



# Reflection of cultural identity and Diasporic consciousness in Anita Desai's "Bye- Bye Blackbird".

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## ABSTRACT

*Bye- Bye Blackbird*, The third novel of Anita Desai, is a story mainly concerned with the varied human relationships. Dev and Adit are the two major characters representing the two streams of life. Adit, from the beginning of the novel, develops attachment to the western ways of life, especially of England; but while Dev living in England, shows his repulsion towards the ways of European life and particularly of England. Sarah, Adit's wife stands for restores friendly relationship between East and West. Adit cares for England but Dev loves India while Sarah swings between her natural inclination and willing adoption of the foreign ways of life. The title of the novel refers Adit's final farewell to Asian immigration in England when he leaves England for India because their background is rooted in the class society with group division by birth, and from a definite sense of social placement they are placed in an alien culture. The themes of cultural conflict, alienation, immigration and exile are common in the twentieth century literature. Anita Desai brilliantly portrayed the dilemma of uprooted individuals in this novel.

Anita Desai presents a new dimension to English fiction through the exploration of feminine sensibility and conflict of values, which has become a typical neo- Indian phenomenon. She has dealt with conflict of values, human relationships, self seeking, broken ties of marriage and so many internal human concepts. *Bye-Bye Blackbird* appears to be an authentic study of man woman relationships abused by cultural conflicts.

## CHAPTER-1

### **1. Introduction**

Anita Desai, born Anita Mazumdar (24 June 1937) is an Indian novelist and the Emerita John E. Burchard Professor of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As a writer, she has been shortlisted for the Booker prize three times. She received Sathiya Akademi Award in 1978 for the novel “Fire on the Mountain”. She won the British Guardian Prize for “The Village by the Sea”. Anita Desai was born on June 24, 1937, in Mussoorie, India to a German immigrant mother, Toni Nime, and a Bengali businessman, D.N.Mazumdar. She grew up speaking Hindi and German at her home. Desai first learned to read and write in English at school as a result, English became her ‘Literary Language’.

She published her first short story at the age of nine and began to write in English at the age of seven. She was a student at Queen Mary’s Higher Secondary School, Delhi, and received her B. A, in English Literature in 1957 from the Miranda House of the University of Delhi. The following year she married Ashvin Desai, the director of a computer software company and author of the book between eternities: ideas on life and the cosmos. Desai published her first novel, *Cry the Peacock* (1963).

In 1984 she published *In Custody* – which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. In 1978 she received Sathiya Akademi Award for *Fire on the Mountain*, and Sathiya Akademi Fellowship in 2007 and Padma Bhushan in 2014. Novels by Desai include *In Custody* (1984) and *Journey to Ithaca* (1995), *Fasting* (1999) takes as its subject the connections and gaps between Indian and American culture,

while *The Zigzag Way* (2004) tells the story of an American academic who travels to Mexico to trace his Cornish ancestry. Initially, Only English – Language writers from the United Kingdom, The Republic of Ireland, and commonwealth countries were eligible. In 2003, it was announced that the prize would be open to English-Language writers worldwide from 2014. The prize was the subject of controversy on several occasions, and in 1984 Salman Rushdie, the winner of the prize in 1981 for his novel *Midnight's Children* described the judging committee as ‘Killjoyces and Anti-Prousts’.

Kiran Desai-daughter of the novelist Anita Desai lived in India until 15, after which they moved to England and then to the United States. She graduated from Bennington College in 1993 and received two Master in Fine Arts from two different universities. Desai left Columbia to write her first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchards* (1998), about a young man in India who owns a post office job and lives in a guava tree, where he makes relating to oracles pronouncements to locals. Unaware that he also knows their living from a mail, they nail him as a prophet. *Hullabaloo in the guava orchard* drew critical praise and received the Betty Task prize (1998) from the British Society of Authors.

While thinking about the second novel, Desai moved from one place to other from New York to Mexico and India. After seven years, she published *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). Set in the mid-1980s in India, the novel talks about Cambridge- an educated Indian judge living out from retirement near the Himalayas. It was a richly descriptive analysis of globalization, terrorism, and immigration. She received the Booker prize in 2007; Desai became the youngest female writer in history to win the award. Anita Desai confesses that, while she feels about India as an Indian, she thinks about it as an outsider. Desai brought this point of view from her German mother, ‘A European core in her which protested against certain Indian things, which always maintained its independence and its separateness’. Her view has explored the life of outsiders within Indian society and within the west.

Her fiction works have covered themes of Women's oppression and quest for a fulfilling identity, family relationship, and contrast, crumbling of traditions, and anti-Semitism. Desai's novels and short stories bring out characters, events, and moods in rich use of visual imagery and details, which led to comparisons with the sensibilities of modernism of T.S. Eliot, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf. The development and origin of her stories as a writer explain, there are so many images that are stored in the mind but often been forgotten, pass through a person's life, and vanishes again. But there are certain images, characters, and words that you don't lose which stays eventually and one starts connecting it to the other.

Anita Desai herself admits, her novels are not populated by heroic characters, male or female in the traditional sense. Her protagonists are said to be criticized and social forces than being able to face and control them. Desai claims that the characters appear as losers, victims showing a kind of heroism of survival. If one can experience with heart and mind without any compromises that to me is a heroic act that is to be celebrated. Desai's characters often meet tragic endings. Whether Desai's characters live on the banks of Ganges or amidst the excesses of Massachusetts, a meaningful personal relationship cannot be observed other than their solitude.

Anita Desai believed that the art of writing can be developed with good reading; Desai often starts her morning by reading, which helped in the writing of her novels. She always says her first love was towards fiction and family was her backbone who kept motivating her to start writing, especially loved Thomas Hardy and D.H Lawrence who was big influence. She took great interest in Japanese and Russian Literature such as Dostoyevsky which opened her sense of imagination and also the discovery of a new part of Literature. Major awards she received were the Padma Bhushan in 2014, Sathiya Academy Fellowship in 2007 and shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1980, 1984, and 1999. She is a professor of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of technology. As an author, her message to

young writers is that one should face several difficulties in the journey, it is important to be very persistent and stubborn to achieve what one dreams of a writer first should start with short pieces of writing sending it to magazines and newspapers, and once you are confident it gives a great sense of joy and delight that you can go ahead and write novels and fiction were you start would never wanted to stop the ideas that flow in mind and lot and a lot of good values and ideas will be spread through pieces of writing.

Desai is frequently praised by various critics for her ability to capture the local color of her country and western cultures which are blended there for developing the skill further with each successive novel. A large part of the skill is due to the use of imagery, one of the most important devices in her novels. She is referred to by reviewers such as 'World Literature' today contributor Madhusudan Prasad as an imagist novelist whose use of imagery is a remarkable quality of her craft that she maintained in her mature novels. Desai has been compared to Jane Austen, and indeed she is a deceptively gracious and most appreciated storyteller, writing like embroider a sword as she creates family microcosms that embody all the delusions and cruelties of the society-at-large.

### **1.1 Analysis of *Bye-Bye Blackbird***

Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is the exploration of dislocation, loneliness, and estrangement suffering by the millions of 'Exiled Indians' who unsuccessfully try to balance themselves between Home and Abroad. The story showcases the life of the immigrants, who suffer a mixed feeling of Love and Hate towards their adopted country; in an alien society, it examines the plight of Indian immigrants in London. The term blackbird used in the title of the book is referred to the 'immigrants to whom the people of London want to say goodbye. The novel deals with urbanized simplified examples of psychological depth, where the main focus is put across the interplay of characterization of scheme for

the cultural treatment in contact. Focusing on the expatriate, the marginalized, the outsider, London is depicted as a hybrid social space that carries across the melting pot syndrome which sustains the notion of a contact zone. The novel carries the theme of negation and affirmation, hatred and love, apathy and fellow feeling- the phenomena of the contact zone.

The search for new values, the quest of the individual to come to terms in-universe, and ideal integration is all a process of cultural mediations built up in the pattern of a novel. The very vast migrated life, complex cultural differences, problems of adjustment, and Eastern people's constant efforts with unfamiliar land are observed by Desai.

