Chapter III
Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard: Localising Cultural Homogenization

Hullabaloo ... is a hilarious but poignant story of life, love familial bonds, Cultural connectivity and above all spirituality. It also speaks on the varied facets of man-nature and man-men relationship and its un-avoidable sourness. The book starts with an unbearably hot summer where the people in the town of Shahkot are dying for the monsoon rains to start. The suffering, irritation, and frustrations this waiting brings on are described in humorous detail.

The main part of the book is concerned with Sampat’s dislike of the business of living around people with expectations of him and making a living. He wants to escape all this and the boring job his father has secured for him at the post office as a clerk. He escapes one day and makes himself a home on a tree in a guava orchard at the foothills of the mountains. Unfortunately the world follows him. People flock to him. They dub him a wise man and listen to him. The monkeys that have been plaguing the town of Shahkot also flock to him to share the food offerings that are made to him on a daily basis.

The background of the novel is Shahkot, an average Indian town, where everything is characteristically dysfunctional and out-of-joint. The town is a sleepy one, walking at a slow pace behind the time. Interestingly Shahkot like R.K. Narayanan’s Malgudi is a town of imagination, hence cannot be traced on the physical map of India. Shahkot has been under fevered drought emanating unbearable heat:
It was summer that sent the dizzy pulse of fever into the sky in which even rules and laws that usually stood straight and purposeful grew limp, like plants exposed to the afternoon sun, and weak. The heat softened and spread the roads into sticky pools of pitch and melted the grease in the Brigadier’s moustache so that it drooped and uncurled casting shadows of his fine, crisp presence.

(2)

The situation grew from bad to worse. Normal life was totally disrupted and life of the poor is withered. As a past of rescue operation the private and government machineries slogged to solve the acute problem. Famine relief camps were set up by the Red Cross to the west of Shahkot yet the condition remained deplorable.

The ration shop was distributing rice and lentils in smaller portions all the time. There were no fruits to be found anywhere and hardly any vegetables. Prices had risen so high, nobody would buy the scraggy chickens sitting in cages outside the meat shop.

(3)

In this dire famine affected year, Sampath was born to Kulfi and Mr. Chawla. An interesting parallel is drawn between the scorching weather and Kulfi’s enormous pregnancy. She grew so large that it seemed as it she had claimed “all the earth’s energy for herself” (3) Breathing in a famine struck small world; she dreamed and designed only of sumptuous dishes. Food had become her
obsession and “fish curries” and “fish kebabs” her regular thoughts. She desires for food in abundance and in myriad forms like –

Of fenugreek and camel milk, yarn and corn, Mangoes and Coconuts and Custard apples Mushrooms sprouting like umbrellas in the monsoon seasons nuts wrinkled in their shells, brown –skinned, milky-fleshed.

(4)

Like the ferocious heat outside, the fierce hunger within Kulfi could not be satiated. To quieten the prowling animal like hunger she bribed the vegetable and the fruit sellers with everything she possessed of little or same value – like squares of silk with embroidery and earning set in gold, a silver nutcracker, a satin petticoat and things like these.

Kulfi was comfortable in the first trimester of her conception but as her pregnancy progressed she could feel the baby kick, turn and even leap. Kulki “… paced up and down, up and down, with her hands upon her belly and thought she might continue to scream all the way until the birth and may be even after”. (7)

Equally memorable was Sampath’s birth as was Kulki’s distorted body with Sampath within the belly. The remarkable circumstance in which he was born made Sampath a loved one. Arrival of Sampath is matched with the arrival of unexpected largesse by Red Cross containing jars of sugar and tea of dehydration mixes, dried milk powder, raisin and digestive biscuits. There were also some smiling foreign women on its cover. There were also nuts, sweets and baby-food tins galore all side. Benediction made the people of Shahkot cry out in elation:
‘Wonderful’, They kept exclaiming, walen dripping from their clothes to form pools about their feet. ‘Wheat a beautiful baby … and can you believe the mansoon? Oh and the food… what a baby! (11)

The birth of Sampath is taken as a miracle, a God –sent angel to save the land and the people. This incarnation of supernatural power is highly rejoiced as – “Soon the house was full of well wishers, chanting excitedly, not knowing whether to talk of the baby or the rain or the food (12). Kulki is the earliest to realise the quietness of her son. Her reaction is recorded as:

She looked at the tiny creature in her hands a creature that looked as if he had come from other planet altogether, or had been discovered in the woods, like something alien and strange and strange. To baby’s eyes were closed and his fingers were tightly curled. His face was red and his strangeness and felt a sense of peace and comfort descend upon her.

