3.1 Introduction

For a considerably long period, poetry had undoubtedly enjoyed the privilege of inviting linguistic enquiry, and prose had been thought completely outside the purview of any such exploration. Usually, we are less conscious of a novelist's use of language than that of a poet's. The main concern of the novelist is thought to be 'the life' and its various aspects. A novel has to be designed in the form of a plot, characters and various situations as far as they reflect life. David Lodge explains:

...life, not language, is the novelist's medium... that his language is merely a transparent window through which the reader regards this life - the writer's responsibility being merely to keep the glass clean.¹

Moreover, the novel being a longer stretch than a poem, and the language being as 'most fluid of the mediums', it was just not considered possible to probe into the language of a novel in the past.
All this is true, however, it does not explain the whole thing. By definition, literature is an art that uses language as its medium. As a sculptor's medium is stone, a musician's musical notes, a painter's colour and brush, similarly language is the only available medium to any literary artist, through which he expresses his innermost thoughts, feelings, experiences and his perception of the phenomena of the world around. Therefore, for a literary writer it becomes all the more difficult because he has to manipulate two things simultaneously. On the one hand he has to be careful about the visionary world which he or she likes to present to his readers. And secondly, he has to be very particular about the language through which he has to conceptualize and concretize exactly, what he wants to convey. Therefore, a double responsibility lies on the shoulder of the writer, if he wants to be a successful one.

Similarly, the written words on the page are the only tools in the hands of the reader to decode the maximum what the writer has encoded in the language. For this, the reader too has to be very alert and sensitive to all the direct and indirect meanings conveyed through language. The language being an artistic medium the writer uses it very skillfully: "It is not spontaneous, whatever theories of spontaneous inspiration may sometimes have been convassed."²
Gradually, the linguistic and stylistic exploration at the level of fiction has gained sufficient ground. Though the traditional critics too comment upon the aspect of language of the works of fiction, however, they are mostly abstract and general in tone. The minute details of language and their effects are not much touched upon. Now the novelist, who tries to create his fictional world through the language has very subtle and deep-perception to express. And linguistics being the study of language in all its details, proves to be of immense help. G. Leech rightly comments:

> If a text is regarded in objective simplicity as a sequence of symbols on paper, then the modern linguist's scrutiny is not just a matter of looking at the text, but of looking through the text to its significance. 3

And literature being a language in a special role, to grasp this special role - in its totality-linguistic insights become all the more essential. One thing more that has to be kept in mind by the reader of literature is that the traditional critic and the linguist are no rivals - both can help each other a long way and thus, the results of understanding the full meaning of literary works would be much better. Only the starting point is different as G.W. Turner observes: "The literary man begins with understanding, which is the ultimate aim of the linguist; the linguist
begins with the patterns that complete the analysis of literature."^4

Whatever theories of objectivity may have been floated, the initial step of any enquiry is what Spitzer called the 'click' of the mind - the intuition that is the beginning point of any analysis, and it cannot be substituted. Presently, another point that has been considered significant is that 'a sentence no longer remains the upper limit' of any analysis. It is the whole text considered as one complete unit that proves to be the minimum basis of a successful interpretation.

Talking about the significance of language for any literary artist, David Lodge rightly says: "The novelist's medium is language; whatever he does, qua novelist, he does in and through language."^5

The specific way in which a novelist selects and ordehis linguistic medium, i.e., words and sentences, enables him to present his special vision - the particular angle through which he shows the new experiences, the individual perceptions and even the fresh insights into the familiar experiences. A novelist's function, as that of a poet, is not to present just a 'pale reflection' of life, but rather to give us a fresh insight into it. He also strives to make the reader live an experience that is original. The difference between poetry and prose is only
relative and not absolute. If poetry cannot be paraphrased, the fiction can also not be paraphrased in totality without some thematic loss. And like the students of poetry, the readers of prose too have to exert extra labour to understand the intricacies of language which express the personal vision and perception of the novelist. The linguistic probings are no insult to fiction. Rather, these linguistic and literary patterns fuse as colour and composition in a painting fuse. Both perform the functions of shading as well as overlapping each other. As in the case of poetry, so in the case of fiction, one should not mind breaking a novel into 'bits' - finding its true appeal and appreciation in all dimensions and placing it back in its original place - then one would find that the 'whole' out of which the 'bits' were broken and joined has grown immensely in all directions. The new insights become bright, the new awareness dawns on the mind and heart of the reader, and everything acquires a new shape and meaning. We can reach the innermost pattern of experience of the narrative writer with the help of a linguist as well as stylistician.