Johnson presents Rutherford Calhoun as a creator and writer of fiction who narrates the entire events through monologue, which consists of many truths. He presents slavery and the contemporary status of African American people in the form of which collects the subaltern history consciousness of slaves the slaves and slavery presenting the reality of freedom of each individual. He has presented the tribe on the west coast of Africa and explores their lack of 'unity of being' and African American experiences. The characters are divided between their adapted cultures and the root cultures. Though they are living in a materially prosperous land, they are physically drawn towards their origin. Everywhere, people have the great tendency to define their identity along: people ask themselves where they belong to? And who they are? Through these questions, we can realize the birth of the national history of expatriates along with problems of belonging as a consequence of globalization living in two cultures people are unpleasant and pleasant.

The homage to picaresque about human nature, sea travel, and self-discovery in a riveting and thrilling way is shown in Johnson's fiction. The story is presented through the protagonist of the novel Rutherford Calhoun, a slave, who is on the voyage. Adit and Dev portray outcasts in England; Desai showed the two sides of the relationship of outsiders in the land of their adaptations.

Adit, in the end, fails to adapt to the English culture despite the strong reciprocal relationship, Dev who once holds up the hostile position develops a warm and positive relationship with English life. He knows, he won't be able to practice the English culture but continue his efforts even after the return of Adit from India. Allmuseri Tribe in the novel is presented as the subaltern group, positively. They were so simple in clothing, did not eat non-vegan, and required no medicine or treatment the only unaccepted thing was they often rob others things and steal property. But due to their simple way of living were made as slaves by their master. In the scenario of London, two Indian characters are analyzed bringing them into contact with two other different cultures and traditions; Anita establishes a mutual understanding and goodwill between the western and the Indian.

The novel opens with the role of freeman being enslaved after being set free played by Calhoun. The period of June 14, 1830, up to August 20, 1830, is presented by Calhoun as starting and ending period. From Calhoun's role, neither of us are neither freemen nor we get rid of it is proved. The cyclic consequences of slavery are found when the novel ends. In the end, Calhoun is set to be free but is again in the bond of marriage with the lady Isadora as a father of Baleka. But Calhoun is set to be struggling with the problems for his existence as a tension created by cultural differences between the east and the west treating the cross-cultural relationship between the Indians and Europeans. The emotional stages of Indian characters in England are experienced through the alienated characters from their native land; Desai draws the difficulty of outsiders in an alien English society. These characters try to change their haunting bad past by a meaningful and happy present, but they fail to strive towards their dream. Adit Sen and Dev the protagonists of the novel identify themselves with English norms and values. But it does not mean that they remain unknown in the new alien society. Johnson mainly focuses on slavery, subaltern consciousness, and psychological notion; Calhoun discovers identity about dignity and cultures, the disillusionment of other characters and himself. Adit's character and

Dev's character show the process of assimilation to a different culture, the novel focuses on the multi-focal interrelationship between the Indians and westerns and multi-cultural relations.

The focus on the multi-culture scenario depicts the relations of new relatives created by the cultural contact. The immigrants are either part is rejected; the feelings of otherness in a new culture to create the experience of Diaspora, hybrid identity and problems of representation, lacking adjustment in the new culture, the position of immigrants become in-between which deprived them of securing a sense of cultural and personal identity. They are incapacitated too emotionally to encounter the hazards of ethical, social-life, and spiritual. Their emotional instability is the major cause and consequence of their failure and achievement and authentic integral selfhood. The Allmuseri tribe is presented as passive, ignorant and humble. They are being dislocated and chained from their homeland, treated cruelly by the ship crew and the captain. The lack of unity is noticed and they remain passive. Calhoun plays an important role for the slaves to make conscious of their slavery life.

When the subaltern group was subordinate to a dominant group revolt against them, they gained more power and became the new dominant group in the society. Daimio is presented as a signifier of a new dominant group after their revolution. He ordered the member of the group to follow the Allmuseri language and culture. Within the highly complex cultures the Easterner's relationship with Westerners through love and hatred illusion and the disillusionment, with the notion of conflict and mutual bond in cross-cultural ethos. The novel seems to be a modern one that optimistically portrays the picture of subaltern, marginal, suppressed voices that will be ultimately be raised because of their conscious or the disillusionment inherent in them from many experiences and got its position in the mainstream. Anita Desai, a modern Indo-Anglican novelist has succeeded in carving a niche for herself in the superstructure of the modern indo- Anglican novel. Apart from the emphasis on cultural mixing and its



effects on the psychology of her characters, she also focuses on the attendant theme of alienation faced by immigrant characters.

The western culture is composed of nuclear families, people open-minded but full of aggression, which give preference to their happiness, and don't like any interference even by parents in their lives. The way of living, eating, and lifestyle of these people are different from Eastern people. In the novel, we find the change of feelings and statements, the behavioral sense of both these characters in her novels. She discusses the aspects in her novels regarding East-West culture. She explores one of the most important things: the impact of Western people or the meeting of Indian peoples with western people just a meeting of the mind. On the other side, it is also a paradox that Adit and Dev liked the western culture externally but their inner feelings for their culture never changed.

Through the characters of the novel, we analyze the condition of immigrants in England and also find the love and hate for one another's culture. Finally, the novel is a combination of the mix-up culture and with the similar and dissimilar thinking towards the East-West world.

## **CHAPTER-2**

### **2. The Reflection of Cultural Identity and Exile in *Bye –Bye Blackbird***

The term Cultural Identity is related to the feeling of identity of belonging to a group. It deals with the aspects of a group. It deals with the aspects of a person's self-perception and self-conception. The reflection of religion, ethnicity, nationality, generation, social class, locality, or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture which forms the cultural identity. Anita Desai's novel "*Bye-Bye Blackbird*" (1971) is an instance of the reflection of cultural identity through cultural encounters.

The story talks about two close friends Dev, and Adit in London. Adit lives for a longer period in London and married an English woman, Sarah. The cultural identity explores the different perspectives and dimensions related to the approaches to look at the diversions in cultures with uncommon social beliefs and values. Culture is dynamic and it changes with social needs.

It can also be used to describe our way of life and the values, beliefs, and attitudes that we use in everyday life, the cultural aspect focuses on artistic values and religion too in one and another way in various ways depending on the circumstances. In the present era, the form of cultural identity has drastically changed and it has emerged as the evaluation of the various conditions such as race, beliefs, language, religion, and lifestyle, issues of gender identity, national identity, ethnicity, and aesthetics. The novelist represented the innermost thoughts of the human psyche to pose the question of cultural identity through psychological and social burdens. The encounter between the west and east got the new ideas in finding out the clashes in cultural identity.

Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* moves out into foreign shores. The story of the two well-educated, Bengali immigrants Adit and Dev raises cultural issues once they decide to incorporate English manners and values. When people immigrate to a new locality, they often face changes in the new environment; it often causes persistent issues to adjust to the new cultural beliefs and practices. The changes in cultural practice also lead to confusion, anxiety, distress, frustration in the form of cultural encounters. The great legends irrespective of the language in which they have been written stand testimony to this by their deep concept for mankind and its betterment for the exiles and the ailing aliens.

The literature all over the world is concerned with and built upon the strong feelings and passions of men and women all over the world despite their differences in color, religion, race, nationality, or government. The theme of cultural alienation and exile is most common in the twentieth-century

literary scene. The drifting characters paired before us and their mechanical march point to the absence of meaningful relationships in the era of technological development and global interaction.

Exile and cultural alienation has become a universal phenomenon. Anita Desai gives a graphic picture of the exile and alienation of uprooted individuals in the novels. Desai reads the minds and understands the fact that they are suffering from alienation. Her characters in '*Bye-Bye Blackbird*' become victims of these feelings.

## 2.1 Exile and Culture

Exile and culture are the most dominating themes in Anita Desai's novels. Desai portrays the mental stability, extreme pain, and alteration of uprooted individuals in her novels. Her alienation of this problem showed in most of her works, she remarks her condition as:

“This has brought two separate stands into my life. My roots are divided because of the Indian soil on which I grew and European culture which I inherited from my mother.”

-Anita Desai (The book “I enjoyed writing most”- contemporary Indian literature, X111, 1973, 24)

Culture conflict arises from culture shock which is a feeling of depression that overwhelms one when he realizes the difference between the way of life he is familiar with and that he is in a new environment. Desai's state or condition of being preoccupied as a novelist has been the extreme alienation among all the characters. Each of her novels presents one or more memorable characters they hold upon a separate position in our hearts. In the character portrayal again, she places the primary interest in the projection of female protagonists living in the separate, closed, isolated world of existence out from problems filled with passion, loves, and hates. Not like the Indo-English novelists,

Desai does something different by portraying each of her individuals as an unsolved and difficult mystery.