(12)

The story leaps over a period of twenty years in the second chapter. Sampath is an eccentric youth affected by the common bug of aimlessness though he works at a post office but finds the boredom of his work space too dreary to bear. To add to his plight is the presence of two of his colleagues Mr. Gupta and Miss Jyotsna. His boss, Mr. D.P.S. in typical boss whose sincerity to his family prevails over his bread giving work. As a result of this attitude her deputes his staff more at his home than at the office. Sampath finds the job suffocating and feels like making an escape
from his workspace. Realising the fact that his father had procured him the job with much pairs, he continues until he feels it is unbearable. His long dreary hours are filled distastefully with reading of piles of letters covered in dust waiting to be delivered to remote destinations.

Sampath is so careless and indifferent at work that he spoils every work allotted to him. He even forgets to lower himself to crawl under the raised wire to reach the post office. As a result a large tuft of his hair is caught and wrenched from his head. He is callous of time and lazily does his work whereby he is sent home with warning of dire consequences to follow.

Sampath, the misfit, is tormented both at home and at post office. His madness limited to his workspace and home becomes public when he appears at the marriage ceremony of the daughter of the head of the post office while discharging the job of filling with sherbet, of washing the glasses once they were emptied by the guests, and then filling with Sherbet, of washing the glasses once they were emptied by the guests, and then filling then up again. No sooner he gets boredom he starts throwing bits of food to the stray dogs that had gathered at the back of the marriage marquees. Threatened by the cooks he manages to sneak into the house. He peers into the cupboards and searches the contents. Finding nothing appealing, he enters the soon where wedding finery is piled high alongwith celebration –clothes scattered upon the floor of myriad colours and vibrant hues. He drapes the fabrics about his body and attached a nose ring to his nose. Eagerly sees his reflection in the mirror and becomes ridiculously happy. Singing he cavorts up and down the length of the red carpet spread in the marriage hall. Reaching a fountain at the centre, he tosses his nose ring and kicks
his legs then he steps into the fountain and splashes water of the spray at the ladies who had assembled as guests.

Sampath’s madness reaches the acme when he starts removing the saris and dupattas he had draped around. To the surprise of the crowd he begins to unbutton his shirt and tosses it on like a hero. Then he lowers both his trousers and his underpants. This act creates chaos amongst the assemblage. Next day he is thrown out of his job for which he is scolded fiercely by his father:

“What! You have lost your job!”
‘Hai, Hai, this boy is nothing but trouble and misfortune’
You are completely lacking in common sense.
Did you get water in your nose?
What are we going to do now?
You really took off your underpants.

(42)

Sampath is put on an arduous hunt for another job. Continuous guidance and long lectures of his father adds to his misery whereby he cries out ‘I do not want a job. I do not like to live like this (46) and “No I do not want an egg’ I want my freedom (47). Sampath is desperate in search of open spaces that can make him feel ‘silence’ – the silence in his inner being:

He wanted open spaces and he wanted then in longer swathes, in days that were clear stretches he could fill with as little as he wished. Here a person’s experience of silence and space squeezed and warped into underground forms that were forced to hide, found only in few places that Sampath could discover.
Desperate in his search for freedom, he runs away from his home. No sooner he boards a bus for his unknown but new destination he feels he has got a new life. “He thought of how he was leaving the world, a world that made its endless revolutions towards nothing. Now it did not matter anyone. His heart was caught in a thrall of joy and fear. Somehow, somewhere he had found a crack” (48)

