

Challenges of Survival and Revival: A Study of Anita Desai's *Bye- Bye Blackbird* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

Komal Rashmi,
Research Scholar, Dept. of English
Patliputra University, Patna

Dr. (Prof) Narendra Kumar
Supervisor, HOD of English
A.N. College, Patna, PPU

Abstract

Indian diaspora authors frequently discuss their connection to their homeland, as well as their feelings of alienation and rootlessness. Furthermore, they suffer obstacles and vulnerabilities in their adoptive nations, which can differ by location. The works of Anita Desai and Kiran Desai depict the crisis in the lives of the diaspora of two generations. The study focuses on the plight of Indian Immigrants in other countries taking into account their cultural difficulties, their dislocation, and the disappointments and suffering that follow and also their psychological dilemma of belongingness. It primarily addressed the self- awareness of educated Indian immigrants, who are always torn between accepting and rejecting a world they have been taught to appreciate and cherish. By concentrating on the immigrant's attraction, rejection and exploitation by vested interests in the novels *Bye-Bye Blackbird* and *The Inheritance of Loss*, it examines the difficulties and dilemmas they face. Recuperation and identity loss are the novels' central themes. The main character's self-realization, loss, and atonement during the globalization era are also examined in this paper.

Key Words: Diaspora, Globalization, Dislocation, Dilemma, Recuperation.

INTRODUCTION

Modern transportation and high-tech communication equipment have changed people's lifestyles and encouraged millions of people to migrate or settle in different parts of the world in search of better-paying jobs and increased security. Scientific advancements and innovations have also brought the entire world to a single platform for interaction. One of the most significant issues in the modern, globalized world is migration. In this ultramodern period, globalization has brought along numerous blessings along with some major problems including identity crisis, nation-nationality question, trans-cultural, trans-national identity, and social belongingness, among others. Third-world countries' daily lives are being impacted by the growing commercialization and homogenization of western goods, which is having an impact on national autonomy, social cohesion, and economics. Globalization is a strategy that the West uses to shape other countries' perceptions of them to suit their purposes. For those who adored the west without question, Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* are the strongest predictor of culture shock and identity loss. The lives of hyphenated persons struggling with their

sense of self and place in the world as a result of western ideology have been depicted by both the writers. The portrayal in the novel is so realistic that each character raises questions about our traditional values while addressing challenges from our everyday life and our affection for western ideologies.

Owing to its narrative framework, which incorporates changes in time, place, and point of view, the book effectively illustrates the precarious situation of characters who must contend with constant social and economic pressures that lead to conflicts between national identities and transnational belonging as well as traditional values and assimilation. Migration, decolonization, postcolonial conditions, and the desire for self-assertion serve as the backdrop for their experiences living abroad. In their attempts to maintain their sense of self, Desai's characters are frequently caught between the demands of assimilation and resistance to this adjustment. These forces, along with the legacy of the colonial past, familial aspirations, cultural conventions, and globalization, shape and modify these characters.

The study takes into account the reasons behind the migrants' relocation from India to England or America, how they developed there, and the particular events that led them to decide to go back home. In her novel *Bye Bye Blackbird*, Anita Desai depicts the development of Adit and Dev, two Indian immigrants living in late 1960s England. Adit, who arrived earlier than Dev, is married to Sarah, an Englishwoman, and is shown as a well-adjusted individual in the most of the novel. But eventually, Adit makes the decision to go back to India, and Dev appears committed to staying in England. In order to comprehend Adit's choice to go back home, the current analysis focuses on her development. *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai depicts parallel migration scenarios from colonial and post-independence India to England and the USA.

In the book *Bye Bye Blackbird*, Anita Desai addresses the psychological issue of isolation and alienation in great detail. It arises from psychological issues such as acclimating to a new environment of prejudice, alienation, racism, hostility, and homesickness. She draws attention to how the three characters in this book—Dev, Adit, and Sarah—feel differently as a result of their diverse cultural background. Dev is an economics student from Calcutta who has recently moved to London at the start of the book. Adit Sen, a friend from school who moved to England with his English wife Sarah after living there for a while, was the host he was staying with. He soon experiences psychological difficulties, feels humiliated as an immigrant, and is ultimately unsure about whether to stay in England longer or to leave. It appears that he perceives instability in his existence insecure and mentally and emotionally tormented. In the early section of the book, Anita Desai captures the dull superficiality and absurdity of Dev's existence in England. She made her opinion known regarding Adit, another protagonist, whose shallow affection for England. He returns to India in the hopes of remaining there after becoming engaged to Sarah, but a lack of better job opportunities forces him to return to England. Despite his claimed

affection for England, he is fundamentally Indian and longs to visit his parents in Calcutta, but that desire was only fleeting. His distaste for London and his feeling of estrangement exacerbate his homesickness. The conflicting opinions of Adit and Sarah highlight the issue and Adit declares his decision to Sarah to go back to India. He says "...I can't live here anymore. Our lives here - they've been so unreal, don't you feel it? Little India in London. All our records and lamb curries and sing-songs, it's all so unreal. It has no reality at all, we just pretend all the time. I'm twenty seven now. I've got to go home and start living a real life." (Desai2022:210). Adit's English wife Sarah married him in the hopes that her husband's exotic and romantic world would fill the void in her life but her dreams got shattered as we see in the words of Desai "Sarah, beside him, wrapped in the customary drabness of her old mackintosh, her face green-tinged with morning sickness and the prospect of travel in this condition, felt herself, on the other hand, fading, fading — like a creature in Alice in Wonderland, in a dream world that bordered on nightmare" (Desai2022:233).

