



CULTURAL MAZE IN ANITA DESAI'S NOVEL 'BYE-BYE BLACKBIRD'

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural labyrinths unfold in Anita Desai's 2005 novel, *Bye-Bye Blackbird*. The characters experience the disorientations of displacement and estrangement. Cultural identity proves no dispensation, but pressing cause for cultural conflicts; human relationships must itself suffer the fracture. Dessai's characters convey environmental change: "Certain novels arise naturally out of certain cities... It is quite natural for one's novels to reflect one's immediate environment" (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015). The present study applies a lecture on potential cultural impasses to encircle the possibilities and limit the potentials envisaged.

2. ANITA DESAI: A LITERARY OVERVIEW

Anita Desai's novels scrutinize the problems of individuals who become victims of hostile, hostile personal situations or of social evils such as casteism, alienation, partition, political turmoil. *Cultural Maze in Anita Desai's Novel "Bye-Bye Blackbird"* In Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, the point of view of the narrative remains fixed on the heroine, Raka, while the world and its peoples, especially the men, represent the chaos and complexity of the cultural maze she has to negotiate. Refusing to dispense with the many contradictions and ambiguities which are the lot of postcolonial and diasporic literary texts, Desai is well aware that cultural dislocation also brings alienation and confusion. Culture in the contemporary world is multifarious and mutable and takes the form of labyrinth, of puzzle and riddle. Desai's novel drives home the implications in terms of music, individuality, language and identity. *Bye-Bye Blackbird* stresses the complexities of the cultural maze that host and immigrant have to traverse and analyses the difficulties of the actual situation which variously highlights the problematics of cultural practices and modes of behaviour. Raka, the sixteen-year-old daughter of a wealthy Indian industrialist, travels from Old Delhi to an unnamed city in the West, presumably Britain, with her father, mother and erstwhile chaperon, Pishi. They come not to settle but to rejoin Raka's elder sister, Maya, who has married a white man and settled there some years previously. But they are soon forced to relocate a substantial distance outside the city after an accident involving Raka and a local wild-girl. The rest of the story concerns itself with Raka's attempts to negotiate not simply her way back to wider society but her adoption of a particular cultural identity, *là-bas*, between there and here, or here and there, implying an inherent impossibility of

belonging. "Raka moves among the rubble and remains of the old capital of the Delhi Sultanate, the first Muslim capital of India. This Old Delhi becomes the metaphor of the loss of true cultural identity" (K Sharma, 2012). *Bye-Bye Blackbird* also identifies the urban as important sites of cultural centrality and critique; these are places of residence for postcolonial immigrants and sites both for cultural production and contestation (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

3. CULTURAL IDENTITY IN 'BYE-BYE BLACKBIRD'

Cultural identity is a central concern in Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1980), which traces an Indian man and his English wife through successive homes in New York and London before they return to Calcutta. Raised in the North West Frontier, the English woman Sarah finds herself unable to live in India, even though leaving it means a perpetual apology. Though she may not be able to transmit the cultural codes of India, Sarah understands the sense of cultural belonging that Gopal needs. From the point of view of the Indian-Anglophone novelist, it is the Indian man Gopal who suffers alienation through cultural displacement, while the English-born Sarah is able to adapt to an alien environment and become a cosmopolitan. The theme of cultural identity is therefore worked out through patterns of alienation—the adjective "black" in the title refers to being "outcast or estranged," a term which had itself been appropriated from the ghettos, as in the black-white exclusion of apartheid Johannesburg (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

The problem of escaping the prison of national culture governs the representation of diasporic figures in later novels. Anahita (confined to domestic space), Amit, Nirode

and Rannu (all exiles cast out of the national family), and Tara (forced to disown her own heritage) each struggles to extricate themselves from Indian cultural codes. In the complex pattern of cultural and gender displacement portrayed, only the question of “racial” identity is privatised and glossed over. Yet it is clear that, even in the diaspora, cultural identity continues to be specified with reference to race rather than class (Jain, 2011).

