

CHAPTER - IV

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN KIRAN DESAI'S NOVELS

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Mark Schorer(1971) in his *Technique as Discovery* observes,

When we speak..... speak of nearly everything, for technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend it: technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject , of conveying its meaning, and finally, of evaluating it . Technique in fiction is, of course, all those obvious forms of it which are usually taken to be whole of it, and many others. Technique is really what T.S. Eliot means by "convention" any selection, structure or distortion, any form or rhythm imposed upon the world of action; by means of which it should be added – our apprehension of the world of action is enriched or renewed. In this sense, everything is technique which is not the lump of experience itself , and one cannot properly say that a writer has no technique or that he eschews technique for being a writer, he cannot do so. We can speak of good and bad technique, of adequate and inadequate, of technique which serves the novel's purpose or disserves.

As the epigraph to the chapter suggests, technique in fiction includes almost everything that goes into making the novel. In simple way every thing a writer uses to narrate his story is included in the technique . It includes imagery, symbolism, point of view, chronological order of events, stream of consciousness, schematisation of chapter division etc. Dialogue, language, characterisation and plot are also the important aspects of fictional technique.

Kiran Desai, is the latest rising star in the field of Indian English Fiction. She is certainly a promising writer and it can be seen in her debut novel. She has attained excellence in her sequel *The Inheritance of Loss*. In the two preceding chapters the researcher has attempted to analyze the thematic preoccupations in her two novels and the present chapter seeks to analyze the narrative technique used by Desai. .

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

in

HULLABALOO IN THE GUAVA ORCHARD

Kiran Desai's first novel is about a youth, who is irritated by the mundane life. He seeks peace and residence in a guava orchard. Here he becomes a Tree-baba and is joined by a horde of followers. Everything turns topsy-turvy by the arrival of the monkey gang. The narrative method applied by the author is the third person omniscient narrator. We sense the presence of the author herself narrating the story. At some places, the authors makes use of dialogues to show what she seeks. The narration is straightforward, simple and linear. In the first chapter, the author has narrated Sampath's birth. The narrative proceeds further, and the last chapter is about the disappearance of Sampath. In some part of the novel, we see the character speaking through, for example, in Kulfi's pregnancy, she least bothers her health, her husband Mr. Chawla goes to the public library to look for books about babies and then he instructs Kulfi to do so for a healthy baby in the following sentences:

'You must take care to boil your drinking water for twenty minutes.'

"you must sit down and rest after any exercise."

You must stand up and exercise regularly and diligently.

Don't eat raw fruit any more, etc.(HGO:6).

The author shows the thought probing of a character, for example, when the atheist spy is on the investigation of Sampath's spiritual secret he thinks, "Could Sampath be drugged? What has been cooking in that pot? No doubt he was smoking ganja – it grew wild all over the hillside. But perhaps he was taking opium as well? And who knew what else? The spy thought late into the night. (HGO :99).

In Desai's narrative technique, use of magic realism is quite explicit. The interweaving of the sharply etched realism of a small town Indian life and its ordinary events with fantastic out-of-the world experiences has been effectively used by the author. We observe it in the following conversation: 'What should I do ? he said, giving it another desperate shake. ' I do not want a job. I do not like to live like this,' he wailed.. and suddenly, before his amazed eyes, the surface of the guava rose even more and exploded in a vast book! creamy flesh flying, droplets showering high into the sky, seeds scattering and hitting people on the balconies and roof tops, and down on the street. 'Ho!' shouted Lakshmiji who has been hit in the eye what is going on there? All kinds of bizarre happenings in that house hold always.'(HGO:46). Desai has also used the technique of flashback to show the bygone incidents. Kulfi, an eccentric character recalls her past when she sees Sampath in the tree and remembers .

Looking at her son, Kulfi felt that the past came rushing back to her engulfing her in the memory of a time when she was young, when her mind was full of dark corners, when her thoughts grew deep and underground and could not be easily uttered aloud. She remembered the light of a far star in her eyes an unrecognizable look, that has made her a stranger to herself when she stared into the mirror she remembered the desperation she had sometimes felt, that rose about her as if she were being surrounded and enclosed by an

enormous wall. She looked at her son sitting up in the tree and felt her emotions shift, like a vast movement of the spheres, and then she said: 'Let him be'((HGO:55).

Kiran Desai is successful in highlighting Sampath's keen observation and sensitive mind. The technique of magic realism is employed for this purpose. Sampath is not interested in materialistic world. His father criticises him for his inactiveness. He abuses him by calling potato, but Sampath is lost in his own world. He wants freedom and space. He achieves this by residing in an orchard. His speech in the orchard though irrelevant, shows his capacity for keen observation. When Mr. Gupta asks him of a little rest, Sampath answers 'Any time you want a rest from her you should send her to the sari and salwar kameez shop', laughed Sampath, ' You know how much this lady loves clothes .. Oh, but may be that is not such a good idea. Already she owes the Ladies' Fashion shop 152 rupees and eighty paisa (HGO:73). The third person omniscience authorial point of view makes it possible for Desai to give the inside view of characters. The direct method of presentation used along with this adds to the objectivity of the tale. Throughout the novel, the author makes the reader perceive the novel through her point of view.

The plot of *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is episodic . The important episodes are,

1. Sampath's birth.
2. Sampath's job in post-office.
3. Sampath's whimsical behaviour in the wedding.
4. Sampath in the Guava orchard as a Tree Baba.
5. Pinky's love-affair.
6. Monkey menace.
7. Kulfi's cooking.
8. Sampath's disappearance.

