Chapter - IV

The Symmetry of Design - Evaluation
THE SYMMETRY OF DESIGN- AN EVALUATION

The technique of narrating a story is determined by the kind of experience and the quality of vision, which the author seeks to convey through the mutual interaction of character and plot. Form and technique it must be admitted make the vital elements of short story, for they are inseparable from the subject matter of the short story.

Structure is a concept including both context and form, so for they are organized for aesthetic purposes. The work of art is, then considered as a whole system of signs or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purposes.

(Theory of literature, 140)

With the form and content a work of art gets its structural design by which an impression of the architectural pattern may be derived. Srinivasa Iyengar has pointed out:

The form of the building is the first thing that strikes us. We enter the building by and by, explore its nooks and corners, gauge its beauties, mark its contours, and as we go away at last our eyes linger lovingly on the building dwell on the 'form' rather than on particular facilities of architectural expression; we begin with the form, we enrich our initial sweep of impression by scrutinizing the matter the many details, and we end
by contemplating the ‘form’ but now the ‘form’ is not
a mere outline, but is the integration of the details, a
unity instinct with beauty and harmony. But where the
‘form as such is hazy while the ’details’ are resplendent
it is these latter alone that primarily attract us and it
is these we retain in our memories.

(S. Iyengar The adventure of Criticism, 41)

The focus of the short stories is not girlish romance or
wooing leading to marriage bells but a more complex urge for human
values in interpersonal relationship and its beauty in one’s journey through
life. In Shri Aurobindo’s Words: “Art is not only technique or form of
Beauty not only the discovery or the expression of Beauty it is a
self-expression of Consciousness under the conditions of aesthetics
values, but life value and mind values social values that enter into Art.”

Art is wholesome when it establishes a relationship between
man, the human agency and the compulsive field of action in which he
discovers his potential, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Desai and Shobha De’s art
has triumphed in the sense that the stories contain souls which make their
efforts through the winding pathways to the heights of social and
psychological recognition. The conquest of human efforts, abstract or
concrete, individual or collective, turn the world upside down; the
impoverish society gains power and glory and the ‘waste’ is recycled so
that a fruitful and a purposeful action engineers satisfaction.

S. Iyengar in his book *The Adventure of Criticism* writes:

The raw stuff of life undergoes a certain obscure process of transformation in the hands of the artist and become at last a thing of beauty. But the “process” is not everything. And the beauty of ‘form’ that we see in the finished work of art is also not everything.

(*The Adventure of Criticism, 660.*)

‘Shobha De’ emerged as the most provocatively marvellous Vibrant and Sizzling writer in the galaxy of fiction writers in India. Her reactionary writing cuts across caste, class, age, sex, race and religion, and vibrates the entire world of her readers. The entire world of her readers. The vibration is of course of romanticism and liveliness to life. She wants to be serious in her views but in a prurient way. Her *small Betrayals* consist of fourteen stories echoing different shades of relationship. Shobha De’ tries to study the structure of despair that emerges out of a feminine discourse on the sad tale of hapless women and men. In this regard Luce Irigaray, an eminent exponent of French feminism writers.

... The relationship of women to their mothers and to other woman thus toward themselves are rare subject to total narcissistic “black out”, these relationship are
completely devalued indeed I have never come across
a woman who doesn’t suffer from the problem of not
being able to resolve in harmony in the present
system, her relationship with her other women.
Psychoanalysis has totally mythologized and 'Censored'
the positive value of these relationships.

