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Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day*: A Narrative of Postcolonial Writing

Anita Desai'nin *Clear Light of Day* Romanı: Sömürgecilik Sonrası Yazının Bir Anlatısı

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ABSTRACT
Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* successfully reflects memory and individual experiences in Indian postcolonial culture and features Desai's talented portrayal of time as both a devourer and a cure. The narration depends on a time circle to present the continual effects of colonialism on individual and social history. In this novel, the women's position in Indian culture is examined through a changing perspective toward the general assumptions of Indian gender roles. A complicated evaluation of women's fights for independence inside a man-dominated system is given by Desai with female characters Bim, Tara, and Aunt Mira. *Clear Light of Day* both serves as a strong narration and also contributes to the wider postcolonial literary field. Desai encourages her readers to think about the complicated characteristics of cultural identity in a postcolonial culture besides the everlasting impacts of colonialism via the unity of personal experiences with more extensive historical and social conditions. This paper aims to reveal Bhabha's postcolonial theories such as subaltern, hybridity, mimicry, and third space by investigating Desai's own multicultural background and Indian history after the Partition as well as the effects of time on the individuals through an analysis of thematic perspectives of colonialism.

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Introduction

India struggled with the complex history of Independence and Partition following the colonial period and a new social order emerged in which people tried to define their identities apart from those of the British colonisers. This was a challenging attempt as the country underwent a transformation period that gave rise to two distinct cultures with different religious roots. Set in India after Independence, *Clear Light of Day* by Anita Desai illustrates this chaotic atmosphere by presenting a postcolonial perspective of Bhabha's theories of the subaltern, hybridity, mimicry, and third space.

Expanding upon the notion of the subaltern, Bhabha discusses groups marginalised by prevailing political entities and sheds light on their complex and dual nature within power dynamics. The subaltern exists in a state of "in-betweenness" and blends within the power structure occupying a ground where they are neither entirely assimilated into the culture nor entirely detached from it (Bhabha, 1994, p. 55). In this space called "elliptical," there is room for acts of resistance when the subaltern's existence disrupts the clear power divisions like the coloniser and colonised distinction (Bhabha, 1994, p. 60). The subaltern's existence signifies both oppression and defiance

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symbolised by "the evil eye" embodying a force that challenges the dominating power (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 55-56). This duality shows how the subaltern defies are controlled by disrupting established power structures and identities. Thus, the subaltern is "neither empty nor full, neither part nor whole" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 64). These mixed feelings present the intricacies of shaping one identity in settings where people balance cultural and political impacts simultaneously subaltern identities are a blend that consistently transitions between various roles and defies rigid explanations. This mixture adds layers of complexity to the distinctions between those in power and those oppressed emphasising the flexibility and unpredictability of influence in the postcolonial realm. The subaltern plays a crucial role in the continuous process of defining identity and culture in postcolonial communities.

In his analysis of societies' cultural dynamics, Bhabha highlights the roles played by literature and music as key components in developing resistance and shaping hybrid identities through mimicry. He views literature as a "masque of mimicry" whereby the colonised mirrors the practices and language of the coloniser (Bhabha, 1994, p.121). This act of mimicry goes beyond replication, it carries traces of ambiguity that challenge the dominance of colonial authority. Postcolonial authors challenge the narrative by adopting the colonial language to create a space of hybridisation where new identities emerge through writing and storytelling. According to Bhabha, literature becomes a platform for ongoing negotiation and subversion of colonial authority by disturbing established norms. Hence, literature enables the expression of a postcolonial awareness that includes local and foreign elements (Bhabha, 1994, p.13). Bhabha also considers music more than an art form, he sees it as an element in postcolonial communities that reflect contemporary life challenges and diverse cultural influences through a blend of traditional and Western sounds (1994, p. 241). The blending of cultures enables both the resistance and integration of influences in music traditions retaining aspects of heritage while adapting and reshaping the coloniser's culture. Music serves as a site of remembrance and reinvention of the legacy of colonialism providing postcolonial subjects. In this way, literature and music, which play essential roles in Desai's novel, are important in cultural expression and resistance as extensions of ambivalence and hybridity of postcolonial identities.

Before studying the novel, the historical context of India should be discussed through the major changes that followed the end of British colonisation which produced a fundamental reinterpretation of identity, culture, and belonging in addition to a political shift. Bhabha's "third space" of cultural enunciation evaluates this idea to challenge colonial ideologies and identities (1994, p. 37), disrupting the binary distinctions between coloniser and colonised (1994, p. 276). While it emphasises ambiguity, uncertainty, and negotiation in cultural encounters to subvert colonial power dynamics, material realities, resistance struggles, and unequal access to resources complicate the possibility of resisting colonial influences in intercultural interactions. Hence, in negotiating cultural differences between colonisers and colonised, a new cultural identity is formed that combines and transcends past and present by creating an in-between space that innovates and disrupts the present (Bhabha, 1994, p. 7). This space is a creative indeterminacy, producing hybrid cultural identities in the ongoing colonial present through the multiplicity of voices and identities in this cultural hybrid space. This third space also helps shape the characters' identities in *Clear Light of Day*.

