

CHAPTER - II
THEMES IN HULLABALOO IN
THE GUAVA ORCHARD

THEMES

In

HULLABALOO IN THE GUAVA ORCHARD

Desai's debut novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* deals with the themes of Escapism, mock-spirituality, Indian marriage system and misuse of government property and offices and man - nature conflict.

The story of novel in brief is as follows:

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard, is set in a small Indian town, Shahkot, is a hilarious socio-comic tale of Sampath, the protagonist of the novel. The novel traces the chaotic progress of the monumentally unmotivated Sampath Chawla. The absent minded protagonist is dismissed from the post-office job due to his whimsical behaviour at the wedding of his senior, Mr. D.P.S's daughter. Quite sure that his father would suggest him to apply for another job, Sampath runs away from his home and seeks residence in the Guava Orchard on the outskirts of Shahkot. His family follows him, but to their surprise Sampath's irrelevant talk, day dreaming converts him into a holy Tree-Baba. He becomes famous unexpectedly. It becomes a turning point in his as well his family's life. But the pastoral idyll is shattered by the tree-dwelling primates, who have developed a taste for liquor and their hullabaloo engulfs the whole orchard. Through their hullabaloo the author highlights the absurdity in the society. Desai tries to portray absurdity through eccentric characters, incidents, scenes, dialogues and through many more devices. Through this tale of gullibility of the people of a world slightly gone mad.

Theme of Escapism:

Desai deals with the theme of **Escapism**. Sketching the fictitious town Shahkot in general and family of Mr. Chawla in particular, Desai reveals the

fact of escaping from the reality. It is quite true that real life is seldom smooth and pleasant, so each and every one wants to escape into other world, the desired world and the world one has been dreaming off.

The novel opens with Shahkotians awaiting the delayed monsoon. It is late September and monsoon has not arrived. It seems everything is wilting under intense heat. People of Shahkot want to escape the world of heat. So the citizens submitted monsoon-inducing proposals. Desai here reveals that people always crave for an atmosphere they desire. Chawla family makes the theme more obvious. It is just as Subha Mishra 2008:29) says, "Man's craving is to escape from his 'real' world to the imagined world of freedom, peace, space and solace".

Let us further analyse the characters that reveal the theme of Escapism. Desai uses fantasy as a tool to depict reality. Thus she criticises the 'normal' world which is selfish and unable to see beyond their needs and materialistic gains. Sampath the protagonist is born in a very mysterious circumstances. Unexpectedly monsoon arrives on the day Sampath is born. Moreover to this a loud crash is heard. Mr. Chawla reacts rather negatively by coinciding his baby's birth with the end of the world. But the loud crash is of a big crate dropped by Swedish relief plane. Instead the neighbours assure Mr. Chawla and his family that the boy is destined for something great. They said "let's name him Sampath" they said, 'Good Fortune'. For though he might not be very plump or very fair, he was triumphantly and indisputably male" (HGO"12). Kulfi, Sampath's mother also had the same type of reaction. Sampath grows totally different to what his practical headed father expected. Somehow he is able to complete his education. He is mostly lost in day dreaming. It is his nature to avoid responsibilities. Though all his schoolmates, who were like Sampath secured some or other job, but Sampath spent his time day dreaming and singing in the gardens. He least bothered about his future.

Mr. Chawla after many efforts procures a back desk job for Sampath in the local post-office. Unlike the other young people of his age Sampath is lethargic, imaginatively observant and a dreamer. He is never aware of his duty, rather neglects it. It is his father, who often lectures him to be active. He stands in contrast to his meticulous father. He takes least interest in the job. His negligence in work makes him to bear his senior's scorn. Sampath is warned from time to time but all is in vain. He opens the letters of other people and lazily reads them throughout the day. Since he started his job he has spent much of his time in this fashion. Instead of being particular in the work allotted to him, he helps to escape himself by persuing the contents of other people's letters. It reaches the climax when at his senior Mr. D.P.S's daughter's wedding, ignoring the work he gets into the rooms of wedding finery and jewels. There he escapes into a world of fantasy. And wearing these wedding costumes and jewels he steps into the garden where all guests are assembled. People are shocked to see him; they are taken aback when he starts to disrobe himself. Some how his family members succeed in taking him home. All this results in what expected. Sampath loses his job. But conscious and caring father suggests Sampath to apply for a job in the Convent, Hospital, Agricultural Centre, Electricity Office and so on. Sampath preoccupied by all these thoughts, decides to escape into the world of fantasy. His father's suggestions make him insecure, his mind longs for something else. His mind said, "I want my freedom (HGO: 47). This is what Desai seeks to show, to escape from mundane life into a world of peace — forms the core of the novel.

