
Liberation and realization in Maud Diver's *Lilamani* and Kiran Desai's *Inheritance of Loss*

Sk Shameem Banu

Research Scholar

Acharya Nagarjuna University
Guntur

Dr G Chenna Reddy

Assistant Professor

Acharya Nagarjuna University
Guntur

Sk Saleem Babu

Research Scholar

ANU, Guntur
& Mentor in English, IIIT
Nuzvid, Krishna Dt

Abstract

This paper discusses the liberation and realization in Maud Diver's *Lilamani* and Kiran Desai's *Inheritance of Loss*. The characters in the novels *Lilamani* and *Inheritance of Loss* have a sense of realization and they try to liberate themselves at the end from the suffering they undergo between the two cultures. Silence is a symbol of suppression, an attribute of the subaltern condition, while speech signifies self-expression and liberation. The theme of liberation and realization is seen in both the novels through various characters. All the characters fall prey to the victimization laid upon them by the society.

Key Words: *Independence, Identity crisis, cultural differences, East and West, Liberation and Realization.*

Introduction:

Katherine Helen Maud Diver, an English woman born in India in 1867, was a well-known prolific writer of India. She wrote about thirty novels and non-fiction works dealing primarily with Indian themes and historical figures. *Far to Seek: A Romance of England and India* is the second novel in a series that began with *Lilamani: A Study in Possibilities* (1911) and continued with *Far to Seek*. Kiran Desai, a promising Indian writer in English was born in India in 1971 is the daughter of the eminent novelist, Anita Desai. She was educated in India, England and the United States. Her debut novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, published in 1998 was unanimously acclaimed throughout the world. Kiran Desai's second novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* was published in 2006 won her the Man Booker Prize in 2006.

Lilamani remains an ideal Indian wife sacrificing everything for the sake of her husband though she undergoes the pain of discrimination. She suffers from health problems trying to adjust in the English culture. She wants to get liberated from the agony she undergoes which is seen when she spoke the cry of her heart. "Oh, that I had the wings – the wings of a Dove. And with evil intent that voice at her ear whispered of strong unclouded sun-light, the still lakes and feathered palm-fronds of her own Hyderabad". (*Lilamani*, p - 332). She finds it difficult to identify herself in the alien land and wants to free herself.

Liberation and realization can be seen in the characters of the Judge, once a man of good status in his society, leads a secluded life away from the city life, hoping for a peaceful life amidst the beauty of nature. Jemu, who goes to England for his higher education, gets mentally disturbed by the treatment at the hands of the people in England and his alienation begins and develops into a complex. It makes him to learn the value of life and his homeland. Towards the end of the novel Jemubhai realized that in all his life he had run after meaningless things like position and power. He had never lived a responsible and sensible life which was of no use to anybody. He realized that his position of power had gone frittered away in years of misanthropy and cynicism. He remembered how he had abandoned his family, his father's love, hope and strength and how he had ill-treated his wife. Thus Jemubhai overcomes the cultural dilemmas that he had imbibed, he becomes reasonable and of all he becomes a human.

Sai, the teenaged granddaughter of Jemubhai Patel is the real epitome of rootlessness in contemporary Indian society. Even at the age of six she learnt the meaning of the term 'loss'. When Sai was longing for

human love and care as an adolescent girl, Gyan, a marginalized Indian Nepalese, came to Cho Oyu to give tuition to her. Gyan is a Mathematics tutor and a frustrated ethnic Nepalese youngman. One day Sai finds that she is in love with her tutor and him with her. It is more or less a tentative love. As immature adolescent young people they play childish games which involve a lot of physical intimacy. Sai believes that she is intensely loved and cared for by Gyan. But their love comes to an abrupt end when Gyan gets caught up in the political activities of the Gorkha National Liberation Front Movement. While tracing the family history of Gyan the novelist vividly describes how the Indian Nepalese had been recruited in a rude and ridiculous manner by the imperial regime in India to fight for England in alien and unfamiliar places. The soldiers sacrificed their precious lives in unknown places for an unknown cause. Even after Independence the Government of India has not done much to the marginalized Indian Nepalese who had done efficient service to Indian defence service. The much affected sect is the Indian Nepalese youth who unable to get proper jobs suffer miserably from poverty and deprivation. That is the reason why Gyan along with other Nepalese youth in Kalimpong is politically active and tries to fight for a separate state to be ruled by GNLF. Even Gyan, who is a Nepali, fights for liberation of Gorkhas, so he joins the revolution. They wanted a homeland where they would not be treated as servants. Basically a poor man, Gyan hates the bourgeois lifestyle of the judge and Sai and he considers Cho Oyu as a symbol of colonial hangover. He is in a dilemma and is caught between Sai and GNLF, love and ideal, being and becoming. Moreover, she was terribly shocked to know that information regarding the availability of guns at her grandfather's house has been leaked to the members of GNLF by Gyan only. What has distressed Sai utmost is that the insurgents have taken away not only guns but also several other things from the house. The accusation of theft enrages Gyan who then beats up Sai mercilessly. The angry departure of Gyan indicates the permanent loss of her love and her lover. After the dreadful loss of her parental love Sai now undergoes the agonizing experience of losing her lover. Though she has no parents, no home of her own, no roots and no memories to share with others she is able to get rid of her adolescent fear, anxiety and perplexity and looks at life with correct perspective.

