TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Relating Religion and Middle Class Mentality in Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, in

Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Masters of Arts in English

By

Tika Raj Paudel

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Tika Raj Poudel has completed his thesis entitled "Relating Religion and Middle Class Mentality in Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*" under my supervision. He carried out his research work from August 15, 2008 to July 28, 2009. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Prakash Subedi

Central Department of English

Date:

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

This thesis entitled "Relating Religion and Middle Class Mentality in Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*" by Mr. Tika Raj Poudel, submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University has been accepted by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of Research Committee

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…… Internal Examiner

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…… External Examiner

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Head

Central Department of English

Date:

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July 2009 Tika Raj Poudel

Abstract

Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is a simple yet touching novel that pictures the mentality of religion-savvy middle class people of India. It is the story of Sampath Chawla of Shahkot, who turns into one of the most revered and worshipped figures, despite the fact that he is an escapist. Through Sampath, Desai exposes the reality of the so-called Babas or Sadhus, who are self claimed messiahs or Know-alls, for the innocent people. However, the fact behind the rise of characters likes Sampath lie in our orthodox nature of viewing and analyzing religion and God.

Contents

I. Contextualizing *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

The present study inquires into the religious mentality persistent in the majority of Indian sub-continent denizens based on Kiran Desai's novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* published in 1998. This first literary venture of the writer deals on a simple, yet common plot, on how a minor boy of no wit and intelligence out-of-nowhere turns into one of the most revered holy man. Through this scenario, Desai highlights the mentality of the middle class Indian people marred by superstition and religious orthodoxy, prominent all over Indian sub-continent nations. As such, this researcher has attempted to investigate the reasons behind the orthodox religious belief that makes a normal man to the height of sacred level taking in view the postcolonial mentality of middle class religion savvy population.

The Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is a brilliant depiction of many of the Indian issues including religious superstition and social orthodoxy rampant in the society. The book presents a pervasive bleakness that has become the characteristic of the people of the postcolonial India as is depicted in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.* The novel has received applause from critics of different sectors for its depiction of postcolonial mentality of the Indian middle class people. This study attempts to investigate the reasons behind the middle class people's mentality on religion and superstition.

People of Indian societies are engulfed in varieties social and religious orthodoxy. It is a common practice to worship stone idol and God, and on top of all they do not hesitate to make God out of common men. The Indian and Nepalese societies are full of such self claimed Babas and Sadhus who claim themselves as the messiahs and soothsayers of the people; however the reality in most cases is just the opposite. They are mere unsuccessful people, who have escaped their home and family to avoid familial and

social responsibilities. Most of the time, their sayings and showings are fraud and mere sham to earn easy money. They are found to be taking undue advantage of the innocent and humble people, cashing on their religious ideologies and beliefs. As their reality is they are no sadhus or revered persons, as the Hindu society takes them for. If not few, most of them are in real terminology 'escapist' people. *The Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is the story of one such Sampath Chawla of Shahkot, a backdrop city of the Indian society.

In cases, such Babas like Sampath are found to be unsuccessful in their life, and are seeking for an alternative to hide their escapist mentality. Then something unusual happens; like Sampath escaping to the guava orchard to escape the family and societal hurdles, and out of now where becomes one of the most revered babas, or 'Monkey Baba,' in case of Sampath. Sampath, the only son of Mr. Chawla a bank clerk is a high school drop out and failure in his profession as a post office clerk. He starts blabbering and chanting some strange things which are not understood by the common folk, however turns into one of the most revered fellows of Shahkot just because some of his words and saying happens to come true to one or two of the fellow visitors. Slowly, the name and fame of Sampath flourishes as the incarnation of a Hindu deity – the 'Monkey Baba.'

Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is a tale of Sampath, the 'Monkey Baba' of Shahkot, a milieu of typical Indian city. Shahkot is home to all sorts of religion savvy people, who are guided and manipulated by religion related aspects and things. People worship the idols, trees, rain, and even make a promise for the birth of their children. Similar is the result of Sampath's birth story. After typical Hindu offerings and promises to do this and that if a son is born, Sampath is born in the family. His birth is of little abnormal in nature, at least in case of relief from the four years old famine that had struck the Shahkot. His birth was marked by a heavy rainfall, which finally ended years of drought in the region, as the narrator describes the scene as:

> Children wrestled and tussled with each other in an exuberance of spirit, while the grown-ups hurried, in this shifting, shadowed light, to get to the market and back, to bring in washing, to carry in string cots. They raised their hands in greeting to each other. 'At last! The monsoon!' Who knew whether it came because of the great fan, the wedding of frogs, the Pied Piper, because of mercurial powers or magician's marvels? And in the end, who cared? The rain had come to Shahkot. (9)

So, when the years of drought was ended and on the same day, Sampath was born, everybody took him as a special gift from the God, and believed that the boy would herald good fortune for the family and the society.

This simple but a next door story of the Indian sub-continent not only has marked the beginning of career of a famous writer Kiran Desai, but also remarked the coming of a new writer in the Indian English literature scenario. Salman Rushdie, a renowned writer, has all praise for this simple but serious technique of exposure of writing. In a comment given on the book, he says, “Lush and intensely imagined. Welcome proof that India’s encounter with the English language continues to give birth to new children, endowed with lavish gifts” (27). He also appreciates the humour presented in the work as, "Kiran Desai has two remarkable gifts – of comedy and of fantasy. Add to this a flair of storytelling and you have the uproarious, whimsical and occasionally stinging *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*" (35).

Desai, daughter of the renowned author Anita Desai, has the inborn story-telling intelligence. As might be expected from the rich input of her cultural background, her first novel is an action packed fast paced novel, with fresh look at life in the sleepy provincial town of Shahkot – a representative town of such spread all over in India. She was born in 1971 in India and until the late 1990s; her identity was limited to being a daughter of a

prominent Indian writer Anita Desai. However, the success of *Hullabaloo* . . . brought her immediate recognition of a new writer in the block. As Rushdie rightly comments on her writings as, "[. . .] "New children, endowed with lavish gifts" (27). Today, after the success of *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) nobody doubts on Rushdie's prediction on young Desai. Her recognition as a writer has been firmly established by the fact that she was awarded with the prestigious Man Booker Prize for the year 2006 for *Inheritance of Loss.* She received her education in India, England, and the United States. Desai was a student in Columbia University's creative writing program when her novel got published. In fact, she took a year off from that program to put things in perspective and write the novel.

Allison DeFrees claims that Desai is at ease, when she is writing. DeFrees on her zeal on writing habit, comments:

> I feel completely alive and happy only while I am writing. The whole process of writing brings me pleasure and an incredible satisfaction. I am at total engagement, when writing. As a writer or a reader, I believe that I am influenced by absolutely everything, that baffles me and, everything that has a forgotten mysticism. (32)

Desai grew up under the influence of Indian writers, but she was wary of getting influenced by any particular style of writing and stayed clear of all books written by Indian authors for a while before and during the time in which she wrote *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.*

Often, she felt she was not making any progress as she attempted to write the novel because she would cut or truncate so much of what she had written. She writes longhand. She tried to write directly on the computer, but it made her self-conscious; she would look on the computer in the midst of the creative process and see it as if it were written on the published page. Rather than seeing it like that, she writes the first draft longhand, and then she transfers the text to the computer and edits it on the computer from then on.