Bhabha believes that subversion of authority in colonial settings occurs through the mixing of cultures as hybridisation. He defines "hybridity" as a challenge to traditional colonial representation where marginalised knowledge disrupts the dominant discourse and undermines its authority (Bhabha, 1994, p. 114). It challenges traditional colonial discourse and allows the colonised to express themselves in a subversive way. Discrimination and social norms are disrupted by providing a space for resistance and self-expression by embracing hybridity (Bhabha,

1994, p. 112). This contests the colonial power's hegemony over interpretations and acknowledges the impact of marginalised cultures (Bhabha, 1994, p. 156). This process disrupts the colonial discourse and exposes the impact of other cultures, leading to a renegotiation of cultural power dynamics. By challenging traditional histories, the third space opens new possibilities requiring fresh thinking. Thus, Bhabha's hybridity theory focuses on the concept of "mimicry" involving similarity and difference (1994, p. 86). It challenges the idea that cultures can be neatly separated and categorised into distinct entities. Instead, colonial hybridity complicates the dominant discourse and disrupts traditional notions of authority and identity. Hybridity highlights the limitations of viewing cultural differences as static and objective, emphasising the need for a more complex understanding of cultural dynamics (Bhabha, 1994, p. 114). Bhabha argues that the coloniser imposes a "mimicry strategy" onto the colonised to internalise inferiority and fears the reformed colonised, wanting them to be almost the same but not quite. He accepts mimicry as both "resemblance and menace" highlighting the coloniser's anxiety and the colonised's actions (Bhabha, 1994, p. 123). Mimicry is troubling to the coloniser because it means their authentic identity can be imitated leading to fear of the Other. Hence, severe distinctions emerged among these different cultures through these colonial and missional actions.

As the century progressed, a complex consideration of identity and nationalism in India emerged through the contrast between the Muslim side led by Jinnah and the Hindu faction led by leaders like Gandhi and Nehru. People had to confront existential questions as the battle grew more intense and they tried to comprehend the distinction between being a citizen of India and Pakistan. If they were the citizens of a determined group, whether their rights were supported or protected through religion, government or fundamental human rights could present them with justice and independence (Khan, 2007, p. 4). The conclusion of these discussions resulted in the 1947 separation which enabled the birth of Pakistan and India and caused the desire to fit in a group accompanied by a desire to fit out of another (Sawhney, 2018, p. 217). However, the Partition did not just divide these two regions, it also covered a shared ethnical inheritance by centring on social divisions. Thus, this not only resulted in painful and traumatic incidents for both regions but also urged the development of the modern mood and its expression in the literary world of India (Kumar, 2018, p. 256). The crisis started taking on disturbing situations such as hopelessness, devastation or sacrifices for irrational forces and began reflecting on themselves by becoming a new reality that they needed to get accustomed to (Kumar, 2018, p. 257). During this violent period, new topics for Indian writing emerged. These topics reflected the pain of existence and included the country's political, socioeconomic, and societal context, particularly in the 'post-Partition India' setting where they presented a culture shock. As a recognised figure in modern Indian writing, Anita Desai masterfully mixed these social issues and individual features in *Clear Light of Day* by giving the perplexing picture of individuals battling with their characters in the shadow of their history. Through an investigation of her novel on memory, time, and the complicated connections between them over a wide period, this paper expects to analyse how Desai constructs subaltern, hybridity, mimicry, and third space to present social and individual disintegration that postcolonial cultures experience.

Revealing Subalternity, Hybridity, Mimicry, and Third Space

Clear Light of Day undoubtedly brings on Desai's own experience even though it might not be regarded as completely autobiographical writing. The story combines memories of her early years spent in Old Delhi which offers readers an in-depth awareness of the complexities of identity, belonging, and the long-term consequences of postcolonialism. Through the eyes of a writer whose own life embodies the complicated relationship between multiple cultural influences explore the postcolonial elements as well as a transformative period in Indian history. In the distinctive structure of Anita Desai's life, the trip through *Clear Light of Day* takes on even more significance.

"As a postcolonial, multilingual, multicultural" woman, Desai's childhood reflects the combination of Eastern and Western cultures; her parents were German and Indian, and she was multilingual who spoke German, English, and Hindu (Chakrabarti, 2018, p. 173). She gained a deep understanding of her mother's Western upbringing, particularly concerning literary and musical works, and the various Indian towns' landscapes.