Sampath rejoices at the sight of greenery passing by an booth sides. So elated is he at the beauteous sight that he leaps from the window of the bus and runs towards an old orchard visible for up the slopel here he climbs a guava tree and settles among the leaves. In the breaches of the tree he finds a bough wide enough to suffice as his bed. After eating a guava, he soon falls into a deep slumber. Soon his friends and relatives come to cajole him so that he could return to his day today affair. Sampath is in no heart to leave his world of peace and enjoys his serenity at the cost of those down below. He mischievously leaks out their personal details – the personal secrets he had collected unethically by reading other’s letters at the post office. His secret exposures are regarded as the visions of the spiritually enlightened and his refuge in the tree is interpreted as his escape from ‘Maya’. Soon he is labeled as ‘Baba’, ‘a guru’ and ‘a Sanyasi’ and finally Monkey-Baba because monkeys have taken refuge alongwith Symbolical but meaningless statements are regarded sacred. For e.g. one mouse is different from the, other, ‘one can digest fish’, a moth will go to the ‘lantern’ and add flavours to milk and it will go sour” (74). His foolish statements are regarded solemn and weighty. Shubha Tiwari in her
essay Kiran Desai’s “Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard as a satirical novel” says

Symbolism is a great asset to Sampath as it curtains his mental deficiency in layers of mystery, people spin their heads in getting at the meaning and the Monkey Baba is regarded as a great mystic.

_(The Fiction of Kiran Desai, 219)_

Of all, only Sampath’s mother could understand her son’s eccentric behaviour. In the orchard as her son does she finds space for her eccentricities, the ‘Space’ where she could make some revelations: “Sampath she knew, she knew why he was sitting in a tree. It was the right place for him to be; that is where he belonged”. (78)

On the other hand Mr. Chawla his father makes the best of Sampath’s refuge. Mr. Chawla amasses huge wealth through the profuse donation made by the pilgrim visitors. He successful capitalizes on the blind faith of the society in his son-established as Monkey -Baba with magical powers.

All goes well for Mr. Chawla until the Monkey –Baba’s friends – Monkeys on the tree develop a taste for liquor and then follows endless hullabaloo with regular boozing they become wild and pose a danger to the spirituality in the surrounding.

On other hand an atheist from the atheist society is sent to Shahkot to make inquiries regarding Monkey –Baba. While the entire congregation is basking in spiritual Waves this haggard being is vigilant in observation and is in hunt for cause to prove Monkey –Baba a fraud. He follows Sampath’s mother Kulfi to the nearby
Forest where she picks herbs and spices. He is sure of the idea that Kulki mixes those herbs in Sampath’s food to keep him under the sway of spirituality. In his curiosity to take a close note of Monkey-Baba’s activities he climbs the adjoining tree. Ridiculously, he falls from the tree right into the boiling cooking pot placed on fire by Kulki. Before he could save his skin from heat of the fire Kulki covers the pot with a lid. In his process of spying, he is even bitten by Kulki with a broom and later in the forest he is struck by her scythe. His comment reveals the deplorable condition in the Indian society:

Even the press in this country goes along with this rubbish. In fact they … propagate it. They take rumour and put it into official language and of course everybody who reads it promptly swallows it as full truth. (120)

Pinky, Sampath’s sister is another interesting character yet life-life. Through pinky the Indian outlook for girls bride-to-be is defined –

Her character must be decent and not shameless and bold… she should not be fat, she should be pleasantly plump with large hip and breast, but a small waist … the girl must be well educated who has passed all examination in the first division. (57-58)

The other superior qualities demanded are –

“She must sit quality with knees together … with Shyness and embarrassment growing (58)

But Pinky shatters all hopes of her parents and the norms of the society by clopping with a boy of her choice. Her elopement with
Hungry hop is out of desperation for his father is busy in accumulating wealth through his son turned hermit. On the other hand her mother is busy feeding her son with strength-giving food and regularly adding exotic elements to his food. Sampath is sympathetic to his sister and advises her to select a boy of her choice.

