

I. Local and Global Tension

Anita Desai's *Diamond Dust* is an anthology of stories covering the issues of the people from the eastern and the western part of the world. Through these tales, Desai chronicles the picture of rising local and global tension, largely due to the difference in culture, custom and mentality of judging people of one part of the nation by the other. Desai, one of the most prominent English writers from India crosses the political boundary in this collection and pictures the life of people living across the political borders and horizons.

Diamond Dust, a compilation of nine stories, published in various western based journals and papers in different time depicts the Indian flavor of culture and tradition and its impact in the western people and world and vice versa. Taking this idea as the guideline, the present researcher will interpret the stories from the perspective of Local and Global tension in the postcolonial world, in order to expose the gap that supposedly exists between east (the developing world nations) and the west (developed nations).

For ages, English literature has been created by various authors in considering western supremacy in mind. This has obviously helped to keep west at the helm of all happenings and incidents eventually flourishing the western hegemony on the eastern culture and people. This has, however, helped to increase the level of suspicion and disbelief to the people of the east towards the west, for ages, and continues to be so, even today. Nevertheless, writers including Salman Rushdie, Chinua Achebe, Michael Ondaatje, Edward Said, and others have written sufficiently on bridging the gap between east and west, however, with less success. As, in reality, the gap between the Orientals and the Occidentals is widening by each day. In this scenario, *Diamond Dust* by Desai is yet another bridge in lessening the gap between the two different cultures and traditions of the people of the world.

Allison Lurie in a literary review in *Guardian* writes that Desai is 'wonderful' in depicting the culture of east and west and this is how, in his words, "will unite the people of the world" (27). He further praises Desai and *Diamond Dust*, and writes:

Anita Desai is one the most brilliant and subtle writers ever to have described the meeting of eastern and western culture. Her new collection of stories is both serious and wonderfully entertaining, but at the same time exposes the deeper level of sentiments of the people of different nations and societies. (26)

Her stories, somehow, finds a way to bridge the gap meet east and west. She does not mere present them in the form of fiction, but are something more to it. As Lurie further opines, "Desai's work are on humane ground, where the broken relationships in the west are joined in the east. Still more, the east serves as rejuvenation to the people of the west" (31).

Desai has a unique way of blending the eastern flavor with that of the west. Like in "Royalty", she narrates the story of a family preparing for holidaying marred by an unexpected guest, which they cannot deny. As in "Royalty," she twists her narration from a sudden flow towards an abrupt change in the course of flow of the incident:

All was prepared for the summer exodus: the trunks packed, the household wound down, wound up, ready to be abandoned to three months of withering heat and engulfing dust while its owners withdrew to their retreat in the mountains. The last few days were a little uncomfortable - so many of their clothes already packed away, so many of their books and papers bundled up and ready for the move. [. . .] 'Oh Ravi, Raja has come. He is in the south. He wants to visit us - next week.' (1-2)

Everything seems very normal in her narration, but then there is an unwanted thing happening all out of sudden. However, she leaves a hint for the coming fortune, as in “Royalty”, she leaves room for a slight turn and twist in the story as, "All was prepared for the summer exodus: . . ." (1). Here an intelligent reader can easily note the tone of the story and expect for something unexpected to run the entertainment show to come. So, does happen by the coming of a letter informing the arrival of the 'Raja.' The sharp twist of events has to do with the technique of wit; Desai depicts to present the happenings in the life of her characters.

Salman Rushdie a renowned name in the post colonial literature has all praise for this technique – providing a hint of upcoming events through a bit witty happening. He comments:

With her trademark perceptiveness, delicacy of language, and sharp wit in full evidence in *Diamond Dust*, Anita Desai once again gloriously confirms that she is India's finest writer in English. Desai's books are illuminated by the author's perceptiveness, delicacy of language and sharp wit that leaves its readers perplexed. (24)

It is the quality of Desai to expose simple yet, outstanding outcome from a normal looking events in the story.

Similarly, human psyche is the dominating factor that influences her character's behavior in the stories. As, psychoanalysis analyze that the behaviors of the present are the outcome of the unfulfilled desires of the past. As it is clear from *Diamond Dust*, when the character of Mrs. Das is introduced to the readers. Desai introduces Mr. Das, when she is expressing her dislike to her dog – diamond as, "That dog will kill me, kill me one day!" (50). Through these words, she expresses her unfulfilled desire, as the readers come to know in the later part of the story that it is a very accurate expression to hide her unfulfilled physical and mental desires.

Desai studies the human psyche, though, initially developed as a therapeutic technique for the treatment of the hysteria patient, expanded later as a technique to approach a literature and a literary art for her. It also served her as a means to explore humane mind. In the views of Michael Rayan it is:

Concerned with dynamics of interpersonal relations and with the ways self is formed through interactions with its familial and socio- cultural environment. Depending on the school of psychoanalysis one needs the study of mind's operation in the literature should be concerned either with unconscious and the instinct or with the family, personal history and social world. (Michael 103)

The unconscious is the major force behind the creation of literature and other arts. The unconscious is the place where all the imagined fantasies, fulfillment of wishes that are denied by the reality or prohibited by the social norms are buried.

Desai's characters have buried forbidden wishes coming into conflict with the author's mind and such centered wishes disguise their real motives and object from the conscious mind. The chief mechanisms that affect these disguise of unconscious wishes are displacement and condensation. Condensation is the omission of parts of the unconscious materials and fusion of several elements into a single entity. Displacement, in Freudian sense is the substitution for an unconscious object of desire by one that is acceptable to the conscious mind. Then the other mechanism is symbolism that represents repressed sexual desires by non sexual objects which resemble them or are associate with them in prior experience. In short, the psychic mechanisms discharge its unconscious contents in various ways and manners.

Discussing on the creation of literature and other arts M. H. Abrams writes:

Literature and the other arts, like dreams and neurotic symptoms, consist of the imagined or fantasized fulfillment of wishes. Such wishes that are

either denied by reality or are prohibited by the social standards of morality and propriety. Such forbidden mainly sexual wishes come into conflict with, and are repressed by the “censor” in to the unconscious realm of the artist’s mind, but are permitted by the censor to achieve a fantasized satisfaction in distorted forms which serves to disguise their real motives and objects from the conscious mind. (127)

Freud asserts that artist possesses special ability to sublimate original sexual goal to non-sexual goals. Such ability to sublimate such personal elements makes them capable of satisfying the unconscious desire of the people other than the individual artist. In the process, the artistic creation gives solace to the unconscious of the writer as well as the reader. So, literature and art may serve the artist as the mode of fantasy that opens the way back to reality.

Desai's stories are depiction of the people of Indian society. 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 escapes 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. In reality is they are no Sadhus or revered persons, as Hindu society takes them for. If not few, most of them are in real terminology 'escapist' people.

Desai born into a Bengali father and a German mother, enjoyed the privilege of analyzing and acquainting into the language and culture of several communities

and countries. She grew up speaking German at home and Bengali, Urdu, Hindi and English outside the house. She first learned to read and write in English at school and as a result it became her "literary language." Despite German being her first language she did not visit Germany until later in life as an adult.

This obviously had its impact on her writing, and continues to the day. Desai has been short listed for the prestigious Booker Prize for three times. She was a student at Queen Mary's Higher Secondary School in Delhi and received her B.A. in English literature in 1957 from the University of Delhi Miranda House.

Upon the publication of *Diamond Dust* critics raved about Anita Desai. "Desai is more than smart; she's an undeniable genius from the Indian English writers" (qtd. In *Washington Post Book World* 12). Similarly, *The Wall Street Journal* called her, "poignant, penetrating . . . a splendid job" (14).

Now, in this richly diverse collection, Desai trains her luminous spotlight on private universes, stretching from India to New England, from Cornwall to Mexico. Skillfully navigating the fault lines between social obligation and personal loyalties, the men and women in these nine tales set out on journeys that suddenly go beyond the pale -- or surprisingly lead them back to where they started from. In the mischievous title story, a beloved dog brings nothing but disaster to his obsessed master; in other tales, old friendships and family ties stir up buried feelings, demanding either renewed commitment or escape. And truly international in nature, she depicts in *Diamond Dust's* final exquisite story, "The Rooftop Dwellers", a young woman discovers a new kind of freedom in Delhi's rooftop community. She comes to know the woman power, she narrates:

'O, a girl is like a flame,

O. a girl can start a fair – ' (186)

These stories are of personal journey and awakening, from as far as the next door in a rural village in India to the distance of Ontario and London. They not only depict the picture of backdrop city of India, but cover the skyscrapers of the United States and the Great Britain. The story reaches from the local community to the international status of awakening.