Her concern for the character alienation enables her to offer an unexpected reference into the deeper relation to the soul or mental state of protagonists. She focuses on saying that not being interested in characters that are not average but have retreated or being moved into some extreme of cause to lose hope and turned against, or took a strong stand against, the general happenings. It is easy to flow with the current, it makes more demands, and it costs no effort, but those who cannot follow it, whose heart cries out 'No', who fight the current and struggle against it, they will know what the demands are and what it costs to meet them.

Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, notices the confusions and conflicts of another set of alienated persons. It has been maintained that in the novel, the flow of tension between the local and the immigrant blackbird involves issues of alienation and accommodation that the immigrant has to confront in an alien and yet familiar world.

In this novel, Desai seeks to deal with the complexities of alienated immigration by focusing upon its attractions as well as a feeling of intense distaste or disgust. In the novel, there is a dislike of prejudice against people from other countries. The novel is an undisputed origin and not a copy study of human relationships that cause great and continual trouble to the exile and cultural encounters. Desai held the novel among the closest of all books to the actuality practically everything in it is drawn directly from the experience of living with the Indian immigrants in London.

The entire focus of the novel is on Dev who comes to London to pursue his studies. As the plot develops, one can find him turning into a complete man who has disappointed someone. He feels alienated in London from both Indians and English men. There is a great lack of sympathy in English

men, who do not recognize they are neighbored and behave with Indians like strangers. The absolute silence in London disturbs Dev and makes him feel uneasy and uncomfortable.

He realizes their neighborhood looking at him as a stranger. He notices that the Indian immigrants rush to the west and in-process the miss badly their motherland. He extremely feels suffocating in the tube station and considers himself like a stranger in a dark prison roaming in the dark: Dev contact begins blooming from Adit who has settled in London with English born and bought-up wife. He is enclosed with problems as Dev moves out in search of a job randomly. He finds it too difficult to adjust the extreme silence in the close blocks who don't mind about each other. Adit calls Dev a fool searching for an identity in an alien culture, Dev feels lost and suffers from alienation.

Dev collects a lot of experiences and is a victim of alienation. He compares everything from London to India. Dev's experience in England makes him neurotic because he is unable to attach meaning to taking his final decision and his experience. He is aware of this state of chaos and confession in him caused by the outside pressure. Dev takes his final decision not to return to India and not to lead the way of the masses there. He slowly starts adapting himself to the new environment in which he is been placed. His friend Adit Sen, a young man from India lives in England with his English wife. After coming to England Adit worked as a teacher, and finally accepted a little job at the vast blue skies. The closeness, however, does not destroy the sense of his own cultural identity for him England turned to luxurious, fertile, and prosperous, even when he thinks of visiting of India, the images of Indian food, dress and music and predominant in his mind. Adit feels like a stranger in England and realizes alienated from the English people. He calls himself a stranger and non- belonged in England.

*Bye-Bye Blackbird* is a novel that has an international theme in the sense that Adit marries an English girl Sarah and by doing so he becomes the subject to the anger of the white society. Ironically it is the submissive wife Sarah who suffers not Adit. By marrying a brown Asian she has broken the

social code of England and she is always the subject to prove someone and insult or mock them of not only her colleagues but even of young people of the school where she works as a clerk. She always avoids any questions regarding her family and her husband but her friends take an interest in asking such questions. Julia who is a teacher in her school comes out with different questions and Sarah answers them with odd comments: she was still breathing very hard at having so narrowly escaped having to answer all the personal questions.

But the letters from India, to discuss her Indian husband, would have forced her to parade like a person who pretends to be someone else, to make life claims, an identity that she did, not herself feel to be her own, although they would have been more than ready to believe her. Not only the grown-ups, but even the young ones were also following the elder ones, people were angry and provoked in wounding some of the other people. As she old-fashioned through a densely packed crowd of people and animals, they pretended not to notice her at all, but once she came across the road, she heard them scream, Hurry, hurry, Mrs. Scurry and Where's the fire, Pussy cat, this much about the very unpleasant experience she undergoes at her workplace at the hands of her colleagues and pupils. But the impact of her marriage is so much on her that they affect her day to day. When she goes shopping she avoids going to the stores of Laurel Lane where she lives, for her shopping would easily betray her link with India. So she prefers going to the big department store where she would remain an unknown buyer, none knowing her Asian connections but despite all precautions, she cannot escape the situation which is made part of her life.

The tension between actual life and guilty of trying to impress other people, reality, and their appearance is always there which tells about her, resulting in a long-term mental disorder of a type involving a breakdown in a relationship. She is fed up with putting on faces and she does not know where she belongs to. She wants people who are loyal and true to her and that would come only when

she leaves England for good at the end of the novel. In England, she is not happy or comfortable searching for peace.

The alienation has been described more than once in the novel which makes her feel lonely and the question is raised asking her 'who she is? '. After marriage with Sarah the Diaspora person who is in the search faces an alienated situation, she had become a nameless person, she lost her name with the lost identity, she got scattered looking at people disappear. Only a stranger will find her and looking at her lost identity in England after marriage seemed, with a sudden silver falling on the light of glamour, to the thoughtful Adit. If a girl marries in the same culture it is easier for her to adjust to her new home and people around her. But intercultural marriage causes adjustment problems that are not easy for one to overcome and face society. In Sarah's case, the problem is complicated for she has married a person whose race was once ruled over by her own. Sarah is homeless in her own native country which is the biggest irony. Sarah's problem is human.

She wants to be a real person whether English or Indian. She is fed up and tired of sitting in between without a proper identity. She tries to remain a sincere wife seeing to it that her marital life is not destroyed up to her best. Her husband Adit too had been playing with absurd presence to create a pleasant appearance although not as consciously as she.

But he also realizes the fact of being incorrect his existence in England and Sarah also knows it well: His whole personality seems to her to have cracked apart into an unbearable number of disjointed pieces, rattling together nosily and disharmoniously.

After the Indo-Pak war in 1965, Adit is in the process of deciding to leave England and Sarah also knows it well for good, being unstable and this is the time when he needs a cooperative understanding wife, and Sarah does well as a responsible wife. Of all wives, in Anita Desai's novels, she is the best in understanding and supporting her husband. She would sacrifice anything, to maintain

discipline in her house, in her relationship with him. If she allowed all the problems upon their marriage, she knew its fragmentation would not remain together but scatters around.

Sarah, the English wife of Adit Sen has the same feeling of alienation as her husband. She lives in a dual world, the two social worlds that do not meet the two incompatible cultures that split her. She gets herself alienated from her society through her marriage. She remains an outsider in the Indian community because she is English. She does not belong anywhere; she is not a physically uprooted person. Yet her condition is precarious. Sarah's dilemma is not that of finding new roots but it is of uprootedness and hence deeper. She finds herself an alien and a stranger to the world to which she belongs to. At the time of her departure, Sarah is sad to leave her place, it was her English self that was receding and fading and dying, she knew, it was her English self to which she must say good-bye.

Sarah is not very happy because of racial prejudice and alienation from her people yet as a responsible wife she takes care of things. Anita Desai very brilliantly has brought to focus the exile and self-alienation in *Bye-Bye Blackbird*. The people like Adit, Dev, and Sarah who moved from their homeland to a familiar location have constant identity crises and suffer from exile, cultural and social alienation throughout the novel. This is only a beginning but not the end was many more are interested in the study of exile literature. No doubt the novel is all about Indians living in England, the author 'Anita Desai' makes a very courageous attempt to create the English environment.

The rich, visual imagination of Mrs. Desai is only proved to be at its best. The creation of the physical environment is very necessary for the success of the novel since the Indian characters define themselves in the terms of their reaction against the alien environment.

Urban England represented by Portobello road, and rural England idyllic and romantic are pictured with all the love care for details that one comes to expect from the pen of Mrs. Anita Desai London, characters take with its extreme populated crowds and bazaars is beautifully



Described- all the characters take on the air of unreal, and released imitation of a person. The temperamental Indians behave the way the East Asia people are supposed to behave. The consciousness of race whites conforms to the English people behaves.

The three major characters- Dev Adit and Sarah behave in too a predictable manner. They are in the search for their identity. Adit's sudden decision to return to India, Dev's changing attitudes towards England, the tension, and the hatred, are all faithfully described; Sarah struggles the biggest conflict in her life when she has to come, any one of the choices, whether to go with Adit to India and settle their rearing her child with yet another dull identity or continue her life in England enjoying her promoted position in the office providing her child is English identity.