Pinky is equally strange as her brother and mother. In a fit of passion she bites her lover so ferociously that “… a piece of his ear lay upon the ground” (113). But she is not harmed by this incident. The local medical officer and the police administration allows her scot free for she is the sister of a hermit.

Sampath and his associate monkeys become reciprocal to each other. It soon developed a rumour that” … the ape community obtained news of Sampath and organized a visit” (107). The lady money pulls his hair and shuffles his “glossy and shining locks” (108). The presence of monkeys increased his authenticity. The monkeys flocked due to variety of eatables offered to Sampath-the hermit by people. The cordial relation between Sampath and the liquor addict Monkey was disrupted by Mr. Chawla’s appeal to loud officials to intervene and maintain “Sanctity and peace in Shahkot” (132)

Sampath’s position as a hermit brings good money and prestige for the whole family members. His family has been recognized as the town’s most respected personages. Sampath’s image as holy hermit saves Pinky from police punishment. Even the rishawallas do good business by charging a fat fee for tree round trip from the bazaar up to the orchard and back. Law also succumbs to religions power preferably the Baba image. The police superintendent not only rescued Pinky but took her to the orchard,
this reveals how faith rules power – “The superintendent places his unpleasantly greasy head under Sampath’s toes and felt as through he was being washed gently and cleaned in sweet blessing” (115-116).

The novelist has introduced the myth of Lord Rama within the web of the story to project the connection between wild creature and super human beings. P.D. Nirasakar describes this feature as –

… the mythical relationship between man and monkey as it is point out in the popular myths and mythologies. But reflection in this connection in Sampath and Monkey’s in the orchard. In the contemporary context, is taken up just for review.

(Kiran Desai: The Novelist 27)

‘Hullabaloo’ has moral connotations too. It points at the futility of materialism- the bug of industrialisation and world of new technology. Nikhil Kumar observes:

Sampath has, in feet discovered the fertility of the ‘hullabaloo’ of the mundane life, in which man reins after the material glory, seeks intellectual attainment, and that, too, for his deeper egoistic satisfaction.

(Spiritual Seeking in Kiran Desai’s “Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard”, 68)

A close study of Sampath’s character brings two sides of his personality one drastically different from the other. He is a complete failure and a good or nothing at home, at school, at work, spending his days either in reverie or riding singing in public garden. He has no urge to discharge his duty and is not at all conscientious to his duties. He is a failure at every step and every
phase of life. Being single male child he is to carry on the family traditions and good name but Sampath holds no promise as such. His new life as a hermit by good luck compensates for what he was termed an idler. May be he is born for on ultimate purpose in life, his grandmother says – “He was born with spiritual tendencies. Everybody was saying may be he is a little mad, may be he is a little simple-minded, but it is just that he could never interest himself in the material world. (96)

Sampath is different attitude may be because of his disinterestedness. His running away from material life, is may be, because of his love for birds and beasts. This is the reason why he resides in the branches of guava tree, he announces – “I am not going to live anywhere but in this tree (127) and later he adds “I am not going to climb down this tree” (189). His search for freedom makes his beg for aloneness. He prays as “leave me alone, I am going to be sick. Leave me alone, leave me alone leave me alone…” (190). But he is deprived of the peace he so advertently demands. Even the media does not leave him alone it publishes his living as –

In February, this picture [Sampath’s Photograph] was printed in the The Times of India, together with the headline- *The Baba of Shahkot in his Tree Abode*. This peaceful orchard outside Shahkot, it read has been transformed by a glut of visitors rushing to see the hermit of Shahkot, whose rare simplicity and profound wisdom are bringing solace and hope to many who are disheartened by these complicated and corrupt times. (119)
Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is a man’s struggle to escape from the din of the real life into a world of peace, space silence. Monkey culture is a refuge for the unhappy the hopeless and the hapless. It asserts the conventional faith in saints and Sadhus or hermits who display such non-earthly imagination. They forecast the future of their subjects, pretending to know their future. As a result the subjects follow them ardently to seek salvation through their remedial treatment. Sampath here poses as an heir of the race of hermits in the Indian history of magic and spiritual performances. Sampath is a tool through which the novelist tends to liberate the shackled mind from orthodox Indian culture that has slaved the subconscious domains of the people though living in twenty first century supersonic world. The socio-cultural maladies have been interpreted in a comic strand like the devotes of Hanuman, the mythical mighty god rob beautiful girls and women of their eatables. When pinky and Ammaji went to see movie and Ammaji had ice-cream, pinky though that the cinema monkey would reach towards her but the monkey “… ignored her and ran after Pinky instead even though she was without any food products whatsoever” (85-86)