In words of Sylvia Brownrig, the *Diamond* is a pure gem, stretching from buried resentments (in “The Artist's Life”) to the havoc caused by a dear dog, Diamond (in *Diamond Dust*) and to a businessman away from home sees his own death (in “The Man who saw Himself Drown”). She writes:

Old relationships stir up buried resentments, a beloved dog causes havoc, a businessman away from home sees his own death, and freedom springs in surprising ways. In this brilliant new collection of funny, sad, compassionate and charming stories, Anita Desai shows us ordinary lives in a disconnecting world, where hopes and dreams clash with disappointment and the human spirit shines strongly from India to Canada and England and across the world. (37)

She shows extraordinary compassion and caliber to present the Indian taste to the western world people. She depicts a minor incident, like a dog's havoc, or a businessman odyssey, into the extraordinary level of human experience and manifestation.

Nine short fictions luminously detailing events that lead characters to irrevocably cross the invisible line separating their pasts from new experiences, new insights, and even new existences. In settings that range from her native India to Cornwall, Mexico, and Canada, Desai deftly sketches the scenes as she introduces varied characters.

Some of the best depicted stories are "Diamond Dust," "Winterscape," and "The Rooftop Dwellers." In the first, a man's devotion to his notoriously cantankerous dog leads him to act precipitously with fatal consequences. The variant levels of depiction of incidents vary from stories like "Winterscape" on the relationship of the aunt and mother of an Indian married to a Canadian, who visit the couple and their newborn son and, as the unfamiliar snow falls, understand the great cultural differences that separate them. Similarly, in "The Rooftop Dwellers", perhaps the tale most redolent of contemporary India, describes a young, impecunious woman who moves to New Delhi to work on a literary magazine and, renting a room on a family's rooftop, begins to enjoy the freedom such a life permits, despite a robbery and a bullying landlord. In other notable pieces, , an unexpected visit from a former college friend underlines a couple's growing frailty and distance from their past "Royalty," a young Mexican studying in the US returns to the town where he grew up and finds it changed and energized, while his family remains querulously in the past "Tepoztlan Tomorrow," and a retired consultant running a hotel in Cornwall with his wife finds consolation after her death by closing the premises to guests and feeding the badgers that come out at night "Underground."

Thus, communalism which was once a communal issue has become a global issue. It has broken the barrier of mere religion and local politics but has gained an international status. Unfortunately, today no nations from the Latin America to Central and America, from Europe to Africa and Asia are free of communal issues and its impact on their people and community. In the postmodern scenario communal issues has crossed the frontiers of the nations and has become international. Madhusudan Rao in the context writes:

The focus of this novel is extremism. It tells the tale of two Kashmiri villages whose inhabitants gradually get caught up in communal

violence. As we know from Yugoslavia, hatred takes on especially horrific manifestations when neighbors turn against each other. Their passion of hatred originates from a marriage solemnized by both Hindu and Muslim rites and reaches as far as Europe and America. (910)

The global scenario of breath taking pace of development has affected all the sectors of social life of a small remote village to international forum. So, terrorism in the present context has crossed the barriers from mere India or Pakistan to Europe and the United States of America.

In Europe the Great Britain has witnessed decade's long terrorism problem, in context to the violence lead by Ireland Republic Army (IRA) in demand for independent Ireland. This movement now, seems to have dozed off, after the then premier Tony Blair in 1998 signed in proclamation signing, Ireland as an Autonomous State. However, due to bias policy on its minority groups, especially Muslims there have been rise in the violence, proof; the infamous bombings of railway networks in London on July 2007. It is needless to site once again the infamous September 11 bombings in the United States of America.

Communal issues, let it be for the sake of religion, or for rights have gone international. They are no more confined within the states of India and Pakistan, or South East Asian nations, which were previously claimed to have been but now is a global issue of tension, specifying the East and the West. It has, or is fast in the process of being an international problem of the so-called western nations, who claim themselves as the watchdogs of international scenario and human rights. *Diamond Dust* is only an anthology that chronicles the issue, out of hundreds of such others. As such, the present research work will focus on terrorism as a global issue, followed by communal issue as a local, as well as global issue. In doing so, it

will not cross the frontier of the text, but will go as far as the U.S. and Europe and again back to the rural settings of India.

II. Diaspora, Hybridity and Culture

Diaspora

The literary meaning of the term 'Diaspora' is scattering of language, culture and people, who were formerly concentrated in same place. It has its origin in Greek term *dispeirein* which means disperse or scatter. In ancient Greek, Diaspora was conceived as migration and colonization. In historical actualization, Diaspora referred to the Jewish communities outside Israel. Traditionally, Jews outside Israel considered themselves in exile (Hebrew *galut*), but many Jews no longer hold this view. Interpreting this historical approach, Simon Blackburn in *Dictionary of Philosophy* writes:

The Jewish Diaspora began with the exile of Judaeans to Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. The majority of Judaeans remained in Babylonia even after the refounding of Jerusalem. Under Hellenistic rulers, large numbers of Jews settled in Alexandria. During the Graeco-Roman period, Jews settled throughout Asia Minor and southern Europe. Many Jewish prisoners of war were brought to Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. (105)

However, this migration did not stop there, and from Italy, Jews migrated to France and Germany, and from there to England, Scandinavia, and Eastern Europe, becoming known as Ashkenazim. Under the sway of Islam, Jews from North Africa moved westwards into the Iberian Peninsula. Expelled by Christian rulers in the 15th century, these Jews, known as Sephardim, resettled in the Netherlands, the Balkans, Turkey, Palestine, and the Americas. In the 19th and 20th centuries, large numbers of central and east European Jews went to North America and, after World War II, Jews of all groups immigrated to Israel.

However, in modern time, the term has acquired a more sinister and brutal meaning. According to Blackburn in modern days, Diaspora signifies to "a collective trauma, a banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile" (105). R. Radhakrishnan's book *Diasporic Mediation* defines Diaspora as the space of hyphen that tries to coordinate with the identity which is related to the place of origin with that of present home. He writes:

The Diasporic location is the space of the hyphen that tires to coordinate within an evolving relationship, the identity politics of one's place of origin with that of one's present home. The term is not used either as a mark of privilege or as a universally representative human condition. . . . As a matter of fact Diaspora strongly contests such a comfortable universalization of Disaporic perspectives. (Introduction xiii)

Disaporic subjectivity is thus necessarily double: acknowledging the imperatives of an earlier "elsewhere" in an active and critical relationship with the cultural politics of one's present home, all within the figurality of a reciprocal displacement. 'Home' then becomes a mode of interpretive in-betweenness, as a form of accountability to more than one location.

The Diasporic people can never be the first class people in the alien world. The hyphen between them (African-American) always create we and other. Thus, the migrated people feel themselves alienated and search for their identity. Similarly, Leela Gandhi's book *Postcolonial Theory* defines Diaspora as trauma of displacement either it is of Jewish or Africans. He writes "Diaspora' evokes the specific traumas of human displacement-whether of the Jews or a Africans Scattered in the service of slavery and indentures" (131).

The world Diaspora suggests, therefore, a linkage asserted in the context of exile from a homeland, and a unity maintained in the varying circumstances

confronting a scattered population. Such a concept refers by extension to other dispersed peoples, such as those exile Americans who resettled across much of Europe and Asia from the eleventh century and throughout the period of Ottoman Empire. While we cannot think of Diaspora without regard to Jewish history, we must beware of making this history normative for our understanding of the concept.

The problem of definition arises whenever a new field of academic study is developed. For a number of reasons the need for a clear definition is particularly evident in the case of ethnic Diasporas. As Gabriel Sheffer defines:

Ethnic Diasporas are created either by voluntary migration (e.g. Turks to West Germany) or as a result of expulsion from the homelands (e.g. the Jews and the Palestinians) and settlement in one or more host, countries. In these host countries the Diasporas remain minority groups. In their host countries Diasporas preserve their ethnic or ethnic religious identity and communal solidarity. (9)

In order to avoid undesirable conflicts with the norms and laws established by the dominant group in their host countries, the Diasporas accept certain rules of the game of these countries. At certain periods, dual authority patterns may create tension between elements in the host country and the Diasporas.