Plot

Man-nature conflict is presented in the guava orchard where Sampath seeks residence. The novel begins with the description of intense heat, man and environment, both wilt under intense heat. Man tries to invent many artificial ways to bring rain. But nature being far superior doesn't yield and man's efforts appear in vain. Thus the power of nature is highlighted. The monkeys seek residence in the guava orchard. But man has already been exploiting it for his own selfish gains. Monkeys who become liquor addict as men, ravage the forests. The conflict forms the middle part of the plot. When Sampath is revered as a Guru, Mr. Chawla wastes no time to exploit the situation. He immediately embarks upon the lucrative business. Sampath Chawla is a slow learner. He is not able to cope up with his father's expectations but Mr. Chawla always wants Sampath to make progress in life. Sampath rescues himself from the humdrum life by heading towards the hills and finding an abode in the tree of a guava orchard. Mr. Chawla follows him there also. A new idea strikes him. Thus Sampath's dream of living in peace is shattered, first by crowd of followers and later by the monkeys who engulf the orchard. The author also presents the conflict going in Sampath Chawla's mind:

Sampath's bare feet are cold against the floor. A breeze lifted the hair off his forehead. Goose bumps covered his arms. He thought of Public Transport, of the Bureau of statistics, of head massages, of socks and shoes, of interview strategies of never ever being left alone, of being unable to sleep and of his father talking and lecturing in the room below. 'No', Sampath answered, His heart was big inside his chest. 'No, I do not want an egg' he said, I want my freedom.' (HGO: 47)

Man- nature conflict is revealed in the misuse of nature. The guava orchard, hardly remains an orchard, it only turns into an extension of the township, crowded and littered with advertisements, which hung from trees. Sampath's father envisions it as "a modern complex with a temple and star facilities for the pilgrims and an environment he could keep control of" (HGO: 127).

Characterization

The major characters are Sampath, Kulfi, Mr. Chawla, Pinky, while minor characters are Hungry Hop Boy, Ammaji, Miss Jyostna and Mr. Gupta. Desai has used different methods to portray Sampath's characters. His character emerges through his actions and his speech. The author also describes him. Other characters talk about him. Lastly she employs the method of contrast to draw and develop his character. Sampath's birth takes place in a very remarkable circumstance. It makes people believe that he is destined to be great. His mother's reaction at birth shows that he is a quite different person from other human beings. But as he grows up he lacks the activeness and is always uninspired and unmotivated. His inactiveness is revealed when his father lectures him every now and then. He is too slow in executing his duties at home and post office. Sampath's father comments about him: "Progress! Ever since he was born, this boy has been progressing steadily in the wrong direction. Instead of trying to work his way upwards, he started on a downward climb and now he is almost as close to the bottom as he could ever be (HGO :26)." His grandmother says, 'Look at him, sitting there as usual, with no raise in pay or promotion anywhere in sight'(HGO:22). Pinky when asked to take Sampath with her for protection from the cinema monkey she says, 'What good will Sampath be! The monkey will probably choose me as the best person to target if Sampath is with me' (HGO:22). Sampath is careless, so

he is tormented both at home and at post office. At one level Sampath appears to be a complete failure at home, at school, at work, spending his time day dreaming in the tea stalls and singing to himself in the public garden. He lacks the motivation and inspiration to perform his duties. He fails on every ground. Hence he escapes the humdrum life and becomes a hermit, a smart plan derived to avoid family responsibilities. But when he runs to the guava orchard and becomes a 'Guru' the attitude of the whole of Shahkot and along with his family also shows a drastic change. Sampath displays the true qualities of a hermit. He ignores his family's advice to return to material life. Moreover, he discloses the secrets of Miss Jyostna, and Mr. Singh which he gathers by their letters before giving them out. People take it as something divine on his part. Immediately people change their comments.

'Clearly he has charmed the monkeys

'The Baba has subdued the beasts' (HGO:73)

Sampath's position as a hermit brings money and prestige for the family. His family members are recognized as one of the town's most respected personages. But his peaceful life is shattered by the liquor addicted monkeys and in this hullabaloo, Sampath disappears.

Kulfi's character is literally a rare one painted by Desai. It is a surrealistic picture of the character that develops sometimes in a macabre, at times in a grotesque form, yet it appears quite pleasingly human and real. The writer adds another dimension to this fantastic portrayal by describing her obsession with food. Food, an extension of her fantasies, is a magnified aspect of her reality. Kulfi's constant eating desire is a paradoxical to the famine. The writer almost seems to paint this character in different shades, at times making her larger than life in size, desires and events of her own world. She lives in her own world of fantasy and dreaming of food.

Kulfi's food world is sought to give her relief from her mundane life into an ethereal world of greenery and abundance. The description of Kulfi's food world gives an exotic and fantastic colour to her character. Her whole existence is filled with elements of fantastic realism. She is shown as an eccentric and abnormal human being. Kulfi does not speak much, but her silences, actions and expressions are very suggestive of her inner turmoil, constantly bordering on hysteria.

Mr. Chawla is sketched by Desai as a very meticulous father a total contrast to Sampath and Kulfi. He has his own style to dominate the family members. He is very practical and keeps his involvement with many matters to the minimum because, "oddness like aches and pains, fits of tears and lethargy always made him uneasy and he has a fear of these uncontrollable messy puddles of life, the sticky humans of things" (HGO:6). The conflicts marked out by the writer in Mr. Chawla and Kulfi are in sharp contrast like the opposite poles. Mr. Chawla realizes the commercial prospects of a Monkey Baba. He immediately starts the business and exploits the situation. So he taps many resources for improvement in arrangements for his family and visitors in the orchard. He manages the hospital facility, electricity line for light with the help of the electrician, lays a network of water pipe leading from an appropriate hole made in one of the main water pipes and also manages supply of provisions from a shop in the town as "a special courtesy" (HGO: 90). He sets a fine business by approaching businessmen, hanging advertisements all over the orchards etc. Mr. Chawla amasses a large wealth on the blind faith of the society in hermit, his magical power of fortune telling and superstition. He understands his son's mind well and so manipulates the situations to save Sampath from all trouble from the spy or the visitors by limiting the visitors hours "the hours of lunch and dinner" (HGO :104). Mr. Chawla's commercial mind works properly. When the cordial relations between Sampath and the monkeys turn sour, Mr. Chawla

immediately runs to appeal the official to intervene and maintain “Sanctity and peace in Shahkot” (HGO:132).

