In 'Where Shall We Go This Summer?' for example, the Island is the symbol of Sita's lonely life amidst her own family and the society. It concretises Sita's feeling of isolation. And the house Sita comes to live in at Manori, after a gap of twenty years, is evocative of her desertion of normal routine life and objectifies the fear that is harboured in her heart.

Apart from the above mentioned examples, there are certain references in the novels that symbolise psyche, emotion, culture of the characters and Anita Desai's vision focuses on the specific situations. The following are the different examples of semiotics in the novels.
6.1 Psyche

Persisting in unravelling the mystery of the inner life of the characters, Anita Desai shows her perpetual interest in their psychic life. Not able to amalgamate themselves into the society around, her characters undertake an inner voyage for the purpose of discovering their own selves. Anita Desai is seriously concerned with the condition of an individual woman in each of her novels, trying to explore her inner self for realization.

In 'Where Shall We Go This Summer ?', Sita, suffers from intense delusions of her being separate and different from others while leading an ostensibly normal life-living with her husband and mothering her children. Suddenly she finds reality unpalatable and decides to retire to Manori, an island where once her father lived like the legendary Prospero during her childhood. She thinks that in the island she would be able to live under a magic spell:

"She saw that island illusion as a refuge, a protection. It would hold her baby safely unborn, by magic [for she is in her advance stage of pregnancy]. Then there would be
the sea—it would wash the frenzy out of her, drown it. Perhaps the tides would lull the children, too, into smoother, softer beings.
The grove of trees would shade them and protect them.” (P. 101)

In order to psychoanalyze Sita’s mind in particular, some situations are discussed. One such is the eagle-crows fight, which testifies Sita’s conflict with her husband and her struggle for supremacy at a deeper psychological level. The symbolic situation of the eagle-crows fight reveals very subtle personality clash between Sita and Raman. Sita is the eagle and Raman is symbolized by the crows that attack the helpless eagle. "On the ledge that jutted out below their balcony." (P. 38) Sita’s desperate effort to save the eagle from the attack of the crows whose "scimita beaks" pierce the eagle is her fight against the masculine values represented by her husband. She resorts to a kind of penis-envy by summoning the strength of her sons, who supply her with a "long handled brush" and a "toy gun", (P. 39) symbols of mother-son incestuous relationship and also the collusion of the mother with her sons against the father. And the last scene of the fight or aftermath of the fight blood stains, and the feathers sticking
Sita's introverted nature finds a kind of wish fulfillment in the following evocative manner. In her state of perversion she gets pleasure out of the sight of stranger. First the sight of a foreign tourist, who wants to go to Ajanta without knowing which direction he has to go attracts her attention. (Swain, 2000: 36) "She not only thought again and again of that wander's mirage-like appearance and disappearance but spoke too often and too much of him. "He seemed so brave", she blurted out when Raman asked her why she had once more brought up the subject of the hitchhiking foreigner, months later." (P. 52)

To her the foreigner is an example of courage Raman lacks. Another such situation is presented by the sign of a young Muslim woman in the lap of an old man in the Hanging Gardens, an unworldly sight, a perfect work of art. (Swain, 2000: 37)

In this novel, one statement also represents the psyche of the protagonist Sita. Sita, 'pregnant for the fifth time, declares, "I don't want to have the baby." (P. 34) It is indicative of her desire not to commit an act of giving birth
to a baby.

In Desai's other novels the women protagonists are put in urban locations. In, 'Cry, The Peacock', Maya suffers from a type of Oedipus complex, idolizes her father but becomes miserable as her search for a father substitute in her husband does not measure up to her anticipation. Bimla in 'Clear Light of Day' suffers for her pride of being a woman and ultimately reconciles herself to reality. Monisha in 'Voices in the City' encounters parental discord and suffers later the traumatic experience of barrenness. (George, 2000: 161) The protagonist Sarla of 'In Custody' and Sofiya Begum are neglected wives and all the characters Nur, Deven, Sarla and Intiaz Begum suffer isolation. The novel 'Fire on the Mountain' corresponds with the bonfire of emotions that Nanda Kaul is subjected to by the frail looking Raka who sets the mountain on fire. In her last two novels 'Bye-Bye, Blackbird' and 'Baumgartner's Bombay', Sarah and Adit, Hugo and Zolte shift from their original positions of understanding reality through conflict with the environments they are placed in following the psychological processes of alienation and realization. (Ibid., 162)
6.2 *Situational*