One result of capitalism's global expansion was the voluntary and forcible dispersion of increasing numbers of people and it is in relation to these impelled dislocations of modern history that the concept of Diaspora becomes more widely germane as displaced populations attempted to trace a story of unity in the face of dislocation and alienation. At the same time, the rise of nationalism as the single most prominent form of modern communal organization give the idea of the 'homeland' a one state-oriented connotation, associating it with political and popular self-determination. In the wake of the French revolution, for example, it was the Diaspora

of Greek intellectuals across Europe that was instrumental in campaigning for an independent Greek homeland which meant also an autonomous Greek state.

From the point of view of imperial history, however, the most obvious and most brutally achieved example of forced dislocation is that of African within the Americans and elsewhere as a result of the slave trade. Particularly in this context, where the exile population was denied control or cultural representation in the new world, it becomes a political act to affirm the oneness of the dispossessed.

In the context of global migration the ideas of Diaspora and of Diasporic culture have become more, not less, significant and continue to be grounded on the assertion of a unity based on something conceived of as sufficiently fundamental to override geographical separation. The fundamental something, of course, might be precisely the promise of a future, restored geographical unity as in dreams of a Kashmiri homeland. Unity between scattered peoples can also be asserted on the basis of shared religious projects, shared blood ties, shared melanin levels, or shared histories of dispersion. Many of these discourses of unity are developed in the face of on going racism or prejudice; many are also manipulated by ruling groups within Diaspora populations for their own purposes of control.

In postcolonial studies, however, the concept of Diaspora often carries the ant essentialist freight as the concept of hybridity. For a writer like Stuart Hall, the notion of culture as diasporic registers the fact that ideas essential unity based in blood or land are, at best, fictions which people put to think of themselves as a single congregation: cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification as sutures, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. In this theoretical context, Diaspora becomes a term of critical intervention against the essentializing categories used to control and delimit peoples including such nations as are employed by elites within diasporas themselves.

In short, "diaspora is taken to have the same kind of critical charge as hybridity, a conjecture that exposes the formulation of identity as a positioning, or as a project, repudiating the idea of a definite and stable home" (Andrew Smith, 256). Thus, diaspora is a position from where people desire definite and stable home.

The colonial and postcolonial countries can be the appropriate places to analyze nation and nationalism rather than the west. The feeling of nation and nationalism affected the whole social and political life of the colonizer and colonized during the period of direct colonial involvement and postcolonial time. The national and independent movements abused trouble to the colonized and decolonized people. Homi K. Bhabha's project is a theoretical model which manifests the difficulties that a writer has to face with reference to cultural ambivalence of the people. Culture is of supreme importance for both Bhabha and other cultural critics because the nation is the conglomeration of cultural policies. Nation can formulate its identity only through cultural manifestations. But, only through national and nationalism, cultural project is possible. In his book *Nation and Narration* Bhabha writes, "The nation, as a form of cultural elaboration, is an agency of ambivalent narration that holds culture at its most productive position, as a force for subordination, fracturing, diffusing reproducing as much as creating, producing, forcing and guiding" (4).

The nation in this sense is the sum total of cultural practices, which ultimately contributes to national identity. It describes other cultures in terms of differences so as to put the self in the superior position where culture acts as a force for subordination. Bhabha disseminates about the time narrative and the margins of the modern nations. However, he is concerned with the formulation of 'the complex strategies of cultural identification and describes address that functions in the name of 'the people' or the nation and make them the immanent subjects and objects of range of social and literary narrative (192). His focus on nation is a form of the locality of culture that paves the

way for the temporal dimension in the study of the nation as narration. The locality of culture for Bhabha is:

More around temporality than about historically: a form of living that is connotative than country less patriotic than parties more rhetorical than the reason of state more mythological than ideology, less homogenous than hegemony; less centered than citizen more collective than subjective, more cyclic than civility, more hybrid in the articulation of cultural difference and identification's gender, race clues than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of socio antagonism. (292)

Bhabha further argues:

It is neither sociological study of these terms, nor their holistic history that gives them the narrative and psychological forces that they have brought to be a cultural production and projections. It is the man of ambivalence of the nation as a narrative strategy and an apparatus of power that produces a continual slippage into analogous, even metonymic categories, like the people, the minorities and cultural differences that continually overlap in the act of writing the nation. (292)

Such an argument shows that there is always on kind a controversy between the idea of the historical necessity of the nation and the arbitrary signs and symbols. It signifies the effective life of the national culture as Bhabha quotes E. Gellner's words and says that "nationalism is not what it seems and above all not what it seems to itself . . . cultural shared and patched used by nationalism are often arbitrary and historical investments" (293).

Postcolonial writers like Rushdie showed the shortcomings of nationalism. He mocks the boarder lines of the world's nations. He cold not find nationalism nowadays;

particularly after the independence. He questioned about the socio-cultural aspect of decolonized nation. The ideologies, awareness and consciousness grow rapidly. Life in third world countries will be painful, if the people do not trample, the nationalistic feeling. Leela Gandhi argues that the impact of cultural materialism upon critical practices in postcolonial literature of the mid 1980's conceded the national underpinnings of all cultures. She in her book *Postcolonial Theory* says:

Text, as is now commonly agreed, is implicated in their economic and poetical contexts. Few critics would despite the understanding that all literature is symptomatic of and responsive to, historical conditions of repression and recuperation. Whole postcolonial literary theory invokes these cultural materialists assumptions in its account of textual production under colonial and post colonial conditions. It goes a step further in its claim that sexuality is endemic to the colonial encounter. Texts, more than any other social political product, it is argued, are the most significant instigators and purveyors of colonial power and its double, post colonial resistance. (141-42)

Literature and text are based on colonial and postcolonial conditions. The most important aspects of socio-cultural and individual life are economics and politics. These two aspects play an important role to produce literature. Literature concerns common people.

After independence, literary artists are sometimes influential and sometimes they are influenced by the colonial masters. Leela Gandhi once more says:

The postulation of Romanticism as the 'originary moment', if you like, of textual politics, is particularly pertinent. For in the textual obsessions of postcolonial literary theory we might read the first symptoms of a process where by metropolitan culture obtains an especially 'romantic'

investment in post colonial literature and its migrant writers. These texts/writers are often seen to embody energies and values allegedly or under threat in the postcolonial world. And these values as we have seen already, are animated by single concept, namely, hybridity. (161)

Fragmentation is an element of postcolonial ideology. No rigid ideology or conception remains, no discipline and be studied independently. One should simultaneously study, literature, economics, politics, history, geography etc. Notably, while these accounts 'romanticise' the postcolonial writer's vision for 'marginalized' postcolonial societies, they simultaneously insist that postcolonial texts characteristically write back to the metropolitan center. Postcolonialism, too, insists on rupturing the centre/margin hierarchy like as post structuralism. Bill Ashcroft's *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* articulates the issue vigorously and finds similarity between the postcolonialism and structuralism. He writes: "Poststructuralism the destruction of centralized logocentric master narratives of European culture is very similar to the post colonial project of dismantling the culture/margin binaries of imperial discourse" (61).

Similarly, the intellectual history of postcolonial theory is marked by a dialectic between Marxism, on the one hand, and poststructuralism/postmodernism, on the other. So, too this theoretical contestation informs the academic content of postcolonial analysis, manifesting itself in an ongoing debate between the competing claims of nationalism and internationalism, strategic essentialism and hybridity, solidarity and dispersal, the politics of structure totality and the poetics of fragment. Leela Gandhi and some point to clarify the idea:

Critics on both sides of this divide are persuasive in their claims, and compelling in their critique of theoretical opponents. Neither the assertions of Marxism nor those of poststructuralism, however, can exhaustively account for the meanings and consequences of colonial

encounter. While the poststructuralist critique of western epistemology and theorization of cultural alterity/difference is indispensable to postcolonial theory, materialist philosophies, such as Marxism, seem to supply the most compelling basis for postcolonial politics. Thus, the postcolonial critic has to work towards a synthesis of or negotiation between, both modes of thought. In a sense, it is an account of its commitment to this project of theoretical and political integration that post colonialism deserves academic attention. (IX)

There is the question of postcolonial constituency- the cultural audience for whom its theoretical disquisitions are most meaningful. There is a little doubt that in its current mood postcolonial theory principally addresses the needs of the western academy. It attempts to reform the intellectual and epistemological exclusions of this academy, and enables non-western critics located in the west to present their cultural inheritance as knowledge. This is of course, a worthwhile project and, to an extent, its efforts have been rewarded. The Anglo American humanities academy has gradually stretched its disciplinary boundaries to non-western world. But of course, what postcolonialism fails to recognize is that counts as 'marginal' in relation to the west has often been central and foundational in the non-west. Thus, while it may be revolutionary to teach Gandhi as political theory in the Anglo-American academy, he is, and has always been, canonical in India. Despite its good intentions, then, post-colonialism continues to render non-western knowledge and culture as 'other' in relation to the normative self of western epistemology and rationality

To conclude, postcolonialism has poststructuralist and Marxist parentage to "diagnose the material effect and implication of colonialism" (Gandhi, 26). As post structuralism, it insists to rupture the hierarchy of 'center' and 'margin' of European

construction and it is to bring 'subaltern' voice into center as Marxism does for proletariat.

