

**CHAPTER - V**  
**CONCLUSIONS**

## CONCLUSIONS

Kiran Desai is a new novelist in the genre of Indian novel in English. A very young writer, living abroad, she writes mainly about India. She is a part of Indian Diaspora. Kiran Desai is the daughter of Anita Desai, a prominent Indian woman novelist in English. Kiran Desai admits that she is influenced by her mother and by her writings. But it can be observed that Kiran Desai writes quite differently from that of her mother. If Anita Desai is considered as a modern writer, Kiran Desai's fiction can be called post-modern. If Anita Desai is known for her psychological novels, Kiran Desai is recognised for her magic realism and other post-modern features of writing. As Chapter One of this dissertation shows, Kiran Desai can be set in the literary tradition of the post-modern writers along with Salman Rushdie.... Githa Hariharan etc.

Kiran Desai appears to be a promising writer. Kiran Desai's novels, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) and *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), can be treated as post-modern novels.

*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, a debut novel, deals with the gullibility of the people and the world that has slightly gone mad. To avoid responsibilities or being incompetent in the world, the protagonist Sampath seeks refuge in the guava orchard for a life of contemplation. But his peaceful life is shattered by the hullabaloo of the monkey gang and thus the novel ends in a racous bang.

Prominent themes like escapism, mock- spirituality, critique of the institution of marriage, misuse of government machinery, office and property and man-nature conflict, find expression in *Hullabaloo In the Guava Orchard*. These themes appear relevant in the contemporary period. The theme of Escapism is related to man's desire to escape from hard unpleasant reality. Escapism is man's craving for admission in imaginary world. Desai presents the theme of escapism by representing mock-

spirituality through this theme. Very fantastically Desai seeks to depict a critique on society that succumbs to the image of Baba. She reveals the shabby superstitious practices which prevail in the society in the name of miracles. Sampath is shown as incompetent to survive in the present day world where life has become difficult and people face the problem of survival. Sampath tries to escape from this world because he is unable to cope with the expectations of his father as well as of the society. So he transfers himself into the world of spirituality and becomes Guru. His family supports him as it becomes advantageous to them.

Desai looks at the institution of marriage critically. She shows that in the male - dominated society, the girl has to listen respectfully to the lectures of her in-laws, even though she exceeds in superiority. In a very ironical tone she has presented the plight and predicament of traditional middle class Indian woman who in the age of Robot is still considered a commodity when it comes to marriage. Dowry is considered more important than the intelligence or beauty of a girl. Here Kiran Desai comes very close to her mother Anita Desai, who also dealt with the theme of marriage critically in her works. She openly satirises the attitude of government officials who misuse government resources for private purposes in the name of religio-spiritual-rituals.

Lastly the theme of conflict between man and nature is also developed effectively by Desai. Man's encroachment is shown to be harmful to man. Desai has employed the third person omniscient narrator to tell the story of *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. The novel is a linear narrative; incidents in the novel are arranged chronologically. The plot is episodic. Man-nature conflict and man-man conflict are seen in the plot. Desai uses technique of magic realism quite explicitly, interweaving the sharply etched realism of a small Indian life and its ordinary events with fantastic out-of-the world experiences effectively. In the character of Kulfi she uses technique of

flashback to present past incidents. Throughout the novel the author makes the reader perceive the novel through Kulfi's point of view.

Desai excels in the art of characterization. Her splendid skills are exhibited in transferring slow, passive, unmotivated Sampath into a holy *sadhu* of exceptional wisdom. She appears to be a master of characters. Kulfi's character is drawn fantastically. Desai has painted the characters in the novel so effectively that they remain in the readers mind long after the book has been laid down. With a skilful hand and minute observation, Desai excels in depicting the details of the setting of the novel. The fictitious town of Shahkot takes us back to Malgudi of the great writer R.K. Narayan. But Desai is not a regional writer like R.K. Narayan. She has attempted to sketch a live Shahkot and its vivid picture stands before the reader's eyes. Description of the nature in the novel is fantastic. It has provided a backdrop to the plot of the novel. She has used names, descriptions about plants, flowers, trees, rocks, animals, and bird etc. Through her setting, Desai reveals man's nature of exploitation and how an orchard is converted into a township. It reveals the details of physical environment and background. It shows how the maladjustment in the city leads to disruption of normal life and city administration is put on the run inviting solution from private and government machineries to solve the acute problem. Though the plot, characters and setting make Desai a modern novelist but features of post-modernism can be found in the narrative technique. Critics have hailed Desai for the language she uses. She experiments with the language. She uses it sensuously. Figures of speech and vibrant imagery, enrich her language. They make her descriptions fantastic. Kiran Desai makes use of simple English and it makes her style easy and transparent. But there is novelty. For example, the names of different food items appear fantastic. Her imaginative power excels in Kulfi when she prepares a large food cuisine. Her language has lucidity, clarity, ease and spontaneity. Her felicitous compound words, transferred epithets, phrases etc add to the

