

Analysis of Diaspora in Kiran Desais Inheritance of Loss

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Abstract: In this paper efforts have been made to study Diaspora and its meaning in depth. Focus has been made on Diaspora writing and writers. Diaspora refers to the dispersion or scattering of a group of people from their original homeland or the community formed by such dispersion. This term is often used to describe communities that have migrated and settled in different parts of the world while maintaining a connection to their cultural or ancestral roots. Pain and agonies of immigrants are highlighted in the present paper where the Diaspora are held in a position of nowhere. Agonies and sentiments of Diaspora immigrants in work of Diaspora writer are studied widely and in depth and facts and condition of immigrants are unveiled in this paper.

Keywords: Immigrants, state of nowhere, agonies of diaspora, confusion, puzzled, alienation etc.

The term Diaspora is derived from the Greek *dia-* *speirein*, which meaning "to scatter through." The term Diaspora was employed in the classical sphere to describe the experiences of Jews who were banished from Palestine and compelled to disperse and dispose all over the world. This term is now used to describe either forced or voluntary migration from one's birthplace to another. People from diverse nations such as China, Greece, Ireland, Turkey, and South Asia who have migrated to other countries from their country are instances of such Diaspora.

Smita Mohanty comments, The Diaspora, expatriate and immigrant writers have focused the uneasy conjectures of the Third World migrants in their displacement and decentred life. They feel the necessity of their culture in their exile to sustain values in life. In their existential dilemma they adopt the dominant one but ethically they do not become the cultural other in their surrender or subordination. Culture of the motherland remains an ethical metaphor at the centre of their consciousness. Consciousness of native culture works as an ethical indicator. Their association and adjustment with a new culture may be an essential step in the strategy for survival in social Darwinism but they preserve their cultural ethics in their emotional contact and social positioning. In American and European social dynamics Indian Immigrants live as cultural other and crave for the rich treasures of Indian culture in their emotional longing. In an alien environment they acculturate their culture in their post-national ethics. (Mohanty)

The present paper discusses the Indian Diaspora and the experiences of immigrants, as well as several other sentiments and challenges that these individuals confront in a distant place.

Dr. M.F. Patel in his article says, A study of selected literary texts by the authors starting from Anita Desai, through Bharti Mukherjee to Sunetra Gupta and Jhumpa Lahiri will not only show through a broad spectrum the self fashioning by the Indian Diaspora but will throw into sharp focus the treatment in literature of the philosophical problem of personal identity. Identities are the names that people give to the different ways they are positioned by, and positioned themselves within, the narratives of the past. Identity can no longer be recognized as static but it is ever changing process of dynamic self definition. Since Indian Independence, the Indian Diaspora community has acquired a

new identity on account of the mutual process of self-fashioning and increasing acceptance by the West. (Patel, 59)

A study of selected literary texts by authors ranging from Anita Desai to Bharti Mukherjee to Sunetra Gupta and Jhumpa Lahiri will not only show the Indian Diaspora's self-fashioning through a broad spectrum, but will also bring into sharp focus the treatment in literature of the philosophical problem of personal identity. Identities are the titles that individuals assign to the many ways in which they are positioned by, and place themselves within, historical narratives. Identity is no longer viewed as a static concept, but rather as an ever-changing process of dynamic self-definition. Since Indian Independence, the Indian Diaspora community has developed a new identity as a result of the reciprocal process of self-fashioning and increased acceptance by the West.

Dictionary of Global culture opines,

Diaspora is often associated with Zionism, which is the belief in the Jews legitimate claim to a homeland (Palestine). Historically, the Diaspora has undergone different phases, the first significant one occurring in 586 BCE when the Babylonians conquered Judah, leading to the enslavement of the Jews. The largest Diaspora, which occurred during the first century BCE and lasted for 1800 years, led to the displacement of 5 million Jews. The numerous Diasporas that have taken place did not necessarily lead to Jews returning to Palestine even after the initial cause of the exile had disappeared. (Dictionary of Global Culture)

When we talk of Diaspora, we always start with the Jewish context, where persecution and expulsion resulted in the displacement of Jews from their homelands. However, the term Diaspora is derived from the Greek terms 'dia' and 'speiro,' which imply around, between, through, or across, and dispersion or scatter, respectively. The movement, immigration, or scattering of people away from an established homeland or individuals scattered by whatever cause to more than one area or people settling distant from their ancestral homelands for economic reasons is referred to as Diaspora. This term has evolved to describe to large groups of individuals who have a common origin and lineage.