Post colonialism emerged as a distinct category only in 1990s. It has gained popularity through the influence of such books: *Other Worlds* by Gayatri Spivak, *The Empire Writes Back* by Bill Ashcroft et al., *Nation and Narration* by Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said's *Orientalism*. The main focus of this school of thought is the rejection of master narrative of western imperialism, in which the colonial other is not only subordinated and marginalized, but in effect deleted as a cultural agency and its replacement by a counter narratives in which the colonial cultures fight their way back into a world history written by Europeans.

In the last decade postcolonialism has taken its place with theories such as poststructuralism, psychoanalysis and feminism as a major critical discourse in the humanities. As a consequence of its diverse and interdisciplinary usage, this body of thought has generated an enormous corpus of specialized academic writing, nevertheless, although much has been written under its rubric, 'Postcolonialism' itself remain a diffuse and nebulous term. Unlike Marxism or deconstruction, for instance, it seems to lack an 'originary moment' or a coherent methodology. Though Marxism and deconstruction challenge the legacy of colonialism, they can't remain aloof from master narrative that put Europe at its center. Thus, recent postcolonial criticism, seeks to undo the Eurocentrism produced by the institution of the west's trajectory. It does so, however, with the acute realization that postcoloniality is not born and nurtured in a panoptic distance from history.

Gayatri Spivak's *Outside in the Teaching Machine* defines postcoloniality as "the heritage of imperialism in the rest of the globe" (80). The line of demarcation between the so called 'colonial' and 'postcolonial' intellectuals was that the 'colonial' one spoke from positions imbibed from metropolitan culture while 'postcolonial' ones

spoke from outside those positions. That argument was unsustainable enough, now, in Spivak's formulation, postcoloniality itself equals the heritage of imperialism which the postcolonial critic inhabits deconstructively or, as Bhabha would say, ambivalent. The legacy of imperialism that Spivak identifies in this passage consists almost entirely of political concepts and practices, nationhood, constitutionality, citizenship, democracy, socialism-for which according to her, no historically adequate referent may be advanced from post colonial space.

Postcolonialism articulates emergence of newly formulated idea of nation and individual identities rejecting the western tradition. Although it studies the ideological and cultural impact of western colonialism and it is in particular, aftermath and accommodates itself to hybridity, syncretism, diaspora, migration etc. to bring the minority voice into the center, many people claim of the continuation of western colonization in different forms. In her book *Postcolonial Theory* Gandhi asserts:

Postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and crucially, interrogating the colonial past. The process of returning to colonial scene discloses a relationship of reciprocal antagonism and desire between colonizer and colonized. (4)

The political experiences and practices of the colonial past are theorized from the enlightened perspective of the present. It helps to know "culture and political identities of colonized subjects" (Gandhi 5). This awareness leads postcolonial people to create their individual as well as national identity as it is done by Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje etc.

Postcolonial literature presents cross-cultural scenario which is complex as well as hybrid, at best Bill Ashcroft in his famous book *The Empire Writes Back* posits

similar view regarding postcolonial literature. He writes, "All post colonial literatures are cross-cultural (Ashcroft et al. 39); the postcolonial text is always a complex and hybridized formation (110); hybridity is the primary characteristics of all post-colonial societies what ever their source" (185).

Hybridity

Hybridity comes from the term 'hybrid,' which in turn is derived from Latin word *hybrida* which means 'combining of two different species or elements.' However, in the modern times, it is one of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in literature. It commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc.

In linguistic examples, it include Pidgin and Creole languages, and this echoes the foundational use of the term by the linguist and cultural theorist, like Mikhail Bakhtin, who used it to suggest the disruptive and transfiguring power of multi-vocal language situations and, by extension, of multi-vocal narratives. The idea of polyphony of voices in society is implied also in Bakhtin's idea of the carnivalesque; which emerged in the Middle Ages

The assertion of a shared post-colonial condition such as hybridity has been seen as part of the tendency of discourse analysis to de-historicize and de-locate cultures from their temporal, spatial, geographical and linguistic contexts and to lead to an abstract, globalized concept of the textual that obscures the specificities of particular cultural situations. Pointing out that the investigation of the discursive construction of colonialism does not seek to replace or exclude other forms such as historical, geographical, economic, military or political, Robert Young suggests that the contribution of colonial discourse analysis, in which concepts such as hybridity are couched, provides a significant framework for that other work by emphasizing that all

perspectives on colonialism share and have to deal with a common discursive medium which was also that of colonialism itself. Colonial discourse analysis can therefore look at the wide variety of texts of colonialism as something more than mere documentation or 'evidence.'

However, Young himself offers a number of objections to the indiscriminate use of the term. He notes how influential the term 'hybridity' was in imperial and colonial discourse in negative accounts of the union of disparate races-accounts that implied that unless actively and persistently cultivated, such hybrids would inevitably revert to their 'primitive' stock. Hybridity thus became, particularly at the turn of the century, part of a colonialist discourse of racism. Young draws our attention to the dangers of employing a term so rooted in a previous set of racist assumptions, but he also notes that there is a difference between unconscious processes of hybrid mixture, or creolization, and a conscious and politically motivated concern with the deliberate disruption of homogeneity. He notes that for Bakhtin, for example, hybridity is politicized, made contestatory, so that it embraces the subversion and challenge of division and separation. Bakhtin's hybridity sets different points of view against each other in a conflicted structure, which retains "a certain elemental, organic energy of hybridity to reverse the structures of domination in the colonial situation" (23), which Young recognizes, that Bhabha also articulates. Bakhtin's intentional hybrid has been transformed by Bhabha into an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant colonial power depriving the imposed imperialist culture, not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed, politically, often through violence, but even of its own claims to authenticity.

Young does, however, warn of 'he' unconscious process of repetition involved in the contemporary use of the term. According to him, when talking about hybridity, contemporary cultural discourse cannot escape the connection with the racial categories

of the past in which hybridity had such a clear racial meaning. Therefore deconstructing such essentialist notions of race today we may rather be repeating the fixation on race in the past than distancing ourselves from it, or providing a critique of it. This is a subtle and persuasive objection to the concept; however in a more positive manner.

Young also notes that:

The term indicates a broader insistence in many twentieth-century disciplines, from physics to genetics, upon a double logic, which owes against the convention of rational either/or choices, but which is repeated in science in the split between the incompatible coexisting logics of classical and quantum physics. (26)

In this sense, as in much else in the structuralist and post-structuralist legacy, the concept of hybridity emphasizes a typically twentieth-century concern with relations within a field rather than with an analysis of discrete objects, seeing meaning as the produce of such relations rather than as intrinsic to specific events or objects.

Whilst assertions of national culture and of pre-colonial traditions have played an important role in creating anti-colonial discourse and in arguing for an active decolonizing project, theories of the hybrid nature of post-colonial culture assert a different model for resistance, locating this in the subversive counter-discursive practice implicit in the colonial ambivalence itself and so undermining the very basis on which imperialist and colonialist discourse raises its claims of superiority.

Diaspora, Hybridity and Culture

Culture in simple understanding is a set of shared beliefs and values of groups of person living in a larger community. It compromise of beliefs, customs, practices, and social behavior of a particular nation or people. According to Blackburn, culture is, "The way of living of a people, including their attitudes, values, beliefs, arts, sciences, modes of perception, and habits of thought and activity. Cultural features of forms of

life are learned but are often too pervasive to be readily noticed from within" (90). As such, culture, in most communities are determining aspects of determining an individual's mannerism.