Kiran and her mother, Anita Desai, often rent a villa in a remote part of Mexico and seek inspiration for their work from this isolated spot. Most of their characters in the novel live in the present eclipsed by the colonial past of the country. In *Hullabaloo* . . . Mr. Chawla, the father figure is one of the best examples of colonial mentality character. He has planned ways for his son and daughter. He trains them in English and wants them to follow the English way, which is the stark reality of his inclination to colonial past. Interestingly, Desai presents some characters stuck into their personal past which have nothing to do with colonialism. One such character is Mr. D. P. S. the head of the General Post Office of Shahkot. He is a typical colonial character, who does not hesitate to employ the office staff at the wedding ceremony of his daughter. He orders his fellow staff as:

> 'You will kindly begin the day's work,' said Mr. D. P. S. 'Keep the post office closed. 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. You will kindly make reservations at the railway station. The receipts are to be placed on my table. You will kindly arrange it all. (32)

The staffs at the post office is governmental employees but are treated as personal servants, as if in a colonial era a white *sahib* used to, to his Indian servants.

India, though in the crossroads of development has been able to produce some of the original stories of its own. The turning of failed next door boy, overnight into a revered Baba is, of course, truly an Indian story. Though her first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is like sipping cool, tangy lemonade in the sweltering summer sun. Refreshing and succulent like green guavas of the orchard that Desai has created, the novel once again confirms that Indian writing in English has come to stay.

Kiran does not share the same intensity that her mother, Anita Desai – a famous Indo American writer. She weaves her own potentiality and limitations in her tales. However, in doing so, she is refreshing and does not disappoint her readers in her maddeningly entertaining novels. One of the most difficult parts of the writing process for Desai involves deciding when a piece is finished. She tries to balance the desire to polish and re-polish the work with the need to retain its spontaneous quality, a balancing act she is always working to perfect.

Though, as a daughter of the distinguished Indo-English writer Anita Desai, Kiran does not share the same intensity that her mother weaves in her potent tales. But she does not disappoint in producing a maddeningly entertaining novel. One of the most difficult parts of the writing process for Desai involves deciding when a piece is finished. DeFrees writes on her dilemma before finishing a piece of literature as, "She tries to balance the desire to polish and re-polish the work with the need to retain its spontaneous quality, a balancing act she is always working to perfect" (123).

The strength *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is the steady fluidity in which the story unfolds itself by the use of brilliantly lucid images, along with a distinct choice of unaffected words and phrases, and a brutish set of characters. The author has handled the 'big-time dreams' of a middle-class family with a keen sense of humour. Who hasn't heard a father talking thus to the over-indulgent grandmother in the house, “What do you care if the sky falls on your grandson's head so long as he has a *gulab jamun* is his mouth?” (32).

Many of these themes are explored further in Desai's next novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). The story revolves around the inhabitants of a town in the north-eastern Himalayas, an embittered old judge, his granddaughter Sai, his cook and their rich array of relatives, friends and acquaintances and the effects on the lives of these people brought about by a Nepalese uprising. Running parallel with the story set in India we also follow

the vicissitudes of the cook's son Biju as he struggles to realise the American Dream as an immigrant in New York.

Like its predecessor, this book abounds in rich, sensual descriptions. These can be sublimely beautiful, such as in the images of the flourishing of nature at the local convent in spring: 'Huge, spread-open Easter lilies were sticky with spilling antlers; insects chased each other madly through the sky, zip zip; and amorous butterflies, cucumber green, tumbled past the jeep windows into the deep marine valleys. They can also be horrific, such as in descriptions of the protest march in *The Inheritance of Loss*:

> One *jawan* was knifed to death, the arms of another were chopped off, a third was stabbed, and the heads of policemen came up on stakes before the station across from the bench under the plum tree, where the town's people had rested themselves in more peaceful times and the cook sometimes read his letters. A beheaded body ran briefly down the street, blood fountaining from the neck. (32)

Depiction of this cruelty in Desai's work shows of her coming of age in writing. For the same work, she was awarded with the prestigious Booker's Prize.

There is pathos - which often goes hand in hand with revulsion – for example in the description of the father's adoration for his son, he is thinking of business. He collects unprecedented tax from the auto-wallahs, tricycle riders, vegetable vendors and all others who make petty income from the groom of baba's nest. All these depict the mean mentality of shrewd people, who are in an attempt to make money out of everything possible. This is another feature of the middle class people mentality, where, when one becomes popular there are dozens milking from the scenario.

Desai latest venture, which won her the Booker's Prize *The Inheritance of Loss* is much more ambitious than *Hullabaloo* . . . in its spatial breadth and emotional depth. It

takes on huge subjects such as morality and justice, globalisation, racial, social and economic inequality, fundamentalism and alienation. It takes its reader on a see-saw of negative emotions.

Desai is known for her colorful and touching studies of Indian life. Desai's work is characterized by its gentleness and empathy with its often poignant and amusing characters, struggling to achieve their personal dreams in a complicated and unsympathetic world. One of her recurring themes is the struggle of women to assert their independence in a restrictive Indian society.

Set in an Indian backwater named Shahkot, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* traces the chaotic progress of the monumentally unmotivated Sampath from failed post office clerk to guava-tree-inhabiting guru. This is a novel very much in the tale-telling mould. Desai unravels the narrative in a series of gossipy asides and sub plots, almost imperceptibly mimicking the diction of her characters. The writing shifts between passages of subtly observed dialogue and evocative lists compiled from the names of exotic fruits and birds, sari silks and the ingredients of lavish imaginary meals. The result is a thoroughly charming, funny and occasionally touching insight into the absurdities and ambiguities of life in small-town India.

In depicting all these, Desai is presenting larger-than-life characterization of the Indian society, marred with false notion of living and leading life, largely under the influence of religious mentality, influenced by a so-called Baba, who in most cases is a fraud, or is self a failure in life. India, a large country, where people of all sects and sectors find their existence, but, most of them with scanty commodities to leads their life. Economic crisis, being one of the basic factors influencing their life and notion has resulted in the rampant rise of such Babas, who, in turn make their living largely on making the common folks their prey.

As India partakes in the play between the colonial past and present, people cannot form stable identity since religion has created deep ambivalence in their psyche. Their attitude is divided, often superstitious, when it comes to religion. They can neither repudiate nor assert this state of mind. They are, for example, ambivalent toward religious mannerism, marred by the excessive dependence on supernatural happenings, and the stories of spirit, and awakening of spirit in an individual.

This research postulates that Desai's novel presents a play between the social and religious mentality of the people of India. It focuses on analyzing the aspects of the facets of Indian society, based on religious mindset. Its main argument is based on the religious hazards that India is bearing in its process of smooth movement to the path of social and intellectual development. Besides it is also an attempt to show the post-colonial mentality of the growing number of middle class people and its ideology. The upcoming chapter will be devoted to describe the postcolonial religious mentality with especial focus upon the Indian society.

II. Post-colonial Religious Mentality

Mentality is directly related to the intellectuality of an individual. It is related to the habitual way of thinking or interpreting events peculiar to a person or type of person, especially with reference to the behaviours that it produces. Most people are susceptible to various happenings around them and are directly or indirectly influenced by it. No persons are free from one or other types of mental effect to which they are susceptible to as it knowingly or unknowingly have its effect in theirs' way of life. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term mentality as "frame of mind, attitude, approach, outlook, mind, point of view, temperament, character and personality."