3.2 Major Theories of Stylistic Analysis

Stylistics being the study of the style of a language used, proves very useful in the interpretation and analysis of literary works. The forerunners in the field of stylistics like Firth, G. Leech, Widdowson, Ronald Carter,
S. Chatman, Halliday, etc., have practically analysed and examined various passages of prose, to show how the objective study of language in literary works yields results in better appreciation and understanding. There are various prevalent theories of stylistic studies reflecting different approaches to literature, as for instance:

The Monists feel that the form and content are inseparable. They are one, and the study of one without the other leads nowhere. We cannot say which parts belong to expression and which others belong to the content. Their relationship is like that of a body and soul. The difference is simply that some texts are more transparent than others. In a really great work of art the form and content fuse perfectly and separating the two becomes really tough.

The Dualists opine that form and content are the two sides of the same coin. Manner and matter are different. The expression and content part can easily be separated and their individual beauties can be sorted out. Similar view is expressed by Pope when he said: "Style is the dress of thought."

The Pluralists also claim that every work of art contains some stylistic features and those can be not only marked out, but also can be studied in detail to go deeper into the world of the text. Theorists like Meenakshi Mukerjee
believe that style is no ornamental cloak, it is simply the 'outer form of the inner reality'. Anita Desai also observes:

Next to this exploration of the underlying truth and the discovery... it is style that interests me most - and by this I mean the conscious labour of uniting language and symbol, word and rhythm... One must find a way to unite the inner and outer rhythms, - to obtain a certain integrity and to impose order on chaos. 6

Each work having a unique identity of its own - embodies the writer's individual exploration of the functional diversity of language. Roger Fowler also writes: "a distinctive use of language reflects distinctive extra-linguistic circumstances."7 To what extent a novelist uses language in a distinctive way and with what success vary from writer to writer. A study of the style is actually a journey from the outer symbols of written words towards the inner reality of the writer's perception.

Whatever the theories and their implications, one thing is certain, that no single method of interpretation of the language of a novel can be adopted fully ignoring the claims of all others. Since every work of art is unique in its own way, it has to be dealt with a different measure and method. Every artist, being an individual, has his own personal and unique vision to convey through the art
of fiction. Therefore, any method would be useful if it meets the challenge and helps in comprehending the unique perception of the writer. Even the different works of the same writer may have to be dealt with differently at times. Therefore, we should apply the suitable measure to analyse each work in its own merits as each work has its own identity and individuality. Last, but not the least, one should remember that all theories put together cannot replace a literary critic. However, the deep exploration of the language of a novel can definitely help and widen his sphere and strengthen his judgements by verification and exemplification. In the present study I shall be following an eclectic approach while analysing the textual passages.

3.3 Method of Analysis in the Present Study

While attempting any type of analysis the reader has to keep in mind two things: (1) that the narrative writer has his personal, unique perception of the world around, which he wants to convey through his fictional art. And (2) to concretize that fictional world, he uses the medium of language. Therefore, while decoding the message or the experience of the writer, the reader must have a very close and subtle observation not only of the linguistic medium but also of all those extra-linguistic items that help in making the perceptive world of the writer a living entity. Along with this the writer also expects from the
reader to share his attitude towards that creation, what G. Leech calls the 'mind style'. The reader not only gets information but also the writer's mental attitude towards that information. Keeping all this in mind the reader finds that analysing the form of expression becomes not only interesting but a quite useful area of study too.

