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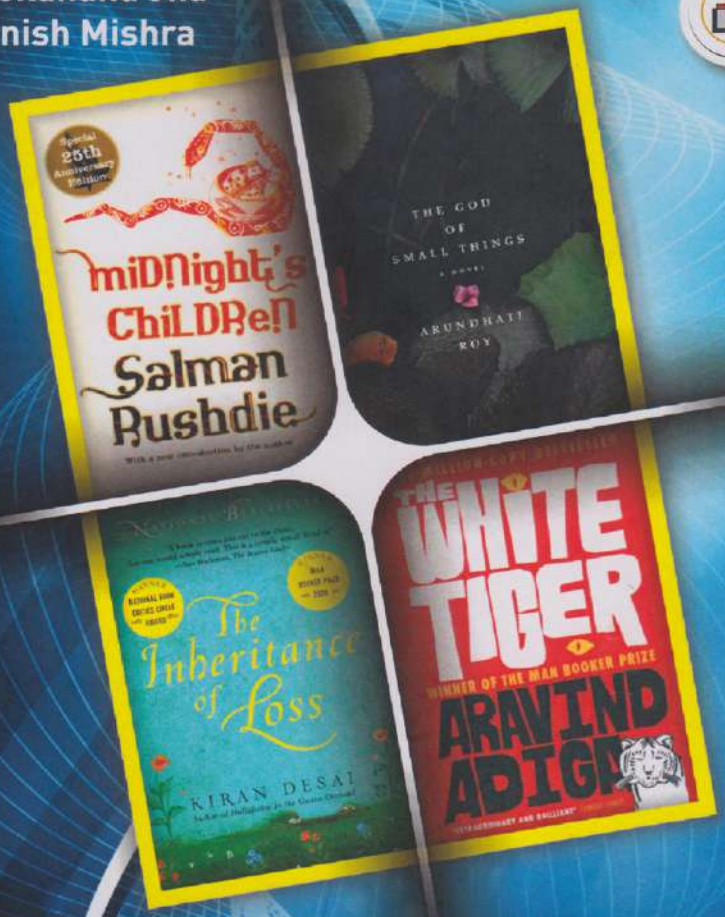

Indian Booker Prize Winners

Images and Imaginations

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Colonialism and Psychological Disorders in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

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Although the nature of psychological disorders during colonialism and after varies significantly from context to context, colonialism and psychological disorders are found to be intertwined in a mutual coexistence. Colonialism generally constructs a space strewn with a great number of irregularities and abnormalities. In other words, it yields certain codes in a space, which according to Franz Fanon, lie "in the consciousness and in the lives of men and women who are colonised" (*Wretched* 27). Those codes create a culture that colonial subjects, especially serving in the civil service, could neither ignore, nor accept. They, in fact, remain in an inescapable dilemma where a unique psychological dislocation emerges. Dislocation and deculturation result from the radical process of rapid modernisation (Leckie 267). Jacqueline Leckie in "Modernity and the Management of Madness in Colonial Fiji" observes that physical, cultural and psychical dislocation renders colonial subjects abnormal and neurotic (267). Ania Loomba also notes that colonialism intensifies a process of deculturation that is the cause of rising insanity. (139)

Leckie attempts to link modernity and madness in a twofold way. In the context of Fiji the colonial projects were carried out to colonise the mind that led to insanity among the colonised,

and modern structures, apparatuses and treatments were applied to treat that madness. She states, "madness in Fiji reflected colonial hierarchies and ethnic boundaries", arguing that "the colonial state restructured the ethnic map of Fiji" and thus split the identity of the natives" (251). She further enunciates that "the expansion of a seemingly 'superior' society wrought physical, cultural and mental dislocation on millions of colonised people, not only through brute conquest and disease, but also through modernisation." (267)

One of the abnormalities inherited from colonisation is violence inflicted upon the colonised by the colonizers. Hussein A. Bulhan defines violence as "any relation, process, or condition by which an individual or a group violates the physical, social, and/or psychological integrity of another person or group" (135). Tirop Simatei in "Colonial Violence, Postcolonial Violations: Violence, Landscape, and Memory in Kenyan Fiction" gives an account of colonial violence, the violent responses to decolonisation, and the violations of the rights of citizens in the postcolonial nation-state as reflected in Kenyan fiction: "Colonial violence", according to Simatei, underscores "relationships, processes, and conditions that attended the practice of colonialism... and that violated the physical, social, and/or psychological integrity of the colonised while similarly impacting on the colonizer" (85). Mahmood Mamdani, arguing that violence is a central theme in Fanon's writings, notes, "violence was central to producing and sustaining the relationship between the settler and the native" (8-9).