Mentality has an effect in human mind, as humans are fragile by nature. Even a small turn and twist in an event have a large impact on an individual and the society. Mentality of a person is largely determined by the environment in which they live and grow in. Furthermore, it is also influenced by the level of education, culture, tradition, religion and the power of reasoning. They are easily lured into attraction by greed, anxiety and age old system of belief. In case, some mystical happenings take place with no proper explanation to support or oppose them, most humble and simple hearted people are immediately engulfed it by a reasoning of something superficial due to some evil or good spirit's will. However, the most common trend in explanation is to seek asylum for all sorts of happenings in religion and God.

The political aftermath of independence of the Indian sub-continent nations was followed by indomitable influences in religious, social, economic, cultural and political sectors. Scholars generally agree that colonialism and its significance do not end with the political independence of the previously colonized countries. The impact of colonialism has its impacts in all sectors of social life and culture of a human and society. In this sense, colonialism is not mere a term but a phenomenon that has its root in the past to the present

and is likely to remain in one or other for in days to come. In considering the religious mentality of middle class Indian people, it is necessary to go through various aspects of colonial aspects of the Indian society.

Colonialism, in simple understanding is practice of ruling (politically) nations as colonies. It is a trend of dominating and exploiting an alien or foreign land for the colonizer's benefit. India and most of the Indian-sub-continent nations were directly ruled (colonized) by British Empire for about two centuries, until they achieved independence during 1940s and 50s. In this perspective, it is rational to understand the trend of colonialism before proceeding furthermore.

There are two lines of thinking on colonialism and its aftermath effect in the colonized nations: firstly, the era of its onset when colonialism was at the peak and secondly, the era of political independence. This difference has given rise to the debate about the use of hyphen (-) in the term post-colonialism. One view is that the end of direct colonialism inaugurates new political/cultural period and, therefore, the time after political independence of previously colonized countries should be regarded as departure from colonial past. This school subscribing this view in words of Leela Gandhi is, "Likes to use the term ‘post-colonialism’ to designate the period after the end of direct rule of colonizers" (3). Critics invoke the hyphenated form to suggest decisive temporal marker of the decolonizing process.

On the other hand, some scholars emphasize the onset over the end of colonialism and suggest that colonialism does not end with the political independence. For them, the postcolonial condition is inaugurated with onset rather than end of colonial occupation. Accordingly, Gandhi argues that "the unbroken term ‘post-colonialism’ is more sensitive to the long history of colonial consequences" (3).

Used with hyphen or not, the prefix ‘post’ is a temporal marker. There can be debates and discussions about the scope and contents of post-colonialism as scholarly discipline. But as temporal designation, postcolonial state has often been used by historians, economists and political theorists as a synonym for post-independence period, independence meaning the end of direct colonial rule.

Political independence of the previous colonized states was far from the end of the forms of colonial control. The achievement of national sovereignty was certainly a significant move but the colonial mechanism continued in one or another form. According to Robert J.C. Young, independence meant little more than being “in-dependence”:

> When national sovereignty had finally been achieved, each state moved from colonial to autonomous, postcolonial status. Independence! However, in many ways this represents only a beginning, a relatively minor move from direct to indirect rule, and a shift from direct to indirect rule, a shift from colonial rule and domination to a position not so much of independence as being in-dependence. (qtd. *Post-colonialism*, 3)

Post-coloniality is a historical condition marked by the expectation of a new world of total liberation on one hand and the tenacious hold of the colonial past on the present on the other. The painful memories of the colonial past can not be easily erased, despite the ideality involved in it. The unsuccessful attempt of making a new expectation results into postcolonial delusion and pathology. Gandhi writes:

> The emergence of anti-colonial and “independent” nation-states after colonialism is frequently accompanied by a desire to forget the colonial past. This “will-to- forget” takes a number of historical forms, and is impelled by a variety of cultural and political motivations. Principally, postcolonial amnesia is symptomatic of the urge for historical self-invention

> or the need to make a new start- to erase painful memories of the colonial subordination. As it happens, histories, much as families, can not be freely chosen out of will, and newly emergent postcolonial nation-states are often deluded and unsuccessful in their attempts to disown the burdens of their colonial inheritance. The mere repression of colonial memories is never, in itself, tantamount to a surpassing of or emancipation from the uncomfortable realities of the colonial encounter. (4)

Post-coloniality inherits a burden from the past as colonization, as Edward Said argues, is a "fate with lasting, indeed grotesquely unfair results" (qtd. in Postcolonial Theories). The colonial past makes its presence by means of the traces in multiple levels. The colonial traces are much conspicuous in politico-economical mechanism of newly "independent" states, the psychological set up of colonized people and the educational as well as epistemological sphere.

Once the phenomenon of colonization took place, it created a deep crack in the psyche of the colonized and it persists in what we call postcolonial. The political independence did not mean the decimation of the split and ambivalent psyche of the colonized. This contradiction in the psyche of the people in postcolonial states generated by the fact of colonization comes in the way of the effort to make new beginnings. Albert Memmi makes an illuminating case about the expectation and the obstacles:

> And the days of oppression ceases, the new man is supposed to emerge before our eyes immediately, one who is able to control and probably guide us. Now, I do not like to say but I must say, since decolonization has demonstrated it: this is not the way it happens. The colonizer lives for a long time before we really see a new man standing to oppose the ancestor. (88)

The reality of the colonial lords remains even after they are no more present in the scenario. Their life is not limited by mere years of the direct domination but goes beyond, as they leave their hegemony in to the root of culture and tradition of the land.

Colonialism always promoted the policy of creating a division in the psyche of the people so as to be able to control them. The colonial discourse encouraged the colonized subject to mimic the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values. The purpose, however, was not to make the colonized subject equal to the colonizer because the colonial mission was driven by the assumption that the people to be colonized were lesser beings.

Bhabha's argument might hold some truth but it has more relevance while discussing how colonialism in its starkest form could not have stayed there without resistance. It is more useful in the discussion of how colonized culture can equip itself to counter the colonial dominance once the phenomenon of colonialism has already taken place.

The psychological consequence of colonialism has been taken up by many literary writers. V.S. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* can be a case in point. Its principle character Ranjit Kripal Singh and the people living in a post-independent Caribbean location- Isabella- show the nature and magnitude of psychological damage inflicted by colonialism. The previous colony has now become independent but the formerly colonized people are unable to establish order and govern their country. The colonial experience has caused the colonized to perceive them as inferior to colonizer. They can neither assert their own values nor can they be accepted as the equals of the master. Consequently, they lack the sense of belonging and suffer from fragmentation and loss of identity. Colonialism has not only seriously dented the self-esteem of the colonized people but it has also planted the seed of disharmony and intolerance. Hiall Ferguson in Durban Declaration against Racism,

Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, 2001 says, "Colonialism has led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and . . . Africans, people of African descent and people of Asian descent and indigenous people were victims of its consequences" (xii). It shows that the psychological problems can not be solved even after independence is achieved. Colonialism gives birth to complex psychological problems that outlast the direct colonial rule and persists in what we call postcolonial time.