Since the whole novel cannot be analysed in detail, a method of selection and sampling has to be adopted. While selecting any particular area, one begins subjectively and it is here that the reader's intuition plays an important role. The present study deals with a particular aspect of the narrative art of Anita Desai, therefore, the selection is further restricted on the basis of its subject. Moreover, the components of language here are not going to be studied in isolation, but in relationship to the subject matter in hand.

Anita Desai, basically being a writer of the 'interior', the 'inner psychic atmosphere of the mind', I find this aspect of her work as one of her important themes. The present study explores this thematic aspect from a psychological perspective. I have selected some important instances of mental conflict which the major protagonists in Desai's novels undergo at times. The choice has been purely subjective, the attempt has been to select those
very instances which form an important link as well as the
turning points not only in the individual work of art, but
they also reveal significantly the underlying patterns of
Desai's world of fiction. The patterns of experience in
the form of theme and the patterns of expression in the
form of language and their relationship has been explored
here.

3.4 Levels of Analysis

I proceed from this belief that the primary unit
for any stylistic description is the whole text, seen as a
single UNIT and not a mere string of sentences. Though the
individual pieces of a literary work are as interesting and
important as the separate parts of a complex machine, how­
ever, they become useful and significant only when they are
taken as a whole - a single entity.

Every text operates at two levels. These are:

(1) the thematic level - that relates to the perception
of the writer, his personal vision of the world around; and

(2) the linguistic level - that relates to the skill
of the artist and how he constructs his world through langu­
age. Both these levels are taken up side by side in this
study. Here the element of foregrounding, saliency, sequen­
cing and focusing play very important roles.
The components of language being many: lexis, context, cohesion, syntax, extra linguistic impressions, symbol, imagery etc., conducting an analysis at all these levels becomes extremely complex. In the present study, I will be restricting my analysis to three main levels of language as explained below. But, nevertheless, while analysing the instances actually in different chapters the other components too will be referred to and discussed. The selected instances of psychological conflict from the selected novels shall be analysed in detail at three main levels of the language, namely:

(1) The Immediate Narrative Context of the Passage,
(2) The Major Lexical Items, and
(3) The Pattern of Syntax

3.4.1 The Immediate Narrative Context of the Passage

Generally speaking the word context means the accompanying text, i.e., the textual and the linguistic environment which creates the text as a whole. In this part of the analysis the word 'context' has been used in a wider sense. Here the narrative context explains the relationship between the writer and the reader, one character and the other character, the form of narration and its significance. The context of the particular instance is
studied at two levels in the present study: (a) the linguistic context, and (b) the textual, situational context. One aspect belongs to the narrative art and the other to the thematic part. No sentence taken out of its context renders full meaning. It is only within its proper context along with its natural surroundings and environment (the fictive world of the writer) that it makes any sense.

3.4.2 Major Lexical Items

Whatever the upper limits, the lowest ebb of language comes down to the level of words. Commenting upon the significance of words, Anne Cluysenaar re-affirms Conrad's belief: "things as they are, exist in words." He further explains:

His (the writer's) perceptual and inner world is, it seems, largely articulated even to himself within the confines of his linguistic awareness, and is certainly expressed to the reader solely through the forms he has chosen from amongst those available to him.

Once we look at the vocabulary or lexis as the encoding of ideas or experience, it becomes a good deal more dynamic than a mere dull list of words in a dictionary. In order to construct the personal vision through the fictional art, the writer has to select words from the repertory of language, and make constructions and then arrange and mould
them in a special way that may serve his specific purposes. This personal choice of the lexical items, their substitutions, repetition, variation, absence and presence, all enable the artist not only to present his personal vision but also to slant his attitude towards that special vision in a particular angle. Through the lexis, the reader not only gets the information but also shares the writer's attitude towards the construction of the fictive world. The different forms of words in their respective categories, i.e., nominals, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, their function and importance, all shall be discussed in detail in the different chapters. Alongwith the major categories of words their pre-modification, post-modification, natural clustering, elegant variation and lexical-collocation shall also be dealt with. It is through these various lexical items that the foregrounding and special focusing take place. Words with same initial phonemes, morphemes, synonyms and antonyms, juxtaposed together are all expressive of some semantic values.