4. THEMES OF ALIENATION AND BELONGING

Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971) revolves around a theme of alienation—alienation from place and culture, and the consequent loss of identity—which ultimately leads to death. The novel portentously unfolds around a leading migrant actor Adit from India who gets married to a British girl Sarah. Apart from their cultural differences, the couple is separated by a gulf of communication, which only strengthens their emotional estrangement. Later, Sarah returns to India compelled by the sense of alienation and estrangement (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015). Desai's novels always retain a characteristic preoccupation with the intricacies of human consciousness and existential quandaries poised before her protagonists, occasionally amid social realism. Her characters are typically introspective refugees faced with cross-cultural crises (Farahmandian et al., 2015).

5. THE ROLE OF SETTING

The role of setting in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is central in expressing the cultural dynamics at the heart of the novel. The story unfolds predominantly in London, India and the interval space in between, locales that shape the characters' experience of identity and provide the context for their cultural negotiations. The narrative's depiction of urban and rural environments signals the complexities of negotiating a place in the world. In London, the protagonist is constantly confronted by the tensions of inhabiting two unfamiliar cultures—an experience that produces thwarted desires and persistent cultural alienation. The urban landscape becomes a site for cultural concealment in the face of restrictive social norms and insidious stereotypes. In contrast, the narrative's representation of the protagonist's traditional village foregrounds cultural identity as a more expansive and inclusive set of social affiliations. The dichotomy between the urban and rural environments reveals the instability of cultural identity in the modern context and the persistence of cultural negotiation irrespective of time and place.

The symbolic resonance of the blackbird underscores cultural displacement as a distinct form of alienation. Birds in Indian stories frequently appear as vehicles traversing diverse settings. Their cross-cultural mobility enables them to access sites and experiences unfamiliar to human characters. The blackbird is a highly visible figure and, like other migrants, can survive the cultural conflict that threatens the protagonist's sense of self and fulfillment. He thereby serves as a constant reminder of the protagonist's predicament and as a symbolic representation of the

labyrinthine structure through which his search for identity unfolds (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

5.1. Urban vs. Rural Dichotomy

Calcutta is often represented as an epitome of urban culture, in contrast to the rural Benaras, which functions as a haven away from the city and a site of tradition, appearing almost frozen in time (SK, 2018). Desai's portrayal of the city is relentlessly bleak, presenting it as enmeshed in dense fog and smoke, emanating painful odours, and cluttered with trash, noise, and grime. These vivid descriptions contribute to an overall sense of decay, abandonment, and blight. Calcutta is characterized by addiction and poverty; the readers witness characters succumbing to suicide and insanity. The city is populated by sour and unwelcoming inhabitants, so that overall the impression is one of hopelessness, inauspiciousness, groping in the dark, and violent immiseration. Yet while vivid descriptions convey the unsustainability of urban life in the metropolis, the characters appear equally trapped by the insularity of their village existence. The anxieties and pressures created by both environments mutually reinforce feelings of entrapment and claustrophobia.

5.2. Symbolism of the Blackbird

The titular bird in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* absorbs the plot and personality of a ghostly presence before materializing in the final chapter as a guiding spirit for an expatriate woman lost in the thrall of colonial loneliness. The symbolic potency of the blackbird arises from the cultural maze traced by its rogue (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015). The story bridges an expansive cultural divide, stretching between the sequestered terrain of London and the rural spiritual intensity of India. London is represented variably as a locus of cultural preservation, a repository for the medicine ritual, and a site of alienation. The paradigm of alienation and containment is realized through a geographic movement from the sequestered reserves of the metropolis to the free-flowing ritual contexts of the South Asian countryside. The figure of the blackbird locates the cultural maze as a condition in which language (human and natural), spirit, and identity, although fluid, become fixated on an unescapable historical moment. *Blackbird* begins as a hungry cosmic twice-born and transforms into a hypnotic figure that prevents renewal by ensuring that the past is remembered, commemorated, encumbered, and lived out in spectacular fashion—a spooky cultural delayed-action bomb on the trail home.

6. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

The central figure in *Bye-B, Blackbird*, Adit, embodies the intricate challenges of navigating the cultural maze. His life oscillates between two distinct cultures: the conventional Indian milieu he longs to return to and the Western environment within which he currently resides. Adit had married Sarah, a young English woman with more worldly experience and elevated social standing, a choice that compels him to adopt a Western lifestyle and work ethic. He is culturally caught between ringing the closing bell in

London and embracing the traditional Indian values his heart yearns for, paralleling the migratory aspirations of many of India's emigrants to the United States and England. Adit is conscious of the comfort, familiarity, and love that India would offer, yet the Western lifestyle serves as a continual reminder of what he has relinquished (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

While the novel is not explicitly focused on the cultural maze, it implicitly explores the tensions of such a maze when two cultures collide. Both Adit and Sarah inhabit the middle ground between India and England; they stand neither entirely in one culture nor the other. As a result, Adit cannot fully integrate into the English milieu, despite Sarah's encouragement to do so as the best environment for their child. Conversely, Sarah cannot assimilate the Indian cultural conventions and social expectations that curiosity about and a desire to explore the culture unveil; those same conventions constrain her freedom and dictate her behavior and relationships. This position between two cultures mirrors Salman Rushdie's depiction of characters in his short story, "Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies," which—though set a generation later—is no less poignant in its depiction of the fissures an individual grapples with when negotiating the cultural maze.

6.1. The Protagonist: A Study of the Main Character

The protagonist of Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* feels caught between two cultures. Sarah's marriage to Adit places her in a desperate search for identity at the same time as an emotional gap opens between the couple. As an English woman, Sarah enjoys the comfort of her native environment, but also encounters isolation from the culture of the Indian family into which she has married. She resents the language and customs of India. She wants to live in India with her husband and baby so that she can transgress herself into a typical Indian wife and obtain perfect cultural identity (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

6.2. Supporting Characters and Their Cultural Significance

The supporting characters in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* play a significant role in shaping and realizing the cultural maze in the novel. Bala's servant, Rakesh, provides an alternative Indian perspective and a reminder of the traditions and struggles that shape Bala's own cultural identity. The blackbird, as a symbol of Bala's cultural displacement, takes on additional layers of meaning through the characters it interacts with, such as the English woman who adopts it and the Indian man who captures it.

Through these supporting characters and their relationships with Bala and the blackbird, Desai paints a rich and complex portrait of the cultural conflicts that underpin the migrant experience and the search for a sense of cultural identity. The blackbird thus becomes a poignant symbol of Bala's attempt to break free from the cultural maze and find a place of belonging. He wants to

say "goodbye" to being a "blackbird," but, like his escaped bird, remains trapped in an ambiguous and uncertain state.

7. NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

The cultural maze in Anita Desai's novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* has been delineated through various techniques. At the heart of the novel, the creation of cultural alienation underlines all the immediate cultural conflicts of the narrative. The intense cultural struggle Dickens experiences shortly generates the latermore profound alienation and identity problems of the main protagonists, both Shaila and Rob. Some critics attribute the novel's point of view as a reason why the cultural theme never develops beyond the initial conflict stage; the events are seen through Dickens' eyes, limiting the extent of realization and interaction with the concept of cultural identity.

Desai shapes the story so that the original export of the less developed Indian culture into the highly developed Western culture is a result of Rob's reaction to the aggressive and competitive nature of the British society and the increasing industrialization of the country. Consequently, the very differences that were initially identified as the reasons for dominance, security, importance, and survival become the reasons for escape—to find the peace, quiet, and harmony with nature that Dickens so idealistically associates with India's rural areas. The novel then becomes an exploration of a cultural maze, where no uncertainty, contradiction, or paradox dominates, and the psyche either capitulates under the overwhelming situation or innovates so as to destroy the self and bewitch the environment secondarily.

7.1. Point of View and Its Impact

In Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, narration from a third-person limited point of view oscillates among the consciousnesses of the three main characters. This method, more firmly classified as free indirect discourse, allows the characters' thoughts to be presented directly, without mediation by the narrator, while simultaneously encouraging sympathy and understanding from the reader. Starting with the abandoned and heartbroken Sarah, whose voice dominates part 2, the narrative shifts to Adit in part 3 and then Manu in part 4. The final part returns to Sarah, presenting her potential to rise- or downward mobility; its open ending leaves her ultimate fate unresolved. Stratified narration of the kind employed permits the reader to observe the ways subjects fracture when they occupy a position somewhere between one culture and another, illuminating the novel's central preoccupation with strangeness and alienation.

