

# Estrangement and Seclusion in the Inheritance of Loss

## OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 11

Special Issue: 5

Month: March

Year: 2024

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Received: 26.01.2024

Accepted: 27.02.2024

Published: 01.03.2024

### Citation:

Binith Muthukrishnan, K., and Nallamuthu Mani Mehala. "Estrangement and Seclusion in the Inheritance of Loss." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts Science and Humanities*, vol. 11, no. S5, 2024, pp. 123–25.

### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v11iS5-Mar.7673>

**Dr. K. Binith Muthukrishnan**

*Assistant Professor of Commerce, NPR Engineering College, Natham*

**Nallamuthu Mani Mehala**

*PG Student, Research Department of English  
Sakthi College of Arts and Science for Women, Oddanchatram*

### Abstract

*Estrangement and Seclusion as a theme has been recurrent in the Indian English fiction. It has become a significant concern for post-modern writers including Kiran Desai. The sense of estrangement forms the general psyche of the contemporary society. Estrangement is frequently describes as 'estrangement' of an individual or the group of people in a large society. These alienated people often challenge the validity of certain accepted norms which are already in existence. Kiran Desai portrays a story which is thrilling chaotic, pathetic and a life infused by the problems faced by common people. She addresses the dismal sentiment and feelings of her mute immigrant characters that neither speak nor display their inner beings. She has aim to present her characters in a simplified way to attain the basic goal of satiation. She has unraveled their interior to entwine with assumption and dreams to achieve the material zenith. Nimi is the suppressed and repressed woman characters, whose desires are suppressed and had taken a form that is unbearable.*

**Keywords: Estrangement, Repressed, Immigrant, Pathetic**

The sense of alienation forms the general psyche of the contemporary society. Alienation is frequently describes as 'estrangement' of an individual or the group of people in a large society. These alienated people frequently challenge the validity of certain accepted norms which are already in existence. Alienation is a condition in the rich social communication reflected by a low degree of integration or common values and a high degree of distance or separation between individuals, or between an individual and a group of people in a community or work environment. "When alienation is described as estrangement, the person displays anger towards the self, social institutions and authority. The individual is estranged because he or she cannot trust people or institutions. The estranged person frames his or her environment to see a world filled with enemies and sinister plots that are designed to harm." Sometimes people feel that they cannot maintain their status in the society and are deprived of certain rights and privileges which are traditionally their own.

Isolation though a common word is the most dreadful and feared one. Common to mankind, isolation sets at various stages and also in various intensities. It curbs the free movement of a jeopardizing him and hampering his growth. The only way to survive is to fight against it, which many fail miserably to do and became victims. In

general, the term isolation at a superficial level refers to a state of loneliness. Still, diving deep one can witness that its roof spread over to abandonment, shame, fear, and sometimes even death. Man has the whole world around him yet has nothing. He is lonely island in the vast ocean of mankind.

Kiran Desai portrays a story which is thrilling chaotic, pathetic and a life infused by the problems faced by common people. She addresses the dismal sentiment and feelings of her silent immigrant characters that neither speak nor display their inner beings. She has attempted to present her characters in a clarify way to achieve the basic goal of satiation. Their suffering, pains, traumas and struggles in order to accomplish the desired facilities are worth appreciating and their sacrifices and dedication they render as to achieve their minimum wanting for a basic living. She has unraveled their interior to entwine with prediction and dreams to achieve the material zenith. Nimi is the suppressed and repressed woman characters, whose desires are suppressed and had taken a form that is unbearable.

In *The Inheritance of Loss* Desai portrays such characters that are displace in one way or another. In this novel there are different types of immgrient people. Some characters are experiencing the pain of expel in America when few persons are be fond of the pleasure of being immigrants in the subcontinent. Their achievements and frustrations reside side by side in both cases they face identity crises after certain period of time in their life in exile.