Like the judge and Sai, the cook is a rootless person. A classical example of feudalism and colonialism the cook left his native village in Uttar Pradesh after losing his property in a court case to his brother. Then he somehow managed to get a job at Cho Oyu under false testimonials. He is not certainly happy to serve the judge for a meagre salary which has not been raised for so many years. Despite his discontented and alien-like existence at Cho Oyu he has placed his hope on his son, Biju, who is now in New York. He is proud of his only son who, he thinks, has been making a fortune in America. He got a visa for his son with the help of false recommendations and testimonials. Assuming that he has got a respectable status in society because of his son in America he boasts to everyone whom he meets on the roadside, "My son works in New York. He is the manager of a restaurant business... New York. Very big city. The cars and buildings are nothing like here. In that country there is enough food for everybody.... One day soon my son will take me" (*Inheritance of Loss*, p- 84). His very hope of going to America and living with his son there keeps him alive and happy at Kalimpong. He wants his son, Biju to liberate him from the miseries of life and eagerly waits for his son's return.

Biju is another victim of loneliness and loss who goes to U.S and undergoes discrimination and comes back home disappointed. He gets liberated from the western way of life which is humiliating. Biju's migration leads to his longing, as he is unable to permanently settle in U.S and so he decides to return with hopes and dream failed.

There is a sense of realization in the characters at the end of the novel in *Lilamani*. Nevil Sinclair belonging to an aristocratic family of England hates politics and escapes to France to stay away from his family. He arrives to England only after his marriage with Lilamani. Though he loves Lilamani, he shows his unwillingness in the beginning to go to India with her but only at the end he accepts India for the sake of his love for Lilamani and he decides to go with her.

Biju's experiences make him reminisce about his village where he had lived with his own people enjoying simple and trivial things of life. His family was satisfied with the income from his father's service as a cook. It seems as if they realize the worth of their lives when they are separated from one another. The conversion of pain into gain, it suggests that there lies the optimism in diasporic experiences. In the novel Biju encounters

with the sense of humiliation and alienation in America. Gradually this realization helps him to construct a new and strong feeling for India. Before leaving India his mind was occupied with American dream. Biju took India as a sinking ship from where he had to escape. After experiencing the nightmare, attraction to the West is transformed into repulsion. Surprisingly his diasporic experience assists him to originate Indianness in his mind.

. The darker and the dreadful reality of the bright and glorious prospective of the west enshrouded is exposed by the writer. Desai makes an important point in the novel through her characters. As Saeed advises Biju: “Still a world my friend, where one side travels to be a servant and the other travels to be treated like a King. You want your son to be on this side or that side?” (*Inheritance of Loss*, p-269). This statement clearly shows the revelation of the west and degradation of the east.

Desai keeps on highlighting the colonial mindsets in India. People in the countries like India have great regards for everything that is associated with the countries like Britain or America. This blind attitude is seen in almost all the characters of the novel.

Hence, the forces of Westernization have effected pervasively even to those who do not opt for the settling in the Western countries. The writer clearly shows the impacts of Westernization on common people and their relations. This can be clearly seen in the case of Gyan and Sai. One common aspect among almost all the characters in the novel is that their minds are colonized. Whether we consider rich people like the judge, and Lola or we consider poor people like the cook, their minds are colonized. They have high regards for foreign things irrespective of its quality. A kind of unquestioned belief or blindness is to be found among the characters. Desai exposed the ground reality of both India and the foreign countries like America or England. Furthermore, depicts in its many details the tragedies of the Third World countries just liberated from colonialism. The main theme of the novel also appears to be the influence of the European powers in India and how Indians are hounded by the Colonization policies. These influences have oppressed and degraded India.

In this way, they celebrate the loss of their inheritance, being stripped of their past and not been compensated for their loss. They march towards the future with expectations of new and better things discarding their lots and opportunities just to realize that their own past had better store for them than the present situation they are in. They try to change their mind set at the end by rejecting the west which made them lose their identity. Thus Desai attacks upon the ignorance of the people of India and their blindness of accepting everything related to the Western countries. And it also ends on a positive note when Sai looks out and saw the meeting of the cook and his broken son Biju being taking place.

Probably, Desai wants to say that life, in spite of all its sufferings and problems are worth living and one should always learn from mistakes. One is often attracted by the materialistic aspects and comforts that the west seems to offer. But, though there is backwardness, poverty and illiteracy in one's own land; one can probably derive a sense of belonging and identity in one's own land only. Desai had successfully delineated the dilemmas faced by her characters in their longing to find for the green pastures in a foreign land.

Conclusion

Thus the novels *Lilamani* and *The Inheritance of Loss* portray the theme of liberation and realization through the characters in the novels. Maud Diver's novel ends on a happy note with the union of two different races where a sense of realization is seen in the characters. But Kiran Desai in her novel presents a realistic picture of the life of the people, who venture into a new world with a hope to secure a good living, only to be filled with disappointments. The identity crisis thrusts them feel uprooted and bring in a sense of realization.

Works Cited

- Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2006.
- *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998.
- Diver, Maud. *Lilamani: A Study in Possibilities*. Ed. Crane, Ralph, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- *Far to Seek: A Romance of England and India*. Echo Library. 2007.