Colonialism has penetrated deep into the political set-up of previously colonized states. The colonizers, in fact, changed or appropriated the contour of then existing political entities and imposed the modalities that suited their purpose. When the colonizers left and the countries got independences, these states faced a difficult task of coming to terms with the emerging situation: they had been pushed too far from the pre-colonial form of polity whereas the inherited political mechanism might not be suitable for the assertion of their independence. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin say, "Colonialism is never a happening of past, that is, it is not a history that is forgotten as something spent up. It remains unfinished or unsettled affair. The injustice and exploitation is still alive in the mind of the people who suffered from it. It is the cause of strong resentment" (198). They further elaborate the situation as:

> There was no system to soothe the unfairness of things; justice was without scope: it might snag the stealer of chickens, but great evasive crimes would have to be dismissed because, if identified and netted, they would bring down the entire structure of so-called structure of civilization. For crimes that took place in the monstrous dealing between nations, for crimes that took place in those intimate spaces between two people without witness, for these crimes the guilty would never pay. (200)

The colonial 'monstrous dealing between the nations,' as Desai calls it, goes unaccounted for and it still exists in different colour.

Postcolonial nation-states have usually though not always been coterminous with the boundaries of the colonial administrative units. Thus in Africa, for example, the extent of independent countries such as Nigeria and Ghana broadly reflects the colonial enclaves carved out from the pre-colonial societies of Africa. Until the late 1960s only four nations were able to achieve independence from the European nations, but in contrast, the Indian subcontinent were relatively more liberal and independent by the time. The apparent colonial unity of the Indian rule was replaced by Partition into separate states of India and Pakistan. In any case, the modern political entities bore only notional relationship to the pre-colonial entities now incorporated as modern, post-colonial nation-states.

Not only that the postcolonial nation states were left with the traces of colonialism in terms of the territorial and administrative divisions, those people involved in the struggle for independence inherited the European concept of nation. Moreover, the leaving of the colonizers, in many cases, was accompanied by overtaking of power by the native elites who had internalized the political values of colonizers. In this regard, the concept of ‘comprador class’ developed by Martiniquan scholar Franz Fanon’s has been a useful category in that it addresses the issue of the political hangover of colonialism.

Comprador class, as used in postcolonial discourse, means the privileged postcolonial natives “who owe their position to foreign monopolies and maintain vested interest in colonial occupation” and “whose independence may be compromised by a reliance on and identification with, colonial power” (qtd. *Key Concepts*, 55).Those included politicians, academicians, artists etc who were positioned to play important role in immediate post-independent period. They can be labelled, to borrow Fanon’s phrase,

"black skin white mask." Discussing the role of comprador class in African context, Kwame Anthony Appiah says:

> Post-coloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia of relatively small, Western style, Western trained, group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West, they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other and for Africa. (62-3)

Similarly, Western countries continue to exercise their power and they continue to display the colonial characteristics in dealing with ex-colonies. Robert J. C.Young makes the following observation:

> For the most part, the same ex-imperial countries continue to dominate those countries that they ruled as colonies. The cases of Afghanistan, Cuba, Iran and Iraq, make it clear that any country that has the nerve to resist its former imperial masters does so it as its own peril. All governments of these countries that have positioned themselves politically against Western countries have suffered military interventions by the West against them. (3)

This shows that there has not been any significant change in the power relation even after the independence of colonial countries in the twentieth century. The ex-colonizer countries play major roles in the politics of these postcolonial states by either direct intervention or by using covert means.

Colonialism was driven mainly by, among others, the purpose of making economic gain through controlling and plundering the resources of what would later would be the colonies. European post-Renaissance colonial expansion was coterminous with the

development of capitalist system of economic exchange. As Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin argue, it meant that the colonies were taken as the source for the expanding economics of the colonial power and the relation between the colonizers and colonized was the one that was resistant to fair and equitable exchange (qtd. *Key Concepts*, 46).

The complicity between capitalism and colonialism is an established fact. The theorists of Marxist bent have demonstrated that colonialism was the product of necessary imperialist stage in the development of advanced capitalist countries. According to *The Columbia Dictionary of Literary and Cultural Criticism*, these theorists argue that "at a certain point in the development of capitalism it becomes necessary to export capital and seek new markets outside of the mother country among less developed societies" (49).

Describing colonialism as a faithful ally of capitalism leads to the issue of the status of capitalism in the face of 'independence' of colonies or 'decolonization.' It raises the question whether or capitalism met any opposition in the course of nationalist movements for independence.

Aijaz Ahamad is a vociferous critic of any suggestion that nationalist movements consisted of any significant resistance to colonialism. He refuses to accept nationalism as the determinate, dialectical opposite of imperialism in his famous book *In Theory*. He is of the opinion that capitalism was quick to drain the anti-capitalist potentiality inherent in the national liberal movements and co-opt the postcolonial states so as to maintain its hegemony as before:

The beginning of the 1980s, then, marked a new phase in which the regimes of the national bourgeoisie had already been assimilated into the imperialist structures, and any revolutionary potential had been successfully denied to states which arose out of the national liberation, so that the full imperialist hegemony was established in Asia and

Africa precisely (and paradoxically) in the very phase in which the advanced capitalist societies are experiencing the long wave of recessionary cycle.

For him, what we call post-coloniality does not mark the break from colonial capitalistic enterprise. Rather it is another face of capitalism. Therefore, he does not favour the distinction between colonialism and post-colonialism in economic term. He states: "We should speak not so much of colonialism or post-colonialism but capitalist modernity, which takes the colonial form in particular places and at particular times" (qtd. *Politics*, 7). Ashcroft and et al explain this scenario, as:

> Postcolonial economy is characterized by the global trade. Globalization is virtually the worldwide extension of capitalism and many scholars view it as a form of domination by First World countries over Third World ones. According to the analysts, global economy did not just spontaneously erupt but originated in and continue to be perpetuated by the centres of capitalist power. (111)

The colonial relationship of unequal access to the benefits of globalization continues to mark the postcolonial world. The world economy has certainly grown larger but the gap between rich countries, often previous colonizers and poor countries is ever widening. Robert J.C. Young makes an illuminating case:

> The world is rich and the world is poor. There are 20 million refugees and "internally displaced people" in the world today. The rest of the world's population lives somewhere along the long drawn-out spectrum from poverty to riches. The nation-states of the world make up a vast institution of inequality, of unequal access to resources and commodities. (136)

The multinational companies and the financial institutions with global reach reap the benefits for the powerful countries under the pretext of helping the poorer nations.

The big players of global economy like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization set the conditions that conform to its own precepts of what is economically desirable rather than those of the county itself. The institutions like the World Trade Organizations seem to facilitate entry of Western or trans-national companies into the markets of developing countries while ensuring that the favour is not reciprocated the other way around.

In conclusion, we can say that there has not been marked change in the economic relation between the colonizer countries and the colonized ones. The world economy continues to operate on the same colonial policy of inequality and exploitation, although tacitly. The colonial past continues to thrive in post-colonial world.

Colonialism has left lasting effect in terms of the education system of the countries once colonized .The end of direct colonialism did not bring about the end of colonial mode of education designed to promote Western interests. Philip G. Altbach sees neo-colonialism in the field of education in what are now independent' nations:

> Neo-colonialism can be quite open, and obvious, such as the distribution of foreign textbooks in the schools of developing country. It is, however, generally more subtle and includes the use of foreign technical advisors on matters of policy and the continuation of foreign administrative models and curricular patterns for schools. Most developing countries have maintained the colonial pattern of school administration and many have altered the curriculum only slightly, thus retaining much of the orientation of colonial education. (452-53)

Political independence changed relatively in the field of education in most developing countries. The nationalist movements might have had sometimes deep feelings of enmity

toward the formal colonial power but very few countries made sharp break with the educational past.