How violence affects the psyche of both the colonised and the colonizer can be traced well in Fanon's observation that "native violence... was the violence of yesterday's victims, the violence of those who had cast aside their victimhood to become masters of their own lives" (Mamdani 9). Through his theoretical

frame diagnoses and treats he not only psychiatric disorders experienced by individuals under the violence of colonial domination, but also the neurotic nature of colonialism itself. (Fuss 20)

Moreover, the vast amount of postcolonial literature shows that colonialism affects both the colonised and the colonizers because of its neurotic nature. How colonial masters fell victims to psychiatric disorders can well be located in the novel *Heart of Darkness*, a very familiar reading in this area. Loomba in her book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* discusses a rather less known novel (John Masters' *The Deceivers*) in which the protagonist William Savage went through a chaotic transformation from the civilised to the savaged even though he was supposed to be dedicated to the "civilising mission" (133-7). Alison Jones and Domoka L. Manda hold that the binary trend of self/other was invented to perpetuate colonial violence and "the trend has been passed forward from a colonial to a postcolonial era" (197). Wole Soyinka argues that postcolonial violence derives its impulse from pathologies of self-alienation and self-hatred, which carve out "... a feature less landscape of rubble, of a traumatised populace and roaming canines among unburied cadavers" (Jones & Manda 199). The traumas of colonial/postcolonial violence, Mamdani argues, turn today's victims into tomorrow's killers (9). This process is obviously a result of psychological abnormalities reinforced by the brutality of colonialism in the name of modernisation.

After the apparent dismissal of colonial rule, the colonised are found to be involved in atrocities and violence against each other. The process following the era of colonisation is known as decolonisation, which is in Fanon's opinion "a violent phenomenon" (*Wretched* 27). While "divide and rule" is the policy of colonialism's "civilising mission", "unite and struggle" is the

policy of the decolonising process. In Indian contexts, the educated natives inspired by the "Western dream" became administrators after partition in 1947. The native officials and clerks who had already served the British continued their service after independence and were blessed with promotion and power. Fanon elaborates that the national middle class that takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class (*Wretched* 119-20). Their ineptness in state autonomy and economic sovereignty results in an ultimate subjugation to the former empire. Therefore, in India colonial laws, order and culture were widely maintained and in many cases restored by the neo-colonial policymakers and administrators in a deviant manner. Most importantly, they failed to mobilise the lower classes and indigenous groups and their unified cultures. Consequently, the end of colonialism or the event of partition or independence did not bring about any notable change in the lives of grass-root people in India; rather, they fell victims to the processes of decolonisation (or re-colonisation) more concretely than the neo-colonial elites did. When (just before and), after the partition, the colonial violence of the former Raj was transformed into ethnic and religious violence in the form of brutal atrocities, killings and massacres, the nation went through a traumatic survival that corroded its sense of sanity. The novels *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh and *Ice-Candy Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa capture moments of that time.

Fanon in the chapter "The Negro and Psychopathology" of *Black Skin, White Masks* mentions several parameters determining the identity of the black that not only constitute a confused existence for them, but also instill, in Freud's words "psychic traumas" into their psyche (Fanon, *Black Skin* 111). First, he talks about the role of schooling and education in a colony. The colonised are educated by fairy tales and other stories where they have standard heroes, adventurers who are none other than

the white colonizers. He then discusses the role of society—when the colonised come across the superior culture and society, the first feeling that strikes him is "shock". The Negro recognises the unreality of many of the beliefs that he has adopted with reference to the subjective attitude of the white man. He is unaware of it as long as his existence is limited to his own environment; but the first encounter with a white man oppresses him with the whole weight of his blackness (*Black Skin* 115-16). In fact, in a colonial rule the imposition of language, literature, culture, and tradition restructures the existing society so that the social, intellectual and political agenda of colonialism can be accomplished.