The narrative focus on secondary characters first, postponing the protagonist's viewpoint, is unconventional but gives the plot new resonance. Sarah is initially pessimistic about Manu's chances for success; his optimism about the future is preserved for the final

sections, when concern for his wellbeing is greatest. The sudden switch to the male participants at the end of part 2 disengages the reader from Sarah's private suffering, inviting comparison between her experiences and those of the Indian men. Sarah perceives at least one other outsider in a situation similar to her own, helping to mitigate her fanaticism and depression. In the end, Sarah clearly plays a crucial role in the fortunes of the two male characters, which are both positively resolved. Stratified narration therefore gives the woman character narrative power generally denied to women in the patriarchal world of the novel (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015). Even though she is subordinate to Adit and has made mistakes regarding her relationship with Manu, she remains at least partially in control of their fates if she can find the courage to act.

7.2. Use of Imagery and Symbolism

Symbols and images play a vital role in pointing out these cultural conflicts. Today, the cultural maze with all its complex prejudices is taking its toll and its burdens. The burden of cultural criticism is being taken up in Desai's novel. Imagery in Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is both novel and arresting. Even the story has footprint of the chronological or historical development of modern India. A complex network of political and cultural elements makes the environment of this novel. The present novel applies a numerous cultural and historical element in a very artistic way and a skilful manner.

The story emerges through rigorous conflicts, which, although pictorially established and described, nevertheless remind the reader of a realm governed by very dramatic characters and incidents. The stressful present is aptly contrasted with an imagined past. The sharp cultural conflicts and dichotomies face the protagonist, and the distressing cultural confusion leads to the establishment of a chasm or gap.

8. CULTURAL CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTIONS

Cultural conflict in Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* arises chiefly because of the otherness each character confronts. Sarah, the English protagonist married to an Indian engineer, lacks a sense of belonging both in Britain and India; Adit, her husband, is burdened with loneliness and uprootedness from the life he left behind. Consequently, both characters contend with numerous cultural disparities and tensions throughout the narrative. Sarah's treatment by Adit's household—which enforces strict, patriarchal boundaries on a recently widowed mother-in-law—epitomizes the clash between Western and Indian cultural norms, exaggerating her sense of isolation and rejection. The novel also emphasizes a broader divergence between the traditional world and modernity that disrupts familial bonds and societal roles globally, reflected by Adit's shame about his mother's presence in England and the implicit expectations that his household remain separated from her. Confronted with foreign social atmospheres, such as the similarities between Chinese and English norms and the heightened constraints on female

sexuality, Sarah confronts the profound limitations imposed on her by the prevailing cultural maze (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

9. THE INFLUENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE

India offers Anita Desai a wealth of inspiration for her fiction. More significantly, it provides her with a cultural paradigm within which to work out the unresolved problems of identity and a sense of roots which her European experience has brought into sharp focus (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015). *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is among the most personally revealing of her novels. The well-known conflicts between tradition and modernity, physical confinement and psychological liberation, communality and individuality, which may be taken as signifiers for her own bi-cultural predicament, provide the fulcrum on which the emotional and cultural tensions of the story turn. The influence of Indian culture on Western culture is profound and permanent because of the long and extensive contact shared between the two nations. India's unbeatable coastline made it a natural choice as favourable avenue for cross-cultural interactions, which rose much in India's favour, and later the British used the country as a colonial hub. India harbours a wealth of knowledge and learning intracultural diversities. Indian culture has taught various civilizations such as Persian/Arabic to Greece among others. India continues to exercise global influence of which it can be proud. It is Madame Sarah's deep desire to adopt a flawless Indian identity, a desire that finds a literal echo in the earlier fable with its image of a fulfilled and totally transgressive blackbird.