Sampath's desire to escape perhaps portrays every contemporary man that desires to escape the reality of the real life he lives in. After all every one strives to achieve something that is desired in an unconscious mind. Sampath here represents that attitude. Though Sampath is shown mentally weak or not competent, in the some way or the other. As he is misfit, he strives to achieve perfection by escaping in an ethereal world. It is

the result of his inability to deal with the problematic of survival successfully. The very next day Sampath grabs the opportunity and runs away to seek residence in the guava orchard on outskirts of the town previously owned by the old district judge. The garden was the land declared to be a part reserved for national forest. This escape provides him peace of mind, the destination, the freedom he has longed for. Sampath's escape into the orchard forms the main theme of the novel. It is supported by other events that take place in the novel. Mr. Chawla and his family members rush to the orchard, to persuade him to come back to the home. Sampath, quite determined does not yield to their requests or threats. Dr. Banerjee from the clinic in the bazaar is sent for. Dr. Banerjee declares Sampath to be a crazy person and he disappears back into the town. Then the family tries to fetch a Tibetan physician, Homeopathy, Ayurvedic and even Naturopathy but all is in vain. Finally they visit the holy man and the holy man suggests "Arrange a marriage for him" (HGO:57). Chawla's search for a bride and the prospective bride is brought to the orchard. They hope at the thought of marriage Sampath may climb down, but all efforts end in a fuss. The bride falls down and their attempt is a total failure. Sampath does not care for all these things. Instead he finds a way to escape from the job, he never liked, and any responsibility he is supposed to carry out. As P.D. Nimsarkar (2008:48), states "His whimsicality is fit for nothing to the element of his kind amidst self understanding which prompted him to escape from the gruesome public life."

Sampath's escape into the orchard creates worries and mental disturbance to Mr. Chawla, but the writer wants to highlight the point that Sampath represents the young generation, whose parents of the low middle class society have to face the problematics of survival, The author shows that some are likely to escape into the world of fantasy to escape from the problematics of survival. Here the writer converts Sampath into a hermit to show the escapism in a fantastic manner.

People flock to see Sampath. Sampath's irrelevant, ridiculous talk make people believe that Sampath has attained spirituality. They consider him a holy Baba in the Tree abode. Sampath's habit of reading letters of others secretly helps him a lot. He speaks out the things that people like Miss. Jyostna, Mr. Gupta have hidden. It leaves impression that he has achieved a spiritual foresight and so he got the knowledge of past, present and future. Through Sampath's conversion the author highlights two factors, one, escape from the reality as one fails to face it and second, attitude of people, who want ready solutions to their problems. The author shows the tendency of the people who fail to face reality and then run to the Hermits, Sadhus Sages etc. for their deliverance from the problems. Desai tries to present the picture of orgy of Indian orthodoxy with special reference to the hypocrisy of such hermits and their pseudo performances. Through all these she wants to make people aware of the twenty-first century world. Sampath's determination to stay in tree-abode and afterwards his association with the monkeys elevating his status as a Baba is really fantastic. But the hullabaloo by the monkeys shatter his peace and he again escapes to a magical world recreated in his mind. He tries to escape from real world to a sublime world of nature, but it becomes chaotic and also increases his responsibilities. He fails in every thing because of his world is far removed from reality. As he cannot withstand the burden of recognition as a spiritual leader, he again escapes into an unknown world.

Kulfi, Sampath's mother, is also lost in the other world. Not able to withstand reality, she prefers to escape into the ethereal world. In the very first chapter of the novel, the author has sketched Kulfi and her dream world. Later on it is revealed that Kulfi is an eccentric character. Kulfi is pregnant and develops obsession with food. Her magical world of food is the place of her escape. Instead of thinking of the baby or her health, she escapes into the world of food, where she confronts food in all its incarnations. She is always in her own world of fantasy, dreaming of food.