Fanon further clarifies the traumatic experiences of colonialism in the chapter "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" of his book *The Wretched of the Earth*. Putting forth several case studies, he elaborates upon the effects of colonial rule in terms of territorial displacement, mental distortion, psychic disorder, and existential crisis. As colonialism negates the very existence of the others and forces them to shed off "all attributes of humanity", "the others" "ask themselves the question: 'In reality, who am I?'" (200). Besides, the colonial system forming an assumed culture and sensibility throws a colonised subject in a space where a new identity is formulated which Fanon terms the "colonised personality" (200). He points out how the natives who were captured during the liberation war in Algeria were brainwashed (*Wretched* 232). One can trace rather a different type of brainwashing of Indian native officials who in some way remained captured in the colonial civil service of British Raj. However, after independence they carried out their service only to climb the ladder of power and prosperity without a notion of improving the life-standards of the majority, of course while bearing a "burning doubt" in their minds.

Now, the connection between mental disorders and colonialism that leads to the formation of a colonial mentality or personality serves as the background to how the Judge is portrayed in the novel[1]. His colonial values thriving on hierarchies sometimes go to the extent of self-hatred and hatred towards Indianness. The fragmentary excerpts of the novel show that the Judge sometimes goes under the name of James Peter Peterson though his actual name is Jemubhai Popatlal Patel. He belongs to the Hindu caste: Patidar. His ancestral village is Piphit, which is located in Gujarat. His father owned a modest business of procuring false witnesses to appear in courts. When his business succeeded, he bought a second-hand Hercules cycle for Rs 35. He was over excited with the birth of his first son Jemu who did his schooling in a mission school. At the age of 14 Jemu matriculated top of the class and then attended Bishop's College on a scholarship. He left for Cambridge on the SS Strathnaver with the help of the dowry he received from Bomanbhai, his father-in-law. His wife Bela became Nimi Patel when she entered into a marriage with him. He returned to India as a member of Indian Civil Service and was posted in a district far from his home in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Later he was promoted to Chief Justice before his retirement.

The Judge's life centres round racial self-hatred and his quest for pale skin and European civilisation. Though Desai does not give details about the Judge's childhood in India, she mentions crucial moments of his educational life in England in a fragmentary description. He often becomes nostalgic, revisiting his past in England. Those days frequently come vividly into his mind, leaving him embittered and traumatised with agony that he can hardly bear. His neurotic nature is revealed through his reminiscence of past memories: "Many years had passed, and yet the day returned to him vividly, cruelly" (Desai 35). Afterwards, he served the British Empire as a Judge, but a very little portion

of his service life can be found in the narrative of the novel. Desai perhaps portrays him in fragments, considering the vulnerable existence of the black or brown man who is "forever in combat with his own image" and "begins and ends violently fragmented." (Fuss 22)

Even though fragmented, every individual's identity is unique in a particular essence; no single individual is similar to another in any respect or at any level. Nevertheless, identity tends to be a contested and controversial issue as there is no intrinsic or inner identity. Stuart Hall suggests that "we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside."(222). He further articulates, "identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within,..." (225). Thus, identity is not predetermined, nor is it constituted on the basis of homogeneity. Though identity tends to be fluid in nature, certain issues like social or political groups, cultural practices, personal experiences, ontological concerns etc. can contribute to constructing particular identities. Fanon, after analysing several case studies of the colonised in Algeria concludes, "criminality is not the consequence of the hereditary character" (*Wretched* 247), "but the direct product of the colonial situation" (*Wretched* 250). Therefore, the experiences of colonial cultures and practices can reconstruct the identity of a colonial or postcolonial subject.

Since a (post)colonial subject fails to identify himself either with the colonial burden or with his cultural root (Hasan 39), identity crisis becomes a crucial problem in his life. After the Judge had gone to England, he found himself dark and odd-colored. He then started coating powder puff pink and white on his face. He used to spend a lot of time in the bathroom, fixing his brown face with English soaps in order to look like an

Englishman. He was so embittered with his Indian colour and identity that literally he wanted to wear a white mask. He might have realised that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" (Duara 118). When he brought the powder puff to his Indian home and kept putting it on his face, his mother feared he might be suffering from skin disease (Desai, Chap-28); however, it was not his skin; rather his mind, his psyche affected with disease that ate into his Indian conscience.