In the novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, Anita Desai successfully raises the problem of identity crisis and gives a piece of detailed information and idea on the topic with the help of the three main characters.

## **2.2 Identity Quest a Problem Faced by Immigrants**

Writing novels about one's own country based on memory has been a great challenge for several exiled or immigrant writers. In this novel, she deals with the problem of adjustment faced by black immigrants in England. She raises this problem by portraying the situations of three different characters Dev, Adit, and Sarah by exploring the effect of racial hatred on their sensibility, all the three leading characters in the Anita Desai novel face identity quest. The characters are forced to manipulate in practicing with the social demands of the society.

Desai places her characters in certain delicate human situations and then begins with self-analysis ideas in their minds. The plot develops through the developments of new attitudes and they make self-discovery and very often find themselves alienated. Many times travel through a world of imagination to come to terms with the reality of the situations.

Adit's nostalgia acquires the dreadful dimension of an illness an ache in him. It begins, suffocating then it makes him feel fed up with life in England. He comes top and considers himself stronger. He moves about in London in a kind of abnormal dimension of an illness, search for belonging but London appears to be altogether different; he simply could not recognize his workday, weary London as his once-golden Mecca. The quest for identity among the major characters lasts longer and they are not in a position to take an immediate decision as to what to do. Desai captures the hope and despair, pain and suffering agony of the Indian immigrants. Similarly, Jhabvala in her novel *Heat and Dust* maps the cross-cultural encounter and identity crisis through multi-cultural and multi-focal inters- relationships of the European migrants. Desai and Jhabvala effectively unfold the socio-cultural sterility of India and Europe respectively.

Through a host of uprooted and alienated characters from their homeland, Desai and Jhabvala beautifully observed the difficult situation of these outsiders in an alien Indian culture and European culture, Desai's attempt to visualize the differences on the social, political, and cultural fronts where they wanted to be merged with Europe and India but the thought of their European and Indians never left them, which ultimately leads their characters to be in a crisis of there in an alien culture.

In the novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* Anita Desai deals with the deep existence concern exploring adjustment regarding value conflict the unlimited decision in life. From his experience of England through the books he had read, he seems to recognize their values and their tradition but the conflict in him arises from the fact that whatever he had learned about his homeland is somewhat a contrast when he goes there. He is also aware of the fact that his values, his identity are not finding their solace. This crisis of identity emerges from the conflict of values he experiences in England. Sometimes, they seem to be acceptance of the dissimilar tradition and values, and sometimes their rejection of the same.

Contemporary literature dealing with the emotional problems of the modern man reflects the injurious frustrations, the identity crisis, and cultural conflict that an uprooted individual undergoes.

Several Indian writers have dealt with the experiences of cultural conflict, exile, expertise, man-woman relationships. Postcolonial India has witnessed the migration of many educated Indians to the abundance of the West. Sarah is the most beautiful character in this novel. She is hard working and self sacrificing woman at home and at her work place. She has so much of spiritual consciousness that she asks herself too many questions about her life which she is not able to sometimes understand. She has distanced herself from her parents after her marriage only to discharge the new responsibilities of a wife. She is willing to go to India breaking herself loose from all the things that she has ever loved.

Anita Desai, an expert in describing the action of criticizing the psyche, portrays the ontological insecurity, alienation, cultural conflict, and anguish of uprooted individuals in the novel. Anita Desai has brilliantly portrayed the dilemma of uprooted individuals through her novels. The experience of exile, cultural conflict, human relationships, and existential problems which are the common problems in the twentieth-century literary scene are visibly dealt with in her novels and a brief analysis is attained by the readers.

## **CHAPTER-3**

### **3. The Elements of Diaspora and Disposition of Immigrants in London**

#### **3.1 Meaning of Diaspora**

The term 'Diaspora' is derived from ancient Greek language which means 'scatter'. When applied to the people, Diaspora speaks about the scattering of people from their homeland.

#### **3.2 Diasporic Literature**

Diasporic literature is different from the literature produced by writers who are away from their homeland. Few Diasporic writers: Anita Desai, V.S Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Kiran Desai, Bharati

Mukherjee. Anita Desai has a mixed parentage as her mother belongs to German Christian and her father is Bengali Indian. This complex origin has given her the suitability to become a Diaspora writer. Diaspora Literature is defined based on the content of writing irrespective of the place where it has been written. If a piece of work, written in motherland speaks about characters' adoption and survival ability outside the motherland it is considered to be Diaspora Literature. There are different types of Diaspora; they are Imperial Diaspora, Victim Diaspora, Labor Diaspora, and Trading Diaspora.

When Diasporic writing is applied to literature is an attempt of the Indian Diaspora about Indian English Literature. The migration may take place due to various reasons like historical, economical, and social reasons. But Indians show a greater sense of acceptability, than Diasporic writers. The Diasporic Indian character can be analyzed in Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird*. The Diasporic element can be seen when Desai describes the solitude of the characters. The solitude is the result of circumstances that affect the inner psyche of the characters. Loneliness is the action of both inner and outer conditions. The Indian community even is not exempted from being a victim of the sense of loneliness. The prime destination for the Indian migrants after independence was the United Kingdom. The background of the novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is setting 1960's England which is written by Anita Desai. The story revolves around two friends Adit and Dev in London. Adit stayed in London for a longer period and married an English woman, Sarah. Dev comes to London for his higher studies and employment.

This has compelled him to leave his motherland and settle abroad for a decent income. He falls in love with an English girl and marries her. He becomes a 'spineless immigrant lover'. Sarah agrees to follow him like a typical Hindu wife. Dev gets angry by being called 'Wog' by a schoolboy. When they are walking down the street they hear Mrs. Simpson muttering aloud, 'littered with Asians! Must get Richard to move out of Dapham, it is impossible now'. This line suggests how immigrants, especially

Asians are looked down on as 'Other' in England. Otherness is a typical difference marked by signs like gender and race. Dev understands that Adit is least bothered about insults. A few days later Dev planned a gathering with other colored emigrants where they can eat and drink.

Modern Diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental material links with their countries of origin- their homeland. That gathering is a fusion of different migrants. Sarah and Adit enjoy Bhangra dance and enjoyment has reached its peak with the high volume of the radio. All of a sudden a voice says, wrap it up where did u think you are, if anyone in India told you to turn off the radio would never even mind doing it so, and can even take a knife and spill the blood down. Over here all you do is shut up and look sat upon' Samar recounts the day he was called a bloody Pakistani' as he refused to close his umbrella at the order of an Englishman. These incidents lead to a deep scar on Dev, who is divided between the opportunity he has got in England at the moments of bearing differences and suppression the feeling of alienation and dedication overwhelmed him. He is trying to meet the challenges of an immigrant. However, he tries to cope with the arrogance of the English people the constant humiliation irked him.

Dev asks about their feelings about Adit he says. One fine day Adit insists on a visit to the landlady where he lived for three years, Sarah rejected him and was reluctant to come. Adit just says that's where he lived for three years, Dev. That's the only landlady he lived with for more than a fortnight. Adit is treated as an outsider and his visit gives him a feeling of unwelcome when he observes the treatment given by the landlady. When Adit describes their daughter, she wishes to reject the fact that she does not have any personal questions about their daughter and rejects the fact that they lived there for three years.

Like most other Indians abroad he has also been infected by a mental approach to the emotion of bad behavior. He cannot digest the experience he faced when the landlady. In the growing society, he

feels divisions inside him further and re-divided again and again. Again they planned their visit to his mother-in-law's house and assume that even his mother in law is treating him differently. He says that despite having her; they make fun of life and lead an ideal life. Adit has developed an extreme hatred for England and starts thinking everything in English of being depressed and insulted who loses control of himself.

