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STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

Alienation and Identity Crisis in Kiran
Desai's
The Inheritance of Loss

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Master's Degree

Submitted By:

Ms. Amal HAOUACHE

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Academic Year

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the thesis entitled, “Alienation and Identity Crisis in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*” is the product of our own work efforts and all the sources we have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

To all marginalized people around the world...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, and prayers and peace be

upon Mohammed His Messenger.

First and foremost, we are deeply grateful to Allah for good health and wellbeing to

complete this work.

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families, and to every person, who have supported us in the realization of this work.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **TIL:** *The Inheritance of Loss.*
- **IEL:** Indian English Literature.
- **IWE:** Indian Writing in English.
- **HGO:** *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.*
- **ICS:** Indian Civil Service.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation attempts to study Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* which is considered as a true representation of the postcolonial period. In particular, this study aims to analyze and investigate the way selected characters (the Judge, Jemubhai and the cook's son, Biju) move from a local to a global world suggesting displacement, which eventually results in alienation and identity crisis. Based on this, the research methodology that was applied is post-colonialism. The dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter involves historical and theoretical background knowledge. While, the second chapter centers on the analysis of the novel focusing on the issues of alienation and identity crisis of the characters with accordance to Homi Bhabha conceptions of Mimicry, Hybridity and Ambivalence.

Key Words: Postcolonial, Displacement, Alienation, Identity Crisis, Mimicry, Hybridity, Ambivalence.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	I
Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgement.....	III
List of Abbreviations.....	IV
Abstract in English.....	V
Table of Contents.....	VI
General Introduction.....	01
 <i>Chapter One: Knowledge Is Power: Historical and Theoretical Backdrop</i>	
Introduction.....	09
1. Indian English Literature.....	10
2. Indian Diaspora.....	13
3. Postcolonial Literature: A Historical Glimpse.....	15
4. Trajectories of Postcolonial Theory.....	16
4.1. Alienation.....	17
4.2. Identity.....	19
4.3. Hybridity.....	20
4.4. Mimicry.....	21
4.5. Ambivalence.....	22
4.6. Assimilation.....	23
Conclusion.....	24

Chapter Two: Echoes of Alienation and Identity Crisis in “The Inheritance of Loss”

Introduction.....	26
1. Kiran Desai as Diasporic Writer.....	27
2. <i>The Inheritance of Loss</i> as Diasporic Novel.....	28
3. The Notion of Alienation.....	29
3.1. Assimilation.....	31
3.2. Ambivalence.....	36
3.3. Home and Belonging.....	39
4. The Dilemma of Identity Crisis.....	42
4.1. The Mimic Man.....	43
4.2. Cultural Hybridity.....	46
4.3. Connection between Place and Culture.....	49
Conclusion.....	54
General Conclusion.....	56
Appendix.....	59
Works Cited.....	61
Abstract in Arabic.....	73

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

*“Language, identity, place, and home: these are all of piece
just different elements of belonging and not belonging”*

(Jhumpa Lahiri Quotes)

Ever since Postcolonial literature has come into existence, the writers were trying to create a new form of fiction within the English language by incorporating new images and above all new rhythms. One of the prominent features of Postcolonial writings is the concern with place and displacement, inconstancy of location, feeling of alienation and resulting in “the crisis of identity into being” (Ashcroft et al 9).

Among the writers of Postcolonial literature who plays an immense role in presenting the Indian English literature is Kiran Desai, who was born on 1971 in New Delhi. When she was fourteen, her family moved to England and then a year later shifted to America, where Desai became a permanent resident of the USA. Desai’s first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) won the Betty Task Prize from the British Society of Authors. Then after eight years of work, she published her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), which has been described as “myth of global economy” (Ambedkar 205). This novel is a superb piece of work for which Desai received many awards including the Man Booker Prize.

The Inheritance of loss is a story of two generations: The judge Jemubhai in one hand, and Biju on the other. The Judge was affected by the western culture due to his education in Cambridge. His experience of immigration has altered him to be a westernized person; Jemu attempts to imitate the English people by trying to resemble them, dresses like them and speaks English every day. Whereas, Biju migrates to America, where he stays illegally in order to find a well-paid job. Unlike Jemubhai, Biju prefers to stay loyal to his culture and he decides to go home as Biju the Indian not the American.

General Introduction

The novel portrays the characters who are the object of Postcolonial plights such as, globalization and multiculturalism, which lead them towards alienation and identity crisis. Desai tries to dive deep into the sea of human psychology and focuses on the basic human emotions like conflict, struggle, adjustments and physical abuse. Hence, the primary focus of this study will be on the Postcolonial and Psychoanalytic aspects, by showing how the author depicted the effects of alienation on the process of identity construction.

The selection of this novel as the corpus of the current study supports the area of investigation and shows the conflicts and hardships faced by immigrants to preserve their identities while trying to dispose of them at the same time. Thus, this dissertation highlights the issues of alienation and identity crisis in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*.

TIL is a novel that not only reveals how people who move out of their country and migrate to other countries feel rootless and alienated, but it also shows how people feel isolated and suffer from loss of identity in their own home land. For this reason, most of the time Desai combines cultural environs to create a complex and perplexing settings for her characters. They hold on to a doubtful or mistaken identity and are incapable of defining themselves in other societies.

Therefore, the present study investigates the themes of alienation and identity crisis, which are areas of great significance in Postcolonial theory, by scrutinizing the collision of the American and British way of life with the Indian one, and the tug of traditions between two different cultures. At the same time, it explores the problems of assimilation and adaptation in new societies and in their own society as well through mimicry and hybridity.

Lois Tyson, in her book *Critical Theory Today*, states that "feeling of being caught between cultures... to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself" (5). That means, feeling conflicted between two different worlds, one is the

home of origin and the other is the world of adoption, makes peoples feel alienated and displaced. As a result, they are transformed from their “native” identity into something quite different a “westernized native”.

The feeling of alienation and the struggle for identity are what bring out our curiosity to undertake the research. But in fact, how Indian immigrants live in a foreign land and how they deal with sufferings and troubles of assimilation and adaptation in another country motivates us to discuss and examine this conflict of different cultures that makes the characters come into dilemmas and clashes.

Alienation and the question of identity in literature have been the core issue of most writers over age. The migration to other countries can be voluntary or in-voluntary, but in both ways, the diasporic writers experience the two worlds, culturally and emotionally different from one another. Therefore, this dissertation proposes to work for the fulfillment of the present following objectives:

- First, it endeavors to give the reader an overview about the Indian English literature and provides richer knowledge about the Indian diaspora and the postcolonial literature. Desai indicates that “solid knowledge took off and vanished to the moon” (71); thus, this conduct also clarifies and explains the concepts of postcolonial theory such as alienation, identity, hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence and assimilation.
- Second, it attempts to provide an insight about the difficulties and obstacles people face especially those who were born in India and immigrated to a foreign land.
- Finally, the study aims to analyze and investigate the themes of alienation and identity crisis, while keeping in mind the contemporary Postcolonial and the hybrid world with the lenses offered by the postcolonial theory in light of Homi Bhabha concepts of

hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence, through the diagnosis of the work of Kiran Desai *TIL*.

In *TIL*, every character feels alienated and conflicts with his or her identity, because every character feels the push and pull of the different cultures and different traditions. So, this extended essay is supposed to answer the following main question: how does Kiran Desai picture the issue of alienation and identity crisis in her novel *TIL*?

In order to answer this question, this study attempts to answer the following sub-questions:

- How does Desai portray the diasporic experience in *TIL*?
- How is alienation reflected in the psyche of characters?
- How do the selected characters deal with problems of migration? And how do they react to the new culture?
- Should the characters assimilate into American or British culture? Will they be betraying their roots if they do?

Many researchers have shown interest in this topic, and in Desai's literary corpus for their investigation. Critics have praised Desai's profound treatment of the issues of alienation and identity crisis in both the motherland and the adopted one.

Among the researchers, who have attempted to examine these dilemmas of alienation and identity crisis in Desai's novel are Muhammad Asim Mahmood and Faiza Noureen. In their article "Ambivalence of Power Relations and Resulting Alienation and Identity Crisis in Kiran Desai's *the inheritance of loss*" (2014). The authors focus on the idea of ambivalence of the colonial discourse to unveil the intrinsic complexity of the power relations and the way they determine the human psyche which endeavours to resolve the human tendency towards

them. This conduct also recognizes how the imbalanced power relations can lead towards alienation and identity crisis.

In addition, a study conducted by the research scholar Abraham Panavelil Abraham under the title “Postcolonial Dilemmas in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance Of Loss*” (2017) declares that “uprooting from one’s own home land is antagonizing process that brings numerous material and emotional traumas in the process of rerooting in an alien land” (1). That is to say, the conditions and sufferings that have been faced by those people, who left their country by some reason bring them a painful experience and create several material and emotional traumas in a foreign land.