Even the house was small for her big desire. Desai describes Kulfi, “she thought of chopping and bubbling of trying, slicing, stirring, grating”(HGO:5) The climax of fantasy is observed when in desperation. she begins to draw pictures on the walls of the house. The drawings has pictures of fishes, fruits like bright pineapples, lumbering jackfruits etc. She draws dishes that she has never eaten : “ a black buck suspended over a fire with a row of ingredients destined to transform it into magnificence, a peacock cavorting among cloves of garlic ; a boar entangled in a jungle of papaya trees. Onion grew large beneath her feet creepers burst from the floor boards; fish swam beneath the doors” (HGO:8). Thus Kulfi fantasies food and gets lost in the world of food. The obsessions with food is not over after Sampath’s birth but continues with second pregnancy and ever after. Her dream world is a paradox to the actual food she eats. The whole description of Kulfi and her food she eats, has an exotic and fantastic side to it. Later on Kulfi’s eccentricity is seen even more, when Mr. Chawla is discussing serious matters, she is lost in her world is “ the world of deep-scented, deep-hearted world of peppercorn berries, of cinnamon bark, of the flower buds of cloves and cassia and the saffron stigmas of the crocus. (H.G.O.2) She doesn’t pay heed to her husband’s commotion. Instead, she is lost in the observation of things outside the window. Only she knows its reasons. Sketching Kulfi as an eccentric character, the author depicts the reality that has elements of fantastic realism and eventually all her appearance seems to be fantastic . Kulfi obsessed with food, in guava orchard is inspired to cook a variety of dishes. As P.D.Nimsarkar observes (2008:36) “ This has a cathartic effect on her emotions. Food, which symbolically is constantly a parallel to her character, almost like her, other self finds a type of freedom in the new found space of the orchard.” She takes full advantage of the space. It helps in finding new food items to cook every day for her son. The food items she finds in and around the orchard are very symbolically and imaginatively named. She is always in search of samples and many kind of new things like ‘ ginger lilies, ‘rain-fever mushrooms.’ The kitchen of

Kulfi sketched by Desai has “pickle jars matured in the sun like an army balanced upon the stone walls; roots lay tortured and contorted, upon a cot as they dried; and tiny wild fruit, scorned by all but the birds, lay cut open displaying purple stained heart... ‘Cumin, quail, mustard seeds, pomeloring,’ she muttered as she cooked. ‘Fennel, coriander, sour mango. Pandanus flour, lichen and perfumed kewra. Colo cassia leaves, custard apple, water melon, bitter gourd, Khas root, sandal-wood, ash gourd, fenugreek greens. Snake-gourd, banana flowers, spider leaf, lotus root’”...(HGO:101). Kulfi’s husband is quite opposite to her. He is practical minded and realistic. Perhaps Kulfi is unable to face reality and so she prefers to escape in the magical world created by her fantasy.

Theme of mock-spirituality

The next important theme that Desai deals with is the theme of **mock-spirituality**. Sampath’s misbehaviour results in the loss of his job. Before heading for another job, Sampath, who longs for freedom elopes to the guava orchard, owned by the old District Judge of Shahkot, before the government declared the land to be part reserved for national forest. He felt a peace of mind, the destination, the freedom he has longed for. His freedom is shattered when all Chawla family rush to the orchard to persuade him to return back. Sampath, quite determined does not yield to their requests or threats. Instead, his irrelevant talk and chronic day dreaming is reinterpreted as a life of spiritual contemplation and he swiftly develops a reputation as a holy man. People consider him to be a deliverer, a solution to their problems. Sampath’s deliverance into a guru becomes a thing of pride for the family character of the Chawlas. Desai presents Sampath’s odd behaviour in an interesting manner. She highlights the strange performances of sadhus and hermits. It is an illustration of the cultural vista of the Indian life. “Sampath’s hide out has now turned into a place of worship for devotees who pay visits, offer prayers and receive blessings of the famous Baba in his tree top hermitage” (HGO:92).

