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The Tragedy of a Self-Abased Man **in Kiran Desai's Novel *The Inheritance of Loss***

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Degree in Literature

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Declaration

I do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled The Tragedy of a Self-Abased Man in Kiran Desai's Novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is my original work assembled and used especially to achieve the purposes and the objectives of this study. I also proclaim that the substance and the findings reported in this dissertation are the result of my examination.

Dedication

I express my gratitude to Allah for giving me the power and the ability to finish this dissertation.

This dissertation is a dedication to the memory of my beloved father 'Mohammed', brother 'Slimane' and sister 'Warda'. May Allah bless their souls.

It is not a dedication, it is a love declaration to all my wonderful family members.

With so much love to my beloved mother 'Grichi M'barka'. With so much love to my beloved brothers and sisters.

To my dear teachers at the University of Mohamed Khider Biskra, for their unwavering support, their generosity and for being the role models that my classmates and I admire and aspire to emulate.

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I also offer my regards and blessings to all those who helped and supported me in any respect during the completion of my dissertation.

Thanks for being there for me

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Abstract

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai writes about the destructive impacts of the British colonization and its serious lasting effects that are still being felt till the present day on the Indians on the personal, social and global levels. Self-abasement becomes a target of a number of academic studies in different domains due to its serious impacts on people's psychological and social well beings. It forms the bulk of postcolonial Indian English women writers' concern including mainly Anita Desai and Kiran Desai who stress on self-abasement to serve unveiling the psychological trauma faced by Indian people after independence. Desai explores this psychological dilemma as it is linked to masculinity, femininity, race, identity, colonization, social caste, class system and East-West relationships. A psychoanalytic Approach is used to deconstruct the character of the Cook Panna Lal and his self-abasement. Stockholm Syndrome Theory is also relied on heavily in the analysis of his case. Some Indian men are increasingly feeling more powerless in India's shifting social and cultural context of the 1980s. This powerlessness leads to a devastating psychological disorders. The subjugated Indian men as the Cook are oppressed and are victims of social caste, colonization, labor inequality, racial discrimination and low social class. Desai depicts their lives, subordination, victimization, failure and loneliness in relation to the powerful and privileged West. In the wider context of the Judge's power, upper caste and hegemony, the Cook is socially constructed to be marginalized due to the nature of his social caste and work.

Keywords: Self-abasement, Psychological trauma, Psychoanalytic Approach, Postcolonial Theory, Stockholm Syndrome, Masculinity, Femininity, Social caste, Subordination, Failure, Racial discrimination, Victimization, Marginalization, Colonization, Hegemony.

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I. General Introduction

A. Introduction

Woman energizes literature and becomes its main subject. She is herself a literature maker and her role in the literary world is important. Postcolonial Indian women's literature written in English conveys all sorts of the beautiful Indian society's practices and traditions. It grows into an aesthetic structure embodying a complex literary tradition. In India, feminism shapes the search for women's rights movement.

Feminism in India aims to identify, develop, defend, and protect civil justice and equal chances for Indian women. Indian feminists pursue gender equality and struggle against specific cultural problems such as violence, gender equality and education. It is significant to observe that the issue of gender identity which forms the bulk of the artistic production attracts Indian women English writers' attention and pushes them to write about it.

B. Background of the Study

Kiran Desai was born in India on September 3rd, 1971 in New Delhi brought up and educated in India, England and America. She studies creative writing at Columbia University. She resides in the United States of America. Her first praised novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998) wins the Betty Trask Award. It gains accolades from influential figures like Salman Rusdie. In this novel, Kiran Desai writes a cultural overview about her native country India. She establishes a literary history for herself by becoming the youngest woman ever to receive the prestigious Man-Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) at the age of thirty-five where she explores deeply problems of modern civilization, illegal immigration and Western influences, colonial heritage and legacies on non-western countries. Inheritance is what we owe and inherit from our ancestors. Kiran Desai is the daughter of Ashwin Desai and the Indian author Anita Desai who writes fourteen novels and wins five distinctive awards. Three of which are

short listed for the Booker Prize: *Clear Light of Day* (1980), *In Custody* (1984) and *Fasting, Feasting* (1999). Kiran Desai is inspired and influenced by the experiences of her mother as well as her way in writing. In his book *The Fiction of Kiran Desai*, Tapan K. Ghosh illustrates:

Anita's works examine the themes of forgiveness and division which stem from observing her own mother experienced identical situation in wartime Germany, a country she left for good. These are the themes which Kiran has inherited. (9)

Kiran Desai is deeply conscious that she lives and writes in a world that is separated by nationalisms and colonialisms. She is also conscious of Naipaul, Narayan and Rushdie's Anglo-Indian inheritance. She reflects the current voice of South Asian Anglophone fictional literature which is interested in the Eastern and Western influences as novel forms, themes and techniques. Kiran Desai creates satire and humor in her novels and establishes herself as a true story teller. Singh Nandita in her book *Evolutionary Search for Self* states that "There is also the sensitiveness which she has inherited from her mother which comes across in spite of the liberal coating of humour" (27).

Kiran Desai is a skilled craftswoman who designs wisely her plots. Kiran's works show a very taut action line. Unlike her mother Anita Desai whose novels skip outer action line. She is an extrovert writer whose novels present the real scenes of life. The effectiveness of her creativity gives the stories richness and a sense of magic. *The Inheritance of Loss* explores specifically the effects of postcolonial instability in tumultuous north east of India in the 1980s. The plot evolves around the life of the characters whose lives are intertwined with India's past. The author is well recognized by the location of the novel because her origins are in the Kalimpong region where she spends her childhood in a house called Chomiomo. She studies at St Joseph's Convent school in Kalimpong which shows many similarities to her

character Sai. Nevertheless, Desai confirms that the character's similarities are used only for literary purposes.

The Inheritance of Loss is a story of desire for a world which treats each of the characters as a consequence of their class backgrounds, illegal immigration and colonial legacies. Thus, they become inheritors of loss. Desai writes about the problems of gradual acceptance and recognition of postcolonial Indian literature such as colonization, caste, race and illegal immigration. The novel manages to examine the difficulties of life, the diverse narratives, societies and various value systems with empathy and perspective.

The newness of this subject in the understudied novel is used as a new tactic by the Indian women writers as Kiran Desai to realize that the subject of the subjugated masculinities impacts dramatically current men's thinking. Kiran Desai puts her works into action dealing with the experiences of failed men's experiences. She discusses the crisis of masculinity in her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* and gives it a voice. Desai's success lies largely in her depiction of the sensitivity of the Indian men's emotional measure of life, failure and loneliness. She gives enough social spaces for women and provides them with views about the unhegemonic status of her male characters. She defines masculinity as a certain system of suffering in the context of race, caste, illegal immigration and colonization.

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is a simultaneous criticism of the shifting power system and an act of deconditioning and reconditioning realities. She includes a critique of patriarchal masculinity in its moment and setting and a foreground for the Indian men who are historically marginalized. With a deep examination in her work, Desai writes about the failed masculinities. This does not only describe the shifting themes in contemporary Indian women's fiction, but also aims to discover their socio-political dynamics.

Male characters are designed to represent their views on the role of race, colonialism, class and illegal immigration in male psyche. Self-abasement represents a real problem at both

individual and social levels as it brings out a range of reactionary states of mind between Indian women writers such as Anita Desai and Kiran Desai. The topic finds its position in postcolonial novels like in *The Inheritance of Loss* written by Kiran Desai to shed light on the consequences of colonialism that are still being felt these days.

C. Rationale of the Study

The basis on which I select Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is because it focuses on the study of women writing and Indian women fiction in particular. This gives the researcher the crucial impetus to follow her literary analysis and dream. Some important facts testify the need for this analysis. At the beginning, historians and scholars agree on the extraordinary scarcity of comprehensive studies on postcolonial socio-political literature. Secondly, the Indian novel written in English is also a reflective mirror of the changing national lives and tastes of the individuals who are strongly linked to their country's destiny. Thirdly, the Indian English literature of this period requires further analysis not only to position the Indian reality on the global scale, but also for its personal and national memories greater interconnection and its rebuilding of the current history from the oppressed point of view.

D. Statement of the Problem

Self-abasement becomes a target of a number of academic studies in different domains due to its serious impacts on people both in their psychological and social well beings. Self-abasement forms the bulk of postcolonial Indian writers' concern including mainly Anita Desai and Kiran Desai who stress on self-abasement to serve unveiling the psychological trauma faced by Indian people after independence. The topic under the Indian study finds its place in postcolonial novels to shed light on the effects of colonization that are still being felt these days.

E. Research Question

To what extent can the representation of self-abasement help revealing realities over the traumatic state of being in Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*?

F. Sub Questions

- What makes Indian women literature a site where one can encounter the problem of self-abasement?
- What makes self-abasement a target issue in Postcolonial Indian Women Literature?
- How does Kiran Desai portray the Cook as an example of a victimized man due to his self-abasement?

G. Hypotheses

- It is hypothesized that self-abasement is a result of colonization.
- It is hypothesized that self-abasement is a result of social caste.
- It is hypothesized that self-abasement is a result of racial discrimination.

H. Objectives

- To explore how Kiran Desai represents characters who suffer from a psychological trauma which is self-abasement in her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.
- To study Indian Women Literature and spot its status on world literature.
- To explore the strategy Kiran Desai uses to depict men characters.
- To study the representation of a number of themes portrayed in *The Inheritance of Loss* as feminism, subalternism and colonization.

I. Aims

- To familiarize the theme of self-abasement and its effects on both individual and social life.
- Our study aims at creating a theoretical framework on both Indian Women Literature and self-abasement so that they will be a basis for future works.
- To enrich our library with a humble work that can help our students with reference(s).
- To encourage students engaging in studying other literatures as the Indian Literature written in English.

J. Significance of the Study

The present study tackles the issue of self-abasement and its effects on both individual and social levels. Since the inequities of colonization are still being felt these days, our study appears to be of such significance. Exploring these effects would help scholars and psycho-therapists to study and find solutions to self-abasement.

K. Literature Review

Indian women 's literature is a field of direct discussion with new viewpoints. Western bearings allow Indian women authors to express their strength in accepting global ideals. Their novels provide a chance to see Indian women's lives from women's viewpoint. Indian women writers work on the basis of deconstructing the Western attitudes towards their society. They want to understand feminist thinking “to speak on behalf of 'authentic' Indian women, who presumably endorse every feature of their culture” (Tong 229). Indian women writers are curious to describe the status of women and their pictures as formed by man. Another fascinating thematic difference can also be seen in the portrayal of the marginalized men. Such representations involve the analysis of the clash arising from the victimization and separation of the subordinated men.