Desai also excels in delineating minor characters. Pinky, Sampath’s sister is sketched as a modern girl with her obsession to look smart. She is quite superior to Sampath. Through Pinky the writer sketches the character of an Indian girl on the threshold of marriage. The family is worried about their girl. Pinky elopes with a boy when she realises ... “no one cared that the life of Pinky Chawla has been rudely interrupted ..” (HGO:80). She is all alone in her attempt to maintain her high position in the ‘bazaar society’ and is frustrated, discovering her own ways to get married. Pinky is also an eccentric who expresses her love in a very strange manner.

Sampath’s grandmother Ammaji is a typical grandmother who cares for her grandson. Her positive attitude is seen when she says that Sampath is destined for something great. Her attitude towards her daughter-in-law is praiseworthy. Kulfi an eccentric barely does the work or daily chores, Ammaji without any complain does the work. She has the ability to understand her daughter-in-law and console her son who often is enraged because of Kulfi’s mad behaviour. She has loving and cordial relations with all the family members. She proves to be very helpful to Chawla family during Sampath’s stay in the orchard. After observing the pictures of babies drawn by her daughter-in-law on the wall, Ammaji thought of “some mysterious osmotic process, influence the formation of her grandchild”(HGO:7), an opinion drawn by a traditional and religious woman brought up in a society dominated by patriarchal supervision.

Thus Kiran Desai draws her major and minor characters beautifully.

Setting

As far setting is concerned, Desai presents a kaleidoscopic picture of an Indian town. It is a fictitious town with its usual facade of bazaars,

schools, a degree college, government offices, banks and inactive monotonous inhabitants. The novel opens with the backdrop of Shahkot wilting of intense heat. It is late September and monsoon has not arrived. Very artistically Desai portrays the famine of Shahkot, "That summer the heat had enveloped the whole of Shahkot in a murky yellow haze. The clutter of roof tops and washing lines that usually stretched all the way to the foothills at the horizon grew blurred and merged with the dust-filled sky"(HGO:1). Shahkot is seen to be experiencing the highest temperatures in the country. Proposals are sent by the people to drive monsoon winds over Shahkot. Desai sketches the arrival of the rain so truly that one experiences the monsoon while reading the description of it. In the novel many details of Shahkot are revealed, for example the house of Chawla's, the way Sampath goes to the post-office, post-office of the town. Details of Shahkot market, and cinema house make the reader feel that he has gone through the bazaar. After Sampath's elopement, the setting of the novel is shifted to the guava orchard on the outskirts of the town, owned by the old District Judge of Shahkot, before the government declared the land to be part of area reserved for national forest. Description of nature in this novel is fantastic. It provides backgrounds and to the setting in the fantastic world. "Kiran Desai uses names, descriptions, about plant, flowers trees, rocks, animals, birds, fishes and similar non-human entities in abundance, creating a fantastic world very impressively and in unique manner," as observed by Shubha Mishra (2008:31).

Through her setting Desai reveals man's nature of exploitation and how the orchard is converted into a township. Sampath's father "envisions to change the orchard into a modern complex with a temple and star facilities for the pilgrims and an environment, he could keep control of" (HGO:127). The time span of the novel is like a traditional novel right from the birth of Sampath to his twenty years. Desai consciously reveals the atmosphere suitable for the events or episodes, for example, the famine

described creates tense atmosphere. Arrival of monsoon creates atmosphere of salvation of the famine cursed land. Description of the post-office creates dull, lazy atmosphere. Thus Desai skillfully changes the atmosphere according to the episodes. Sampath's brooding shows the atmosphere of insecurity he feels. Monkey menace has revealed the atmosphere of terrorism in the orchard.

Desai has been hailed by critics for the language she uses. She experiments with the language. She uses language sensuously. The similes, images and metaphors are strikingly different presenting parallel levels of perceptions and making her descriptions very extra ordinary.

Kiran Desai makes use of simple English that makes her style easy and transparent. She does not use archaic words to express her feelings through the narrative. She herself has confessed her obsession with food that we find reflected in the book depicting Kulfi's obsessivity with food and cooking. Details of Kulfi's cooking and number of exotic dishes she prepares add a different flavour to the novel. She has used many literary devices like humour and irony that add to the readability of the novel.

The language has lucidity, clarity, ease and spontaneity. Her language abounds in sweet sounding compound words, transferred epithets and metaphoric phrases, alliterations, for example, to show Sampath's absurdness, she has used such words for different places: Bombalapetty, Pudukkottai, Aurangabad, Tonk, Coimbatore, Koovappally, Piploo, Thimpu, Kampala, Cairo, Albuquerque(HGO:33,34).

She has also used felicitious compound words such as,

"Jewel-like, bettle-like, deep-scented, deep-hearted, world of pepper-corn berries (HGO:21) thin-ridged (HGO:16) strange-feathered (HGO:33) calm-looking, cacoon-like(HGO:49), over-reacting(HGO:82), colour-co-ordinated (HGO:58)

Furthermore the following are the felicitous adjectives: Milky clouds, good-humouredly (HGO:55), bottle-brush (HGO:63), diaphanous waves (HGO:81), Jewel-green(HGO:50), green-slained (HGO:50), finely powdered beetle, Kohl-rimmed eyes(HGO:128).