In *Clear Light of Day*, Desai's deliberate time analysis is firmly connected to her character assessment and having a place as a subaltern in postcolonial India. Her perspective on character confusion is completed by T.S. Eliot and Emily Dickinson's epigraphs which offer a reflection on time's consequences for characters and familial components. The novel has four parts starting with two epigraphs of Emily Dickinson and T.S. Eliot. The excerpt from *Four Quartet* by Eliot describes that time passes but nothing is changed. Desai ends her novel with another excerpt from the same poem: "Time the destroyer is time the preserver" (1980, p. 182)[1]. In her interview, she explains that her book is based on the setting of Old Delhi and the significant transformations experienced by a Hindu family since 1947. Her focus was to create a dimensional narrative illustrating how a family's journey unfolds across time. The narrative delves into the concept of time as both a force of destruction and preservation exploring the impact of constraints on individuals. She believed life's cycle continues in a circular motion where past and future coexist within the present moment (Gopal, 2013, p. 90). Hence, she starts her novel by describing the present situations of her characters; in Part Two, readers go back to the adolescence of the characters in Indian Independence in 1947. Part Three goes back to the childhood of the characters, how they perceive the world and what they expect from it. Finally, in Part Four, the story comes back to the present again and gives its readers a chance to determine whether the characters catch up with their dreams or not. One of the main characters, Bim foreshadows this time-lapse at the end of the first part, she believes that life often resembles a flowing "river," punctuated by moments of calmness and sudden rushes of excitement and the summer of 1947 marked a time of change and bustling period (pp. 42-43). Thus, the novel's first and fourth parts are in the present and include memories and nostalgia of the past such as the brother Raja's sickness, the younger sister Tara's running away from the beehive, and leaving the elder sister Bim as stuck. These insignificant incidents are explained in the novel's second and third parts showing that the past is related to the present and characters re-experience them. Furthermore, the second part has a historical background – the Partition in 1947 and explains it with the help of Bim's and Raja's past. Then, through the third part, readers witness the growing up of Tara, the birth of the youngest autistic brother Baba, and the arrival of Aunt Mira. Finally, the last part provides readers with opportunities for confessions, judgements, interpretations of characters, and comparisons of histories. Therefore, the way that fragments of partially recollected memories blend and shape the adult characters' knowledge of one another. Desai's storytelling shifts between the characters' past and present to offer Bhabha's idea of mimicry where characters strive to imitate ideals. While these characters experience the new environment as a subaltern of the idealised culture, they ultimately circle back to their cultural origins unavoidably constrained by them. Hence, Desai criticises the continuous impact of colonial legacies shaping postcolonial identities by framing the novel around recurring memories and fragmented encounters. She deliberately highlights how individual and cultural past narratives reflect on the current day.

Postcolonialism highlights diversity in marginalised populations and the silent women become the subalterns in their homes and countries. The circumstances of these groups frequently do not significantly change despite efforts to give these voices more power (Spivak, 1988, p. 288). Spivak explores the concept of "the subaltern" which has gained significant attention in postcolonial theory by equating the subaltern with marginalised individuals (1988, p. 285). She challenges the

[1]From now on, only page numbers will be given for the citations from *Clear Light of Day* by Desai 1980.