Despite significant limits in the uniqueness of the Diaspora notion, it is useful in the research of immigrants or individuals who have established in other nations. One of the major notions of Diaspora is the preservation of one's cultural identity in one's host nation. There is already a substantial body of literature on numerous Diasporas such as the Chinese, Indian, African, and Caribbean, among others. When we talk about Diaspora, we always start with the Jewish context, where persecution and expulsion led to the dispersal of Jews from their homelands. However, the term Diaspora is derived from the Greek terms 'dia' and 'speiro,' which imply around, between, through, or across, and dispersion or scatter, respectively.

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The reality that being in limbo is difficult and marginalizing for Diaspora cannot be denied. Rootless and displaced, they pine for "home," returning to "lost origins" and "imaginary homelands." They also suffer cultural dilemmas when their cultural practices are criticized and their cultural identity is threatened. Jasbir Jain, for example, highlights the Diaspora's "....ambiguous status of being both an ambassador and a refugee."Diasporas typically experience two pulls: one from their own culture and one from their host society.

Diaspora literature has developed significantly as a result of the important contributions of luminaries such as Salman Rushdie, Naipaul, Bharati Mukherjee, Bapsi Sidhwa, Anita Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, and, of course, Jhumpa Lahiri.

The Diaspora writings of Kiran Desai has been highlighted in the present paper, with an effort made to demonstrate the importance of Diaspora and cultural currents in the works of the well-known Diaspora women writer.

Kiran Desai, the thirty-five-year-old daughter of famed Indian-origin writer Anita Desai, made literary history by being the youngest woman ever to receive the coveted Man Booker Prize for Fiction. A special position is held by Kiran Desai, the daughter of Anita Desai, among contemporary Indian writers writing in English. She is a well-known author of English novels written in India. She was born in New Delhi, India, on September 3, 1971. She took a few years off from Columbia University to focus on writing her debut book, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998). This book was awarded the British Society of Authors' 1998 Betty Trask Prize. Her second book, *The Inheritance of Loss*, was published in 2006. For this work, she was awarded the Booker Prize. Kiran Desai is a well-known writer from India who lives abroad. She features Indians as the main characters in her writings. Her books typically tell the story of Indian immigrants who find it difficult to adapt to a foreign nation, mainly America. She explores many aspects of the Diaspora in her writing, including cultural insularity, nostalgia, alienation, and the search for identity and absorption.

The Inheritance of Loss is set in a very different setting from her previous book, *Hullabaloo in Guava Orchard*, which is about a middle-class post-office worker who hops up a guava tree to become a recluse in order to avoid failure. The guava tree serves as a focal point for all of the characters. In the novel *Inheritance of Loss* the lives of Biju and Sai are at the center of the narrative. Biju, an Indian, is an illegal resident of the United States. His father is a chef for Sai's grandpa. Sai, an orphan, resides in the hilly region of Kalimpong with her cook, Jemubhai Patel, her maternal grandpa, and a dog named Mutt.

The tale begins with the residents of a village in the north eastern Himalayas in the 2006 book *The Inheritance of Loss*. These include the chef, an irate elderly judge, his granddaughter Sai, and a wide range of friends, family, and acquaintances. Additionally, it shows Biju, the cook's son, who is an immigrant attempting to live out the American Dream in New York. Kiran Desai depicts individuals in *The Inheritance of Loss* who are disturbed in some manner. There are several kinds of displaced persons in this book. While few people are enjoying the benefits of being immigrants in the subcontinent, some characters are going through the agony of exile in America. Their successes coexist with their disappointments. After a while in their lives spent in exile, the individuals in both situations have an identity crisis. Her exploration of these crises and the confusion involved in the construction of cultural, national, and linguistic identity is done with competence. Whether in America or India, immigrants from the West or the East always struggle psychologically to create a

new identity in a foreign land. They are always trying to get over the sense of emptiness brought on by their Diaspora dislocation. The characters who are exiled in the book *The Inheritance of Loss* have also highlighted this difficulty.

The story of *The Inheritance of Loss* opens with Sai, an orphaned adolescent girl from India, living in the Himalayan village of Kalimpong with her grandpa, a retired judge who attended Cambridge University. She works with Gyan, her math instructor, who is a Gurkha mercenary from Nepal. Their relationship never takes off when Gyan joins an ethnically Nepalese militant organization. The story is told in two parts, one about Sai's life in Kalimpong and the other about Biju, the cook's son and an illegal immigrant in New York who was transported to the country by his father. The most potent and keenly observed parts of the book are those that focus on Biju's life in New York. Biju is an adolescent lad with limited educational background. He is from an impoverished household. His father, a chef, has been impacted by the inferiority mentality of being a colonized person, thus he wishes to see his kid in the most prosperous country in the world the United States of America. He is effective in instilling in his kid Biju the concept of "other "