Another researcher, who has shown interest in this topic, is Kasenija Kondali in his study under the title “Migration, Globalization and Divided Identity in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*” (Feb 2018). In this article, Kondali claims that migration, Postcolonial struggles and diasporic existence combine and detach different worlds and characters. He also examines how tensions between colonial hegemony of the past influence the characters who are hanging between assimilation and resistance and the conflict to assure their personal and national identities.

Dr G Chenna Reddy, on the other hand, points out in his research entitled “The Theme of Alienation in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*” (November 2015) that Desai tackles different themes in her novel, among them are isolation and issues related to loss of identity. He also explains how the author pictured the sense of loss that has started with the Judge, who tries to mimic the English people and is alienated in the process of the colonial period. As well, this researcher depicts how Desai captured the meaning of existing between East and West and portrayed the way to live as an immigrant in a strange land through the character of Biju.

Furthermore, Josena K Joseph, in his article “A Study of Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* as A Novel of Exile and Isolation” (August 2019) demonstrates how Desai described the sufferings of exile and isolation and represented the postcolonial obscurities. He concentrates on the central characters Jemu and Biju and how their “blinding desire for better life” (884) drives to their alienation. Moreover, this conduct discusses the reasons that led to their migration, their cultural clash and their conflicts to survive in a foreign land and how they respond to their diaspora.

This research is going to describe, analyze and interpret the issue of identity crisis and the effects of alienation and estrangement on the psyche of the selected characters in *TIL*; therefore, this novel will be studied from the Postcolonial perspective.

This study is based on a Postcolonial approach to literature that endeavors at validating the existence of the identity problems in relation with colonialism, and portraying some issues of identification such as mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence with accordance to Bhabha.

The dissertation is divided into two main chapters: the first chapter entitled “Knowledge is power: Historical and Theoretical Backdrop” sheds the light on the historical background of the Indian English literature and focuses on the Indian novel during twenty first century. Moreover, it clarifies the Indian Diaspora and Postcolonial Literature as well. Eventually, this chapter ends with Postcolonial theory by illustrating Bhabha concepts such as Hybridity, Mimicry and Ambivalence. It also deals with the explanation of the concepts of alienation, assimilation and identity crisis.

The second chapter is entitled “Echoes of Alienation and Identity Crisis in *The Inheritance of Loss*”. It goes to study the analysis of the selected characters’ feeling of alienation and their struggle for identity as Indian immigrants as reflected in Desai’s *TIL*. It

General Introduction

begins with a brief introduction of Kiran Desai as diasporic novelist. Then, it explores her masterpiece *The Inheritance of Loss* as diasporic novel. Finally, the chapter moves on to the main objective, which is aimed at analyzing the themes of alienation and identity crisis in *TIL*.

CHAPTER ONE:
KNOWLEDGE IS POWER:
HISTORICAL AND
THEORETICAL BACKDROP

Introduction

“We are not gods but wounded creatures, cracked lenses capable
only of fractured perceptions” (Rushdie 12)

It is convenient to say that Diasporic Indian English literature is a significant genre depicting the mentalities and experiences of Indian diaspora in a broad sense along with postcolonial historicity. Being the representatives of the Indian diaspora, diasporic Indian writers succeed in declaiming the readers of Indian English literature in a susceptible, unpretentious and modest style while conveying a sense of the global experience of immigration.

This chapter is a historical and theoretical examination which attempts to provide a historical overview about Indian English literature and Indian diaspora, focusing on the novel form. Moreover, it sheds the light on both postcolonial theory and literature, illustrating the most important concepts such as alienation, identity, hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence and assimilation.

1. Indian English Literature

India had been a colony of British Empire for about 200 years. In order to have an effective ruling of this country with the help of Indian people, the British government introduced the English language into the Indian education system. Consequently, the English education highly affected the Indian literary scene; as a result, new modes of prose, poetry, drama and novel in English were emerged. In this vein, K.R Srinivasa Iyengar stated that;

Western education was as yet carrying all before it. It was the 'open sesame' to knowledge, freedom, power, it cut the old bonds of convention and tradition; it let in light into the old darks rooms of an obscurantist faith; and it made a new world and a new life possible for its beneficiaries. (qtd. in Mahanta et al 38)

Indian English literature, also known as Indian Writing in English, refers to the works of Indian writers written in the English language and whose native or co-native language can be any of the various languages of India. Indian English writers used the English language only as a mean of expression to convey an Indian experience.

The history of IEL began with Sake Dean Mahomet's book *Travels of Dean Mahomet*. It was the first book written by an Indian in English which was published in 1793 in England. Actually, Indian novels in English did not come fully to light until the beginning of the organized movements of civil obedience against British Imperialism. The first Indian novel written in English was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* in 1864.

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a turbulent growth of the Indian English novel. Romesh Chandra Dutt was a significant figure at that period. He wrote six novels in Bengali and translated two out of them into English: *The Lake of Palms* (1902) and *The Slave Girl of Agra* (1909) which they were published in London.

The following years also saw a remarkable event in the field of Indian English literature with the emergence of the trinity Raja Rao, R.K Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand. They marked a great change in their novels by portraying the feelings, emotions and traumas experienced by the Indians. They differently tackled the problems of the time.

In his article "*Pigeon-Indian: Some Notes on Indian English Writing*", R.K Narayan emphasized the necessity of nativizing the English language to foreground the Indian literature, he states, "I believe that Indian English Writing has to stay as a literature of Indian because it is based on Indian English language of the most vital character like Irish English, American English" (Naik 24). In the same manner, Raja Rao advocated Narayan's standpoint in his work *Kanthapura* (1989), Rao professes that "English is not really an alien language to us... We are all instinctively bilingual... We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us" (preface). In the same vein, Kamla Das insisted to give English a local touch in order to maintain a distinct Indian flavor, she points out in her poem *An Introduction*(1985) that;

The language I speak
Becomes mine, its distortions,
Its queerness
All mine, mine alone
It is half English, half
Indian, funny perhaps, but its honest
It is as human as I am human. (8)

Beside this trio, the path was paved for the women Indian writers like Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala. They are interested in the psychological space in which their characters strife towards a privatized and individualistic self-awareness, basically acquainted with western ideals. The authors were also tormented by a sense of alienation which it became a prominent theme in their writings.

In the late of the twentieth century, precisely during the 1980s and 1990s, a new generation of Indian English writers had emerged, and India had become as a leading literary nation. The new authors not only tried to represent life in modern India but also endeavored to explore much more limited India and cultural narrative frameworks. In particular, they wanted to globalize India and re-inscribe the past through their writing. The turning point was with Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* which made him the first writer of Indian Diaspora to be one of the elite international authors. Another sparkling star of Indian English literature was Arundhati Roy. His novel *The God of Small Things* took the world with a storm and became an international best-seller. Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*, Ardishir Vakil's *Beach Boy* and Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* are some other prominent writers of Indian origin.

Indian English writers have celebrated Indian English on the national and the international scenery by blending English with mother tongues. They are attempting to write in different manner, they create their own language Indian-English which is extremely distinct from English-English. This new literary variety of English has a peculiar flavor of Indianess. They introduced what was one strange has now become an indispensable component of own intellectual and cultural life. In short, Indian writers have not only nativized the English in terms of stylistic aspects, but rather accumulated the British language in terms of Indianized context.

Indeed, Indian writing in English has existed for about 150 years. It is the outcome of the historical contact of the English culture with the Indian culture. It expresses cultural experiences, Indian heritage and a shared tradition. Due to the accusations of being imitative, shallow, ostensible and superficial, IEL has to prove itself on the grounds compared to literature produced in other Indian languages. Therefore, the new generation of Indian

English writers has addressed several themes and subject matters by using the English language. In fact, the distinctive characteristic of IWE is that the English language is only the outer cover of expression, and that the literary philosophy sticks around Indian. In brief, IEL has remained Indian in essence and in context.

Indian Writing in English is a real adventure to explain the ever rare gems of Indian English literature. From being unique, exceptional and unconventional, IWE has succeeded to be a new form of Indian culture wherein Indian writers used Indian words along with English ones; as consequence, a blend of Indian and Western cultures were reproduced.

2. Indian Diaspora

The Diaspora has approximately 25 million inhabitants and they have settled in important areas of the world. The Indian diaspora is rated to be the second largest place in the world and has a variegated global presence. According to Amitav Gosh, “the Indian diaspora is one of the most important demographic dislocations of present day which is growing and assuming the form of representative of a significant force in global culture” (Praveena 177). Nowadays, it has become a personal choice of individual for numerous reasons, for instance, free trade and commerce, education and academic pursuit and for better standards of life.

Diaspora theory with its different characteristics has affected the literature of every language of the world. This literature is called ‘diasporic literature’. Hence, diasporic literature is a general term that involves all the literary works created by the authors outside their homeland; however, these works are related with native origin and culture. Diasporic literature has its origins in the recognition of loneliness, estrangement and loss which appeared as a consequence of expatriation and migration.

Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai and many others are Indian diasporic writers who have explored their diasporic experience and dealt with the different issues of diaspora through literature in English. Salman Rushdie highlights the positive side of diaspora and concentrates on the crisis moments in his famous essay “*Imaginary Homelands*”, and states that “to live as migrant may well evoke a sense of loss but on the other hand, it opens different windows of possibility to have new knowledge. This diasporic experience can be the source of creativity and can give birth to dignified feelings” (10). Thus, living as migrant gives the opportunity to have a double perspective to be able to experience multiple cultural modes.

Indian writers of diaspora generally described migrant characters from their own dislocated community. They raise questions related to the sense of alienation, assimilation, the quest for identity, homeland, marginalization, displacement and dislocation, fragmentation, memory and nostalgia, emergence of new patterns of life, struggle between generations and cultural dilemmas. According to Rushdie,

The Indian writers who write from outside India... are obliged to deal with broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost... one physical alienation from India at almost inevitably... precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indians of the mind. (10)

It is universally accepted fact that Indian diaspora writers set a tendency since the independence, and Indian diaspora literature irrespective of style, language, literary form and technique attracts the readers crossing the borders. It furnishes the readers enormous opinions

and views on the Indian culture and its flavors and on India as a country as well. It also sheds the light on the traditions and social status of the Indian people.

3. Postcolonial Literature: A Historical Glimpse

Postcolonial literature is the literature that is identified by its opposition to colonialism. This literature depicts the struggle of the marginalized people who faced poverty and cultural disturbance under the colonial rule. Ashcroft argues that “we use the term “postcolonial” however, to cover all the culture affected by the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft et al 2).

Historically, many countries were under the rule of the European colonizer, among those countries is India which achieved its independence in 1947 from the British colonizer. Along this period, postcolonial literature was born to introduce to the world the uncertainty of cultural and national identities of the colonized people.

Many Indian writers in this era have used the pen to fight the harsh policies of the colonizer and all the forms of racism, slavery and oppression against the colonized. Among those writers are Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ania Loomba.

Homi Bhabha, the Indian writer who is considered as a prominent figure in the postcolonial studies, he was influenced by western poststructuralist theorists such as Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan. He developed central concepts that are related to the postcolonial theory in his book *“The Location of Culture”* (1994), for instance, mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence. These concepts present and describe the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized and depict the way the colonized people resist against the power of the colonizer. For him, “Postcolonial criticism witnesses the unequal and uneven forces of

cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order” (171).

Another Indian writer is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. She is best known for her essay “*Can The Subaltern Speak?*” (1988) in which she points out to the representation of the third world within western discourse. According to her, “...subaltern is not just a classy word for “oppressed”, for the other, for somebody who’s not getting a piece of the pie ... In post-colonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern -a space of difference” (Sersour 4).

To end up, Indian writers in the postcolonial context have produced prominent works where they stood against the colonizer and fought its oppression against them.

4. Trajectories of Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory or postcolonialism is considered as the continuation of colonialism when the colonies achieved freedom only from the political rule, those colonies are known as the marginalized people or the colonized people who live in countries like Pakistan, India, Shrilank, Nigeria, Australia, South Africa, Canada, Asian countries and many Islamic countries. They experienced various kinds of suppression, slavery, emigration, displacement, resistance, cultural and racial discrimination.

Postcolonial theory is a critical theory that concentrates on the colonial experience from the colonized perspective. It had begun in the late of 70’s with theorists as Edward Said with his famous theory “*Orientalism*” (1978), then it developed to be named colonialist discourse theory with critics such as Spivak in her collection of interviews and recollections “*The Post-colonial Critic*” (1990) and Homi Bhabha with his book “*The Location of Culture*” (1994).

Otherwise, this theory can be identified as the study of the colonial impact on cultures and societies from Post-World War II to the present day. It investigates the political, psychological, and socio-political effects of the colonization on the colonized countries. It is based on the combination of both the material effects of colonialism and the different everyday hidden responses to it.

Aschcroft et al in 1989 gave a brief overview about post-colonial theory where he emphasizes that; “Post-colonial literary theory appears after the failure of western theory to bargain adequately the complications and different cultural determinations of post-colonial composing” (1).

Therefore, post-colonial theory can be represented as the field which unravel the effects of colonialism on the psyche of the colonized people, and brings the light into themes and concepts such as alienation, identity, hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence and assimilation.

4.1. Alienation

The theme of alienation is an old phenomenon but it has appeared in the present age and stands as vital concept in modern literature.

The term alienation itself is originated from the Latin noun “Alienus” which means another person or another place, and by turn it came from the word “Alienus” meaning “other” or another. Literally, the word alienation means estrangement and separation from other people, society or work. According to Britannica perspective “An alienated man is ... Stranger to himself, he has lost his essence, he is always in search for his being.”

The terminology alienation has been used and discussed by many psychologists, theorists and philosophers like Eric Fromm(1972) the social psychologist who considers

alienation as an expanded phenomena, in which the one is said to be alienated from society, culture, nature, others and most importantly from himself .

Moreover, the philosopher Karl Marx sees alienation as subversive socio-psychological problem of the capitalist society. For him alienation is represented in work and one's impotent features are those of sociality and individuality. According to Karl Marx alienation means;

First, that the work is external to the worker, that it is not a part of his nature, that consequently he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery, not of well-being, does not develop freely a physical and mental energy, but is physically exhausted and mentally debased.... His work is not voluntary but imposed, forced labor.... Finally, the alienated character of work for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his work but work for someone else, that in work he does not belong to himself but to another person. (Marx 398)

On the other hand, Malvin Seeman has discussed this theme from the psychological side, for him the process of alienation is internal condition of individuals in which the individual is alienated from culture and society, from work and from other individuals who affect him, and lead him to experience self-estrangement, meaninglessness, isolation and powerlessness.

Yet, alienation is the condition where the one suffers from the feeling of not belonging to his surroundings what leads him to experience the feeling of self-pity and self-introspection and brings a problem inside his identity.

4.2. Identity

Identity is a significant property which an individual possesses. As a concept, “identity” has been discussed by many social scientists, anthropologists, and psychologists who defined it with different meanings. For Castells, identity is “the people’s source of meaning and experience” (Albuhamdan & Anthony 2). For Kath Woodward identity is “marked by similarity that is of the people like us and by difference of those who are not” (ibid). So, identity remains entrenched in both the subjective and the collective substratum of an individual’s being.

Whereas Tiwari explains in her article, “*Identity Crisis Indian English Fiction of Post 1980’s*”, that “identity is a multi-dimensional word. In psychology and sociology: identity is a person’s conception and expression of his/her individuality and or group affiliation such as national identity and cultural identity” (6). Based on Tiwari’s remark it is understood that identity links an individual to the group or community that he/she belongs to.

Coming to postcolonial literature, it is difficult to define “identity” because in most cases it is linked to the so-called “other” by mean the one can recognize himself/herself with the existence of the other. Kath Wood argues that identity is how i see myself and how others see me; identity encompasses the external and the subjective. It is a socially renowned by others not just by me. Hence, when our identity is recognized by others for our race, class, gender, ethnicity and religion ... it helps us to figure out our place in this world and brings us the strong feelings of individuality and uniqueness.

In fact, the question of identity and culture has been always the major concern for postcolonial writers who want to affirm their own identity that differs from the colonizer’s one. In the book “*The Empire Writes Back*” (2002), it is stated that nowadays more than quarters of the people who live in the entire world have had their lives formed by the

experience of colonialism (Ashcroft et al 1). Those writers has represented the impact of the colonizer on the colonized what brings to the indigenus the so-called identity crisis. Mercer (1990) clarifies that “identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” (43).

Homi Bhabha gave a brief overview about identity in his book “*The Location of Culture*”, in which he set eyes on the impact of colonization on the colonized culture and identity, especially in terms of cultural hybridity which stands as challenge to the fixed and traditional identification, for him, “this interstitial passage between fixed identification opens up the possibility of cultural hybridity that entertains the difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (4).

4.3. Hybridity

One of the most disputable terms in postcolonial context is hybridity which refers to the cultural exchange.

According to Peter Barry, hybridity is “the situation whereby individuals and groups belong simultaneously to more than one culture” (199). By means hybridity stands in a situation where the one is caught between two different cultures, when the one leaves his/her own language, costumes, religion and goes to another; he/she experiences new culture and new language which leads him/her to live a dual life and brings him/her a lost identity .

The theorist Homi Bhabha, in his book “*The Location of Culture*”, introduced the term “hybridity” where he considers hybridity as a result of the strong oppression of the colonization on the indigenus whom became incapable to go beyond the limits of the colonial discourse. He declares that “Hybridity is the sign of the revaluation of assumption of

colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity affects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacements of all sites of discrimination and domination” (160).

Further, Homi Bhabha brings the term hybridity and links it to the so-called “Third Space” where the one lives between two spaces and two different cultures which bring a person a merged identity. For him “The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is “The third Space” which enables other positions to emerge” (211).

4.4. Mimicry

The term mimicry has been always a crucial theme for many theorists and thinkers who view this concept as a fully imitation of others in various aspects.

Mimicry happens when the one feels his/her personality is less important inside the society what leads him/her to imitate other people’s behaviour and way of life, and becomes mimicking of someone else.