The continuity of colonial practice is evident in teaching and administrative model of education but also in the continued use of European language. Colonialism survives by creating a situation in which the colonized countries can not retain the pre-colonial language by getting rid of the colonial language. Altbach further writes:

> The continued use of European language in many developing countries is one of the most important aspects of neo-colonialism and the impact of colonial heritage on the Third World. In a few cases, such as Indonesia, the colonial language was discarded and linguistically diverse national polity shifted to an indigenous language. In a number of developing countries, such as Nigeria, Ghana, India, Pakistan, and most of the French-Speaking Africa where there is no single indigenous national language, there has been a tendency to use the metropolitan language in administration and sometimes in education. (154)

Additionally, there has been growing trend of students leaving their home country for Western education. The Western education institutions might be better equipped and organized but the factor of colonialism still comes into play. It can be argued that the colonial exploitation of Third World countries enabled them for educational advances as in other fields. Moreover, the beneficiaries of the Western education have been few elites of the developing countries if any.

Epistemologically, what one knows is conditioned by different factors. Michel Foucault's concept of knowledge and discourse is very relevant while discussing epistemology in postcolonial context. According to Foucault, "discourse constructs, defines and produces the objects of knowledge in an intelligible way while excluding other

forms of reasoning as unintelligible" (78). Therefore, it is essential to analyze what kinds of discourse the people of previously colonized countries are exposed to.

As discussed earlier, the previous colonizers are the ones who have been in the position of power even in postcolonial era. Most of the discourse originates from this location of power and circulates worldwide. Altbach succinctly summarises the existing situation regarding the distribution of knowledge through discourse as follows:

> The products of knowledge are distributed unequally. Industrialized countries using a world language are at the centre of scientific research and scholarly productivity. These same countries dominate the systems which distribute knowledge; they control publishing houses and produce scholarly journal, magazines, films and television programs which the rest of the world consume. Other countries, especially those in the Third World, are at the periphery of intellectual system. (485)

It is not that books are not published in the Third World countries and are not authored by intellectuals from these countries at all. But overall attraction lies in publishing in Western language through Western publishers. The Third World intellectuals consider writing in English prestigious and the publication houses in the Third World countries find it lucrative to publish books in Western language, especially English, from economic the point of view. So, intentionally or unintentionally, the colonial mode of knowledge production and distribution still persists in postcolonial state.

Even the books authored by Third World writers are manipulated in one way or another by West. A complex web of economic, political and traditional factors makes Third World Literature susceptible to Western meddling. Aijaz Ahamad remarks:

> [L]iterature from other zones of the "Third World"- African say, or Arab or Caribbean-comes to us not directly or autonomously but through grids of

> accumulation, interpretation and relocation which are governed from the metropolitan countries. By a time Latin American novel arrives in Delhi, it has been selected, translated, published, renewed, explicated and allotted a place in the belonging of archive of "Third World Literature" through a complex set of metropolitan mediation. That is to say, it arrives here with those processes of circulation and classification already inscribed in its very texture (136).

Thus, how and what the people of non-West know of themselves or their situation in relation to West remains somewhat conditioned due to the system of knowledge production and distribution which is controlled by the powerful.

Another issue related to epistemological structure in postcolonial context is representation and the risks involved in it. Colonialism thrived by making systematic and politically motivated representation of what it regarded as the Orient. Edward Said in his seminal book *Orientalism* concludes that the political colonialism largely depended upon the discursive body about the orient by the Western writers that represented the orient as inferior or exotic other. The discursive body about the Orient by the western scholars enabled the West to assert the superiority of its own culture and justify its colonial enterprise. Therefore, the west's representation of the East was way of "dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it settling it, ruling over it: in short, [. . .] Western style for dominating , restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3).

No more a discourse is considered figment of imagination or the reflection of objective reality. Any discourse, be it literary or non-literary in the conventional sense, is said to have political and ideological underpinning. The possibility of interest-free discourse is highly contested. Edward Said says:

> [N]o one has ever devised the method of for detaching the scholar from the circumstance of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position or from the mere activity of being a member of a society. These continue to bear on what he does professionally, even though naturally enough his search is and its fruits do attempt to reach a level of relative freedom from the inhibitions and the restrictions of brute, everyday reality. For there is such a thing as knowledge that is less, rather than more, partial than the individual who produces it. Yet this knowledge is not, therefore automatically nonpolitical. (43)

Said's intriguing ideas triggered a comprehensive analysis and theorization about the issue of representation regarding colonization. The postcolonial examination of representation in colonial text has gathered momentum since then. Bill Ashcroft and et al summarize the postcolonial scholarship on the issue of European representation of the East as following:

> [. . .] In both conquest and colonization, texts and textuality played major part. European texts- anthropologies, histories, fiction, captured the non-European subject within European frameworks which read his or her alterity as terror or lack. Within the complex relations of colonialism these representations were re-projected to the colonized - through formal education or general colonialist cultural relations- as authoritative pictures of themselves. Concomitantly, representations of Europe and Europeans within this textual archive were situated as normative. Such texts- the representations of Europe to itself, and the representation of others to

> Europe- were not accounts of different people and societies, but a projection of European fears and desires masquerading as scientific/objective knowledge. (85)

The colonial tendency of making the representation of the East in a way that suited the political purpose of the West might have not been same as in postcolonial era but it has not been quite a thing of the past. The archive of world literature contains many texts that misrepresent the East and contribute to the colonial view of Third World. These texts are included in the curriculum of many Third World countries. Thus, as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin observe, it is through education and in terms of modes of production and consumption that colonialist representations persist and currently circulate (85).

The risk of misrepresenting comes not only from the Western writers but also from the writers of the Third World countries. Third world writers might internalize the widely disseminated knowledge emanated from the Western intellectuals and institutions. Many of these writers have unwittingly become accomplice to the continued cultural hegemony of the West. Cases of Anglophile – lovers of English in the Third World writers' works are abundant.

Along with the risks, the Third World intellectuals have the opportunity of resisting the West's representation of the East through their works. This resistance can take many forms, from the parody of the prominent western discourse to the practice of counter canonical literary discourse.

As the discussion in preceding sections show, the time designated by the term colonialism and post-coloniality stand to each other in a very complex relationship, now it is clear that it has a huge impact in all the social sectors after the colonial era has ended. Although a number of colonial attitudes and policies still persist in the present, post-coloniality is neither a total break from the colonial past nor it is absolutely the same as

colonialism. It is marked by a negotiation between past and present. Gandhi in the context writes:

> [P]ost-coloniality is painfully compelled to negotiate the contradictions arising from its indisputable historical belatedness, its post-coloniality, or political and chronological derivation from colonialism, on the one hand, and its cultural obligation to be meaningfully inaugural and inventive on the other. (6)

The effect of colonialism is such that it could not be undone even if the previous colonizers made a sincere effort to do so. Once a nation is colonized, it is bound to suffer from contradictions, ambivalence and disorientation that characterize postcoloniality.

The postcolonial present is conditioned and constrained by the colonial history. The colonial past is the basis for unequal relation among people and resulting resentment leading to violence. Gandhi further writes of the connection between post-colonial world and its colonial past as:

> A dialectical perspective us understand not just colonial history but the postcolonial world as well. The relations that are put into place during colonialism survive long after many of the economic structures underlying them have changed. The devaluation of African slaves still haunts their descendents in metropolitan societies, the inequalities of colonial rule still structure wages and opportunities for migrants from once colonized countries and communities, the racial stereotypes that we identified earlier still circulate, and contemporary global imbalances are built upon the inequities that were consolidated during the colonial era. A complex amalgam of economic and racial factors operates in anchoring the present to the colonial past. (129)

Although we refer 'colonialism' as something of the past as in the phrase 'colonial past,' it operates in the present. To put it other way, colonialism if it is something of the past, it is present in the postcolonial present by its absence.