Critics licensed with cultural discourse of suspicious on the part of colonized people, seeks to undermine the imperial subject. It has forcefully produced parallel discourses which have questioned stereotypes about myths. The power and authority of western colonial representation have been questioned and challenged by the discourses produced y the people supposed to be subordinates. Those post-colonials writes and critics turned the table from the real situation of the colonial countries and presented the colonial history from the perspective of colonized people's experiences. By doing this, they revealed what the colonial authority did in the name of progress, science and civilization. Frantz fanon, one of the eminent postcolonial writers and critics, seems to be more radial on this issue. Said in his *Culture and Imperialism* writes about Fanon:

Fanon reverses the hitherto accepted paradigm by which Europe gave the colonies their modernity and argues instead that not only were the well being and the progress Europe built up the sweat and the dead bodies of Negroes. Arabs, Indians and the yellow Races but Europe is literally the creation of the third world. (197)

Whereas, Boehmer in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, writes:

The wretched of the both, Fanon called for the entire structure of colonial society to be changed from the bottom up violently. For him to decolonize meant that the indigenous be forcefully substituted for the alien, in literature as in life colonized had to 'insult and 'varmint' up white mans value. (182)

Emerging from displacement and dereliction of social marginality, the post colonial writer produced parallel discourse in order to re-inscribe and relocate cultural

differences. Many writers of the colonial period, influenced and encouraged by the postcolonial tenants based their narrative on ideological premises regarding cultural differences. From the perspective of colonized people, colonizers debunked western colonial misrepresentation about themselves.

The narratives of the third world writers are designed in such a way to form and change the ideological process of misrepresentations. These writers have made vigorous attempts to restudy, reinterpret and even to rewrite their own history. Postcolonial writers and critics, by subverting the colonial perspective, played a crucial role in reinserting the colonial history. They were concerned about creating/recreating their own history to give the cultural definition of their own. In the process of developing national history, self meaning of a nation emerged with imagination/writing about the nation. Appropriate definition of a nation was much more complicated in such writing. With reference to concepts of nationalism and new nationalism, Boehmer writes:

The early moment of anti-imperialist rationalist or more accurately, nationalist or more accurately, 'nativist resistance was in many cases a reliability sedate preliminary to the more offer to the more overt libertinism which followed. But it also laid the ideological and strategy bedrock of later developments. As with earlier nationalism, the movement sought, in the first instance an inversion of imperial value, if not of structures. Their messianism drew support from other utopian ideologies of the time. (For example, Marxism, Fabianism, Versions of Christainity). The message they communicated was distinguished a strenuous defense of the virtues of native culture characterized as reach, pure and authentic (hence the term nativist). The idea was that a people's identity, though long suppressed, lay embedded in its cultural origins

and was recoverable intact unadulterated by the depredations of Colonialism (180).

However, since the 1990s, under the pressure of reaction to the Gulf war and the prevalence of debates over post-modernism and modernity, issue relating to cultural diversity and multiculturalism emerged which further challenged a still entrenched monoculturalism. Pluralists such as Henry Louis Gates and Edward said embrace the idea that, I modernity, culture is hybrid and interactive and is therefore never contained clearly in the form of ethnic groups but travels between groups, multiplying and continually mutating.

Radhakrishnan in his book *The Use and Abuse of Multiculturalism* defines multiculturalism as an eccentric field where the spirit of self-consciencization founds all social process. He writes:

Culturalism has to be thought as an eccentric and isotopic field that is not to be mastered by the will to dominance of any one subject. The only way to honor and enter the multicultural field is in a spirit of self-reflexivity, self consciencization, and submission to that radical alterity that founds all social process in opposition to egocentric ideas of self and other. (34)

Radhakrishnan is of the view that as long as multiculturalism is perceived as a subset of the identity theme and its inevitable entanglement with the binaries of self and other it is doomed to failure. Within the aegis of identity politics multiculturalism can at best tantalize the self with the exotic distance of alterity, all the while making sure that this distance will never be negotiated in the name of Coeval rationality.

The only options are to 'eat the other', to use Bell hooks' ringing phrase, become the other though an act of histrionic virtuosity, or just ignore the other as non-negotiable different. All these options are hopelessly locked within the Manichaeism of

the identity-difference game. Any honest attempt to embodying multiculturalism as social value and praxis has to step beyond the reified rhetoric of self and other, of identity and difference, in a spirit of de-centered multilateralism. He further adds:

Multiculturalism could be developed along the lines of social justice, egalitarian democratic participation, and the ideological yet multilateral production of social consensus and dissent. On the other hand, multiculturalism could be commoditized and aestheticized and packaged as an exciting consumable collage: brown hands holding yellow hands holding white hands holding male hands holding female hands holding back hand in a spirit of post-historical contemporaneity. (40)

The meaning of multiculturalism is far from transparent. It is indeed a contradictorily coded term that, depending upon how and from what point of view it is articulated, stands in for a range of contradictory social phenomena. Multiculturalism promotes the insidious belief that all the different groups occupy an even playing field, encourages historical amnesia, and by creating an immanent spectacle conceals the actual center of power that remains external to the constitution of the college and thereby controls and directs the representational politics. It is only by rigorously insisting on the politics of representation that we can steer the culturalists debate towards such dire social issue as equality, distributive justice, and reparation and compensation for crimes and injustices of the past, and the ongoing influence of the past on the present. For it will not be enough to say that a collage style de-territorialization has already enable the 'multi' to speak and to believe that such speaking has rendered absolute relationship that each different culture has to itself representatively and responsively.

The symbolic alterity that is doing, all the interpellation of the college is accessible differently and differentially to the brown hand, and the black hand and the yellow hand and the white hand. But Radhakrishnan thinks "the culturalists form as

college misreads both the egalitarian ideal that underlies distributive justice and the recognition politics undertaken in the name of difference" (42). Radhakrishnan further adds:

If the college model of culturalism is erroneous, what indeed is the right model? I would like to advance the thesis that multiculturalism cannot be in complicity with business as usual, and that there are something to be taught and learned here, and something to be corrected and rectified. Rather than run away in fear from the very term 'correctness' radical theorist of multiculturalism need to align 'correction' with 'persuasion' ethnical as well as epistemological, historically and contingently with the idea of realizing 'common ground' among identities, groups and constituencies by reformulating the very nature of 'interest' and 'its inherence in the politic of perspectives. (42)

Culturalism needs correction with persuasion, ethnical as well as epistemological with the realization of common round among groups, identities by recreating the very nature of interest based on hybridity and Diaspora.

As such, the correction that is being made is not made in the name of any individual, groups, or constituency that has arrogated to itself the privilege based on suffering: Jewish, Palestinian, Subaltern, or whatever or omniscience and eternal correctness. All happenings are historically contingent and the perspective that initiates the correction is itself not invulnerable to error and oppression. No perspective has a monopolistic hold over the ethnic political concept of humanity. Rather, the correction is made in the name of a transcendent human principle or value that is more worthwhile and precious than the egotism or the moral righteousness of any one group. As such, diaspora, hybridity and culture are the essence of the determination of the modern day society's distinctiveness, as no society is free from its impact.

III. Tension between East and West

For ages, the world has supposedly been divided between the east – materially less developed, and west – materially more developed. Based on this idea, the hegemony of the west has prevailed for ages between the parts of the world. In these aspect, the west, or precisely the developed nations in the western part of the globe have since long claimed their supremacy over the eastern, or undeveloped and under-developing eastern and central nations of the world.

The base of their claim, though dubious, largely rests on the fact that they play a leading role in the present world politics and occupy a definite place in determining the development activities carried out in the present global scenario. In the scenario, Anita Desai's *Diamond Dust* breaks through the hegemony of the so-called superior western nations and maintains a cultural bridge to the less developed nations of the east. *Diamond Dust* is a collection of nine short stories having its background, basically in the Indian topography and the characters in the stories are more Indians and less Europeans and Americans. However, the typical eastern characters are able to make their presence felt in the western world, and many of them are even more than that, as they influence the western people and their mentality.

“Winterscape” one of the first stories of the compilation glorifies the eastern myth rearing children and affection associated with them. In every parts of the world, children are born and mothers give them special attention. However, in India there is a strange trend in relation to it. It is not only the birth giving woman, who is the mother, but all the senior females in the family, who provide the child with the motherly love and affection. Rakesh is an Indian origin youth married and settled with Beth, a Canadian lady in Canada. He was reared by his widow mother, whom he called “ma” (25) and by his aunt, whom he calls “masi” (25).