Biju decides to immigrate to America in order to achieve material and cultural riches. The USA Embassy is where Biju's journey to America begins. Every step he takes in the direction of America brings unanticipated disgrace. Biju arrives at the Embassy and finds himself among a throng of Indians who are fighting their way to the US visa counter. Biju continues his adventure at the Embassy as :

Biggest pusher, first place; how self-contented and smiling he was; he dusted himself off, presenting himself with the exquisite manners of a cat. I'm civilized, sir, ready for the U.S., I'm civilized, madam. Biju noticed that his eyes, so alive to the foreigners and went dead." (34)

Following his arrival in New York, Biju encounters several obstacles in his life. He has just arrived as a migrant and an outcast in the hostile world. His vision of a safe future is dashed by the harsh facts.

Being an exile has given Biju insight into how to live his life in America. He starts to perceive himself as an unexpected person. Following his shift at the restaurant, he crossed the river and made his way to the further end, where the homeless guy frequently slept in a dense green room that appeared to grow more from fertile city dirt than from soil. In a park, there also resided a homeless chicken. Occasionally, he saw it making a scratching sound in the soil.

He was drawn to the rustic way of life. This was the first thing he realized when Biju started to feel homesick. He believed that rather than the advanced and prosperous America, his own nation owed him something unique. He began to feel remorse and even a hint of resentment toward his father for bringing him here by himself. He experiences a persistent feeling of estrangement after coming to America. He often moves eateries one after another in an effort to adjust to the language and cultural variances. He cultivates the very Indian inside himself.

He is an exile with a persistent national identification dilemma. Biju longs for his native village's tranquillity and comfort while he is in New York. He also does a self-portrait in the airport restroom mirror, drawing inspiration from a strong feeling of Indian nationalism to return to his home country.

Kiran Desai exposes his feelings:

Here he was, on his way home, without name or knowledge of the American president, without the name of the river on whose bank he had lingered, without even hearing about any of the tourist no statue of Liberty (314)

The epicentre of *The Inheritance of Loss* is globalization. On the one hand, the west is attempting to globalize its values, as in the example of the judge and Sai and his westernized neighbourhood; on the other hand, India is the power that is spreading over the west. As a result, the novel depicts the tug-of-war that is taking place between western and eastern cultures. The colonial encounter might be viewed as a conflict between two conflicting nationalisms. It is well understood that colonialism is the result of the violent and expansionist tendencies of European nationalism. As a result, the history of decolonization has been expressed via anti-colonial nationalism's resistive counter-energies.

This anti-colonial nationalism is required for the oppressed and colonized peoples of the world to achieve their goals. Post-colonialism is simply another term for cultural and historical globalization.

One magnificent piece is *The Inheritance of Loss*. The suffering of exile, the complexities of post-colonialism, and the overwhelming desire for a better life when one person's prosperity equals another person's poverty are all highlighted. Because of her incredibly unique voice, Kiran adds something novel and exciting to the writing situations. Because Kiran Desai is a keen observer and pays great attention to even the smallest details, her characters and stories come to life. She uses her characters to convey her topics without passing moral judgment on them; instead, she creates common people who are trying to live their best lives while making the most of the resources at their disposal. Her characters have a strong sense of realism and impact. She is a self-assured, gifted, and wise writer. Her writing is sometimes upbeat, dogmatic, and formulaic, yet it can also be hilarious and quite depressing at times. Her perspective on examining the outcomes of significant cultural and political influences is broad.

There will probably be upcoming chances and difficulties. As time goes on and technology advances, connectivity's shapes will inevitably shift. The lines of the paradigm we use then need to be stretched and redrawn. Those who have crossed the boundaries will be greeted with an unexpected accomplishment in the conclusion. It is changing boundaries rather than overcoming them. Reading the book reveals the novelist's exquisite workmanship, artistic portrayal of a hard and desolate scenario including hunger and poverty, and most importantly, a rich symbolic and connotative description.

Kiran Desai presents both the good and bad aspects of life in exile in *The Inheritance of Loss*. Biju has feelings of isolation and humiliation in America throughout the book. This insight gradually aids him in developing a fresh, intense emotion for India. He had the American dream in his mind prior to departing from India. India was seen by Biju as a sinking ship, from which he needed to get away. Unexpectedly, his experience of being dispersed helps him to conceptualize himself as Indian. It is implied throughout the book that going into exile is a good method to deal with life's many levels of loss. It is a lifelong process that is passed down from one generation to the next.

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