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POSTCOLONIALISM IN THE NOVELS OF KIRAN DESAI- AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the postcolonial themes in Kiran Desai's novels, focusing on *The Inheritance of Loss* and *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. Desai's works intricately depict the enduring impacts of colonialism, examining issues such as identity crisis, cultural hybridity, displacement, and socio-economic inequalities. *The Inheritance of Loss* delves into the fractured identities of characters navigating globalization and migration, highlighting the tension between the past and present in a postcolonial world. Similarly, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* employs satire to critique societal norms and explore the intersection of tradition and modernity in postcolonial India. By analyzing Desai's nuanced portrayal of postcolonial realities, this study illuminates her contribution to understanding the personal and collective struggles in the aftermath of colonial rule. The analysis underscores her ability to weave humor and pathos, offering profound insights into the human condition within the postcolonial framework.

Key words: identity crisis, cultural hybridity, displacement, globalization, migration, colonial legacy, tradition vs modernity, socio-economic inequalities, satire, postcolonial India.

In Kiran Desai's novel, "The Inheritance of Loss," the character of Biju, the cook's son, represents the disillusionment and challenges faced by individuals pursuing the American dream. Biju's story is an important section of the novel, highlighting the multicultural perspectives that shape his experiences. From his arrival in America to his deplorable living conditions and eventual journey back to his mountain home, Biju's narrative sheds light on the complexities of multiculturalism, the pursuit of success, and the harsh realities faced by immigrants in their quest for a better life.

1. **Biju's Disillusionment with the American Dream:** Biju's disillusionment with the American dream is a significant aspect of his character arc. Through his letters and experiences, the novel portrays his initial optimism upon securing a waiter position in America. However, as the story unfolds, Biju's living conditions and the lack of essential resources, such as health insurance, erode his dreams of success. This disillusionment reflects the challenges faced by immigrants striving for a better life while navigating unfamiliar cultural landscapes.
2. **Multicultural Perspectives and Challenges:** Biju's encounters with multiculturalism in America form a crucial part of his narrative. His letter, where he mentions the absence of Indian food and the American owner of the establishment, highlights the cultural differences he grapples with on a daily basis. Biju's struggle to adapt to a new culture, find his place, and overcome the barriers of language and societal expectations underscores the challenges faced by immigrants in multicultural societies.
3. **The Cruel Twists of Biju's Journey:** Desai skillfully depicts the cruel twists in Biju's journey, from his falsification of a story to secure a visa to his deteriorating living conditions in America. The novel explores the harsh realities Biju faces, including the absence of health insurance and his desperate attempts to reach out to his father. The ultimate revelation of his dwindling dream and his decision to return to his mountain home provide a poignant reflection on the often harsh realities faced by immigrants pursuing a better life.

The process of decolonization of the Third World is implanted with narrating the stories embarked on by pivotal writers such as *Chinua Achebe*, *Wole Soyinka*, *Buchi Emechete*, *Salman Rushdie*, *Wilson Harris*, *V.S. Naipaul*, *Kiran Desai* for reconsidering the status quo. They have cognizant the readers of the reality that Africa and the Indian subcontinent have been the worst victims to the pangs of British colonialism.

Ever since the Postcolonialism literature has permitted African and Indian writers have been evincing their response to colonialism in different genres, but the response of fiction has found powerful consequences. They have deeply penetrated that colonialists have very tactfully legitimised their exploitation over inhabitants of colonised society.

Postcolonialism arose after decolonisation in the second half of 20th century. It analyses the impact that prolonged colonisers have implanted in the minds of natives of colonized countries. Sometime Postcolonialism is often referred as new colonialism because of economic and cultural oppression. This work delves into the profound exploration of how societies, governments, and individuals in regions formerly colonized by the world experience international relations. It sheds light on the enduring influence of colonial and imperial histories, revealing their impact on shaping a mindset rooted in colonialism. Furthermore, it critically analyzes the dominance of Western knowledge and power, which has systematically marginalized the non-Western world. The focus lies on addressing the disparities in global power and wealth that have been accumulated by a select few states.