They are a happily settled family in Canada, until the day, when Rakesh decides to invite his mother and aunt to accompany him in Canada, and assist in rearing up his newly born child. Beth not accustomed to such interference of blood ties in the family finds it disgusting, as:

. . . she felt herself tense at the thought of not just one, but two strangers, foreigners, part of Rakesh's past, invading their house. She had already wished she had not allowed Rakesh to send for his mother to attend the birth of their child. It had seemed an outlandish, archaic idea even when it was first suggested; now it was positively bizarre.

'Why both of them? We only asked your mother,' she insisted. (26)

This is one of the obvious differences in culture between the east and west. Beth does not want two strangers, who are Rakesh's mother and aunt, and with whom she is required to share her house along with many more things. This is the western world where things are seen as they are but, not the other aspect.

Beth is worried on the aspect that she would have to invite two women in her house, when initially she was not willing to accept, even one of them. The culture of providing the child with a special treatment by senior family members is very oriental, to which Beth is not known. In almost all cultures of the world, the birth of a child is celebrated with pomp and show; however, the east has its own way. The concept of treating children in a special way is very popular in the eastern part of the world. Here, the entire family gather and provide the newly born child with their blessings and offerings, with mental and physical care to the baby child. This infact increases familial ties and increases internal bond and affection among the members of the family.

Birth of a child is celebrated in the eastern world with charm and glow. Each of the relatives of the couple is invited, and the child is provided with offerings by all

the attendants, followed by, in most cases giving some monetary gift. It is, however, related to various local cultures, and may differ in style of celebration and gist of the ceremony. But, the essence that the child will be blessed by the senior members of the family continues, even today. This is the rich side of eastern culture, which Rakesh wants to continue back in Canada, but, of course, not understood and supported by his Canadian wife, Beth. She finds it meaningless, as:

‘Two tickets, for whom?’ because she knew, Rakesh did not have a father, that his mother was a widow.

‘For my mother and my aunt,’ he said, in a low almost sullen voice, sitting on the edge of the bed in his pyjamas and twisting his fingers, together. [. . .]

‘Your aunt?’ Beth heard her own voice escalate. ‘Why do we have to pay for your aunt to visit us? Why does she have to visit us when the baby is born? I can’t have so many guests in the house, Rakesh!’ (27)

It is obvious Beth does not understand the eastern culture. However, some of her expressions are anti-eastern values, like when she says, why do we have to pay for your aunt, it is the expression of a western woman, who is unaware of the rich eastern culture. It is largely because of the varying cultures of the two nations and continents.

In the context, Rakesh, after the death of his father, was reared by mother, and his aunt, who was his mother’s sister. In the west, it might sound a little weird; however, in the eastern part of the world, it is absolutely accepted. And, when Rakesh has his own child, he invites his mother and Aunt to Canada to assist in nourishing the newly born baby boy. However, Beth not habituated with such scenario and culture, does not find it very welcoming. She is against the idea that two of the never seen and heard women are coming to stay with them, that too, in the

pretext of caring her newly born child. For her they both are “Two guests, two foreigners – at such a time” (27). This is the gap that separates the east and the west.

Rakesh, had two mothers; one who gave birth and other, who reared him. When his real father died, his mother took him to his sister’s house and there he was reared. When this fact is disclosed to Beth, she could not digest the fact. For her, it was impossible for a sister to give her blood-son to her big sister. Beth says, “Nothing, no one could make me do that. Give my baby away?” (35). She is a typical western culture woman, who dreams and works for self, and not for others, unlike eastern that believed in sacrifice to look into the feelings of others.

Rakesh knew more truths about his mothers. However, he could not tell her all, as Beth could not understand it to the core. Even though he tries to persuade Beth by explaining the cultural and ethical aspects of the east, as:

It was not like that. They understood each other. Ma looked after me – she cooked for me and fed me, made me sit down on a mat and sat in front of me and fed me with her own hands. And what a cook she is! [. . .] And Masi . . . she took me by the hand to school. In the evening, she lit the lamp and made me show her my books. She helped me with my lessons – and I think learned with me. (35)

The concept of two mothers, one son, probably, possible only in the east. And the interesting aspect is both of them have no complaints to other, and are sharing their motherly love to him, without any biasness and personal, whatsoever. This is the presence of eastern culture in regards to blood ties and children.

Beth, a mere representative figure, voices the western culture in the entire process. But as things went on, the two old women – mother of Rakesh eventually won her. After they left, she kept their large photograph, despite the disapproval of Rakesh, in the sitting room. In the refrigerator of their sitting room, Beth had added a

photograph of theirs, which she liked to do the most. So, finally there was understanding between the mothers – the mothers of different culture and continents.

In this richly diverse collection, Desai trains her luminous spotlight on private universes, stretching from India to New England, from Cornwall to Mexico. Skillfully navigating the fault lines between social obligation and personal loyalties, the men and women in these nine tales set out on journeys that suddenly go beyond the pale -- or surprisingly lead them back to where they started from. In the mischievous title story, a beloved dog brings nothing but disaster to his obsessed master; in other tales, old friendships and family ties stir up buried feelings, demanding either renewed commitment or escape. And truly international in nature, she depicts in the collection's final exquisite story, "The Rooftop Dwellers," a young woman discovers a new kind of freedom in Delhi's rooftop community. She comes to know the woman power, she narrates:

'O, a girl is like a flame,

O, a girl can start a fair – ' (186)

These stories are of personal journey and awakening, from as far as the next door in a rural village in India to the distance of Ontario and London. They not only depict the picture of backdrop city of India, but cover the skyscrapers of the United States and the Great Britain. Thus, the collection of stories moves from the local suburbs of Indian village to large cities of the world, and to different cultures and tradition that is different to that of the Indian flavor.

Typical to the eastern way, Desai has a unique way of blending the eastern flavor with that of the west. Like in "Royalty," she narrates the story of a family preparing for holidaying marred by an unexpected guest, which they cannot deny. As in "Royalty," she twists her narration from a sudden flow towards an abrupt change in the course of flow of the incident:

All was prepared for the summer exodus: the trunks packed, the household wound down, wound up, ready to be abandoned to three months of withering heat and engulfing dust while its owners withdrew to their retreat in the mountains. The last few days were a little uncomfortable - so many of their clothes already packed away, so many of their books and papers bundled up and ready for the move. [. . .] 'Oh Ravi, Raja has come. He is in the south. He wants to visit us - next week.' (1-2)

Everything seems very normal in her narration, but then there is an unwanted thing happening all of a sudden. This unwanted thing is the coming of some persons or befall of ideas never precedent to the characters mind and body. They are left to lurch to the same and, they cannot avoid the same.

This is one of the features that most humans have to go through all over the world. They cannot avoid the unprecedented coming of any such characters, which they want to avoid. Raja has arrived in the story “Royalty,” which can be interpreted in many ways. It is, something that the couple cannot let go unheard, and all their plans are shattered within minutes. This is like the sky falling to the poor couple, who are in the verge of going for a holiday. However, this phenomenon is quite similar to many of the people all over the world.

There are all sorts of things happening in the life of common people, in the east and west, which is not in their hands. An arrival of a guest in “Royalty” and the coming of the two mothers-in-laws in “Winterscape” shatters the plans and desires they have managed for them. However, these unwanted happenings, in around the globe, which no humans can escape. It is to say, tragedy befalls on all people despite culture, class and status of a person.

The varieties of stories in the novel are an amusing mixture of various diversity of social subject matter. Sylvia Brownrig in *The New York Times Book Review* comments on collection of the stories, as:

The diamond is a pure gem, stretching from buried resentments (in “The Artist’s Life”) to the havoc caused by a dear dog, Diamond (in “Diamond Dust”) and to a businessman away from home sees his own death (in *The Man who saw Himself Drown*”). Thus stories cover a wide variety of twist and turn in its pattern and in its way of presentation. (18)

The curious mixture of happenings in the compilation ranges from life in Indian soil, as slowly being influenced by the western norms and ideas. This is the depiction of amazing combination of the Indian society. The Indian society is a vast mixture of people from all-most-all religions, ethnics, class and status. All these have added to make up an amusing Indian society.