The Judge can be seen as an authentic manifestation of Macaulay's proposition of what an Indian should be: "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (O'Reilly 17). It was intended in Macaulay's Minutes that a dissemination of the English language would create the colonial subject who would serve "as an ideological alibi for colonialism" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 100). However, the Judge knows very well that he is not a man of dignity and eventually he would be discarded by both the Indians and the British. He has failed to acquire white skin and turn British, and he is sure that he could never be Indian except in terms of appearance. Therefore, having a brown face with a white wig, he becomes a brown-skinned Indian wearing a "white mask." Desai puts it this way:

> He found he began to be mistaken for something he wasn't—a man of dignity.... he envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become, he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians both. (119)

Fanon, in *Black Skin White Masks*, underscores the alienation of colonised subjects. In adopting the values of the white colonial power, the blacks deny their own identity and are thus led into a psychotic condition that can be cured only by a complete physical and psychological decolonisation (Hawley 118). Similarly, the

Judge attempted to adopt colonial values and cultures, but was marginalised everywhere and dehumanised during his stay in England (Desai 110-11). Fanon states that "in the first case the alienation is of an almost intellectual character. Insofar as he conceives of European culture as a means of stripping himself off his race, he becomes alienated" (*Black Skin* 174). After the Judge reached England, he immediately discovered that the place was not welcoming to him. He developed a sort of self-hatred and became a neurotic. "He grew stranger to himself" (Desai 40). He was obsessed with fright and loneliness and eventually retreated into a long term self-imposed solitude. "The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow" (Desai 39). Nothing was attractive to him in England. He even failed to socialise himself with that world. He registered at Fitzwilliam, which was a bit of a joke in those days and more a tutoring place than a college. Therefore, he saw nothing of the English countryside and missed the beauty of carved colleges, and churches painted with gold leaf and angels. He did not have any friendship with English boys, let alone girls. When in a viva voce he tried to recite a poem, he was severely ridiculed by the British interviewers. They chuckled as soon as he finished his recitation.

Fanon's claim, "The black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed" (*Black Skin* 10)—can be found sensible in an Indian context. The Indian Judge who had lived and studied in England for a period of time returned to his home country radically changed with a sensibility of the British that everything Indian must be discarded. He became a "new man" (*Black Skin* 12), for colonialism depersonalises the individual it has colonised. When he came back to India after he was enlisted in ICS, he found himself alienated in his own community. He deliberately discarded his mother language and his inherited culture. The Judge's new taste and attitude towards

whiteness and Englishness, and his apathy towards Indianness amount to nothing more or less than a person's surrender to the idea of a "superior" European civilisation. His self-hatred became hatred towards Indianness, his own community and by extension all human beings.

The moment the Judge left for England, he forgot he had a wife. She had drifted away like everything in his past. Except for exchanges with landladies and "how do you do" in shops, he had not spoken to a woman in years. Desai describes, "For entire days nobody spoke to him at all, his throat jammed with words unuttered, his heart and mind turned into blunt aching things, and elderly ladies, even the hapless—blue-haired, spotted, faces like collapsing pumpkins—moved over when he sat next to them in the bus... the young and beautiful were no kinder; girls held their nose and giggled, 'Phew, he stinks of curry!'" (39) After reaching home, in the first sexual encounter with his wife, Jemu raped her ruthlessly. According to Freud, the symptoms of neurosis "are essentially substitute gratifications for unfulfilled sexual wishes" (Landry). During his stay in England what he repressed in his mind did not disappear but remained latent and therefore burst out the moment he came to India and met his wife. Later, he used to have violent sex with his wife and continued to be a pervert throughout his life. (Desai 169-70)

