

**Language, Style and Technique in Kiran Desai's "*Inheritance of Loss*"**

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**Abstract**

*India is a land of various castes, creed and culture. It is a land where many legends in various fields are born. It is famous in the fields of literature, arts and culture. Language is one of the powerful driving forces that leaves human on top of all the living creatures in the world we are living in. It is through language that we are able to communicate. Like wise, we could easily find out the mindset of the writer in their writings. In India we have more of male domination than female in the art of writing. Nevertheless the taste of their writings is very different, though Indianess seems to have theme in most of them. The *Inheritance of Loss* illuminates the pain of exile and the effects of post colonialism with a variety of colorful characters. The novel talks about love, longing, futility, and loss that are Desai's true territory. The novel is full of stylistic playfulness, touches of comedy, subtlety of logic and nature description. The panorama of the novel is very vast. Language and style portrays the writing skills of the novelist. She beautifully describes the natural elements and compares it to the characters. She also uses various skills and techniques of writing like flashback technique, metaphors etc.*

**Keywords:** Assimilation, Diverse, Oxford, Artistic, Culture.

Kiran Desai uses simple English and anyone who reads the novel would find interesting with the various style of writing. The Inheritance of loss is a global discovery and displacement- deals with the theme of the conflicting Indian identities in the post colonial India and in the United States. Desai does a beautiful job of weaving stories of India, the immigrant's experience, a troubling legacy of colonialism and the challenges of assimilation. She shows the presence of a third world within the first world, while exploring the subtleties of status, class and nationality. Propelled by the vicissitudes of capitalism, imperialism, and ethnic and national conflict, migrants have transported their lives across vast distancing and life-altering borders, and set up afresh.

Through the technique of telling two parallel stories and introducing the issues of the East and West, Desai expands her narratives into larger socio-political as well as historical subjects. In the novel she talks about the life of Biju without nature and other with those of Indian people living happily with nature. Not only it is a touching story, it is also a timely and critical inquiry into our increasingly interconnected world. The point of view of this novel is third person omniscient. The author uses the judge, Sai, Biju and the cook as narrative characters most often. However, the novel is written heavily in exposition to the new world, descriptive passages, or insurgency which allows the author's own voice to come through almost as often as those of her characters. The author uses this technique in order to cover a great deal of time in a short number of pages. This technique also allows her to tell her story beautifully and with great control without the added richness of dialogue and a multitude of dramatic scenes. All the natural scenery is also seen in the novel, and feels like those who reads too would be in deep contact with nature and wants to be with nature all the time.

The point of view works well because the author is careful to denote changes in narrator with chapter breaks or paragraph breaks. The author beautifully portrays about her characters in each chapter and once if a person starts reading the novel, one would really feel about the character and enjoy reading.

### **1. Multiculturalism, Yearning for love:**

The main character in the novel Sai, a young girl was an orphan. Her parents died in a space travel. She was a mix child of a Russian and an Indian. She longed to be with her parents most often and dreams as if they were with her. She believed that one day she will be with them. After staying with her grandfather, she became to realize that nature is something interesting and that she was in contact with it. She lived happily with him but to certain extent she missed her family. The vivid memories of her childhood often led her into tears; she lost her education too at a young age around thirteen.

Sai often thinks of the life back in her schooldays, the way she used to fight with her friends, the way teachers scolded her for not answering questions and not doing her

homework. She used to stay in the boarding, and most often she used to write to her parents and the day when she knew that her parents are dead she was shocked and her heart shattered into pieces. Her past life was full of enjoyment and often when she remembers it and tears roll down from her eyes. She also remembered the first time when she visited her grandfather, the hilly travel and the bus journey.

Sai told to the cook about how her mother and father fall in love with each other. She also told about the romance that her parents had in their youths. She wondered if she could have the same romance. She also told cook about the subjects of her parents, their religion and culture.

The Zoroastrianism and the Hindu, the two diverse cultures together which shows that love has no boundaries, cultures, caste etc. About the death of the parents, she could only know that her parents went together in a space and never returned again.