Desai here seeks to depict a critique on the society who succumbs to the image of Baba. She shows that the mortgaged mentality of a person religious in outlook, submit to the namesake Baba and such people climb up the tree where Sampath is seated. The Cinema monkey and his associates create havoc in the city. The Cinema monkey has been mischievous, very trouble some to the ladies of the town for peanut cones. Now the Cinema monkey and his friends turn to place where Sampath has his control. Their regular visits to the hillside develop a rumour whether “the ape community obtained news of Sampath and organised a visit” (HGO:107). The mutual interaction between them is reduced a wary distance” (HGO:107). and they identified Sampath” as the nucleus of the bountiful community they had come upon” (HGO:107). These primates now developed a cordial relation with Sampath. They share the bed with Sampath : he was not merely accept, then but endowed with elevated status within the monkey hierarchy (HGO:107). This strategic compromise helps them “Obtain their meals much more easily by sitting near Sampath” (HGO:108). The lady monkey pulls his hair, followed by other present, shuffles his “glossy and shining locks” (HGO:108). and he enjoyed these tugs and scratches as if they are his body guards. Seeing this the people remarked respectfully that “The Baba has subdued the beast” (HGO:108). Sampath’s close relationship with the monkeys elevated his status as a Baba. It made people to trust his spirituality. This is not what writer wants to present through these fantastic elements. She portrays many issues such as from shabby superstitious practices, in the name of miracles which engage men, society and government machinery into its protection and nutrition, Sampath wants freedom, isolation from all mundane, he wants to run away from the material world and remain carefree and alone, cool and silent, supine but there too he is chased by people, who forcefully indulge him in superstitious and ritualistic conducts.

Mr. Chawla takes full advantage of Sampath's popularity. Mr. Chawla a meticulous man, is very active and conscious about his health and family. He is well aware of his son Sampath's capacity. When Sampath becomes a Guru, Mr. Chawla wastes no time to take advantage of the situation. He exploits the situation in such a way that he makes a lot of money, the thing he has awaited long. Mr. Chawla approaches the business men of the town to display their advertisements in the orchard to earn more money. People's generous donations help Mr. Chawla to amass a large capital. He made all the necessary arrangements for a comfortable life in the orchard. The fact of superstition leads to exploitation is shown in the novel. Mr. Chawla exploits the visitors who blindly accept Sampath's spirituality, magical power of fortune telling and superstition. He knows Sampath's mind and behaviour "It is nothing" he knew "unsettled" (91). Desai's keen observation, or perhaps as a Indian, she is well acquainted with the surrounding, the atmosphere that prevails round a hermit, a deity, or at a famous pilgrimage. Sampath's abode is not less than a pilgrimage centre where people from and outside Shahkot come over for his blessings. She mocks the spirituality that people accept without investigation. Sampath's escape has been a solution to everyone's problems as he settles happily into the life of a guru and his family embarks upon a lucrative business. For instance, a tea stall is arranged with Ammaji it's sole in charge to provide tea, snacks or even light lunch to the visitors. Near the tea stall, Mr. Chawla put on a cart loaded with garlands, flowers, fruits, incense to those inclined towards leaving offerings for Sampath. Mr. Chawla used to buy these items on discount and sell them at a large profit. Moreover the coconuts and sweetmeats that the pilgrims offered Tree-Baba are on the cart next day to be sold. The scene at the pilgrimage centre is portrayed by Desai in a fantastic way. Every thing goes on smooth till a spy of the Atheist Society enters the orchard and gives shock to Mr. Chawla. He is entrusted with the work of establishing the real identity of the God-man. He is to find out whether he is really a spiritual leader or a hypocrite. The spy himself is

much confused. He puts several questions to Sampath. Sampath, however manages to cope with him without revealing his identity. “ His queer questions unsettle the hermit as he himself got lost into peeping out and into the latter’s design of mind. Beside all other roles that Sampath adopted to be misinterpreted as a God-man, the spy suspects that perhaps Sampath is drudged through the varieties of food, something always cooked in ‘that pot’ (HGO:99). The conclusion he comes to is that Sampath’s odd words and antics would be found in Kulfi’s cooking pot” (HGO:4). So he decides to follow Kulfi, in this case he receives a good beating with a broom by Kulfi. He thinks he might be killed. When he follows Kulfi in the forest near the hill, he is also struck by her scythe. Mr. Chawla becomes aware of the danger of the spy and so limits the hours of meeting Sampath. The Spy is actually supposed to be a highly intelligent person in the Indian system of Investigation and Judiciary. Desai in the novel portrays a spy belonging to the private agency. He is an ordinary person, who succumbs to the pressure and eventually has to sacrifice himself. Mr. Chawla did not leave any opportunity to make Sampath famous. He arranges a cart with Sampath’s photograph for the propaganda. His cart proves to be very popular and soon it is seen everywhere. Sampath’s position not only helps Chawla family in acquiring good money but even the rikshawallahs also do good business by charging a lot of money for the round trip from the bazaar up to the orchard and back. The spy is irritated by Sampath’s publicity and he remarks, “Did you see the newspaper article about the Chawla case? It is completely outrageous. Even the press in the country goes along with this rubbish. In fact, they are the ones who propagate it. They take a rumour and put it into official language and of course everybody who reads it promptly swallows it as the whole truth. This mad man belongs in a lunatic asylum and just look at how everybody is running to him bringing him presents.”(HGO:120).