Diaspora expresses the suffering oscillating mind and agony of cultural change. He decides to leave England and says to Sarah, knows that Adit loved England more than herself, often felt myself half-English, but it was only pretense, Sally. Now it has to be the real thing. Though Sarah agrees to his proposal she faces an internal alienation. Sarah is brave enough to face the situations in life though she faces fears in her mind, she is at crossroads. Sarah can neither shed her native English culture nor accept the adopted Indian culture completely. At the time of farewell Christine asks her about the baby, Sarah says you mean boy or girl? Sarah hopes the baby would like Adit, black hair and black eyes with brown as brown. Christine replies, in that case, suppose it will be better to have the child in India now she lost her density as an English woman she is to be considered multi-cultured Mrs.Sen the wife of an Asian rather than Sarah, the English woman. At the end of the story, Dev who always complains about the country and its people decides to settle to reap a rich harvest. He is successful and overjoyed to establish his roots in England. But Adit and Sarah bid goodbye to England. At the time of bidding goodbye, Dev calls out.

*Bye-Bye Blackbird* is how Anita Desai describes the Diasporic elements to the eyes of the readers and makes them evolve in society. With the decline of the empire and the independence of many colonized nations, such as India the British Nationality act 1948 granted British citizenship to the people of its former colonies. The British passport holders were free to live in the United Kingdom, and there was a wave of migration to the United Kingdom in the late 50s and 60s. This was an economic

migration, due to low wages and migrant's home countries, like the United Kingdom. As the boundaries opened up and became a multi-cultural society, dominant culture and domination of one culture over others were changed.

Anita Desai wrote her novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* set in London in 1965. It is an exploration of the fate of dislocation, a sense of loneliness, and the feeling of alienation suffered by millions of 'Exiled Indians' who try unsuccessfully to balance themselves between 'Home and Abroad'. The novel is an urbanized simplified example of psychological depth, of characterization for the treatment of cultural contact. The novel, like the two other works, has a three structure arrival of discovery and recognition, and departure.

### 3.3 The disposition of immigrants in London of Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird*

In today's world with its high level of mobility, it is difficult to capture with a satisfactory level of precision the identity and the history of a modern-day immigrant community. The United Kingdom is still considered to be heaven for immigrants from across the globe. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was a net exporter of people' most of which emigrated to the United States and some dominions of the 'Old Commonwealth' and in those days very few foreigners were living in Britain.

This notably changed in the mid-twentieth century, following the decline of the colonization era, and a great number of immigrants, mostly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, West Africa, and the United Kingdom. Today, even though problems with racism, which started to arise more than half a century ago, have not been fully resolved, and despite Prime Minister David Cameron's controversial statement that multiculturalism in the United Kingdom has failed, the UK is still considered to be a multicultural society.

In her novel 1971, *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, Anita Desai describes an episode of the 'Acclimatization' of two men from India in the postcolonial London of the 1960s. The generation she describes is people

who were born around the time of the partition of India and the story surrounds a period of a few months in the course of which significant changes take place in the protagonist's character. The story is set in the summer of 1965. An Adit is a young man from India, who leads a seemingly happy life in the United Kingdom with his English wife Sarah. Adit has been living in Britain for a while, and Dev, his friend from Calcutta, arrives in England to stay with them for a while. He wishes to study economics but does not plan to stay in Britain longer than necessary. For a while, the three of them live together, and the novel describes a number of their outings and afternoons together.

As the story unfolds, it turns out that Adit has been subconsciously unhappy all the while, and Dev unexpectedly starts to find England very appealing and eventually decides to stay there and make it his home. The two friends, Adit and Dev, become transposed as the story develops, both with regards to their character, their characteristics, and the result of their life in England as it is presented in the book. Adit is a self-proclaimed Anglophone who turns into a hopeless nostalgic returnee, while Dev, his old Calcutta coffee-house friend, is a sworn Anglophobe who turns into a hopeful anglicized inhabitant of Great Britain. New historicism allows us to observe any text as a product of the appropriate cultural context, and every text in its way contributes to our reconsideration of a period in history.

In history books, we would read the facts, whereas a literary text brings us closer to understanding what such pieces of information could mean. Reading Anita Desai's novel from 1971 in this light contributes to our better understanding of the possible reasons behind multiculturalism failing in Great Britain if it indeed has failed.

Light is also shed on the depiction of the first generation of immigrants, which is a very topical issue because decades later their reasons for choosing England as their new home are brought into question at the end of world war , at one point the British Empire covered approximately one half of the



earth's land surface. However, during this period there were also some signs of the weakening of the empire because the British right to rule was being brought into question. At a peace conference in 1919, Britain had to agree that it would try to help its colonies to establish successful self-government. In addition to this, there was a growth in the 1920s and 1930s by 1945 it was clear that something had to change, and the British left India in 1947. Other colonies followed suit and the only thing that remained from the old empire was the new commonwealth.

Following World War 2, there was a period of prosperity in Britain due to aid received from the USA. The 1950s were a stage for many changes; new supermarkets were opened, new urban television. Between 1956 and 1960 the number of television licenses doubled. There was also an unparalleled consumer boom in this period proportion of the British population who used refrigerators rose from 6 to 16 percent, washing machines from 25 to 44 percent, and those owning a motor car from 18 to 32 percent. Taking into consideration that today we can talk about several generations of immigrants, it is very interesting to analyze the first generation due to its most difficult role in paving the way for future generations.

Desai's text has been selected for analysis due to tackling this exact topic. The novel also touches upon all the denoting changes in British society, as well as the problems that started to arise in the 1960s. Although neither of the main protagonists is British the reader can glimpse life in Britain in this period of history through the depiction of Adit's neighborhood, his and Dev's relationship with Sarah's family, and Adit's former landlords, the millers. Sarah's environment at her workplace is also indicative of how immigrants were viewed in this decade, and so are her and Adit's relations with their neighbors.

Anita Desai is considered to be one of the most important Indian writers today. She is well known for her presentations of India and the Indian people throughout different historical periods, but

she is also famous for her literary presentation of isolation, loneliness, family affairs, immigration, and the position of women. What make Anita Desai especially important from the aspect of post-colonial literature are her depictions of the ordinary people alone against a sea of troubles, both in their original and their adopted homeland. In 1993 she was described who is struggling to find the voice that can bridge the gap between a glorious Indian past and a much diminished, more sordid, postcolonial present, but her topics today include a large variety of subjects.

The best way to regard the aspect of hybridity in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is through its definition which is connected by putting aside the negative connotations. In this sense, the notion of hybridity is close to the notion of 'liminality', existence in an in-between space, which also implies transcultural change. The emergence of such hybridized forms is never simple. This is most clearly visible in the character of Adit: on the one hand, he practically believes in his English, and on the other, he cannot forsake Indian food, sings Indian songs, and loves Indian music. There are plenty of examples of the two male protagonists' hybrid identities in Desai's novel, but let us mention one: when Sarah announces that they will be going to the countryside Adit ecstatically screams at Dev. Here, Adit calls upon Dev to be a man, whom he equates with being an English man, and we can also see the hybridity of the language he uses, which Desai marks by using Italics.

In *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, the protagonist has all the opportunities they had ever dreamed of, which is in harmony with the period of prosperity in Britain in the 1960s. On the other hand, they are also occasional victims of the emergent social issue and consequently start feeling the onset of racism-related troubles.

In Desai's story; while the two men have absolutely no financial difficulties, one may also notice the fact that they do not socialize with English- born friends, they do not engage in Britain's social life and or what it has to offer in this time of abundance. Throughout the story, they are mainly alone,

visiting relatives or interacting with Indian friends. The language that Desai uses here is a visible exaggeration of her usual writing style. Using images such as invalid stricken with anemia and scattering into a million sparks or intentional markers of Adit's melancholy and his visions of an India that does not exist.

The two protagonist's identities change from feelings of being of others, through talking on forms of hybrid identity, to trying to become anglicized in every way. A very interesting narrative technique of Desai is that she takes us on this journey from different poles of the immigrant world: both protagonists change the identities they never meet at the same point. Towards the end of the novel, when Adit moves from trance- like state of utter happiness and feels satisfaction to a deep dark depression that he cannot fat born, suddenly in his London flat he feels like a stranger arrived at a hotel in a strange city. A hotel is not one's home, so the feeling of being dislocated and adopted is again presented by Desai, the footsteps of the passers- sound different, laughter has a sinister ring to it. It seems to Adit that he has turned into one of the Indians he used to despise: the eternal immigrants.

Contrary to the reader's expectations, Dev decides to stay in Britain and make it his home. England slowly draws him further including her mesmerizing embrace. At one point he stops talking about the London school of economics and starts talking about finding a job in London. What once started as only thought of definitely staying in England fights for keeping its secret space in his mind and heart? He feels that something has inexplicably changed inside him, and he can never be the same man he used to be and is determined to find the England of his dreams and reading and decides to stay and pursue this course.