In "Where Shall We Go This Summer?" some incidents denote situational symbols. One such is the eagle-crows fight, which testifies to Sita's conflict with her husband and her struggle for supremacy at a deeper psychological level. The symbolic situation of the eagle-crows fight reveals very subtle personality clash between Sita and Raman. One small incident:

"With glee the crows whistled-whee; in ecstasy they waved their wings; Crra-Crra, they laughed and rasped as they whipped it with their blue-bottle wings and tore into it with their scimitar beaks. It rose weakly, tried to crawl into the shelter of the wall's shadow and its wings, leaf-red, scraped the concrete, then its head, gold-beaked, fell to one side". (PP. 38-39)

Another small incident is the sight of strangers. First, the sight of a foreign tourist who wants to go to Ajanta without knowing which direction he has to go attracts her attention much to the annoyance of Raman. To her the
foreigner is an example of courage Raman lacks:

"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. "He seemed so brave", she blurted out when Raman asked her why she had once more brought up the subject of the hitchhiking foreigner, months later. "Brave ? Him ?" Raman was honestly amused. "He was a fool - he didn't even know which side of the road to wait on."

(P. 52)

"Perhaps that was only innocence", Sita faltered, "and it made him seem more brave not knowing anything but going on nevertheless." (P. 52)

Another such situation is presented by the sight of a young Muslim woman in the lap on an old man in the Hanging Garden, an unworldly sight :-

"It was in the Hanging Gardens", she recalled, slowly pacing beside him. "One evening I took the children there. We were
walking about. Near a tall hedge, on a 
bench, I saw a woman stretched out. A very 
young woman, very, very pale and beautiful - 
beautiful," she stammered, speaking faster 
and faster. "Fatally anaemic - or fatally 
tubercular. Pale, you see, so white. Her head 
- this white, ill, beautiful head - lay in the 
lap of an old man." (PP. 145-146)

The symbolic situation of island is:

"The island offered them, to begin with, a lone 
soda-water shop under a clump of toddy palms and a very 
shabby, broken bullock cart in front of it, the bullock bowing 
its head beneath the great wooden yoke. The red paint on its 
horns made the only patch of colour in a scene that seemed 
all the more sallow now that the everhanging sky was 
flowering into a sunset radiance - the piled clouds, with the 
sun setting some where within their hearts, lighted from within 
like lamps in the shape of artificial roses, casting a light of 
fluid gold across the western sky." (P. 20)

In 'Cry, The Peacock', Maya's husband returns from 
office and very efficiently, precisely disposes off the matter:
"I sent it away to be cremated ---- It is all over. Come, won't you pour out my tea ?" As she tries to do so, she spills the tea into the sygar-pot, the tea-strainer topples into a cup, the lemons slip to the floor and there is chaos. Just then the servant announces a visitor and the husband escapes "ordering tea to be sent to the study, forgetting her, forgetting her woes altogether." (P. 6) It is a description of quite a routine situation familiar in every Indian household.

6.3. **Socio-Cultural**

Social situations have served to bring out its amazing diversity and infinite variety in Desai's novels. Man-woman relationship has been influenced and conditioned by the existing intricate social situation. In her novels, Desai has covered a wide gamut of man-woman relationships. Social situation impinges upon the characters in her novels.

In 'Where Shall We Go This Summer ?' Sita is a married woman and has four children, but she feels herself to be a prisoner in a house which offers her nothing but a crust of dull tedium, of hopeless disappointment. Sita's married life has been one of utter failure because her husband was a middling kind of man. Her unhappiness in married life finds
expression in feelings of contempt for the friends and colleagues of her husband, Raman:

"They are nothing - nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex and money matter." (P. 47) Sita's own attitude to married life was warped by the knowledge and experiences in regard to her own parents. Her mother ran away to Benares leaving her husband and children behind and gave no information about herself. And the most shocking experience for Sita have been that though her father had participated in the country's struggle for freedom and though after he had dedicated himself to the service of the common people in Manori, yet he had incestuous desire for his own daughter - Sita's step sister. (Khanna, 1995 : 34)