Desai competently explores these crises and the disorientation in the formation of cultural, national and linguistic identity. Both western and eastern immigrants go through the constant psychological endeavour to construct a new identity in dislocated place whether in America or in India. They are always in a quest to overcome the vacuum feeling which resulted from diasporic dislocation. This struggle has also been brought to the limelight in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* through the characters in exile.

All the characters in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* exhibit the longing for identity, for love and acceptance in an alien land. But they hardly are able to locate where they belong to since postcolonial hybridity is, in the words of Radhakrishnan, a defect search for region and a legitimate political identity. They have build a sense of loss, though in different degrees. The characters are all victims of the so called postcolonial dilemmas. However, eventually it is in Biju that the reader finds some hope of true happiness in his supposedly reunion with his father.

She powerfully delineates how the sense of loss has started with Jemubhai Patel, the Judge who unsuccessfully tried to become an Anglicized person and gets alienated in the process in the colonial period. This loss has been be succeeded to the next generations and epitomized in Sai, the Judge's granddaughter. Her efforts to recover from the feeling of rootlessness by having a relation with Gyan, the Nepali are critically hamber by the political turmoil caused by Gorkhaland movement

The themes of alienation, isolation, dislocation, disillusionment, nostalgia, yearning for home, and longing for identity are visible through the character of Biju. He dreams for the greener life and of course, the Green Card in the US. But he is severely humiliated even when he is issued a visa. He could not even understand the announcements at the American embassy. Thus he experiences a sense of alienation even before leaving the country. Just as the Judge feels alienated in England, Biju feels alienated in the host country because of his race and colour. Thus the author Kiran Desai delineates the sense of loss experienced by people of different social strata and its inheritance over generations.

Probably Desai wants to say that life, in spite of all its sufferings and problems are worth living and one should always learn from mistakes. One is often attracted by the material prosperity and comforts that the west seems to offer. But, in spite of the backwardness, poverty and illiteracy in one's own land; one can probably derive a sense of belonging and identity in one's own land only.

Uprooting from one's own land and re-rooting in an alien land is a painful process and Desai had successfully delineated the dilemmas faced by her characters in their longing to find a green pasture in a foreign land.

Setting young and old against a shifting portrait of India, Desai explores the conflicts raging and inherent in a world where national identity no longer suffices in any one guise. Desai's heroine wants to be Indian; she wants as well to be a part of the modern world (or rather, knowing she is a part of modernity, she wants not to lose the past that has cradled her). Her journey to maturity must pass through several stations of conflicting loyalties, of demanding allegiances, and of losses that will prove a gain of illuminating experience.

It is a pervasive phenomenon in the contemporary era which is affected by globalization. The contemporary man fails to perceive his purpose of life and constantly searches for his place in the world. Globalization has improved the quality of life in India, but of course only to a minority of people. Besides this, the gulf between the rich and the poor has also deepened. This created an atmosphere where all relations including the familial relations have become commercial. It has created a society where ethics and human values are sacrificed for the sake of success.

She very powerfully delineates the feeling of rootlessness that has started in the colonial times. She also depicts how this sense of loss has been inherited to the succeeding generation and how it has robbed their lives of the very pleasure of human existence. She also brings home the point how the struggle for existence in the era of globalization alienates the people. But the author concludes the novel with an optimistic note. Biju, the Cook's son rejoins his father and though he loses his hard-earned money he gets the long sought after love. The author gives an optimistic hint that Gyan comes back to Sai with Mutt, the Judge's dog. Thus the author suggests that the Loss will not be inherited to the next generations. Despite creating the characters with the traits of existentialism, the author Kiran Desai concludes the novel in an optimistic note:

"The five peaks of Kanchenjunga turned golden with the kind of luminous light that made you feel, if briefly, that truth was apparent. All you need to do was to reach out and pluck it." (p.324).

## References

1. Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss*. New York: Grove, 2006.
2. Seipelman, David Wallace *Solid Knowledge and Contradictions in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss Critique*, 2010.