## **2. Journey motifs:**

Journey motifs are used in the novel through various characters and various modes of transportation. Jemubhai Popatlal Patel was always on the move, but trains, planes, and auto - mobiles aren't just modes of transportation. In fact, traveling always marks a transition between cultures, or stages of life. So time spent on a ship is beautiful and have a mark on the mind. The first and probably most significant example of this is the fact that Jemu's father inspires him to travel in oceans and tells him that it is worth travelling and the experience is beautiful. But no matter what, things keep happening to each travel on ships.

When the judge first went to the sea voyage to England, he was afraid and when a day or two was over it was alright. He had a great experience in the sea, the enjoyment of the people and the beautiful sea creatures were worth seeing.

In England the judge went from London to Cambridge University, by ship. It seems like those days only ship was the mode of transportation. Like when one person wants to travel to another part of the country or from one country to another, they had to travel by seas and oceans only.

Again, Biju on the request by his father went to America by plane with a fake passport. On reaching there he found out that he could not get any job, so he had to go around for looking job. He thought that life would be great there but on the contrary it was not. He felt that it was better to live in home that live in there. There was a change in his living conditions, style of talking and various other new habits.

On returning from America Biju was full of happiness, he could see the change in the places, the airport at Calcutta was developed and it was not like before. The surrounding area was also good and that the people also changed a lot. He came back to India after seven years and he was glad to be back in his own country. He was in great joy to see his father and his neighbors but he was not aware of the insurgency that was taking place. He was in full energy

and happiness in his face but he was not aware what could be happening to him in next moment.

### **3. Cultural motifs:**

Cultural motifs are also shown in the novel through food. The cook attempts to make an evening snack, food for the dog etc. that is done by male servant everywhere in proper timing, because he is homesick for the life she left behind. The problem is that he could not quite get that snack or food right, which shows us just how far from home this man, was.

Even when the judge first went to England, he was not able to eat the food that was made there, he felt awkward looking at the style of cooking food. But in the course of time he began to like the food and the taste which shows no matter what if a person has to live in a place first thing he have to do is to adapt to the place and the food.

In America, Biju was in full trouble in making food; he had to prepare different kinds of food to attract customers as well as to satisfy the boss. He was regularly shifting places because of his preparation of food.

Food shows a connection or disconnection between a character and his or her culture. Throughout the novel, food is an important way that culture is preserved in home of the judge to that of food shops of America.

### **4. Flow of culture, knowledge, remembrance, tradition :**

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, objects say a lot about the social status of the characters. Artistic objects such as paintings, books, or photographs carry particular meaning. Even the dresses and professions carry different kinds of meanings. The Judge chose profession that is not in medicine, engineering, or the sciences, as their parents had preferred. Instead, he was an I.C.S officer who was trained from England and a man of literature and travel. His choice of artistic, less lucrative professions mark a shift from their parents' values. He appreciates art and has a friend who does it too.

The meaningfulness of objects also varies by character. While Sai and Patel, generally see books as status symbols and art as décor. The judge's parents, particularly his father, see money and women as incredibly significant objects, perhaps because of their Indian childhood. Sai and one of her friend from Russia grew up in India and attended schools influenced by British colonial heritage. Knowing the English language and English culture was an important way for them to succeed in a world where familiarity with English was a ticket to success. These practical reasons aside, books are personally meaningful to them, and their taste for books tends toward the great novels and short story and magazines. Sai associates books with his grandfather too.

Even Lola and Noni were Bengali sisters who wore different dresses to mark from which place they came. One was a widow and another one was a spinster. The Tibet sisters

wore their dress which one can easily identify from the dress they wore. Uncle potty, a Swiss citizen who was a resident there in the hills, for a long time has preserved his long beard as a sign from where he came from.

The tailors, the shopkeepers and the revolutionist have their own aspects of preserving their own culture and tradition by their works. This shows that India is a land filled with different kinds of culture, language and tradition. No caste, creed or culture is prevalent but the nature of respect that one person has for another one is important.

### **Some of the Quotes from the Novel:**

*"That very afternoon the police arrived at Cho Oyu in a line of toad-colored jeeps that appeared through the moving static of a small anxious sleet".* (11) Cho Oyu is a mansion that has obviously become a symbol of loss and displacement. Commenting on the metaphorical significance of the mansion Tessa Hadley observes: Cho Oyu is a tragic-comic metaphor for the seedy remains of British imperial culture in India. It is suggestive too of the novel form itself, another alien habit that might at first glance seem as ill-matched to its Indian environment as the stodgy meals and ideas about keeping up civilization. (25-26)

*"Don't mind me, love, he always told Sai after a drinking bout, opening one eye like an owl".* (4) Here the comparison of eyes is shown. Gyan the lover of Sai would always told that her not to feel bad when he was drinking. After drinking he would open his one eye like an owl and stares at her. One knows how big and round an eye of an owl is.

