

Marginality in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

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Abstract

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, a novel that depicts the lives of various characters who are marginalized in different ways due to their social class, race, nationality, gender, or religion. It is analysed how the novel portrays the effects of colonialism, immigration, and identity crisis on the characters and their relationships. It is also discussed how the novel uses various literary devices such as irony, symbolism, and intertextuality to highlight the themes of loss, alienation, and resistance. The novel demonstrates how the legacy of British rule and the appeal of Western culture, in addition to their own decisions and the circumstances in which they were raised, influenced their individual histories and the directions they chose to take in life. As the society becomes increasingly complex and unstable, the novel investigates how the disparity exists between the learned and uneducated, as well as between natives and non-natives. Being excluded, oppressed, or silenced by dominant groups or discourses in a society is a condition that is referred to as marginality.

Keywords; Marginalization, Identity loss, Obstacles, Legacy, Alienation.

Introduction

Through the experiences of a diverse cast of characters living in India, England, and the United States, Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* Kiran Desai investigates colonialism, immigration, and question's personal identity. The majority of action takes place in the Himalayan village of Kalimpong, which is located in the 1980s. At this time, a Nepalese insurgency poses a threat to the peace and stability of the village. The protagonist is an elderly judge, his granddaughter Sai, who works as their chef, and the judge's son Biju, who is in the country illegally but works in New York.

The term "marginality" alludes to this condition. Exploring marginality in literature can be accomplished through the depiction of individuals, topics, or places that are in opposition to the norms and expectations of the culture that is considered "mainstream." Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* depicts being on the margins of society. The lives of several characters in this novel are portrayed; all of them are marginalised in some way, whether it be due to their social class, race, nationality, gender, or religion. In addition to this, the novel demonstrates how the individuals' identities, relationships, and decisions are impacted by their marginalisation within the framework of postcolonialism, globalisation, and violence.

The influence that colonialism and globalisation have had on the lives of characters, who come from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds, is one of the primary themes explored in Kiran Desai's novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*. The novel paints a picture of many different ways in which these folks are marginalised, discriminated against, and alienated from society. Biju, Sai, and Lola are some of the characters who must overcome these obstacles throughout the story. Biju is an undocumented worker from India who currently resides in New York City and is employed at a number of different eateries. In his pursuit of a better life, he is subjected to the ill effects of poverty, exploitation, and racism. He lives with the constant worry that he may be deported and lose his identity. In addition to this, he experiences a sense of estrangement from both his native country and his father, who resides in a run-down home in Kalimpong. Biju's hope of realising the American ideal is dashed when he learns that he is not appreciated or welcomed in the land of opportunity. Biju's desire to realise the American dream is broken. Sai is a young girl who resides in Kalimpong with her grandfather, who is a judge since retired. She has a more Westernised perspective on life as a result of her education in a convent school. She finds herself falling in love with her tutor, Gyan, who is a member of a Gorkha family. The Gorkhas are an ethnic minority group. Because of their dissimilar perspectives on identity, culture, and politics, Sai's grandfather and Gyan are both a potential source of social exclusion for her.

Gyan represents the growing nationalism and hatred of the downtrodden communities, while her grandfather symbolises the legacy of colonialism and its impact on the Indian elite. Sai is torn between these two opposing points of view, and she grapples with the challenge of discovering her own voice and her position in the world. In close proximity to Sai's home is where Lola, a wealthy widow, makes her home in a mansion. She is completely preoccupied with her physical appearance as well as her social standing. She makes an effort to imitate the British way of life and manners, but she is unable to integrate herself into either colonial or postcolonial society. Due to the fact that her own family disapproves of her unusual conduct and the expensive spending she engages in, she is shunned by them. In addition to this, she is cut off from her community by the superior attitude and snobbery of her neighbours. The hopeless and pitiful efforts that Lola makes to forge an identity and a sense of belonging for herself are worthless. In the work, Desai draws attention to themes that are associated with being on the margins by using language and images. The novel delves into the lives of a number of characters living in a postcolonial society and attempting to come to terms with their identities and feelings of belonging. Desai brings attention to concepts that are associated with marginalisation, such as estrangement, oppression, resistance, and hybridity, through the language and images she uses in her work. Desai uses a variety of language registers and styles in her writing to reflect the varied pasts and experiences of her characters, as well as the cultural and historical settings in which they find themselves. She also creates contrasts and analogies between the individuals and their environs through the use of vivid descriptions and metaphors, which reveal the inner tensions and desires of the characters.

Alienation is one of the most important ideas that are discussed throughout *The Inheritance of Loss*. Many of Desai's characters, like Lola, have the sense that they are on the outside looking in and are cut off from the people and things around them. This sense of alienation is exacerbated by the legacy of colonialism, which includes the establishment of societal structures. Desai brings the characters' tribulations to life with sympathy and nuance, illuminating the ways in which factors such as race, class, gender, and nationality shape the circumstances in which they find themselves. Despite the difficulties they endure, several the characters display resiliency and ingenuity in their efforts to construct a sense of belonging and agency for themselves in the face of obstacles they face. Desai also examines the

concept of oppression by looking on how individuals like Biju and Sai react to the situations they find themselves in.

Biju, an unauthorised immigrant in the United States, is subjected to exploitation and abuse at the hands of his employers and has a difficult time making a living there. Sai, on the other hand, is torn between her Indian ancestry and her education in the English language. As a result, she experiences a sense of confinement as a result of the demands of both cultures. The way in which Desai portrays these individuals draws attention to the structural inequities and power imbalances that play a role in the formation of their lives and also emphasises the significance of social justice and solidarity. In the end, *The Inheritance of Loss* is an insightful investigation of the tangled web that is our identities.

Conclusion

Examines the concept of marginalisation, cultural disputes, displacement, alienation, and identity crises within the backdrop of globalisation. The novel depicts the lives of a number of characters, all of whom are influenced in some way by the legacy of colonialism, the ethnic struggle, the economic injustice, and the cultural hybridity that form their existence. The work also sheds light on the difficulties and conundrums that come with migration, whether deliberate or forced, as well as the diasporic characters' persistent need for home and a sense of belonging. Desai, by way of her narrative, sheds light on both the positive and negative aspects of globalisation, as well as the impact it has on individual lives and the connections between people. *The Inheritance of Loss* is a novel that portrays the complex realities of modern world and the inheritance of loss that it involves many people. These realities are reflected in the novel as a result of author's personal experiences.

Works Cited:

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