

## MIMICRY AS RESISTANCE OF POSTCOLONIAL SOCIETY IN KIRAN DESAI'S THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS

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### Abstrak

Novel *The Inheritance of Loss* menceritakan kisah paralel India pasca-kolonial dan Amerika Serikat, dari Jemubhai Patel (sang Hakim), sang Koki, sampai Biju (putra sang Koki, imigran gelap di New York). Seperti fiksi pasca-kolonial lainnya, tema-tema seperti krisis identitas, kebarat-baratan, kelas sosial dan lainnya ditampilkan, tetapi penelitian ini melihat sesuatu di balik semua tema ini, suatu resistensi. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini mengajukan masalah tentang bagaimana karakter India digambarkan dalam novel *The Inheritance of Loss* dan resistensi apa yang mereka tunjukkan dalam novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Untuk mengkomodifikasinya, penelitian ini menggunakan teori Bhabha tentang Ruang Ketiga sebagai alat untuk menunjukkan proses resistensi yang dekonstruktif dalam krisis identitas. Metode ini menggunakan interpretasi kritis sebagai analisis data. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa di balik krisis identitas dalam diri Jemubhai (seorang pria dengan kebencian terhadap budaya India) dan Biju (seorang anak lelaki yang berpikir bahwa Barat lebih baik), ada sesuatu yang dekonstruktif yang perlu dilihat, bahwa mereka mencoba untuk tidak teridentifikasi sebagai orang timur yang berada di bawah wacana kolonial, seperti orang (timur itu) miskin, lokal, tidak beradab, tradisional, dan tidak terglobalisasi.

**Kata Kunci:** Pasca-kolonial, Identitas, Ruang Ketiga, dan Resistensi.

### Abstract

Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* narrates a parallel story of post-colonial India and the United States, from Jemubhai Patel (the Judge), the Cook, and Biju (son of the Cook, an illegal immigrant in New York). Like the other postcolonial fiction, themes like identity crisis, western-centrism, class social and others are adhered in it, but this research sees something that behind these all themes, there is resistance. Therefore, this research proposes problem of how the Indian characters are described in Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and what resistances that they expose in Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. To accommodate it, this research uses Bhabha's theory of Third Space to propose the deconstructive resistance in the crisis of identity. The method uses critical interpretation as data analysis. The results show that behind the identity crisis in Jemubhai (a man with hatred of Indian culture) and Biju (a boy who thinks West is better), there is something deconstructive to see that they try to be unidentified as eastern who is under colonial discourse, such as poor, local, uncivilized, traditional, and non-globalized people.

**Keywords:** Postcolonial, Identity, Third Space, and Resistance.

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### INTRODUCTION

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* narrates a parallel story of post-colonial India and the United States. Set in the 1980s in the Kalimpong village, down of the Himalayas, the story revolves around some of the main characters in the novel, from Jemubhai Patel (the Judge, a Cambridge alumni), the Cook, Sai Patel (Jemubhai's granddaughter, an orphan girl), Gyan (Sai's math tutor from Nepal), and Biju (son of the Cook, an illegal immigrant in New York). Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* can be discussed from the perspectives of postcolonial

theme such as identity crisis, western-centrism, and class social.

Started from how Sai falls in love with her math tutor, Gyan, who is Nepali. The relationship between Sai and Gyan is not allowed by the Judge, because of the status difference, for the Judge, a Nepali is second-class minority. Moreover, the Judge always acts like an Englishman. Meanwhile thousands of kilometers from Kalimpong, Biju, son of the Cook, is fighting for a decent life as an illegal immigrant in New York. Biju works as a part time waitress in order to avoid the chase of immigration officer. Biju never complains about his life to

his father, so his father always thinks that Biju has been successful in New York.

Those characters represent the condition of Indians as postcolonial society such as Biju used to live in New York and Jemubhai who used to live as student in Cambridge, such as “the sense of loneliness, the process of finding their identities, ... struggle with a self, with tradition, with the wonders and horrors of new cultures with growing aspirations hopes and desires” (Puhspa, 2015: 485). From the Judge, it clearly represents an Indian who has lost his Indian identity and experienced syndrome of India-phobia because he considers himself has higher status than the people around him. Sai represents the westernized Indian. From Gyan, it clearly represents Indian separatist fighting for the independence for the nation of Nepal. From Biju, it clearly represents the colonized mentality. Thus, Sai Patel, Biju and Gyan seem to represent Indians searching for identity between the contradictions of Western and Eastern values, the social impacts felt by them living in the between space of Western and Eastern Cultures. Moreover, from the Cook, he is so loyal to live with the Judge although he is treated like animal, and of course, he represents the Indian who is colonized.