From postcolonial perspective, Ashcroft et al states, “mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of behaviour of the colonized” (139). By means the colonial discourse is the responsible for the imitation of the colonized to the colonizer, when the colonized wants to be exactly like the colonizer by adopting his cultural institutions, values, habits and assumptions the result would be extremely “Blurred Copy” as the so-called mimicry.

Moreover, the concept mimicry has been essential theme in Homi Bhabha studies, whereby he views the native people are blindly imitating the western culture and trying to be just like them as he emphasizes “... that is almost the same, but not quite the colonized

therefore become almost the same but not white” (86). He also relates mimicry with the term ambivalence where he points out that “mimicry has a double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority (88).

4.5. Ambivalence

Many theorists have tackled the theme ambivalence from different aspects. Psychologically, the term ambivalence has been defined by the theorist Young as “a state of mind in person who wants one thing and its opposite simultaneously” (161). By means, it is the act of being attracted to and get repulsed from an object, person or an action in the same time.

Homi Bhabha represents the term ambivalence as a part of colonial dominance. According to him, ambivalence “describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizers and colonized” (qtd. in Ashcroft et al 10). In other words, the mix of attraction and repulsion represents the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. For him the ambivalence in the relationship happens because the colonized subject is never opposed completely to the colonizer rather than some of colonized subjects either “complicit” or “resist”.

Over and above, the term ambivalence has a dimension in dividing the feelings of the colonized towards the colonizer between positive and negative. Loomba set eyes on this dimensions, she states that “In reality any simple binary opposition between 'colonisers' and 'colonised' or between races is undercut by the fact that there are enormous cultural and racial differences within each of these categories as well as cross-overs” (105).

4.6. Assimilation

The term assimilation has been a vital concept for most sociologists, anthropologists and theorists who gave different definitions for the terminology assimilation.

In the article "*A Study in the Process of Assimilation*", H.G. Duncan defines assimilation as "a process, for the most part conscious, by which individuals and groups come to have sentiments and attitudes similar to those held by other persons or groups in regard to a particular value at a given time" (qtd. in Hirsh35). In other word, to assimilate is to make like or similar. Assimilation depicts the process of political, cultural and social amalgamation of a minority group into a dominant society and culture.

According to Britannica, assimilation in anthropology and sociology is "the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture of a society. The process of assimilating involves taking on traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society."

In addition, the term assimilation is used in reference to immigrant groups who integrate themselves into the new country and adopt the culture of the majority what leads to be like them in terms of behaviour, values and practices. Immigrants attain new attitudes and new culture what results in people becoming alike, this process of assimilation among immigrants can be gradual or rapid and it can be also compulsory or spontaneous. The Geography Professor William A.V Clark defined immigrant assimilation as "the process that occurs spontaneously and often unintended in the course of interaction between majority and minority groups" (Assimilation: Introduction to Sociology).

Conclusion

Indian writers have raised the pen to represent all the harsh policies against the Indian people, and depict all the impacts of colonialism on the psyche of the colonized under the postcolonial literature. Those writers enlighten the Indian diaspora using the Indian English literature where they unravelled all the Indian immigrant experiences. Hence, Indian Writing in English has attracted a wide and deep attention both in India and abroad, and turned out to be a modern form of Indian culture and voice.

CHAPTER TWO:
ECHOES OF ALIENATION AND
IDENTITY CRISIS IN
THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS

Introduction

One of the essential functions of any literary work is to enlighten human beings about human predicaments and make them realize the intricacies of human life. Kiran Desai, through her novel, goes to a long, extended journey between India, Britain and the United States, in a prolific narrative that mixes between immersing in the souls of the characters and what appears to be dark, drenched in depression, or absurdly comic. Thus, almost all the characters in *The Inheritance of Loss* have their own reasons of being estranged and feeling alienated. They always find their identity in between powerful and powerless, superior and inferior, Indian and British or American. The characters in the novel sustain with identity crisis. They all tried to cope up with the situation in their own way.

Therefore, this second chapter is the analysis of the selected characters (Jemubhai and Biju) of the novel, sticking to the postcolonial approach which was the area of focus in the previous chapter with accordance to Homi Bhabha conceptions of Mimicry, Hybridity and Ambivalence.

1. Kiran Desai as Diasporic Writer

Kiran Desai is the daughter of the author Anita Desai. In writing, she has inherited her mother's talent. She is a recognized diasporic writer of Indian origin. She grew up in India, Britain and the United States where she has settled down. Through her writings, Desai not only re-conceptualizes the Indian diaspora but also she historicizes her Indian protagonists' diasporic journeys in order to draw an analogy between Indian Diaspora in the British colonialism in the past and the American neo-imperialism in the present.

As a diasporic writer, Desai detected all the diasporic elements and contemporary issues like globalization, multiculturalism, alienation, identity crisis, assimilation and nostalgia in her fictions. Her treatment of all these themes made her one of the most highly acclaimed Indian writers of the second generation. She won the Betty Trask Award from the Society of Authors for best new novels by citizens of the Commonwealth of Nations under the age of 35 for her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* in 1998. Her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* received the Man Booker Prize in 2006, as well as the National Book Critics Circle in 2007. She also awarded a 2013 Berlin Prize Fellowship at the American Academy in Berlin.

HGO is a peculiar tale which combines between superstitious magic and satirical comedy. It attempts to find out the backgrounds of social, psychological, religious and spiritual events that diligently shaped Desai's fictional art. Unlike numerous diasporic writers, who expend pages and pages depicting Indian culture and traditions because of their nostalgia to motherland, Desai, through her novel, describes daily life of an ordinary man; everything appears to be normal and ordinary. This made the novel very special since there is nothing so special about the characters depicted.

The creativity with words, an equated balance and the scene description in her narration make Desai deserves the awards she received. She has a creative power to convey the invisible emotional reality. She has experimented with various forms of narrative techniques in her fiction. Her talent of using irony and humor make her novels worth reading. No one can deny that she is an iconic and fabulous writer of the Indian diaspora and Salman Rushdie described her as an elegant writer in demonstrating the sufferings of exiles. She has a place among the great contemporary Indian authors who study life and society in India (Asghar 29).

2. *The Inheritance of Loss* as Diasporic Novel

The exceptional novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*, produces an exotic influence on the literature of Indian diaspora. It portrays three worlds India, Europe and America at the same time. Kiran Desai describes the basic themes of her novel in an interview to *Rediff.com*; she said,

The second book isn't a book that is set entirely in India, but one that tries to capture what it means to live between East and West and what it means to be an immigrant. On a deeper level, it explores what happens when a Western element is introduced into a country that is not of the West, which is what happened, of course, during colonial times and is happening again with India's new relationship with the States.

In the article "*Loss and Longing*", it is stated that *The Inheritance of Loss* is "a story of much loss as it is of the characters, as a consequence of their class backgrounds and postmodern legacies. They thereby become the inheritors of loss" (Bandurang32). According to Mala Bandurang, *TIL* is the story of fake hope of immigrants and the deep belief of comfort and well-being in a foreign land in which Desai depicts the struggles faced by her characters throughout their journey in a host land.

The title of the novel is a contradiction because an “inheritance” generally encompasses an asset, a gain or something precious rather than a loss. The author Kiran Desai has demonstrated that her novel’s title speaks of little failures, passed down from ancestors to descendants. So, in order to back up her view, she has used Jorge Luis Borges’ poem “*Boast of Quietness*” to serve as an appropriate epigraph for *The Inheritance of Loss*. The poem speaks about the difficulties in achieving conviction and satisfaction, about universal human feelings, and above all it speaks about loss. The following lines from Borges’ poem are a reflection to this fact,

Time is living me.
More silent than my shadow, I pass through the loftily covetous multitude.
They are indispensable, singular, worthy of tomorrow.
My name is someone and any one.
I walk slowly, like one who comes from so far away he doesn't expect to arrive.
(Borges)

The Inheritance of Loss is an enthusiastically written novel that combines colloquial and more literary styles. The textual study of this novel has a diversified meanings and interpretations regarding to a number of readers and a number of readings too.

3. The Notion of Alienation

Nowadays, the Indian diaspora has emerged with variety of culture, plenty of histories and a deep sense of survival. The survival process of the diasporic individual in between “the origin home” and “the adopted world” is the journey undertaken in the entire alienation process which experienced by immigrants in real life situations. This confrontation with another culture can make a person feel alienated both in his/her motherland and the strange land. This novel; therefore, expresses the theme of alienation.

Alienation is estrangement from society or other people. It mirrors a state of man's detachment from himself with a predominant sense of loneliness or a feeling of rejection that accompanies any behavior in which the person is forced to self-destruct.

Kiran Desai succeeded in depicting the alienation and the encounter of East and the West with the help of two characters, Jemubhai and Biju. Both of them have been immigrated to West in the hope of their better life. After a career in the ICS that followed his education in Cambridge in the 1930s, the Judge settles in Kalimpong which is situated at the foot hills of mount Kanchenjunga in the North Eastern part of India. His rejection of his family in addition to his native heritage in pursuit of false ideals makes him an alienated person in his own land. Another is Biju, the cook's son, strives as an illegal immigrant in America and the only character in the book who is unwanted in the country he lives in. His estrangement originates from his immigration to New York, being driven by the phantom about the West.

