CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The main concern of the present study as discussed in Chapter I was to analyse closely the language of psychological conflict in the selected novels of Anita Desai and thus explore and establish a close relationship between one of the major thematic aspects of Desai's world of fiction and its portrayal through language. The attempt made here was two-fold, (1) to explain and interpret the psychological conflicts which the major protagonists in Desai's novels undergo in different situations, and (2) to analyse in detail the language that portrays the rise, progression and diffusion of these conflicts. Initially the choice of the subject was purely intuitive but later a sound base was formed on the basis of the analysis of the novels of Anita Desai.

While going through the works of Anita Desai time and again, it was felt that the psychological conflicts form quite a significant and large aspect of her work. The universality of the variety of human psyche, its reactions and responses, its deep inward delving and withdrawal from the outside world, the changes brought forth in its outlook with the passage of time and experience, and particularity of the manner in which Desai has treated and portrayed these conflicts has most
interested the present writer. While going through the available critical material, I felt that most of the critics and scholars have dealt in some detail with the major currents and undercurrents of the novels of Anita Desai. Even individual novels have been significantly reviewed and examined closely at length. Of course, they do comment upon the aspect of language here and there but that is quite superficial and general in tone. To venture in a different direction, the present study was initiated to relate the content and the form. For the purpose of detailed analysis I selected three novels which represent to a fairly large extent the fictional world of Anita Desai.

7.1 Summing up

The novel being a long narrative, it becomes quite difficult to analyse each and every word in detail. For the purpose of detailed analysis, three instances of psychological conflict (which the major protagonists undergo in different situations) have been selected from each of the three novels. The selection of these instances was made, keeping in view not only the important turning points and critical moments of these individuals in the context of the particular novel but also considering their significance as they form an important link in the overall pattern of Desai's
work and also in the totality of impression that is created through the detailed analysis of the language of these conflicts.

To avoid repetitiveness, a variety of these conflicts have been selected and analysed. Another fact that was kept in mind was that each instance has been analysed in view of its individual merit and mode of expression. This variety can be marked at the level of sampling, focusing and presentation as well. All the samples selected here are unique in their own way, though they constitute an integral part not only of the individual novels but also of the overall pattern of Desai's fiction.

Chapter I. of this study specifies and introduces in detail the purpose and need felt for the present attempt. It further reveals to a large extent the current changing trends in the field of literary criticism among readers and scholars of literature. The present study not only provides a great scope for 'fresh insight' into these selected novels but it also helps in dispelling the long established belief among the readers that novels are read simply for the sake of story and entertainment.

In Chapter II, I have tried to present in detail the overall picture of Anita Desai as one of the major contemporary voices among Indian writers in English. In this chapter
various thematic and linguistic features, that we find scattered over her world of fiction, have been explained in detail to know and understand the versatile genius of Anita Desai in the background. Moreover, all her major novels to date, which have remained outside the purview of detailed analysis in the present study, have been interpreted individually. Since the main concern here is related to the psychological conflict, all these individual works too have been interpreted and explained from a psychological perspective.

This chapter deals at length with the main currents and undercurrents in Desai's fiction and also her individual novels. To sum up, I would like to say that the major background against which the present study was initiated is mostly built up in this chapter.

If chapter II prepares the thematic background of the present study, chapter III introduces and explains the aspect of language which was supposed to be analysed in detail in relation to its content. Apart from this, the different prevalent theories of stylistic analysis are also discussed in this chapter. The methods and approaches of analysis in this study have also been explained in detail. Further, the various levels at which the actual analysis has been conducted here have been outlined and explained in this chapter.
Chapter IV, V and VI have been fully devoted to the detailed analysis of three individual novels. From each novel, three instances have been taken up and their language is analysed in detail. Chapter IV deals with the first published novel of Anita Desai, *Cry, the Peacock*. In this novel all the instances selected for analysis relate to the major protagonist, Maya, in different situations. As Desai is more concerned about the 'wherefore' of actions rather than the action itself, most of these instances form a kind of interior monologue. The causes leading to the mental tension, the rise, progression and the final denouement of the conflict have all been discussed under the heading 'immediate narrative context'. This textual context and the participants relationship to one another and to the narrator as discussed here, not only introduce us to the preceding and the following events of the textual world of the specific novel but they also help in placing us precisely in the exact situation in which we find the character. As already mentioned, I have taken up the whole text as a single unit for exploration and it was only for the purpose of detailed analysis that the method of selection and sampling has been adopted.

