Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION
A short story is a short narrative, usually fictitious, almost always in prose, which creates a mood, illuminates a character or two, and develops a single series of events. It is as old as the history of literature. But it has been changing according to the times. In the twentieth century it is characterized by brevity, texture freedom from excrescence, and a unity of effect. As Edger Allen Poe says, “A ‘tale’ is capable of being perused at one sitting.”¹ According to Poe, a short story is to be pursued in one sitting.

Brander Mathews asserts, “The short story was a distinct genre, a separate kind, a genus by itself.”² He further says that the short story, “Deals with a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation.”³

With regards to the tenets of the short story the theme, character, plot, situation, language etc are important. The story must have a theme, which is congruent with its moral. It is the underlying thought that pervades a short story, which makes it something more than a mere narration of events. The theme will have a vital significance for it is capable of producing in the reader an emotional uplift and an intellectual satisfaction.

With regards to characterization it is as important as the theme. The author gives a brief description of the character in the beginning of the story itself. He gives him a name and gives a brief physical description but it should not be built by what the author says about him. The character should reveal his/her individual traits by what he does, how he thinks, the way he talks, the gestures he makes, the philosophy he expresses etc. The character description is not too lengthy and it is often woven into the story as the story moves forward. The character
thinks, the way he talks, the gestures he makes, the philosophy he expresses etc. The character description is not too lengthy and it is often woven into the story as the story moves forward. The character should also be visualized according to the theme and situation of the story. If the writer wants to write about a New England farmer he should paint a word picture in accordance with the general description of the character somewhat differently from other persons of the same class.

In some stories situation plays a more important role than the character. These stories are called atmosphere dominant stories where the situation or an event dominates the whole story than a character. Eudora Welty rightly observes of the atmosphere in a story. Thus, “We are bearing in mind that the atmosphere in a story may be its chief glory- and for another thing, that it may be giving us an impression altogether contrary to what lies under it.”

Narratology also plays an important role in the short story. The short story writer puts forward his/her theme in the story in three ways, in first person, third person, or in an omniscient way. The first person narration in other words is called authorial narration, which creates a close rapport with the reader. The storyteller strikes a direct contact with the reader, for instance, in Updike’s “Wife-Wooing” the story is narrated in first person and present tense, it greatly enhances the reader’s sense of immediacy. The reader identifies closely with the narrator, who is telling and seeing it all- inevitably in a light favorable to himself.

In the third person narration the contact with the reader may be less but the scope for understanding the situation is wider. Sometimes it also creates a tension between what the characters do not know completely, between the external action and the internal reactions,
between the grossness of gesture and the refinement of thought, between what really is and what the character thinks. About the third person narration as is seen in his short story “The Beast in the Jungle”, Henry James felt, “that the most effective point of view for a story was to submerge the storyteller into a character he called the “central intelligence”.5

Dialogue also plays an important role in the short story; every short story has a certain percentage of dialogue, which depends entirely on the writer. As Abrams rightly observes, in a character dominant story, “Nothing more happens than an encounter and a conversation between two people.”6 In Hemingway’s, “A Clear Well Lighted Plays” a dialogue between two waiters discloses the story of an old man, who is always in a drunken mood. Dialogue used in the short story is qualitative rather than quantitative. The character always speaks about something that is relevant to the story’s problem and not about some distant incident that is irrelevant to the subject. Dialogue is always relevant to the character and to the situation. Thus all these tenets of the short story are to be developed well in order to create a good short story.

In the distant past, generations were bound together by oral narrations in varying spacio-temporal locations. The roots of the modern storyteller lie in the century’s old, unwritten part of history, whether he revisits it or creates it. A storyteller thus has always been finding a solace in his/her society regardless of time whether the story is an account of events, a version of the past, a narration of some supernatural events, a description of an experience, a riddle, or an anecdote. The tale of the present and of the mysterious past has, at all times, enamored the listener as the prime source of entertainment and knowledge. Stories differ if one moves from one place to another, the logic and the
manner of the telling also changes as we move from one country to the other, but the story in general aims to fulfill the same basic social and individual needs.

When we talk about the history and practitioners of short story in the West, brief narratives such as, Old Testament stories, the stories of Joseph, Samson, and Absalom are to be remembered, which reveal a stylistic economy as well as a psychological interest, and so forth. They are not pure fiction as they purport to be historically veracious and to justify the ways of God to men. The stories of Susannah and the elders or Bel and the Dragon, in which Daniel plays the role of a detective, are just stories but they are not considered clear literary inventions. The stories of New Testament parables are also not considered pure fictions. Ancient Egyptian stories, which provided mere entertainment, and the Story of Sinuhe, which provided pleasure, or the Egyptian’s Shipwrecked Sailor are to be noted as early short stories. The stories like proto-novels of Pretronius, the Satyricon, first century A.D., Apuleius’s, Metamorphoses or the Golden Ass in second century A.D. are to be found in Ancient Greece and Rome, which are in verse. Later Aristides of Mitetus 100 B.C, collections of Milesian tales were made in Greece during the first two centuries B.C. and soon became popular in Latin translations. From Medieval times onwards several large, mobile tale clusters infiltrated from Eastern cultures into European literature by various routes like the stories of Panchatantra. It spread through Europe in the Middle Ages, which was translated by Thomas North into English in 1570. The Stories of Seven Sages, The Book of Sindibad, The Book of the Wiles of Woman, which appeared in moral prose form, and The Battle of Malden and Chaucer’s Miller, that appeared in verse, are based on the story of seven sages whose narrative powers prevent a wrongly condemned prince from being executed. Breton Lais.
popularized by the Norman writer Marie de France are introduced into English by works like Sir Launfal are also in verse form.

In southern Europe the work, which established prose, as an attractive option for the literary artist was Boccaccio’s Decameron, appeared in 1350, which influenced the Renaissance narrative. In France, Marguerite de Navarre’s Heptameron appeared in 1558, which exemplifies Boccaccio. The original short story in France was well established in 1829-30 with the magazine publications of dozen contes by Merimee, Balzac and Gautier, The pastoral stories of Flaubert’s Trois contes in 1877 and most structural naturalism of Maupassant stories appeared in 1880’s. Later O.Henry, Galsworthy appeared in France.

When we come to the East, particularly the Indian stories, which start with Indian Christian Life by Kamala Sathianandan. The ancient Indian tale took, broadly, two forms, the fable and the folk tale as exemplified in the tales of Panchatantra and Jataka tales. The fables and folk tales have influenced the modern Indian writers in English. The other stories similar to Panchatantra and Jataka tales are Kathasaristsagara based on Brihatkathao Gunadhya and Dasakumara Charita of Dandin are also the most well known Indian short stories. Apart from the ancient tales and fables, in many puranas like Bhagavata, Brahmananda Ramayana and Mahabharata also the form of a tale is found.