beauty of style. Desai's style elevates the novel. It is a hilarious, satirical, comic tale. Desai uses satire in a lighter vein. Alongwith Sampath's escapism she satirises the fortified events in the novel. These events reflect Desai's social awareness. Her Indianness despite her living abroad is apparently genuine. She has satirised the Indian attitude towards the institution of marriage. Her attitude towards marriage is progressive.

Desai satirises the government officials for their succumbing to the pressures of namesake Baba and also misuse of government property and resources. She fantastically satirises the reality she observes in the government offices. Desai presents a cross-section of a government office in her novel. Moreover in a very fantastic way she presents Indian's blind faith and superstition, that result in their exploitation.

She also has highlighted the concept of joint family by depicting the relations in Chawla family. This is a striking aspect of 'Indianness' of writer's approach. Her keen observation, humorous cynicism towards various attitudes related to religious social and political issues are reflected in her statements. It can be observed that in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*.... Desai creates an image of India. It is in keeping with the tradition set by pioneers like R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and others who have highlighted exoticism and typical Indian tradition and cultures in an exaggerated manner. Here she seems to be writing in the tradition of cultural expatriates. *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*.... emerges as a modern and a post-modern text simultaneously with the intermingling of the features from both these trends.

Desai's second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* focuses on many recent issues in the contemporary society. It is the story of a retired Judge who wants nothing but peace of mind. He wants to spend his life of retirement peacefully. The Indo-Nepali agitation has formed the backdrop of the novel. It is the agitation that disturbs the life in the hills and thus

terrorism forms a major theme of the novel. Alongwith this the theme of immigration and human relationship also attracts our attention. She has depicted the modern world realistically rather than imaginatively. Important issues such as loss of inheritance, terrorism, economic inequality, marginalization, immigration and globalisation are explored artistically in the novel. She has developed the theme of terrorism very effectively in this novel. Desai shows that in the world of globalisation, enmity arising out of political, social, religious, cultural and economic differences and reasons become responsible for contemporary terrorism. Kiran Desai authentically describes the theme of terrorism, caused by the Gorkha youths. With a keen eye, she has represented the heart-breaking effects of terrorism but along with it she depicts the other side of the coin, that is the reason of injustice behind the movement. With a skillful hand, Desai depicts the ugly manifestations of terrorism and its hideous impact on society. In fact, references to political unrest in India and portrayal of the explosive situations caused by terrorist activities enhance the relevance of the novel. The author shows that terrorism leads to fatal losses.

Desai's unerring eye for detail and acute powers of observation is displayed in her depiction of the theme of immigration and also the theme of human-relationship. Immigration is also an important contemporary issue revealed in *The Inheritance of Loss*. She illuminates the life of immigrants by delving deep in the lives of the characters. Perhaps it can be the author's personal experience because she herself is an immigrant in the U.S.A. She brings on record the painful and tormenting emotions of being an immigrant. It is the predicament of a person who is caught between two continents, two cultures, to inherit loss. Through the story of Biju, Desai reveals the theme of immigration. An immigrant is exploited. He has pains of self-imposed exile parallel to Biju and the cook who presents the pathetic condition of the parents whose hope is shattered. They are rewarded by despair and loss. Desai clearly reveals the indifferent and insensitive treatment given to the

immigrants. Desai perceives immigration as a product of loss of identity, rootlessness and alienation. Through Biju she makes people aware of the dangers involved in self-imposed exile. She suggests the people not to fall victim to the advertisements for jobs in the foreign countries. Along with this she criticises Indians who are tempted to migrate inspite of humiliations and insults. Kiran Desai who experiences the pains of exile and immigration portrays the life of contemporary immigrants spanning from Kalimpong to New York.