(Women Exile, 75)

A conflict between the psychological and ethical conception
of love is evident in the short stories. The conflict between 'Kama' and
'Tapas' love and beauty is found in the stories. Her extraordinary
language style and her realistic exploration of the hidden depth of human
psyche particularly of woman have undoubtedly heralded a new
conception in the realm of traditional thinking. Like Arundhati Roy, she
has invented so many words and diction's, technique and style to
conform to the feeling. She has given a new style to English language, a
style that turns and twist language to portray the different facets of
modern mind which is being haunted by so many traumatic experience, a
style that lulls away from cheap sentimentalism to the world of poetic
pattern and metaphorical structure. To Shobha De' the pure art has
nothing to do with absolute truth. It shows truth and the naked exposure
of society, but she did it through the medium of art and beauty, feeling
and form. Her novels Sultry Days, Starry Nights, Strange Obsession,
Socialite Evenings, Sisters and Small Betrayals (A story collection) are
still sold like hot cakes in India and abroad. Pual W. Roberta in "The Toronto Review" rightly holds the view:

Staggeringly beautiful she’s also touchingly humble about her work. Looking into her eyes I saw loneliness, passion fear, humour, uncertainty, anger, sorrow and enormous strength. Not at once, but in succession a reaction to circumstances like a chameleon. Rarely have I encountered such windows into a soul opened so freely what emerges is what one reads in her work: enigmatic, straightforward, crude, erudite, girlish, wise and ultimately uncontrived truth. She doesn’t know how good a writer she is which is why she is so good a writer.

Interpreters of Maladies a collection of short stories by Jhumpa Lahiri has a unifying design for every scene, incident and details of the action described or suggested does carry a direct relation to the conflict and its resolution. Her stories are marked by “two fundamental types” of conflict, External and internal, External in which a character struggles against a tangible obstacle and internal conflict or conflict within a character as in ‘A Temporary Matter,’ here the conflict works between Shobha and Shukumar who feel their insignificance for each other after the loss of their baby. Here the action is ‘progressive and sequential’;
originates at a point when the loss physically ceases to exist and a resolution occurs towards the close when Shukumar makes a civil confession what was unknown to Shobha for quite a length of time. The confession re-establishes their love and faith and the conjugality takes a fresh lease of life. If is a psychological story for the drama is set in the mind. This new wholeness kills the void that the two partners first released on their nerves at the start of the story the psychophysical boundaries that they now construct is intelligently described by Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach in what do women want as:

In love and in sex there are many unconscious factors that lie beneath the surface that motivate us in ways, which if examined would seem to have little to do with 'healthy' loving impulses. But in love and in love-make there is a process of repair to the low self-esteem and sense of self that so many people suffer. For 'being loved' allows us to see and experience ourselves differently. We are taking in the love that another is giving (even if he or she may be giving in part out of narcissistic needs). This love can enter into the well of longings or emptiness that live deep inside of us. It can feed us in profoundly important ways and transform deeply held images of unconnectedness.

(What do women want, 153)
Interpreter of Maladies reveals no surface and immediate conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Das. The conflict is not made apparent to the readers until one third of the story is narrated. The immediate conflict appears when Mrs. Das confesses her illegitimate and momentary sexual involvement with a friend of Mr. Das. Bobby was conceived during this love making and a vent to "this terrible secret" is the moment of desolation. Here the resolution of conflict is temporary and the basic conflict continues to live until Mr. Das comes to know of Bobby's parentage. Mrs. Das confession ensures her of the possibility of repairing this damage that she has internalized psychologically.

'A Real Durban' reads like a conventional story. Basically its structure is not very different from that of the older or more conventional type of story. There is an immediate conflict between Boori Ma and occupants of the multi-storied building. Here we have an example of expatriation. The term is described by Christine Gomez in the informative essay ("The on going quest of Bharati Mukherjee from Expatriation To Immigration")

"Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a wistful longing for the past, often symbolized by the ancestral home, the pain of exile and homelessness the struggle to maintain the difference between oneself and the new unfriendly
surrounding an assumption of moral or cultural superiority over the host country and a refusal to accept the identity forced on one by the environment. The expatriate builds a cocoon around herself/himself as a refuge from cultural dilemmas and from the experienced hostility or unfriendliness in the new country."

Boori Ma's litanies and her prevailing predicament makes narration shift from prevailing time to the 'dead time' and back again to the prevailing time; she is caught in the horns of expatriate dilemma as which is an inner conflict set in the theatre of his mind. As a fragmented and alienated character she is projected against a social group which later drops her from all times and she now becomes an injured expatriate. Her fate in the form of social art adds to her deterioration along with physical decay, which finally culminates in a disaster. The insensitive neighbourhood drives her out of the little room she had, and this violence comes as a cultural shock to her.