Desai shows that the media is also responsible for the propaganda of the superstitions and blind faith. Through all these hullabaloo Desai seeks to

show that “ In India anything sells in the name of religion. Religion, in fact, is the most lucrative business here and involves the least number of risk factors. In notions Mr. Chawla is ready with a complete package of Baba-accessories for the blind and superstitious followers of Sampath. Desai vividly brings out the skillful *modus operandi* of the making of a saint in our country” (2008:64). Desai successfully portrays the business that is carried out completely with production, advertisements and selling arts, from recycled coconuts to fanning popularity of Baba by distributing his photos. As soon Mr. Chawla becomes doubtful of the spy, he limits the visiting hours. Mr. Chawla successfully works out in such a fine manner that day by day his bank account is found swelling. He leaves not a single opportunity of making money. Thus the authors succeeds in bringing home the fact of absurdity of blind faith and fanatic beliefs. The author presents the reality of an Indian society in a satiric vein. Her intention is not to criticise the culture, rituals and practices and their rootedness in the social and individual’s consciousness, particularly of the Indian citizens and their faith in conventional faith in sadhus, saints or hermits, but many a times it happens that a person who wants to escape from the chaos of world and seek peace, salvation is forced to stay among the gullibility of the crowd, Sampath perhaps is the representative of that. Though a fantasy, Sampath’s disappearance from the guava orchard shows his urge of peace which has firmly grasped him. Thus Desai delineates the events showing eccentricities of irrational blind faith and religious spirituality at its best and tries to unveil the fate of Baba system that seems to prevail in India.

Theme of Indian marriage system

Desai also criticises **Indian marriage system** prevailing in contemporary India. She highlights the condition of the marriage system in the male dominated society. She presents both the types of marriages, love-marriage and arranged-marriage. She has depicted it in a very fantastic way. In Indian society, girls are generally not allowed to marry of their own

choice. If girls are found in love-affairs they are severely punished by their family members, confined to rooms, even have to bear physical as well as mental torture. But here the author sketches, Pinky, Sampath's sister as an eccentric character, whose parents least bother about her obsession with Hungry Hop Ice-cream Boy. They never understand her feelings. They never think from her point of view. In fact Mr. Chawla is only after money. Kulfi all the time is in search of exotic elements to feed her son and Ammaji the eldest one in the house always caters for the needs of her grandson. Pinky, a young girl is always obsessed with the thought of somebody following her. She went to the market always in her best dresses. Though she complained of people staring or following her, she enjoyed it. On one such trip to bazaar for the dentures of Ammaji, Hungry Hop boy recovers the dentures snatched by the Cinema monkey. Pinky is too much impressed by this gesture, that early next morning she walks upto him to express her love in a very strange manner, due to her aggressive love she bites him ferociously, "A piece of his ear lay upon the ground"(HGO:113). Instead of being punished, Pinky enjoys the privilege of being a hermit's sister. The Hungry Hop boy is confined in the house by a dozen of ladies who are shocked by Pinky's behaviour. Fantastically the author describes Pinky's attempts to meet him. She writes a note asking forgiveness and tying it to a stone throws it with a deadly aim straight at Hungry Hop, who unknown of Pinky's intention falls down. The stone comes as a bullet that flew out of nowhere and hits him squarely on the jaw. He collapses against the wall. After such incidents Pinky and Hungry Hop boy's romance flourishes but it ends in a long fuss. Pinky and Hungry Hop boy decide to elope on the same day the plan of monkey-catching is to be carried out. Then Hungry Hop boy gets entangled and is caught by the army and their plan of eloping is shattered.

Along with eccentric characters, Desai portrays various other aspects of Indian life in the novel. She ridicules the institution of marriage.