notion that the subaltern can have a voice or action, particularly in the context of colonial societies where their history and identity are erased focusing on the additional challenges faced by female subalterns in society (Spivak, 1988, p. 287). She strongly argues that being poor and female presents a set of challenges (Spivak, 1988, p. 284). Spivak explores the situation of Indian women, particularly focusing on the practice of "Sati," where widows choose to burn themselves on their husband's funeral pyre (1988, p. 297). She critiques the Western narrative of the British abolishing this practice as a case of "white men saving brown women from brown men," and discusses the Indian nativist perspective that suggests the women actually wanted to die (Spivak, 1988, p. 297). The subaltern is unable to speak due to conflicting discourses, leaving no space for their voice to be heard, so "the subaltern cannot speak" (Spivak, 1988, p. 308). In this context, this novel questions the position of women in India. Firstly, it is crucial to have an idea about the traditional attitudes of Indian culture towards women. According to Prasad, people have followed the advice of Manusmrti which is completely traditional. The husband of the woman provides for her protection when she is a young woman as her father cares for her during her upbringing, and her sons look after her as she ages. So, the woman is unfit to be free. (2005, p. 183). During Independence and Partition, Gandhi believes women are not weaker but nobler than men. He sees women as embodiments "of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith, and knowledge" (Everett, 1991, p. 76). In *Clear Light of Day,* Desai discusses Indian women's situation by showing various types of women through Bim, Tara, and Aunt Mira. Although Bim and Tara grow up together, they perceive the world from different perspectives. Bim is the one who is not afraid of pushing boundaries, she likes sports, plays with Raja, and helps others; but Tara is passive. It is stated in the novel that Bim idolises Florence Nightingale and Joan of Arc while Tara secretly wishes to hide from the world and never has to prove herself or do anything (p. 126). Tara is a traditional woman with her childhood images about having a husband and children; on the other hand, Bim is a modern woman who imagines being a heroine with being successful at school and wishing for a career rather than being a mother. Unfortunately, with their parents' deaths, Bim has to take care of her brothers and her aunt struggling with alcoholism. Thus, her new role in the family destroys her plans and wishes for the future. It should not be forgotten that Bim is not a traditional woman even if she prefers to stay with her family rather than getting married. In the second part of the novel, Dr Biswas, who treats both Raja and Aunt Mira, likes Bim and he invites her to a tea party to introduce his mother. After a while, Bim is bored and wants to leave. She insists on going back alone, claiming it is safe for a woman like her despite warnings against it (p. 92). She is not afraid of the chaotic atmosphere of the city; she does not need the protection of a man. The subaltern exists in a "hybrid space" where they can subtly resist norms while navigating their own sense of self and identity (Bhabha, 1994, p. 55). Even though Bim may seem to adhere to expectations on the surface by choosing not to marry and taking care of her family; her actions also present a quiet form of rebellion. This mix of conflicting feelings and choices that Bhabha refers to as typical in experiences allows Bim to challenge gender norms without disregarding her commitment to her family. This character illustrates how Indian women's self-perception has changed and how their level of awareness has increased (Anand, 2018, p. 190).

The postcolonial theory deals with women's position in society and women are often seen as 'the other' or the subaltern oppressed by the male population. The presence of women vanishes and is caught between "patriarchy and imperialism" at a savage pace that reinvests the conventional symbols with new metaphors. Thus, the female figure becomes a third-world woman caught between modernisation and convention (Spivak, 1988, p. 306). Indian social system encourages male domination and it becomes an effective narrative tool in *Clear Light of Day.* After her marriage to Bakul, Tara has changed; she looks elegant and has even curly hair which she desired much in her childhood and Bim cut it to make curls. She does her best to satisfy her husband and tries to adapt herself to his norms of beauty. However, she is oppressed by the male identity. For instance,

Tara serves her husband, Bakul, tea with a little bit of milk left. She asks if it is enough and feels guilty, but he does not respond (p. 8). Later, she straightens his clothes and offers him a choice of ties, showing her approval of his decisions (p. 11). Although Tara wants to talk about important things and seeks Bakul's opinions, he ignores her and finds her speech distracting as "the chirping of a single sparrow that would not quieten down at night" (p. 158). Bhabha discusses the concept of the "Third Space" as a place where subaltern individuals navigate between identities that often conflict with each other (1994, p. 36). Tara exemplifies this idea by balancing norms with the values she acquired through her marriage to Bakul. Although she outwardly conforms to her husband's wishes, her inner confusion reflects her position as a subaltern torn between upholding patriarchal traditions and embracing her true self. Additionally, the character of Tara exemplifies Bhabha's idea of hybridity by embracing beliefs in her marriage yet staying true to her family values. This blend of influences offers an identity influenced by both her colonial-influenced marriage and her rooted family traditions presenting the complexity of postcolonial identities that defy simple labels and categories (Bhabha, 1994, p. 175). So, the Indian patriarchy upholds the idea that men are superior, but the novel also shows how a woman's voice can be heard loud and clear beneath the surface, challenging his ultimate power (Adhikari, 2018, p. 208). The other oppressed female character is Aunt Mira who stays with the family to look after the children. In the novel, she is defined as a woman with bad fortune. Even though their mother is older than her, she looks older. She is married to a man at the age of twelve and her husband dies on their wedding night. His family blames her for bringing bad luck to her husband. So, she has to take care of them out of guilt (p. 108). Aunt Mira is the victim of the system; she has no right to voice up because of her gender. Thus, she has lived as a subaltern even in her new home. Finally, she tries to find peace with alcohol. The portrayal of Aunt Mira as a widow taking care of her family reflects Bhabha's idea of being a subaltern due to her gender and social standing within the family and society. Her silence and isolation symbolise what Bhabha calls a life without a sense of belonging or connection to mainstream norms (1994, p. 9). Aunt Mira's subaltern role eventually drives her to rely on alcohol as a coping mechanism which sheds light on the impact of her exclusion. Although Aunt Mira has a role in the family dynamics and relies on alcohol as a form of rebellion, she quietly asserts her identity through overlooked acts of resistance in Bhabha's "Third Space" (1994, p. 36). Her behaviours emphasise the constraints on her ability to influence outcomes and focus on the loneliness that Bhabha points out as central to a subaltern's experience. Her "subaltern identity" has excluded her "from mainstream society" in which Indian enslaved female figures have to continuously fight against discrimination and injustice based on their "race, gender, and class oppression and inequality" (Misir, 2018, p. 12). In his writing, Bhabha puts forward a form of resistance to the limitations enforced by family and society in India. This indicates the balance between being controlled and having autonomy exhibited by both characters. Thus, it emphasises how Bhabha's ideas align with Desai's representation of hybrid and subaltern identities.