The examples of alliterations used in the novel are as below:

- I would like,“Pheasants, peacocks, pomegranates,said Kulfi (HGO:25).
- Radishes, Are those Radishes? No Potatoes, Potatoes? No Radishes (HGO:45).
- They rose, only to settle again, Coo, fuss, coo fuss. (HGO:44).
- People used them for fruit and firewood (HGO:55).
- daughter of crazy family as Ammaji has conjectured but the crazy daughter of a crazy family as he himself has surmised. (HGO:65).
- He must have gone through a thorough and complete transformation. (HGO:73).
- Run, run, run. Run, Ammaji, Drop the ice cream and run!(HGO:85).

One can observed the metaphoric phrases and similes as below:

- He is a crazy person (HGO:56)
- Now you are really kheema kebab (HGO:43)
- She should hide her face, pink as a rosebud in the fold of her sari(HGO:58)
- The Chawlas watched as the bus veered off the road like a crazy beetle and moved towards them in a cloud of dust. (HGO:59)
- She was scrawny and dark.’ like a crow’(HGO:59).
- The burgeoning of spirits that has carried him so far and so high up fell from him like a gust of wind that comes out of nowhere, rustles through the trees and melts into nothing like a ghost(HGO:50)

While experimenting with the language to present the facts in a fictitious way, Desai has also enriched her style. The style opted by her to narrate

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard can be labeled as humorous and hilarious satirical. Language experimentation and writer's trait to bear a comic attitude towards tragic and comic events gives the novel a post-modern view. This has helped Desai to flourish her style of writing. Though she is not treating an uncommon theme still her novel is hailed as a fantastic novel. The author has tried to present reality engrossed in fantasy. The story of the novel is not based on only imaginary creation but has a realistic base. Humour prevails throughout the novel.

Desai's satire is mild to suit the novel in lighter vein. She has satirised many things in the novel, firstly the government office, marriage institution, government officials, superstitious people becoming prey of the blind faith etc. She has particularly satirised the Indian attitude behind it for example, how people view the government property. Through lucid style Desai fantastically satirises the reality she observes in the government office. A cross-section of a government office is depicted by her in the novel. Sampath is in Government service, a statement made by Mr. Chawla creates a picture of government office where people enjoyed afternoon siestas, tea-boys running up and down, free medical aids, free medical check-ups, privileges of pensions, gas connections etc. along with this in country of festivals like India, people enjoying holidays. Desai shows Shahkot's post-office where the staff is engaged in the wedding preparations of Mr. D.P.S., the senior officer. Similarly Desai satirises the careless attitude of people towards public property. The novel describes the barbed wire fence that erected about the post-office compound was within no time dismantled by the people and used for their personal needs, for example, curtain hooks, gate latch, fencing the houses etc. One more attempt of the writer to satirize the human mind of exploiting the helpless is Mr. Chawla who embarked on a lucrative business when his son is rendered as a Tree Baba is an example of the exploitation.

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE in THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS

Kiran Desai's second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* tries to explore and put before us almost each contemporary international issue such as globalization, terrorism, multi-culturalism, immigration and economic inequality. This novel is a postmodern historiographic metafiction. According to Jesse Matz (2004:134), 'Metafiction' typically gives us narrators who constantly think about the ways they are telling their stories. Metafiction shifts the focus back from showing to telling. While discussing the narrative technique used by Desai, we see the use of the third person omniscient narrator narrating the story of the novel. Omniscient narrative technique enables the writer to control and manipulate the novelist's world in such a way as to control and sustain his reader's interest in the story and subsequent narrative movement. Being a third person omniscient narrator, the writer is able to dive into the minds of her characters, explain their acts and also to present the characters' views or thoughts on men and the matters handle in the novel. The tense system used by Desai in this novel to narrate the tale is unstable, switching erratically between the narrative preterite and the historical present. The narrative moves backward and forward. While narrating the present she goes into the past. For dealing with the past, Desai has used technique of flash back or stream of consciousness. This particularly we see with the judge Jemubhai Patel who is triggered by a present situation is lost in the past, his life moves in front of him, right from his childhood, education, journey to England and back, service as a Magistrate etc. Sometimes the judge himself reveals his past, at times the cook is shown to narrate the life of judge and his wife, for example, when his orphaned grand-daughter arrives at Cho Oyu, he finds himself upset and disturbed. This makes the past incidents move in front of his eyes.

The future judge, then called only Jemubhai—or Jemu—has been serenaded at his departure by two retired members of military band hired by his father-in-law. They have stood on the platform between benches labelled “Indians Only” and Europeans only”, dressed in stained red coats with dull metallic ricrac unraveling about the sleeves and collars. As the train left the station, they played “Take me Back to Dear Old Blighty”, a tune they remembered was appropriate to the occasion of leaving. The judge was accompanied by his father. At home, his mother was weeping because she has not estimated the imbalance between the finality of good-bye and the briefness of the last moment.(TIL:)

At some parts of the novel the characters are in direct dialogue with each other. Here Desai tries to narrate the novel through dramatic presentation, for example, the dialogue between the cook and the doctor.

“What do you have now.”

Chun Chun?”

“No THUN THUN.”

The next visit. “Are you better”

“ Better but still.... “ Thun Thun?”

“ No doctor,” he would say very seriously “Chun Chun”(TIL:72)

In some parts of the novel, the novelist appears to be silent present and the characters are made to narrate. The following speech reveals the novelist’s silent present.