For the purpose of accounting for this relation between colonialism and post-colonialism, this researcher likes to borrow some terms and concepts of French philosopher Jacques Derrida, especially the terms - diffērance and play. Derrida uses these terms to explain how signs function within the system of language but the terms will be used in the conceptual level in this research.

According to Derrida, "a sign does not produce any meaning due to its positive identity or inherent feature but it happens to be different from the other signs" (Abrams 59). Any sign to have the effect of meaning depends upon other signs from which it is different. But at the same time, it carries within itself the trace of other absent signs because without other signs in the system, it would not be able to produce any effect of meaning. The absent signs have their differed presence in the sign in question. Derrida coined the term 'diffērance' to capture the both meanings 'to differ' and 'to defer.' Raman Selden explains:

> Derrida invents the term 'diffērance' to convey the divided nature of sign. In French, the 'a' in diffērance is not heard, and so we hear only 'diffērence'. The ambiguity is perceived only in writing: the verb 'differer' means both 'to differ and 'to defer.' To differ is a spatial concept: the sign emerges from a system of differences which are spaced out within the system. To 'defer' is temporal: signifiers enforce an endless postponement of 'presence'. (88)

In this way, Derrida proposes play among signs by which we mean the phenomenon of referring back and forth. The signs, even the seemingly opposite ones, are always at play, that is, they are never mutually exclusive of each other.

This researcher likes to propose that post-coloniality is 'diffērance' of the colonial past. Post-coloniality does not mark the end of colonialism; rather it is 'differed' and 'deferred' colonialism. It is different from traditional colonialism in its outlook, that is, it does not look same outwardly. It now operates from metropolitan location as opposed to direct colonialism in which the colonizers made visible physical presence. On the other hand, there is temporal spacing between colonialism and post-coloniality, that is, post-coloniality is differed presence of colonialism. Colonialism functions in postcolonial time without announcing its presence or being apparently absent.

The nations after their independence from their colonial boss are more likely to adapt to their predecessor's way of life and living. They adapt to past mentality, as represented by the sophisticated way of thinking and living of Mr. Chawla and by Mr. D. P. S., boss of the General Post Office of the Shahkot. They are representative figures to advocate the presence of colonial mentality even after the independence of India and her neighbouring countries. In organizing the marriage party of his daughter, Mr. D. P. S. bestows the glow and charm of power and money; similarly, Mr. Chawla though is a simple person wants his son and daughter to work for the *sahibs* and learn their way of living.

Religion plays the most influential and important role in determining the mentality of all middle class people. And especially after the colonial era, it is in fact the religion related matter which has determined the politics of Indian-sub-continent nations like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka to a large extent. Hence, it is obvious that religion is at the centre of determining the mentality of the people of the region. As such, the present researcher will make an analysis of the novel to see the relation between religion and the mentality of the middle class people.

III. Implication of Religious Mentality in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

Kiran Desai's debut novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is a brilliant exposure of middle class peoples' mentality on religion concerned issues. Indian sub-continent nations are religion based nation, at large. Take for India, despite the fact it is secular nations its politics is determined by the strong presence of Hindu fundamentalist. Similarly, Pakistan and Bangladesh are Islamic nations, officially. Other two nations in the region: Sri Lanka and Nepal are densely populated and dominated by people of Buddhism and Hinduism sect, respectively.

These regions, since its independence from their western domination are marred by religious issues and matters frequently. On the lime light there have been the so-called Babas or the revered persons. Indian societies, as well as nations of sub-Indian continent are dominated by fake Babas and Sadhus, who claim themselves as the soothsayers and messiahs of the people. However, they are found to be taking undue advantage of the innocent and humble people, cashing on their religious ideologies and beliefs. In most cases, these Babas have been found that they were unsuccessful in their life, and were seeking for an alternative to hide their escapist mentality. And, all of a sudden, with no formal education on the related topic, they start blabbering and chanting some strange things which are not understood by the common men, and in turn they take him/her as the incarnation of this and that God. Still more, the common folks blindly support such people, generally called a Baba – the revered fellow and the normal people are ready to sacrifice whatever the so-called Baba demands for.

Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is a tale of a similar Baba, Sampath Chawla of Shahkot. Sampath – son of a local bank clerk is a failed postal clerk and a pathological dreamer. The storyline of *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is simple and similar to hundreds of families across the Indian sub-continents, who take such Babas as

the ultimate source of knowledge and trouble-shooters. The plot of the novel revolves around a boy – Sampath who turns in to one such Baba, popularly known as Monkey Baba in Shahkot. It is Sampath's story and his deeds that allured the humble and innocent people in believing him as one of their messiahs.

After years of sacrifice and offerings to the God, the Chawla family were bestowed with blessings from the God, in the form of Sampath – the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Chawla. However, his birth has a story to make his presence felt in the town: the birth of Sampath was marked by a heavy rainfall ending years of drought in the region.

> And she watched the children in the streets leap like frogs, unable to keep still in their excitement. 'It's getting cold; they shouted, and pretended to shake. 'It's going to rain.' They wrestled and tussled with each other in an exuberance of spirit, while the grown ups hurried, in this shifting. [. . .] They tussled their hand in greeting to each other: At last! The monsoon! (9)

His birth was marked by a heavy rainfall on Shahkot, which finally ended years of drought and also under mysterious circumstances. So, when the years' long drought ended on the day of Sampath's birth, most people regarded him as a 'noble gift.' He birth was certain to embark the Chawla's family with good luck and fortune, at least so was expected by Ammaji, Mr. Chawla and Kulfi the mother.

Kulfi, the mother of the most sacred Baba of the area is a lazy figure doing nothing around, and every hungry. She is so hungry that nothing can feed her in the home; as such she is ever hungry. And above after years of marriage the family is worried, as still has not shown symptoms of fertility. However, after many offerings to the almighty, typical to the mentality of the middle class folks, Kulfi becomes pregnant. Desai portrays the birth scene in a typical fashion, as follows:

> Kulfi stretched out farther and farther until the rain took up all the space insider head. It seized her brain, massaged and incorporated her into the watery sounds, until she felt that she herself might turn to storm and disappear in this blowing, this growling, and this lightning flutter quick as a moth's wing. (10)

So, finally a child is born, with ample signs of good luck that a child can bear in his birth. But, let alone the birth signs are not enough to determine the outcomes and short comes of a man's future.

After years of continuous failure as a student and at work and Sampath's habit of day dreaming in the tea stalls and singing for self in the public, senior Chawla father knew his son was nothing more than a burden to him, and his family. Somehow, he is appointed as a help boy in the local postal office, where, he has particularly nothing to do, except he sneaks in to the public's letters**.** One day, being tired and able to resist his father's words, he escapes from his work and into a guava orchard in the outskirts of Shahkot. Desai penetrates the situation in a microscopic manner, as:

> How he hated his life. It was a never-ending flow of misery. It was a prison he had been born into. The one time he had a little fun, he was curtailed and punished. He was born unlucky, that's what it was. All about him the neighbourhood houses seemed to rise like a trap, a maze of staircases and walls with windows that opened only to look into one another. (43)

Sampath, so after years of disappointment and monotonous life finds escape in the orchard, but here, too people come to make him a Baba, out of nowhere.