In the early 19th century with the introduction of Macaulay’s Scheme of modern education, Indian literature gained some popularity. The impact of English literature was found to be there to a considerable extent on Indian literature. By the turn of the century the Indian writers began to write short stories in English. The early short stories by different writers like Raja Rao’s “Kanakapala”, “Five Short Fables” by Mulk Raj Anand,
"Illuminations" by Manjeri Ishwaran, and "At the Portal" by R.K. Narayan are based on fable. Maupassant influenced the Indian short story to a great extent. The Indian short story writer in English looks to the Maupassant tradition. Maupassant's sense of realism and understanding of human situation in society through firm character delineation in terms of environment appealed to the Indian writer very much. But the National Movement had made the Indian writer to be aware of the unifying bonds of his country. The Indian writer in English longed to present to the West the true picture of India thorough general observations of men and women and the land. In the short stories of pre-independence era a sense of a strong feeling of patriotism prevailed. He does make fun of the pro-British elements in India, but at the same time he has no grouse against British. On the whole the Indian short story writer in English exposed his country's admirable features as well as the undesirable aspects with a tolerant sympathy rather than disillusioned heart.

Tagore's stories "Cabuliwalah", "Subha", "Master Mahai", and "The Post Master", and "The Castaway", are written only to symbolize the downtrodden. Before Independence the stories depicted the evils of the society. A. Madhavaiah's Kushika stories deal with marriage reforms and allied matters, stories by S.K. Chettur and G.K. Chuttur deal with eerie, awesome, and supernatural elements. Mohamed Habib's "Desecrated Bones" deals with the theme of horror. A.B.P. Ayer's "Sense in Sex and Other Stories" deal with the problems faced by Indian Women. "Children of Kaveri" and "Creatures" by Sharka Ram illustrate spiritual crisis in human lives. K.S. Venkataramani's "Itadharan and Other Stories" illustrate the various facets of the individual mind in its response to the social conditions. Later Manjeri.S Isvaran, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao appeared on the scene. All these writers have
focused on contemporary Indian events. Among the above Raja Rao depicts the Indian
scene and setting in his short stories but not as vociferously as Anand does. He depicts
the darker side of our inherited customs and beliefs with a sense of philosophical
resignation.

Raja Rao was born in 1908 in Hassan, in the state of Karnataka in South India in an
orthodox and well known Brahmin family. He was born at the precise moment when his
father was receiving Maharaja Krishna Raja Waderyar of Mysore at their house. So the
child was called Raja instead of Ramakrishna. This influenced his writings also as he
refers to it in many of his short stories like “Raja” “The Prince” etc. His forefathers were
vedanties and advisors to the kings for generations. This had a great impact on his
writings. He was also greatly influenced by his grand father who taught him to love
Sanskrit language and kindled his interest in Indian Philosophy. In his preface to The
Policeman and the Rose and Other Stories he says,

When I was a boy, four or five years of age my grandfather convinced Vedatin (from a family that can boast of having been Vedanta’s at least since
the thirteenth century, and again brahmin advisers to kings, first in Rajaputna,
another thousand years earlier, and yet again Brahmins to other kings, may be
the Greco-Indian ones in Gandhara, earlier yet- at least such our mythical
genealogy tells us) – and my grandfather taught me Amara, that wonderful
thesaurus which, like a grave and good brahmin boy, I had to learn by heart,
and thus never have to ask who the Two-headed one is, of course he is
Ganesha, or Kartikeya, his brother, who of course is Commander-in-chief of
all the armies ,etc, 7

This training from his grandfather had a great effect on his writings. The all-
pervasive philosophical, religious references in his works exemplify this. Raja Rao's
father was a teacher and scholar in Nizam’s schools. So he went to Hyderabad and entered the Madarssa-Aliya school, which was meant for Muslim noble families. At school he was greatly influenced by his headmaster Durand, who taught him philosophy, Prisoner of Zenda, and later Aristotle’s works. He was also introduced to Sufism by him. Every year Raja Rao spent some time in Malnad Hills where he enjoyed the company of priestly-Brahmins. This contact with the Brahmins developed a sense for philosophy and interest in classical literature. This also provided him with the capital material for his works.

After the completion of his primary education in Hyderabad he left for Aligarh for higher studies. He joined B.A with History and English Literature as optionals. Luckily an Englishman by name Dickinson taught him “Avignan, Michelangelo”. Jack Hill, his French professor, taught him French and introduced him to Valery and Gide. In the mean while he received letter from Sir Patric Zedus who invited him to join at an international college at Montpellier at France. Then the Government of, Hyderabad awarded a scholarship, “ Asiatic Society Scholarship” and Mr. Brunet, who taught him Aristotle provided with him the required money. So he left for “College-des-Ecossaise” Montpellier in France. There he studies these for five years. Later he perused research at Sorbonne under the guidance of Cazsamian on the Indian Influence on Irish Literature. But unfortunately he couldn’t complete his Ph.D. It was there he started writing stories in Kannada and French languages. In 1932 he was appointed to the editorial board of Mercure-de-France (Paris) a position held until 1937. He married a French woman, Camille Mouly, a professor of French, who translated The Bhagavat Getha and Aurobindo’s Commentaries on Indian epics into French. Soon after his marriage, he started writing in French, English, and Kannada. But he witnessed the most recent literary
trends in France, especially the literary innovations of symbolists like Valery and Gide. This in a way influenced his works markedly.

He finally left France in 1939 just before the outbreak of World War II. At that time he was drawn towards India. He was passionately concerned with India. After his arrival to India he first met Sri Aurobindo and had a dialogue with him on various matters about India. He even visited Benaras, which found place in his writings particularly in his short stories. Later he went to Ramana Maharshi Ashram in Tiruvannamali, Madras. His contact with Ramana Maharshi inspired him to touch upon Indian philosophy and religion in his short stories and novels. After a short stay in the Ashram he went to Pandit Taranath at his Premayatana Ashram in Mysore. Mr. M.K. Naik feels that, “Pandit Taranath had a lasting influence on Raja Rao and his aesthetic theories suggest that the Master in the stories “Narsiga” and “The Cow of Barricades”, is modeled on him.”

In 1942 he met Mahatma Gandhi in his Ashram, at Sevagram. He was very much attracted by his philosophy of Karma yoga of Bhagavat Gita. This type of thinking in Gandhi appealed to him and inspired him to participate actively in the freedom struggle. M.K. Naik comments on what Raja Rao believed, “Besides having faith in Vedic and Upanishad values, and his idea of good and evil as the resultant of moral outlook on life, are clearly the evidence of Gandhian influence on Raja Rao.”  

Rao’s quest for fulfillment was not completed until he met Sri Krishna Menon (Atmananda Guru) in 1943 at Tiruvallaouram in Travancore. The novel, The Serpent and the Rope ends with the protagonist’s search for his Guru at Trivandrum. There is also a
strong autobiographical element in this novel, which describes the failure of his marriage with Camelley in 1949. After his stay in the Ashram he became an active member of a cultural organization of Sri Avidyanantha at Vanaparti in South India. He also became a member of Chetna cultural centre. For him literature basically is a means to achieve spiritual discipline and self-realization.