At the second level of analysis, the major lexical items through which the variant stages of conflict and mood of the protagonist have been portrayed, have been examined closely.
Further, their individual significance, collocation, variation, modification and repetition have all been discussed and scrutinized. To support the arguments and to facilitate ready reference not only the original text of the relevant passages has been provided in the appendices but various charts and tables of lexical items, verbal element, their groupings under different sub-headings have also been provided in the respective chapters. The way these words, in their proper context, convey and concretise the visionary world of the author has all been studied in detail.

Finally, the level of syntax - how it helps in unfolding the conflict, its progression and final diffusion, all has been taken into consideration. It is through syntax that the relationship between one lexical item and another - as displayed through the word order is established. The element of salience, co-ordination or subordination, as presented through the sentence structure has been discussed. Their linguistic value and semantic significance have also been taken care of. Some important sentences have been interpreted in their own merit individually and also as far they reflect upon the overall pattern of Desai's fiction collectively. What strikes us most in the pattern of sentences in the novels of Desai, particularly as analysed in these selected psychological conflicts, is that invariably we find very long sentences
joined either by pause markers or co-ordinators when the character is visualizing or reliving the past moments mentally in a dreamlike situation or reverie.

In these long sentences usually the main clause is very short but it carries the burden of many anticipatory or trailing elements. While examining these sentences closely, we find plenty of lexical repetition, synonymy and antonymy in single sentences with the purpose of reinforcement. There is a lot of rhythmic alliteration and assonance, the contrastive juxtaposition of various elements, morphemic and phonemic repetition, that not only creates poetic effect but also enhances aesthetic pleasure. When the mind of the character is tense the same utterances are contracted to the minimum. On such occasions we have either incomplete sentences or sentences with gaps, very small sentences, and even single word sentences are there to fill the gap. The structural deviation within the passage not only catches the reader's attention to pause and think but it also explains the significance by contrast. The reader has to be under great strain in order to fully interpret the mental and physical vacuities and the numbness of the consciousness of the character as conveyed through these sentences.

Since cohesion - internal or external - is an important feature of every text, this aspect too has been
given its due attention wherever the individual conflict is analysed in detail.

Thus I have tried to interpret how the intricacies and variant components of language help not only in conveying but also in creating the visionary world of the author, so that the reader can have nearly the same 'feel' and the 'experience' as the writer wished him/her to have. Thus beginning from the whole text as one single unit of thought coming down to the bottom - the lexical choices - all have an important role to play in communicating and consolidating the desired meaning and the required effect.

Chapter V deals with the novel, *Fire on the Mountain*, following the same pattern as chapter IV. The instances of mental conflict which have been analysed in detail here, though they formally deal with the major protagonist of this novel, Nanda Kaul, but indirectly they reveal quite a lot about other characters as well. Like the previous chapter, here too the important turning points in the life and attitudes of the protagonist have been examined closely.

Chapter VI deals in detail with yet another major work of the novelist, *Clear Light of Day*. Here again the main focus has been laid on the mental tension afflicting the major protagonist of this novel, Bim. However, the other characters also get due recognition and importance as far as
they are related to the major protagonist. An interpretation of all these novels precedes the analysis in each chapter.