Traditionally, masculinity is typically based on physical strengths and encourages the duty life, hard work and the achievement of admirable goals. It refers to “the range of physical, behavioral, and attitudinal qualities that characterize what it means to be a 'man' in any given historical or cultural context” (Code 273). Its absolute value is idealized as far as it depends on the combination between the inborn qualities, acquired behavior and choices. In *Taking Care of Men: Sexual Politics in the Public Mind*, McMahon states that “Since the issue clearly raises the question of the feminisation of men, it allows us to explore the negotiation of male identity in a particularly delicate situation” (4). He also says “It is particularly useful to examine cases where masculinity is made problematic by men's entry into fields previously considered feminine, including occupations such as nursing” (4). The constant venture of women's emancipation affect the changes in men's life.

Darity explains the dilemma that is a part of the constant adjustments of masculinity across time, space and cultures faced by men:

Because gender varies so significantly — across cultures, over historical time, among men and women Within any one culture and over the life course- we cannot speak of masculinity as though it is a constant Universal essence, common to all men.(2)

In his groundbreaking work *Masculinities*, Connell writes “masculinities are configurations of practice structured by gender relations” (71). Masculinity can be visible only in relation to femininity. He also says “Masculinity, to the extent that the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture” (71). For him, masculinity must be understood only when it is being performed.

The gendered identity which is a type of ideology represents a set of cultural ideals sets fixed and acceptable values and expectations for and of men. Thus, masculinity is

vulnerable to performative shift as Reeser who states that “My performance of masculinity includes evoking and rendering other types of performances impossible” (87). Brittan argues that “One of the central difficulties in attempting to write about masculinity is that, as a topic it did not really exist until feminists began to attack the presuppositions of traditional, political and social theory” (78). The social roles needed to be fulfilled by men are in urgent need of repair. Consequently, a problematizing appear in both masculinity and femininity .

Feminism creates opportunities for the re-examination and deconstruction of gender norms. The campaign focuses on the awareness of the inequality of power in men-women relationships. Feminist critics aim to claim equity in power relationships and redefine gender roles that contribute to a dangerous challenge to masculine authority. Their evidence is based on that it is time for men to experience the powerlessness of women. Flax suggests that “the greatest advance in feminist theory is that the existence of gender relations has been problematised so that gender can no longer be treated as a simple natural fact” (627). Farrell criticizes feminist attack in response to that and argues that “feminism articulated only the shadow side of men and only the light side of women” (4).

The Inheritance of Loss describes the story of simple wishes that are frozen in India's rooftop in the mid 1980s. The writer conveys the difficulties associated with men's subjugated attempts to make their voices heard. The novel explores how postcolonial circumstances lead to a sense of loss in masculinity. In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Desai writes about masculinity as a core concept for natives who cannot fully free themselves from the Western colonial rule. Writing with a skilled mentality, Kiran Desai creates situations that smack on the features of failed masculinities to make their expressions felt.

Desai introduces a different perspective of herself as a postcolonial woman writer by portraying the tragedy of failed men in their search for masculinity. The success of Desai lies in her representation of the sensitivity to the emotional measure of the lives of the Indian men,

failure and loneliness. Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is a simultaneous critique of the shifting power system and an act of deconditioning and reconditioning realities. The experiences of the marginalized Indian men require a critique of the normative masculinity in their time and milieu. All men in the novel are threatened and lost the ability to belong to their own masculinity.

L. Methodology

This research relies on an eclectic methodology that combines several approaches and theories which are necessary in order to analyze the case of self-abasement in the character of the Cook in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. The main critical approaches and theories that are applied in this research are:

- **The Postcolonial Theory**

The evaluation of the novel selected for the study begins with a investigation of whether the postcolonial condition can lead to a sense of loss in masculinity which is a central feature in *The Inheritance of Loss*. It shows that natives who cannot fully free themselves from the western colonial hegemony continue to play shadow roles both in India and abroad. Writing with a preformed mentality, Kiran Desai creates situations that smack on the features of failed masculinities to make their expressions felt.

- **The Psychoanalytic Approach**

Some Indian men are gradually feeling more powerless in India's shifting social and cultural background of the 1980s. This powerlessness can lead to destructive psychological disturbance. A psychoanalytic Approach is used to deconstruct the character of the Cook and his self-abasement. Stockholm Syndrome Theory is also relied on heavily in the analysis of his case.

- **The Feminist Approach**

Indian women writers are curious to describe the status of women and their pictures as formed by man. Another fascinating thematic difference can also be seen in the portrayal of the marginalized men. Such representations involve the analysis of the clash arising from the victimization and separation of the subordinated men. The success of Desai lies in her representation of the sensitivity to the emotional measure of the lives of the Indian men., failure and loneliness. All men in the novel are threatened and lost the ability to belong to their own masculinity. All men in the novel are threatened and lost the ability to belong to their own masculinity.

M. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study is confined to the study of self-abased man (the Cook) who is one of the main victimized men's characters in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. The study; however, deals with the psychological trauma of an outcaste man in the Indian social hierarchy. The researcher tries to cover self-abasement framework and the possible consequences of such phenomenon on the subjugated men.

N. Structure of the Research

This research is divided into three chapters, each one traces and develops an aspect of the larger problem that this analysis tackles. Written from a historical perspective, the introductory chapter which is entitled Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*: Theoretical Framework explores the various milestones in postcolonial Indian women literature written in English and highlights the detailed design of the study which consists of an introduction on the various aspects of the study for example postcolonial issues in Indian women literature, colonization, caste and trauma. Chapter one begins with a reference to the Indian women English writers. Postcolonial literature and feminism are often described as an area of study where the researcher explores distinctly different characteristics of both.

Written from a psychological perspective, the second chapter which is entitled Psychological Trauma, Self-abasement and Stockolm Syndrome:Theoretical Debate examines the masculine psyche (self-abasement) as a site of productiveness and uniqueness in postcolonial Indian woman writing.Desai 's fiction is more about investigating the major currents and undercurrents of the human psyche.Her strong understanding of the inner reality and the massing of features is reflected in such a way that all the influential shades expose the inner self of her male characters.There is a mix of all forms of human psyche as in the character of the Cook who experiences seriuos mental conflicts of different severity arising from the confrontation between his inner and external realities.In different circumstances the various states of mind create different reactions.He is lost in the struggle with caste, colonialism, labor inequality and class.But with his son Biju,the Cook comes out successfully with a new realization and hope.

In the third chapter,the researcher explores how Kiran Desai focuses on isolation and loneliness of the Indian men surrounded by social, cultural and political problems both in India and abroad.These men whose “attempt to seek their refuge in their loneliness worsens their situation still more, for their solitary musings and their mobility quicken the process of their disintegration” (Raizada 129).*The Inheritance of Loss* informs the reader about the enslaved men who establish strategies of survival in which they attempt to communicate their concerns.When their interactions fail, they produce self-destructive performances which none can fail to take notice of.The Cook and the Judge lost their opportunity to belong to either worlds.Therefore,chapter three becomes a field where the researcher applies chapter two theories on Kiran Desai’s Man- Booker Prize winning novel *The Inheritance of Loss* understudied character the Cook.

O. Conclusion

Self-abasement becomes a target of a number of different scholarly studies and domains due to its affect on individuals both in their psychological and social well being. Self-abasement shapes the bulk of postcolonial Indian women authors' concern including basically Anita Desai and Kiran Desai who write about self-abasement to serve disclosing the psychological trauma confronted by Indian individuals after independence.

The subject finds its place in postcolonial novels to shed light on the impacts of colonization that are still being felt these days. In the present research, the researcher uses postcolonial theory to study the effects of colonization on the doubly subjugated man. She also uses feminism to study the way women writers depict masculine issues as in the case of the victimized man (the Cook). Furthermore, the theories of Stockholm Syndrome and psychoanalysis are used to examine the aspect being studied (self-abasement) so that the researcher will be able to approach reliable result(s).

II. Chapter 1 : Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss : Theoretical Framework

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1.1 Introduction

Postcolonial Indian women writers are mainly concerned with human relations in their fictional works. In their novels, they depict the emotional journeys of their characters. They artistically write about the decline of the value-system that cause characters traumatic and psychic experiences. Indian women writers as Kiran Desai are actively engaged in the ongoing process of decolonizing their native cultures with an increasing political consciousness and commitment to their Indianness. Postcolonial studies find their interest in literature as a site of the most controversial and challenging field to explore the impacts of colonialism on postcolonial societies in general and women in particular from a women's point of view.

1.2 Postcolonial Indian English Literature

The subcontinent of India remains under the British colonial rule for more than two hundred years. Therefore, Indian writers aim to unite the Indians and destroy the colonial influences. Because there are many regional languages in India, Indian writers prefer English as a medium for their writings "The literature produced by the Indian writers in English came to be known as Indian English Literature" (Naik 19). The Indian English writers' early works are set against the backdrop of postcolonial themes that include nationalism, racism, ethnicity and cultural identity. They often discuss a number of sub-themes including rootlessness, alienation, gender inequality, labor exploitation, hybridity, poverty, corruption and marginalism.

The cultural and linguistic difference in India leads to the birth of the Indian English literature. In 1995, Bill Ashcroft et al write "To name reality is therefore to exert power over it, simply because the dominant language becomes the way in which it is known" (283).

1.3 Postcolonial Indian Women Literature Written in English

Indian Women authors make their contribution to the Indian English fiction only after independence. The readers see a different life and world through their eyes. Postcolonial Indian women writers as Kiran Desai are mainly concerned with human relations in their novels. They write basically about the depressed Indians' psychological and traumatic problems that are the result of the value-system's collapse.

1.3.1 Indian Women Literature

Postcolonial Indian women literature written in English develops rapidly over time. It recognizes a new age and wins many laurels both in India and abroad. Indian women novelists display their great standing in literature both qualitatively and quantitatively. Through their special and valuable English fictional works, the works of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Kiran Desai and Manju Kapur have great influence on their readers. The characters of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy are traditional in their lives, but modern in their views and ways of thinking. They are described as awakening individuals to question the domination of the conventional social structure that works to deepen their weakness.

Chaman Nahal states that feminism is "Both the awareness of woman's position in society as one of disadvantage or in generality compared with that of man and also a desire to remove those disadvantages" (17). In her novel *A Married Woman*, Manju Kapur tells through the story of her talented protagonist (Astha) who questions middle-class constraints a seductive love story at a time of political and religious disturbances. It is told with compassion and wisdom. Manju Kapur says that "A woman should be aware of self-controlled, strong-willed, self-reliant and rational, having faith in the inner strength of womanhood. A meaningful change can be brought only from within by being free in the deeper psychic sense" (90).