Raja Rao was influenced by many French writers, like Andre Gide, Malraux, Romain Rolland, and Heidegger. Andre Gide’s influence brought home to him the ‘precise sense of the play of ethics.’ He was also greatly influenced by Andre Gide’s ‘metaphysical activity’, which reflected in some of the short stories like The Cow of Barricades and Other Stories. In his own words, “In my mature years two authors, both French, have influenced me Paul Valery and Andre Gide...Andre Gide brought alongside Valery, a great humanity and a more precise sense of the play on poetical sensibility.”10 Apart from the French writers, Raja Rao was also influenced by writers like Shakespeare, Russian Dostoevsky, Kafka, and Ignacio Silone. He was very much attracted towards the modern American youth for they were at once direct and profound. As he says, “The American is abstract. He is interested in the essentials of life. .... They are interested in the joy of existence. Now they have only to learn the art of life.”11 Essentials of Life, quality of life, art of Life, joy of existence are the things which interested Raja Rao the most.

Raja Rao started writing in his native language Kannada during 1931-32. As he confesses, “I started writing in Kannada. I wrote a novel in Kannada and then started writing in English again. Then my Macaulay English was left behind. I started translating my Kannada texts and began to find the richness of the English language”. 11 Actually his literary career started with the publication of a short story, “Akkayya” in English
while he was in France. More stories appeared in French and English Journals. His wife was his first literary critic and so he dedicated his first collection of short stories The Cow of Barricades and Other Stories.

Rao’s first novel Kanthapura appeared in 1938. It is about how Gandhi struggled for Independence from the British. A Major part of the novel was written while he was in a thirteenth century French Castle in the Alps. The novel did not win much popularity for him. Raja Rao’s second work of art The Cow of Barricades and Other Stories was published in 1947. His second novel The Serpent and the Rope was published in 1960. It is autobiographical in tone. His next novel The Cat and Shakespeare appeared in 1965, Comrade Kirilov was published in 1976 but Raja Rao’s second volume of short stories The Policeman and the Rose and Other Stories was published in 1978. What is remarkable about these stories is that Rao makes a generous use of metaphor drawn from European register and places them in his own Indian tradition to exemplify the worldview. His writings thus acquire a universal authenticity. Rao, s next novel The Chestmaster and His Moves was published in 1988. His metaphysical bias is much more apparent in this novel for which he enlarges the dimensions of his novel by appropriating the domain of metaphysics. The narrative derives from the indigenous katha tradition in Sanskrit literature. He uses the metaphor of the game of chess to animate philosophical ideas. On Ganga Ghat published in 1989 is about Benaras. While first volume of Raja Rao’s short stories The Cow of Barricades and Other Stories appeared in 1947. The second volume, The Policeman and the Rose and Other Stories appeared in 1978. The second contains a six page ‘preface’ by Raja Rao, which
throws light on his motives for writing short stories. Raja Rao is better known in India and abroad for his novels than for his short stories. He says,

I write because I cannot but otherwise. I would not write for anybody. You may say: why do you publish? Because I want others to enjoy what I enjoy. It is very simple. I see a beautiful rose. I want others to come and see it. That is all.

C.V. Venugopal comments on the stories that, “Rao’s short stories however are not merely an expression of an inner joy, they are that and something more mundane too, a desire to satirize, a desirer to reform the social scene all around” 14 M.K. Naik says “The form of the short stories is of popular folk tale and epic legend, with all the simplicity and credulity, its myth-making power and the strong moralistic sub-stratum on which it is, in its popular wisdom, often grounded.” 1 Though the short stories of Raja Rao are attempts at revealing the social evils or at preaching Gandhian idea of non-violence, they are folk tales first, forming an integral part of Indian tradition, interpreting the joys and sorrows of peasant people through an artless narration. In these stories he deals with the social problems faced by a low-caste woman like Javni, a Brahmin widow Akkayya, and an unfortunate wife like Rati. Vignettes of Indian Freedom struggle are found in “Narsiga” and “The Cow of Barricades” while “The True Story of Kanakapala, protector of Gold”, is a typical Indian folk-tale with a well-etched village grandmother as the narrator. The metaphysical dimensions of India, figure in the later stories such as “Nimka” “India-a-Fable”. “The Policeman and the Rose” is a convoluted allegorical tale, yet it holds out attention because of the imaginative vigour of the narrative. It is not just content but the variety of techniques, which makes his short stories memorable.
The characters that Raja Rao introduces in these stories are predominantly from rural India. They are very simple and sane. They are not psychologically complex and moved by the primary emotions. Their actions are also fully predictable. They have a feeling soul, they share our joys and sorrows with us. They are all simple, ignorant, and credulous. Their lives are happy or unhappy as led by the circumstances, but have incredible faith in divinity as Akkayya, Javni.

The narrative technique, which he adopts, is the omniscient method of narration. In this the characters are not merely the characters. He fuses description and dialogue to disclose the inner feeling of the characters as though a wild plant begins to emerge from the soil, slowly but surely attaining its full stature and enthralling with its colourful flowers. The characters also fascinate us through this authorial narration. Most of the stories are written in this method. He also uses the modern technique like the Stream of consciousness technique in one of his short stories, “In Khandesh.”

Raja Rao has achieved a remarkable perfection in using English idiom to suit the Indian setting in his stories. He has evolved with great skill a language flexible enough not only to express the nuances of Indian life and temperament but powerful enough to evoke a vivid picture of Indian scene. The Indian abusive expressions used by Raja Rao give to smooth English renderings without sounding strange or unnatural, great care has been taken to make the words suit the characters. The mistress, who loved Javni, could only use abuses like monkey and donkey’s widow against her. Similarly Akkayya, living her last wretched days, is unable to forebear using the bitterest and most offensive words against young Naga. Another remarkable feature of the language is comparisons. An Indian, while using his native language, tends to find comparisons from current life or his
cultural heritage. Raja Rao does the same although he uses the English language. In doing so, he has again been very much careful not to sound exotic or peculiar, but be manifestly Indian. Similarly his use of metaphors, imagery, aphoristic statements are particularly Indian taken from Indian life and Indian lore. These have been used so naturally that they do not seem to be translations or adaptations.

Anita Desai was born in Mussouri, a hill station, North of Delhi, to D.N. Muzumdar, a Bengali businessman and Toni Nime of German origin, in 1937. She was educated in Delhi at Queen Mary's Higher Secondary School and Miranda House. When she was a child, German was used for conversation by her parents, her sisters, and brother at home. But studies in Missionary schools had a great influence on her career as a writer. It made her select English as the medium of expression for her stories rather than Bengali or German. Though she knew both the languages very well she never tried to writer in both the languages.