The language is quite forceful and it concretises the image of Boori Ma with well marked details. This gives us not only the meaning of the idea communicated but also partakes all that of a character, which is physically, present. Metaphors are used to gives specific details and to intensify the communicated details. The language is inherently fresh
and it has a potency of quickness in conjuring images. For example Boori Ma’s knot of hair, is described as “a walnut and her voice as “brittle with sorrows as tart as curds and shrill enough to grate meat from a coconut.”

*(Interpreter of Maladies, 70)*

Here diction is highly instrumental in suggesting the growing resentment around Boori Ma. The clash is seen on the surface of the lines, which makes the plight of the old lady highly poignant. Boori Ma is a nameless character as symbolically it represents the ancient Indian Culture, which had its root in “Vishwabandhutava”.

‘Sexy’ is a story, which begins with adequate details about the major character with a smooth bringing in of external conflict. The story is set in Boston and cross-cultural conflict is the thematic chord. The western and the Indian perspective gives a delicious taste to the story. Miranda is a young girl who is all existed to taste youthful love attains maturity towards the close of the story and mends her way by giving up Dev as her dream lover so that he retires to her family and continues supporting his wife and child. Miranda is described with the help of similes providing perception of visual images. He had silver eyes and skin as pale as paper and the contrast with her hair, as dark and glossy as an expresso bean, caused people to describe as a striking, if no pretty. She had a narrow egg shaped head that rose to be prominent
point. Her features too were narrow, with nostrils so slim that they appeared to have been pinched with clothespin. Now her face glowed rosy at the cheeks smoky below the brow bone. Her lips glistened.

(Interpreter of Maladies, 87)

The similes emphasized her sensuality. These physical details metaphorically expressed, project her as a pulsating sexual being and to whom domesticity is an alien world from this juncture the story cease to be an external conflict. The protagonist is now in war with herself. Her determination to avoid Dev so that he re-adapts himself in the filial warmth. The story is noticeable for it is strongly charged with emotion. It contains genuine emotions life is here treated both “faithfully” and “perceptively”. Miranda deserve our sympathy and the story manipulates her retreat with grace and decorum: “... She would tell him the things she had known all along: that it wasn’t fair to her, or to his wife that they both deserved better, that there was no point in it dragging on”.

(Interpreter of Maladies, 110)

“This Blessed House” is built on external conflict. The story begins on a happy love surcharged with the thrill of a new surrounding and quaint discoveries in the form of effigies of Christ of porcelain, wood and terracotta, Christ intrudes into the warmth of conjugality and the war of individuality is initiated. To Twinkle Christ exists in the house as
a sacred air. She regarded the discovery as 'blessed gains' but to Sanjeev it is 'meaningless' for his religion provides no room for Christ as a deity.

In 'This Blessed Home', there is a bit of religious inhibition in the husband, Sanjeev which accounts for his sullenness and gruffness at his wife, Twinkle, she finding Christian objects in their home and displaying them and being happy with a childlike innocence and girlish delight. And it is this which thaws Sanjeev's reticence.

"The treatment of Bibi Haldar" begins with a detailed descriptions of her ailment that baffled family, friends, priests, palmists, spinsters, gem therapists, prophets and fools. She was offered all kinds of treatment allopathy, homoeopathy, ayurveda x-rays, probes, auscultations and infections. This story reads with a noticeable speed; projecting Bibi Haldar's nature of illness with articulate misery. Long details are given with a number of pauses to reflect upon all necessary details that rush with noticeable speed.

(a) "Her soliloquies mawkish, her sentiments maudlin malaise dripped like a fever from her pores."

(b) "In has most embittered moments were wrapped her in shawls, washed her face from the cistern tap and brought her glasses of yogurt and rose water."

