

THE COLONIAL NEUROSIS: AN EXPLORATION OF KIRAN DESAI'S NOVEL *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS*

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Abstract:

Kiran Desai's second novel The Inheritance of Loss (2006) which won the 2006 Man Booker Prize, offers an opportunity to relook at the unique concepts of modernity, human-relationship between motherland and alien land, globalization and multiplicity of culture in contrast to the western views. The narratives intertwine Kalimpong, Phiphit, England and America, showing contrary human relationship between own culture and other culture, men in motherland and men in other land. Throughout the description, there are ample examples of the western world-first countries – imposing its uncalled presence into the third world in different ways and manners.

Keywords: *The Inheritance of Loss, anglicization, economic inequality, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity and dislocation.*

Introduction:

Jemubhai is an epitome of obsession with psychological self-colonization and the victim of racial contempt of the western discrimination. Sai's Grandfather Jemubhai Patel makes journey from Phiphit to Cambridge at the age of twenty and became maiden son of his wrecked community to join the Indian Civil Service. But the impression of western culture is so ingrained in his persona that the culture of the western makes him isolated personality. His life in England takes heavy toll on him and bruises him in many ways. Jemubhai Patel contemptuously abandons Indian upbringing with the pungent packet of puris and pickles his mother made for his ship journey. He feels ashamed of home-made food and gets raged at the awkward gesture of his mother, "Undignified love, Indian love, stinking unaesthetic love (Inheritance: 3). His temporary stay in England makes him completely anglophile and colonized making stronger to himself, detesting his skin, color and accent. Jemubhai becomes a representative of the colonial residual. As Homi Bhaba comments:

Those inappropriate signifiers of colonial discourse – the difference between being English and being Anglicized; the identity between stereotypes which, through repetition, also become different; the discriminatory identities constructed across traditional cultural norms and classification, the Simian Black, the Lying Asiatic – all these are metonymies of presence.

Misanthropy and Sycicism as a brunt of colonization:

Separation and uprootedness are axis of the existence in the First World. With the return to his home, Jemubhai tortures, persecutes his wife for want of literate, and he hates all her ways of Indianness. As a revenge of having uncultured wife, he repeats his injustice and harsh treatment in bid "To teach her the same lesson of loneliness and shame he had learned himself" (Inheritance: 170). He deliberately makes desperate attempt to transform his wife into an English lady but it culminates to bear no fruit, but his tortures, anglicized behavior wrecks Nimi psychologically and physically making her nonentity. Eventually Jemubhai with his insensitive torturous treatment makes her commit suicide which he believes is an accident. It can be categorically stated that as he climbs the ladder of material success, his soul stoops low and plummets. It seems to be shocking and surprising that a man could not love his spouse, his daughter and his granddaughter, who had suffered a ambivalent circumstances and colonization, repeatedly appeared in its trail almost all his life and who had nourished '*misanthropy and cynicism*' over the years could shower love on a dog in such a way that he would compel the police to find it and torture his cook mercilessly for holding him responsible for its loss. Love and affection about dog and pitiless thrashing of the cook are suitable patterns of Jemubhai's psychic approach. His affectionate relationship with dog, mutt, is not a normal affair of a man with his domestic creature, nor has he an abnormally kinship with dog. He reaches to the conclusion that an animal is more suitable and better than man:

He couldn't conceive of punishment great enough for humanity. A man wasn't equal to an animal, not one particle of him. Human life was stinking, corrupt, and meanwhile there were beautiful creatures who [sie] lived with delicacy on the earth without doing anyone any harm. (Inheritance: 292)

In sync with the story of Jemubhai Patel, the novel presents the life of Biju, the son of cook. The cook's whole life moves around his son Biju. Biju stays in America as an illegal immigrant. He lands in USA in order to earn bread and butter to be rich with journey from innocence to the experience. America gains reputation as the land of promise of property and opportunity for the marginalized and deprived. The novel provides glimpses of excruciating conditions of illegal immigrants which was the offshoot of the intense churning of globalization. Desai highlights the intricacies of the law and the green card syndrome. The documents with Biju were forged and fake. He and many others are impressed by the mirage of the American dream, and stay there as illegal. However, the cook is confident that his son would prosper in America and bring name and fame to him. But Biju caught himself in a world which was relentlessly in a doldrums and devoid of many assured conditions. Given his awkward suitability and ingrained nativity upbringing, he is mired in alien land being ill-equipped foreigner and stuck more and more to his nativity conditioning as a protection against globalization as well as multiculturalism. Thus, Biju's employers cash in on his fake documents to keep him mum and subservient. How Biju passed the night is the exposure to harrowing conditions:

Biju joined a shifting population of men camping out near the few box, behind the boiler, in the cubby holes, and in odd saved, corners that once were pantries, maid's room, laundry's rooms, and storage room and

the bottom of what had been a single family home, the entrance still adorned with a scrap of colored mosaic in the shape of a star. The men shared a yellow toiled; the sink was a tin laundry through. There was one fuse box for the whole, and if any one turns on too many appliances or lights, PHUT, the entire electricity went, and the resident creamed to nobody sense there was no body, of course, to hear them. (Inheritance: 51-52)

Conclusion:

The separation and uprootedness that Jemubhai goes through is a reflection of his servitude due to his psychological colonization. *The Inheritance of Loss* is modeled on the defective, divisive globalization. It is the west which propagates its ideals as in the case of Jemubhai and Sai and his westernized neighborhood on the other India is the power which is being spread across the west. So the novel is caught in the tug-of-war that is occurring between the western culture and the eastern one. The characters yearn for space of autonomy. Pinky and Sai longs for seeking love and Gyan treads the path of idealistic chimera. Desai portrays their inner pent-up feelings and paves way for self-conscious obsession with their self-images.

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