When she was nine years old she first read Wuthering Heights by Emile Bronte, a tale of exceptional emotional and imaginative force. It had a great impact on her. In an interview with Atma Ram she says,

*I was nine years old when I first read Wuthering Heights, and although obviously I could not have understood half of it, it struck me with the force of a gale and I still vibrate to it. Ever since, literature seemed to me, more interesting, more significant and overwhelming, than the real world.*  

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Her parents belonging to two different nations and cultures had a great impact on her though she never wants to disclose it anywhere. In an interview to the students of Baruch College, she says,

The main reason for the parental absence is to protect my parent's private lives. I felt that I might inadvertently give away some of my parent's private aspects when I was writing. So in order to prevent them, I decided to make the parents conveniently absent and aloof. The reasons were subconscious too.

At the tender age of seven she started writing small stories, poems and letters for children's magazines. While writing short stories she used to illustrate them diligently and sewed them into covers so as to make them look like real books. While she was at college she had a few short stories published in the college magazine. She wrote quite a bit for the *Writer's Workshop* Journal and an English magazine called *Envoy* till her first novel was published in the year 1965.

After her primary and secondary education at Queen's, she did her B.A with English Literature in the 1957 from Miranda College, Delhi University. The innumerable collections of books kept in her house also influenced her to write. She used to read a lot. She and her two sisters always visited libraries and bookshops and bought so many books. She fondly accepts that it was simply her love of books and imagining images within words that inspired her to write. While she was in the university, she was very much influenced by the British and German writers like D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Wolf, James Joyce, and Marcel Proust etc. In an interview with Megada Costa, about the influences of other writers, she says,
Different writers at different times. As a young woman, when I was very seriously writing, or trying to write, anyway it was British literature like Jane Austin, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, and E.M. Forster. They were my models in those days. Then for myself, I discovered and really revered the Russian writers, Chekhov, Dostoevsky above all. Recently it's more and more poetry that I use as a model. I'm more interested now in reading poetry than fiction. I think they use language in a way I would like to evaluate I would like to achieve that gravity, compassion, the intensity of their language.

When a questioned about the influences of the Indian writers on her, she says that,

It is difficult to say, because there are Indian writers in too many different languages, some of which I read and most of which I don't. I do know writers in twenty different languages. I can't say any of them has been an influence on my writings simply because I didn't read as many of them as I did of Western literature. But of Indian writers there are certainly many I admire very much.

She married Ashwin Desai in 1957 from Miranda College, Delhi University. Though she was married at the age of twenty and had three children, she never found it difficult to write. She had managed both her family duties as a mother and also her thirst to write. Ruth Prawar Jhabvala as a person, as a neighbour encouraged her very much though she did not help her in any material sense. When she took writing as a serious profession she was further influenced by Kawabata and more by modern poetry particularly that of Rimbaud, Hopkins, and Lawrence. That is why there are so many poetic sentences in her writings and even poems. Of all these writers she was very much influenced by Jane Austin. In an interview with Ramesh K.Srivastav she says,
When I first read Austin, I was left cold*, much later and later when she found more happiness in her writings she again reaffirms the idea that, 'I still left cold'. There is something about her that is totally alien to my own writing and which strikes no sympathetic chord in me. Is it that she is so entirely social, or entirely the opposite of solitary? 20

Anita Desai has started writing at the age of seven to the school magazines and college magazines. They have appeared from time to time in the leading Indian magazines. Her first short story “Circus cat, Alley Cat” appeared in 1957 in Thought. The second story “How Gentle is the Mist” was published in The Illustrated Weekly in 1958, followed by “Tea with Maharani” in 1959 in Envoy. Subsequently her publications appeared in the same or different periodicals. “Grandmother” was published in 1960 in Writers Workshop Miscellany. The same year in Miscellany she published her short story “An Examination”. Her excellence as a short story writer was proved with the appearance of “Ghost House” in Quest. “Mr. Bose’s Private Bliss” appeared in Envoy (May-June) 1961. In the same year “To Sell a Picture” came out in Writers Workshop Miscellany. Among her other stories “Private Tuitions by Mr. Bose” 1970, in Indian Literature,” “Decent from Roof-top”, in The Illustrated Weekly of India in 1970,” Surface Textures” in Femina in 1974, “The Accompanist” in Quest are the well-received ones.

Desai’s collection of short stories, Games at Twilight was published in the year 1978. It consists of different short stories published in different magazines. Another volume of short stories, Diamond Dust was published in the year 2000. The two volumes of short stories, Games at Twilight and Diamond Dust highlight some of the subjects of her novels. Though the world of Anita Desai’s short stories is limited it is quite interesting when compared with her novels. The two volumes show a psychological exploration of the state of being.
Most of the stories in both the volumes deal with the themes about parents and children and about people in search of their selves within the context of the family. In Games at Twilight the stories are set up in India, where as in Diamond Dust the setting is outside India like Manitoba, Toronto, Cornwall, Amherst, Massachusetts, Mexico, and Delhi. In some of the short stories she also deals with the themes of alienation, loneliness, fear of death and violence, non-conformity, and withdrawal.

The range of characters in the stories is limited. The protagonists of Desai are generally educated and sophisticated. There are also some protagonists of ordinary lower class, uneducated, and villagers who represent the masses and have a close contact with the soil and a deeper faith in tradition juxtaposed with sensitive, alienated upper middle class characters. In an interview with Ramesh K. Srivastava, when he asked about the selections of characters and plots in short stories and novels, she says,

> Usually minor incidents and minor characters tend to be drawn from real life and the major ones from the imagination. Lack of experience may be a handicap but lack of sensitivity, thought, intelligence or memory would be far greater as I do restrict myself to writing about people and situations I know or can understand yes, this is the reason for my emphasis on ' inner action'.

In this context she mentions about a neighboring girl, who goes to Delhi, takes up a job, and learns how to live life independently. Her character is presented in the short story "Rooftop Dwellers". Usha Bande comments, “Anita Desai’s characters reveal her vision of life; they share her perception, and they set out in quest of meaning. Like their creator they love solitude and privacy.” In an interview with Dalmia Yashodara, she says about her selection of characters as,
I am interested in characters who are not average but have retreated or been driven into some extremity of despair and so turned against, or made a stand against, the general current. It is easy to flow with the current. It made no demands. It costs no effort. But those who cannot follow it, whose heart cries out 'the great no' who fight the current and struggle against it, they know what the demands are and what it costs to meet them.  