(Interpreter of Maladies, 161.)
"Bibi Haldar" represents the misery of marriageable girls who are denied the bliss of marriage if the family members shirk from the responsibility of fixing aliens. She communicates her emotional pain with those in the neighborhood, Haldar and his wife leaves the city; the drama now turns 'inward' and the 'external conflict' glides into 'inner conflict'. Strangely yet interestingly the conflict resolves into an unconventional happenings. Bibi Haldar delivers a baby without being knotted in wedlock and the child fills Bibi Haldar’s vaccum with thrill engagements and structures her mode of living.

Actually by experimenting first person plural number feminine gender narrative technique Jhumpa makes feminine section of the society omnipresent in the story. The entire story is narrated according to their point of view. They keep their eyes on the subordinate institutions of the society like family and individual. At the same time the group of female narrators are critical of themselves. It marks their objective approach and establishes their credibility.

The story has a rare beauty and is an affirmation of "Fellow-feelings”. The unceremonious blessedness that destiny award to Bibi Haldar speaks large of the strange ways through which one becomes amiable with despotic life. The quirk of circumstances converts the no good individual (Bibi Haldar) into an industrious, loving, amiable and transformed individual. Here happiness or unhappiness ceases to matter
and soul-searing music closes the story by the torrential flow of transcendental experience. Here Lahiri is superbly impressive captivating and compulsively absorbing.

The last story ‘The Third and Final Continent’ deals with the problem of an Indian couple who are immigrants and his life in west narrates how love can make one transcend geographical limits. The story is narrated in the first person by the male protagonist who settles in North America and holds admiration to exaggeration for sending a man on the moon. He brings his wife Mala along, soon after his marriage whom he takes to Mrs. Croft to extend his affection and adoration. The old lady notices an unforgettable reward for the narrator. Mrs. Croft’s death disturbs him and the emotional bond shapes it as a personal loss. Globalization with its additive beauty enhances the range of human experience, another memorable story which transcends geographical and cultural barriers. The protagonist experience absolute contentment in the third continent yet the nostalgia is still there.

Lahiri’s stories are simple with common character uncomplicated plots and have variety of thoughts. Most of the stories have omniscient narrator who records the subtle nuances of living, emphasizing life with myriad experiences. The stories are well seasoned with irony, pathos, flashback, fantasies and well chisled dialogues. Simple affections and sincere adoration’s is the fragrance of many of her
stories. The stories are narrated in a style that combines economy of expression with a charming lyricism. Sparing words, yet extremely eloquent, she weaves visual images for the reader in a startlingly realistic manner.

The volume *Games At Twilight* and other stories shows that Desai's achievement as a short story writer was equal to and as accomplished as her mastery of the craft of the novel, the short stories each of them a cameo of poetic-prose containing authentic word picture of Indian Life ranging from the life of the upper middle class children in a metropolis on a hot day to that of a young American couple who escapes the heat of the plains of the mountain. Her world is peopled with sensitive characters crushed by those who are not so sensitive.

Anita Desai breaks a new ground in the world of Indian English short stories by shifting the emphasis from the external to the internal world. She creates a world of her own, which she fills up with extraordinary sensitive beings. She cherishes relationship for the sense of security, Companionship belongingness and fulfillment. Disillusionment and despair, disappointment and frustration abound in the lives of the protagonists. The plot of her short stories is rather sleek, but it does not lack in coherence, symmetry and organic quality, though there are deviations here and there. "*Games At Twilight*" centres round Raghu and Ravi and other children who usually play the game of 'hide and seek at
twilight. One day the children are busy playing the game. Raghu seeks others who are hiding themselves in secret places. Ravi hides himself in a corner of a garage, where from through a crack he slides into shed. There Ravi is frightened to see strange things crawling moths and uncanny insects, which are trying to eat one another. Raghu vaingloriously tries to find Ravi, who is still watching the drama of struggle among the lesser species. The child psychology of Ravi has thus deftly been drawn along with that of Raghu and other children. The plot is therefore, trivial yet the presentation is wholly surcharged with a psychological delineation of the children, particularly of Ravi and Raghu. Seeing moths and insects Ravi develops a conspicuous strain of philosophy and a "terrible sense of insignificance" which is both appealing and also in turn with Anita Desai's general outlook on life and the world. An extreme assertion of self-reliance is invariably predicated upon a denial of reciprocity and upon solipsistic-rigidity.