“No speak English,” he always said to mad people starting up conversation in this city, to thirasable ornery burns and Bible folk dressed in ornate bargain basement suits and hats, waiting on street corners, getting their moral and physical exercise chasing after infidels. Devotees of the church of Christ and the Holy Zion, born again handing out pamphlets that gave him up-to-date million –dollar news of the devil’s activities.” The SATAN IS WAITING TO

BURN YOU ALIVE.” Screamed the head lines.
 “YOU DON’T HAVE A MOMENT TO LOOSE
 (TIL:267).

The above speech is the thought of Biju and not the writer. For expressive purpose Desai has used playful parody. The cross culture encounter is narrated in a humorous style by Desai in her novel,

Gyan and Sai- She thought of the two of them together, of their fight over Christmas; It was ugly, and how badly it contrasted with the past. She remembered her face in his neck, his arms and legs over and under, bellies fingers, here and there, so much so that a times she kissed herself “Jesus is coming,” read a sign on the landslide reinforcements as they nose-dived to the Teesta. “To become a Hindu,” someone has added in chalk underneath This struck Father Booty as very funny, but he stopped laughing when they passed the Amul bill board. Utterly Butterly Delicious- “Plastic? How can they call it butter and cheese? It’s not. You could use it for waterproofing (TIL:194).

There is a discussion about the monks who first are very grateful to the Indians but now wanted the Americans to take them. “God they’re so hand some, “ said Uncle Potty,. “who wants them to leave?” He remembered the time he and father Booty has first met ... their admiring eyes on the same monk in the market... the start of a grand friendship.. “Everyone says poor Tibetans – poor Tibetans,” Lola continued, “ but what brutal people, barely a Dalai Lama survived – they are all popped off before their time. That Potala Palace- the Dalai Lama must be thanking his lucky stars to be in India instead, better climate, and let’s be honest, better food. Good far mutton momos. “ Noni: “ But he must be vegetarian, no?” “These monks are not vegetarian. What fresh vegetables grow in Tibet? A “What a situation,” said Uncle Potty.” The army is vegetarian and the monks are gobbling down meat”(TIL:196)

Desai brilliantly devises a method to narrate a multi-layered story. First she constructs the gathering insurgency itself as a larger frame work and plot, and then locates the stories of her characters within it. From the very first chapter the novelist make us aware of the insurgency and most of the chapters in the novel depict its presence, that insurgency seems to constitute the backdrop of the novel. Desai has effectively combined narration of the story and development of the insurgency simultaneously.

Desai's mode of narration is quite experimental and is called " hybrid narration" by Anand Patil (2008-90). He further remarks that Desai's narration is " formalized by character's consciousness plus author's ironic vision" The traditional aesthetic of impersonality of the author has not only been challenged by the post modernists but also declared the author's death. Desai's skill is seen in presenting the narrative in few lines but they speak volumes. This is observed in Chapter Seven when Sai describes her grandfather, "Oh, Grandfather! more lizard than human. Dog more human than dog" (TIL:32) In Chapter Eight when being an orphan Sai is sent to her grandfather's house as he is her only relative the only relative. He was silly to be upset by Sai's arrival to allow it to trigger this revisitation of his past. No doubt, the trunks has jogged his memory of Miss S. Mistry, St. Augustines Convent. Mr. J.P. Patel and S.S. Strathnover.(TIL:37).

Desai mostly ignores the traditional way of narration. Even for portraying reality, she makes multiple uses of reported speech that is mostly uncompleted. It becomes evident in the chapters concerning Biju's illegal stay in America. The insult, the humiliation, the problems he faces because he is not a green card holder. He has to do low- paid jobs in the kitchens of the restaurants and live in the basements. Only in five lines in a separate section of the Tenth Chapter, she conveys the immigrant culture as well as Biju's life as a waiter. "The food is cold," the customer complained: soup arrived cold! Again ! The rice is cold each and every time!" "I'm also cold" Biju said losing his temper. "Pedal faster," (TIL:52) said the owner. In the

Twenty Fourth chapter she shows his pathetic condition of the place he stays. "One chewed Biju's hair at night, "For its nest," said Jeev." "It's expecting, I think" (). They took to creeping up and sleeping on the tables. At day break they shuffled back down before Harish arrived, "Chalo, Chalo, another day, another dollar"(TIL:147). Desai has used inverted commas when she quotes direct speech of the characters. Humour, satire and irony are effectively employed in such short passages and broken dialogues.

Anand B Patil (2008:97) in his article observes, "Desai flaunts and exaggerates and thus exposes the foundations of this instability; the fact the novels are constructed through a continuous assimilation of everyday historical forms of communication." Thus Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* has a complex interwoven structure of past and present, crisscrossing throughout the narratives, the story weaves a pattern of intertwined lives and times. The novel presents an authentic contemporary picture of life lived in the shadows of illusions of the past.

Plot

The plot of *the Inheritance of Loss* appears to be complex, episodic with lots of events taking place that are complete in themselves. The plot construction of the novel is in zigzag manner. Incidents of past and present intermingle. The plot is not a linear but with divergent streams and interwoven subplots. The plot is fragmented in nature. Gathering Insurgency seems to be the main plot at the backdrop of the novel with other subplots such as Jemubhai Patel's life story, Sai-Gyan love-affair, and Biju representing the immigrant life. But Desai's focus runs parallel on all the episodes without making any one of them prominent. The plot of the novel can be seen in terms of series of setbacks, beginning with robbery of guns to Biju's returning penniless with a ladies gown, the only garment covering his body. Being a post-modernist novel, the plot does not have traditional beginning, middle and end. Instead, the story is proposed to be a reality that