Desai also handles the theme of human relations in the novel very powerfully. She depicts this theme from various perspectives. Desai has presented a kaleidoscopic view of man-woman relationship. She highlights the sensitive and the serious issue of an Indian woman's plight within marriage. Desai suggests that man-woman relationship can be successful only if it is based on compatibility, equality, freedom, love and understanding. She also reveals that relationship devoid of these values leads to fatal loss. The major issue Desai thrashes out in man-woman relationship relates to power and person's desire to dictate. Another aspect she observes in man-woman relationship is different cultural background on different point of view shatters the relation as it happens in Gyan and Sai. Here she shows that the socio-political situation can adversely affect the relationship between the lovers. The relationship Jemubhai Patel and Sai stands in contrast to the relation between Biju and the cook. Jemubhai's prejudices estrange his relation with his granddaughter while the cordial relation between Biju and his father, the cook, remains tightly woven despite their poverty. It forms no barrier for the love and affinity the cook has for his son. Throughout the novel Desai has attempted to create the relations that appear quite real with lot of ups and downs. Desai succeeds in depicting human relation against the background of the characters in view of their religion, race class and gender. She shows how human relations are influenced by them in unpredictable ways.

In this novel also Desai uses the third person omniscient narrative technique. With the help of this technique, she dives into the minds of her characters, explains their acts and also presents the characters' view points or their thought processes. The technique of flashback is used to show the past of the judge Jemubhai Patel. She has also presented scenes through the dialogues and also through the action of the character. Thus Desai has brilliantly devised different methods to develop a multi-layered story. The mode of narration is called "hybrid narration" The narrative shifts in between past and present. It is episodic and a number of events take place. The events are complete in themselves. The plot is fragmentary in nature. It is the feature of the plot in post-modern novel.

Desai's excels in her art of characterization. Her minute observation of the behaviours, revealing the details of her characters bring life in her narrative. She has sketched common people in an extraordinary manner. She presents a cross-section of the society. Multiculturalism is observed in Desai's characters. She has included in her novel characters from different cultural background. Despite heterogeneous background, relation of love and friendship is seen in them. But in case of Sai and Gyan this heterogeneous culture their love shatters and dies before it blooms. A large number of female characters are painted on the canvass. They are rich, poor, elitist, housewives, widows, spinsters, virgins etc. They come from different cultural backgrounds ranging from Lepchas, Bhutias, Nepalis, Bengali's and Gujarathi's But among the female characters Nimi and Sai are the major while others are minor. Similarly Biju, the cook and the judge are major male characters and uncle Potty and Father Booty are minor characters.

The novel is partly set in India and partly in States. The foot of wizzard Kanchenjunga, Kalimpong is extremely beautiful. It attracts the reader; Desai paints the landscape so as to reveal the condition of the characters. Her minute details recording of the atmosphere, climate, people, traditions create a live picture of Kalimpong in front of the reader's eyes.



Experimentation in language and her unique style makes her stand apart from her contemporaries. Her free experimentation with language combined with fact and fiction appears wonderful. Credit goes to her for creating so many coinages and phrases and symbols etc. She has used code switching to present Indians especially those who are uneducated. Her skill resides in selection of words, even the very sounds are reproduced to create the necessary effect, for example, rustling of wind and grass etc. Capital letters are used to indicate high pitch voice of the characters. Desai has omitted punctuation marks for breathless narration. Besides this, she excels in using similes, metaphors, alliterations, epithets etc. Thus her game with language reveals her linguistic skill, that makes her post-modern writer.

Comparison of the selected two novels on thematic as well technique level, reveals her remarkable progress in her second novel: *The Inheritance of Loss*. Though both the novels deal with totally different themes, some similarities can be observed. In both the novels the most striking thing is Indianness. Minute details, keen observation of the society and culture makes her more Indian though she may be residing abroad. It also reveals that truly she is bound by her genuine love for her motherland. Critique of male hierarchy is seen in both the novels. She has highlighted marriage institution and also slightly touched the female psyche. Like her mother, she has attempted to paint inner mindscape of her feminine characters. Moreover she has tried to maintain essential humanity, good feeling and humour that is what makes life worth living. Being gifted with a sense of humour, she is successful in infusing the comic and the tragic together. Desai's characters are human beings born with conflicts. This reality in the novel is presented by her in a fantastic way. Her experimentation with language in both the novels secures a different place for her in Indian novel in English.

Her struggle for perfection in delineating themes and craftsmanship, various ways of polishing and working till satisfaction creeps in mind, has been duly awarded by the most prestigious award Man Booker Prize.

Finally it can be said on the basis of the analysis of her two novels that Kiran Desai is an emerging and promising writer of fiction in the realm of Indian English Novel. Desai's preoccupation with various themes and narrative techniques, language and style employed by in her two novels, her contribution to the genre of novel seems to be significant.