In the wake of India's emergence as a developing country, Indian women novelists as Kiran Desai are still hopeful to imagine their cultural and social realities. They are skilled in

forecasting an accurate observation as they portray Indian women under strain from crucial humanitarian circumstances and emotional relationships. In today's dynamic cultural strain, they focus on the complicated sufferings of women. They are also interested in the ways in which class, race and gender are developed by language that destroys society's dominant values.

A wide range of conceptual, methodological and political concerns are the key concern of postcolonial Indian women novelists who include the portrayals of women in their writings in both colonial and postcolonial writings. Postcolonial Indian female writers use their literature to demonstrate and articulate themselves and as a way of arguing for their desires and demands. They are wise in designing plans to describe their fictional works' objectivity and universality. They create a psychological space for themselves and for their characters. In her book *Woman, Gender and Identity in Indian Woman Writing*, Bedjaoui states that:

Indian woman's writing involves both a feminized awareness of gender identity and the social context which historically and traditionally had enclosed the life of the female subject. In the works of these women writers, woman's experience in the Indian family and receiving society has been rather one of friction and disjunction. On the level of fictional representation, Indian women writers have reshaped their ethnicity to adjust to the changing needs of women. (42)

Postcolonial Indian women's literature explores the severe effects of colonization on postcolonial societies in general and on women in particular from women's viewpoint. Indian women writers are actively engaged in the ongoing process of decolonizing their native cultures with an increasing political consciousness and commitment to their Indianness which "becomes a matter of subjective perception and a desire for authenticity" (Maver 80).

1.3.2 Postcolonial Issues in Indian Women Literature

Postcolonial Indian women writers work to establish their literature by concentrating on women's world issues. Indian women authors write to call for social justice and equality in patriarchal societies. In addition, the East-West struggle, cultural displacement and the loss of identity among exiles and immigrants are central aspects of postcolonial Indian women's literature. Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* reflects many aspects of modernism and feminism as it gives voice to the problems of race, gender, globalization, man woman relationship and problems of illegal immigration. The novel also reflects a woman writer's wishful thinking and expresses the thoughts of her characters that come under constant doubt because of the nature of their work, race, new lived experiences and the perceptions associated with them.

The output of postcolonial writings by Indian women develops the procedures for a "reconstruction of what colonialism meant for women versus men-sexual politics and colonialization of female bodies" (Katrak 22). The experiences of women are still a key theme in postcolonial literature. Boehmer says that they "were, because it is called, doubly or triply marginalized. Indian women writers are advancing leaps and bounds. On the contrary, the victory of women writings is exceedingly acclaimed because it has won universal acknowledgments breaking the obstructions of gender, race, social lesson in expansion to religion and caste" (216).

The writings of Indian women concentrate on the demarcation of Inner life and implicit connections. In her writings, Manju Kapur focuses on the issues of patriarchy, interreligiousness, marriage, family ties, male-female relationship, past and present coexistence. She portrays her female protagonists as a victim of gender, sexuality, domestic abuse, and circumstances. She states that "there is a man within every woman and a woman in every man. When, manhood is questioned womanhood is fragmented" (13). Their literature

focuses on the disparities that separate women in a dominant male culture in society. It provides perspective, a wealth of understanding, reservoirs of meaning, and the basis for debate.

1.4 Kiran Desai's Works

Kiran Desai is deeply conscious that she lives and writes in a world that is separated by nationalisms and colonialisms. She is a skilled craftswoman who designs wisely her plots. Kiran's works show a very taut action line. Unlike her mother Anita Desai whose novels lack outer action line, Desai is an extrovert real writer whose novels depict characters' real life, experiences and world. She writes her novels in a skilful, imaginative and magic way.

1.4.1 Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard

Kiran Desai in writing her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is inspired from a true story of a man whose name is Kapila who goes up the tree and lives there for fifteen years. She publishes it in 1998 and is conferred with the Betty Trask Award the same year. It gives her a great success at the age of twenty seven. As a young Indian writer living in self-exile, Kiran Desai is artistically good at writing her novels in English.

The novel is a work of miracle. It focuses on the enigmatic behavior and thoughts of the Indians. It also emphasizes on an individual's life that seeks to explore adult life's possibilities. It happens in Shahkot, an Indian village in the Punjab state. It is the story of the young Sampath who marries a bureaucratic girl. He works as a sorter in a mailroom in Shahkot's post office. Sampath is unable to find his way in the framework of the bureaucratic world because he hates the modern world. Consequently, he stops this poor job because he dislikes it because he knows well that he is not a part of this modern world.

Desai's first novel focuses on the exploitation of the young Sampath Chawla who escapes his duties as an adult. He is depressed and dissatisfied with his life in Shahkot. He decides to live his spiritual life and world in the branches of a Guava tree far from his

hometown Shahkot to experience real peace, realize his dreams and rediscover his true self. Therefore, he is marginalized from the society and talking about his spiritual gifts makes him a popular “holy man”. In her research paper *The Search for Identity in Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* Singh Nandita writes:

Hullabaloo tells the story of Sampath Chawla, born in a middle class family, who has no achievement to his credit for which he is constantly reprimanded by his father and derided by the society. His feelings of claustrophobia and sense of alienation with his milieu lead to the renunciation of present existence for the life of ascetic in the tree. (20)

The novel criticizes Sampath’s father, Mr. Chawla who is blindly influenced by the materialist capitalism of the West. He decides to benefit from his son’s reputation as a Monkey-Baba. The novel describes the colonial influence on the Indians in a satirical way as in the Indian Civil Service that is a copy of the British Administrative System which is harmful and destructive to the Indian life. Desai also writes about the confusions and contradictions that are found in the Indian values. Sampath’s mother Kulfi also needs to assert herself in society. In *The Art of Invisibility in Kiran Desai’s Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, Ramya Rajagopalan states that:

Kulfi and Sampath are social outcasts; steeped as it is in the ancient beliefs and superstitions of the subcontinent while caught in the encroachment of post-colonial modes of thought, and necessarily suffused with the thirst for gossip of any self-respecting community. (1)

Kulfi and Sampath look forward to assert their identities in the society. Sampath's life in the Guava tree reflects Kiran Desai's love for nature as trees, flowers, hills, rivers, and gardens which form a major element in her writings. In her book *Kiran Desai*, Alessio Carolyn explains this notion when he says “Like Wordsworth and Frost, nature is an intimate part if

Desai's pen, ambushed by nature and often abandoned by family, culture, and language, the protagonists in Desai's novels struggle with the most basic question of assimilation" (84).

The novel is the story of a sorter who chooses to live his spiritual life and world in the Guava tree far from his hometown Shahkot looking for peace to realize his dreams and rediscover his true self. In her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, Kiran Desai writes the story of life, love and family relationships focusing on the real Indian culture and values and the universal complexities of human experiences.

1.4.2 The Inheritance of Loss

The framework of *The Inheritance of Loss* is designed through the experiences of Desai who lives in India, Britain and America because it includes various countries, continents, times and characters.

Kiran Desai writes about the experiences of the migrated people to the west and their struggle to survive in America. It is the story of loss, the loss of thoughts, feelings, personalities and ultimately the loss of their life. The loss of inheritance and the inheritance of loss are identical for the migrants. The novel includes a patriotic content and meaning. It is a true examination of the lost human connections due to exile, migration and the mixed cultures. Desai explores well the impacts of globalization and cultural shifts and disparities. The contrasting essence of past and present life is also reflected in the novel. In his book *The Fiction of Kiran Desai*, Tapan K. Ghosh explains this idea when he says "It is the inheritance of little losses and failures accumulated from generation to generation that Desai has sought to chronicle through the parallel stories based in imperial England, Postcolonial India and the centre of global politics and economy, the United States" (74).

Therefore, novel's characters become inheritors of loss. It explores the severe effects of alienation, migration and identity crisis in India, the pain and distress of the Gorkhas. The story of Desai takes place in America and Kalimpong that is located in the northern part of

India near Darjeeling, during the turbulent political era in the Kalimpong mountainous area. The plot of the novel revolves around the life of the characters who are closely linked to their country's past.

In the novel, Desai's aim is to reflect the Western 's dangerous effects on the East which are observed in many of her characters. Desai expresses this message at the beginning of her novel. Ghosh states that:

Life comprises both hatred and love, justice and injustice, poverty and opulence, selfishness, cruelty and violence as much as sympathy, friendliness and charity, loss as well as gain, and that with all its inherent contradictions it will go on despite individual aberrations and socio-political upheavals. (68)

The Judge Jemubhai Patel who suffers from identity crisis represents a countless migrant who is proud of the British colonial and superior mindset that leads to his ambivalent character. In his article *Solid Knowledge and Contradiction*, David Wallace Spielman explains this idea when he says “To suppress his Indian past and elevate himself above others in his community, the Judge holds fast to what he has learned of performing English identity” (77). The consequences of British colonialization on him are his isolation, humiliation, self-hatred and ashamed of his family, community and others for not being English.

Sai returns to Kalimpong after her parents' death under the wheels of a bus in Moscow to take care of her grandfather “the Judge”. Sai resides at her grandfather's home whom she does not know before. She loves her Math' tutor Gyan whom she leaves later when he becomes a part of the Gorkha insurgents. Their relationship finishes like hidden memories from the colonial trauma. Sai is not deeply attached to her grandfather because he himself is mentally, psychologically and physically displaced. The influence of the political uprising affects the personal relationships. In one's country loneliness and lack of belonging is

a serious problem. Desai also utilizes binary opposites such as arrivals and departures move in and out, hope and hopelessness to show that they are all components of the diasporic problems. Rukmini Bhaya Nair says “Postcoloniality is a condition requiring a cure and the passage to that cure involves a return to buried memories of colonial trauma” (qtd. in Shands 5).

All of Kiran Desai's characters are fascinated by the idea of modernity and westernization. The Cook who sends his son Biju to America with his hard-earned money wishes that his son will be successful and wealthy. In his article *The deplorable state of illegal immigrants in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss*, Rajni Singh writes “In the dingy and suffocating apartments in Harlem, Biju's life is a mockery of the ‘American dream’ that he had dreamt of. He is not at all far from the poverty his father believed he has escaped” (96).

