
**EROSION OF TRADITION AND CULTURE IN KIRAN DESAI'S
"THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS"**

M. Sindhuja,

Assistant Professor in English,

Bon Secours College for Women,

Email sindhujamohan872013@gmail.com

Abstract

The Inheritance of Loss heralds Kiran Desai's as one of our most insightful novelists. Desai introduces this novel, the idea of two different cultures never fully being able to be inter winged and the fact that one can never truly belong to another culture. 'The Inheritance of Loss' deals with her own situation of migrants, expatriation, and alienation from the mother country. Through the characters, she gives how her own dual Indian – American upbringing which results in despair. Living between East and West and the introduction of western elements in a country creates an erosion of tradition and culture.

Keywords: *erosion, culture, tradition, immigrants, alienation, westernized Indians*

With Kiran Desai, a literary tradition is reborn. It is a literary inheritance Kiran Desai is proud to acknowledge: "To my mother, I owe a debt so profound". She born and brought up in a multi-cultural atmosphere. As might be expected from the rich output of her cultural background, Kiran Desai has proved her literary legacy in formidable terms. With storytelling in her blood, Kiran Desai, daughter of the prominent Indian origin writer, Anita Desai, created literary history by being the youngest ever woman to win the prestigious Man Booker Prize for Fiction at the age of thirty-five.

The novel is essentially a study of losses – loss of culture, loss of identity, loss of human relations, loss of emotional binding, loss of human values, loss of rationality, loss of peace and harmony, loss of human beings' faith in each etc. The sense of loss is an integral part of every character's life; they are insecure, and unmoored, struggling to survive in the modern world, unsure of whether they will ever see the benefits of globalization; characters unnecessarily feel inferior due to their Indian heritage.

The story is centered on two main characters, Biju and Sai. Biju is an illegal immigrant living in the United States. He is the son of a cook working for Sai's grandfather.

The novel shows the internal conflicts in India between present and past. There is a rejection and yet awe of the English way of life, the opportunities for money in the US, and the squalor of living in India.

The major theme running throughout is closely related to the effects of the people. There loss their identity and the way it travels through generations as a sense of loss.

The Inheritance of Loss is set partly in India and partly in the US. How does the imbalance these two worlds change a person's thinking and feeling?

Kiran Desai has presented in this book such lovely details that many times it feels so much 'our world'. She has portrayed the human soul, naked and bare. The judge Jemubhai whose perfect manners and demean our is very much British is not able to to get himself free from the shackles of the traditional Gujarati and Indian mentality. In the specific context of The Inheritance of Loss, the characters Jemubhai, Biju, Sai, Guan, Lola, and Noni all have they are personal as well as social reasons for their feeling of anger in their respective milieus. Jemubhai Patel leaves for England for the first time and suffers from disillusionment with his image of England and at the same time gets alienated from his native land culture and more. In England, he feels isolated as he has difficulty in adapting to the western culture and civilization.

Jemubhai finds the meals packed by his mother with love and care for him as inappropriate at the point of time, and "he lacked the courage to go to the dining salon on the ship, given that couldn't eat with knife and fork..." He felt humiliated and so he "picked up the package, fled to the deck, and threw it overboard...Undignified love, Indian love, stinking love, unaesthetic love the monsters of the ocean could have what she had so bravely packed getting up in that predawn mush". Thus, Jemubhai separation from tradition, culture, custom, and milieu stars with his move to England to England itself. Kiran Desai born and brought up in the multicultural atmosphere. The In Heritance of Loss is a dark and ambitious glimpse at globalization and its discontents

The main story is about the kinds of losses the characters endure. Sai, the orphaned and daughter of the judge is returned to his case from the convent school. Hiding from his own life and at a loss to provide the love and warmth she years for, the judge her care over to the cook. Infected by the desire to leave home among the people he sees around him, the cook who has lost his wife also sends his son Biju off to work on the cruise ship which deposits him in New York. All his hopes are on his son Biju, who had the good fortune to get a tourist visa for the USA and left to make his fortune.

In the middle of the novel, Sai reflected over the many books she borrowed and concluded how these were precursors of her very own condition, and indirectly unveiling the long line of texts that foreshadowed Desai's own story of the Inheritance of Loss. There were endless accounts of travel in India and over and over, in book after book, there was the scene of late arrival at a dark bungalow, the cook cooking in a black kitchen, and Sam realized that her own delivery to Kalimpong in such a manner was merely part of the monotony, not original.

This shows that Kiran Desai is informed by discussions of intertextuality, postcolonialism, and other obtuse literary discourses once fashionable in the Humanities Department of the Western Academe. The seeming sophisticated notion of "hybridity" offered by postcolonial academics, wherein both the colonized and the colonizer benefit from interaction, is exposed and discredited by the force of concrete conditions. Their inclination for rewriting an intrinsically unequal and oppressive political and economic condition as some sort of symbiotic relationship is exposed as a farce. In the novel, we see globalization for what it actually is.

There is a multiplicity of cultures in the metropolitan centers of Western Capitalism as a result of decades of colonial and neo-colonial exchange. The colonized have no choice but to appropriate materials from the colonizer. But the latter rarely recognize materials from the colonized world. There is no real reciprocity or conversation between the colonized and the colonizer. It is most of the time a one-way bludgeoning of the colonizer of the colonized. Desai also shows the inadequacy of the multiculturalists' injunction for mere tolerance of other cultures as a response to stark realities of exploitation and oppression. After all, cries of racism by colored do not stop them from exploiting workers of their own race.

The Inheritance of Loss is ultimately an exploration of how multiculturalism and meeting of the East and West bring change but not always progress because we are all bound by our past experiences and traditions. As Karl Marx reiterates: "Philosophers have only interpreted the World in various ways, the point is to change it". The book is thoroughly pleasant that it threatens to achieve greatness through its statement, but unfortunately, the novel missed the mark on the target board and losses in a long way.

The novel 'The Inheritance of Loss' is a true study of human relationship. It is deviled by exile and erosion of tradition and cultures. The characters who are not enjoying their seem to adhere to their cultural instinct and detached from their real nature. This is made a negative impact on their whole life leads to cultural deformity. When these happened to live in a new world; they have to construct their own world based on their acquired culture and civilization. The characters Jemubhai, Sai, the cook Noni, and Lola are westernized Indians. The western culture transformed into lives of traditional Indians show they're hated toward western culture. It

leads to great outcry in individuals. Hence the Desai characters are struggling to survive life in the modern world. The novel clearly portrays the erosion of tradition and culture.

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