What is common in all these three chapters, and which to some extent represents the overall view of the author and also provides a cohesive link in all her novels, is the female psyche that has been explored in depth. Women, generally being more sensitive and emotional, their reactions and responses to the harsh realities of life are definitely different from their counterparts. In every conflict which has been analysed here, among other reasons that give rise to the conflict, one thing is common in all these, and that is the wide gap between the inner reality of the character and the harsh reality of the outside world. The desires, dreams, ambitions of the character on the one hand and the trauma inflicted on the psyche of all these characters by the actual experiences of life, emotions set against reason, the individual set against either the adverse social environment or against the inner self of the character himself/herself also go a long way in producing psychic tribulations. The writer following the tradition of stream-of-consciousness novel, there is ample scope for memories and flash back technique playing a significant role in the lives of these characters. At times when the conflict takes the shape of internal monologue or introspection, we have a fluctuating time scheme.
The character swinging between the past and the future sometimes very rhythmically and at other times with irregular intervals, the sequence of incidents too becomes very haphazard. So much so that at times the beginning of the incident actually signals the end part and vice-versa. In the present context it is quite important to learn that Desai prefers suggestions, hints, gaps of silence (thematic and linguistic both) more, to actually placing before the reader the bare facts in a crude form. Therefore, while considering the written language, the extralinguistic features, the vacuities of thought, the numbness of the consciousness of the protagonist have also to be taken account of. As the subject of this study is purely the internal world of the mind, the language of the interior, the thoughts and impressions, attitudes, moods, dreams, reveries, memories, apprehensions and speculations play significant roles. We have to study everything minutely and consider it in the manner human consciousness actually works. Since this language of mind is certainly different from the language of the world of action, we have to be very alert in recognizing and acknowledging even the smallest details that should not escape our eyes if we want to understand our characters fully. With the help of proper lexical choices, their collocation, syntax and metaphors, Desai verbally paints the inner scenario of the character's
conscious and sub-conscious self in a very realistic manner. In addition, a close study of the various components of language enables us to share not only the information provided by the artist but also the slanting of the writer's attitude towards that information.

As already mentioned in Chapter I and II, the language here is analysed not in isolation but in its relationship to the particular thematic aspect. However, the overall purpose as initially set for the present study has been kept in mind throughout. The parts out of the whole work were taken out not with a purpose to isolate these instances but in order to analyse their language in detail, this sampling was extremely essential. With the detailed analysis and explanation of these pieces not only their significance is enhanced but they also grow in size immensely. And when these passages are placed back in their original slots, the whole work gains a new meaning and significance.

Thus I have tried to show in my own way how the close analysis of language of the narrative art can not only increase our understanding of the particular work but it also enhances the aesthetic appeal by revealing immensely the hidden beauties and meanings of the individual works of literature.

However, it is by no means to suggest that the present study is complete in all aspects of detailed analysis.
The possibilities for the analysis can certainly be extended further. The field is so vast that no single attempt can cover all the possible aspects of this area.

In view of the limitation set by the nature of topic and subject of the thesis my main focus has been on the psychological aspect of the individual characters' personality. It is further restricted to the study of the subject of psychological conflict only. I have been mainly concerned with only those instances which invariably portray the rise, progression and final or semi diffusion of some mental conflict.

Another limitation was posed by the aspect of language as far as it reveals and portrays these instances of mental tension. As already mentioned, the language here is analysed mainly on three levels, i.e., contextual interpretation, lexical choices and syntax. Although the other aspects of language like imagery, metaphors, pause markers, cohesive devices, textual and linguistic gaps have been discussed, they are mostly general in tone. The psychological aspect being the main concern of the present study, other allied fields like cultural contexts, philosophical and social concerns which could prove quite interesting and significant have remained mostly unexplored. The detailed interpretation of many important images and metaphors too can yield quite significant revelations. The detailed analysis of the male psyche along
with its counterpart can also be an interesting area to explore further. The other major thematic aspects of these novels like, the changing human relationships, alienation and feeling of strangeness even among the closest of relationships, the disturbed mental conditions as representative of the present social and cultural context, too become quite significant under the present circumstances. All these aspects have been merely touched upon in this study which could well form the basis of various useful and significant explorations.