In the second volume of short stories, Diamond Dust, she deals with the characters that are not average but have retreated or been driven into some extremity of despair and so turned against the great current. More recently in an interview to Magda Costa, when she is asked about the subjects she chooses, she confesses that she has been vexed with the routine characters and plots and now wanted to widen her perception. As she says,

Specially in earlier work, I found myself addressing the same things over and over again: very much about the life of women, specially those women also are confined to home and family, also the solitude from which a person can suffer even if living within a big family, or surrounded by crowds. But after several years and several books I began to feel suffocated myself by the confinement of these subjects. I felt I was limiting the territory to such an extent that it created a kind of suffocation even for me. So I very deliberately opened the door, to widen the canvas, and started writing more about male characters and their lives, because I felt they had a wider experience of the world and I could address a greater variety of experiences.”

So we find male protagonists from different sections quite new to her world in the recent short stories of Diamond Dust.
She uses first person narration in most of her stories and in some she uses the mixed, a combination of the first and third person points of view. She also adopts the recent technique of the stream of consciousness, internal monologue narration in most of her short stories, particularly in the story “The Man Who Saw Himself drown”. She uses characteristic and situational irony in her stories. In many of the stories in Games at Twilight she uses the situational irony. The stories like “Surface Textures”, “Sales”, “Pineapple Cake”, she uses the destructive and devastating irony to project the instinctual desires in adults. In the story “Diamond Dust” she uses situational irony. Her use of imagery is flexible, a means of capturing the rhythm of Indian local life. “Private Tuitions by Mr. Bose” makes use of beautiful visual imagery to describe the domestic life of the protagonist, Mr. Bose. In the stories, “Surface Textures” “Pigeons at Daybreak”, “Winterscape” she uses pictorial imagery. In the story “Underground” she uses verbal imagery to describe the Caniwall.

About her use of English, Desai’s education in the missionaries influenced her and made her select English as a medium of expression, she always feels proud, because English to her is a rich, flexible, supple, adaptable, varied, and a vital language. She thinks that it is both the language of reason and instinct, sense and sensibility. It is capable of poetry and prose. More over she believes that she has so much of commitment to the English language because she thinks that English itself has created for her to depict her problem.

Bharati Mukherjee is an established voice of the Indian Diaspora in North America. She was born in 1940 in a wealthy traditional Hindu family in Calcutta. Her father was a chemist. She lived in a big family consisting of 40 to 50 relatives until she grew up. She
never appreciated the company of so many people as her mind was indigenous to solitude. So she made a physical space for her own and read and read. But there was absolutely no privacy in the house of hers as every room was crowded. She recollects, “In fact in the traditional Bengali family of my kind to want privacy was too selfish.” 25 This had a great impact on her to take refuge in reading to enjoy the solitude. She further says,

So in a sense, what I did was, in order to make privacy for myself, make a little emotional, physical space for myself, I had to read, I had to drop inside books as a way of escaping crowds. As a result I became a very bookish child; I read and read and read all day. 26

Thus born into an extraordinarily close-knit and intelligent family, she and her sisters were always given good academic opportunities as a result all the young ones in the family were educated well. Her fathers, though born in a traditional Hindu Bengali family believed in equality. So all the children at home were given equal education. Her mother on the other hand always liked her daughters to live in a different way. She did not like her daughters to be confined to the home and family as she had been. She is the driving force behind Mukherjee and her sisters’ professional success. Mukherjee fondly calls her the most modest heroic woman who achieved her goals in quiet and determined ways.’

As she wished, all her daughters fulfilled her wish. According to her, she knew as early as at the age of three that she wanted to be a writer. As a child her favorite pastime was to listen to Indian folk tales told by her grandmother. At a tender age she also read the Bengali translations of great writers like Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky. She used to read these books hiding them under a bed or behind chairs. So the crowded family indirectly inspired her to become a great writer. The Bengali translations of Russian writers had a great impact on her. In her own words,
The country being described in the books, they sometimes seemed more real to me than the real people around, me. So that there I was, visualizing and translating into upper middle class Bengali terms, the Russian families' that I was reading about. I knew from when I was very young, long before I was ten that I was going to be a writer. 27

Thus we find many references to Russian terms and people in her works.

In the year 1947 when she was eight years old, her father was given a job in England. So she went to England and lived there till 1951 and then in Switzerland for another year. About three and half years they had spent in Europe. In England in order to buy candies and to deal with her schoolmates she learnt to speak and think in English. So from childhood she was not only bi-cultural but also bi-lingual, as they spoke Bengali at home and English outside. In England she enjoyed perfect privacy and independence. In an interview to Natasha Rafi she says, ‘I discovered myself in new ways.’ Living apart from various relatives allowed her to concentrate on what was important to her. At the age of nine, while she was in England she wrote her first ‘novel’ about a child detective.

The family returned to Calcutta after three and a half years and Mukherjee was admitted into the best English school available at Loretto House, a missionary school run by the institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary with its headquarters in Galway. It was far more British than any other school she had gone to in England or in India. She says,

The Hindu girls did best in scriptures than the Christian girls... It also gave me a kind of grounding in Western thought, the Greek and Roman plus Christian references that are the classical and mythological references and scriptural references that best work their way so well into English literature.28
So education in Christian schools gave her a good grounding in English language and literature and also enabled her to write and read in English language.

But unfortunately the British schools and later the very English post colonial school in India forced her to devalue Indian and Bengali literature, language, and way of thinking. The upper class Indian children in British schools looked down the Indian epics, the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the element of surrealism in these where the animals can become Gods, and monsters and humans change forms, and the elastic time etc, were looked down upon. They were asked to develop the Western tradition of logic, satire, irony, and realism. So her school education had a great impact on her writings, as we find no surrealism, realism, or epic references in her earlier writings.

After completing her school education she studied B.A. honors from the University of Calcutta in the year 1959. After her graduation the family moved to Baroda where she did her Masters Degree in English and Ancient Indian Culture in 1961 at the Baroda University. Up to the completion of her master’s degree she was fairly obsessed with the idea of herself being a budding creative writer. After her master’s degree she went to Iowa to attend the prestigious Writer’s Workshop in the year 1961. Her father having traveled all over Europe and never had visited America decided to send her to the University of Iowa to continue her pursuits as a writer. It was by sheer luck and accident that she landed in the Iowa University.

When she landed in Iowa, she found herself in a society in which almost everyone was Christian, white, and moderately well off. In the women’s dormitory she lived with six international graduate students. The University classroom was the first experience of co-
education. She also did her Ph.D in English and Comparative Literature in 1968. Later she moved to Canada with her husband, and after three years she became a naturalized citizen. In her words,

That act cut me off forever from the rules and ways of upper-middle class life in Bengal, and hurled me into new world life of scary improvisations and heady explorations... The five-minute ceremony in the lawyer's office suddenly changed me into a transient with conflicting loyalties to two very different cultures. 29

She became one of the youngest tenured women faculty members at McGill University in Canada. It was during this period that she began to write novels and gain international repute. But she did not like the life of the dark-skinned non-European immigrants there. She was thrown out of the hotel lobbies when not accompanied by her husband. Her first novel The Tiger's Daughter and the second one, Wife did not receive much attention by the Canadians.