The precariousness of the individual being caused by the dread of being battered by external forces is at the core of the story "Studies in the Park" told in the first person singular by the unnamed protagonist. The story presents an ethos in which genuineness of being rates lower in people's priorities than passing an examination. Unable to bear the noise and stifle of his surroundings, the student who is setting for the intermediate examination shortly takes refuge in a park. Within the compass of the story's rhetoric is established a polarity between
sterility and strength of being, between death and life. The narrator counts himself among the dead souls who like himself are preparing for one or the other examination B.A or M.A.

I felt as if we were all dying in the park, that when we entered the examination hall it would be to we declared officially dead. That's what the degree were about. What else was it all about? Why were we creeping, around here hiding from the city from teachers and parents, pretending to study and prepare? Prepare for what?

*Games at Twilight, 29*

"The Fare Well Party" is a little masterpiece. As well as being a scintillating satire on the crudities and complacencies of men and women of urban India who live busy but vacuous lives, it is at the same time one of Desai's most sadly evocative short stories. Though artistically a powerful partial of human emotions. It is extremely weak in plot. The third person universal observer pattern of narration which we find in this short story, does not, infect, make it a story complete and perfect in all respects. The slender theme is gradually threaded around human passions and emotions. The farewell party is arranged by the Ramans and the guests and the neighbors arrive to congratulate Mr. Raman on his getting promotion. The guests and the neighbors are sumptuously entertained.
"The Accompanist" gives the germinal idea of the theme, which Anita Desai has developed in her novel named *In Custody*. Devotion appears to be the keynote of this story and aspiration to be an elevated soul seems to be the underlying idea. One of the salient features of this short story is the use of first person narrative. Mr. Misra and Ustad Rahim Khan are the two-major characters around whom the whole story revolves. Mr. Misra is devoted fellow. He is a Tanpura player to his master Ustad Rahim Khan, a noted musician, He admires his master very profoundly. He has unbounded love for his master and does not see any blemish in him.

"Surface Texture" is an attack on evasiveness and pusillanimity, cowardice and irresponsibility of a person. The satiric veins runs throughout the story, its tone is slightly bitter and biting. His surface texture of incompetence and indolence, of indifference and antipathy, once boredom and tedium to him in office are now equally impeding his new life of a sadhu.

"In Sale" Anita Desai has projected an idea neglect of artist in society. She considers the declining aesthetic taste of the people wholly responsible for the plight of the artists. Anita Desai behoves that artist should never make any compromise with the standard of his art first for the sake of money. "Pineapple Cake" is another short story by Anita Desai, is replete with a pathetic touch in the end. It is based on child
psychology which is usually highly sensitive and delicate. Victor is the child who is given assurances a number of times to get a pineapple cake by his mother named Mrs. Fernandez, who is wordily wise lady and whose deeds do not tally with her promises. “Private Tuition” deals with the child psychology. Mrs. Bose is ill cultured and does not possess sophisticated manners. Mr. Bose is scared of her ill manners as much as he is bored of his students. She makes a lot of noise in the kitchen when her husband is busy teaching his pupils.

“Pigeons at Daybreak” is a psychological story dealing with the imagined problems of an asthmatic patient like Amul Bose. Pigeon’s figures in the story are emblem of peace and liberation. At the time of day break the pigeons like other birds flutter in the air feeling free, liberated and happy. Amul usually sleeps at daybreak getting a temporary respite from the night’s suffocating air and physical groaning. Mrs. Desai has a marvellous mastery over language and style. Her language is highly sensitive, responsive sensuous, but nervous. Her style is fit for all modes of thought and tension, whether she describes the morose Raghu or pessimistic Victor, or the derelict Harish her language always catches the right words phrases and expressions. As in her novels the subtle nuances and shades have nicely been presented, so in her short stories the thought the modes and the tensions have been excellently narrated with the force and deftness of a big creative writer.
Her range of vision is certainly limited, as most of her plots are sleek and airy dealing with the life of cities. The Hardyian touches of external details, the Meredithian effect of psychological growth the Dickensian force of external specifications are commonly and often even conspicuously absent in her short stories.