Adit leaves Dev his job, and he and Sarah live in the flat in Clap ham. The first to arrive makes the situation more comfortable for those who will succeed them. Dev perfectly fits into the groove already cut and warmed for him by Adit. As the novel ends, he is not a man completely at peace, but

one has the true impression that the good sides of life in Great Britain will eventually outweigh the potential problems.

Ralph Waldo Emerson coined the term ‘double consciousness’ proclaiming it to be one solution to the mystery of the human condition. A similar idea can probably be said to lie behind the idea of multiculturalism, as it advocates being different, but respecting others, differences as well as being open to changes that always inevitably come. Multiculturalism is currently in the spotlight due to the reconsideration of the many policies introduced in its name, in these times when we are faced with constant disquiet in multicultural communities, and we witnessing dissolution and compassion fatigue.

The first generation of immigrants was perhaps in the most difficult position because of the actual act of migration, but decades have proven that even today later generations find it difficult to fit into their adopted community. Multiculturalism has not fully developed in the way it was meant to, and the possible reasons for this are constantly assessed and reassessed. Analysis of literary text written in such a cultural setting in the last few decades may be offered as a modest contribution. Desai’s novel is interesting because it gives us a glimpse of the obstacles of a first generation of immigrants faced. Excerpts from the selected novel have presented how the self of the migrant subject is multi-layered and how crossing actual borders did not necessarily imply crossing inner borders, and this additional step requires additional efforts. In such collective effort is combined with the understanding and acceptance of the surrounding community, multiculturalism may prevail.

## CHAPTER-4

### 4. Character Analysis in Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird*

#### 4.1 Adit Sen the Protagonist

Adit is a foil to Dev, the former loves England it is a land of opportunities while Dev adores the English for their having racial prejudice. Adit has been living in England for quite some time and has married English women. The main reason for his staying in England is that England has provided him with a profitable job which he could not find in India. He tells Dev, that he did not go back three years ago, when he got engaged to Sarah and parents wanted to come with her, stayed there looking for a job for four months. All he could find was ruddy clerking for some government of India tourist bureau. They were to pay me two hundred and fifty rupees and after thirty years I could expect to have five hundred rupees.

That is what depressed me- the thirty years of spending in painting after that extra two hundred and fifty rupees. Adit is not made for this and came back and told Sarah we would stay. Indians often go to foreign countries for better jobs and better living conditions. Even low grade persons, such as fitters like to go to England. The rampant unemployment and lack of human dignity in Asian countries are forcing Adit- like persons to seek fortune in western countries.

It is true that the immigrant from Asian are treated with contempt in foreign lands. Dev is hurt when a boy in the bus called him 'wog' and Mrs.simpson says that the 'Asian are littered' all over. But the Asians who are living there to earn their live hood have no option but to pocket the insults hurled at them occasionally. Adit speaks plainly; I like being called a wog, like choosing between three kinds of

flush toilet- ladies and gents Asiatic. It is a question of one's existence, Adit has got a job and a wife here.

Therefore, he is ready to eat a humble pie once in a while. Livelihood apart, there are other reasons for Adit to stay in England. He has come to love this country for its climatic conditions also. Besides him the atmosphere and pubs of England, he likes the living style in London. Adit likes going into the local for a point on my way home to Sarah, wearing a good rough-surface on a mist November day. The convent garden opera house it has a decorative like a place of fireflies when he stands under it feels like a millionaire. Likes the girls here and their nylon stocking and the way their noses flit upwards, and used to like dancing with them. These statesman shows that Adit is dazed by the glare of the British life.

The reaction for his being so great an admirer of the English life and culture is not far to seek. He has seen unlivable conditions in India. Wide-spread poverty, mass unemployment, lack of opportunities and even old disgusting customs of Indian society has dejected him completely. The English life has overwhelmed him by its comparatively better job-opportunities, modes of travelling, etc. Even Dev is impressed by the prosperity of England. He goes overboard when he sees the gleaming prosperity and sparkling quality of Himalayan copies.

Adit makes fun of the Indian way of life and thinking. Dev says that he has come to England to get admissions to the London school of Economics, and has approached some of the professors. When Dev speaks against the Britishers, Adit speaks in a manner expressing contempt about Dev's desire to study at the prestigious college. Instead of saying that Dev has in a way acknowledged the superiority of the British school. Adit doesn't like the Indian ways of living. He openly express contempt the costumes and manners of the Sikh family living that the ground floor. In the response to Dev's

observation about the Sikhs that are still up, Adit says ironically that they are never Down, meaning that the Sikh family is awake all hours of the day. Then he adds with sharpness that the Sikhs are from Ludhiana, the original stuff. The four generation are living in two rooms- First the young men came, then they sent for their mothers, and then for the wives for the sons, and they all had children together. Adit goes upstairs tip-toe, because he fears that even a little sound will wake up the Sikh family, who will wake up the whole Laurel Lane by their noisy Gup-shup.

Adit does not want that Sikh family should come out of the bed at odd hours but he has no doubt in waking up his English wife. He flashed; she's used to being woken up. These English wives are quite manageable really, you know. Not as fierce as they look-very quiet and hard working as long as you treat them right and roar at them regularly once or twice every week. He does not want the Sikh family to be woken up; but will not care if his roaring wakes up his harmless wife. He takes his chance to show male racialism once or twice a week. Adit has spoken rather abruptly about the life-style of the Sikhs because he is too much westernized. He fails to see the generous aspect of their character. The old Sikh woman treats Dev like her own child while perhaps no English woman will do.

Adit is of course, not right in slash the Indian ways in general, but he is right in ridiculing Indian concept of going on a pilgrimage. A pilgrim is supposed to go with nothing but backpack so that he\she may remain free from the materialistic world any mercy remains tied up with pious ideas. The conditions on the boat were horrible. He could not eat and sleep for five days. The people at times offered him a piece of roast sleep, but he grasp his belly and stuck out his tongue to give them to impression that he was not well, perhaps suffering from cholera. When he was pushed off the boat at Bombay, his bag was missing. There was nothing at the boat befitting the taste and temper of a pilgrim, Adit sees nothing good in India. He is so much disgusted with the Indian ways that he insults Dev for

disparaging love-making in the open, in public parks and saying, then you better go straight home and ask your mother to find you a suitable bride.

One morning Adit reads in the papers that India and Pakistan are at war. He is transported to Calcutta of 1947 when Muslims and Hindus regarded each other as one people. The scenes of riots also come alive to him. He feels concerned very strongly; patriotism moves him and inspires him to go home straight to become part of what is happening there. He says that, I am not going to play auntie any more. This is just a Farce, think of what people at home are going through.

He tells Sarah that he has made up his mind to go to India and to his good luck Sarah agrees to go with him. The character of Adit shows very clearly that however better condition there be in a foreign land, the yearning for one's motherland, the nostalgia of one's younger days remains too strong to be suppressed.

#### **4.2 Sarah Sen A Study of Diasporic Womanhood**

Sarah is perhaps the best character in this novel. Sarah is an English woman, married to Adit, a Bengali. The two belong to two different countries, nationalities and races, yet the two make a happy pair. Adit met Sarah in a party hosted by Christine. Sarah, was invited because she was a school friend of the hostess and Adit was invited to lend a touch of colour. Shyness and honors for Sarah brought out the protective in Adit. Adit is happy to have a wife like Sarah; she has learnt to cook Indian dishes since Adit has told her frankly and finally- no British broths and stews for me. She was preparing the Bengali dish charchari.

By way of compromises, Adit has told her that she can have her plum pudding on Christmas while his party pudding is carrot halwa, Sarah is working in a school as head's secretary. She appears



an altogether a different person while performing a different person while performing her official duties. She walks down to her work- place punctually like a machine with an automatic and switch swift adjustment to the world outside.

She is puzzling silent about herself, Adit her husband is worried to see her going all alone without listening what others say about her. She has become something of an introvert. One evening she happened to board the bus that Adit was travelling by across the river. He couldn't go to her due to a great press of people going to their homes, but he could observe her from a distance. She had become nameless; she had shed her name as she had her ancestry and identity and she sat there, staring as though she watched them disappear. Adit being a loving husband thought that he should take her out tonight to visit one of her friends so that she may recover from her incision. The sure quick quality of her humors that he had known when he fell in love with her. She refused blank to go to any of them, but on entering her flat, she allowed her husband to take her in his arms.