I've been writing and publishing since 1971 but it's taken me an awfully long time to get any attention, largely because I was for a while, an Indian citizen living in Canada as a landed immigrant and writing about people outside of India. Then I became a Canadian citizen but writing, let us say, about immigrants in New York. They didn't know how to classify me, whether by my passport or by my material, which was about immigrants at a time when there was no such category as "immigrant fiction" that wasn't about Europeans coming to North America during the 19th century. 30

The Canadians were not ready to receive the immigrant literature; more over they were very particular about their racial purity. While she was in Canada, though she married a Canadian, due to the colour of her skin, she was humiliated. Fed up with Canada
Mukherjee’s family moved to the United States in 1980. She had taken permanent citizenship in the U.S. She worked as a tutor of creative writing at Columbia University, New York city and Queen’s college. At present she is a professor of English at the University of California, in Berkeley.

Mukherjee’s literary career started when she was in Canada, with her first novel, The Tiger’s Daughter. We can classify her literary career into three phases. Her earlier works, such as The Tiger’s Daughter and parts of Days and Nights in Calcutta are her attempts to create an identity in her Indian heritage.

The second phase of her writing starts with works viz w.i.f.e and the short stories Darkness, an essay, “An Invisible Woman”, and “The Sorrow and the Terror”, a joint venture with her husband. These works originated in Mukherjee’s own experience of racism in Canada, where despite being a tenured professor she felt humiliated and on the edges of being a housebound, fearful, afraid, obsessive, and unforgiving queen of bitterness. In Wife Mukherjee writes about a woman named Dimple who has been suppressed by men and who attempts to be an ideal Bengali wife eventually murders her husband and commits suicide. The stories in Darkness further endeavor to tell similar stories of immigrants and women.

In the third phase, Mukherjee describes herself as an American and not the hyphenated Indian-American. She says,

I maintain that I am an American writer of India origin, not because I’m ashamed of my past, not because I’m betraying or distorting my past, but because my whole adult life has been lived here, and I write about the
people who are immigrants going through the process of making them here...\textsuperscript{31}

In a critical and creative career that has spanned over thirty years Mukherjee has been engaged in redefining the idea of Diaspora. As Gabriel Sharmani says,

Bharati Mukherjee has been engaged in redefining the idea of Diaspora as a process of gain, contrary to conventional perspectives that constitute immigration and displacement as a condition of terminal loss and dispossession involving the erasure of history and the dissolution of and original culture.\textsuperscript{32}

She rejects the idea of retaining the cultural memory to eliminate the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ because it is this mentality that is manifesting itself as increased violence between minorities, ethnic communities. She recommends to think of American culture and nationhood as a constantly re-forming, transforming ‘us’ into ‘we’. As she says,

In this age of Diasporas, one’s biological identity may not be one’s only identity. Erosions and accretions come with the act of emigration. The experience of cutting myself off from a biological homeland and settling in an adopted homeland that is not always welcoming to its dark-complexioned citizens has tested me as a person, and made me the writer I am today.\textsuperscript{33}

She continues writing about the immigrant experiences in most of the stories, which explore the meeting of East and West. “Jasmine” develops this idea of the mixing of the East and West with the story of a young Hindu woman who leaves India for the U.S after her husband’s murder only to be raped and eventually returned to the position of a
caregiver through a series of jobs. The unity between the First and the Third worlds is shown to be in the treatment of women as subordinate in both countries.

The two volumes of short stories, *Darkness* and *The Middleman and Other Stories*, received much attention by the critics. In the first volume of short stories, *Darkness*, she explores Canadian prejudice against South Asians. The racial intolerance she experienced in Canada compelled her to move back to the United States where she is now settled as a South Asian. The second volume depicts the stories of America. She wrote them as a true citizen of America. In an interview with Sybil Steinberg of *Publishers Weekly* she describes her feelings about America:

Mine is a clear-eyed but definite love of America. I’m aware of the brutalities, the violence here, but in the long run my characters are survivors... I feel there are people born to be Americans. By American I mean an intensity of spirit and a quality of desire. I feel American in a very fundamental way, whether Americans see me that way or not. 34

In most of the stories Mukherjee uses the American narrative modes in order to transport the Asian immigrants and make them transformative. She uses the authorial point of view to depict her immigrant themes. In the two volumes of stories she effects a deep understanding of and sympathy for the plight of her characters, which find themselves caught between their new countries and the ones they have left behind. They have all brought with them false ideas about what to expect from Canada and America. Though the characters in all her works are aware of the brutalities and violence that surround them and are often victimized by various forms of social oppression, she generally depicts them as the superiors. As Gabriel Sharmani says,
Mukherjee's characters share the experience of diaspora as they explore new ways of belonging and 'becoming' in America, they are America's new 'middlemen' who have to negotiate between two modes of knowledge and remake home out of the hurly-burly of the unsettled magma between two worlds. 

Mukherjee employs mordant and biting irony to depict the miserable life of the immigrants in Canada and America. She also uses situational irony to present the double-edged situation of the immigrants in America, one on the ethnic and the other on the personal moral level. In most of the stories in *Darkness* she uses situational irony to depict the life of skilled and unskilled Asian immigrants in Canada. In the second volume she uses mordant and self-provocative irony to present her American themes. All the stories depict the ironical struggle of the protagonists to prove themselves and fit into the alien nation successfully. She also uses the Canadian and American imagery and symbolism to depict her themes. She also uses India and America as metaphors to show the broken identities in the alien nations in many of her stories. In the story, “Angela” she compares the soldiers with leeches. In the story, 'A Lady from Lucknow” she visualizes the broken heart of Hussaina with rich verbal imagery. “A Father” presents her favourite Goddess ‘Kali’ as the image to present the immigrant psyche. The scarlet and saucy tongue of Kali warns the protagonist about the oncoming sin. In the story, “Courtly Vision” she uses her favourite imagery of Mugal miniature paintings. In the second volume of stories she uses pictorial imagery to present the themes of rebirth and refashioning of self. In the stories, “A Wife's Story”, "Jasmine”, "The Tenant” she uses the physical beauty of the protagonists to describe the struggle of Asian women to establish themselves in the alien nation. In the stories, “Loose Ends”, ”Orbiting”, and “Fathering” she uses the image of America as a place of flux, a metaphor that represents freedom from Indian history as fateful.
Bharati Mukherjee uses American English in her two volumes of short stories but before she wrote the short stories she wrote purely in British English. As she says in an interview, "Unlike writers such as Anita Desai and R.K.Narayan I do not write in Indian English about Indians living in India." 36

It is clear that all her themes are set in Canada and America. Even in the second volume of short stories she uses purely American English as all the situations and the characters in the stories are of America and American setting. Known for her playful language she rejects the concept of minimalism, which is designed to keep anyone out with too much story to tell. She gives much importance to emotions rather than language. She also uses American jargon in many of her stories. She also uses abusive words like 'shit', 'whale shit', 'pythons', and slang words like 'its awesome' and clichés like 'love flees but we're stuck with love's debris' etc in her American stories. In some stories she uses language as a metaphor.