He decides to escape his work and his oppressive family to live in a guava tree. Here he spends his life snoozing, musing and eating the ever-more exotic meals cooked for him by his sociopathic mother. He begins to amaze his fellow townspeople by revealing

intimate details about them gleaned from a bit of lazy letter-opening whilst still working at the post office and by spouting a series of truisms worthy of a Shakespearian fool, or Forest Gump. Before long he becomes known as a local guru and attracts such a strong flow of visitors that opening hours have to be established in the orchard to allow him to rest.

This is how, a boy of no value and substance turns into one of the most revered Baba of Shahkot, and people start to worship him. Sampath's clever father, Mr. Chawla, in turn starts making his earnings out of it. This simple, but a next door story of the Indian sub-continent, not only has marked the beginning of career of a famous writer Kiran Desai, but also remarked the coming of a new writer in the Indian English literature scenario.

Rushdie, a prominent name in the Indian English Literature praises the novel on its dense imagination and exposure of delicate yet dominant issues. He comments, "A triumph in comic storytelling. Desai stands out as a fresh, highly self confident voice. The book is a remarkable achievement in exposing some of our earliest forms of mental themes, subtle yet powerful" (source: back cover *The Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*).

It is fascinating to go through the antics of a post-office clerk (Sampath) who spends his free time reading the mail of the people of Shahkot, and after climbing atop the guava tree reveals interesting facets to those same people. They start referring to him as Baba – the saint. Equally engaging are other characters: the Baba's Sister, Pinky, who finds delight in biting the cheeks or tweaking the bottoms of men she fancies; the mother, Kulfi, who had enormous cravings for food make the perfect companion to the Indian society of varieties of people. Narrating the hunger of Kulfi, the narrator writes:

> Meal after meal of just rice and lentils could not begin to satisfy the hunger that grew inside Kulfi; she bribed the vegetable sellers and the fruit sellers and the butcher with squares of silk, with embroidery, a satin petticoat, an

> earring set in gold, a silver nutcracker, and bits of her dowry that had not yet been pawned. She bribed them until they had nothing to give her anyway. By then, her hunger was so fierce, it was like a big, prowling animal. (5)

During the time of her pregnancy, her appetite was as like an animal indulge in swallowing whatever was fed to it.

In fact Kulfi is a character obsessed with more and more hunger. She cannot imagine of things other than food, even in sleep, as:

> 'A bushel, a drachm, a pint,' muttered Kulfi in her sleep. 'A peck, a coomb, a sick, a hogshead, a scruple, a ton. Sandal, madder, cassia, orris root.' She turned restlessly. 'Gall nut, cinnabar, mace. Senna, asafoetida, quail eggs, snail eggs, liver of a wild boar, tail of a wild cat . . . ' She turned around again. 'Nastrurtium leaves, rhododendron flowers, cicada orchids!' (201)

Thus, the character of Kulfi is food maniac and so, is inherited less or more in Sampath. He, too, is lazy and ever willing demanding food rather than engaging any leisure time for any creative works.

However, in latter part of her life, her sole passion is to feed her son Sampath – the 'Monkey Baba' with exotic dishes, complete with ingredients like asafetida, quail eggs, nasturtium leaves and cicada orchids. The egocentric Kulfi, who goes about life in her mysterious ways, appears to be a typical mystic character of Indian origin.

The guava orchard becomes the epicentre of all the characters. The 'hullabaloo' starts when everyone -- from his family, to the people of Shahkot town, to the monkeys -- tries to make an eventful performance out of the hermit perched atop the guava tree. It becomes the centre of the town. All sorts of Indian characters from religious fanatic to ignorant hand-to-mouth struggling people, including a spy, who is determined to unfold the mystery of Sampath visit him everyday.

In this new context, however, Sampath's chronic daydreaming is reinterpreted as a life of spiritual contemplation and he swiftly develops a local reputation as a holy man. For a while it seems that 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 catering for the coach loads of pilgrims and sightseers arriving to visit the 'tree-baba'.

This pastoral idyll is shattered by the arrival of a riotous tribe of alcoholic monkeys who move into Sampath's tree, leaving only to make smash and grab raids on local liquor stores and to harass the young women of Shahkot. Depicting the ensuing descent into anarchy Desai is in her element, cataloguing the various insane schemes proposed by the town's leading citizens to solve the monkey problem. The comedy is tempered with a genuine pathos as Sampath helplessly watches the destruction of his paradise by his community's endlessly baulked desire to impose order on a chaos of their own making. As events spiral ever further out of control however, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* begins increasingly to read like one of Sampath's more obscure mystical utterances:

> 'First a chikoo is raw,' said Sampath. 'Then if you do not pick and eat it quickly it will soon rot and turn to alcohol'. What was he saying? That the time of perfection passes, that you should eat a chikoo at the right time only, that everything is part of nature, that good becomes bad or that bad is not really bad because it is all part of the nature of a chikoo? Oh sometimes he was hard to understand. (77)

Desai's subtle exploration of the ambiguous nature of Sampath's holiness is one of the novel's major strengths. However the expanding layers of ambiguity run the risk of finally becoming as frustrating to the reader as they do to the inhabitants of Shahkot. The final descent into absurdity (metamorphosis of man into fruit!) and abrupt conclusion in the midst of chaos is disappointingly weak. The novel's peculiar brand of mysticism works

well up to this point precisely because it works within a recognizable, if somewhat bizarre framework of reality.

However, the Sampath's sermons are beyond anyone's understanding. That is what makes the novel purely Indian in nature. As India is vast and mystical in nature, so are the sermons of the baba. All babas have their own way to solve or cheat the innocent people through their sermons. So does Sampath. Upon the inquiry and solution by one of the devotees that his son is keeping bad company, the Monkey Baba replies:

> 'Add lemons to milk and it will grow sour,' answered Sampath in an exceptionally sociable and happy temper, mimicking the old men of Shahkot, who liked to sit at their gates on winter afternoons, basking in their socks and hats. [. . .] 'But add some sugar, madam, and Wah! How good that milk will taste. These are things that I do not have to tell you. You yourself, you behaved just like your son when you were young. (75)

These horrible were the sermons and teachings of the Monkey Baba, who the devotees readily believed in. There is no practically or spiritually any relationship between a bad boy turning good and the lemon mixed milk.

In a way, colonialism became a fateful happening of the human history with the future consequences already inscribed in it. It intermingle the cultural aspects of one nation people with the other and thereby making process of intermingling of culture of different nations and nationalities in several ways. More than any other event in the history, it had the future of the world moulded in advance in awareness of social, economic and political nature. It has left the traces that will come at play in foreseeable future.

However, the natural consequence of colonialism, there is resentment among people of different races and places in the postcolonial world. Those countries which were once colonized have not been able to come in terms with the colonial past. The people in

these postcolonial states are drawn back to the past whenever they make effort to move ahead. This gives rise to frustration which in turn results into violence. The violence is not always directed against the previous colonizers, it can turn people of the same nation against each other.

