Title: AN ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL
CONFLICT IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF ANITA DESAI

by

Usha Kani

Submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Faculty of Languages (English) 1991.

ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to analyse the language of psychological conflict in the selected novels of Anita Desai. It further explores the close relationship between the two aspects in these novels of Desai, i.e., (a) the psychological conflict which the major protagonists undergo in various situations, and (b) the portrayal of these instances of mental strife through a particular style and manner of expression. The individual works of the author, to date, too have been interpreted from a psychological perspective.

For the purpose of detailed analysis three major novels of Desai: *Cry, the Peacock*, *Fire on the Mountain* and *Clear Light of Day* have been selected. From each of these
novels, instances of mental conflict have been explained and analysed in detail. All these novels are representative of the fictional art of Desai. The selected instances are also important because they reveal some significant turning points either in the lives of these individuals or they provide a turn to the work as a whole. They further present variety on account of sampling, focusing and salience. The individual merit and uniqueness of each passage has been highlighted in the analysis, which is restricted to three main levels, namely;

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

All these levels not only pin-point the psychic tortures of the characters in the textual world of the novels, but also highlight and explain the various stages (the rise, progression and the final denouement) of the conflict.

Though the analysis is mainly restricted to the three levels, many other components of language, such as: pause markers, natural clustering, nominal and verbal collocation, poetic elements, linguistic and thematic gaps, etc., have been discussed in respective chapters. An eclectic model of stylistic analysis has been adopted.