The feeling of anguish permeates throughout the novel as it is observed by B.P. Giri, "it is clear from this caste of uprooted characters that a certain sense of alienation and loss, said to be an integral part of the diasporic condition, is at the heart of the novel's inheritance" (Akhter et al 127). Thus, the sense of being marginalized obliged them to turn back to India. Kiran Desai weaves a story full of coincidence that is both heart breaking and hopeful.

In *The Inheritance of Loss* throughout the character of Biju, Desai expresses her own feelings and emotions. Biju acts as the mouth piece of the author. Biju felt alienated in New York, where he moved from one job to another and from one hotel to another and tried to avoid the United States immigration authorities. The novel has an autobiographical overtones and it can be viewed as having themes of assimilation, ambivalence, belonging and home coming.

3.1. Assimilation

From the beginnings of literature, poets and writers have based their narratives on crossing borders, on wandering, on exile, on encounters beyond the familiar. The stranger is an archetype in epic poetry, in novels. The tension between alienation and assimilation has always been a basic theme.

(Josena 886)

This quotation confirms that assimilation is a basic theme in any literature. In a website, Mack and Young state that assimilation is “the compulsory or combination of two previously different groups into one” (Hirsh); that means, assimilation is the amalgamation of two distinct cultures into a single culture in which attitudes and behaviors of the individuals are united including characteristics of both cultures.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai represented the process of assimilation experienced by the immigrants through the characters of Jemubhai and Biju. But they responded to the new culture very differently, to which Jemubhai shows his acceptance of the western ideology and exposes his ignorance of the native environment, while Biju resists the Western ideology and appreciates his own cultural traditions.

Jemubhai Popatlal Patel has lived a wretched and miserable family life. His father sends him to London to complete his education in order to enter civil service under English government which was very rarely happen at that time; he pins his hopes on him for better future. So, he got married to his wife Bella (Nimi) for money to get education in Cambridge.

Jemubhai deprecated the Indian customs and traditions while his journey to England. For instance, when he was asked to throw away the coconut that was given by his mother for his safe journey, he refused to do so. From his early days in London, he adopt the western

culture as an attempt to assimilate the British culture by using white powder, western attire, and his accent in England but he failed. The British people do not accept him as a part of their culture, they consider him as an alien and they neglected him; “He was a foreigner –a foreigner– every bit of him screamed. Only his digestion dissented and told him he was home” (TIL 167). Even his teachers mocked him for his Gujarati accent. This kind of existence and his experience led to his alienation and isolation in a strange land.

When Jemu returns to India after becoming a judge, he does not feel as native in his motherland and he fails to cope up with his relatives and his unsophisticated Indian wife because of his English traits and sense of his past life in England. He feels everything irrelevant related to his own culture. This creates a sense of alienation in his native land. In fact, his estrangement in India was not only because of his western appearance and behavior, but also because of the way he was treated by his own people in his own country. He was not treated as an Indian but as a stranger in his own country. It is further supported by his father’s words “It was a mistake to send you away. You have become like a stranger to us” (TIL 306).

After retiring from his career, the Judge decides not to merge into the society of Kalimpong but chooses to remain alone except for his dog, his cook and his granddaughter. He bought Cho Oyu¹ which “is very isolated [house] but the land has potential” (28), the geographical location itself reflects alienation in the family. His behavior connotes his isolation from his Indian community and his love towards the Western form of privacy. Bhabha criticizes that “a desire that reverses in part the colonial appropriation by now producing a partial vision of the colonizer’s presence; a gaze of otherness, that shares the acuity of the genealogical gaze” (93). The Judge feels that the place of the house gives him a shelter. The house is a means of escape for him. He can hardly speak the dialect of the

¹Cho Oyu: a crumbling house built by a Scotsman in the northeastern Himalayas.

ordinary people of Kalimpong. “The judge could live here, in this shell, this skull, with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country, for this time he would not learn the language. He never went back to court” (29).

On the other hand, the character of Biju, the cook’s son, represents thousands of immigrants who were obliged to plan their lives in a new land with the hope of a better life. He migrated to America with lots of dreams of achieving success, getting a good job and he will be treated differently there. However, Biju’s dreams disperse as he becomes an illegal immigrant and escapes from being held by the migrant authorities by altering his work from one job to another “Biju changed jobs so often, like a fugitive on the run, no papers” (Desai 3). He had to live in a basement in very poor circumstances. He was exploited by his employers and even prohibited from his basic human rights. Even the established Indian immigrants there were not ready to help him.

During his lodging in the United States, unlike the Judge, Biju does not give up his Indian identity. Even though he fails to understand the Western culture, he does not transform his misfortune into hatred. His experience there helps him to appreciate his own culture where he can understand its customs and people.

Interestingly, Biju does not succeed to cope with the Western society; his Indian values cannot permit him to do so, it is very difficult for him to get rid of his traditions and native culture. That’s why he rejected to work in restaurants those who serve dishes with beef. When he finds a job, he always asks:

“Do you cook with beef?”

“We have a Philly steak sandwich.”

“Sorry. I can't work here.”

“They worship the cow,” he heard the owner of the establishment tell someone in

the kitchen and he felt tribal and astonishing. (Desai 137)

When he meets other Indians, he gets surprised at how they fully assimilate to the American culture. He is shocked to see Hindu Indians eating beef and he could not accept this status, he states that “One should not give up one’s religion, the principles of one’s parents and their parents before them.... You had to live according to something” (TIL 136). This situation showed his hesitation to adjust with the foreign culture. The result is his isolation in a strange land.

Biju joins Harish Harry²'s restaurant because it gives him feel of his homeland. Biju works hard to adapt with western culture, but the new culture does not admit him. His friend Saeed³ told him the ways of survival in USA in difficult circumstances. However, Biju feels himself thrown away in a strange world; he becomes unable to deal with the hard circumstances. Saeed seems to be more pragmatic than Biju. He has an easy life in a foreign land without any qualms. He has not been influenced by the hardships of an immigrant and he never thinks of leaving America. On the contrary, Biju is a lost man in the new world. He confronts repeated misfortunes and miseries. He is very sensitive to such changes and withstands the Western culture in which he is trapped in and yearns for his home back in India.

Actually, Biju returns back home when he knows that his father needs him. Here again the Indian values win because it is recognized that the Indian people run to accompany their loved ones when they are in need. He told himself that;

²Harish Harry: is the owner of the Ghandhi Café, the last restaurant in which Biju works. He uses globalization to his advantage in selling generic Indian food to Americans.

³SaeedSaeed: is a Muslim man from Zanzibar and he is one of Biju’s coworkers at the Queen of Tarts Bakery. Biju comes to admire him for his resilience and his ability to not only survive but also thrive as an undocumented immigrant.

If he continued his life in New York, he might never see his pitaji⁴ again. It happened all the time; ten years passed, fifteen, the telegram arrived, or the phone call, the parent was gone and the child was too late. Or they returned and found they'd missed the entire last quarter of a lifetime, their parents like photo negatives. And there were worse tragedies. After the initial excitement was over, it often became obvious that the love was gone; for affection was only a habit after all, and people, they forgot, or they became accustomed to its absence. They returned and found just the facade; it had been eaten from inside, like Cho Oyu being gouged by termites from within.

(Desai 233)

So, He leaves the United States, deciding to abandon his American dream and return home to be poor in a way that is more tolerable to him. His diasporic experience assists him to originate Indianness in his mind. His disappointment with America is; therefore, illuminating, as he realizes he is better off going home than struggling to become part of the world of success and grappling to comprehend his new, alienated self.

To sum up, the Judge's story can be compared with Biju's story as both of these characters migrated to an alien land for a better future. They had to undergo many bitter experiences there. But they did not respond to it in the same manner. Jemubhai rejects his native culture and practices in order to get assimilated in the western culture. He is not aware that he is a slave to the authorities of a colonial past. He is unable to find his place neither in the East nor in the West. In contrast to Biju whose feelings for his own culture strengthened and he refused to adopt and assimilate the foreign culture. He could not avoid the call of his native land. His childhood memories and his loving father always attracted him. That's why; he forced to end his Diaspora. In his case, his isolation in the foreign country made him more attracted to his native land.

⁴Pitaji: an Indian word which means father.

3.2. Ambivalence

Exposure to different culture can also create ambivalence regarding one's own cultural identity. The resulting situation challenges all to face the same heart.

Wrenching questions that haunt the immigrant who am I? Where do i belong?

(qtd. Akhter et al 128)

Ambivalence is the situation whereby the one get attracted and repulsed from something in the same time. In the colonial discourse, ambivalence brings feelings of hatred and love for the same thing simultaneously.