According to Huggan, an essential part of the creation and upkeep of colonial power structures is played by music (1990, p. 13). Desai skilfully presents her readers with her characters' personalities through their social relationships shaped by literature and music including characteristics of the colonial heritage. In *Clear Light of Day*, Baba never speaks and obsessively plays records of the forties on an old gramophone. It was brought to India by British colonies and the records include Western popular songs. Baba's obsession with this antique gramophone and old hit music points out that the effects of colonialism are still valid culture in India. These music records represent the colonial past through its Western style of living and its everlasting impact is still crucial for the Indian people. The daughter of Hyder Ali, Benazir, whom Raja eventually married, possesses the gramophone that features the complex connections of power and social allocation in colonial nations. As far as "hegemonizing native elite culture" is concerned, Loomba thinks literature study is also helpful (1991, p. 178). Hyder Ali is a rich man who invites people to

read poems and discuss them. These reading parties serve as useful tools for Desai's search for the impact of literature in dominating the Indian high-class culture. Infused by Hyder Ali's admiration of poetry, Raja attempts to compose poems in a similar style as him. However, years later Bim realises the poets he loves greatly influenced his writing with no original ideas or phrases of his own (p. 168). Bim's realisation of Raja's absence of creativity uncovers the deliberate manners that common Indian people have been impacted by English colonial constructions. Raja's poems show a mix of the colonial culture with his native culture by overclouding the poetic expressions and tools between these two cultures despite his aim to draw in his Indian heritage. Desai presents a complex evaluation of colonialism in affecting the characteristics of the Indian people and their culture with the help of music and literature. *Clear Light of Day* also underlines the importance of mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence in shaping identities. These themes are especially evident in the representation of music and literature within the novel presenting how colonial and indigenous elements mix to reflect the diverse nature of postcolonial identity. The figure of Raja epitomises mimicry as he endeavours to replicate the techniques and cultural beliefs of practices in his poetic creations. However, Bim realises that his creative output lacks uniqueness and highlights the conflict between imitating structures and the inability to capture them authentically as intended by Bhabha's perspective on mimicry. This mirrors Bhabha's belief that mimicry may seem to support power but weaken it by revealing the impossibility of flawless imitation. The gramophone also symbolises this fusion of cultures as music initially enforced during colonial reign now blends into the routines of Indian individuals such as Baba. His intense interest in the documents from the 1940s rooted in culture underscores the ongoing impact of colonial works blending with local customs even after the departure of colonisers. The fusion of these elements is complex and contradictory. While the presence of the gramophone symbolises colonialism's influence, it also reflects a lack of integration of Western values since Baba maintains a certain emotional distance and communicates solely through these remnants of colonial authority. Desai employs music and literature not to show the lasting impacts of colonialism but to delve into how postcolonial individuals navigate and shape their identities in a diverse cultural setting. Through this perspective, the readers can observe the complexities of hybridised cultures and the presence of individuals in postcolonial India which is demanded by the characters' relationships through music and literature.

The reinterpretation of the past is a crucial technique for postcolonial writers. Edward Said utters that those writers who emerged after colonialism carried their pasts with them, urgently reinterpreting and redeploying them as experiences where the once-silent native spoke and moved on land reclaimed from the colonisers (1986, p. 55). Bhabha suggests that the "Third Space" provides a setting where cultural reinterpretation takes place a realm where established historical stories can be broken down and pieced together into new structures. This allows authors to portray identity as an ongoing process that goes beyond basic distinctions of the past and present (1994, p. 37). The reinterpretation of the past can be transferred "by memory, fantasy, narrative and myth" (Hall, 1993, p. 226). These ideas help writers engage their countries' past experiences with the present ones. Thus, it allows how (after-) colonisation affects the present by creating characters troubled by flashbacks to the division of India and the establishment of Pakistan (Sawhney, 2018, p. 213). *Clear Light of Day* starts with a reunion of these two sisters – Bim and Tara and takes them back into their childhood and adolescence memories. These mentioned concepts assist the author in connecting the experiences of their nations with realities. The recollections of Bim and Tara are situated in what Bhabha refers to as the "Third Space" where their past is not a fixed memory but a dynamic arena for shaping their sense of self. It enables them to reexamine events from their youth as elements of their developing selves struggling between a longing for the past and the painful legacy of Partition. To them, past and present in Old Delhi are static and unchanged. Yet, the writer presents complicated and contrasting aspects of the narrative