The monkey had a special taste for he had been “… harassing the ladies of the town for peanut cones” (85). The Hanuman and Monkeys association is given a contemporary colour even though it highlights the connection between wild creature and super human being. Sampath and his Monkey associates is looked at with deep reverence. Some of them keep his toes reverently upon their heads. The life of repose with tremendous respect among the devotees, bring a change in Sampath’s looks gradually:
His cheeks grew slowly plumper day by day; his tense, worried expression melted into one of contentment of the days and nights rising and falling about him were gently reflected in his face and his eyes mirrored the quiet of the distant hills.

(79)

Here the novelist establishes connection between physical environment and lives of different kinds. The monkeys share the bed with Sampath, “Has sharing endowed him with elevated status within the monkey hierarchy (107). By remaining close to Sampath, the monkeys obtain their meals much more easily. The lady monkey pulls his hair and shuffles his glossy and shining locks” (108) a if they were his body guards. Further the presence of the monkeys increased his worthiness and authenticity as a Baba though his father was unhappy at the loss of eatables the visitors had offered piously.

Popularity of Baba/hermit is formed out by setting his photos in the house and glorifying his achievement. The spy’s comment on such a popularity is apt and thought –provoking –

Even the press in this country goes along with the rubbish. In fact they ... propagate it, they take rumour and put it into official language and of course everybody who reads it promptly swallows it as the whole truth (120)

Newspapers like Times instead of exposing the truth glossfies Sampath adding to his popularity. It addresses Sampath as a hermit of Shahkot with “rare simplicity and profound wisdom” (119). In the era of globalization when the county needs literacy to make landmark contribution, even educated people are turning to such
hermits for quick gain of comfort, luxury and humour. They not only shun their responsibilities and duties but also their patriotic feelings.

Likewise the New district Magistrate on his first posting at Shahkot who is “… very shy man, only just installed in government service, and very thick and weak looking” (168) who felt a strong sympathy for the Baba and returned home even more distressed about the matter then before” (171). It projects the officers of high administrative level in the contemporary time as incapable to handle the crisis involving affairs related to religions. Hence the plan to catch the monkey fails miserably because of the lack of proper supervision, planning and proper executions results in a complete chaos. Here Desai vividly brings out the skillful modus operandi of the making of a saint in our country. It is a wide-ranged business with selling art, production trade in the form of recycled coconuts to picture postcards of the Baba to timing visiting hours and heavy pour of money into the Chawla bank account. The absurdity of blind faith and fanatic beliefs are effectively exposed by the author.

Monkey – Baba and money –culture becomes the intellectual force with which material and mental forces are controlled. People flock for blessings and vendors flock for high sales, whereas monkeys flock for alcohol. The monkey-culture creates not only chaos but also puts law into question. The state body of law remains an “outer ditch” behind which stands a powerful system of “fortresses and earth works” – a network of new culture which buttress the rule and domination of the rutting class, Common culture minus monkey – baba is discarded and a new ideological
formation with the interest of the Chawlas at centre advances as the interest of the ruling class. Cultures then becomes the arena of class struggle. In the process of commodification the diversities are homogenized to form “one country, one people one culture”. In a world, commercialization of culture is a natural corollary of such globalization. Sitaram Yechury describes such a form of globalization as –

... the sudden popularization of western concepts like “Valentines Day” amongst our urban youth accompanied by the sale of universal products of cards and gifts. In many third world countries, illiteracy may be third rampant but the image of Walt Disney cartoon figures are familiar to the children.