In *The inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai represents what Bhabha calls ambivalence of colonial discourse through the main characters the Judge, Jemubhai, and the cook's son, Biju, where they suffer from a sense of ambivalence which leads them to develop a sense of loss. Both of them found themselves in a cultural conflict between East and West which made them live in a contradiction, confusion and frustration that never last and keep moving from one generation to another bringing for them feeling of alienation. In the novel, Desai presented her characters to explain how simultaneous experience of local, global and colonial creates "Ambivalence" inside the individual's identity. This novel enlightens the ambivalent relationship between the East and the West in the period of colonization and after it, where the physical colonization has disappeared to be replaced by the era of postcolonial period which was characterized by its resistance to the present authority. Characters such as Jemubhai have suffered in both of period's days of colonization and after it, where he got internal complexes including being alienated in both the alien land and the homeland.

All the characters inside the novel suffer from a sense of ambivalence that leads them to experience the feeling of alienation; among those characters is Jemubhai Patel, the embittered judge who lives in Kalimpong with his memories from the past when he was

young man lives in England and study law in Cambridge. Jemubhai was an Indian student with brown skin in England where he got rejection because of his accent, his culture and his color skin what made him dislike his native identity and brings him feeling of estrangement and shame for his own culture and skin color “He retreated into a solitude that grew in day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow” (TIL 39).

From postcolonial perspective, W.E.B Dubois used the term “Double Consciousness” to describe the division that happens inside the individual’s identity, what the judge becomes a victim for, he views the English as superior ones which puts him in a diasporic problem that aggravates his ambivalent nature “He envied the English ... He loathed Indians” (Desai 119) and makes him prefer suppression to keep his version of truth, the supremacy of the English culture “To suppress his Indian past and elevate himself above others in his community, the Judge holds fast to what he has learnt of performing English identity” (77).

Yet in the novel, Jemubhai depicts what Bhabha calls “The ambivalent nature of colonial discourse” in which the judge Jemubhai has an attraction for the whites despite all the subjugation he has received there. People in England avoid talking to him because of his dark color and stinking, and young girls used to hold their noses when passing across him. Jemubhai’s ambivalence appeared in his efforts to build an English identity exactly in the point when he has lost his confidence and courage to deprive his reality, the real him.

In fact, deep down inside him he was aware of his reality, he was conscious about being brown with Indian pronunciation. The judge became foreigner to himself, to everyone and even to his own culture, he came up with a habit that may cover his reality, a powder to conceal his brownness what brought him kind of mockery from his Indian family as one of

his sisters laughed at him and said “We sent you abroad to become a gentleman, and instead you have become a lady” (TIL 167). This remark reflected his admiration for the western culture and hatred for the Indians.

Furthermore, Kiran Desai has presented another character to enlighten the issue of ambivalence. Biju, the cook’s son, who was sent to America and lives there illegally, tries to have a place inside the American society. Biju presents the theory of Homi Bhabha that discusses the cultural contradiction that brings ambivalence for people who came from ex-colonies and live with the whites possessing awe for them. Biju is an Indian immigrant lives in America hates the whites because of the contradiction that happens between his native culture and the western culture what creates inside him a sense of ambivalence.

According to Kiran Desai, the relationship between the western people and the Indian people is characterized by “harm” whereby the Indian people had difficult times because of the western colonization. For her, immigrants who lived inside the western countries hated the whites and their culture what expresses the feelings of Biju who hated the whites because of the discrimination they used against him but stills living there hopes one day he would get place in and makes his father’s wish comes true to be big man in America .

To end up, both of the characters Jemubhai and Biju have suffer from a sense of ambivalence that put them in diasporic issue. The Judge has always admired the westerns and their way of life despite all the subjugation had received from them .In addition to the cook’s son who experienced the sense of ambivalence through his living inside a society that discriminates him for his native culture but stills hoping one day he will be a rich man there.

3.3. Home and Belonging

“Migration creates the desire for home, which in turn produces the rewriting of home. Home sickness or homelessness, the rejection of home or the longing for home becomes motivating factors in this rewriting. Home can only have meaning once one experiences a level of displacement from it”

(qtd. Singh 58)

The quotation above presents the problem of the immigrants who came from a community they were part of and leave it for reasons like employment, education, marriage and trade...etc. what put them in a diasporic issue and bring them a sense of alienation; therefore, they found themselves torn apart between two different cultures and caught in a no place and in the state of unbelonging.

In *TIL*, Kiran Desai set eyes on those immigrants who keep moving from one culture and homeland to another and depict this issue in characters such as the Judge who moved from (India to England) and the cook’s son from (India to America). Those characters suffer from a sense of displacement fight to invent a new life far away from India. The longing for another culture which is not like theirs brings them the feeling of alienation and displacement. When those characters left their original homeland they started changing and negotiating their own native identity with something quite different than theirs a “westernized identity”, they get caught in place of no-belonging what makes them question their origins “who am i? Where do i belong?

Actually, the displacement and the alienation that has been experienced by Jemubhai and Biju in both of their homeland and the alien land brings them a diasporic problem and makes the home as a space of “unheimlich”; “The sense of “unheimlich” or the feeling of “unhomely” at home makes the diasporic to both belong and unbelong.” (qtd. Jayaraman 56)

The judge Jemubhai Patel lived his life caught between his “imagination” as a white man names James Peter Paterson and his reality of being brown skin man with the name Jemubhai Popatlal Patel. After all the attempts that the Judge made in England to escape his origins and assimilate the westerns as much as possible. Jemubhai has returns to India as foreigner to everyone including himself inside his homeland. In fact, when Jemu has joined to the Civil Service of the British government in India, he decided to be foreigner in his land in terms of language, beliefs and culture what made the space inside this land as “unheimlich” for him.

Likewise, in the motherland the Judge found a place to live in far away from the other Indians, he bought a house from Scotsman, the first time he sees it “he felt he was entering a sensibility rather than a house” (TIL 28). Jemu loved the place because it provided him “with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country” (29) and made him proud to have that house due to his obsession with the western culture. Actually, the house symbolizes his place of being in in-betweeness, and keeps reminding him of his wasted life which was full of guilt and shame.

When the Judge began living in this place he started immediately adopting the British culture and considering himself more superior and important above the others in his society; “He loathed Indians, worked as an Englishman with the passion of hatred and for what he would become; he would be despised by absolutely everyone--English and Indians, both (Desai 119). The Judge hated the Indians and considers India as an alien land, for him he does not belong to that place but in the same time he cannot identify himself as a part of the English society because they still see him as an Indian man. Despite all the efforts and the attempts to be one of them the Judge never felt he is an English man for real, he was

completely aware of his unbelonging to the British society as well as the Indian community “he was a -foreigner- every bit of him screamed” (167).

Added to these feelings, Jemubhai lived in a confusion that changed him to be a violent hatred man for his wife and all his family, he turned to be more cruel towards his wife Nimi whom wanted to make her live in a shame and loneliness as he does.

Biju also shares the same cultural and emotional alienation with Jemubhai but he experienced the sense of alienation only in the western land. The cook’s son who migrated to America and settled in New York illegally didn’t succeed in America because he kept in touch with his native culture. Day after day he felt displaced, stranger and alienated inside the western country, he never experienced the feeling of belonging there.

In fact, he becomes aware of his displacement inside the American society not just from his native land, family, home and culture but also from his previous thoughts about his individual and communal belonging as Paul Jay states “One of the first things Biju learns after arriving in New York is that he belongs to a global South Asian diaspora with a long history, and this knowledge upsets everything he knows about his own identity.” (qtd. Kondali 109-10)

Finally, the cook’s son realized his real belonging and decided not to live as “a fake version of himself” (Desai 258), so he got back to India where he met his father again convinced that “the home is where the heart is”. The first time he arrived to his lovely mother land he felt freedom from all the apprehensions and anxieties he experienced in the foreign land. For him the American experience helped him to figure out where he belongs and showed him his real cultural identity. Actually, Biju never felt guilt about leaving America, he finally found his happiness when he met his father, despite all what he has lost, he could feel home again and that’s all what matters for him.

All in all, both of the characters faced displacement and alienation that led them look for their real home and belonging.

4. The Dilemma of Identity Crisis

The person's identity forms throughout his life and is affected by the life circumstances. Psychologically, identity is the conception and expression of a person's individuality. Identity can be seen as "the distinctive characteristic belonging to any given individual shared by all members of a particular social category or group" (Tiwari 6). It is also ascertained that individual's identity leads to complications and conflicts that the self of individual suffers. It is this crucial conflict that almost every human being encounters. This conflict is known as an identity crisis.

Identity crisis is a fact that no one want to change or suffer but they expect the other to change by all means in undergoing numerous cultural, religious and dislocation of land from one to another. The identity crisis, according to the psychologist Erik Erikson; is "one of the most important conflicts that people face in development... an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself" (Tiwari 6).

The Inheritance of Loss deals with the quest for individual identity and the struggle for self-determination of the protagonists Jemubhai and Biju. In her article "*Human Identities and Transculturalism in Kiran Desai's Inheritance of Loss*", Sanasam points out that "Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is replete with problems of human identities and the frustrations, associated with postcolonial impact and its aftermath" (qtd in Mulk Raj 216).