The *Inheritance of Loss* illustrates the terrible effects of power disparities, class-based exploitation, and distorted ideals in this context. These effects are felt by millions of individuals worldwide and are ingrained in the destiny of the book's protagonists. Thus, in the context of migration, diaspora, and globalization, the novel depicts the interaction between various kinds of influence and identity. Under these conditions, writing about globalization may seem like a topic that has just recently gained attention.

The novel, which is set in America, India, and Britain, focuses on the lives of characters who come to New York and those who remain or go back to their native countries. The novel's themes primarily deal with the widespread effects of American capitalism in the context of India's shortened identities as a result of English colonialism's legacy of displacement and dispossession. As a result, the story portrays the individuals' struggles to survive as a result of a breakdown in moral principles and crises related to both personal and societal identities.

After serving as a judge for the Indian Civil Service (ICS) and retiring to his remote Kalimpong home, Jemubhai is a bitter and estranged Anglophile who has lost his sense of Indian identity. His father was a peasant whose job it was to feign witnesses and present them to the court as false testimony. Using the benefit of Indianization, Jemubhai gains admission to one of Cambridge's lower-tier institutions to pursue a career as a magistrate, surpassing his father in status.

After leaving India, he experiences a significant educational and cultural shift in England that has an impact on his identity. He withdraws into his room, lets his landlady refer to him as James, and feels self-conscious about his unpronounceable name, how he pronounces English, and the color and smell of his skin. The description of this protagonist's terrible isolation,

dislocation, and agony drives him to self-abnegation through a taxing work schedule that exacerbates his twisted and nervous mental state. He scarcely talked during his years in England due to his shyness and feeling intimidated by the new and foreign environment. Eventually, he stopped using the first person pronoun "I" and began using "one," as if his subject's perspective was that of anyone.

The primary characters in the book face numerous challenges related to their language, society, and past that weaken both their sense of self as individuals and as a group. Because he is uncomfortable in his own Indian skin, Jemubhai, after receiving an award for his judgeship, clings to everything he has learned to act his English identity, including using a powder puff to whiten his face, when he returns to India. With distinctly English eating, drinking, and tasting habits, Jemubhai puts himself above others in his community and withdraws into self-imposed seclusion. His sense of alienation and self-loathing, which keeps him constantly distant from himself and makes him a stranger in his own homeland with limited language and other sensitivities, exacerbates this: "The judge could live here, in this shell, this skull, with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country, for this time he would not learn the language" (Desai 2006: 29). Jemubhai's ridiculous type of Anglophile, which fuels his self-hatred and scorn for his Indian heritage, other Indians, and his motherland, is linked to his Englishness, a legacy of colonialism.

Desai portrays the protagonists' changes and their respective achievements and failures throughout the book in terms of how they adjust to situations that defy their preconceptions and expectations when different cultures clash. For instance, caught up in an internal battle to comprehend his new circumstances, Biju muses over how he should perceive and respond to various stimuli. Concerned and disheartened by the monetary and mental challenges he faces, Biju appears to be wondering more and more about his identity and the kind of person he is becoming into. His concern that his identity is becoming more fragmented adds to his disenchantment with the chances brought about by the global economy in New York. In contrast to the judge and several other immigrant characters, who saw migration as a means of bettering themselves, Biju always thinks back to his native country and rejects the new culture he has entered. Fearing for his father in the face of escalating violence in his native country, he decides to give up the American ideal and go back home, where he will be impoverished in a way that he can live with. His dissatisfaction with America is therefore instructive, as he comes to the realization that returning home is preferable to trying to fit in with the successful world and attempting to understand his new, estranged self.

The account of his landing in India encapsulates the poignancy of his return and his sense of satisfaction at reestablishing the former order in which he is no longer planets far from himself: But because of his idealized memories of his native country, he is defenseless and ill-prepared

for the anguish, shock, and dispossession brought on by the uprising. The story comes to a dramatic close in which the subaltern struggle against the colonial weight of border-making is characterized by collateral harm caused by the pain of being robbed, undermining the emotional fulfillment and relief of returning home.

CONCLUSION

The storyline of *Bye-Bye Blackbird* and *The Inheritance of Loss* is set across continents and eras and alternates between points of view in brief chapters, highlighting the characters' conflicted responses to the unavoidable social and economic pressures of migration and globalization. The protagonists are stuck between tradition and change as a result of the strains of the global economy and the legacy of colonialism: two universes that are irreconcilable and incompatible at home and abroad. In their exposure to their new circumstances, these characters are tormented by an unwavering sense of multiple exile, away from their home, family, and country—what they hold dearest and miss most. The two stories, which are interwoven and take place on two distinct continents and eras, come together at the intersection of globalization, migration, colonization, and dispossession, along with the opportunities and disruptions that these phenomena bring.

REFERENCES

Chaudhari, Sheetal M. “A Psychological Conflict in Anita Desai’s *Bye Bye the Blackbird*”. *International Journal of Research in all Subjects in Multi Languages*, vol 8, Issue 9, sep, 2020.

Desai, Anita. *Bye-Bye Blackbird*. Orient Paperbacks, 2022.

Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss*. New Delhi : Penguin Books, 2006.

Mastud, Shahaji Subrao. “Loss, Realization and Redemption of Self in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*”. *ResearchGate*, April, 2017.

Pandey, Sanjay Prasad, Imtiyaz Ahmad Wani. “The Crisis of Identity in the Era of Globalisation: a Study of Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*”. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, volume 7, Issue-6S3, April 2019.

STOICAN, Adriana –Elena. “Return Migration in Anita Desai *Bye Bye Blackbird* and Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*”. *ResearchGate*, July, 2014.