*"The oldest of them looked under twenty, and one yelped at Mutt, they screamed like a bunch of schoolgirls, retreated down the steps to cover behind the bushes blurred by mist".*(4) These lines shows the fear of the community when revolutionist people come. They came in bunches and most of them are child below twenty and at the young age they became in such a confusion that they feared that they might caught or accidentally get killed.

*"It felt as if it were the world shaking with a ravaging force he was trying to hold himself against".*(8)The old judge was very tired remembering his past life. He tried to forget it but as soon as he saw his granddaughter, automatically all his past life would come in front of him. It feels like an earthquake has just happened and he was trying to stop it.

*"In his trembling message, brought forward as if by the motion of his wringing hands, he tried to emphasize how he was just the messenger".*(11) The above lines show the trembling and fear of the man. After the robbery, done by the revolutionist the cook acts as a messenger and went to police station to file a complaint. But he was not able to do so because he was frightened and due to fear he was shaking his hands.

*"Mostly, because the judge's residence had long been a matter of curiosity in the bazaar, they, like the gun robbers took the opportunity to have a good nosy look around".*(11) The above lines show that the judge was the man of honor and that everyone in the area knows it. Due to this the revolutionist people were eager to rob the house and

suddenly without the knowledge of anyone took a look around the house and tried to find out the surroundings.

*"Somewhere above, there was the sound of an alarmed bird, of immense wings starting up like a propeller".* (25) The above lines show something was going to happen in the area where the judge and the cook were residing. Even the birds and all the winged animals were frightened and all of them were spreading their wings and was about to fly. They were making the sound like a propeller.

*"Into one of the top families of Gujarat. Ahmadabad. Or was it Baroda? Huge haveli like a palace".* (56) The above lines show the living style of the people in the past. The judge's wife Nimi came from a high class people. The cook told Sai that her grandmother lived in huge haveli which can be compared to that of a big palace.

*"The cook would talk to the chemist, carefully, trying not to upset the delicate balances of the field, for he believed in superstition exactly as much as in science".* (72) The above lines show that the cook did not believe in science. But he believed in superstition that he thought that science is just something, which cannot be practical. Once he went to chemist to buy medicines but he thought that it was of no use talking with it and he carefully tried not to make him upset either.

*"When Jemubhai saw her, cheeks erupting in pustules, he took her fallen beauty as a further affront and felt concerned the skin disease would infect him as well".*(173) These lines show the love, care and affection of the husband to wife. Though the wife was ill and was suffering from contaminated disease he did not felt anything, but he realizes that the disease would also infect him as well.

*"They were battered and balding from fights and disease, but they, like their masters, had the air of outlaws".* (317). These lines show that the revolutionist people were great threat to the people. They themselves were also suffering a lot, they had to fight against the diseases, suppress the people, terrorize people etc. Just like their leaders, they were also breaking the rules and regulations.

## **Conclusion**

Any novel written by human beings illustrates the true history of mankind. It represents the changing phenomenon of life and reality artistically. The interrelation between novel and society is essentially identical and reciprocal. The creative works of contemporary women novelist have been quite commendable. They have achieved distinction in the field of fiction by portraying the diverse manifestations of the rich and valuable Indian heritage authentically and aesthetically. Kiran Desai is a novelist who loved nature and its wide variety. Being born up in India, she too has developed a sense of nationality. She travelled far and wide around the globe when she was young. She travelled along with her mother; she studied in Britain and later studied in America and settled there forever. She had experience a

variety of culture, custom and language etc. She knew that there had been a lot of difference between all the cultures, each one she experience is unique. The novel on one hand deals with the social, political and economic problems of the people of the contemporary society in India and, on the other the social and psychological problems faced by Indian immigrants in America and England. Kiran Desai presents in her novel the social and political climate of contemporary India.

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