Sarah however should not be taken for one who has interest in life around her. She is an modest, yet she has love for the people. She does not forget to carry chocolate in her bag for the dappled child who brings the register for her she enters her office to perform her duties, her daily tasks with utmost dedication, believing that she is a goddess and doing her duties is or religious rites which, when done satisfactorily, will be suitably rewarded terms of satisfaction or rather joyful- she performs the daily tasks evenly and smoothly, with the conviction of a priestess that if all the rites observed, life would after all be simple.

This is the question which pricks the conscience of every thinking man. Sarah does not take a person on her face-value; she rather goes to see why one is Adit thinks that Sarah is an ice cube, taking things so coldly. Sarah loves her pet cat; Adit cannot eat rice if the cat has stuck its nose into it. He says

to Sarah, if my mother were to see this Sarah, she would have heard attack. Sarah is surprised to see that Indian goods are being sold in petticoat market in London. Sarah laughs losing her self-consciousness in her amusement.

Sarah is a kind-hearted woman one morning she finds that Dev is going to meet some employers though he is suffering from cold and cough. She persuades Dev not to go out in such condition. She asks him in an authentic voice, you are not going out. You go to bed; I heard you slept a wink. You will get pneumonia if you go out in the rain aging. When Dev still wishes to go saying that he will soon back and get into bed, Sarah says with greater insistence to go to bed now. Sarah has got a letter from her mother asking her to come to her. Sarah also feels that she should get to meet her parents since she couldn't go at Easter.

It's like a good daughter that she longs to meet her mother. She asks Adit and Dev also to go with her, saying that it will be good change. Sarah's mother entertains the party consisting of Sarah and Adit, Jasbir and Mala, Samar and Bella. Sarah's mother on the contrary has a position in the society though she has shabby way of thrusting her tongue under her false teeth and making them stick out in arrow, and beat oddly up and down between her lips as she stood outside the fishmonger's window, speculating upon the sole and the dwelling fish. Sarah has the memory of well-dressed and portly father with Victorian habits and speech, trying to please his small daughter with treats of biscuit and bun, and his tender smile, but after leaves his medical practice and coming to this house his wife had chosen for their retired life, but her husband had gone to seed had become an unwieldy, half-wild country plant.

Sarah emerges as a woman who sees ahead, accepts life as about her childhood or youth. She has in a way separated herself even from her parents lest her life in her in-laws house should be affected by her sentimental attachment with parents. It becomes all the more clear when Adit goes to her bedroom

in the parent's house. When he opens the cupboard, he finds it filled with stuffed animals, the Beatrix potter books, puzzles, etc.

When war breaks out between India and Pakistan, Adit feels very strongly that he should be in India in this critical time. He is well aware that he is not a soldier that can go to the battle field. He thinks collection of funds for war is also not enough. He tells Sarah in a dramatic manner that all is over. Sarah is silent founded by Adit's vague statement he has not said what is over; the English terminates their marriages sometime on a petty issue. She feels assured that his period of stay in England is over. He has made up his mind to go to India and asks Sarah whether she will also go with him. She fails to answer immediately because the probability of the marriage snicks her violently. She says to Adit that she will go with him and gives him the news that she is going to have a baby.

Sarah takes time to gather herself- Sarah's hand clasped in his, felt a sudden huge revulsion against the theatricality of the scene, of their words the way emotions were dragging her this way and that as though she were their victim. Adit has not consulted her in taking yet she takes no time to give her willingness to go with him. The last but one scene presents an image of firmly determined. Several things and persons appear before her to weaken her determination to go to India, but she sweeps them aside. Leave taking arouses strong emotions but she controls them with the idea that future has a lot of hope and happiness. She is leaving behind childhood, family friends but Adit, she believes has so much to give her so many relations and attachments, pictures and stories legends, promises and warnings.

Sarah continues in a double think since she is going to live in a new country with new people. It is natural for her to think of life she is going to get even when she boards the train with her husband. She boards the train creature in Alice in Wonderland in a dream world that boarded on nightmare. Her body, with its rules and wants kept slipping out of her hold, acting strangely and irresponsibly,

shrinking and threatening to disappear to get over the creeping nervousness and joy alternately, she clutches at Adit's arm, and gets the thrill of a journey to a strange land and hope for a happy life ahead.

It will not be amiss to say that Sarah is the main character, if not the heroine of this novel. She is Adit's better-half in so much as she supports him in all his acts and decisions without caring for the ordeals she has to pass through. Her submission to the circumstances makes her pitiable and great.

### 4.3 Dev friend of Adit Sen

Dev is a friend of Adit. He has come to London to seek admission to the prestigious school of economics. He is staying with his friend for the time being but he makes observations about habits and behavior of the Londoners. The first morning of his stay tells him a lot about the common people in London. As usual he rises early in the morning but his mother is not there to give him his mother tea, and he cannot wake his friend's wife to prepare tea for him. Dev jumps out of his quilt to get cigarette and matches to smoke in bed, wrapped in the quilt, thereafter he goes to the kitchen to prepare tea for himself.

Dev makes observations as he goes to the pub. He finds that the Britishers are traditional. He finds that the atmosphere in the pub is the same as he has read in the works of Lamb, Dickens, Addison, Boswell, etc. He observes that the malls in London are something beyond Indian imagination- they are different from malls in India. Dev cannot ignore the other small evidences of the lavish life of the Londoners- they stare him in the face. When he goes to the commons after lunch, he finds a boy sailing a small red boat, a spaniel and coolie running on the grass after a blue bath: a man and woman are lying together with heads and shoulders covered with a jacket and children are playing cricket. Dev is gratefully delighted with the statues and pictures he sees in the national gallery.

He is impressed by Greco and Titans. Dev is happy to walk alone seeing the originals of what he have so far only seen redutions. Dev has a streak of patriotism. He fails to understand the Asian immigrants tolerate discrimination and contemptuous remarks. He is hurt when a boy in the bus calls them 'wog' and Mrs.simpson says on finding Dev and Adit lying on the grass that the place is littered with Asians. He is against when Adit takes these things slightly. Adit explains to him that England is a land of opportunities, provides employment to the Asians. Pakistani fitters come in large group to get jobs in factories even though they are treated contemptuously.

Dev observes that Indians are subjected to restrictions at every stage with the result they cannot live the way they want. Dev is a keen observer of the mindset of the people. He goes to Westminster Abbey which has been highly praised by a great poet as Wordsworth. But Dev finds that the English have a penchant for displaying their national pride more than their faith in religion. Dev disapproves of the British way of making love in public. He has seen the lovers sprawling on the grass in Hyde Park in summer dusk, forgetful of the world about them Sarah thinks that English people aren't as self-conscious as they are supposed to be. They are really quite unselfconsciousness when it comes to think like that.

But Dev countered, I think that those people are really a bunch of exhibitionists. Adit is returning to India disenchantment with England had begun sometime before he read the papers, but this he showed away in his subconscious. But Dev, in spite of his strong patriotic feelings, stays in England because an abstract law has caught hold of Dev all unconsciously and enticed him to remain in England. Dev is a foil to Adit. The former began with a dislike for England while the later loves everything in England. The novelist presents a debate on the desirability or rather justification for living in England through the two characters- Adit and Dev.

#### 4.4 Emma Moffit spinster landlady

Emma Moffit is a minor character, yet she plays an important role. She is a spinster landlady of the sense. She loves India and everything that belongs to India for she had a love affair with a soldier, who died of dysentery in India but buried in Ambala. She is still so emotional about her love she has kept the letters and gifts send by her soldier- lover wrapped in a Kashmir shawl though thirty long years have passed since her lover died. She is living like an aged mouse in the attic of the house.

She is quite friendly with Sarah though Adit does not hold a good opinion about her. She knocks Sarah's door in her familiar way, Sarah knows who is at the door and raises in an easy, manner to open the door. She is so close to Sarah that she sits sipping tea and gazing upon letters from India with so much wonder, awe and study as if she expected a sudden exploding revelation a flash of light that wools illuminate all. Sarah once said to Adit that Emma was like her own reflection in a mirror. This confession sought of remark irritates Adit because he does not see any resemblance between his tall, fair wife with her long countryside stride and her good nature and this nervous, old lady, always a composition- untidy and distorted in grey and manure a green, with her run-down slippers her great scattered hairpins, and her grey, manure and lunatic face.