Moreover, how brutally he tortured his wife on slightest excuses is evident in the 28th chapter of the novel. The novel further indicates that the cause of her unexplained death is the Judge himself (Desai, Chap. 49). Here it is worth mentioning a case study from *The Wretched of the Earth.* A European police officer, who not only witnessed the brutal torture of the Algerian colonised, but also took part in vicious torture sessions, tortured his own wife and children. He hit his children, even the baby of twenty months, with unaccustomed savagery, and threw himself

upon his wife, beat her and tied her to a chair (Fanon, *Wretched* 215). However, the Judge went a step ahead, torturing his wife both physically and mentally. As soon as he one day found her footprints on the English toilet seat, he blamed her to have squatted on it, took her head and pushed it into the toilet bowl. He insisted on her learning English; one house tutor was employed to teach her English. However, when she learned no English, a shower of humiliation fell upon her. Desai articulates, "She was uncared for, her freedom useless, her husband disregarded his duty" (171). Abandoned, she lost her own self, her existence and remained indifferent to what the Judge considered the yardstick of European beauty. He, however, was scared of getting infected with "skin disease" as her fallen beauty and dried skin might spread infections. He shouted at her, "'Don't show your face outside,'... 'People might run from you screaming'" (Desai 173). However, long ago before he went to Cambridge, he liked his wife. "He was 20, she 14. The place was Piphit and they were on a bicycle, traversing gloriously down a slope through cow pats" (Desai 308). After returning to India, Jemu remains a hollow shell throughout his life. He was glad he could disguise his inexpertness, his crudity with hatred and fury—this was a trick that served him well throughout his life in a variety of areas—in his conjugal life, in public encounter, in service etc.

If we examine carefully, we will find that colonialism is a disease that has infected European civilisation. Loomba argues that colonialism is regarded as psychopathological, a disease that distorts human relations and renders everyone sick, for "no one colonises innocently" (Cesaire 39). At some point in his colonial life the Judge succumbed to the notion of a superior civilisation, that is, European civilisation. Aime Cesaire in *Discourse on Colonialism* points out that it is already a "sick civilisation"—"decadent", "stricken" and "dying" owing to colonialism. He holds that "a poison has been distilled into the veins of Europe

and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds toward *savagery*" (35-6). Thus, Cesaire's evaluation of European civilisation gives us insight into analysing a character such as the Judge in a non-western context. Furthermore, the novel narrates that one true thing Jemubhai learned from European civilisation that "a human can be transformed into anything. It was possible to forget and sometimes essential to do so" (Desai 308). His father even realised, "It was a mistake to send you away. You have become like a stranger to us." (Desai 306)

The seventh chapter of the novel opens with these lines: "*Oh, grandfather more lizard than human.* Dog more human than dog" (Desai 32). In this chapter, we are introduced to Sai, the Judge's granddaughter with whom he had a conversation about his dog Mutt. He compares his dog with the Hollywood film star Audrey Hepburn. His infatuation with the dog goes to the extreme after she has gone missing. He is an atheist but surprisingly we find him surrendering to God who he had rejected long ago (Desai 301). He only has God to appeal to so that He would give Mutt back to him. He even goes to the police station and demands that the sub-divisional officer find out his dog. While in Cho Oyu, law and order are deteriorating every moment, and people are being killed and struggling to survive with rice-*dal* and bread-salt, the Judge is out there in search of his dog which was, a couple of years ago, injected a vaccine most people could not afford (Desai 291-92). After he has been called "madman" and "senile", he returns home bare-handed and judges the worth of humanity this way, "A man wasn't equal to an animal, not one particle of him. Human life was stinking, corrupt, and meanwhile there were beautiful creatures who lived with delicacy on the earth without doing any harm" (Desai 292). Afterwards, in a frenzy, for his dog he brutally beats up his old cook and threatens to kill him. The threat to kill one who has been serving him for a long time reveals his mental distortion. His entire life, indeed, unveils his artificially

constructed grandeur, self-deception and hatred. His existence is based on lies that at last undo him. Desai enunciates:

> He was forced to confront the fact that he had tolerated certain artificial constructs to uphold his existence. When you build on lies, you build strong and solid. It was the truth that undid you. He couldn't knock down the lies or else the past would crumble, and therefore the present... but he now acquiesced to something in the past that had survived, returned, that might, without his paying too much attention, redeem him. (209-10)