Kiran Desai described the life of hyphenated people who find themselves in a dilemma of their own identity and portrays multiple of postcolonial issues such as mimicry, cultural hybridity and the connection between place and culture, and shows different aspects

of the postcolonial reality on a different life stories faced by people who are trying to come to terms with a strong foreign influences.

4.1. The Mimic Man

When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizers' cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening.

(Ashcroft et al 124-25)

The above quoted lines show that colonization not only destroyed native culture but also induced the natives to abandon their own culture and to imitate the colonizers. Homi Bhabha, on the other hand, supports this idea by proposing that ex-colonized people face a challenge in crossing cultural boundaries, which is an identity issue. He points out that individuals coming from ex-colonized countries tend to show adoration towards the colonizers; so, they tried hard to be like them. He calls this attempt as 'Mimicry'.

In his book *Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha defines mimicry as “an imitation of language, culture, manner and idea of the colonizer that is done by the colonized. Mimicry is a kind of duplication but it being different instead of being same. It means that the colonized tries to copy the colonizer even almost the same, but not quite” (86). That means; mimicry is a fully imitation of the colonizers to be completely like them.

Kiran Desai's projection of negative influence of foreign cultures and the bending nature of Indian masses towards the western outlook is too much that following west, its codes and the dream of look-alike western people is so alive in the characters that they are thinking to be civilized is the only way to adore west.

In *the Inheritance of Loss*, the Judge Jemubhai is the best instance of the colonial aftermath. He keeps the colonial past even he lives in independence India. Jemu refuses to integrate cultures because he desires to establish a western identity. He has embraced the education, manners and values of white masters. He is mocked due to his westernized way of life. Jemubhai's life is nothing but the mimicry of the Europeans. Thus, Mimicry appears to be a post-colonial dilemma which Jemubhai experiences to establish an English identity as Desai described; "He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become, he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both" (119).

The Judge's identity as an Indian is questioned from the moment he boards the ship to Cambridge for Western education. He starts hating the Indians including his family and his wife and respecting the English "He did not like his wife's face, searched for his hatred, found beauty, and dismissed it... An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one" (TIL 168); he feels that "Never again would he know love for a human being that wasn't adulterated by another" (37). Above all, he resists his Indian Self and has tuned into what V.S Naipaul has termed as the 'mimic man'.

Jemubhai blindly follows British Culture. He gets enrolled as an ICS member and tries to become an official (keeping up [the British] standards" (Desai 119). It obviously shows his mind arrangement that Britain represents a superior society to India. Homi Bhabha declares that "the powerful influence of a different culture will cause a tension between the desire of identity stasis and the demand for a change in identity; and mimicry represents as a compromise to this tension" (86). 'Mimicry of the center', as Ashcroft affirms, is "the periphery to immerse themselves in the imported culture, denying their origins in an attempt to become 'more English than the English'" (4). Same situation is with the judge. He studies

hard only and only to get more knowledge about western culture and tries to adopt the British standards in his daily life.

He worked twelve hours at a stretch, late into the night, and in thus withdrawing, he failed to make a courageous gesture outward at a crucial moment and found, instead, that his pusillanimity and his loneliness had found fertile soil. He retreated into solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow. (Desai 39)

He takes afternoon tea every day, tries to speak English in typical British accent, covers his dark skin with the powder puff, applies cologne all over his body and eats chapattis⁵ with knife and fork in order to get his identity in the western society but failed. He is always in a dilemma, a struggle of identity.

When Jemubhai returns to India, the situation becomes more despicable, even to the members of his family, he is like a 'foreigner'. Even in India he uses the powder puff, not to protect his skin, but to hide his brown skin color. Also, he insists on ironing everything which he uses and wears since, from his knowledge, the Westerners use ironed and neat clothes.

He was a shriveled figure in a white shirt and black trousers with a buckle to the side. The clothes were frayed but clean, ironed by the cook, who still ironed everything pajamas, towels, socks, underwear, and handkerchiefs. His face seemed distanced by what looked like white powder over dark skin." (Desai 33)

From his experiences and knowledge, the Indian identity is worthless compared to the Western identity; his mentality and lifestyle reflect his attractions towards the Western culture.

⁵ Chapattis: is a type of Indian flat bread.

Jemubhai's attempt to assimilate the culture of the colonizers is noted in a transcendental choice-freeze. Though he inherited glorious Indian culture, he does not use it as a frame of reference. The result, however, resembles to what Bill Ashcroft and et al. remarks "He is neither European nor Indian." He lost his self and turned into an immigrant within himself. He becomes victim of double identity as is described by Desai in the novel "He envied English. He loathed Indians." (119)

No matter how hard Jemubhai fights to cut all connections with India, and even with his own body, his body remain a reminder. Bhabha quoted the British politician Macaulay's words; "Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (87). Hence, Jemu attempts are limited to repetition, or mimicry of the British gentleman.

4.2. Cultural hybridity

Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. (Fanon 36)

Hybridity is the situation whereby the one belongs to more than one culture. The theorist Homi Bhabha explained the term as the place whereby different cultures meet and alter each other what leads to cultural negotiations in establishing new cultural identities; what is considered as the portrayal to transculturalism in which people are allowed to negotiate in, integrate and adopt cultures. For Bhabha the so-called cultural interaction leads to cultural issues such as ambivalence, mimicry and identity crisis.

In the novel *TIL*, Kiran Desai explores the issue of people who get caught in the place of in-betweenness where they faced cultural clash between the East and the West. In this novel, the author visualized this issue through the main characters Jemubhai and Biju, who suffered from the feeling of being conflicted between two different cultures, the native

culture and the adopted one. Those characters were torn apart between the East and the West culture what drove them for an identity crisis and made them establish their own version of identity as a result of their encounter with the western culture. Those characters were transformed from their native identity to something different “the transformation of the native into something other than himself a westernized native or at least one who is in crisis regarding his /her own cultural identity”(Abraham 3).

Kiran Desai has enlightened the issue of cultural hybridity through the central character the judge Jemubhai who was sent to England to study (as mentioned before). During his time in England he was rejected due to his skin color, his accent and his culture what created inside him a self-hate and a shame of his native identity. Once the angered Judge returns to India he chose to reject all the hateful things in his encounters and started establishing an English identity.

The embittered Judge began camouflaging his brown skin by the white and the pink powder struggling to be the model of a mimic of the English man, the Judge’s anglophilia led him to hate his Indian identity and made him stranger to everyone including himself. His self-hate went beyond than that to make him prefer his western name James Peter Paterson on his real name Jemubhai Popatlal Patel. Jemubhai tended to suppress his Indian identity and promote himself above the others in his society to establish an English identity for himself. His obsession with appearing westernized like the whites and having an aversion to the Indian society proves his process of hybridization.

Added to this humiliation, the confrontation and the conflict between the two cultures led the judge to become Janus-face due to his hybridized cultural situation. In fact, this situation made him not only aware of his place that Bhabha calls “The original moments from which the third emerged” rather than threatens his identity to be dissolved. The Judge is not

what Bhabha suggests, he cannot establish new identity, but instead he is able to explain his power only through physical violence; when he found out the real thief of the powder to be his wife, he experienced the sense of humiliation that made him take revenge from her by abusing her sexually.

In this incident, the Judge appeared as a victim of inferiority complex whereby deep down inside him, he is strongly aware of his skin color that wouldn't be changed by the white powder, stills has the desire to be like whites using the powder to get himself rid from the sense of inferiority .

In the same vein, Frantz Fanon explains in his famous book "*Black Skin, White Masks*" (1952), the complex in terms of an "epidermal schema" where the marginalized races of the colonized world are subjected because of their culture. Similarly, the colonizer made the Judge ashamed of his native identity and his epidermal differences from the whites. When Jemu failed at covering and hiding his reality through the white powder, he hated himself and lost his self-esteem.

Furthermore, the writer keeps explaining the process of cultural hybridity through the character Biju, the cook's son who migrated to America without the proper visa, and settled down in New-York where he had to struggle hard to earn dollars to fulfill his father's wish to be a rich man. Biju tried hard to involve with the different cultures but could not due to the discrimination he got from the higher class-culture what made him prefer the homeland and keeps his native roots inside the western country.

In fact, the cook's son represents the struggles of the "Shadow Class"; the class that involved all the illegal people who came from "Third World" to live in the wealthiest modern cities but instead they experienced all the forms of poverty, discrimination and discomfort. Biju is one of those immigrants, he found himself alone in a foreigner land trying to keep

attached with his homeland but he could not stand. The cook's son was discriminated with the same way the Judge was by the whites. Biju's boss used to complain that Biju smells and keeps giving him soap for that, this example explains the hybridized situation of Biju where he was caught between two different cultures in the western society preferred living with his native culture inside.

To conclude, cultural hybridity has touch both of the characters in this novel. The Judge was a real example for the process of hybridization that many of the Indian immigrants has experienced inside the western societies, the judge was torn apart between two different cultures what made him create a new identity that does not belong either to the native identity nor the alien one; in contrast to Biju who preferred keep his native identity inside the alien land.