Biju gets his tourist visa and goes to America. In India, the Cook thinks that his son works in America, but Biju becomes unemployed. Biju migrates to America in order to find peace and realize his American dream that is totally destroyed after his visit to America that is a country of frustration and hopelessness. In his article *Reclamation of Inheritance: Biju's Homecoming in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss*, Narendra Khandit illustrates the harsh effects of globalization:

She first projects America as the most preferred destination for the jobless youth from the Third World countries. This, on one hand, could be seen as an acknowledgment of America's success in selling its dream to the world and, on the other, could also be a critique on American policy of exploiting the poor countries for cheap labour. (174)

India is a country of cultural and lingual diversities on the basis of class and caste. The novel explores the lives of characters who are stuck in both the upper and lower caste system. Desai writes about the oppression of the Indians by the economic and cultural influence of the West. Her characters lose their ideals through their experiences with the

Westerners. They are immovable and stubborn and refuse to throw off the constraints of colonization while still dealing with deprivation, poverty and the trappings of the social class. Desai depicts the miseries of the poor Indians with compassion and sometimes sarcasm. Tapan K. Ghosh explains this idea when he says “In Kiran’s Indian people are afflicted by incurable poverty and privation. Their minds are filled with anger and anguish that result from non-fulfillment of their basic needs and that lead them to resort to terrorist violence” (16).

In the novel, the Judge Jemubhai Patel, the Cook, Biju and Gyan believe in Forster's affirmation about the Indians' wrong wishes when he writes “All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for foreigners, birds, caves, railways, and the stars; all became joy, all laughter; there had never been disease nor doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear” (322-323). But their misguided hopes do not last for a long time. In the novel, Desai conveys a hidden message of hope. Nelson states that “The reality is that the world is full of racism, segregation, and cultural divisions, but it does not mean that hope does not also exist. Change can happen if people initiate it” (72). *The Inheritance of Loss* is powerful in its humanity and requires deeper study from the point of view of the oppressed not only to illustrate the Indian experience on the global stage, but also for its greater mix of personal, national history and its rewriting of present history.

1.5 Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* Main Themes

Kiran Desai as a diasporic Indian English writer makes a bold effort to raise her voice against the crimes and injustices perpetrated against the migrated people in foreign countries. She also writes about people's regional aspirations. The themes of cultural conflicts, migration, alienation, colonialism/colonization, nostalgia, globalization, social caste, class system, race, multiculturalism, separatism, hybridity, political struggles, trauma, nationalism, gender, ethnic affections and economic inequalities are the hallmarks of Desai’s pen.

1.5.1 Colonization

Cultural hierarchy and supremacy are the basic doctrines of colonization which is defined as “the domination by a metropolitan center which rules a distant territory through the implanting of settlements” (Kortright 4). He also defines it as “It is the establishment and control of a territory for an extended period of time by a sovereign power over a subordinate and “other” people which are segregated and separated from the ruling power” (4). The colonial condition involves political and legal control over the "Other" population, economic and political dependency relations, legitimized ethnic and cultural disparities. The primary aim of colonizers is to enforce their supremacy, their physical force by attacks, labor and resource exploitation, incarceration and objective killings; enslavement of all the colonized and their land. Memmi states that “The colonial situation manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonized” (56). Colonization generates the personalities of both the colonized and the colonizer who construct the historical circumstances and are constructed by them in turn.

Childs and Williams make the difference between colonialism and imperialism. They define imperialism as “The extension and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal, and military controls” (227). Whereas they define colonialism as the process of “The settling of communities from one country in another, usually in a conquered territory” (227). Colonialism constructs the Self and the Other, advanced racism, enslavement, domination and the complete power over the colonized by sending out the Western philosophies and principles. Ogaga Ifowodo argues that:

Colonialism ought to be understood as an intrinsically traumatizing force, a disruption par excellence in which one is forcibly reconstituted by the demands of an outsider. [S]lavery and colonialism shattered the world of the colonized”, he observes, producing “utter chaos” and a “sense of being unmoored and cast adrift from any frame of reference. (132)

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized continues to expand to social, pedagogical, economic, political and largely cultural exchanges, often with a hierarchical European settler class, local, educated and privileged class forming barriers between the European “mother” nation and the various controlled native people. This ideology inherits concepts of alien otherness and cultural inferiority of race. Colonialism is born with the intention of increasing its power and authority to attain its goals, spreading its legacies and growing its influence. It marks an ambivalent range of cultures and ideologies in the colonized countries.

1.5.2 Caste

It is believed that the caste system begins in India with the arrival of the Aryans about 1500 BC. They set out the social and religious rules which assert that only the Rjyana, the Brahmans and the Vaishyas are permitted to become priests, warriors and businessmen of the community. Historically, the Indian caste system is one of the major themes in which Indians are socially segregated by class, race, ethnicity, tribe region, community, gender and language. It is viewed as a powerful social hierarchy in which a person's social status is obliged into which caste they are born. This relies on particular, superior and inferior meanings of purity and impurity. It is viewed as a social phenomenon. It is linked to spirituality. Hutton defines the caste system as:

a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name; claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community. (47)

The caste system is the division of individuals into four hierarchical caste classes that are called the Varnas according to occupation salaries, income, and power. Priests and scholars of the Brahmins are at the top of the pyramid followed by the Kshatriyas or political

rulers and soldiers. The third class is that of the Vaishyas or the merchants. The fourth class is that of the Shudras who are commonly known as laborers, peasants, artisans and servants.

The Untouchables are placed at the bottom of this hierarchical pyramid. They are considered as the lowest of the low castes and do not have a place in the Verna's system. To be born a Shudra or an untouchable is a penalty for the actions of sins that are done in the past experiences. The terrible results of the caste system are called casteism. The high caste of the Brahmins gains all those privileges and rights. They exclude and abuse the lower classes who do impure and polluting jobs like scavenging and skinning dead animals. They are considered as outcasts. They are not permitted to be a part of the ranked castes.

The caste system is made up of three components that are repulsion, hierarchy and inherited specialisation. According to Velassery "A society is characterized by such a system if it is divided into a large number of hereditarily specialized groups, which are hierarchically superposed and mutually opposed. It does not tolerate the principle of rising in the status of groups' mixture and of changing occupation" (2). The Indian caste system plays an important role in determining the professions, responsibilities and values of the Indian society.

Starting with the horrific racial discrimination, brutality and oppression of the Aryans for centuries, religion is the continuous drive toward this system of stratification. It is religion which defines the Indian people's daily lives and belief. It is believed that the caste system continues to play a significant role in India's changing social and political interconnections. The caste system is a social structure that is closely linked to the Indian culture and psyche. Thus, it is a psychological concept. It affects the whole Indian population's life and social mobility.

1.5.3 Trauma

As a modern phenomenon, Trauma plays an interdisciplinary role. It starts out as a movement to highlight an episode of transformation in the history of suffering and pain. It succeeds in attaining the degree of understanding and awareness. Trauma comprises stressful events such as an event(s) or an experience(s). Trauma has a close correlation with other fields including psychology, sociology, history, war, politics and literature. It incorporates both feelings and ideas. Trauma from the past and traumatic experiences affect greatly characters' minds.

The language of trauma theory is developed from its roots in Freud's works from the idea of invasion which takes it closer to the obsession of the empire with postcolonial studies. Freud in his most influential cultural accounts *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* states that "Trauma occurs, he argues, when excitations from the outside [...] break through the protective shield of the ego, and provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy—an attack that must be met, like any invasion, by every possible defensive measure" (29). It describes the relationship between the stressor and the subject as one of aggression, disturbance and chaotic defense. Trauma is the product of colonization which is a cause of mental illness.

In *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth also adds "What is traumatic in such invasions is not the self's encounter with foreignness, as the overwhelming, absorptive quality of that encounter, as the invader takes up residence in the self like a settler who resists assimilation" (4). She also states that "Trauma is a piercing or breach of a border that puts inside and outside into a strange communication" (3). Caruth defines trauma as "an 'encounter' across boundaries of difference, one that connects disparate experiences of pain and forges a 'link between cultures that might otherwise remain separate'" (26,56). Moreover, Kai Erikson defines

trauma as “Something alien breaks in on you.[...]It invades you, takes you over, becomes a dominating feature of your interior landscape” (183).

Trauma is one of the contentious concepts commonly used in today's postcolonial literature. It can be found in a variety of contents and cultural circumstances that vary in the European context from Freud's original theories and from Fanon's postcolonial studies. Although the term trauma offers a basis for comparison across geographical, religious, ethnic and linguistic boundaries, the complexity of these experiences cannot be reduced to a single cohesive form.

1.6 Conclusion

Postcolonial Indian English women's literature is a debate about modern India's culture, history and ultimately destiny. Their real struggle today is to tackle the stratification and transformation of culture as a result of globalization and multiculturalism that attracts Indian English writers to identify themselves in India and abroad. Indian English women's novel passes through a tough time, but now it is readily accepted overseas. Nevertheless, it fights hard to achieve its freedom. The current recognition received by Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga introduces the Indian novel to the global scene and it can now change its identity and destiny in the global context. In the present, day it gains more strength and importance.

III. Chapter 2: Psychological Trauma, Self-abasement and Stockholm Syndrome:**Theoretical Debate**

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2.1 Introduction

Literature has a great influence on the lives of humans. It has a strong language for showing man's psychological world whose experiences are darkened by harm, pain and trauma. Kiran Desai is one of her generation's most successful and prominent postcolonial Indian authors. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is a breathtaking literary masterpiece that is set in the mid 1980s, tracing downtrodden and upper middle class lives of the Indians. It narrates the story of the independent young India that is still suffering from colonialism's lasting impacts that cause an extreme psychological trauma.

The Inheritance of Loss presents successfully the inner tensions between different individuals from distinct social groups. These disputes are deeply connected to colonialism in the past and independence in the present. In Kiran Desai's novel, a number of controversial problems are introduced including the theme of self-abasement which the researcher targets in the present chapter. A theoretical debate on self-abasement and other related concepts such as Stockholm syndrome and psychological trauma are also tackled in details so that we can have a theoretical framework about the aspect understudied.

2.2 Psychological Trauma

The experience of horrific incidents interferes with public awareness on a daily basis, but it is often maintained for long denial, suppression and disconnection that exist on both social and personal levels. Studying psychological trauma has a hidden background. In order to heal, we need to recognize the past in order to rebuild the present and the future. Thus, the perception of psychological trauma starts with the revival of history.

2.2.1 Definition

Trauma is a pervasive, disruptive and severe public health problem. It is the result of crime, violence, abuse, neglect loss, tragedy, war and other mental distress experiences. Trauma has no restriction on age, gender, socio-economic status race, ethnicity, geography

or sexual orientation. It is a widely known psychiatric issue. The ability to cope with trauma is constantly seen as an important part of effective mental health services. Trauma is defined by C. Courtois as:

Trauma refers to experiences or events that by definition are out of the ordinary in terms of their overwhelming nature. They are more than merely stressful – they are also shocking, terrifying and devastating to the victim, resulting in profoundly upsetting feelings of terror, shame, helplessness and powerlessness. (17)

According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) “Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting psychological effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (2).