The colonised person cannot cope with what happens around him because colonisation erodes his very being, his subjectivity. Colonialism promises to bring about modernisation, but ironically that modernisation leads to native madness. However, it is not modernisation *per se* but colonisation that dislocates and distorts the colonised psyche. Thus, the psychological disorders brew up when colonialism in the guise of civilisation fails to fulfil what it has promised. That's why, the educated class of snobbish and colonised elites is troubled with contradictions that emerge from the practice of modern values regarding doctrines of humanism and rationality. Vaughan claims that the modern individual or the colonial subject is constituted out of "colonial social control" and constructions of modern apparatuses (Leckie 268). Calling the colonial subject the "mimic man", Jenny Sharpe describes that he is fantasised by "the pseudo-aristocratic world" with "sprawling bungalows, country clubs, and polite parties or 'frolics'" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 99). The Judge's world—the spacious bungalow, visits to Gymkhana, English wines, hot baths, boiled peas, English dishes, cutlets etc.—surprises his poor neighbours. Hardly does he interact with people living in the nearby *busti* (slum). After his dog goes missing, he hesitatingly visits the plumber, the electrician, and the deaf tailor (who made her a winter coat) and asks them about her with a sneer on his face. When he realises that he has lost his clout, and a bit of "sir sahib

huzoor" for politeness' sake becomes just "residual veneer" now, he utters in grief, "The world had failed Mutt. It had failed beauty; it had failed grace" (Desai 291-92). Precisely, the mimic man dwells in a castle in the sky and denies the subject status of the natives belonging to the subordinate or subaltern classes.

The Judge showed sheer negligence towards the man who was wrongly arrested on the accusation of the rifle robbery. He was brutally tortured in the police station and "his eyes had been extinguished" (Desai 227). When his wife and father came to beg the Judge for saving him from police custody, he remained indifferent to their appeal. Even when the cook gave them some *atta* (flour), he shouted at him and ordered him not to give them anything. His misanthropy and hatred towards his own countrymen is obviously a sign of his psychological abnormalities. However, one thing is clear here that not only the Judge as an agent of colonial system, but also the entire postcolonial (rather neo-colonial) system as a whole falls victim to the psychological disorders of colonialism.

The way the police administration and their brutal tortures are portrayed in the novel testifies to this claim. Desai describes, "The more he screamed the harder they beat him; they reduced him to a pulp, bashed his head until blood streamed down his face, knocked out his teeth, kicked him until his ribs broke" (226). The novel further elaborates the insanity and brutality of Indian neo-colonial police who—like the British colonial police—arrest innocent people and without investigation torture them inhumanly in police stations. (Desai, Chap. 35)

The Judge humiliates, when he gets a chance, his countrymen who are, in his judgment, inferior to his position. When he harasses Gyan, Sai's home-tutor, on the excuse that his English does not conform to British accent and he is not adept at English table manner, one can find him to be a perfect mimic

man of colonial byproduct. However, we see Gyan, an educated and ambitious Gorkha evading the tender love of Sai only to be part of the Gorkha movement. Somehow he is able to connect himself, though temporarily, to the cause of the movement. Gyan's commitment to a cause and Sai's ambivalent existence with an alien European culture are contrasted amidst the psychologically distorted Judge who is, in body and soul, torn between his Indianness and colonial consciousness. Besides, the Judge's failure to support the cause of the Gorkha movement discloses his crippled conscience castrated by the sharp edge of colonial consciousness. In fact, the poison of colonial culture spreads so deep into his psyche that it rots his very sense of humanity.

While the Judge is engrossed in colonial fancy, Cho Oyu becomes a hub of activities. The Gorkha's struggle to get their own rights and land slowly creeps into the lives of almost all characters of the novel: the cook, the judge, Sai, Noni, Lola, and troubles and questions their very being (Book Review). The first chapter of the novel relates, among others, an incident of a robbery that takes place in the Judge's house. The guerrilla boys of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) get into his house for robbing his hunting rifles. The scene, however, is notable as it shows how the Judge is humiliated by the Gorkha boys. Since they sense his weakness for his dog, they point a gun at her to terrify him. All his life he boasts of holding power and authority and humiliating people but here he is ordered: "Too soft-hearted sahib. You should show this kind side to your guests, also. Go on, prepare the table" (Desai 6). He is forced to enter the kitchen where he has never been. When they advise the Judge to repair his house (Desai 7), it might denote, as the description ("a lot of repairs") implicates, to mend his dilapidated house as well as fixing his distorted personality. After the robbery is over, he sits bolt upright, "his expression clenched to prevent its distortion, tightly

clasping the arms of the chair to restrict a violent trembling, and although he knew he was trying to stop a motion that was inside him, it felt as if it were the world shaking with a ravaging force he was trying to hold himself against." (Desai. 8)