As in “Diamond Dust,” we find the love of a dog by its master is rather not eastern. Old relationships stir up buried resentments, a beloved dog causes havoc, a businessman away from home sees his own death, and freedom springs in surprising ways. In this rather funny, sad, compassionate and charming story, Desai depicts the readers with the happenings of ordinary lives in a disconnecting world, where hopes and dreams clash with disappointment and the human spirit shines strongly from India to Canada and England and across the world. Then there falls the concept of border, and the world turns into a hybrid sense of communal culture and tradition.

To present all these, Desai shows extraordinary compassion and caliber to present the Indian taste to the western world people. She depicts a minor incident, like a dog's havoc, or a businessman odyssey, into the extraordinary level of human experience and manifestation. In this anthology of nine short fictions luminously

detailing events that lead characters to irrevocably cross the invisible line separating their pasts from new experiences, new insights, and even new existences, Desai turns the world upside down. In settings that range from her native India to Cornwall, Mexico, and Canada, Desai deftly sketches the scenes as she introduces varied characters.

Some of the best composed stories are "Diamond Dust," "Winterscape," and "The Rooftop Dwellers." In the first, a man's devotion to his notoriously cantankerous dog leads him to act precipitously with fatal consequences. The variant levels of depiction of incidents vary from stories like "Winterscape" on the relationship of the aunt and mother of an Indian married to a Canadian, who visit the couple and their newborn son and, as the unfamiliar snow falls, understand the great cultural differences that separate them.

"The Rooftop Dwellers," perhaps the tale most redolent of contemporary India, describes a young, impecunious woman who moves to New Delhi to work on a literary magazine and, renting a room on a family's rooftop, begins to enjoy the freedom such a life permits, despite a robbery and a bullying landlord.

In other notable pieces, , an unexpected visit from a former college friend underlines a couple's growing frailty and distance from their past "Royalty," a young Mexican studying in the US returns to the town where he grew up and finds it changed and energized, while his family remains querulously in the past "Tepoztlan Tomorrow," and a retired consultant running a hotel in Cornwall with his wife finds consolation after her death by closing the premises to guests and feeding the badgers that come out at night "Underground."

All these, but, are the representation of eastern values reaching to the western fronts, and vice-versa. This can be appropriately viewed in "Winterscape." Beth, the central figure in the story have shows lack of concern to the eastern culture. It is one

of the aspects of cultural differences that prevail in today's global scenario.

However, it is also culture that lessens such differences and voices for a common global culture. Through the cultural exchange and programme, there can be a global world of harmony and peace. In the context, "Winterscape" reaches beyond the eastern border and goes up to mingle itself in the western.

"Winterscape" is a story of a young Canadian woman, Beth, who does not understand the values and ethics of eastern culture. She is reared up in west and has a sister, to whom she owes no responsibility. However, when she becomes a mother, she encounters two mothers who have raised her Indian husband. As a new mother, Beth cannot understand the poignant story of these two widows who have come to visit from India – one her husband's natural mother and the other her beloved older sister to whom the mother gave the child to raise.

The collection opens with "Royalty," about a couple who delay their exodus to their summer home in order to welcome a much in-demand guest, a young man with such charm as to overshadow his parasitic nature towards the wealthy. It is a western trend to go on a weekend or to take a long holiday. For the same, an eastern couple Ravi and Sarla, a middle-class typical Indian family have planned to go for an outing, to escape the summer heat. However, they are penetrated in their plan by the unexpected arrival of a guest, Raja, who they revered as a family guru. The shocking news comes to them through their nephew, as:

In that uncomfortable interlude, a postcard arrived – a cheap, yellow printed postcard that for hands began to tremble: news from Raja. In a quivering voice she asked for her spectacles. Ravi passed them to her and she peered through them to decipher the words as if they were a flight of migrating birds in the distance. Raja was in India, at his

ashram in the south, Raja was going to be in Delhi next week, Raja expected to find her there. (2)

As, the news exploded they were left helpless, as Raja was a person, who could not be ignored. Moreover, the letter was more an appeal to come rather than a request. It read, “She would be there, wouldn’t she? ‘You won’t desert me?’ (2). It is the depiction of how the eastern world still is under the influence of the ancient Hindu tradition that was a factor that differentiated between the east and west.

On the other hand, Ravi and Sarla who were going to California for the weekend represents the hegemony of western world being fallen as, generally it is the westerners trend who prefer holidaying in a far away countries. In the context, Desai depicts the western world – California, from the eye of an eastern in a comparative manner. Many of the Indian denizens view life in west as full of charm and glow; however, it has its own flaws. Desai narrates the pomp and glory of California, the western world, as:

California had such weather? Had they been deceived by posters of palm trees and golden beaches? Didn’t they know the fraudulence inherent in the very notion and practice of tourism, that abominable habit of the Western world? Tourism! Now, when he returned to India, it was not to see the sights, he already knew them – they were imprinted upon his heart – but to imbibe them, savor them, nourish himself upon them. (12)

India is fast gaining ground as a tourist destination among the westerners. It is associated with the trend of European and Americans coming to India, and in turn the Indians going to the Americas for holidaying is the reversal of the trend.

Similarly, the title story, “Diamond Dust: A Tragedy,” shortest in the collection, is somewhat comical in the description of Mr. Das’s overblown devotion

to Diamond, his dog “of an indecipherable breed.” Indeed, the dog becomes the most precious part of Mr. Das’s life, in spite of Diamond’s pariah status in the neighborhood – the dog is not only dirty, mangy, and a repeat runaway, he’s also exceptionally mean with a special hatred for the postman. In the end, tragedy is inevitable.

Then there is “Tepoztlan Tomorrow,” the story of Luis, who comes to the decision that he was going home, tomorrow. He was quitting everything he had in this developed part of the world, Mexico and move to the rural backdrops of his dear Tepoztlan – a not very large and friendly city. Dona Celia, Luis, the narrator’s aunt depicts the city as:

Do you think Tepoztlan is the place it once was? [. . .] we all know about lively. Men come to our street to drink. All afternoon you hear them drink and gamble there under the bamboos, and by evening you may see them lying stretched out in the road, dead and drunk – so lively has it grown,’ Don Celia said bitterly. (140)

So, the city has changed and its denizens, but, whatever, Luis loves the town. It is true that one cannot quit his/her hometown for all the worldly pleasures and comfort. Had, it been so, Luis would not have decided to quit Mexico City for Tepoztlan, a small town situated in the outskirts of Mexico.

This is like homecoming of a long lost son, who finally cannot resist the isolation from his near and dear ones, and decides to come back to them, to the warmth of one’s home. The scene of homecoming should be understood more internally, rather than externally. These are the moments of glory and pomp, when the east welcomes the west, and vice-versa. During such moment, people can forget wealth and power, as the homeliness of one’s culture reminds them of their own. As such, the essence and norms of all cultures are very same; however, the ways they

are presented are different. Amid cultural background, people find happiness and, thus the gap is lessened. As such, culture helps to sooth our woes and worries and takes us to a new height of universal fraternity.

The eastern culture and values revolve around the marriage and conjugal life. However, in west, it is common that young boys and girls prefer to remain single; a rather awkward scenario in the east. However, Desai presents the life of a young single woman residing in Delhi in “The Rooftop Dwellers.” The story penetrates into the mentality of a young lady, who has just come from Maharashtra, an Indian state. She is rather dull in being homely and cultural. When her landlady offers her an invitation to come to the house and watch Mahabharatha – a popular tele-serial based on ancient Hindus epic, by the same name:

‘You have come just at Maahbharata time,’ the woman cross-legged on the bed reproached her.

‘Sit down, sit down beti. You can watch it with us,’ the man said more agreeably, waiting at an open corner on the bed, and since they had all transferred their attention back to the screen. (159)

Mahabharata is an ancient scripture of the Hindu people of Aryan culture. Many of the Indians and Nepalese culture and tradition are celebrated and obeyed on the basis of the same epic.

Men and woman requesting for a relatively unknown lady, as she has just arrived on the same day, to rent the room, is rather disbelieving. However, in the eastern culture, people are soon believed; whether they like it or not. This is one of the rich aspects of eastern culture, where humane feelings overcome various typical difficulties in difficult moments in life. Similar is the case with this young lady, who has just come to stay in the house.