The ordinary symptoms of treatment that offer people a sense of power, connection or purpose are overshadowed by traumatic events which violate family relations, friendship, love and community attachments. They are breaking the self-construction which is created and maintained in relation with others. They destroy religion. In a natural or religious order, they breach the victim's trust and throw the victim into a state of emotional problems. It is a breaking “basic trust”. A feeling of loss and separation pervades all the relations. In her book *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman defines psychological trauma as:

Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning [...] Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe. (33)

People who suffer from serious traumatic experiences feel sad, nervous and have other mental effects “A few people live through horrible events without experiencing much fear, but most of us react with feelings of horror and helplessness. Psychological trauma occurs in the wake of an unexpected event that is so unpleasant and shocking that the human mind and body react in an autonomic defensive manner” (Thornett).

Van Der Kolk in his book *The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma* makes a reasonable argument about the complex nature of the trauma when he says “Traumatization occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat” (393). Both clinicians make the argument that the harm does not come from the trauma itself. It is how the mind and body of the individual respond to the traumatic event in accordance with the collective response of the social community of the individual in its own unique way.

Studying psychological trauma means facing both human insecurity and human nature's potential for evil in the natural environment. This indicates that those who are close sympathize with the victim easily and bring attention to traumatic experiences. In this confrontation, it is practically difficult to stay neutral. The person is obliged to take a stand. People who experience a traumatic neurosis are morally inferior human beings, delusional schizophrenic and liars. They are claimed to be spiritual invalids. This can also be triggered by continuing and persistent tension such as being physically violated or injured, being exposed to physical violence, witnessing horrific deaths, daily community violence, life-threatening illness or disorder.

2.2.2 Symptoms

The traumatic neurosis symptoms refer not only to perception, memory and state of mind, but also to the whole context of rational action and effort. Traumatized people limit their lives in an effort to establish some sense of security and control their overwhelming fear.

2.2.2.1 Reservation

Reservation is on constant threat as if the threat can return at a certain time. The symptoms in this case are easy to break, respond angrily to provocations and sleep badly. This is the central nervous system's continuous stimulation. In her book *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman writes:

Patients suffer from a combination of generalized anxiety symptoms and specific fears. They do not have a normal "baseline" level of alert but relaxed attention. Instead, they have an elevated baseline of arousal: their bodies are always on the alert for danger [...] It also appears that traumatized people cannot "tune out" repetitive stimuli that other people would find merely annoying; rather, they respond to each repetition as though it were a new, and dangerous, surprise. (26)

The post-traumatic stress disorder and the psycho-physiological changes are both substantial and enduring. Therefore, traumatic experiences help to rebuild the human nervous system.

2.2.2.2 In Intrusion

Long after the danger in the past, traumatized individuals recreate the event as if it constantly happens in the present. Thus, Trauma affects the daily lives of the individuals. Judith Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* states that "The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory which breaks spontaneously into consciousness both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep" (26). Traumatic memories include a range of exceptional characteristics. Judith Herman explains this idea when she says:

Traumatized people find themselves reenacting some aspect of the trauma scene in disguised form without realizing what they are doing such as putting themselves in dangerous situations this time to make the end come out differently. They deny any

knowledge or memory of being abused. (28)

Traumatized people recreate the moment of trauma not only in their thinking and dreams, but in their acts as well. Traumatic memories avoid verbal narration and context. They are recorded in the form of realistic experiences and memories.

2.2.2.3 In Constriction

When an individual is totally helpless and loses any sort of resistance, s/he enters a state of submission. Judith Herman states that “The system of self-defense shuts down entirely. The helpless person escapes from her situation not by action in the real world but rather by altering her state of consciousness” (31). Traumatized people limit their lives in an effort to establish some sense of health. In order to prevent any scenario that resembles the trauma of the past or any action involving future preparation and risk, traumatized people divest themselves from certain future ideas for positive coping that minimize the impact.

2.2.2.4 In Disconnection

Traumatic incidents break families, friendship, love and society pledges. They destroy the self-construction which is created and maintained in relation to the others. They damage the religion which gives human life meaning. There is a sense of alienation and disconnection that characterizes every connection. Traumatic experiences have not only principal impacts on the mental structures of the people, but also on the relationships that connect individuals and societies. Trauma causes the victims to recreate their previous struggles regarding freedom, ambition, competence, personality and affection. Judith Herman writes “Traumatic events violate the autonomy of the person at the level of basic bodily integrity” (38).

Guilt is considered as an effort to derive a valuable lesson from the tragedy and recover a sense of power and control. It is more acceptable to think one can have done better than to confront the truth of absolute helplessness. Judith says that “Trauma impels people both to withdraw from close relationships and to seek them desperately” (40). The deep breach

of trust and confidence, the familiar feelings for shame, guilt, dehumanization, failure, embarrassment, uncertainty and/or loss inferiority and the desire to escape memories of the trauma that are linked to social life all facilitate the withdrawal from close relationships. Hence, the traumatized person sometimes chooses between loneliness to interact anxiously with others.

2.3 Self Abasement

Self-abasement is a critical fall in self-esteem expressed in one's personality regression, humiliation, spiritual beliefs, or physical qualities. Self-abasement is typically followed by psychotic-directed mental disorders and occurs as a consequent symptom of a psychotic-disordered torture. It is defined by Anthony Lightfoot as "Self-abasement arises against the background of dependence which suppresses a person's will and resistance over time and the strengthening of painful attachments" (193)

Subjection to the will and desires of another, subordination, inability to fight changes in fate and extreme humility further damage individual identities. Self-abasement emerges from the concept of weakness which, over time, undermines an individual's motivation and strength and heightens painful ties.

2.3.1 Definition

Self-abasement as a shield is not an effective way to defend against abuse. An individual who experiences sympathy and dismissiveness from others often becomes annoyed by these behaviours. Decreased self-esteem and traumatic failed experience motivate a person to replace an unmistakable lifestyle and change his approach to shadowing "Self-abasement is manifested as a defense against the attacks of the outside world because no one will condemn someone who already condemns himself beyond measure, but a person who is joyful and brags about his skills can well be besieged" (Psychology and Psychiatry). People who want this form of defense will never be pleased about their words being rejected and refuted. An

individual who is continually worried that others can distinguish closely how unattractive he is removes himself from active public life in order to minimize perceptions and surpass others' deceit. He is always driven by self-abasement apologizes genuinely and stresses his incompetence so that others have no idea of entrusting something to him.

Self-abasement in Norman Polansky's book *Integrated Ego* is defined as "Self-abasement is a process whereby through criticizing, blaming, or otherwise derogating the self, the individual seeks to allay anxiety. In academic textbooks on personal adjustment, one used to encounter descriptions of the patient whose problem was a "poor self-concept" or feelings of inferiority" (49). Merriam Webster defines it as "Self-abasement is also defined as humiliating oneself when one feels lower or less deserving of respect" (Merriam Webster Dictionary). For those who pursue modesty before God, self-abasement can have a religious framework in the form of the monastic lifestyle. Practices of self-abasement contain self-flagellation, slavery, bondage, torture, sexual humiliation and public humiliation (including online humiliation).

The state of self-abasement gradually takes away from the present experience. This involves all the mental energy with past problems, endless repetition of errors and spiritual self-punishment for missteps "Submission and obedience are guided in this case not by a desire to benefit or not destroy relations, but by a desire to shift the responsibility for one's own life. In the case of failure, there is always someone to blame him. And if he succeeds, he can be redirected into the hands of the dominant person" (Psychology and Psychiatry). The denial of the authorship of one's existence is closely correlated with the lack of interaction with reality. Thus, objectivity is profoundly abused in determining one's own values and the facts around it.

In psychology, self-abasement is one of a person's most dangerous psychiatric disorders. This causes the individual to extend his faults and joys in speaking about them and when he injures himself, he becomes happy. When he starts to wrath himself, he feels more agony. Then, he gets used to this frustration and is habituated before he achieves it. The issue

enters the stage of self-whipping and contributes to this frustration as being adored. In his book *Not Just Recovered but Delivered II*, Lightfoot Anthony says “Self-abasement is associated with shame (rather than guilt) and involves the reduction of the subject's self-esteem. The notion of self-abasement can be said to be based in Freudian psychoanalysis” (193).

2.3.2 Symptoms

Self-abasement is a self-enclosed mechanism of experiencing the serious effects of guilt, lack of perseverance (being more dumb with a lower personality) and timidity prevent the individual to take a dignified position “It passes to leadership and influence on his own life. It includes a set of signs which are: feeling of laziness, exaggeration, lethargy and lack of energy” (Psychology and Psychiatry).

A patient who suffers from self-abasement is continually experiencing physical and psychological distress such as: the goal is to have a depressed mood, loneliness, depression and frustration that contributes to intense self-abasement symptoms, distort the picture of creativity and face difficulties, inability to establish positive relationships and the loss of ability to communicate with others, irritability and anxiety and the lack of focus and severe fear.

Self-abasement purposely places the individual in He begins experiencing other illnesses that he does not have before. The pressure on his mind is overwhelmed by matters of extreme hostility for its own existence and the fluctuation of action and ignorance “Self-abasement purposely places the individual in a structural position of social inferiority in relation to an alter. It sets him in a luminal position which enables him to manipulate his own position in the society in relation to future acts” (Psychology and Psychiatry).

2.4 Stockholm Syndrome

Stockholm Syndrome is a widespread phenomenon which is gaining an enormous attention from various cases of high profile of kidnapping and hostages. Capture bonding is also recognized as a psychological phenomenon where captives establish emotional bonds with their tormentors. This is not an illness, but rather a sort of social survival mechanism that the victims unconsciously use for self-preservation. Stockholm syndrome is a psychiatric disorder in which hostages often show empathy, compassion and optimistic emotions towards their captors to the point of protecting and bonding with them “These feelings are generally considered in light of the danger or risk endured by the victims who essentially mistake a lack of abuse from their captors for an act of kindness” (Peer Reviewed Journals).

2.4.1 Definition

Adorjan M et al state that “The term is first used by the media in 1973 when four hostages are taken during a bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden. The hostages defended their captors after being released and would not agree to testify in court against them” (454). They also define Stockholm Syndrome as the following:

Stockholm syndrome is a contested illness due to doubt about the legitimacy of the condition. It has also come to describe the reactions of some abuse victims beyond the context of kidnappings or hostage-taking. Actions and attitudes similar to those suffering from Stockholm syndrome have also been found in victims of sexual abuse, human trafficking, terror, and political and religious oppression. (454 - 474)

In *The Short Step From Love to Hypnosis*, Stockholm Syndrome is defined by Jameson Celia as “Stockholm Syndrome is a condition in which hostages develop a psychological alliance with their captors during captivity” (337). Stockholm syndrome have the same symptoms as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) ones which are: nightmares, general irritability, unreality, distrust, difficulty in concentrating, being easily startled and

flashbacks. The creation of a hostage's positive feelings towards the captor, no prior experience between the hostage and the captor and a hostage's trust in the captor's goodness are all major features of Stockholm syndrome.