is tossed in between past and present. The events juxtapose between present and past. The novel opens with the gun robbery, that has in actual later connection. Sai's arrival in the Second Chapter makes judge revisit his past life. In between we learn of Biju's life in America, so the events are arranged so as to give them a face of fact rather than fiction. This plot construction enhances the effect of the narration making the novel postmodern. The plot appears loose thread bare. There is no such one story developing chronologically but many events put together. The conflict that arises in the plot creates interest in the readers. The element of conflict is depicted on political, cultural and economic level. The conflict between the insurgents and the government is political. The insurgents demand a separate Gorkha State and so are creating trouble for both the people and the government. Secondly conflict is seen in different cultures. Sai a westernised Indian and Gyan a Gorkha, love-affair between them suffers due to heterogeneous cultural backgrounds. Kalimpong seems to be place where people from different cultures are found to be residing. Lola and Noni-Bengali sisters, Father Booty- Swiss man etc. Conflict of Economic inequality prevails throughout the plot. It is seen between the Judge and cook. This becomes more desperate in the Second Chapter when the police investigate Biju's belongings that are bare enough to reveal his poverty.

Characterization

Desai's excellency is proved in her vigilant observation of the behaviour, minutely revealing the details of her characters which she brings to life in her narrative. In her novel she has neither tried to create saints nor villains.. She presents just ordinary people leading the best lives they can using whatever resources are available. Her characters are the real persons coming from all cultures and all strata of society. From high to low she depicts all men and women with their faults and follies. They sacrifice for the sake of their children, behave indifferent towards other people. love, reject traditional ways and values of life, rediscover what is important to

them. Sometimes they are deceived, under go humiliation and from all this they learn and grow and sometimes have ill considerations about their lives. As Neerja Arun (2008:114), says “Dealing with all levels of society and many different cultures, Desai shows life’s humour and brutality, its whims and harshness, and its delicate emotions and passionate commitments”. Desai has delineated characters from different cultural backgrounds. She portrays them in contrast to each other, for examples, Sai-Gyan both have different cultures as well as come from different social backgrounds. Despite their heterogeneous cultures they fall in love with each other, but love shatters as they both fail to understand and have different temperament. Sai stands for Westernized Indian whereas Gyan is Indo-Nepali. Similarly Judge-cook are in contrast to each other because they both are from different cultures but economic inequality demarks a line between them that they remain opposite to each other. Even uncle Potty and Father Booty besides being friends are temperamentally different and also have different backgrounds. Uncle Potty is an Indian citizen while Father Booty is a Swiss man. Uncle Potty is a drunkard who is always found horizontal on the contrary Father Booty is a hardworking man dreaming to improve the economic status of the hills by introducing dairy business. Though it is not a feministic novel, Desai’s canvass is populated by many female characters compared to male character. Of them Sai and Nimi are the major whereas minor female characters are in large number. These are products of culture and come from different strata of the society such as the rich, poor, elitist housewives, widows, spinsters or virgins. Desai like her mother Anita Desai tries to reveal the inner landscape of her characters and acknowledges the reader with their desires, love, hate and longings. The female characters are from in and abroad India which depict a picture of heterogeneous feminine identity. Among all these characters, the character of Nimi is flat whereas of Sai is on the way of being round. Nimi’s character is quite a common one, a female bearing the male dominance, before and after marriage, one who is just like a commodity, valueless without rich dowry, handed over by one to

other. No one cares for her opinion, and emotions and so she lives a secluded life from birth to death. In fact finds life in death more comfortable than she had lived with her husband, the judge. Through the character of Nimi, Kiran Desai sketches the category of countless, nameless, and faceless married Indian women victimized every year. Desai has characterised Sai by using two points of view. The judge admired her for her colonized traits, western manners like himself, which made him feel guilty for not giving his daughter a chance. It is for the same reason Gyan her tutor and lover hates her and betrays her. As a female, Sai stands in contrast to Nimi, Nimi is submissive and has to accept death meekly, on the contrary, Sai emerges spirited, fights with Gyan for his betrayal and hopes to become independent fulfilling her father's dream. Vandana Pathak (2008:141). is her article observes "Desai in the female characterization throws light upon the hierarchical structure of power levels in an andocentric society. The multiple female characters analyse the tenor of human relationships on the basis of caste, class, gender, race and other social institutions". Desai has painted multicultural female characters on the canvass of her novel ranging from Lepchas, Bhutias, Nepalis and Bengalis, Gujarathis. She is successful in infusing in the readers a sense of sympathy for them. To some extent Desai like her mother has painted the inner mindscape of her characters. For that purpose she has made use of physical description, dialogues, self utterances and comments in painting characters. To present her characters the author makes use of various devices such as gaps and breaks, metaphors, double or multiple voices, broken syntax, repetitions, cumulative rather than linear structure and open ending. Comparatively male characters are few in number. Among them are the judge, the cook, Gyan and Biju are the major characters, while uncle Potty and Father Booty are minor characters. Their virtues are valorized but the relations are maintained and nurtured by females. Through the judge she sketches a anglophile man imitating English manners and sacrificing relations for that purpose. While a loving-caring father is painted in the cook. Biju stands for the illegal immigrants suffering

in the alien land, whose dream aspirations are disconnected from their roots. “It was horrible what happened to Indians abroad nobody knew but other Indians abroad. It was dirty like rodent secret (TIL:256). Uncle Potty and Father Booty are humorous characters providing a vein of relief.