Salman Rushdie, a prolific and well known representative of post colonial fiction was born in 1947 to well educated parents just two months before India became independent. As Feroza Jussawalla says,

Salman Rushdie has been classified as a postcolonial writer whose fiction depicts the hybrid nature of postcolonial in their migrations and movements, their merging and mixing. Rushdie has variously been called a "Third World Cosmopolitan" a "metropolitan intellectual," and "a hybrid" but most often a "postcolonial," because of his "birth" as a "Midnight's child"--a child born as India was gaining independence at midnight on 14
His father, Airs Ahmed Rushdie was a Cambridge educated businessman and his mother Negin Rushdie was also an educated woman and was a schoolteacher. Born into a wealthy and a liberal orthodox family he grew up in Bombay marked by a cosmopolitan and a metropolitan secularism. He and his three sisters were given good education against the customs of the Muslim tradition. When he was a child his father succumbed to dipsomania. So his mother admitted him in Bombay’s prominent John Cannon School run by missionaries. At school he was introduced to ‘Anglophone Indian Education System’ formulated by Lord Macaulay. In the school all the students were given instruction in English. This helped him to develop his writing skills since childhood. Since then he has been multilingual and multicultural. At home Urdu was spoken and at school, English. His childhood was spent in Bombay. According to Literary Encyclopedia.

It was in these two languages that Salman and his three sisters received their parents’ richest legacy to their children a fund of stories to fuel their imagination. A dichotomizing linguistic experience such as this one has, according to some other Anglophone Indian novelists, led to fissures in their identities as writers. In contrast, Rushdie, for whom The Kathasaristagar, The Mahabharata, The Ramayana, and The Arabian Nights are as much part of his intellectual baggage as works in the Western canon (Notably Shakespear, Swift, Sterne, Blake, Dickens), has been among the most outspoken champions of the idea of hybridity, particularly under diasporian conditions.38

Even his grandfather, his father’s father, who was a great poet, bore a deep impression on him. Rushdie says in an interview,
I can’t remember my father’s father, who died before I was born, but he was, by all accounts, one of my few literary antecedents, in that he was an essayist and a patron of young writers and so on — and he also made a fortune, which my father then spent most of his life losing. 39

Rushdie’s upbringing was a secular one, though his family was technically an Indian-Muslim family. His parents never thought of going to Pakistan at the time of partition and they felt more like Indians than Muslims. So they decided to move to Bombay instead of living in Old Delhi where his grandparents were living, just before nine months after his birth. He talked about the secularism the members of his family followed,

Two or three times a year, at the big Eid festivals: I would wake up to find new clothes at the foot of my bed, dress and go with my father to the great prayer Maidan outside the Friday Mosque in Bombay... The rest of the year religion took a back seat. 40

This type of secular thinking is clearly seen in his short stories and novels. When he was a boy he had a discussion with his mother’s father, who was a very religious man. Rushdie advised his grand father not to believe in God and so on. In his own words,

When I was more grown up- we would needle him by claiming not to believe in God and so on. .... So certainly, the atmosphere around him was that anything could be said, anything could be discussed, and that’s how we all grew up 41

So his granddad had developed in him the thoughts of secularism though he was a dogmatic person himself. Rushdie’s childhood was immersed in the attractions of popular cultures, Bombay’s film industry, American cinema, and comic books. On every birthday he received books by way of gifts. He was an unathletic, intellectual child, groomed for
the elite schools. After his school education at the Cathedral School Rushdie was sent to Rugby school in England at the age of thirteen. He experienced the taste of racial disharmony in England. As Timothy Breunan rightly comments, “The age of thirteen thus began an unhappy stretch of his life. Shunned by his schoolmates as much for his lack of athletic prowess, as for his ethnicity, he experienced both minor persecutions and racist abuse...” 42

He was considered an outsider, a ‘wog’ there. He was ill treated both by the students and teachers and often he was excluded from social activities. During this stay in England, he poured out all his thoughts into a short autobiography called The Terminal Report. This is the first experience of trading outlet for his thoughts and emotions, which changed his life entirely and made him consider writing as a serious profession. In his own words about Rugby,

Rugby was tough, Cambridge I had a very good time at, but coming to Rugby was really quite brutal. I was not quite 14 and taken to be made to feel like a foreigner, which, until that point, I had never thought of myself as. I did experience certain amount of racial discrimination- not from the staff, but from some of the other boys. And that was shocking and depressing. And so I remember my school days as not being particularly happy. 43

While he was studying in Rugby his parents had moved to Karachi. After his graduation he went to Pakistan in 1964. In Pakistan also he was an outsider. He became more independent, more forceful with the opinions and his English articulation had changed from its original Bombay accent to the more superior sounding English. With this superiority of British Colonial accent he felt that he was a displaced person even in Pakistan. In Pakistan he found an employment in Pakistan Television but after making
several unsuccessful attempts to introduce a more liberal brand of journalism into the media, he resigned it. Though he hated Rugby he decided to go back to England. He enrolled his name in King's college, Cambridge in 1964, as he had no further alternative than joining Cambridge because he realized that he could not stay in Pakistan any longer. He described this return in 1965 as 'one of the most disorienting movements in his life. After a few weeks of his arrival he realized that Cambridge was not like Rugby Sequel. He began to excel everyone studying History in the college and Literature on his own. He felt very happy and comfortable at Cambridge. In his own words,

I didn't feel any oppression I didn't feel any racism aimed towards me. I didn't feel excluded. And then, also I was at Cambridge at quite a good time to be young. I went there in 1965 and graduated in 1968 and you know, of all the years in the last 50 years to have been at University, those were probably the years. 44

Eager to become a writer, he had taken History. His favorite Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad, Faiz inspired him to take Islam Civilization. While doing his M.A. honors in London, his main interest was in writing. He had the ambition of becoming a writer even when he was a child. In his own words,

My parents tell me that when I was 10 years old, I would say that I wanted to be a writer. Now, obviously, at the age of 10, I didn't know what that meant. All it meant, I suspect, is that I liked being a reader and therefore wanted to be a part of that work which made those things that I liked to read. 45

Apart from short visits abroad he never left England and made his living as a freelance advertising copywriter for Ogilvy and Mather and Charles Baker. He published his Grimus a cross between Dante and Sufi poetry. The Midnight Children appeared in
1980. It received Britain's coveted Booker McConnell Prize in 1981. He dedicated it to his son, Zafar. When it was published he felt very happy and said, "After ten years of blunders, incompetence and commercial for cream cakes, hair colourants and the Daily Mirror, I began to live by pen".46

His third novel Shame appeared in 1983. It is a deep satirical tale about Pakistan's ruling circles. Later appeared his The Satanic Verses and a travel book, Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey. His fourth novel The Satanic Verses, though it was acclaimed more, there was a sign of acute danger in the publication of the book. The Orthodox Iranian leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa against Rushdie on 14th Feb 1988 a death sentence and a bounty of 11.5 millions on Rushdie's head, forcing him to go into hiding under the protection of the British government and police. The book won the Whitbread Novel Award in the year 1988, though it was burned in many countries. On 18th Feb 1989 he made a public statement of regret for the appeasement. On Feb 1990 he published a statement In Good Faith appealing to sincere Muslims against charges.