In an ironical tone, she presents the plight and predicament of traditional middle class women, who are considered as a selling commodity in the bazaar of marriages. When prospective wives are shown to Sampath, he is on top of a tree and Hungry Hop boy is in a living room. Suggestion comes to persuade Sampath to climb down the tree as a girl is to be shown to him prospective bride. Desai ridicules the bride showing ceremony. When the expectations of boy's side are fulfilled the boy's parents and relatives select the bride. The conditions for a prospective bride are - the girl must have a pleasant and graceful personality. She must have a good moral character and must be decent. Alongwith these general expectations the boy's relatives set the criteria of the girl's body, she should not be fat, she should be pleasantly plump with a large hip and breast, but small waist. The girl must be a well educated, passed all examinations in the first division, must be submissive to her in-laws and must have nourished on refined etiquettes and manners. She must be an example of high-culture. The dowry should include most of the domestic items. She should possess sweet voice but will not dance and sing after marriage and shame the family. This girl will listen respectfully when her prospective-in-laws lecture her on various subjects though themselves have failed in secondary schools. If she has fulfilled all the requirements for a sound character and impressive accomplishments, and if her parents have agreed to meet all the necessary financial expenses and if the fortune tellers have decided the stars are lucky, then and then only the girl will be selected. The same is found when the family of Hungry Hop boy looks for a daughter-in-law. Instead of Hungry Hop boy going to the girl's house for bride selection, the prospective bride is brought to his house. Similarly the prospective bride is brought to the orchard suffers humiliation. The author shows the reality that despite good qualities girls are made to suffer. Contrast to them is character of Pinky whose parents have denounced all the expectations who is ready to elope with a boy. As P.D.Nimsarkar (2008:48) observes, "Indian marriage system, procedure and patriarchal dominance have been taken up for critical

discussion in a lighter vein that is ostensibly followed in the middle class strata of the society as well as high ones” .

Theme of misuse of government property and offices

In her fantastic novel Desai also brings forth the **theme of misuse of government property and offices**. The conditions that succumb to pressures of such Babas, Sadhus, Hermits etc. and the government resources are misused for private purposes or in the name of religio-spiritual-rituals. The author here proposes to criticize higher officials indulged in corruption. She chooses the postal department with the post master as an instrument, who uses his staff for his private purpose. In his daughter's wedding, he instructs the staff, "You will kindly begin the day's work'. Make preparations for the flower garlands; Contact the sweetmeat vendor and the biryani cooks. Get the men to put up the tent. Make arrangements for chairs." (HGO: 32). Here we come to know that to keep the office closed without any government holiday is in real sense the misuse of the government office on the part of the authority. The staff members have to perform the assigned duties without any complaint. The author here ridicules the postmaster's behaviour who exploits his staff by misusing his power. The writer exposes the reality fantastically. Mr. Chawla employs his son Sampath in government so that his son can enjoy maximum benefits. Afternoon siesta, tea-boy running up and down, free medical service , ration cards, gas connections, telephone connections, holidays on every festivals, etc are some of the benefit employees reap as government servants. A man in government service is considered as very lucky due to these benefits. But Sampath's disinterest in work did not allow him to think himself a lucky chap. When Pinky bites Hungry Hop boy, instead of getting punished, Pinky enjoys the privilege of being a hermit's sister. The superintendent of police takes her to the orchard and seeks to get blessings of holy Tree-Baba.. In Desai's words, "The policemen all climbed up the ladder to receive Sampath's blessings. The superintendent placed his

unpleasantly greasy head under Sampath's toes and felt as though he was being bathed in pure holiness, if he was being washed gently and cleansed in sweet blessing, it reminded him of the feeling, he had when he was given presents on festival days. 'Can you tell me, Baba, when can I expect a son?' he whispered" (HGO:116). Chawla also managed the facilities of the hospital, electricity line for light with the help of the electrician, and laid a network of water pipe by making an appropriate hole in one of the main water pipes. Thus Desai shows how the government property is misused.