She is new and cannot adjust to the fact that many people can sit together in front of a TV and spent hours watching it. The scene from the television, which was telecasting Mahabharata, was disgusting, as:

It was an extremely loud, extremely dramatic scene showing a confrontation between a ranting hero, a weeping heroine and a benignly smiling saint, and the whole family was watching open-mouthed, reluctant to turn their attention away from it. But when their dog darted out from under the bed at her, she screamed and the servant boy flapped his duster and cried [. . .]. (159)

The senior generations of Indians love to watch TV serials, especially the women and children folk. This viewing is even more, when there is a religion based TV serials.

This scene depicts that there are people who dislike the rich religious aspects of the eastern world. Moreover, she wants to live a solo life, free of any sorts of familial and friendly chaos. The house she shares, shelters many women and, who are like most typical Indian women; gossiping, spreading rumors and introducing fascinating stories. However, she came from a house where:

. . . the accommodation of objects, their comfortable clutter and convenience, could be taken for granted. Nothing had been expensive or elaborate but there had been plenty of whatever there was, accumulated over many years; rugs, chairs, cushions, clothiers, dishes, in rooms, verandas, odd corners and spaces. (160)

But in most Indian houses, even today, spaces and goods are very minimal. It is hardly sufficient to make selves comfortable. Life is difficult and so are the goods they enjoy and depend on. The living arrangements are still horrible, as most people

come from background, which do not have their own houses. To have a separate room and abundant facilities is still a distant dream to many of the Indian families.

This lady, Moyna; however, is rather above than most of the Indian girls, in the sense, she has been enjoying a rather standard life and does not want penetration into her privacy, as often done by the girls and women of the boarding. Desai narrates Moyna's dilemma, as:

For the first two weeks she felt she was trapped in a cell; whenever she shut the door, she was swallowed by the cell, it prisoner. If she left the door ajar, every girl going past would look in, scream, 'Oh Moyna' and come in to talk, tell her of the latest atrocity committed by the matron or of the unbelievably rotten food being served downstairs, and also of their jobs, their bosses, their colleagues, and homes and families. (160)

One of the fascinating cultures, especially in case of female in India, is their never ending gossip. This may not be true to all, but it is true to many housewives and single women. Moyna becomes the victim of such gossips, which she was not accustomed earlier. She finds it disgusting that women have to come to her to narrate so many things, not concerning to them, to narrate her. However, this is the difference between eastern and western culture.

In between are a number of unforgettable pieces, "Underground," about a couple trying to find a room in a resort town, "The Artist's Life," about a young girl who announces she wants to be an artist, "Five Hours to Simla or Faisla," about a day-long traffic jam caused by an obstinate trucker, and "Tepoztlan Tomorrow," about a college student who returns to his relatives' hometown in his native Mexico. All these are third world nation's issues; let it be traffic jam, or a man willing to return to his home.

All these collections are assessing of the cultural hybridity of the present world that depicts the falling aspect of cultural ties, all over the world. Every stories of the anthology contains happening based on lamentation and woes of the general people, from the east to the west and the vice-versa, which thereby depicts that the sentiments of the people across the globe is same. There are few stories set in Indian soil, consisting of simple villager's anecdotes and stories. It thereby observes the Indian people and society very minutely in a realistic manner.

In today's world every person has his/her way of living and thinking in conception of society is seen as complex and sum total of comportsing discourses that are produced frequently in the course of time. The ideas which are drawn out of these compelling discourses are negotiated. To understand nation as a transcendental or ideal one is the culture of European modernity. Modernity always creates 'we' and others. And this 'we' is one of the prime reasons to dismantle the concept of east and west. Here, Desai tries to impart the idea against 'totalized' local and national culture, which create binary opposition and envisages multicultural utopia where no binaries remain, thus a bridge is created to gap the differences.

In *Diamond Dust*, Desai's characters seem out of place, foreign, and unfamiliar, even to their author. But they are linked with the universal codes of love, sentiments and the sense of fraternity. The stories seem contrived, ending on a clumsy unexpected twist – the secrets of the hotel owner who would not take any guests, the lodger who was living an artist's life far different from the one the young protagonist imagined, and the young man's disappointment at how his once-familiar Mexican town and its inhabitants have changed.

Desai most excels – as many writers do – are in the stories that are perhaps closest to her own experiences, at least in surroundings and environment. It is beyond doubt that her eastern rearing has to do with the manner of her presenting

stories. She is eastern at soul, and western by manner. Similar trend is reflected in almost all the stories, where she has depicted the rise of eastern culture to the height of west, and a parallel culture is in the offing. Her characters move from the dusty streets of India, as far as the farthest corner of the globe – to Canada, and then again come back to native land – India.

Thus, Desai shows the different aspects of eastern as well as, western culture in order to combine them into a uniform above national and cultural borders. Her strongest stories are those that take place predominantly in Indian locations, populated with Indian characters, but associated with western ways of living. There is no culture like a national or local culture; all have been the hybrid cultural forms. It thereby creates a uniform and organized culture in the present world. Thus, she creates a hybrid culture; which is the voice of the day to save the growing indifference and chaos among people of different nations and societies.

IV. Decline of Hierarchical Supremacy

Anita Desai's *Diamond Dust* blurs the hierarchy between the east and west. These collections of stories bridges cultural gap that exists between the east and the west, and disregards the so-called hierarchy exist in the two parts of the globe. In doing so, she dismantles the concept of superiority of the west over the third world developing nations, or the east. The collection, comprising of nine stories goes through rise and fall in the mentality of its characters, whose perception of viewing the other continent as indifferent to each other, has fallen apart.

The world is fast being a global village and people are moving forward to adopt similar culture and trends. They are adapting to culture and traditions that were once alien to them. The once unknown and hostile behavior and practices are now falling apart, and people are ready to accept and adapt to new changes. All types of borders are being crossed to link societies and communities never known or heard, before. This change is largely due to the technological and material development taking place in the world. To add to this, growing attitude of people to know and explore the mystic of others culture has add to this trend. This has certainly increased fraternal feelings and, lessened hostilities between the societies.

Due to this, growing attitude to respect others culture, people are fast becoming the part of a global community. In the context, *Diamond Dust*, a collection of stories of characters and plot, where it is depicted that people and community are increasingly becoming liberal to address each other's ideas and values. Desai portrays the voice of the global community through the colorful sides of human society and changes coming to them. She depicts some of the touching humane issues through the display of love, gesture and sentiments to address the voice of the global community people. These touching issues are the voices the people of the

global community, who are in an attempt to reduce the global indifference that has bridged them for ages.

Desai's *Diamond Dust* is characterized by its gentleness and empathy of its characters towards the changing place around them. With its often poignant and amusing characters, struggling to achieve their personal dreams in a complicated and unsympathetic world; often crossing the traditional lines determined in the name of culture, Desai voice the coming of generation. This is the accent of the new generation, and its offspring, who do not want to remain within any sorts of dogmas, thereby bridging the gap between east and west.

Diamond Dust creates a culture, that is a set of values and beliefs that shape up the way of living and thinking of person and, determines the course of a society. Since ages, people all over the world have adapted to different cultures and trends; however, until now. The different cultures that have dominant different societies are coming together, and the cultural gaps are being fast falling declining to pave way for a global culture. The recent days, also have seen cultures falling prey to the development and invention of various twenty first century gadgets. These gadgets are, one of the means to communicate various ethics and values, and thereby to dismantle the gap between the people of varying cultures, residing in different geographical backgrounds.

As found in "Winterscape," where a Canadian lady comes in term with the eastern way of mothering and values associated with it. Beth cannot come to terms with the concept that her Indian husband was nourished by two mothers. These two mothers, one biological, and second the biological mother's sister, were a burden imposed on her and her freedom; until, she really understands them and their motherly love. Similarly, in *Diamond Dust*, the story of a dog – Diamond, might be amusing to typical eastern people, who might find the love of the dog, rather

amusing in this part of the globe. At the same time, the story of Moyna in “The Rooftop Dwellers,” the boarding house resident can be termed as both western and eastern. It is so, as toward the middle part of the story, Moyna develops a liking to the gossips of the females in the locality and befriends them during the festival.

Similarly, Beth, a Canadian born lady has dislikes towards the eastern culture. She cannot digest the fact that her husband, an Indian, fellow has been reared by two blood-sisters; one the biological mother and, second the teacher-mother. However, when she is aware of the love of the two women to her husband, she is spellbound and ultimately develops a liking towards the eastern culture.

Thus, Desai’s *Diamond Dust* dismantles the hegemony or supremacy of the west and inferiority of the east by bridging the cultural gap among them.

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