The phenomenon in Stockholm is paradoxical since the optimistic emotions of the hostages towards their captors are the opposite of the fear and contempt that an outsider feels towards the tormentors. Stockholm syndrome is a concept that is used by psychologists to examine a range of conditions, including cases of severe or long-term aggression in which mind control is thought to be involved.

2.4.2 Symptoms

Adorjan M et al say that "Victims of the formal definition of Stockholm syndrome develop positive feelings toward their captors and sympathy for their causes and goals, and negative feelings toward the police or authorities" (454,474). People with Stockholm syndrome have symptoms close to those of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The Stockholm Syndrome occurs primarily from a psychoanalytic perspective as a consequence of survival instincts. In his book *The Stockholm Syndrome*, Strentz states that "the victim's need to survive is stronger than his impulse to hate the person who has created the dilemma" (1,9). Adorjan M et al say that "A positive emotional bond between captor and captive is a defense mechanism of the ego under stress" (454-474). Such emotional feelings are not merely for show as the captives are often afraid to see that their affection is fake. Thus, they begin to assume that their good emotions are true.

Psychiatrists like Steve Norton find that there is no clear set of rules involved in determining whether or not someone has Stockholm syndrome. Furthermore, the symptoms of Stockholm syndrome correlate with other disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and become impotence. People who are frequently exposed to dangerous situations outside lose their endurance to make decisions

In her book *Crisis Narratives and Masculinist Protection*, Cecilia Åse explains that ideas like "dominance hierarchies and submission strategies "assist in devising explanations for the illogical reasoning behind the symptoms of those suffering from Stockholm syndrome as a result of any oppressive relationship" (595). In other context, Adorjan M et al state that:

Stockholm syndrome develops in captives when they engage in "face-to-face contact" with their captors, and when captors make captives doubt the likelihood of their survival by terrorizing them into "helpless, powerless, and submissive" states. This enables captors to appear merciful when they perform acts of kindness or fail to "beat, abuse, or rape" the victims. (454)

Stockholm syndrome is a condition in which victims display optimistic emotions and behaviors towards their tormentors or captors to the point that they gain negative feelings towards their family , friends or those who aim to get them out of this prison. Thus, Stockholm syndrome is a self-defensive survival technique formed by the victim to protect himself from extreme fear and anxiety. Therefore, the victims believe that establishing an emotional bond with their captors will ensure their survival and a simple act of compassion on the part of the abductors will make them perceive their tormentors in a more meaningful way.

2.5 Conclusion

Literature is one of the forms in which we teach each other about categories of human experience that cannot be captured by normal ways of speech and can even transcend human comprehension. It helps us to pay attention to things that are not well known and it opens our minds to interactions that otherwise stay invisible and unheard of. Self-abasement as a self-enclosed system of misery and suffering from the circumstances of guilt and the lack of protection (being more dumb and having a lower character) places purposely the individual in a structural context of inferiority and in severe social situations which lead to his pain.

Self-abasement becomes a target of a number of scholarly studies due to its affect on both individuals' psychological and social well being. The subject finds its place in postcolonial novels such as *The Inheritance of Loss* written by Kiran Desai to shed light on the impacts of colonization that are still being felt these days. It shapes the bulk of postcolonial Indian authors' concern including basically Anita Desai and Kiran Desai who stretch on self-abasement to serve disclosing the psychological trauma confronted by Indian individuals after independence. In the coming chapter, the researcher uses chapter two approaches and theories to analyze the theme of self-abasement in Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.

IV. Chapter Three: The Inheritance of Loss: The Victimization of a Common Man

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3.1 Introduction

The strength of *The Inheritance of Loss* relies mainly on the sensitivity to the Indian men's emotional measurement, their lives, alienation and disappointment. Kiran Desai puts her works into practice to examine the lost men's experiences. She focuses on the alienation and loneliness of the Indian men whose "attempt to seek their refuge in their loneliness worsens their situation still more, for their solitary musings and their mobility quicken the process of their disintegration" (Raizada 129) are overwhelmed by social, cultural and political problems at home and abroad.

As other postcolonial novels, *The Inheritance of Loss* is a memory novel that informs the reader about the enslaved men who establish methods of preservation in which they attempt to convey their thoughts. If their interactions fail, they produce self-destructive mechanisms which nobody can fail to take notice of. In the novel, the male characters such as the Cook and the Judge lose the right to belong to any world. All of them are inheritors of loss.

3.2 Defining a Common Man (the Cook)

Biju's father and the Judge's Cook Panna Lal is not a secondary character in the novel. He is Sai's father figure. He is not identified until the penultimate page of the novel. Before that, Kiran Desai gives him the name of "The Cook" to stress the importance of his job, not of his person. The Cook who reflects the elder generation belongs to the subaltern group. He is the character who draws the reader's attention to subaltern, masculine and enslavement problems in India. Kiran Desai describes him as follows "His lines had been honed over centuries, passed down through generations, for poor people needed certain lines; the script was always the same, and they had no option but to beg for mercy. The cook knew instinctively how to cry" (5).

As he belongs to the lowest caste in the Indian society, the Cook's caste is defined by birth and can never be altered. Thus, he is destined to be a subaltern and his social class will always stay as a lower-class in the community. He lives in a small cottage near Cho Oyu (the house of the Judge). The Cook works in the service of the Judge from the early age of his childhood. This poor creature reflects the misfortune of the oppressed in India. The Cook's low status is inherited from his father's low caste who also works as a servant and wishes that his son to work hard to be a servant too. "The Cook's sense of inferiority to his father is not for his low social caste or inexperience in the kitchen, but because his father "served white men only" during his career as a servant" (Ben Abderrezak 80). In contrast, his son the Cook works only for a dark-skinned Indian Judge in his whole life. The Cook wishes his son Biju to work hard to realize his American dream of becoming rich .

The resistance of the working class is noticed as the Cook who deliberately positions himself as an object of the actions of the Judge. His behavior does nothing to alter our perception of his position. He is a weak man who still wishes to escape problems. His compliance allows the abuser to continue his rule. The Cook who is happy because he works for the Judge who is of a higher rank has to free his mind from psychological colonialism. He suffers from policemen's actions when they arrive to Cho Oyu to investigate in the Judge's lost dog Mutt and says "Well, they have to search everything, he said. Naturally. How are they to know that I am innocent? Most of the time it is the servant that steals" (Desai 26).

Another type of pain and humiliation when the Cook is reduced to be handled even less than the humiliation of the former Judge's dog Mutt. The Cook's humiliation is due to his job's nature and its related demands, poverty and lower caste. Therefore, demonstrating the masculinity that he himself never possesses. The subalterns are obliged to accept suffering and humiliation without any apparent challenge because it is the only way for them to sustain their lives.

The Inheritance of Loss tells the story of people's simple expectations being stuck on India's rooftop in the mid 1980s. In the shifting social and cultural context of India, some Indian people are increasingly becoming more powerless. Desai writes about decades of subjugation by the economic and cultural influences of the West. Novel's characters are shocked by their experiences with the West. They are unchangeable and arrogant. Through her novel, Desai mirrors her connection with India her motherland. Desai conveys successfully the challenges that are embedded in her characters' subjugated attempts to make their voices heard all over the world.

3.3 Designing Roles

India is a multicultural and multilingual land of differences that are based on class and caste. *The Inheritance of Loss* examines characters' lives in the upper and lower caste systems. Desai describes with sympathy and sometimes sarcasm the wretched lives the Indians who most of them miss something or someone they like. They all inherit loss because they are born in India.

Set in three separate locations (India, England and America), Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* emphasizes on the tensions and hardships of the caste system in India and even abroad. It follows the wretched lives of the Indians whose lives are trapped in deprivation, misery and racial discrimination. The novel reflects how the borders of class, caste, region and religion are vanished in a globalized world. Kiran Desai shows the real situation, the dark and bleak sides of the life of the Indians without falsifying the truth.

3.3.1 The Cook

The word "Cook" introduces to our minds the picture of a female who does household jobs as cleaning and cooking for wages. In contrast, Lau says that "the position of the male domestic servant is emasculating given the existent patriarchal context and deeply gendered

social hierarchy” (35). Chopra in her book *Servitude and Sacrifice "Masculinities and Social Change"* argues that Cook's emasculation as a male servant starts with his entrance to job when she says:

Reputation and reliability are the key tropes that make young men employable as household labour. Like the veiled woman the sense of self is looped out through other people's 'tellings'; thus like a woman who can be approached only through others who metaphorically stand before her, a young male worker is known and fleshed out by others who stand surety for him. (31)

The Cook's silence, warm speeches and his body's language show his lack of masculinity. He is a houseworker who:

Draw their bodies inward through a series of gestures that mute their maleness. Ways of standing with hands folded over the genitals, eyes lowered (nazar ka parda) [...] Silence, soft speech tones, economy of speech (awaz ka parda) and a successful adoption of a listening posture are read as incorporations into obedience. (Chopra 34)

3.3.2 The Cook and the Judge

India as a postcolonial country is like a sinking ship in the minds of the rich and class-conscious privileged Indians who are westernized and urge their beloved families to go abroad sooner rather than later. The British leaves loss in India which becomes a state of absolute despair. Desai emphasizes the horrible effects of colonialism and the difficulties it brings on the colonized who think that the colonizer is a great gift, superior and that their colonized nation is inferior “As all colonized who believe that the colonizer is great, divine, superior and that their colonized nation is inferior, he couldn't defend himself against their mistreatment of his race or even see the harm and destruction they did to his homeland” (Alkhodairy 12).

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Desai addresses the problem of colonial mindset through the role of the Judge. Therefore, it is a necessity to define the term of “Colonial Mentality”. Nadarjan defines it as follows:

Acceptance of foreigners (the westerners – the whites) and their ways as superior; attempts to mimic a foreign culture with the hope of becoming superior like them; at extreme ends, attempting to absorb the whites culture and way of life physically, culturally and intellectually, in order to become superior foreigners in ones’ native country. (1)

when one's cultural identity is rejected as inferior to the colonizer, this leads to a cultural identity crisis as in the case of the Judge Jemubhai Patel in the novel. Desai defines the Judge as complex, diverse and as a representative of the colonial Indian mind. He becomes mentally a slave to the British. Sharma states that “One result of the colonial educational policies in British India was the emergence of class of Indians who were “English” in all but skin-color, with well-entrenched ideas and ideals about England and Englishness acquired from English texts” (16). He who speaks English is admired and respected and those who speak Indian are considered as illiterate.