Sita's condition is the loneliness of a woman, a wife, a mother - a loneliness conditioned by family and society. Her mental disturbances are the direct result of a clash between the hypocritical world. (Dhawan, 1991 : 136) Marital disharmony changed Sita from an ordinary wife and mother into a creature who "lost all feminine, all maternal belief in childbirth, all faith in it and began to fear it as yet one more act of violence and murder in a world that had more of them in it than she could take." (P. 56)
The city of Bombay is a place of violence and destruction where the creative impulse has no chance against the overpowering desire to destroy. The world of crows in this novel is the human world. In the city of alleys and flats there is always much black drama, in this crow theatre "murder, infanticide, incest, theft and robbery, all were much practised by these rough, raucous rasping tatterdemalions." (P. 38)

In 'Cry, The Peacock' Maya's marriage with Gautama was more or less a marriage of convenience. It was a match between two different temperaments with not even a single link in the strain of their physical and mental outlooks to bring them to a close tie. (Dhawan, 1991 : 129) In 'Bye-Bye, Blackbird', Adit is an Indian, but he has married an English girl Sarah because he has settled down in England. Sarah, tries to identify herself with her Indian husband, but the two are not able to go along happily as husband and wife. (Khanna, 1995 : 33) In 'Voices In The City', Monisha and Jiban have married having nothing in common in each other's personality. It is the most pathetic illustration of maladjustment in marriage. Amla puts it very poignantly when she asks "Aunt, why did they marry ?". In 'Fire On The Mountain' and 'Clear Light of Day', marital disharmony disintegrates family life.

(155)
Nanda Kaul, in 'Fire On The Mountain' undergoes consistent mental torturing and bitter experiences of a married life. (Dhawan, 1991 : 139)

6.4. **Emotional**

Anita Desai as a woman writer is concerned more with thought, emotion and sensation than with the action, experience and achievement. She has the ability to evolve the changing moods, the ebb and flow of emotion, the flux of thought and mysterious working of the human mind, perceiving and responding to reality. Human mind is so strange and unique that it is hard to reckon what makes the mind happy or sad. Sita, the main character of 'Where Shall We Go This Summer ?' is such a unique case. She is blessed with four children and is proud of them. But her fifth pregnancy and the thought of parturition which follows automatically makes her panicky. She is reluctant to bring forth her new, fragile being into this harsh world, and runs away to a small island which has childhood associations for her 'in order to achieve the miracle of not giving birth?'. (P. 31) It is unnatural - she has conceived the baby but wants to avoid parturition. At the same time she does not want to abort her child either. Her husband got puzzled at her assertion. But his re-
mark "you should have thought of it earlier ----- It's too late now ---- one can't have abortion at this stage" (P. 34) made Sita furious when she grasped his saying.

In 'Cry, The Peacock', Maya realizes, "Already we belonged to separated worlds, and his seemed the earth that I loved so, scented with Jasmine, coloured with liquor, resounding with poetry and warmed by amiability. It was mine that was hell. Torture, guilt, dread, imprisonment these were the four walls of my private hell, one that no one could survive in long. Death was certain" (P. 102)

6.5 Vocative

It is used to address a person or thing.

For example, in 'Where Shall We Go This Summer ?'; different characters address each other in different ways:

(a) "My memsahib !" reared Moses suddenly, putting an end to the titters scampering around the table. "The memsahib is coming." (P. 14)

(b) "And Sahib ?" enquired Moses, peering again into the interior of the car as though it might, perhaps, hold another occupant who might prove more promising, more satisfying. (P. 14)
(c) "For a lungi, you said", said Joseph, the careless sceptic. (P. 9)

(d) The eagle tried to crawl into the shelter of the wall's shadow and its "leaf red" wings scraped the concrete and then its "gold-beaked" head fell to one side. (P. 39)

In, 'Cry, The Peacock', Maya is a 'wayward and high-strung child.' Substantially well-off, she has been living a princess-like, sheltered existence enjoying a "sumptuous fare of the fantasies of the Arabian Nights, the glories and bravado of Indian mythology and long and astounding tales of princes and regal queen, jackals and tigers and ................. of the lovely English and Irish fairy tales as well" (P. 43)

6.6 Referential

'Referencing' is the act of mentioning or indicating somebody or something. It is a thing which we say or write that mentions somebody and something else.