Edward Said's Orientalism is an brilliant document for postcolonial critics for expounding different ways in which western discourse invented and mobilized imagining of the "Othres". It was based on the ontological and epistemological distinction between Orient and Occident. It's a relationship of Power of dominance of complex hegemony. There is an discourse on sign of the power exerted by western over the Orient rather than actual discourse about Orient.

Significantly, "The West" constructed the cultural notion of "The East," which, as Edward Said argues, provided Europeans with a means to dominate and suppress the distinct expressions and representations of the people and cultures in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and Asia as a whole. Orientalism effectively merged and simplified the diverse non-Western world into a homogenous cultural entity known as "the East." This phenomenon is evident in various fields such as philosophy, lexicography, history, biology, political science, and economic theory. Consequently, there exists an entire industry that exploits the Orient for subjective purposes, lacking factual knowledge and genuine understanding.

Nexus of Postcolonialism is the concept of place, displacement, interaction of languages,

environment among the colonisers and colonised people. Emphasizes on visibility of sign of difference when manifested in skin colour, hair features etc. It's a process concerned with examining the effects of and reaction to European colonialism from 16th century up to Neocolonialism of the present day. The independence of newly formed states are in continuous endeavour to claims to state that they have left behind the powers of colonisers but it's satirical to note that still how in practice the dominance of idea of Independence is modelled from Europeans. In Africa independent countries' like Nigeria, Ghana broadly showcase colonial enclave carved out from pre-colonial societies. Many postcolonial countries have been clinged to former colonial administration, legal and economic system.

It's an pertinent issue in Postcolonial/Colonial discourse. It's used to chasm between two types of European colonies: Settler (invaders) colonies and colonies of occupation. Nigeria and India are examples of colonies of occupation, whereas indigenous people remained in majority but we 're administrated by foreign powers. Examples of settler's colonies is Europeans who annihilated, displaced or marginalized indigenes. They are usually considered inferior and suffer discrimination from colonizers. Race has become one of the most important components for postcolonial literature. It's the classification of human beings into physically, biologically and distinct groups.

It has been nexus of discourse since the rise of colonialism because the very idea of colonial powers established its dominance over the weak section of society to justify their imperial enterprise. It was imbued to show distinction between the *-Civilised and Primitives*. Racism generated the culture of superiority attitude by the colonisers. Humans were categorised by Europeans on physical grounds from late 1600. There become a clear distinction between white Europeans and Black Africans.

British was at the apex of its empire in 1914 with land ranging from the Caribbean to Africa to South Asia and Southeast Asia under its domain. But gradually in 1950, s most independent countries came into existence. Now when India decolonised itself from British as it's colony there was mount in its self- development that led prob of postcolonial literature, which unveiled the varied excruciating issues of India. Postcolonial studies swamped decolonised people's perspectives and ideologies. There is representation of how with extreme endeavours and toil independence was gleaned from colonial powers.

Critics like *Tamara Sivannandan* shows how anticolonial freedom struggle ranged for successive liberation movements. In India *Mahatma Gandhi* started Satyagraha, The Civil Disobedience, Quit India Movement. In Kenya, zembava, Algeria, Indonesia numerous movements led to achievement of Independence. Uther partition of subcontinent in India and Pakistan become pertinent for postcolonial writers to explicate their opinions on ideologies of colonial's

powers. In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi wa Thionyo captures the moment when Kenya got independence that was marked with huge crowds, fiery speeches –Everybody waited for something to happen. The waiting and the uncertainty that went within it was a taut cord beneath the screams and the shouts and laughter.

Indian English literature writers like Mulk Raj Andand's both novels *Seven Summers* and *The private life of an Indian* have postcolonial issues, sufferings with autobiographical notes and pensive narratives K Narayan's *Waiting for Mahatma* deals with national struggle while his *The Guide* is another masterpiece that narrates the tale of personal and spiritual cries of an individual pitted against manifest power of his destiny.