Kiran Desai labels her characters by their jobs with the intention of illustrating and stressing the disparities in social status and the master/slave relationship between the Judge and the Cook. The idea of class can be found on the first page and in the whole novel. The poor Cook lives in a bamboo hut in the Judge's property. When Sai first goes to his cottage, she realizes that he has nothing “It pained Sai’s heart to see how little he had” (Desai 20). He has only one additional shirt and some other personal possessions. He starts to work at the age of fourteen in the Judge’s house. Desai states that “The Judge and his Cook had lived together for more years than they had with anyone else, practically in the same room, closer to each other than to any other human being and—nothing, zero, no understanding” (Desai 313).

The Cook who is so submissive to the extent that he cannot resist his master's orders and demands is an illustration of fragile and weak masculinity. The Judge is the strong master and the Cook is the subservient servant who makes huge effort to fulfill the demanding tasks of his master with inadequate tools "Only a corner of the kitchen was being used, since it was meant originally for the slaving minions, not the one leftover servant" (Desai 7). The low status of The Cook further reflects how he sees himself "He was a powerless man, barely enough learning to read and write, had worked like a donkey all his life, hoped only to avoid trouble, lived on only to see his son" (Desai 11). Sai identifies the Cook and his son Biju in a discussion with Noni as "the poorest family in the village" (Desai 67).

The Judge's contact with the Cook is limited to the essential information and instructions. When the police arrive to investigate in the Judge's dog Mutt's robbery, the Cook tries to give them information, but this action upsets the Judge who shouts "Go sit in the kitchen. Bar bar karta rehta hai" (Desai 11). The Judge's order to the Cook in two languages (English and Indian) shows the low social status position of the Cook. The Judge's use of the English language indicates his allegiance to the British colonizer and the West while the Indian expression demonstrates the disparity between the Judge and the Cook while sharing the same cultural association and identity. This leads the Cook to understand his master's message.

Humiliation continues to occur in the novel mainly when the Judge's dog Mutt is lost which is an intolerable action for the Judge who likes his dog more than anything else in his life to the point that he beats his Cook Panna Lal who feels a huge sense of guilt. He fears that he does the wrong thing and his guilt starts to rise. He cries bitterly and runs into the forest to find Mutt. The Cook continues to blame himself for his low self-esteem for being dishonest. The Cook knocks at night at the Judge's bedroom door asking for forgiveness and retribution. In fact, he concedes the errors he makes over the years. The Cook asks for

punishment and even murder “I’m a bad man [...] I’m a bad man, beat me, sahib, punish me” (Desai 319).

In *the Inheritance of Loss*, Desai explores the devastating effects of colonialism through the Judge’s character who suffers from brutal treatment and racial discrimination in England that leads to self-hatred, hate of his family particularly his Cook Panna Lal and wife Nimi. The hatred, anger and disgust of the Judge towards members of his family, especially his wife and Cook leads him to torment a human (the Cook) for a dog. Desai identifies this brutal behavior as follows:

The judge was beating with all the force of his sagging, puckering flesh, flecks of saliva from his slack muscled mouth, and his chin wobbled uncontrollably. Yet that arm, from which the flesh hung already dead, came down, bringing the slipper upon the cook’s head. (321)

This incident disturbs Sai who cannot bear the torment of the judge to his Cook and requests him to stop, but the Cook affirms and says “Let him. He wants to kill me. Let him kill me. What is my life? It’s nothing. Better that it’s gone. It’s useless to everyone” (Desai 320). The huge dichotomy between the Judge and the Cook reveals the Indian society’s infamous master/slave relationship. The Judge with his British colonial attitude believes that he still has the right as a master to enslave the East’s submissive poor man (the Cook). Desai shows a contrast in the East-West relationship according to postcolonial theories.

The Judge hates the Cook and cannot tolerate him because he is Indian, uneducated, submissive and belongs to the low class in the Indian society. He was born in a society where the English are the most privileged, wealthy and powerful. The Cook with his low self-esteem and instability feels less successful than his father “A severe comedown, he thought, from his father, who had served white men only” (Desai 63). Furthermore, the Judge-Cook relationship shows how colonialism and the Western domination influence the Indian

social systems.

The Judge accuses the Cook for Mutt's loss and says "It's your fault. Mutt was in your care! I will kill you. Wait and see. You didn't do your duty. You didn't watch over her. It was your duty and you let her be stolen. How dare you? How dare you?" (Desai 320). When the Cook does not find Mutt, he falls on the Judge's feet "clasping one of them and weeping for mercy" (Desai 359). This traumatized incident causes the Cook to flee from reality to imagination which reveals his fragile psyche and personality that are ravaged by an imagined guilt. People who face traumatic experiences suffer from unavoidable psychological harm. A spectrum of traumatic mental illnesses range from the impacts of one overwhelming incident to the more complex consequences of excessive and repetitive abuse. People who experience atrocities and violence always tell their tragic events in a highly emotional, paradoxical and distorted ways that weaken their credibility. Thus, they serve the twin precepts of truth-telling and confidentiality.

The Cook works for the Judge for nearly his whole life and his salary becomes insufficient. This causes him to ask the Judge to increase his salary, but the Judge rejects the proposal and sees the salary of the Cook as only "a pocket money". The Judge says "All your expenses are paid for-housing, clothing, food, medicines. This is extra" (Desai 54). This shows how high-ranking educated people as the Judge who feels his superiority both professionally and personally easily exploit people who are from the lower classes as the Cook in the Indian society. The action of the Judge with the Cook is the product of his own instability, lack of trust and issues in identity.

In her book *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Herman states that "Atrocities, however refused to be buried" (1). Because the ability of the person to remove trauma from consciousness (a protection from trauma) is interrupted by the unexpected problem and this leads to the failure of the defense and the reappearance of trauma. Judith Herman also says

that “Traumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in psychological arousal, emotions, cognition and memory” (34). People cannot comprehend the way the trauma of abuse affects them. Others can observe a difference, but are not able to understand why there is a difference. Thus, we are changed by trauma.

Desai as a postcolonial woman writer addresses the catastrophe of the defeated men and focuses on how the historical experiences (colonialization) have a profound effect on the lives and identities of the colonized. She deals with the different traumas of subjugation and crisis. She also describes how racism and discrimination are terrible human actions that can have devastating and unforgivable outcomes on the colonized. In the role of the judge, Desai explores the concept of the social class structure which is one of the bad results of British colonization

3.3.3 The Cook and Sai

The Cook fascinates Sai with tales about her grandfather's glorious past and his excellence in hunting which makes him respected. The happiness of the Cook is to make Sai appreciate listening to his real stories as well as to make her win all the games he plays with her. Desai states that “The Cook couldn't help but enjoy himself, and the more he repeated his stories, the more they became truer than the truth” (Desai 232). The Cook looks as he is a mentally deranged person and continues to live in a delusional world. He is full of love and loyalty to the Judge. His adoration to Sai is from the beauty of his heart. Desai identifies the Cook's joy through his domestic attitudes when Sai invites him to take a photo:

Once, Sai had taken a picture of the cook with Uncle Potty's camera, snuck up on him as he minced an onion, and she had been surprised to see that he felt deeply betrayed. He ran to change into his best clothes, a clean shirt and trousers, then positioned himself before the National Geographic bound in leather, a backdrop he found suitable. (19)

In his book *Multicultural Factors in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of loss*, Reddy Sasikanth.T says that “It is both the cultural difference and identification with the cultural tradition that defines one’s identity;and the denegation of either may result in a state of loss” (Desai 101).This notion is observed in the mimicry acts of the Judge’s Western procedures of life especially when he chooses an English name for himself which becomes James Peter Peterson.He also has an everyday bed tea.He becomes more English in his personality,behavior and way of thinking than the English themselves because he believes that the Western culture is superior to the Indian.The Cook (Panna Lal) recounts this practice to Sai when he says “At five-forty-five I would take the bed tea on a tray to your grandfather’s tent” (Desai 61).

Sai who knows well the circumstances of the Cook shows sympathy towards him.She still feels happy to see his wrinkled face and hear him negotiate in the market.She is full of joy and satisfaction when he talks with her with love calling her baby “Babyji” or “Sai”“Babyji” or Sai“ baby”.He is obliged to play with Sai and leaves her wins.The Cook and the local people of Gorkha become her father figures.Through the character of the Cook, Sai understands well the British colonization’s serious and lasting effects on the Indian society.

3.3.4 The Cook and his son Biju

The Cook is a poor man whose greatest happiness in life is his son Biju.All his wishes are on Biju.He recalls happily his son's childhood with honor “He isn’t scared of anything at all.Even when he was very small he would pick up mice by the tail, lift frogs by the neck” (Desai 23).The Cook is emotionally attached with his son and because he is obsessed by the British superiority, he feels proud of his son’s settlement in America.He “was sure that since his son was cooking English food, he had a higher position than if he were cooking Indian” (Desai 29).He also dreams of the arrival of rich son from America willing him to marry a pretty girl and to look after the family properly.

Biju who lives in poverty with his father the Cook in India feels as a man that his dignity as well as his strength are broken down because he belongs to the lowest class in the Indian society. He goes to America to realize his American dream, but the reality is different. He is “left as a new person, a man full to the brim with a wish to live within a narrow purity” (Desai 139). Another victim of terrible social bias and racial discrimination is Biju and his father who hold the conviction that America is the land of happiness and success.

With his terminated visa, Biju is like a primitive man who works as an illegitimate immigrant in America. His American Dream is transformed into an Indian nightmare. He “had been cultivating self-pity” (Desai 191). The love of his father is the only thing of interest in his life. Biju fights to survive in America conducting menial works. Desai is a real writer as she positions simple lives in a conflict between tradition and modernity. Biju is hopelessly back home filled with frustration and loss after his terrifying trip to America.

3.4 The Healing

In her book *The American Dream and the Power of Wealth: Choosing Schools and Inheriting Inequality in the Land of Opportunity*, the American Dream is defined by Johnson Heather Beth as “The American Dream represents a basic belief in the power and capacity of the individual[...]which the dream promises: a system of opportunity, so that regardless of background each individual has an equal chance to prosper” (21). She also defines it as follows “It is a set of deeply held beliefs, a particular mind-set, and it is a particular way of viewing the world and it is a particular way we want the world to view us” (22). Consequently, many people over the world immigrate to America looking for equality, freedom, wealth, better opportunities and the American Dream to realize their personal purposes in life.