9.1. Traditions and Modernity

In Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye, Blackbird*, the experience of modernity is complicated by the continuity of tradition. Since the partition of India in 1947, notions of culture have become complex, with India increasingly seen as urban and modern and the remaining rural spaces associated with tradition (SK, 2018). The traveller reaches a city superficially modern yet still cohabiting with rural tradition: technology exists alongside the continued reliance on priests and omens. The traveller struggles to impose a transparency on the scene: because the city shares so much with his own culture, it looks like a cultural replica albeit backwards. Yet symbols proliferate and he has to navigate his way through the maze they create. India has been transcendentalized and distanced, figuring as cultural matrix on which the city functions as a weak simulacrum (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015). A postcolonial paradigm is achieved by combining the modern and the traditional with the continual elevation of both into the second degree.

From the perspective of the traveller who stands for the modern, urban world, the city appears maze-like because modernity is weak and partial.

9.2. Diaspora and Cultural Displacement

The term diaspora remains contested in the literature across disciplines and is subject to the specific context in which it is employed. Generally, it speaks to a sociocultural condition of dispersion and interspersing of peoples and cultures, with consequent cultural, psychological, and existential feelings of dispersion and loss (Farahmandian et al., 2015). Within literary criticism, however, the term is meaningful mainly in relation to an analytical mode and interpretative approach to the reading of texts, their characterization and orientation of characters, their intertextual and historic relations, their production and circulation, and their reception and subsequent circulation in relation to a broader background of dispersal of peoples, cultures, and traditions. Therefore suggests that “diaspora is not an event, but a process in which cultural and literary relations are absorbed, refigured, and transmitted over time and in different historical moment.” Yet, the term is still useful, especially when employed in conjunction with the description of the cultural operations within texts or set of texts. Baumgartner’s *Bombay*, for instance, is placed in the wider context of Golden Age of the large German novel when it appeared as an example of transnational or diasporic literature (de Capitani, 2015). Thereby, Anita Desai’s *Baumgartner’s Bombay* adopts the perspective of a German Jewish Holocaust survivor and a former cabaret performer to connect the histories of Germany and India. These characters, witnesses to multiple stories and cultural instances, create a diasporic network that challenges official history and gives meaning to exile. Diaspora and exile are ambivalent conditions. While exile often causes havoc, it also offers a contrapuntal awareness of multiple cultures, enabling unexpected connections. The novel tells the story of Hugo Baumgartner, a German Jewish Holocaust survivor who escapes to India to survive Nazi persecution, leaving his mother behind. After World War II, he is interned as a hostile alien and later witnesses the devastation of Partition in Calcutta. He learns through postcards that his mother was murdered in a concentration camp and finds shelter in Bombay, where he spends the rest of his life with his only friend, Lotte, a former cabaret girl.

10. GENDER ROLES IN THE NOVEL

Desai engages with the theme of gender roles—particularly the status and struggles of women within the frame of the novel’s cultural tensions (Bari, 2014).

10.1. Female Characters and Their Struggles

Women suffering under the cultural maze constitute another major cultural theme. Anita Desai’s *Lady of the Cars* (1988) and *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* vividly portray dilemmas of females under culturally dominated situations. Ashoke and Sarah represent the male and female perspectives on the migrant’s cultural dilemma; Sarah’s perspective emphasizes the special problems women have in handling cultural friction under such circumstances. Sarah’s difficulty on the cultural minefield, like her English upbringing and ignorance of Indian

language and customs, is further complicated by her sex and position as a woman. Her need to transgress her past and re-invent herself within the husband’s cultural ideology reveals the cultural maze (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

10.2. Masculinity and Cultural Expectations

Studies of Anita Desai’s novels have indicated her concern with the condition of women in India. Women are brought into relation to the larger sociocultural network and shown to suffer as a result of internalizing dominant social values that enable males to dominate them either overtly or covertly. Some scholars have therefore argued that Desai’s attention to women is linked selectively in the case of Sarah to the critique of an Indian national past and the community of dominant patriarchy; the English woman’s need for Indianization serves as the anomaly through which the desirability of Indianized English culture can be interrogated, while the position of Indian women as victims within that culture reveals one aspect of what renders such assimilation undesirable. The notion of “masculinity” is then closely linked to that of national identity and what counts as both dominant and authentic. In this light, the focus on male identities becomes a means of exposing and critiquing the processes by which particular gendered identities gain dominance through their inextricable relation to national narratives and cultural claims to authenticity (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