story and real experience into an interactive partnership that converts static memories into a moving and active recalling (Bandlamudi and Ramakrishnan, 2018, p. 18). In the novel, Bim states that Old Delhi has not altered, all it has is rot like an enormous graveyard and each home becomes an asleep grave (p. 5). She also compares it with New Delhi built by the British colony and implies that traces of other cultures such as "the Tughlaqs, the Khiljis, the Sultanate, the Moghuls" (p. 5) are eliminated. However, at their home, they are also numb and lifeless (p. 5). In Bhabha's perspective, Old Delhi serves as a Third Space that embodies the intertwining of colonial and after-colonial narratives and presents the city as a centre of cultural mixtures. To Bim, the numb state of Old Delhi symbolises the oppression of identities by forces whereas contrasting it with New Delhi emphasises how cultural richness was diminished during colonial modernisation efforts. Although these two female characters talk about the past with a sense of nostalgia, Tara and Bim declare that they are really happy those days remained in the past and there is no chance to reexperience them (p. 43). The idea of ambivalence in Bhabha's work also deals with the emotions of nostalgia and relief experienced by Bim and Tara. These characters construct individuals who are caught between the persistent impact of the past and their desire for the future beyond it. This sense of conflicted feelings highlights Bhabha's notion of identities where individuals struggle with past wounds while striving to create new selves in a third space that transcends colonial influences. When the novel comes to an ending after sharing some memories, both women acknowledge their early years as children and adolescents, because those traumatic experiences are always with them (p. 174). Thus, rethinking personal memories merged with the country's history and social and historical environments plays a crucial role in shaping memories. It represents not just lexical meanings but also collective cultural memories in which all members of society are engaged. In the novel's second part, British India is separated into India and Pakistan and the family in *Clear Light of Day* is also divided. Through their disinterested parents' deaths, Raja's sickness and leaving home to join his idol Hyder Ali in Hyderabad, Tara's marriage with a diplomatist and going abroad, Aunt Mira's death due to alcoholism, the family is separated and only Bim and Baba live in the household. The fragmented relationships within this family introduce the lasting impact of histories in shaping identities. This results in the emergence of a Third Space where individual and shared identities are in a state of re-evaluation.

Desai constructed a traditional narrative in *Clear Light of Day*. Her deliberate narration technique can be discussed by Bhabha's theory which often points to the characters who appear to fit into roles but challenge them with hidden contradictions. Bhabha exposes "the colonial subject as a partial presence" (1994, p. 86) and Desai's storytelling style participates in it by giving the impression of conformity. Because the ambivalent portrayal of roles by Bim, Raja, and Tara simultaneously embraces and questions ideals through critical aspects of values. In the third part of the novel, the siblings dream about their future when they are children. Bim and Raja want to be leading figures and Tara wants to be a mother. Bim is highly self-confident and full of ambitions; she believes that she will work and earn her money as an independent woman and can also take care of other family members as a powerful woman when everything goes normal (pp. 140 – 141). However, she has to give up the idea of an independent woman to look after Raja, Aunt Mira, and Baba. She knows that they need her and chooses to stay at home. Bhabha's idea of hybridity sheds light on Bim's personality as she combines the qualities of a caring woman with a drive for freedom. Hence, it forms a position where conventional norms and individual dreams meet in what Bhabha calls a third space. Desai uses Bim's struggles to focus on the conflicts in postcolonial identities where individuals navigate their environments influenced by both inherited beliefs and the longing for self-determination. Raja also wants to be a hero. Before the Partition, his friends at school wanted to count him in fighting for Hindu nationalism which is considered a heroic act; but he has sympathy with the Muslims and he threatens to notify them (p. 57). Bim ironically defines Raja by resembling him with Lord Byron who fights for Greek independence and dies. She