Globalization strengthens the grip of ruling class hegemony over our society. On the issue of the ideological hegemony exercised by the ruling classing, Marx and Engels observe:

The ideas of the ruling class in every epoch, the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has means of material production at its disposal consequently controls the means of the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the while subject to it... the individuals composing the ruler class posses among other things, consciousness and therefore think.

(http://CPim.org/node/1366, p-6)
The culture of globalization is anti-traditional. In ancient times the Hindus – hermits secluded themselves on the tops of Himalayas to practice meditation and attain enlightenment. But Sampath in order to attain liberty and refuge from chaotic, world due to termination in services hides in a tree – top. To sum up, the culture of globalization seeks to divorce people from their actual realities of day to day life. Culture thereby acts not as on appeal to the aesthetic, but as a distraction, diversion from pressing problems of poverty and misery.

The inroads of the monkey into the human world and the monkey – baba and his disciples into the forest projects the demerits of globalization, for e.g. the modern youth life Sampath has drifted away from familial ties and have no respect to elders and joint family system. They wish for independence, privacy and space, as a result the traditional family has given way to nuclear family. Consequently globalization has his the roots of the sacred institution called ‘family’ which is the most important part of one life of Indian culture.

In short globalization makes a difficult definition. Scholars from various disciplines such as sociology, political science economics and geography have perceived globalization differently, and tried to define it from various angels. Taking cues from those definitions, globalization can be interpreted as –

A) Squeezing of space and time
B) Shrinking of the world
C) Co-ordination of production or a grand scale.
D) Wide and incessant flow of technology and information.
E) Diffusion of values and practices with world a wide impact.
Evaluated on these features **Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard** makes a global theme and a global world

The continuity of Indian cultures is perhaps linked to India’s long cherished ideal of openness and freedom. **Hullabaloo**... shows the forces civilization uses to keep people from having such freedom – religion, family economics, social beliefs and politics. Sampath simply walks away from it all. Only two kinds of people are bold enough to do this – a madman or a holy man. It is a matter of debate which one he truly is.

Sampath wants to be free of the forced and false manners of life. Many of the characters have similar urges for instance, Kulfi, Sampath’s half mad and repressed mother refuses to cooperate or perform her duties unless she wants to. As sexually aware as Sampath, she loves colour texture, taste and paints the walls of her house while pregement. She cooks sumptuous dishes once she is set free from the house and can live in the forest near Sampath. Kulfi and Sampath are extreme in their need to be free. Likewise, the chief Medical officer wants to get out of Shahkot, so he can have peace and quiet. The wife of Verma leaves him to be free of his domineering theories. The Hungry Hop boy wants to be free of his female relations and pinky wants to run away from boredom.

In traditional India the desire for the soul’s liberation from its earthly rounds of reincarnation lad pilgrims to renounce the world as a trap and seek a religious teacher. As the citizens of Shahkot believes Sampath to be. Such historical religious teachers as the Buddha who founded Buddhism or Mahavira, a major figure in Jainism, are deeply revered models of non-attachment to the material world. Sitting at the feet of an
enlightened teacher was considered a way to come out of suffering, and the pithy proverbs of great masters in the collection known as Upanishads are clichés and platitudes in the guava orchard.

Hullabaloo... has the east and the west put side by side. The grandmother, Ammaji is pushing traditional remedies and astrological lore on Sampath, while the father proud of his modern banking career and a product of English system castigates his mother’s ignorance. He perform yoga exercises at home, them puts on western manners and goes to work. He wants his daughter pinky to be a secluded, modest and shy like the ideal Indian women.

The small town of Shahkot has electricity intermittently and on antiquated phone system that rings the wrong numbers. The barbed wire fence around the post office is vandalized and used by people who scrounge for what they need. The town moves slowly in its ways though it has its modern face with movie house, buses cars and a university. If the traditional desire for religious gurus makes people see Sampath as a holy man it also produces a modern atheist who wants to debunk the fraud and save Indian form the dark ages. These contradictions of old India and modern Indian side by side provide much of the humourous satire.