Kiran Desai explores the theme of the American Dream especially through the characters of Biju and his father. The Cook who does not care about his own distress is a kind of person whose real happiness in life is the prosperity of his son. They both love each other. The Cook wishes Biju to succeed in his life. He urges his son to move to America to realize his American Dream looking for richness, prosperity to escape from poverty. Biju writes a letter to his father from America where he beautifies the reality to raise his father's spirits "I have a new job in a bakery and the boss leaves us in complete charge" (Desai 90). The Cook is really pleased to read that his son becomes successful in America "My son works in New York," the cook boasted to everyone he met. "He is the manager of a restaurant business." "New York. Very big city," he explained. "The cars and buildings are nothing like here. In that country, there is enough food for everybody" (Desai 84).

Despite his low social class, the Cook is a poor man who sends his son to America. He begins his business of his own liquors' r selling after his son's travel to America. The performance of the Cook in business frustrates and challenges the high status of the Judge "It was his habit to be a master and the cook's to be a servant, but something had changed in their relationship within a system that kept servant and master both under an illusion of security" (Desai 209). Kiran Desai indicates that people of the lower classes like the Cook can be innovative and effective in their lives if they are given the opportunity to do so. She also shows how it is difficult for a member of the lower class to develop his own position.

In her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai embeds a message of hope despite the racism and violence that affect the world "The reality is that the world is full of racism, segregation, and cultural divisions, but it does not mean that hope does not also exist. Change can happen if people initiate it" (Nelson 72). Hope is the motor of motivation. Without it, people neglect themselves and fail. Biju and his father Panna La reunite again and a message of hope glitters at the novel's end. They encounter each other the same way the Kanchenjunga

peaks are rejoined “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 needed to do was to reach out and pluck it” (Desai 324).

Desai describes the scene of reunion between the son and his father as the following “Biju and Panna Lal-two inheritors of loss,who were separated from each other by the claims of modernity and the blinding desire for a better life-are finally united” (Ghosh 67).Though they suffer from loss and blankness “The inheritance with which to begin writing a future [...] the loss that we inherit is ours to make good” (Poon 555).The Cook loses his dignity, but he succeeds in regaining his son back.

3.5 Conclusion

The Inheritance of Loss is a mixture of all human emotions of experiencing a world that perplexes most characters as a consequence of postcolonial legacies and class status.Consequently, they become inheritors of loss.Postcolonial Indian women novelists as Kiran Desai writes about the victimized men and scrutinizes the fight resulting from the load of tradition and individual will,victimization and racial discrimination against the subjugated men.Thus, the fiction of Desai examines the hidden sides of the human psyche.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, there is a mix of all kinds of human experiences as in the character of the Cook who experiences serious mental problems of different intensity arising from the confrontation between his inner and outer realities.The various states of mind produce different responses in different situations.The Cook gets lost in the fight with caste, colonization, labor inequality and class, but he manages to realize hope with his son Biju at the end of the novel.

V. General Conclusion

The Inheritance of Loss is a mixture of all human emotions of experiencing a world that perplexes most characters as a consequence of postcolonial legacies and class status. Thus, they become inheritors of loss. In her works, Desai concentrates on topics that are related to the gradual acceptance and recognition in postcolonial Indian literature such as: colonialism, caste race and illegal immigration. Kiran Desai's novel succeeds in examining the complexities of life, various histories, cultures and different systems of values with empathy and wisdom. Thus, *The Inheritance of Loss* in its humanity is poignantly powerful and needs further studies not only for placing the Indian experience first on the world's platform, but also for its greater mixture of personal and national experiences and its rewriting of contemporary history from the point of view of the marginalized.

Indian English literature is particularly important because the language in which it is written is presented to the Indians through the colonization's experience. As a postcolonial Indian woman author, Kiran Desai writes her novel from her personal view and society. She explores the experiences of people, the lost traditions and identities and the fractured social structures in India. She also shows how each character fights between two worlds (Indian, British/American) and is unable to belong to any of them. Kiran Desai's vast corpus of literature creates a tradition that addresses the silent voice of (wo) men. By broadening the spectrum of human experience and expression, she opens up a new range of emotions and thoughts and expands Indian women's fiction boundaries. Writing is an act of bravery for Desai that resorts women authors to various methods to act on their own imagination and creativity. Kiran Desai struggles strongly with the patriarchal ideology of the powers contributing to the deconstruction of family and social structure in India in her attempt to deconstruct socio-political constructions.

In *The Inheritance of Loss* where masculinity is a major concept, Desai reveals that natives who are unable to liberate themselves entirely from the Western colonial domination tend to play shadow roles in India and abroad. Writing with a skilled mentality, Kiran Desai invents events, circumstances and characters that remind of the features of broken masculinities to highlight their needs and to make their thoughts known. Male Subalterns who are not treated with dignity turn to destructive tactics that are detrimental to them and to their societies at large when all their moderate attempts fail. The analysis of Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* as affected by many cultures helps to go broader into the field of women literature to give voice and value to the subaltern men who are oppressed throughout all the experiences. The most remarkable achievement of her novel is Desai's representation of the Indian men's tragedy and experiences with the Western hegemony represented by both colonization (The judge) and globalisation (Biju).

Through its protagonists, the novel reveals that individuals are typically a reflective mirror of their history, social structure and society. The experience that people bring with them is one of the key reasons why old stereotypes are so harsh. In her novel, Desai explores these facts by examining the lives of a few intertwined protagonists when each of them meets a new culture. Their experience differ, but mainly to the negative. Each and every experience again shows that the people's past or cultural identity influence their view of the others.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai discusses the devastating impacts of the British colonization in India and the sophistication that follows colonialism on the personal, social and global levels. Desai explains how some people like the Cook in India are persecuted by social caste, low social class, colonization, labor inequality and racial discrimination that are studied in relation to the powerful and privileged West. Desai describes how the different characters struggle to survive and get better chances for their lives in the social hierarchy. Self-abasement is identified collectively in the Indian culture by social

structures including: caste , class and ethnicity. These factors contribute to the oppression of the victimized men and generate different relationships between the hegemonic and the subjugated men. Marginalization is always connected with the powerful people 's authority and hegemony. In the broader context of the Judge's upper caste, the Cook is socially constructed to be marginalized due to the nature of social caste and work and the expectations combined with them.

The Inheritance of Loss ; however, creates a shift in the view of Kiran Desai. Men's fragility becomes noticeable through the acts of the strong male characters who place their strength into action to persecute both women and men who come under their authority. Kiran Desai brings attention to the personalities of the male characters and is mainly interested in how they feel and think about themselves as men and what types of problems affect them. Kiran Desai is a postcolonial Indian women English writer who narrates India 's history, socio-political awareness, changing cultures, traditions and socio-economic issues in the colonial and post-independence epochs.

In India and abroad, Kiran Desai draws attention by capturing the protests of the poor and marginalized people. She paints a bleak image of India where minorities in various regions feel oppressed by dominant majority. Taking up arms and fighting for their rights and privileges in the society is futile for the subjugated people who are victims of caste, colonialization, labor injustice and class and their only way is to search for what they lack and make their voices heard. In the novel, male characters are either servants, slaves or soldiers who sacrifice for the rest of the others. They feel abused and oppressed and are forced to fight all types of domination toward dictatorship. B.P. Giri states that Kiran Desai “ is keenly aware that she lives and writes in a divided world-divided by nationalisms and colonialisms, but also by gender, class and ethnic afflictions” (76). She still has a strongly rooted dream in her mind for a peaceful and prosperous future and world. Nelson in her article *Inescapable*

Past says that “In the mist of chaos and cultural division,home,family,identity and history are what hold people together and allow them to survive the day” (72).

The present research has an enormous relevance and utility.It offers an opportunity to explore self-abasement as it is emerged in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*.In her novel, Desai explores this psychological trauma (Self-abasement) as it is linked to masculinity, femininity, race , gender, colonialism, social status, class structure and relations East-West relationships.Self-abasement has an interdisciplinary relations with sociology, philosophy, psychology and religion.This study reflects a mirror to today’s world and focuses on the several particular psychological clashes that will promote more work on historical context and the analysis of moral problems posed by women authors.As the present work reaches the above mentioned findings which hopefully will be considered as an attempt to steer our attention to similar situation(s) in the Algerian society.The researcher,hereby, hopes that the present study will be taken into consideration in further studies related to self-abased men in Algeria.

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ملخص

تتحدث كيران ديساي في روايتها "ميراث الضياع" عن الأثار والمخلفات الخطيرة للإمبراطورية والإستعمار البريطاني و إلى التعقيدات التي تبعتهما على مستويات شخصية، إجتماعية وعالمية مختلفة في الهند. حيث أصبح التحقير الذاتي هدفا للعديد من الدراسات الأكاديمية في مجالات مختلفة نظرا لأهميته على الصعيد النفسي والإجتماعي للهنود. هذا الأخير شكل الجزء الأكبر من إهتمام الكاتبات الهنديات نذكر على سبيل المثال وعلى وجه الخصوص أنيتا ديساي وكيران ديساي اللتان إحتلتا مكانة مرموقة في أدب ما بعد الكولونيالية حيث تطرقتا لمشكلة التحقير الذاتي كمعضلة نفسية عانى منها الشعب الهندي بعد الإستقلال هذا من جهة، وإهتمام كيران ديساي بدراسة هذه الأخيرة وعلاقتها بالذكورة ، الأنوثة ، التمييز، الهوية، الإستعمار، الطبقة الإجتماعية ، النظام الطبقي وعلاقات الشرق بالغرب من جهة أخرى. بالإضافة إلى ذلك تم إستخدام نظريات التحليل النفسي ومتلازمة ستوكهولم سيندروم في هذا العمل لتفكيك وتحليل حالة التحقير الذاتي للطباخ بانالال في الرواية. حيث صورت الكاتبة الهندية كيران ديساي حياة الرجال الهنود، تضحياتهم، تبعيتهم وعلاقتهم بالغرب القوي المتميز مما أدى إلى تناقص قوتهم تدريجيا ، تحقيرهم وظلمهم. حيث أصبحوا ضحايا لنظام الطبقة الإجتماعية، الإستعمار، عدم المساواة في العمل، التمييز العنصري، النظام الطبقي المتدني ما خلف لديهم إضطرابات نفسية مدمرة كما هو الحال في شخصية الطباخ الذي تم بناء شخصيته إجتماعيا ليكون مهما سبب طبقته الإجتماعية وعمله في النطاق الأوسع لسلطة وهيمنة القاضي وطبقته الإجتماعية العليا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحقير الذاتي، الصدمة النفسية، نهج التحليل النفسي، نظرية ما بعد الكولونيالية، أدب ما بعد الكولونيالية، متلازمة ستوكهولم، الذكورة، الأنوثة، الطبقة الاجتماعية، عدم المساواة في العمل، التمييز العنصري، التضحية، التهميش، الاستعمار، الهيمنة.