It has to do with the colonial mentality of thinking and practice imposed by the forerunners. It is one of the tragedies of colonialism, which is injected in the mind of the people of colonized countries false sense of superiority of colonizers' values and knowledge. Consequently, it creates a fissure in their psyche. The "mimic men" produced by the fact of colonialism lives even after the end of overt colonialism. They display the fissure in multiple forms such as Anglophobia, inferiority complex and cultural rootlessness. Kamau Brathwaite states in the context of the consequence of colonialism in African continent:

> It was one of the tragedies of the slavery and of the conditions under which creolization had to take place that it should have produced this kind of mimicry; should have produced such "mimic-men." But in the circumstances this was only kind of white imitation that would have been accepted, given the terms in which the slaves were seen. (qtd. *Postcolonial Studies*, 203)

Nevertheless, some postcolonial critics argue that it is precisely this kind of mimicry that disrupts the colonial discourse and thereby its authority. For Homi Bhabha, mimicry is the process by which the colonial subject is reproduced as "almost the same but not quite" (qtd. *Location*, 84). Mimicry, does not simply serve the colonial purpose but it contains the very seed of the destruction of colonialism because it is at once "resemblance and menace" (86).

The action is 'resemblance of menace' as the heart and mind of religion fanatic person. And the Indian society, when it comes to middle class scenario is full of such extreme people, who take anything coming their way as godly figure. It resembles to the life of many of the deities of Hindus Gods and Goddess. Our sacred books are full of descriptions, where a normal man turns in to mighty spirited and powerful one, after leaving their social and familial responsibility, like our own Sampath flees to the guava orchard.

It is not the stereotypical story of a boy, but of the people, who are ready to accept anything granted that provided mystery or distinct as God. The God factor is religion aspired, as there are hundreds of revered personalities in Indian society, who take themselves as unique, different and super beings forging ground for the innocent, yet crazy population to accept such man to Baba. Religion is the bread of large number of people in the Indian sub-continent and some shrewd characters out of them take this mentality to earn food for their living.

One such stereotypical character in the novel is the father, Mr. Chawla, who is a clever businessman by nature and takes advantage of his son being worshiped in the locality. Reminiscent of colonial mentality, the father is a representative figure of most of the middle class Indian population. He is a government employee, who exercises regularly, shows his concern for his children's future, but remains aloof from the extraordinary oddities of life around him. He is the floating buoy of the novel, becoming the connecting link between his meditative son, Sampath – now a revered hermit – and the people and events that create the clutter in the guava orchard.

The reader begins to feel the speed and buoyancy at which the turn of events take place in the novel from the very moment Sampath tries seeking respite from his worldly affairs by making a guava tree his habitat along with the monkeys. Once Sampath settles

down in the guava tree, he is joined by a horde of followers, including his family who try to commercialize his presence atop the tree. And then follows a horde of businessmen who endeavour to sell their wares, ranging from toothpaste to mosquito repellents, to the trustful tourists of the orchard. After the dreaded monkeys of the town also join him in the tree, Sampath is then re-christened as “Monkey Baba.”

Critics on *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, who have raised contemporary issues like alienation and oriental study. Novy Kapadia claims, “The novel has raised an important issue of oriental study” (32). He opines that the eastern are easy "to fool on religious matter – let it be a Hindu or some other religion" (33). In India religion seems to be at the top of all matters. That probably must be the matter why there are so many Gods and Goddess in Hinduism.

Similarly, Tabish Khair another important critic on contemporary Indian writing explains, the novel as, “This is the novel, which establishes Kiran Desai as an important writer on Oriental issues” (54). In referring Oriental issues Khair is rather sceptical. He argues:

> There are lots of issues in the eastern part of the world which needs abundance of attention to demystify it. And here lies the speciality of the Orient culture, as the mythical acceptance of minor and seemingly meaningless object to the status of most revered objects and even to that of God makes the east and the easterners allegoric to the west. (67)

East always has served as a mystic land to the west. The tradition of respecting, worshiping and adoring the plants, animals, non-living things as God is the spiritual attraction to the people of west.

In depicting all these, Desai is presenting larger-than-life characterization of the Indian society, marred with false notion of living and leading life, largely under the

influence of a so-called Baba, who in most cases turns out to be a fraud, or is a self failure in life. India, a large country, where people of all sects and sectors find their existence, but, most of them with scanty commodities to leads their life. Economic crisis, being one of the basic factors influencing their life and notion has resulted in the rampant rise of such Babas, who, in turn make their living largely on making the common folks their prey.

The final scene of the novel is even more fascinating. After the repeated attacks of the monkeys in the orchard, Mr. Chawla is worried, but not Sampath. In fact the real picture of Sampath is ever clear from the moment he sneaked into the orchard to escape his household affairs. He is not willing to go back to home, and is not ready to accept to make any amends from hiding himself to the safety of the monkeys.

This research postulates that Desai's novel presents a play between the social and religious mentality of the people of India. It focuses on analyzing the aspects of the facets of Indian society, based on religious mindset. Its main argument is that religious hazard hinders India from moving ahead smoothly in the path of social and intellectual development.

The final collapse of this framework exposes the fragile relationship which Desai has created between a real and an imagined landscape and in doing so, she displays one of the greatest achievements by exposing the real picture of middle class people's mentality. She presents varying characters from Kulfi – the food maniac, to mean Mr. Chawla, to Amma ji, the typical family head of a joint family. However, *Hullabaloo . . .* is a tale of Sampath, who is in reality good-for-nothing but who turns into one of the most revered fellows of Shahkot – a representative backdrop city, out of many of the Indian towns. Thus, the story is an exposition of archetype of religious mind of Indian Diaspora that is ever ready to make a normal man to the status of God.

IV. Conclusion

Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is an exposition of one of the subtlest issues of Indian society related to faith and religion. Most Hindus worship and adore the so-called Babas, who are taken as trouble soothers and hope amid the worse days of life. It is common for the general people to make a common man out of a trifle happening into the status of a God like figure. Desai presents Sampath, who is raised to the height of one of the most revered ones in Shahkot, a representative city in religion guided India.

In almost all the societies, it is the middle class people who are the most sensitive when it comes to issues like faith and belief. People of other two classes remain aloof of such issues: one the higher status or the resourceful and the other ground level people, who struggle to make their hand-to-mouth meet. The first of them are busy in their own den, aloof from such issues and the other has no time to run after, other than arrange for feeding and lodging. But the middle class people are conscious enough to determine and get involve in such issues like religions and faiths.

Sampath, the monkey Baba, is a typical representative of the middle class family people. As he cannot resist the pressure from his father of achieving so-called success, without which as if life ends for a human and hence takes asylum in a guava orchard. However, this very escape of Sampath turns the wheel of his life roundabout. He becomes a household name as he makes some predicament come true. It is obvious that his preaching is of no meaning but the common folks find a meaning in his silly little words and on top of all, he can make some people spellbound by exposing some secrecy of his town herds. However, the reality is, as a post-office clerk, he had sneaked into most of the letters of the town folks.

Thus, from a small and insignificant event, one of the most insignificant and dull person becomes the most valued and respected figures in Shahkot – or the Indian society.

From the event, dozens of people take advantage. One of the first to do so is Sampath's shrewd father, who shifts his family from the city to the jungle and starts collecting the innocent people offerings and gifts. The venue of Sampath – the Monkey Baba's resident turns in to a holy shrine and hundreds of folks throng to the place from far and wide to worship and take blessings from him.

Thus, Desai in *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* exposes one of the most mean, yet simple realities of religion-fanatic middle class people's mentality, who are habituated of taking even an insignificant person to the height of Godly figure. This scenario also has to do with the remnants of the colonial culture, still rampant all over India.

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