4.3. Connection between Place and Culture

Kiran Desai, in her novel *TIL*, successfully presents the collision of East and West and shows the feelings of a person in a foreign country. Thus, the theme of the connection between place and culture is discussed in this chapter as the idea of relationship between one's identity and place. The characters, Jemubhai and Biju, are the best depiction of those people who are struck between two worlds and struggling for their identity in both worlds.

The sense of displacement can be caused by loss of cultural connections with the place which can further cause the loss of one's identity. This chapter demonstrates this problem on the story of the judge who experienced dislocation twice and both these experiences had a great influence on his behavior.

The first time the judge experiences displacement was when his parents decide to send him to England to be able to work for the British government in India; this happened

during the Raj period in early the 1940's. During his journey and his stay in Cambridge he experiences a range of events that formed his sense of himself. From the beginning he experiences several racial prejudices and he gradually starts to believe in them. These beliefs turn into his self-hatred.

He grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him found his own skin odd colored, his own accent peculiar. He forgot how to laugh, could barely managed to lift his lips in a smile, and if he ever did, he held his hand over his mouth, because he couldn't bear anyone to see his gums, his teeth. They seemed too private. In fact he could barely let himself peep out of his clothes for fear of giving offence. ... To the end of his life, he would never be seen without socks and shoes and would prefer shadow to light, faded days to sunny, for he was suspicious that sunlight may reveal him, in his hideousness, all too clearly. (Desai 40)

The displacement and lack of cultural understanding caused the judge to live a very lonely life. He had no cultural connections with Britain and since he was not accepted for his otherness, his loss of self-esteem caused him also to lose his self-respect. He turned all his hopes to his studies but when he attended to the ICS examination he was only ridiculed by the examiners. Later on he discovered that his performance was not sufficient to qualify for the ICS; however, since there have been "attempts to indianize the service" (Desai 117) he was in the end admitted. Although this event was very important for him, it did not improve his self-esteem as he still observed himself as "one" when saying to his landlord "One is done. One is finally through." (ibid)

As the judge met someone of similar cultural background, he instantly found a relation with him on the ground of the same cultural understanding. The judge, together with Bose who was "his only friend in England... They had similar inadequate clothes, similar

forlornly empty rooms, [and] similar poor native's trunks. A look of recognition had passed between them at first sight" (TIL 118), tried to become as English as possible and they "avoided Indian students at Veeraswamy's, ate shepherd's pie instead, and agreed on the train home that Trafalgar Square was not quite up to British standards of hygiene" (Desai 119). Consciously, the judge started to embrace the new British culture and by doing so he began to work on his new identity.

He found he began to be mistaken for something he wasn't—a man of dignity. This accidental poise became more important than any other thing. He envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become; he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both. (Desai 119)

This extract illustrates his desire to belong somewhere, to find his place within the society but at the same time he cannot identify himself with the society which does not accept him. He loathes Indians since being Indian caused him great suffering in Britain so his working "at being English with the passion of hatred" was really his endeavor to belong somewhere, to merge into the society, to suppress his exoticism. Unfortunately, this attempt only causes him to be detested by Indians as they understand his effort to be superior to them and also by the British who do not fully accept him as he is still Indian.

On his journey home "He sat alone because he still felt ill at ease in the company of the English" (Desai 119). This line is simply proof that although he tries to become British he does not feel to be one. However, upon his arrival home he finds out that he does not belong to his culture anymore either. "He was a foreigner – a foreigner – every bit of him screamed." (Desai 166-167) This sense causes a great perplexity to him.

The judge finds shelter for his uncertainty in adhering to British customs on which he highly insists on. He eats only English food and tries to adopt customs like playing chess and hunting. The Britishness becomes his protecting shield.

Biju, the cook's son, was one among the victims of cultural trauma by displacement. He documents this issue vividly. Biju travels to the USA as an illegal immigrant but finds very difficult to understand the new culture and at the end returns to India. Ashcroft believes that the issue of place began to be important after the experience of the colonial invasion when he writes:

A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place. ...A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation, or voluntary removal for indentured labor. (Ashcroft 8-9)

Soon, Biju realizes that he cannot find any bond between himself and the place because he cannot understand the language and does not find any cultural connection with the location, and the collision of various cultures and unfamiliar environments made him frustrated, though he stuck to refuse eating beef, which was the bottom line of his mother culture.

Even though the judge came back from his journey abroad as a person who achieved his purpose of going abroad and gains a reputable job for the government he never gains respect and is scorned by other people for his cruelty. Biju, whose return is far less successful as he is robbed and laughed at upon his arrival to Kalimpong, so his goal to gain money and

begin his own business is not achieved. But by maintaining his cultural believes he does not lose his identity or family relation.

Conclusion

The postcolonial dilemmas faced by the characters have been nicely depicted in Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. They often face the problem of alienation and identity crisis and become frustrated at the end. Even when they come back to their mother land, like the Judge in the novel, they develop a feeling of anger and distrust. They are in a state of confusion from which they will find it too complex to come out. Actually, the author's aim was not to describe the lifestyle of people in a remote part of India with their traditional culture, but rather to show the relation between East and West in addition to the reality of immigrants. In a nutshell, in *The Inheritance of loss*, Kiran Desai gives us the mixed complete package of everything.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

Indian diaspora is a crucial concept in the Indian English literature where writers present and discuss the immigrants' issues outside the homeland. Writers such as Kiran Desai had successfully enlightened these painful issues whom immigrants suffer from the feeling of alienation, displacement, dislocation, unbelonging and identity crisis.

Desai's novel "*The Inheritance of Loss*" was a portrayal of postcolonial dilemmas such as multiculturalism and globalization and how it resulted on the characters' loss of identity. As well as, Kiran Desai as diasporic writer captured the issues of people who migrated to the western countries such as the United States and Britain where they found themselves torn apart between two different cultures experiencing all the feelings of alienation, estrangement, displacement, unbelonging, exile and isolation; what led them live in –betweenness and become strange even for themselves.

Therefore, this study has discussed the theme of alienation and identity crisis using the postcolonial theory in the light of Homi Bhabha perspective that contains his important concepts such as Mimicry, Hybridity and Ambivalence as an attempt to enlighten the immigrants' life inside the western country.

Yet, the study attempted to analyse the central characters of the novel, Jemubhai and Biju who migrated to the West in the hope of better future. They found themselves trapped with the new culture, confused between keeping their roots in the alien land or adopting new culture and new identity. The encounter with the West made them feel alienated and displaced all the time what led them to start looking for their real home and belonging. In the novel, Jemubhai as was named the mimic man represented what Bhabha explained about mimicry as fully imitation for the superior culture that drove him to live in hybridized situation. And Biju the immigrant man in America who gave up his dream just to feel his home again has experienced the feeling of alienation in a strange land.

General Conclusion

In general, the novel is the mirror of what did the immigrants suffer from in the western societies that used all the forms of oppression, racial discrimination, slavery and injustice against them. Kiran Desai succeeded in reflecting all these issues inside her novel in which she showed the effects of the migration on the individuals psyche and makes them experiencing the feeling of alienation which led to an identity crisis.

APPENDIX

Boast of Quietness

Writings of light assault the darkness, more prodigious than meteors.

The tall unknowable city takes over the countryside.

Sure of my life and my death, I observe the ambitious and would like to understand them.

Their day is greedy as a lariat in the air.

Their night is a rest from the rage within steel, quick to attack.

They speak of humanity.

My humanity is in feeling we are all voices of the same poverty.

They speak of homeland.

My homeland is the rhythm of a guitar, a few portraits, an old sword, the willow grove's

visible prayer as evening falls.

Time is living me.

More silent than my shadow, I pass through the loftily covetous multitude.

They are indispensable, singular, worthy of tomorrow.

My name is someone and anyone.

I walk slowly, like one who comes from so far away he doesn't expect to arrive.

Jorge Luis Borge

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ملخص

تحاول هذه الأطروحة دراسة رواية ميراث الخسارة للكاتبة كيران ديساي، حيث تعتبر هذه الرواية تمثيلا حقيقيا لفترة ما بعد الإستعمار. تهدف هذه الدراسة، على وجه الخصوص، الى تحليل و استكشاف الطريقة التي تنتقل بها الشخصيات المنتقاة (القاضي جيموباي وابن الطباخ بيجو) من المحلية الى العالمية مما يشير إلى النزوح الذي يؤدي في النهاية الى الاغتراب و أزمة الهوية. وبناء على ذلك، فإن منهجية البحث التي تم تطبيقها هي ما بعد الاستعمار. في هذا الصدد، ينقسم البحث إلى فصلين، حيث يتضمن الفصل الأول لمحة عن المعرفة التاريخية و النظرية. بينما يركز الفصل الثاني على تحليل الرواية مع التركيز على قضايا الاغتراب و أزمة الهوية للشخصيات وفقا لمفاهيم "هومي بابا" للتقليد والتهجين والتناقض.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ما بعد الاستعمار، النزوح، الاغتراب، أزمة الهوية، التقليد، التهجين، التناقض.