describes him as a man struggling in dramatic situations in a romantic manner like Byron even though he wants to help desperate people, he will, unfortunately, end up falling ill or dying (p. 60). The way Raja looks up to leaders and his intricate stance during the Partition reflect Bhabha's idea of mimicry. Through his behaviour, the author indicates the positions of individuals who take on characteristics of the other in a manner that challenges distinctions. This experience mirrors Desai's portrayal of figures who do not entirely fit into one culture but rather navigate through various cultural loyalties. Thus, this concept creates a third space of both fitting in and feeling out of place as described by Bhabha. Additionally, Bim and Raja make fun of Tara when she reflects on her desire to become a mother, but Aunt Mira is positive that she will make her dream true because it is a typical norm for a woman, but the aunt strongly believes that being leading figures in their society is not possible for Bim and Raja (p. 112). As the aunt foreshadows, Tara makes her dreams come true. The nature of Tara's aspiration to be a mother is an example of mimicry. It suggests the idea that women are meant to desire domesticity, and these domestic roles and duties are approved in the right manner for women in a patriarchal world. Because mimicry is not only an "imitation" that reasserts power but rather a "partial presence" through which the restrictive authority of colonial or traditional frameworks is rendered explicit (Bhabha, 1994, p. 88). Additionally, Aunt Mira's belief that Bim and Raja can never be leading figures is closely related to Bhabha's hybridity. Their ambitions show a hybrid identity, for their roots live in tradition but their desires hope for individual freedom. In this regard, the ambitions of Bim and Raja exist within a Third Space where their dreams create an effective space of possibility even though their aunt sees these dreams in absolute liminality that exceeds normative domains. Hence, this hybridity questions the patriarchal roles that Aunt Mira tries to enforce, so hybrid identities between two cultures challenge fixed roles and create new zones of possibility. Desai mentions this issue in one of her interviews. Though she is loath to write of leading figures in the run of titles, her refractory characters have often seemed like losers whatever the fact that is a new embodiment of heroism that is a way of surviving. She believes that if you can live a life not sacrificing your heart and spirit but with them intact, that is heroism worth commemorating. Bim has seen her beliefs shattered, picked up the pieces, and at last accepted her disillusionment, so this makes her the heroine (1978, p. 4). Even though Bim is educated and dreams about independence, she does not leave Baba and her family home. The brother Raja is given the chance to be a hero, but he chooses to leave home and settle in Hyderabad. Thus, Bim struggles to survive without any help.

Desai uses "the well" in the garden as a symbol of women's situations and three female characters are linked to this symbol. Aunt Mira convinces the family to buy a cow for fresh milk, but the gardener leaves it out and falls into the well. It cannot be rescued and left to rot. This disturbing event causes intense horror and distress for the family (p. 118). The well can be viewed as a Third Space representing a place where various social pressures from patriarchal and colonial influences unite to trap the characters in the story's setting. The distinction between freedom of action and limitations becomes blurred. It also reveals a setting that reflects their sense of self and constrained freedom within the norms they navigate. As an important female character, Aunt Mira links herself to it, and she rots in her bed and dies. Aunt Mira's strong connection to the well presents Bhabha's idea of being trapped in a place of uncertainty known as the Third Space. She finds herself torn between her duties as a caretaker and her hidden wishes leading to a sense of displacement. This creates a situation that leaves her feelings detached from any sense of self within her family or community (Bhabha, 1994, p.9). Other female characters Tara and Bim also use the well as a symbol. After returning home, Tara feels like Bim is bringing her down and making her feel oppressed, numb, and bored. She feels like drowning in her childhood memories (p. 149). Bim also expresses a feeling of doom, comparing themselves to the leading figures who have disappeared and ended up at the bottom of a well where a cow once drowned. Bim fears that they will eventually find themselves in that same dark "well" one day (p. 157). That sense of being

drowned represents the dualities of postcolonial identity within which the individual is stuck between where society wants them to be and where they wish to go. To Tara and Bim, the well symbolises this inner conflict as a form of third space, representing their divided selves formed by social norms governing their existence where they are not allowed to establish an identity outside of one another. Hence, these females are still suffering because of the "unequal treatment of women" (Davey, 2018, p. 57), and they resemble water at the bottom of the well, and most of their dreams are darkened by various conditions through "the weight of socially discriminatory practices" (Ghosh, 2018, p. 64). Hence, the well symbolises the "unhomely" that Bhabha theorises in his concept of the Third Space wherein home as imagined to be a secure, ideal place instead emerges as a source of psychological and cultural violence (1994, p. 9). The blurring of the familiar and unfamiliar conditions shows how deeply buried the social and personal dreams of these characters are beneath centuries-old social restrictions that would leave them to remain in a literal symbolic "well."