The Judge is an authentic portrayal of the Anglophiles from the ex-colonies who devoted their lives to being acculturated into English life and customs, and spoke Indian languages in English accents. He became a neurotic, a psychopath, for he had drunk the venom of European Civilisation without realising that the binary construction of superior versus inferior was a false one. He even failed to figure out the follies of colonialism, which was always legitimised in the name of civilisation and modernisation. The theory of binary opposition, for example, Self/Other was in fact employed to carry out the colonising project of civilising mission. However, in the colonising project the Other were, in most cases, deprived of the subject position; rather they were "sealed into a crushing objecthood" (Fuss 21). The colonised black in Africa or brown in India remained a static object while it was inevitable for the other to retain their subjectivity. It is neither an "I", nor "not-I", but simply "an object in the midst of other objects". Fanon articulates, "the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye" (*Black Skin* 82). Thus, the binary theory even did not work in the mission of colonisation. Therefore, what the colonial condition was, in Fanon's words, that the "black man must be black in relation to the white man" (Fuss 22). Besides, "the white man can be white without any relation to the black man because the sign 'white' exempts itself from a dialectical logic of negativity." (Fuss 22)

However, the Judge is hardly able to come out of the cocoon of his colonial mask. Drunk, his friend Bose was once complaining about the English: *bloody white people* committing the

crimes of the century, but the Judge remained silent. However, he at last burst out, despite himself and seemed to speak wisely: "YES! YES! YES! They were bad. They were part of it. And we were part of the problem, Bose exactly as much as you could argue that we were part of the solution" (Desai 206). However, he could not proceed anymore; he shouted: "Waiter!, Waiter!, Waiter!" (Desai 206-07). This occasional conscience, despite all his nonsensical mimicry, exposes a strange type of his ambivalent mentality. While discussing mimicry and the colonial subject Homi Bhabha explains the ambivalence of mimicry, which is at its best a weapon to disclose colonial disorders. However, the Judge's consciousness of the colonial mischief and the colonised absurdity is no longer "a double vision" that can disclose "the ambivalence of colonial discourse" as well as disrupting "its authority" (Bhabha 126); rather, it is simply an abrupt outburst of his neurotic conscience.

The presence of characters like the Judge as the colonial mimic man or the colonial babu or sahib is quite noticeable in Indian writing in English. For instance, *Karma,* a short story by Khushwant Singh, depicts such a colonial mimic man who served as a barrister in British India. Sir Mohan Lal, an Oxford graduated anglicised Indian, "spoke like an English man" (Singh, *Collected Short Stories* 10). The ironic existence Lal dragged through his interactions with fellow Indians, Englishmen and his wife, and his disillusionment has become a typical portrayal of Anglophone Indian sahibs in Indian writing in English. It is evident that both Justice Jemubhai Popatlal in *The Inheritance of Loss* and Sir Mohan Lal in *Karma,* who are obsessed with British lifestyle, attempt to discard their root, culture, identity, and even language. By wearing white masks of colonial fancy they want to cover their Indian faces, and by managing to appear like cultured Englishmen in manner and behavior they attempt to coat their psychological bruises. However, they differ in the way that, unlike Singh, Desai

places Jemubhai in the era of postcolonial capitalism by juxtaposing his past and present in fragments. Whereas Mohan Lal is presented through an ironic lesson of karma, the Judge is portrayed through rather inexplicable traumas and incurable abnormalities. In fact, his sufferings do not seem to complete a single cycle of karma.

Thus, we can sum up that the Judge, unlike other colonial mimic men, undergoes a radical process of psychological traumas and drags a distorted existence throughout his life. He fails to decolonise himself from the shackles of colonisation. He submits himself to the promises of colonial fancy, but ironically he is entangled in the dilemmas of colonial frenzy. On some occasion, he seems to be unethical, dehumanised, and even misanthropic. As he betrays with his own self by discarding his culture, ignoring and humiliating his fellowmen, and fancying living in a colonial castle, he is found to be a hollow man haunted even by his own shadow. In fact, he bears an inheritance of loss, a loss of a generation, an identity, a commitment he is required as a Judge to make and maintain in a bid to restore law and order and cast away the ghost of colonisation in order to construct a society free from the distastes and disorders of colonialism.

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