Further the contrast of Sampath’s world of imagination and the petty ugliness of modern Indian life becomes more and more glaring as the orchard is turned into a commercial nightmare with ads blaring PA Systems, busload of visitors drunker monkeys and the constant interception of people asking Sampath questions about their lives. This represents Ancient India which
is very much alive in India Today. This is pictured in the novel in the marriage customs, the family and traditional feasts, the religious beliefs and the holymen that can still be seen everywhere, sitting under trees by rivers or begging for their food.

**Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard** highlights all sorts of foolish characters in Desai’s satirical look at a small town in contemporary North India. It is the touchstone that reveals the hypocrisy of his culture.

Sampath’s flight from his society to a guava tree is humorously treated by Desai, yet there is a serious core to it that puts Sampath in the company of other wise fools. The tradition of the spiritual quest is both parodied and taken seriously, for it has much in common with the artist’s quest. Furthermore, Sampath is certainly a religious humbug (as the spy from the Atheist Society tries to show), though the role of a holy man has been forced upon him. Sampath prefers to be left alone. He articulates a genuine human aspiration for freedom and joy, as well as simplicity in life and the ability to live in the present moment.

Sampath’s yearning to be rid of the distractions of life is interpreted variously as religion, rebellion, madness, or illness by the other character. Indeed, Sampath’s interactions in the village of Shahkot present a humorous critique of many Indian institutions. All the contradictions or religious and social boundaries that keep the people, as Sampath feels, in a prison, are rejected by him: “He thought of how he was leaving the world, a world that made its endless revolutions towards nothing” (133). Because of this,
Sampath is perceived as either a holy man or a lunatic. The pronouncement of his holiness depends on a series of funny misunderstandings, including the assumption that he is celibate when in reality he merely feels that the woman foisted on him for a wife is repulsive.

From Sampath’s point of view, his quest to become one with beauty is fulfilled. In his tree “he felt weightless… rocked by this lambent light.” He is more and more thirsty for the world’s loveliness, but the more he reaches for it, the more it escapes from him. He decides it must “reach out and claim him instead.” And it finally does. In the last night in the orchard, Sampath seems to have what might be called Buddha’s experience of Samadhi, or oneness with the universe. He is the Buddha in the tree, instead of beneath the tree: “He could let all [the dark’s] whisperings, all its shades of violet, float into him. This impersonal darkness could be comforting as no human attention ever was,” (173). Then he picks a guava with a “Perfect Buddha shape.” In the morning, he is gone, and only the guava bearing Sampath’s birthmark remains. Is Sampath’s transformation simply a foolish parody, or the echo of ancient Indian stories?

Desai’s novel takes place in contemporary India as a postcolonial nation. Postcolonialism has a special meaning for the former territories European nations. All of the countries in Africa, Asia, or the Americas that were held by European powers were drastically changed by the dominant and foreign culture. The Indian Civil Service, for example, is a remnant of the British Administrative System, and is subject to Desai’s satire. The British
system of administration is often seen as completely unsuitably, rigid, and laughable when applied to Indian life. All of the officials in Shahkot are ridiculous and incompetent, retaining the air and mannerisms of British lackeys. There is a chain of command, from the Police Commissioner to the District Collector, who arrives from Delhi to straighten out the hopeless mess of the locals.

The postcolonial nations often exhibit symptoms of displacement, shock, and mixed values amounting to a modern identity crisis. Because of the Globalized western economy, they cannot go back to the way things were, and they cannot forget their origins. Mr. Chawla is on one side, for instance, with his Western business values, and the atheist spy is part of the secular group in India who wants to drop the old religion and be part of the modern world. The Hanuman Temple Group, on the other hand, is part of an older religious view, and the people who want to worship Sampath as a guru hark back to their sacred roots. These confusions of the old and new are made fun of in this novel.