As mentioned before, the novel follows a time circle, and in the last part, the readers again witness the present conditions of the characters after reading about their childhood and youth. Hence, characters turn to the past and face their memories with a sense of nostalgia. Bhabha points "the past is a necessary precondition for any identity" (1994, p. 35). Bim's exploration of her memories echoes this notion as she begins to understand that her personal identity and inner resilience are deeply intertwined with her family's past and her reminiscences of both happiness and pain. For instance, Bim realises that the meaning of life is the love for others not the love for the self, and she decides to forgive Raja who writes a letter to her as a landlord rather than a brother. Bim exemplifies an identity as described by Bhabha where conflicting feelings of resentment and love are harmonised in her life. She embraces these emotions as aspects of her journey to exist in a third space that transcends narratives of blame or affection and develops a deeper understanding of herself. In the end, it is stated that though Bim is deeply in love and longs for her family, she also acknowledges the imperfections in her love. She understands that to overcome obstacles in life, she must heal and strengthen her bonds with family members (p. 165). After having this revelation, Bim gets closure and clarity about her family. She perceives the problems and weaknesses in her past relationships by understanding the significance of love and the meaning of forgiveness. In this setting, the influence of Bhabha's concept of the Third Space is obvious. The novel's cyclical timeline blurs the lines between past and present seamlessly creating a space for reflection and transformation for Bim to revisit her memories and seek reconciliation through a new perspective. A thorough exploration of this mixed-time setting allows Bim to navigate her sense of self in a changing comprehension of her family's intertwined past. Thus, reexperiencing the past gives her the chance for relief: "Everything had been said at last, cleared out of the way finally. There was nothing left in the way of a barrier or a shadow, only the clear light pouring down from the sun" (177). Finally, she finds the power to bury the hatchet and has a chance to move on with a "clear light of day." Moreover, returning to the past shows how memory and its reflection can change over time. Bim admits that the situation turns into a sense of peace and dignity as clear weather after the rain. By embracing acceptance and forgiveness of the past, she metaphorically clears the atmosphere. Bhabha accepts identity as flexible and always in change and this is reflected in Bim's experience as she embraces her past and evolves her sense of self through forgiveness. Connecting with Bhabha's idea, identity can change when old wounds are forgiven; other people become a blend of the past and how they see things in the present helps to develop one's identity. This shows how intricate postcolonial identities can be. Furthermore, the way that Desai portrays memory in *Clear Light of Day* provides well-informed perspectives about various complexities of family relationships and forgiveness. Bim's attitude of self-revelation welcomes the readers to think about their own past associations and possible healings.

Conclusion

Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* narrates several lives of ordinary Indian people by dealing with periods before and after the Independence and the Partition through postcolonial elements, gender roles, and the complexities of memory. She successfully examines crossing cultural issues between the coloniser and the colonised, family bonds, and personal desires using the perspectives of ordinary Indian people and their experiences after the Partition. This novel indicates the everlasting impacts of the past on both personal and social perceptions. Constructing a time circle helps the narration to move smoothly between the past and the present. Moreover, Desai's portrayals of women characters such as Aunt Mira, Bim, and Tara deliberately undermine gender roles by stressing the position of women in different social assumptions. The novelist also makes use of music and English literature as elements of colonialism. Consequently, the family is reunited on the last pages of the book and life goes on with a "clear light of day."

Bhabha's notion of mimicry, hybridity, and third space resonates with Desai's novel on postcolonial themes. The concept of mimicry illustrates how colonial subjects often imitate the coloniser but in a way that subtly undermines the coloniser's power. The novel emphasises it with Raja as an admirer of Hyder Ali who tries to follow Western literary traditions. Raja also writes poetry influenced by British canon poets, this presents a blending of colonial borrowings and Indian cultural history. Inhabiting this new borderland challenges the identity of the characters, particularly with their difficulty in becoming postcolonial subjects in the remnants of the colonially accepted culture they were mingled with both personally and socially. Desai's complex relationship between the characters and their colonial past illuminates Bhabha's claim that postcolonial identity is ambivalent, and contradictory emerged in the third space. Desai connects the narrative to these theoretical issues so tightly as if demonstrating this point which explains how interconnected colonialism and its shadow still are with personal identities and cultural representation. It may be suggested to argue that *Clear Light of Day* is a profound statement on the ongoing effect of European empires. Thus, far above its valuable thematic substance, the novel becomes a prolific source to show the long-term effects of colonial culture, the ongoing battle for independence, and the effort to try to define the self in the day-by-day changing world. Desai's writing skills about the theme guide her readers to muse over how the past goes on affecting the present by opening the doors for forgiveness and moving on after understanding humankind.

Desai's narrative presents a much clearer understanding of the complicated nature of India from the beginning to the very last page of this novel. The novel becomes an immortal representation of how a plot line may reveal tiny nuances of human lives by reflecting and uniting the divisions between individuals. In this world in which we have to put up with these divisions and complexities, Desai's narration can be accepted as a chance of hope that assists us with the recollection of our personal history through empathy, understanding, and forgiveness. If we think deeply about her words, we might at some point be inspired to recognise the resemblance that actually connects us all. As well as contributing to the literary world with *Clear Light of Day*, Desai has also touched our souls by allowing us to think over the experiences of this ordinary Indian family. She encourages us to seek connections by emphasising the importance of our variable stories while we try to be prepared to take leave of them.

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