The question of the “condition of women” in India relates closely to the theme of aspirations and self-worth. It is posed in economic rather than sociocultural terms. Women who succeed, by “fasting and feasting,” merit respect and a better life for themselves and their family. Arun is fundamentally concerned with facilitating the advancement of the women around him, first supporting his sister’s desires to “fast” her way to marriage and then attempting to “feast” on the American offer that will secure his mother’s financial future. In short, the disparity in women’s aspirations is one that corresponds to the distance between the present and the future, to the degree of optimism each vision entails. Fasting represents a less immediate reassembly of the present within the constraints of the traditional—the preservation of the ruins. Feasting is the construction of a viable alternative, a new order that will not leave women to function as liminal sites of cultural preservation. Both attempts can be seen as giving expression to a state of collective insecurity and as both individual and collective aspirations (Volná, 2005).

11. LITERARY CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATIONS

The content of Anita Desai’s *Bye-Bye Blackbird* has been explored from multiple points of view within postcolonial, cultural, feminist, postmodern and historical frameworks. A relativistic cultural paradigm governs the novel in a way that leaves all perspectives and standards equal while demonstrating their contradictions and imbalances. The

protagonist's sense of disconnection is shared by other characters, often stemming from the impossibility of living up to ideologies they uphold. Rather than imposing a rigid ideology, the narrative denies all ideological absolutes as soon as a partial glimpse of each perspective becomes available. The novel situates itself on a cultural border where the impossibility of fitting within distinct discourses becomes evident. It refuses to commit to a single vision of India or other cultural constructions, instead showing the challenges of making one's way across a maze of culture (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

11.1. Critical Reception of 'Bye-Bye Blackbird'

Anita Desai's 1971 novel *Bye-Bye Blackbird* received limited critical attention upon its publication. This sparse reception contrasts with the engagement it invites in subsequent decades, when scholars chart the modern Indian novel's response to postcolonial diaspora and displacement (de capitani, 2015). Like Desai's earlier novels, *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is set largely in India and employs characters from diverse cultural backgrounds who live at the confluence of multiple cultural sites. The poetics of self-delusion and historical unawareness identified in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* underlie *Freeze*, a novel that evokes the plight of asylum seekers and refugees.

11.2. Comparative Analysis with Other Works

Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird* deserves to be examined in conjunction with her other eleven novels and a considerable number of essays in order to grasp the depth of her cultural concerns. For example, the condition of women remains a paramount issue throughout her literary career despite the varying cultural backgrounds in which her female protagonists find themselves (Volná, 2005). Moreover, the complexity of diasporic entanglements often marks the intersection of India and the West, where anxiety over the conflicted coming-together of the two cultures affects a selection of characters (de capitani, 2015). In the following study, however, Desai's cultural maze — arguably her most defining concern — assumes a particular form. This special configuration will be set apart from some of the many related issues of either historical or postcolonial provenance as, after all, the narrative features a "London-based married couple of Anglo-Indian Argentinian and Indian parentage" (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015).

12. CONCLUSION

Benedict Anderson's theory of imagined communities suggests that a nation is a socially constructed community, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group (Sharma & Kumar Roy, 2015). In Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, the narrative creates the impression that the character of Sarah is trapped in an inescapable cultural maze, unable to find her true position. Although she is living in the country of her birth, her marriage to an Indian man places her beyond the reach of belonging to the English community. She must leave the place she has

always called home and hopes to become an acculturated member of her husband's society. Anita Desai, one of the most distinguished contemporary Indian writers, is widely recognized for her nuanced characterisations and penetrating psychological insights. Several of her novels, such as *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, explore the effects of acculturation and displacement, portraying individuals who live on the margins of their original culture. Even after becoming acculturated members of a new community, they are haunted by uncertainty and a painful sense of alienation. By presenting precisely this kind of situation, Desai dramatizes the experience of Indian migrants by analysing the cultural maze within which they are caught. The narrative's exploration of the bewildering complexities of cultural identity makes it an invaluable contribution to the field of cultural studies. The ability of a work to take on special significance within the conceptual framework of another field constitutes one relevant measure of its cultural value.

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