



Displacement and Disenchantment in Kiran Desai's Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *Kiran Desai's Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard portrays about an individual's displacement and how his family members are displacing for him and feels disenchanting. Sampath, the protagonist of the novel does not like to live a normal life. He was alienated from his family and his alienation made him to decide pessimistically. He believes that the shift of place was the only solution to escape from the problem. He used to decide wrongly till the end of the novel. The theme of Displacement plays an important role in the changes that happened in the life of Sampath.*

Kiran Desai, the author of two popular novels – Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard and The Inheritance of Loss is an emerging post-colonial Indian author who won an international repute, quite early in her writing career. She is a young and vibrant Indian English novelist possessed with a lot of artistic talents. She has inherited the literary skills of her mother Anita Desai. The literary environment from her childhood helped her to create works with subtlety.

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is wryly a comic and satirical story of life, love and family relationship. The novel was published in the year 1998 and with the publication of this novel, Desai entered into the world of literature. This novel was serialized in The New Yorker, included in the Vintage Book of Indian Writing and has found publishers around the world. Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard portrays human foibles and eccentricities in a satirical tone. This novel is known for its verbal artistry and the author presents the social and political climate of contemporary India.

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is a collection of hilarious accounts of things encountered by the people of Shakot, a town full of peculiar characteristics which was surrounded by beautiful sceneries of its landscape. It is a sequential tale of unplanned funny incidents taking place in the life of Mr. R.K. Chawla's family members. It is the story of a middle class boy, Sampath, the protagonist of the novel. He is portrayed as a highly bored post-office clerk in the town of Shakot. Sampath Chawla is a twenty year old young man who was frustrated with his life and wants to escape from the materialistic world. His mind was filled with illusions and he hates the machinery life in which one runs behind money. So he displaced himself in a guava orchard and he is not able to clear the illusions from his mind. He feels disenchanting in his life and his only way to solve any kind of problem is by escaping. The theme of displacement and disenchantment revolves throughout the novel.

Food, Clothes and Shelter are the three basic essential things for human beings. House is the best shelter and whatever the problem may be one's house ought to console one with some sort of satisfaction. For Sampath however, the house disturbs his thoughts and he feels alienated inside his own home. He does not know the importance of a home and its value. Actually "Place-ness" will denote not just the physical locale of home and home-region, but also a person's emotional, legal, aesthetic and existential investment in a physical location" (Ferguson 37).

He wants to escape from the frustration and failures that he faced in his life. So, he decided to leave out of his town and he climbed up a guava tree in search of a peaceful life. But

he was identified by the people as the "Hermit of Shakot". Suddenly he became unexpectedly famous as a holy man. Sampath's father was unsatisfied with his early failures. So he made a great plan to improve the economic condition of the family with Sampath's climbing up of trees. He executed the plan successfully.

Sampath was in the adolescent stage and his development was not up to the mark. He did not have the transition and he was confused as to how to decide his life. The latent confusion rendered the life of Sampath as one without any ambition, worthless and one that became useless.

Sampath is unable to get inspiration from his family. Kulfi, his mother is possessed with some peculiar characteristics and it may be mentioned that Sampath inherited the peculiar characters from her. So he lacked the love and care from his mother and he cannot take his mother as his inspiration. On the other hand, his father is portrayed as a man who is perfect and regular in his work. Even though he was married at a young age he was able to overcome the pros and cons of the life. He achieved greatly and he is portrayed as a man with self motivation. He was a good role model, but he failed to inspire his son with optimistic thoughts. Thus, his life begins without any perfect person to motivate him in a perfect way. For a child, its father and mother are the first source of inspirations and the first teachers. They will try to imitate them in each and every kind of activity. From the time he was a child Sampath failed to think optimistically. Chawla wants to utilize his son's misbehavior and his displacement and he wants to settle the family. He does not want to inspire or advice him to come back to the home. Instead he made the arrangements for the family members to settle in the orchard.

Jung says "If the person is stuck in illusions of childhood, however, or has built up unrealistic expectations, he or she can have a multitude of problems" (129). Sampath is struck with life and wants to enjoy his life without any work. It shows that he wanted to live as his childhood days. Like a child he wants to be without any work, he wants to be in his world of dreams. In the orchard he enjoyed with his dreams and his father interpreted as a sadhu's thinking. He had a lot of visitor's everyday but Sampath's longing for loneliness was not satisfied, but his father's wish of earning a lot was satisfied.

Everything went smoothly till the monkey's entry. Monkeys used to visit the orchard regularly, when they meet Sampath in the tree they feel "... the sedentary member of another species they had spotted in their usual domain, with some trepidation and maintained a wary distance, baring their grotesque and discoloured teeth, pulling faces, chattering in a scornful show of contempt and derision" (Desai 107).