Rushdie published The Haroun and the Sea of Stories in 1990. It was written for children about an affable robot, genies, talking fish, dark villains and an Arabian princess in need of rescue. The Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism. It consists of the articles and essays written between 1981 to 91, during the Fatwa. In the year 1994 his collection of short stories East, West was published.

East, West divided into three parts of which each recapitulates Rushdie's own migration from East to West. The first part is set in India and Pakistan. The first story is about Mrs. Rahana, who wants to immigrate to London. The second one embodies the
cross-cultural theme of optimism in the face of futility for a Rickshaw puller. The third is also set in Kashmir about a relic, which causes havoc in the house of the protagonist.

The second set focuses on the three icons of Western culture, Hamlet, The Wizard of the Oz and Christopher Columbus. The first of this set is about Hamlet's Yorick retold by Rushdie, who marries Ophelia, the question of future morality. The second is scientific fiction. It is a comment on the future state of ethics and the place of life in such a world. Rushdie writes it as if it was a dream he had. In that extravagantly imaginative, "The Auction of the Ruby Slippers", it is clear that every one wants to go home, but in the commercially overheated west no body knows where the home is.

The final set of the three, blends East with West. The first story, "The Harmony of Spheres" is about a writer who has a relationship with a schizophrenic occultist and the roles played by their wives. The second, "Chekhov and Zulu" is a compelling story about the question of nationality and ancestry. One of the protagonists deals with this. The final story consists of characters of various ages experiencing Indian-British life in England. It is autobiographical in tone. It is a recapitulation of the childhood experiences of Rushdie. The final confession of Rushdie to choose the East or the West in his words "I...have ropes around my neck...pulling me this way and that. East and west... commanding ...choose.... I refuse to choose." 47 Thus the title of the book is very apt to the content of the book.

Rushdie follows two modes of narration, the first person and the authorial third person narration to present his themes. In some of the stories he follows the traditional Indian technique of oral story telling. As he says in an interview with M.L. Pandit,
I remember when I was at Baroda recently, a story-teller came to tell the Mahabharata story, and he drew a crowd of four lakhs of people, which shows what a great hold this form has, and I think it is important. As writers, we have to consider what kind of narration attracts the readers.48

Like Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan, the narrator of the story “Free Radio” is a schoolteacher, who describes each and every detail of the village to the readers. In the story “The Prophet’s Hair” he follows the historical tradition of story telling perfectly by blending mystery, magic, and morality in a more significant way. He also uses the dramatic monologue form in the story “Yorick”. He uses satirical irony in his stories. In most of his stories he uses situational and satirical irony to bring out the themes effectively. He also uses a very different imagery and symbolism from different myths and scriptures of religions and he interweaves them with different juxtapositions. The themes from Islam and Hinduism are interwoven with figures from English literature and English literary references, as in the story “The Prophet’s Hair”. In this story he takes the relic of Prophet Mohammad to explain how the relic of Mohammad ruins the life of a moneylender. He deals with the theme of crime and punishment with surrealism. In an interview with Vijaya Nagarajan he says about his idea of surrealism:

In the surrealist manifesto there’s a ... I don’t remember the exact quote... but Andre’Berton’s idea was that the world is full of marvels and that our habituation to it forms a kind of veil over our eyes and we can no longer see it as marvelous; we see it as familiar and customary. It was certainly a part of the surrealists’ idea: to scratch away the veil of habituation in order to show the marvels of the world as they actually were. One of the primary techniques for that was the idea of making
strange, to take the familiar and make it strange – and therefore, with any 
lack make it fresh. I guess this is my way of doing something like that. 49

In the story “At the Auction of Ruby Slippers” he uses magic realism as the slippers symbolize freedom to the liberals who want to go to their homes, but the fundamentalists want them only to burn, as they do not believe in the magic of the slippers. In the story “Christopher Columbus consummates his relationship with Queen Isabella” he uses surrealism to evoke a sadomasochistic flirtation between the queen and the explorer. His experimentation with language is one of his remarkable achievements. Most reviewers have waxed lyrical over his quality of English and commented that no Indian writer has had the courage to handle English language with such gaiety and joyousness like him. Like Raja Rao, his mastery of language it total and that he has decolonized English more effectively than the other writers. As he writes in his “Imaginary Homelands” about a world, which is repressively colonized and also engages with and celebrates a complex inner world he produces an English language world, which is not Anglo-centric. As he explains,

Those peoples who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly remaking it. Domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it – assisted by the English language’s enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers.50

His stories give many numbers of examples as to how marvelously he manipulates the English language. Consciously and unconsciously he has done experimented with the English language and succeeded eminently in his experiments and innovations. The diction he uses in each story is perfectly suited to the character’s voice which in turn is
well suited to the story being narrated as is seen in the character of the school teacher in the story, "Free Radio". He also succeeds in facing the two aspects of verisimilitude in language, the problem of conveying the flavour of the idiom and of making clear what is being spoken by the character at any given time as seen in the stories of "West". He also confesses in one of his interviews that the language one has to develop as a writer is developed with great care of many years in order to try to tell more and more truth.

Thus to conclude all the four writers taken for study are settled abroad and have their roots in India. They are all educated in India but started their literary careers in the West. All the writers have won recognition as writers in India only after their works have been published in the West. Though they are indignant of Indian readers they never forgot their homelands. While Raja Rao and Anita Desai have depicted the Indian themes and settings in their stories, Bharati Mukherjee and Salman Rushdie to some extent have deviated from the other two in depicting the Indian themes and settings in their works. Though they are away from their homelands for many years, their hegemonic cultural background has not lost hold on them.

Notes and references

3. Ibid, p.278.


12. Ibid. p.190


18. Anita Desai: Interviews by The Students in Professor Eva Chou’s Contemporary Asian Literature Course English 3980 in Sidney Harman Writer in Residence for spring 2003

19. Megda Costa, An Interview with Anita Desai in Barcelona, 30th Jan, 2001. This interview was originally published in Spanish in the Anagarine Lateral, March, 2001. p.3

20. Ibid. p.5


22. Ibid, p.211.


25. Megda Costa, p.5


27. Ibid, pp.34-35.


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34. Bharati Mukherjee, “American Dreamer”, p.3.


43. Peter Kadzis, p. 4

44. Ibid, p.4.

45. Ibid, p.4


50. Ibid. P.No.5