Interestingly the novel Projects the fact that a question effect of globalization is global culture. Global culture already exists, in a sense. The most self-evident forms of cultural globalization are the products of Western media: television, western pop and Hollywood icons such as Britney Spears or Arnold Schwarzenegger, and products such as a Lee or Coca Cola. Stuart Hall argues that as yet there is not globalized equivalent of local cultures (by which he takes to mean the corpus of myths, legends, icons and stories embedded within a national consciousness). Hall argues that local cultures have a strong emotional appeal for people, while global culture have a strong emotional appeal for people, while global
culture may have an ethnic ‘appeal’ without the emotional content (Hall 1999 [1992]:304-9). Mike Featherstone suggests that whereas local culture is closely tied to place and time, global culture is ‘disconnected’ and ‘de-territorialized’, existing outside the usual reference to geographical territory (1995).

David Held et al identify the following as the principal agents of cultural globalization: pop music, television, cinema, and tourism. In the early years of the twenty-first century we need to add global telecommunications technology and the Internet as factors that affect and effect cultural globalization. Held et al see three responses to cultural globalization:

i. those who see cultural homogenization as an outcome of the impact of Western media and consumerism (what they call ‘hyperglobalizers’),

ii. those who see the impact of global culture as superficial (the ‘sceptics’) and,

iii. those who predict the emergence of new global cultural networks and hybrids (the ‘transformationists’).

(1999)

However, globalization cannot be seen as a one-way effect of Western culture on local ones. While admittedly the impact of Coca Cola and Levi-Strauss on India and Mexico is an important feature, the reverse is also true of cultural globalization. Local products such as Indian cuisine and ethnic wear have now reached global markets. When the ‘curry’ is declared UK’s ‘national dish’, we have a very globalized local product. African music and Italian pizza are now as much global as Coca Cola. Further, migration of software and communications works into all parts of the world.
Rustom Bharucha, following Richard Schechner, uses the term ‘interculturalism’ to refer to the cultural exchanges that are facilitated by globalization. Interculturalism emphasizes that the exchange among cultures, done by individuals or by non-official groups, without obeying national boundaries (Bharucha 2001:5).

Ashis Nandy’s argument (1998) on inter-Asian civilizational dialogue seeks a new cosmopolitanism that can fight the cultural hegemony of the West.

Ronald Robertson defines glocalization as ‘the creation and incorporation of locality, processes which themselves largely shape, in turn, the compression of the world as a whole’ (1995:40).

Resistance to globalization is also local. In India the Mumbai Resistance (which held parallel sessions opposite the World Social Forum, Mumbai, January 2004) and the Seattle protest marches are clear acts of local resistance.

An interesting variant of such a process is the way in which metropolitan-based cultural artifacts affect folk and local traditions in India. The spread of mass-mediated music genres, especially film music, has significantly effected the decline and even extinction of folk genres in India. Collectively performed music has been replaced by mass-media music. The individuals who once performed collectively as a community are now falling apart.

Instead of such collective ‘acts’ we now have atomized families or radio (Manuel 2001). In a sense, promoting a consensus of values and taste (Shah Rukh Khan in rural India, and films with specifically rural settings, such as the high-profile Lagaan or Swades).

Globalization can be resisted through recourse to a ‘national imaginary’. That is, the ‘glocal’ cannot entirely do away with the
nation state as a concept or as entity. The national facilitates an oppositional discourse to the global. However, this does not mean that the national is homogenous. ‘Glocal’ ingredient embedded in the text is another feature of globalization.

_Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard_ has some characteristics of folklore. Part of the long tradition of oral literature that was passed from generation to generation before stories were written down. Folklore includes folk tales, fairy tales, fables, proverbs and legends. A fable is a short narrative, often with animal characters, or of a fantastic nature, that teaches morals or ethics. Examples are Aesop’s fables, which contains familiar tales such as the Tortoise and the Hare (the race is not always won by the swift). India has a rich legacy of folklore and fables in the _Pahchtantra_ of Bidapi is set in a framework as lessons in the art of politics for princes but includes animal characters to illustrate the points. Similarly, the Jataka Tales teach Buddhist ethics through animal characters, like the greedy crow. Desai’s novel is set in modern India but feels like a fable with fantastic characters, the monkeys, and the hero turning into a guava. Sampath teaches in proverbs from the tree, and some of the sayings play on platitudes familiar to an Indian audience.
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