Those problems are the issues, Desai's concerns with in the novel proposing “such multiculturalism, confined to the Western metropolis and academe ... economic globalization become a route to prosperity for the downtrodden (Mishra, 2006). Multiculturalism and globalization become the point to highlight as it is also noted here that, “Desai touches upon many different issues throughout the book such as, globalization, multiculturalism, inequality and the different forms of love” (Pryor, 2006).

However, the problems that can be enhanced from those facts are about the characters giving the those example, such as There is Jemubhai who is considered “unable to cope with the conflict of identities ... was consumed by self-loathing”, Gyan who is “negotiated through ... “resistance” and directionless vengeance”, and Biju who is “disillusioned by the West ... embittered by racial discrimination [that] discovers authentic colonial experience that how Third World natives are exploited and humiliated in the West” (Kour, 2016: 873-874).

Those characters explain the crisis identity that actually the real impact of postcolonial discussion. But the problem is, is there any pure condition of identity? Here, Jemubhai, Biju, and Gyan seem to be an example of impure Indian, while the pure Indians themselves, culturally, socially, economically, and so forth, are not also better. Just take a look at the Cook, with his Indian-ness, living poorly, chaotically, and disorderly. Which one is better? Nationalism with poor life or identical crisis with better life? What resistances do Indians act? The

paradox, complex, and chaotic identity those characters have, explain that identity of postcolonial society must be in the negotiable, which is called as Third Space.

Third Space, Bhabha states, “overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation: a place of hybridity” (Bhabha, 1994: 25). Bhabha borrows the term of hybridity from biology field (botany) to explain the condition of identity culturally. It is known that hybridity is a process to splice two or more different types in order to produce better types. Logically, in the context of culture, hybridity explains identity must be cross-cultural. There is no pure identity. The relation between the colonizer (western) and the colonized (eastern) is not oppositional and creating binary opposition, but instead changing the binary oppositions with an alternative space transcending them as “a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other” (Bhabha, 1994: 25). It is the third space.

In other word, third space explains an encounter between the colonizer and the colonized in a space beyond both. But, in this space, hybridity is constituted and mimicry is processed as a negotiation. Bhabha states that “hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal” (Bhabha, 1994: 114), for example, the encounter of two cultures make each of them blend and shapes new identity differently from them, surely it makes difficulty in identification, either as inferior or superior. Bhabha also states that “mimicry is at once resemblance and menace” (Bhabha, 1994: 86), for example, a slave imitates his master's acts and behaviors which are never same, while it turns to be mockery for the master. Reversing the colonialist disavowal and becoming both resemblance and menace refer to resistance against the colonizer in the postcolonial space; Kalimpong and the New York where the Indians make chaos and mockery.

The postcolonial space explains the fact that territory is constructed unnaturally and it is impermanent. Space should not be domesticated because multiplicity can move beyond colonial practices and experiences. It does not create gap between east and west, inferior and superior, and so on. It should not contain of a negation. It is a negotiable space which offers “spaces where we begin the process of re-vision” (Hooks, 1990: 145). The point is, by erasing the category, identity can release its resistance of being domesticated.

In that sense, seeing Jemubhai and other characters, it should not create internal conflicts of the Indians by criticizing, blaming, and insulting them for excluding nationalism, Indian identity, and etc. They actually resist by making chaos in their identity. Indian identity is not the identity that can be domesticated and determined by western (Indian is east, Indian is poor, Indian is inferior,

Indian is local and so on). They also show the third space of the Indian where Indian can negotiate the western; as hybrid, Indian makes chaos in western space and as mimicry, and Indian mocks in resemblance.

Bhabha borrows zoological term of mimicry to explain the condition of post-colonial society. Basically, mimicry means imitating. Imitating means copying something. Copying means making the difference between the real object and false object (the copy). Thus, general opinion sees that the colonized people are inferior because they imitate the colonizer people. However, Bhabha used to state, "reading as being ravished ... writing is really a contingent and dramatic process." (Bhabha, 2000: 372-373).

For Bhabha, the analogy of culture is just like literature; the process of reading and writing. Reading is like ravishment. When someone is reading colonial's cultural tradition, then the readers must be absorbed into the text they read. Moreover, there is no text which is pure, there must be power behind it. In postcolonial context, there must be colonial discourse behind the texts. The text itself is the result of the dramatic process which is so subjective. This process is like mimicry.

The term mimicry refers to the instability of colonial discourse. For him, mimicry should be considered as the process in which the colonized people are seen as "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 1994: 86). Of course, imitation cannot be same with the real one. But, this is the interesting part. The things such as cultures, manners, or principles that are imitated by the colonized people, actually contain meaning of imitation and mockery.