Sampath does not consider their mockery and he feels a friendly relationship with them which he lacks with his family members. He wants to develop a mutual relationship with the monkeys and he used to offer various things to eat, which was offered for him by the visitors.

A human monkey relationship is not possible because the trees and forests are meant for beasts. But Sampath as an abnormal human being occupied its place and tried to approach them friendly. It ends when the animals drank, "... five bottles of rum while rifling through the bag of a man who had stopped to see Sampath on his way to a wedding" (Desai 122). The monkeys' behaviour started when they tasted the wine and refused to settle down as earlier. Sampath feels nervous and his words expresses his mind: "' Do keep quiet,' said Sampath sleepily. 'You are making me nervous with all your jumping'" (Desai 123). Sampath feels quite uncomfortable with the strange behaviour of the monkeys, who were intoxicated.

"It is not the monkeys' fault. Always men are the degenerate ones. It is very sad, but in a place like, this with so many visitors, you are bound to get the bad with the good" (Desai 123). We are humans but we place our shelters in the forest, cutting down the trees and occupying the places of the beasts. Sampath and others occupy the orchard which is the shelter of monkeys. So they started to disturb the human beings who settled over there. As a visitor of hermit it is not fair to bring wine bottle to the orchard where animal life exists. But the man without sense has brought the wine to the orchard and unfortunately it leads to a lot of problems and causes disturbances to others.

The creatures are not able to identify the important people who visit the baba in the orchard. The monkey was not able to identify Sampath because of the unstable mind it has. When some of the police men visited the orchard, they started to misbehave with them by throwing the peanuts on their heads. Their misbehaviour made Chawla to feel that his dream would end negatively. "The monkeys were getting more and more out of hand and he had an unsettling feeling that their hallowed days in the orchard might be under serious risk of disruption" (Desai 126).

Unfortunately the langurs tasted liquors for the second time and create uproar in and around the orchard, as they search for more liquor. This gives an occasion for a 'Hullabaloo' involving the civilians, military men, police officers, doctors, etc., to control the activities of langurs. Sampath does not like to send out these animal companions out of the orchard. His father planned to construct a concrete hermitage or he wants to send the monkeys out of the orchard. Sampath does not like these ideas and at last decided to escape from the orchard.

Sampath was occupied with his own thinking. In early days Sampath approaches everything in a pessimistic manner and its all useless thoughts. But on that particular day he was pre-occupied with the thoughts of the monkeys' unlike his previous thoughts. He felt and worried for the monkeys' survival and was left in the position to decide the monkeys' life. He thinks about the 'hullabaloo' which is going to happen on the next day. He escaped from the house and wants to be free from the 'Hullabaloo'. But the same thing is going to happen in the orchard. He was not able to control his emotions.

Sampath was portrayed as a person who does not worry for his own future. There was no incident to mention that Sampath is worried for his family and for his future. He did not bother for his future but he is worried about the future of the monkeys. He thinks deeply and worried for them. It showed his kind hearted and his love towards the monkeys and it made him to leave the orchard by replacing a guava fruit in his place.

In the meantime, the sub-plot of Pinky and Hungry Hop's love was also interwoven into the main plot. The other characters like Kulfi, Sampath's mother who was very much fond of food and his grandmother had a great belief for his grandson. All these characters had undergone displacement and disenchantment in the orchard. Mr. Chawla's family's displacement in the orchard made their lives become enchanted.

Desai portrayed the characters as enmeshed with the illusion, but they are not trying to free themselves from the false beliefs. Chawla had a great liking for money. Sampath feels that everything around him was false and that his mother Kulfi was only interested in cooking and eating. Pinky loves the Hungry Hop boy but finally she understood that their love was an illusion. Pinky though younger than Sampath, she was able to change her mind set and she behaved maturely. Unfortunately, Sampath lacks that maturity till the end of the novel, he was in disenchantment and he displaced himself to escape from the problems.

The theme of Displacement played an important role in the lives of the characters. They were affected psychologically and their disenchantment feeling was clearly expressed by Kiran Desai through various incidents. There are various reasons that may suit for a person's alienation and it may happen sometimes in their own home because they were distanced from their family. Through displacement the protagonist Sampath, wants to attain freedom from his day-to-day activities. But his shift of place to the orchard made his family members to feel disenchantment. They were also psychologically disturbed and felt alienated in their hometown itself. He wants to change his place for his convenience but his change made the entire family to shift to the orchard. Sampath longing for loneliness was also not satisfied. The theme of Displacement plays an important role in the changes that happened in the life of Sampath. The characters' displacement ended with distrust and many of their beliefs and dreams were disenchantment and remained as illusions.