

# A STUDY OF KIRAN DESAI THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS FROM POST COLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

*Postcolonial studies occupy a significant position and even relative prestige. Post Colonial studies centre have been set up in many institutions- mostly linked to departments of literature and innumerable Conferences. This paper focuses on Kiran Desai's novel from Post Colonial perspective. Kiran Desai, the Indian American writer whose novel. The Inheritance of loss (2006) opens with teenage girl an orphan Sai who is living with her Anglophile grandfather. Desai shows how the lives of Gyan and Sai and her grandfather along with their cook and his son intertwines before and after the horrible turning points.*

## ARTICLE

As a discipline in literary studies, however, post colonialism emerged during the late twentieth century. This discipline has now attained wide currency on account of the influence of such work as Frantz Fanon's. The Wretched of the Earth (1961), Edward Said's Orientalism (1978), Homi Bhabha's Nation and Narration 1980. The term post colonialism is defined by Nagarajan in his book English Literary criticism and Theory as: The nomenclature post colonialism is used to refer to all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. Post Colonialism examines and analyses the aftermath of colonization and effect of colonial oppression. In other words, it analyses the literature that was affected by the imperial process, the literature that grew in response to colonial domination, right from the time of contact between the colonizer and the colonized down to the contemporary situation. (Nagarajan,185) It is with Edward Said's phenomenally influential Orientalism (1978), and Bill Ashcroft's The Empire Writes Back (1989) that postcolonial studies become an institutional enterprise. Today, the field is fast and ever expanding, including in its ambit and theoretical concerns, film and culture studies, language/religion art and architecture, education system displacement, Diaspora and multiculturalism, feminism and more recently.

It is an established fact that post-colonial literature is not a commodity these days. On the one hand, writers like Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy are the best-selling and on the other hand, no college English department worth its salt would be without a scholar who can knowledgeably discourse about postcolonial theories.

Postcolonial is also a troublesome term because it draws some very arbitrary lines. South African writers Atteridge and Nadine Gordimer are often excluded from postcolonial courses, although their works were powerful protests against apartheid and they have lived and worked for more in Africa than, say, Buchi Echidena who emigrated to England as a very young woman and has done all of her writing there-because they are white.

Of those who write in English, Anita Desai is included, though she is half German, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is included even though he now writes primarily in Gikuyu. Bharti Mukherjee specifically rejects the label Indian-American though she is an immigrant from India.

Kiran Desai is an Indian writer. She was fifteen years old when she left for England with her mother Anita Desai who is also a well known author. After a year they moved to the U.S.A., where Desai has lived till date. She is a part of Indian diaspora and she is a citizen of India and a permanent resident of United States.

She has created literary history by winning the prestigious Man Booker prize for her novel. *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) a post colonial novel that raises important issues related to colonial culture and inheritance in a powerful and persuasive way. It shows Desai's deep interest in the complexities of time and history. As Shalini asserts.

It is the additional layer of the impact of British colonial culture which shapes the thematic and formal preoccupation of the novel. Desai beautifully exfoliates how intricate and intriguing of colonial inheritance operate in a specific context. (198)

The title of the novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* is more complex but still informative and realistic. First of all the title can relate to the loss. The novel is set in post-colonial India but the ominous presence of colonial period can be seen and felt causing its shadows on a country which has been given a waking call to the glorious morn of independence. Kiran Desai's focus on the consequence of colonization in various walks of Indian life.

*The Inheritance of Loss* is the story about the crucial impact of globalization in Indian village life. It is all about an embittered old judge named Jemubhai, who is the best example of the colonial aftermath. Jemubhai wants to return in peace. In the character of Jemubhai Kiran Desai, presents desire and hope two most important mottoes of post. Colonialism. He considers England as a land of dream, glory, beauty and happiness. At various points during his stay in England he experiences the oppression of colonial power through the assimilation and adaptation of culture of practices and cross fertilization of cultures. He finds himself in the position of in between i.e. between adopted Englishness and Original Indian Man. Another post-colonial aspect i.e. mimicry is apparently practiced by Jemubhai as he uses imported face powder to become one like of them.

In the novel Desai constantly juxtaposes two extremes of Indian society an example is when Sai turn up at Gyans home. There she is met by the sights of chickens being hurt and raped by the rooster. The image figuratively refers to the colonial situations, where the rooster represents the English and the chickens the Indians:

The birds had never revealed themselves to her so clearly; a grotesque bunch, rape and violence being enacted, hens hammered and pecked as they screamed and flapped attempting escape from the rapist rooster (256). Through the Individual characters Desai left the discussion up to a top level. Colonialism and the inheritance from the colonial period of Bangladesh and India.

The action of the novel shifts between the small town of Kalimpong and America where Biju another resident of this small town has gone to try his luck. But unfortunately he is actually as Desai says In a tentative structure under a palm roof scuffling with rats at the outskirts of Piphit (Desai 56) in Gujrat. Desai suggests that the colonial haughtiness is visible in the post-colonial situation even in countries like U.S.A. Biju experiences it again and again as he attempts to find a job and home away from home. He often hears people shut at him openly on the street go back to where you come from. (Desai,135).

Colonialism and post colonialism is dealt with again and again by Desai in the novel as Nandy describes it: This colonialism colonizes the mind in addition to bodies and releases forces with colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all. In the process it helps to generalize the concepts of the modern west

from a geographical and a temporal entity to psychological category. The west is now everywhere, within the west and outside, in structures and minds. (Nityanandam 60).

It generally ends with losses in many ways. It also shows glimpse of hope and optimism. Sai loses her lover but obtains a higher understanding regarding his future and independence. This novel throws a light on various contemporary issues like quest for identity and the struggle for self determination of an ethnic group the results from post. Colonial despair that disturbs a settled order of life and lead to alienation, isolation, loss and exile.

Set in the north eastern state of Kalimpong in 1980, *Inheritance of Loss* is a Diaspora post colonial text. Most of the characters are displace from their native land and undergo a sense of loss. They try to make this displace place their home but fail to do so. Due to this Diaspora a person faces identity crises. Migration is essential component in Kiran Desais novel. With no place to call their own, the character Biju, Sai and J. Patel have no identity at all. Colonialism not only destroyed their native culture but impelled them to follow theirs. Biju tries his best to adjust in America but is unable to do so. Colonized cannot adopt the culture of the west and lose their own just facing a loss.

Desai has carefully and very creatively brought out the impact of colonialism and post colonialism by traveling back and forth in time and by elaborating through her characters physical and psychological trauma they go through.

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