Owing to her love for India, Emma has started an Indian club, showing that she is a spirited woman, positive work to enhance the reputation of the country she loves. Emma is very enthusiastic about her club, when she makes a mention of it, Sarah it lightly saying that Emma had told about the club on earlier occasions too. Emma therefore has to speak of it with emphasis this time since it has started its activities in the right earnest. However, Emma has her peculiar way of speaking empathetically- she brings down her hand on the table- top with a slap which startled the cat and made

its furred brow wrinkle up in a frown of disapproval. So she announces with tale-thumping that the club is going to start functioning. It is like making the announcement with the drum-beat.

A small meeting or conversation does not reveal the whole of a man. Emma is like the woman who are either overlooked or ignored or mistaken only for one or two reasons. Emma being the landlady writes curt reminders for rent every month. Such persons are generally taken as money-minded, madly after the lucre. People fail to see the simple truth that rent is the only source of income for Emma. But when one comes, one finds that Emma loves India for her personal reasons. She loved a soldier who had died of dysentery in India. He used to write to Emma about the beautiful aspects of Indian life. Emma is so great a lover that she is still living with the memory of her deceased lover, has not married another man.

## **CONCLUSION**

The term cultural identity is related to the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It has the aspects of a person's self-conceptions and self-perception. The reflection of Nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture which forms the cultural identity. Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971) is an instance of the reflection of cultural identity through cultural encounters. The focus on the treatment of the migrant condition in English literature is the most focused topic mixing logical questions. The post-modernist world has pondered the emergence of interdisciplinary and cultural studies as the major thrust areas of academic exploration.

The novel carries the theme of negation and affirmation, hatred and love, apathy and fellow feeling- the phenomena of the contact zone. The process of search for new values, the ideal of integration, and the quest of the individual to come to terms with his/ her universe- a process of cultural

meditations- buildup the patterns of the novel. The vastness of the migrated life, complex cultural differences and the problem of adjustment, and the Eastern's constant efforts to come to terms with this unfamiliar land are keenly observed by Desai. Johnson presents Rutherford Calhoun as a writer and creator of fiction who narrates the whole events through monologue, which possesses many truths. He presents the reality of freedom, slavery, and the contemporary status of African American people in the form of which collects the history of subaltern consciousness of slave the slaves.

A problematic situation here in the novel seems of the Allmuseri and exposes their unity of being and complications of the African-American experience. The characters are torn between their root cultures and adopted ones. Though they live in a materially prosperous land, they are psychologically drawn toward their origin. Everywhere, people tend to define themselves along with cultural lives, through this we can realize the crack identities of relocating alongside problems of belonging as a consequence of globalization. People experience the pleasant and unpleasant aspects of living in two cultures with two identities. This detailed historically precise phase of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the adventures of an ex-slave is attentive.

The England and English culture for outsiders becomes a place where they are criticized. Through the portrayals of an outcast like Adit and Dev in England Desai has shown the two sides of the relationship of outsiders with the land of their adaptation. Adit, at last, fails to assimilate himself with the English culture despite his strong attempt for a reciprocal relationship. And at the same time, Dev who once hold the dislike position also develops a warm and enriching relationship with English life. He knows, he won't be fully observed by the English culture but continue his journey even after Adit's return to India. They were so easy to wear cloth. They required no mediation. They often steal things; they feel so sick if they wronged anyone.



So, by showing two Indian characters in the scenario of London or by bringing into contact the people belonging to two different cultures and moderns, Desai has striven to establish mutual understanding and harmony between Westerners and Indians. The novel opens with the role of the freeman being enslaved after being set free. When the novel ends he seems to be free but is again in the bond of marriage with Isadora and as a father of Baleka.

Treating the cross-cultural relationship between the Europeans and the Indians, she deals with the ever-widening gulf between the East and the West as a result of the tension created by cultural differences. She speaks of the emotional stages Indian characters experience in England. Through a host of uprooted and alienated characters from their native land, Desai beautifully absorbs the predicaments of these outsiders in an alien English milieu. These characters try to replace their haunting past with the meaningful present, but most of the time they fail to materialize their dream. The protagonist of the novels Adit Sen and Dev fail to identify themselves with English norms and values. But it is not that they remain unrecognized in an alien milieu. At times outsiders like Dev fully absorbed the English way of life though he is not observed by it.

Johnson focuses on slavery, a psychological notion about the subaltern consciousness. During the course middle passage, Rutherford Calhoun discovers several things about cultures and dignity, about the disillusionment of himself and the other characters. Through the process of agreement that appears initially in Adit's character and later in Dev's character, the novel focuses on the multi-cultural and multi-focal interrelationship between the westerners and Indians. Focusing upon the multi-cultural scenario it depicts the fearful relationship of the settling abroad as the new realities created by the cultural contact.

As a consequence of the cross-cultural character, reciprocity and conflict both arise in the relation of outsider and insider. The immigrants are always either partly or rejected, their feelings of

otherness in new culture creating the experience of hybrid identity and the problem of representation. Lacking adjustment to a new culture, their position becomes in-betweens which deprived them of a secure sense of personal and cultural identity. They are emotionally too incapacitated to encounter the hazards of life-social, ethical and spiritual. Their emotional sterility is at once the cause and consequence of their failure to achieve authentic and integral selfhood.

The story showcases the life of the immigrants, who suffer a mixed feeling of love and hate towards their adopted country, in an alien society. It examines the plight of Indian immigrants in London. The term blackbird used in the title of the book is referred to the immigrants to whom the people of London want to say goodbye. The author explores the adjustment and feelings that the people from India face there. The novel seems to be a modern one that shows hope and confidence and portrays the picture of the marginal, subaltern, suppressed voice that will be ultimately raised because of their conscious or the disillusionment inherent in them from many experiences and got its position in the mainstream.

The author describes the beautiful London and the busy lives of people there. The characters of the book are not so real but it truly undergoes the real problems, the immigrants face in the country. The story revolves around three characters- immigrants refusing to fit in and looking at those who do with scorn, an immigrant trying to belong and loving everything about the new place, and a native who marries an immigrant.

From a personal point of view, the novel centers on the problem of marital maladjustment which is one of the most recurrent dominant themes in Anita Desai's work. According to some critics like Uma Banerjee, and R.S. Sharma, the heroine character Sarah is different from other characters. She is almost in exile in her land but unlike others, she never withdraws. The novelist herself says Sarah's

loneliness is different from other heroines because she chooses it deliberately whereas for her other characters its part of their nature. Sarah loves Adit and Indian immigration.

But she wants to hide her relationship from her English people. Here we find that Sarah though in an advanced country, she is still weak and submissive. She expresses her love openly for Adit. Anita Desai deals with the theme of displacement in her novel. She feels displaced in England by marrying an Indian in the sense she is a victim of values, systems, and culture. She lost her identity and appears submissive and voiceless; Sarah experiences an extreme kind of loneliness after being married and Indian. Her marriage is an act of free choice. They merely cluster around to density the ordinary contrast between east and west on the other hand attention has been shifted to Dev and Adit, the male characters in the novel. Sarah has shown her reserved and sensitive characteristics.

Anita Desai has deeply and objectively studied Indian married couples. Scholars have observed that Anita Desai portrays the stable mental state, alteration, and physical pain of individuals. The immigrants can be said to be ones but Adit does not show the discontent of uprooted person. The novel can at best be studied as a detailed description of the Asians who go to England and other western countries for jobs. They have to adjust to the different cultural atmospheres in which they have to bear economic disparities.

The novelist proves with so many instances that one should not make opinions about others by merely looking at them from a distance. One should, therefore, watch persons and situations from close quarters to come to the truth. Adit has always spoken highly about the English people and their lifestyle, but Dev has also changed his stance. He has also begun to praise England and India and as days pass the scenario changes. Adit manages to live happily and Dev also eventually decides to stay in England when his expression changes his opinion about England and the English.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The author is highly thankful to Mr Prakash Reddy T, MA Economics, and M.Phil, Principal Vishwa Chethana Degree College, Secretary Bharath Education Trust – Anekal, and also I express my sincere thanks to the secretary and Principal Reverent.Dr.Sister.I.Arockia Rani, my guide Assistant Professor. Dr. K. Lavanya Head PG and Research Department of English, St.Joseph’s College of Arts and Science for Women, Hosur, for providing me all the necessary information to carry out the project successfully.

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