Theme of man-nature conflict

In this novel Desai presents the **theme of man-nature conflict**. Nature is presented as a powerful representative of the fantastic world. Nature is an inevitable part of human life. It is constantly desired by man but it receives inhuman treatment at the hands men. The author shows how man drastically misuses it. As Subha Mishra (2008:31) observes, "The writer describes nature as a constant parallel to human characters and things". The novel begins with the description of worst heat of the summer season and delayed monsoon has raised its intensity. It looks as if everything is going to melt in this intense heat. Here, Human mind functioning in a bizarre fashion in the humdrum life and its idiosyncrasies have been systematically made visible in different ways in the novel. Scarcity of water and Intense heat has made the famine conditions possible. To overcome famine various proposals have been suggested. There are suggestions, by Mr. Chawla to the Forest department to grow the vegetation in elaborate patterns, and army's proposal is of driving of clouds by jet planes. The police department's suggests frog wedding. Vermaji's suggestion is of a giant fan. These various proposals are about the elemental fantasy. They show that when man is trapped in environmental problems, he is forced to believe in impossible things and far fetched ideas. Thus there develops a strong relationship between man and nature and it is continued throughout the novel in the form of the orchard and the monkeys. Every character in the novel and all

the people of Shahkot are somewhat responsible for the clashes between the man and Nature. It is evident from the Cinema Monkey who tries to rob beautiful girls for the peanut cones. Later all his tailed friends jointly venture in the guava orchard as if it is reserved for them by some of their inmates. These tailed gangsters, play a special role in the novel. A great chaos is created by them after they have developed a special taste for liquor. It becomes a subject of introspection. It is just an incident. The speculations are drawn on whims or fantasy. These monkeys become addict and all the while are in search for liquor bottles, in and around the city. These addicted primates, raid persons, places, wine shops, government office and also “raided the cupboard of the retired District Judge. They have taken five bottles of whisky and bounded away before the servant has even realized what has happened” (H.G.O:176). Like human beings these hooligans go in search of liquor bottles and represent the drunkards creating trouble with their unstrained behaviour in the society. Their misbehaviour ruins the atmosphere as well as their relation with Sampath. They become so troublesome that Mr. Chawla is forced to appeal to the officials to intervene and maintain “Sanctity and peace in Shahkot (H.G.O:132). Desai wants to show that Monkeys sit near Sampath, get quite humanized but when they become alcoholics, they symbolize evil in man. So when they drink alcohol, human qualities of assault and thievery are visible in them. It helps in artificially expanding their energies, leading them to ravage the forests in the very human way. Kiran Desai uses names, descriptions of plants, flowers trees, rocks, animals, birds, fishes and similar non-human entities in abundance to create a fantastic world very impressive and unique. When the problem of monkey menace becomes severe Mr. Chawla runs to the Indian Administrative Agencies to find out a solution to the problem. Desai brings religion and all the issues related with it. The new District Collector was “a quiet man and, though firm in his ideals, he was a very shy man, only just installed in government service, and very thin and weak-looking” (H.G.O:168). He is offered first posting at Shahkot as it was

not a very big responsibility. The DC's tenure seemed to be a failure. He is not successful in controlling the messy town of Shahkot. This inexperienced man fails to solve the monkey problem. Moreover, he has Mr. Gupta as secretary, who has grabbed the post through manipulation. "These monkeys are a terrible business, Sir, said Mr. Gupta, pretending hard to be unhappy, but looking despite it all, very happy indeed! (HGO:170). The District Collector's meeting with Brigadier is stormed by the Monkey Protection Society. Mr. Gupta takes DC to meet Sampath. Sampath was already afraid but when they glanced at each other in a curious way, each of them felt exposed and vulnerable to the other. The D.C. as a person is supposed to be rational, sensible and tranquil but not an emotional. The District collector meets Brigadier and CMO many proposals are put forth to destroy the threat created by the monkeys. But no plan is found right to work properly. At last Mr. Chawla comes with a plan. He advises to train the army and police as monkey catchers, and using army trucks to convey them to far-off forest. Finally the plan to catch up the monkeys fails due to lack of proper coordination, supervision and planning. It results in complete chaos and turmoil. Instead of the monkeys the poor Hungry Hop boy is entangled in nets. They fail to catch the monkeys and in between this commotion. Sampath feels unsafe who disappears to an unknown place. In other words, the responsible officers shown their incapability to handle the crisis involving affairs related to religions. Through all the characters and the incidents the author shows us, as said by Subha Mishra (2008:40) the 'mitigated realism' of the world. The last scene of the hullabaloo in the orchard compels one to think whether it is not the homosapiens who are in true need of some disciplinary action, rather than their more natural primate cousins.