Diamond Dust a collection of nine short stories, exhibiting Anita Desai’s creative talent. One of the striking features of her writing happens to be her typically feminine point of view, which is expressed through her microscopic observation of life in a very subtle and lyrical language, whether the setting is Indian, Canadian or British. She has a remarkable power of evoking the atmosphere in a photographic but poetic way. She selects a single event or thematic unit and explores its intricacies and highlights its significance in a very subtle manner. Her stories therefore add to the beauty and richness of the genre of Indian short story.

In the first story entitled “Royalty” the authoress picturizes the contrast between east and west, poetic and prosaic life and nostalgic attachment to one’s past. The protagonist, Raja has returned to India from California where he teaches Sanskrit and composes poetry. Sarla who is practical woman fails to understand Raja’s poetic approach to life. Raja who believes in unity of being, laugh at the double standards of Ravi. Raja finds spiritual peace in his nostalgic engagement
with Indian. He visits the tomb of Nizamuddin and seems to be deeply moved by it. His visit to India enables him to have an intense poetic ecstasy and share it with others. Perhaps there is no greater royalty than the rich artistic experience one undergoes. Anita Desai thus explores the psyche of an artist by contrasting it with that of the ordinary one. Images like ‘a great shiver’, ‘a wind blowing’ ‘a shadowy house’ ‘a radiant serpent’, some threat of danger’ serves as a clue for the negativity that clouds the family warmth. Abstract emotions like “Ravi sat uncomfortably in the darkened drawing room”, his lips thin and tight” with an expression of “helplessness.”

In “Winterscape” the theme of cultural contrast is intersected by that of generation gap and time gap. The Hindu collectivism is contrasted with the western individualism and selfishness. Asha nourishes Anu’s child very affectionately and experiences the joy of surrogate motherhood. When the two mothers go to Canada to stay for a few days he finds that he has forgotten the past because of the long interval of time as well as his long stay in a foreign land. His growth of personality also adds up to the lack of communicating with his two mothers. Likewise the mothers also feel a sense of alienation. Although Rakesh and Berth try their best to take care of them by buying new clothes for them and taking them out the two mothers begin to feel bored with Canadian a life and watch the Canadian winter with curiously. They fall ill because of cold weather. The winter is not only real but grows
metaphorical for them. There is no real communication between the two mothers and their son. Anita Desai has shown the contrast between an Indian mother and a Canadian mother in a very subtle fashion. In terms of E.M. Forster, Asha and Anu are flat characters who does not grow through the entire length of the story. The life of these two women move around Rakesh who is more a described character than a delineated one.

The title story "Diamond Dust" depicts the theme of unusually intimate relationship between man and animal, Mrs. Das the protagonist and his pet dog called Diamond the dog is a terror to the neighbors. Anita Desai seems to teach the lesson that all love whether of man or woman, bird or beast requires some kind of sacrifices. Here the narrative images portray not only the human drama externally, with the passage of time as the action evolves and the story grows.

In "Underground" Jack Higgins and his wife Meg go in a car in search of a hotel on a hot sandy beach. The story is episodic and the motif is not sufficiently clear, although it contains very fine description of the coastal atmosphere. Man-woman relationship is the core idea and here once again Anita Desai shows what goes to make happy conjugal relation and what makes life going even when the two love partners are not at each other's side. The theme is given a spiritual implication. For at the middle of the story the lady dies and the husband with deep and empty sentiments recalls how their togetherness made solid earth
for each other. The story has a psychological point of view and out of which emerges the time-tested truth that love is immortal and couples can never be separated as well as nothing can thwart the impulse of love. Here Anita Desai appears in her inimitable style and the flow of the story holds us like Coleridge’s Wedding Guest.