Postcolonial narratives by women writers like Allia Hossain , *Nayantara Sahgal* ,*Anita Desai*, *Kiran Desai* are sacred documents that portray role, status of women residing after Postcolonialism amidst changing notions of family and communities Hossain's novel –*Sunlight on a Broken Column*” is narrated by Laila , a young orphan tells about the turmoil of 1935 to 1947, that disrupts their idyllic life. *Sahgal's –like Rich like Us* is set during emergency that also explores the fate of women within conventional marriages and their gradual alienation and erosion of values. *Kamala Markanday* in “*The Nowhere Man*” and *Anita Desai* in –*Bye Bye Blackbird* have intensely excavated the plight of Indians outside their subcontinent and revealed the amount of racial prejudices faced by Indians. Further *Nayantara's* novel “*A Time to be Happy*” protagonist Sanad discourses about identity crises of English educated urban elite –I don't belong entirely to India ,I can't My education, My upbringing ,and my sense of values have all combined to make me an India—Of course there can be no question of my belonging to any other country “*Chinua Achebe's masterpiece*” *Things Fall Apart* and Joseph Conrad's “*Heart of Darkness*” brilliantly navigates the traumatic legacy of colonialism and figures out how to revitalize a stagnant African culture.

Postcolonial writers and critics have intended to vent out poignant between desire to belong to new society yet clinging to their root culture. Through lucid characterization, they sympathize with the experience of displacement, uprooting from native state values, and the agony of re-establishing oneself in an alien land. Another bodacious focus of Postcolonialism is on Hybridity ,it was expounded by theoretician *Homi Baba* to capture the sense that many people have belonging to both cultures. But satirically both Hybridity and Multiculturalism mounted sense of displacement and profoundly agony among natives of postcolonial world. The cultural globalisation, language hindrance consequently led to humiliation and English was considered alien for third world people. *Frantz Fanon*, the psychiatrist in *The Wretched of the Earth* identified that colonialism is nexus of destruction of democratic world, an denial of attributes of humanity that leads to violence of existence of amiable attribute among countries. Further *Vladimir Lenin* in his essay *Imperialism*,

the Highest Stage of Capitalism states that colonial imperialism as degenerated form of capitalism. Jhumpa Lahiri in novel *'The Namesake'* shows conflict between different backgrounds ideologies of two world that swamps gap between Gogol Ganguly and his parents. This mingling of culture, language, lifestyle, and habits are the product of Postcolonialism.

Term Postcolonialism was first time used by Gayatri Spivak in collection of interviews that were recollected and published in 1990 and called *The Post -Colonial Critic* which was to vent political, social, linguistic, and cultural experience of societies that were former European colonies. Stephen Slemon has stated that Postcolonialism is now used in varied forms to describe heterogeneous subjects. It has been used a way of ordering a critique of totalizing forms of Western historicism; as a portmanteau term for a retooled notion of class , as a subset of both postmodernism and post-structuralism; as the name for a condition of nativist longing in post-independence national grouping ; as a cultural marker of non -residency for a Third World intellectual cadre; as the inevitable underside of a fractured and ambivalent discourse of colonialist power ;,as an oppositional form of reading practice and this was my first encounter with term-as the name for category of literary activity which sprang from new and welcome political energy going on within what used to be called 'Commonwealth literary studies. Subjugated by colonizers the colonised people experienced tormenting temperamentssuch as loss of freedom, deprivation, social discrimination, marginality, corporal punishment and so on. But these excruciating experiences of loss became unprecedented source of creative energy. In the post-colonial India, long suppressed people have begun to exhibit their dereliction, to vent out their anger and despair. They with the power of creative writings broke the nerves of colonialism. The well-knit colonial fabric is unravelled, and the colonized countries are decolonized. The era has excavated authors and literature in almost all genres giving a productive response to colonialism.

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