

Plight of women in the inheritance of loss by kiram desai

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ABSTRACT

Thought the feminist writer claims women are one half of sky' but history witness anguish and agony of women. Women have been kept away from basic needs and fundamental rights, and their would have been confined to home and kitchen. They have merely been treated as an object. We have plenty of feminist theories postulated by various authors and critics. They aim at ensuring egalitarianism of opportunities and rights for women in all spheres of life. The present paper researches The Inheritance of Loss as 'feministic work of art' and plight of women prevalent in society.

Keywords: Self identity, Nostalgia, displacement, immigration.

INTRODUCTION

Kiran Desai is an Indian author, a citizen of India and a permanent resident of the United States. Her most famous and well known novel The Inheritance of Loss won the 2006 Man Booker Prize. Kiran Desai is educated in India, like the United States, she continues, like the characters in this book, to divide her time between places, with mixed result. Salman Rusdie aptly says-

"Kiran Desai is a terrific writer."

It is not only textual but she has proved it by implementing a broader area of various interpretations of her postcolonial text 'The Inheritance of Loss.'

No doubt, its main idea moves between the two spheres of New York and Northeast corner of India but also portrays the various characters suffering from pain, nostalgia, ambitions, Self identity, frustration of modern life and the very terrors related to each other's life. Publishers weekly asserts.

"Stunning... alternately comical and contemplative.. deftly shuttles between first and third worlds' illuminating the pain of exile, the ambiguities of post colonialism and the blinding desire for a 'better life', when one person's wealth means another's poverty."

Desai's novel has one distinct feature of the feministic work of art. She has portrayed very frankly the picture and reality of Indian women in its society. The level of women given to her, taken by her and also due to change, her very for her rights. Says, Sarah R. Egelman-

"...Desai has secured her place with the list of great contemporary Indian authors exploring life contemporary Indian authors exploring life and society in India.."

Indian women novelists have given a new dimension to the gamut of Indian English Literature. In the mid of nineteenth century many Indian women started to write in English language. Beginning with feeble attempts at being heard, Women novelists have incorporated the recurring female experiences in their writing.

Kiran Desai is one of the new women writers, who have enriched the genre of Indian English fiction. But her imagination goes beyond the boundaries of her gender. She addresses herself to an Indian culture in which there is a social pain and cultural displacement within country itself because of globalization and immigration.

In her Novel, she portrays not only the legacy of loss that is a part of the contemporary era but has also given a voice to various female characters: Some traditional, timid and submissive, Some vain and lost, some assertive, confident and self dependent. Desai has represented various faces of Indian womanhood through various female characters. The attempts at self identification lie across the pages of contemporary fiction; more so in the care of the female characters whose identity is entwined and often enshrouded with the labyrinth of her relationships. The Bloomsbury Review asserts:

“The Young Desai proves her literary legacy as she deftly unfurles piece by disparate piece the stories of each of the lost souls searching for connection”

In present Novel, the most touching and pathetic female character is the wife of judge, Bela Patel. Traditional, naïve, and submissive, She is unable to understand the ferocity and rage of her husband. When the judge was extremely abusive towards his wife, and-

“Any cruelty to her became irresistible.” For him. He violently rapes her after she steals his precious powder puff to –

“Teach her the same lessons of loneliness and shame he had learned himself.” She is docile as ever and represents a typical suffering and self sacrificing Indian woman who accepts her lot without a word. But now this silence start punishing her core-

“Weeks went by and she spoke to nobody...” She is abandoned eventually by her husband as-

“Nimmi did not accompany her husband on tour, unlike the other wives...” due to her ignorance or illiteracy. Her loneliness has been very severe-

“Nimmi was left to sit alone in Bonda; three weeks out of four, she placed the house, the garden... she was uncared for, her freedom useless, her husband disregarded his duty.”

Her husband insulted her, everyday, not only physically but also mentally. And thus torched her too-

“When Jemubhai saw her cheeks irrupting in postules, he took her fallen beauty as a further affront and felt concerned the skin disease would infect him as well. He instructed life servants to wipe everything with Dettol to kill germs ... He powdered himself extra carefully with his new puff...”

The effect of such kind of treatment, reflected as-

“Nimmi made in-valid by her misery, grew very dull, began to fall asleep in heliographic sunshine and wake in the middle of the night...”

Ultimately, Jemubhai abandons her. Even her name is changed after her marriage just as in care of Jaya in That Long Silence and like many more Indian women, for sake of traditions. The changing of name shows the complete devoid of individuality of a woman. Then she suffers silently while the judge does not even bother to take care of her and his daughter. She dies by fire with not an eyebrow being raised as to the true nature of her death.

Born out of this loveless marriage and into painful silence of her mother. Judge’s daughter grows up without the affection of her parents. Judge never cares to fulfil his sole as a father. He only provides financial assistances-

“He had condemned the girl to convent boarding school, relieved when she reached a new height of uselessness and absurdity by eloping with a man who had grown up in an orphanage...”

Nodoubt, she is free to choose her own life but unfortunately her happy life is also short by an accident.

Mrs. Mistry’s daughter and the grand daughter of Nimmi and the judge is Sai. Unlike her mother and grand mother she is lucky to be accepted into the life of the judge due to the unavoidable circumstances. Her character is neither docile as Nimmi, nor negligible as her mother she is the face of the modern woman who is innocent, sensitive, naïve but bold enough to break free of the mould she adjust in every situation but not restricted by her class or position and relates to her environment and the people:

“Both Sai and the look had averted their gaze from the judge and his humiliation...” Her attraction towards Gyan leads her to philosophical world as she thought-

“...Love must surely reside in the gap between desire and fulfillment, in the lack not the contentment...” Realization of Gyan,s true feelings shock her but experience makes her mature enough to understand and to accept the differences. As she thought when she found herself betrayed.

“Her kiss had not turned him into a prince., he had morphed into a bloody frog.” After the transformation of women through the three generations of Judge’s family, Desai also delineates many minor female characters in the novel.

Malini, the wife of Harish-Harry in America is a practical woman, equally shouldering the responsibilities of her husband’s business. Her character is far cry from the stereotypical image of a traditional Indian wife, bold, confident and pragmatic-The other two women characters are Nonita and her widowed sister Lolita. Like the Judge they are also anglophiles which is evident in Lola’s euphoric pride at the success of her daughter pocie in England. Of the two sisters, Noni is far more an individual. It is she who advised Sai-

‘... If you get a change in life, take it. Look at me I should have thought about the future when I was young...’ Mrs. Singh is a rich but a vain and deluded character as she neglects motherly duties and had an extravagant show of lavishness. Thus Desai has portrayed a multiplicity of female identification and thus perfectly shatters the stercotyped and typecast image of Indian women making her more individual and human.

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