"The Man Who Saw Himself Drowned" is a psychological fantasy. It shows the death of the protagonist’s double by drowning in the river. He protagonist is nameless. The story has the quality of fable and is conspicuous for its psychological significance. Here the problem of existentialism is once again delineated as it was done earlier in novels like Baumgartner’s Bomby and Journey to Ithaca. Mrinalinín Solanki writes:

"Frustration, tension loss of identity alienation dissonance and despair are the integral parts of the essential human condition. Man is perhaps the only living being who does not feel at home in nature, because he feels evicted from paradise. For man his own existence is an enigma that he has to solve and from which he cannot escape. It is more so in the modern context as the most poignant problem of modern life is man’s tragic realization that life has lost significance... this situation has accentuated a world
wide phenomenon called existential vacuum, “an inner emptiness a sense of total and ultimate meaningless of ... life.”

(Mrinalini Solanki, Anita Desai’s Fiction Patterns of Survival Strategies, 5)

“The Artist’s Life” shows that Desai’s characters stand outside the traditional concept ‘character’ is revealed in ‘action’. She is, like Henry James who is more interested in portraying emotions, feelings and thoughts of a character to show that action is only imparted in relation to reaction in the mind. The battle of living is not always set against society or traditions but at times against one’s own conception of self. Miss Polly was the protagonist were not suited to her temperament. She dreamt to be an artist but artistic ways are mere fades to her. Thus the Artist’s life explores the aesthetics of proper living.

In “Tepoztlan Tomorrow” Anita Desai highlights the generation gap between the old and the young. One’s nostalgic attachment to one’s native city and the progressive deterioration of the city. Leuiss son of Teresa who is the protagonist of this story goes to Tepoztlan and meets Dona Celia. While having his dinner, he inadvertently refers to Pedro and Spoils Dona Celia’s mood. The story thus shows a picture of decadence of the city in various ways. Here Desai in a post moderate fashion does not aspire to tell the truth, but is
content to do her job of foregrounding the basic differences of outlooks to make a ponder over the question; how to come to terms with such a complex thing as rapid industrialization and perceptible in the world of visibility.

"Five Hours to Simla or Faisla" is one of the successful stories in this collection because of the clarity of motif in it. It is a humorous story about the adamant attitude of a Sardarji causing a good deal of tension to the travelers on the way to Simla. Anita Desai also portrays the psychological use of violence within a social fold. The attitude of the Sardarji appears congruent which Erich observes:

"Man seeks for drama and excitement when he cannot get satisfaction on a high level, he creates for himself the drama of destruction."

(The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, 30)

"The Rooftop Dwellers" deals with the problems of a working single woman in Delhi. Moyna cannot afford to hire an expensive house or apartment. Besides space is a big problem in the over crowded Capital City. Though simple the story throws light on the contemporary Indian society by highlighting the problems of an unmarried working women. An educated woman in India has to face many odds in her adventure of preserving her identity. Anita Desai's depiction of women's problems has a ring of authenticity and sympathy. The Rooftop Dwellers is about the make-believe world of the adults who live
in a world of present dreams for away from the charmless realities.

On the whole the stories in Diamond Dust are written from an omniscient point of view. Out of the nine stories five are set in Canada and England and four in India. They are conspicuous for their remarkable and microscopic description, evocation of relevant mood and atmosphere and insight into the subtle working of the human mind. As the Blurb says “in this brilliant sad compassionate and charming stories, Anita Desai shows ordinary lives in a disconcerting world, where hopes and dreams clash with disappointment and the human spirit shines strongly from India to Canada and England.”

Technically, a story tries to set up and maintain an illusion of life by recording a sequence of facts. This is achieved by the dramatic treatment of themes and by the pictorial clarity of the scene and action, which produces a powerful dramatic appeal than by presenting a logical sequence of events. This method is perhaps most suited to present and project the character’s state of mind without any authorial interference. Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Desai and Shobha De have employed first person narration, the third person narration and flash back and omniscient narrator to gained success in bringing language under perfect control to suit the tone and theme.
Works Cited