3.4.3 The Pattern of Syntax

Syntax is the level of linguistic structure which is responsible for the concretization of the content. For any linguistic construction, the sentence plays an important
role in communicating not only the desired meaning but also
the required effect. The special arrangement of words in a
particular order conveys different meanings. Semantically
too the word order becomes very significant. The meaning of
the sentence is not just the sum-total of the meanings of
its component parts. The meaning depends upon the relation­
ship that is shown through the ordering of words in a parti­
cular way. The position of the agent, the salience of any
particular idea, the sequence of equal parts, the emphasis
or insignificance all can be interpreted and explained
through the structure of the sentence. Even the punctuation
marks, that are the written indicators of tone, help in
carrying the meaning of the sentences. The modality form
and the form of sentence too convey meanings. Not only this,
but the relationships of one sentence with the preceding
sentence and the following ones communicate significant
meanings. The inter-sentential and intra-sentential ties,
the cohesion brought forth through various devices, like:
ellipsis, substitution, the repetition of the word, phrase
or clause, the presence or the absence of any important
marker and the articles all go a long way in inferring the
hidden meaning of the written text.

Different syntactic arrangements encode different
meanings, even though the words may remain the same. The
syntactic aspect involves the inter-relations of the parts of the text, and the semantic aspect involves the global sense of the utterance, the themes which it invokes. The co-ordination and the subordination of clauses also convey different manner of focusing the salience and the sequence of the subordination of one idea to the other. Leech explains it thus:

Syntax... includes both lexical choice—choice of words from the vocabulary of the language—and the grammatical choices involved in combining these words into sentences. 9

The important role of syntax in language is to weave into a single fabric the different threads of meaning that derive from the variety of linguistic functions. One and the same syntactic feature is very likely to have at once both a deeper and a more immediate significance. Continuity is not merely an interesting feature that is often associated with texts, it is a necessary element in the interpretation of the text as well. The cohesive relations themselves are relations in meaning, and the continuity which they bring about is a semantic continuity.

3.5 Linguistic and Textual Gaps

The written word is important but an alert reader finds something more apart from the written indicators on
the page in the form of gaps left in between - the meaning implied, the suggestions hinted at - they also form an important method of expressing the content. The gaps left on the page, the small and unnoticed between sentences and larger units, are intentional and they correspond to the break in experience of linguistic communication. The pauses for breath, the gaps of silence, mental or physical, the beginning or intermittent pauses convey special meanings in a special way.

The selected thematic area of the present study being psychological conflict, the method of the narrative being stream-of-consciousness, these vacuities of expression are communicated in different ways. At times the protagonist being very tense is at a loss to think of any alternative position resulting in the form of incomplete sentences. At times the mind is full of so many ideas simultaneously that the character lacks energy to assimilate all; resulting in short, verbless, even single word sentences, one after the other, standing sharply deviant against the background of long sentences preceding the sentence as well as following it. At other moments, there are sudden inward leaps of consciousness towards the past moment which usually result in the frequent change of tense and mood of the protagonist. At this point the past and present merge and we experience
the eternity of time. On other occasions, the mind is at a loss to find out the solution or is upset with the present state of affairs, single words without any anticipatory or trailing constructions are uttered by the characters. Thinking on the same thing time and again, we have repetition of different types. The numbness of the consciousness, the lack of energy to cope with the unwanted situations, result in abrupt break of thought and continuity of expression. Diverse aspects of the same situation or many different situations in one breath are frequently doled out. Certain things with deep implications are communicated through metaphors and similes. These gaps are physically perceptible, in the linguistic text as well as in the thematic whole. Summing up this chapter we can say that language is a very powerful force in the hands of the narrative artist to convey through it, his innermost thoughts, feelings and his sensitive perceptions alongwith the process of those perceptions. Similarly for the reader too, the language symbols taken in their right perspective, their meanings and relationships properly explored, prove to be of immense help in re-constructing or comprehending the deeper and the fuller meanings of the text, whatever the field of fiction may be.
NOTES


9. Geoffrey N. Leech and Michael H. Short, *Style in Fiction*, 1989, p. 120.

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