For example, in 'Where Shall We Go This Summer?', the urban residence and its surroundings with its characters represent for Sita the prose of life while Manori island stands as a symbol of spiritual peace and a manifestation of individualism for her. A wounded eagle represents Sita and crows
represent the callous society around her. In, 'Cry, The Peacock', peacock refers to Maya. The cry of Peacock is agony of Maya. Maya sees the dance of peacock as the symbol of love and death. (Dhawan, 1989: 104-106)

6.7 Imagery

Imagery means the language that produces pictures in the minds of people reading or listening.

Images are more distinctive feature of Desai's novels. Their pertinent use helps the novelist 'establish the subjective reality' of her protagonists' being and convey "the peculiar intensity of the feminine sensibility." (Pathak, 1990: 102) All the recurrent images are from certain well-defined areas. We come across animal imagery frequently. Wild animals, according to Freud, represent "human beings whose senses are excited, and hence, evil impulses." (Ibid.) For example, Sita's husband, in 'Where Shall We Go This Summer?' has a "chameleon existence". The world populated by "disturbed agitated animals" (P. 26) is not conductive for sensitive persons like Sita. These images suggest the dominance of men, who "monster-like" stride the scene. (Pathak, 1990: 102) Gautam, in 'Cry, The Peacock' for example, is compared to a horse which

(159)
has not "noticed anything" and to a hungry wolf. His mother is said to behave like "some busy rhinoceros charging through the forest." In 'Voices In The City', Dharma the painter, despite his "measured talk and serene appearance", is in no way different from "a worm, exactly such a glaucous, fleshy worm." (Ibid)

Some of the images suggest the dangerous condition of women in our society. Sita in 'Where Shall We Go this Summer?' has been variously thought of as an insect, a moth, a lamb, a white bird and a jellyfish. In 'Cry, The Peacock', Maya's friend reminds her of an 'avid rabbit' and "a timid, crouching mouse". Monisha, in 'Voices In The City, has been described as "a wild bird flushed from some, unexplored depth of jungle" and in 'Fire On The Mountain', Illa Das, Nanda Kaul's friend, is "like an old animal that has been made to run before the hounds." (Ibid.)

Desai has also used the images of traps, bonds and cages. In, 'Where Shall We Go This Summer?', Sita is haunted by a sense of unreality. At the end she feels tired like a player who is left with the responsibility of 'clearing the stage, and picking the costumes in equal parts saddened and relieved.' She also comes to realise that "Her life on the island had been
very much of an episode on a stage" and that "she had actually been playing the part of an actress in a theatrical performance and was now to return to a life of retirement off-stage." (PP. 152-53) In 'Voices In The City', Monisha is described as a pinned butterfly. Her destiny is to reside inside "the tired balconies" which have "metal railings", intricately criss-crossed." (P. 113) Raka, in 'Fire On The Mountain', finds her grandmother "a cage of white bones" which is "cracking apart". In, 'Cry, The Peacock', Maya also feels as if she were shut inside "long black bars" and "were performing a scene from a play in the confines of a cage." (Desai, 1980)

Thus the language of Desai's characters gives us a peep into the dilemma of these pathetic creatures. The use of Desai's images has lent authenticity to her fictional art, and is a meaningful long step in the realm of feminine discourse.

References
3. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


10. Ibid., P. 102.

11. Ibid., P. 43.


13. Ibid., P. 38.


15. Ibid.


17. Ibid., P. 34.

18. Ibid.


20. Ibid., P. 52.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., PP. 145-46.

23. Ibid., P. 20.
24. Ibid., P. 47.
25. Ibid., P. 56.
26. Ibid., P. 38.
27. Ibid., P. 31.
28. Ibid., PP. 8-9.
29. Ibid., P. 14.
30. Ibid., P. 9.
31. Ibid., P. 41.
32. Ibid., PP. 152-53.
35. Ibid., P. 162.
38. Ibid., P. 33.
39. Landar, Herbert. (1966), Language and Culture, Oxford University, New York, P. 130.
41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., P. 213.


45. Ibid., P. 13.

46. Ibid., P. 14.


48. Ibid., P. 47.


51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.


58. Ibid., P. 136.

59. Ibid., P. 139.

60. Ibid. PP. 104-106.