The setting of the novel

The Inheritance of Loss is partly in India and partly in States. Indian province Kalimpong at the foot hills of Kanchenjunga is the place where novel takes place. It is the geographical area that Desai has chosen to make the backdrop of her novel extremely beautiful. The novel begins with the description of Kanchenjunga. “Briefly visible above the vapor, Kanchenjunga was a far peak whittled out of ice gathering the last of the light, a plume of snow blown high by the storms at its summit”(TIL:1) Sai the protagonist of the novel observes Kanchenjunga, “Wizard phosphor scene with a shiver”. Cho Oyu is the residence of the judge. When Sai at the age of nine was delivered there from St. Augustine’s in Dehra Dun, “the taxi had dropped her off and the moon had stone fluorescently enough to read the name of the house-Cho Oyu-she waited, a little stick figure at the gate, her smallness emphasizing the vastness of the landscape”. The setting here is itself enough to depict Sai’s lonely orphaned life. In this way Desai skillfully manages to sketch the landscape, so as to reveal the condition of the characters. The setting in between shifts from Kalimpong to USA, New York where Biju the cook’s son is working in the kitchens of the American Restaurants. The basements she describe reveal the pathetic life of the illegal immigrants who have to stay there for lack of green card. “Biju at Le colonial for the authentic colonial experience. On top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native, Colombian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian, Gambian (TIL:21). Biju joined a shifting population of men camping out near the fused box behind the boiler, and in odd-snapped corners that once were pantries, maids’ rooms, laundry rooms, and storage rooms at the bottom of what had been a single-family home, the entrance still adorned with a scrap of colored mosaic in the shape

of a star. The men shared a yellow toilet; the sink was a tin laundry trough. There was one fuse box for the whole building, and if anyone turned on too many appliances or lights, PHUT the entire electricity went, and the residents screamed to nobody, since there was nobody, of course, to hear them. (TIL:51,52). This description itself makes clear of the plight of the illegal immigrants in the alien land. Sketching of the haat day in Kalimpong, the festive crowd thronged to the market in high pitch of excitement. Every one reveals in their best clothes reveal the multicultural people in provincial Kalimpong. "Nepali" ladies with golden nose rings, Tibetan women with braids and prayer beads, who had walked far away to villages to sell muddy mushrooms covered with brackish leaves or greenery, already half cooked in the sun. Powders, oils and ganglions of roots were proffered by Lepta medicine men, other stalls offered yak hair, untidy and rough as the hair of demons and sacks of miniature dried shrimp with oversized whiskers there were smuggled foreign goods from Nepal, perfumes, jean jackets, electronics etc.(TIL:83-84).Desai's splendid skill of observation makes her portray the setting in such a way that the reader himself feels one with the provincial area depicted in the novel.

Language and Style

The unique style of Desai has made her stand apart from her contemporary writers. She has employed new techniques in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. It makes the novel a bit different. She has experimented freely with language and combined fact and fiction. Blurb says, Francisco Goldman, (the author of *The Divine Husband*) is highly appreciative of Kiran Desai's novel and remarks:" The writing is extraordinary, astonishingly observant and inventive, joyously alive." The use of sentence construction, experiment in arrangement of words and use of linguistic devices are reflected in the novel. A good play with words, phrases are seen in the novel. Her novel seems to be filled with charming phrases, elegant sentences, felicitous expressions, throbbing sentiments and

incredible kindness. Using words with the aid a perfect device, she has been successful in rendering her feelings and emotions. She has used some words from regional languages. To introduce fun and comedy she has shown the cook imitating English language, It his accent and pronunciation create a funny atmosphere, for example,

“Bed tea,” the cook would shout” Baaad tee”(TIL:61)

Desai has made use of code switching throughout the novel .The Indian words uttered by characters like the cook and Biju depict their illiteracy towards English language, making the novel more Indian more provincial. Here are some examples of code switching. When Sai arrives at Cho Oyu at the time of night the car driver rattled and shouted. “Oi, Koihai? Khansama? Uth Koi hai? Uth Khansama?” (TIL: 19). The cook is shocked to know that all these years Sai was not in a foreign country but in Dehra Dun. “Dehra Dun!” Devasted, “Kamaal hai, said the cook. (TIL:24). Some more Indian words used in the novel are No Pertatas: green Termatas (TIL:41). “Huzoor!” (TIL:45). Tikka masala! Chicken Tikka masala! ?(TIL:46). Not only Indian characters of Desai are made to use Indian words but leaving abroad also use Indian words. “Namaste, Kusum Auntie, aayiye, baethiya, Khayiye!” “Dhanyawad Shukria”(TIL:50). Biju sings old Hindi songs “Oh yeh Ladki zarasi dewani lagti hai..” (TIL:51). Saeed saeed sings “Mera Joota hai japani...” and Bombay se aaya mera dost.. oi” (TIL:53).

“Namaste babaji” (TIL:75).

“atta”(TIL:86).

“Shrikhand”, “eendo,”(TIL:90).

“Bai, dekho aesa hai...”(TIL:95).

“Biju beta” (TIL:95).

“Peepal tree,” (TIL:103).

“Angres zaise” (TIL:105).

Hota hai hota hai

“Bitch, where, cunt, Sali”(TIL:181).

dried churbi (TIL:180).

“Hushbhi Hushbhi Hushbhi Bandar bandar” (TIL:185).

“La Phone La! telephone!” (TIL:229). etc.

To enhance the feelings or the expressions, she has used reduplication mostly in the novel.

Hump Hump wiggle Waggle (TIL:15).

hanky panky, crick-crack, (TIL:17).

knick knacks (TIL:44).

\chun chun, Thun, Thun (TIL:72).

pooky pooky (TIL:78).

Hushbhi Hushbhi (TIL:101).

honky tonky (TIL:106).

Dum Dum (TIL:131).

Phata Phat(TIL:131).

Mun Mun (TIL:131).

Harish Harry (TIL:146). etc.

Desai’s skill resides in selection of words, even the very sounds are reproduced to create the necessary effect, for example, rustling of the wind and the grass, the twittering of birds, the croaking of the frogs the whistling of the owl, the ringing of the phone, the blowing of taxi horns and so on.

Kiran Desai’s Indian origin is revealed when the characters speak out exclamations from Hindi vernaculars.

“Arre Chalo Chalo” (TIL:147).

Bilkul bekar (TIL:139).

“Arre, Biju.. to sunao Kahani: She always said “batao what’s the story?” (TIL:146).

“Bepk kuph” (TIL:182). etc.

Oddities in pronunciation are captured through deliberate misspelling as in “Vhaat deeference, Eeendya, Caantreey”(TIL:138).

“Naaty boy”(TIL:189).

“dallors”(TIL:298-299).

many more like ahffend, Ah'm whaat, taleephone, have a already, toeald, taaalk, relateev, caantrey again, poiiiinth, gurllll, beoog man, reech man, vhat you say? ya vanna nice cheekan kurry? Half 'n' haf, etc.

In many words vocal trails or accentual word of the characters or the speaker is noticed. for example

“maroooooned”(TIL:100).

“bee-oo-tee-ful country (TIL:131).

‘care for a drop of she-rr-y , mye dee-a-r?

Inflection in the voice is observe in

“Poetatto,” Toematto (TIL:131).

WHEES-KAY (TIL:52).

‘oh myee Godl”(TIL:96).

‘aaaiii” (TIL:78).

“haat day”(TIL:83)

“ I am going crazeeeee(TIL:78)

In the novel we come across use of block letters. It seems they are purposely used to indicate the high pitch voice of the character

“WHAAT” (TIL:137).

Ah” AAHM beef” (TIL:137).

“EXCEPT US” (TIL:158).

BECAUSE I’M BORED TO DEATH BY YOU, THAT’S WHY”
(TIL:163).

“THEY DON’T WANT YOU!!!!” (TIL:164).etc.

Sometimes Desai has omitted punctuation to convey a sense of breathless narration, generally that is observed in hotel when the waiter describes the menu.

“Mutton curry, Mutton pulao vegetable curry” “vegetable pulao... (TIL:207).

In the same way the cook breathless had presented a string of recipes of puddings and tarts that he can make. The names of the puddings are “

Banana fritter pineapple fritter apple
fritter.....

gooseberryupsidedownplumsideddownpechupsideddownraisinupsideddown.--- (TIL:64).

Desai excels in using of similes and metaphors in her narration which are testimony to the grace and quality of her imagination .

Similes:- Memories like diamonds(TIL:79).

.. the world resembled a map from a divine perspective (P 141). .. moving an expressionless face like a sunflower (TIL:143). Jemubhai's new second hand car .. looked more like a friendly stout cow than an automobile (TIL:172). lived like a leaf in the apple tree (TIL:199). Like soft birds flying you should let the words free (TIL:200). Kanchenjunga smoking like a volcano aragir (TIL:231). Watched the invisible mountain sides opposite as the falling lanterns of drunks plummeted like shooting stars (TIL:289).

Khadija with gauzy gray eyes and the voice of a cat (TIL:79). A conference of old men with elegant goat faces, smoking bidis (TIL:300). The five peaks of Kanchenjunga turned golden with the kind of luminous light that made you feel, it briefly that truth was apparent. All you needed to do was to reach out and pluck it (TIL:324).

Desai has used felicitous alliterations : you had to live according to something. you had to find your dignity. The meat charred on the grill, the bold beaded on the surface, and then the blood also to bubble and boil. Those who could see a difference between a holy cow and an unholy cow would win (TIL:136). Ah jealously, jealously” they inoculated themselves

in advance so on criticism would get through during the visit “an just jealous, jealous, jealous of our dallars (TIL:299).

“Gorkhaland for Gorkhas (TIL:214)

As the butterfly fluttered beguilingly on a cable of the bridge (TIL:216)

Desai excels in use of epithets such as terrified measure, (TIL:125). wrathful smile, (TIL:141). “ a ghost riding a snow lion” (TIL:141). No visitor came with their rich city fat, to burden scabies nags on pony rides. An orgy of blood and feathers ensued, a great squawking kerfulle, headless birds running about spilling guts and excrement (TIL:237). Use of imagery is strikingly vibrant. It has been an effective tool in the hands of the author. A few examples listed below will make the point clear. Making her thoughts more appealing and commencing, Desai found no more perfect a such as simile, metaphor Hence the author has applied imagery through the figures of speech, for example, ‘Mostly he sat on a folding chair, silently moving on expression face like a sun flower, a blank handicapped insistence following the sun, the only goal left in his life to match the two’ (TIL:143). She yawned again, elaborately like a lion letting it bloom forward,’ you are like slaves metaphorical expressions used by the author convey the imagery. for example, “clown-nosed breast,”(TIL:175). ‘Buddhist wheel of life’(TIL:175).”Rooster – snake-pig(TIL:175). ‘Carved wooden city of temples”(TIL:181). “A fixed and unembarrassed eye” (TIL:184). Felicitous adjectives are found all through the novel.

Similarly Desai’s word game is depicted in hybridization leading to new coinage. Harish-Harry Gaurish-Garry Dhansukh-Danny (TIL:138). Madhu Kamara(2008:209)observes, “The prose is poetic which is another attraction to the reading of the novel.” Thus applying various devices Desai enriches her language.

To conclude, Kiran Desai succeeds in creating her own mark by her experimental and innovative skill. She has omniscient point of view but her novel depicts many tools of post-modernism. She plays with language and mixes' high and popular culture. She skillfully uses narrative and linguistic devices, It achieves the fragmentation of narrative architecture, non-linear time schemes and the deconstruction and reconstruction of standard English