For Bhabha, "mimicry is at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha, 1994: 86). Mimicry indirectly shows the flaws of colonial discourse. Mimicry shows resemblance. Resemblance is similarity. But, the similarity in mimicry also shows the menace. The menace of mimicry comes from its "double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (Bhabha, 1994: 88). It means that the one that is imitated feels the menace from the imitator. This the resistance. This is the counter attack of the colonized people. They are not inferior. They have something to resist. In other word, the menace must exist as the resistance to the colonial discourse, practice, and experience. Therefore, it shows the mimicry as the mockery.

Some example can be taken to make it simpler. When our little brother imitates what we do, we feel disturbed. It is how mimicry works. He imitates us, but we feel disturbed of being imitated. Another example is, when Andre Taulani (Indonesian comedian) imitates Mario Teguh (Indonesian entrepreneur), Mario feels fine, but he does not realize that he is being mocked by Andre's

imitation. Other example, when Charlie Chaplin (a comedian) appears with moustache like Adolf Hitler, of course, it is the mockery for Hitler because Chaplin performs jokes while Hitler performs Fascism.

Bhabha sees that imitating the other culture, such as language, culture, manners, ideas and others, must be exaggerative. This makes mimicry is not only imitating, duplicating, or reproducing, but it is also mocking the imitated indirectly. Mimicry seems to be comical approach to colonial discourse because it mocks the colonizer. It breaks the colonial construction. Joking spontaneously can be resistance from the colonizer to the colonizer.

Bhabha gave example of this when he has a travel from Mumbai to Oxford, then from Brighton to Chicago and Boston as a Parsi. Parsi is an Indian minority. The population is just about 160,000. They migrate from Persia in 18th century because Muslim was persecuted. It made them spread over the world. Then, they are claimed not to have ethnic identity. For Bhabha, Parsis are a hybrid. They are transnational group. Middle-class Parsis (called as the Jews of the East) "have emulated the bourgeois ethic of professionalism and philanthropy and have sought recognition in the high cultures of the West" (Bhabha, 1998: xv).

In this case, Bhabha saw that Parsis will be always travelling, translating and using the language of colonialism for trade and business. It is what makes them hybrid identity. As hybrid, they live like a group of uncanny people. They always make chaos anywhere. The uncanny is the unhomely (Bhabha, 1992b: 144). This unhomely becomes the stereotype, when everyone sees unhomely as negative thing, for the uncanny people, they live in the space where no borders of them and they make chaos for everyone. This chaotic situation means that the uncanny people are not determined by colonial practice. This is the power of the colonized people who are determined and arranged into places (with borders) while everywhere is space (without borders).

Thus, in mimicry case, for the colonized people, it is a reaction to colonial stereotypes. For them, "there is life outside and beyond the stereotype, even for its victims" (Bhabha, 1995: 110). The trace of the mimic-men can be seen as the effect of "a flawed colonial mimesis in which to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English" (Bhabha, 1994: 87).

It means that the comical attributes of mimicry are important to realize as colonization because there is laid colonial discourse. The colonial discourse seems so convincing, educating, and improving the colonized people. But, it is actually "the embattled and embalmed narrative of civilizational clash" (Bhabha, 2003: 27) and it drags the colonized people to "the stark choice of

civilizational clash” (Bhabha, 2003: 31), like when an Arab woman thinks that his marriage system is wrong because it is too patriarchal, then it makes chaos in Arabian culture.

Of course, if colonial discourse is reproduced, it becomes a colonial narrative without resistance against it. When everyone believes in the colonial discourse narratively, there is cultural colonization. Colonial people can spread their discourse because it is “a historical and theoretical simplification” (Bhabha, 1983: 23). They offer future, modernization, and civilization while it enhances their position over the colonized. The colonial discourse becomes a power to manipulate the colonized people. In this case, mimicry can be seen as a deconstructive postcolonial way to break the colonial power over the post-colonized people.

Mimicry as deconstructive way of mockery is like signifier without signified. Bhabha analogized that it “conceals no presence or identity behind its mask” (Bhabha, 1994: 88). For anyone who imitates actually has no identity behind it. They wear a mask while they do not have a certain face. Their faceless identity seems to place the colonized as inferior, thus the colonizer feels no worry of being mocked, while the practice to imitate actually embodies the farcical (mockery) jokes of it. This is the resistant practice of mimicry as mockery against the colonizer. The point is, for Bhabha, “distance between subject and object, inside and outside, that is part of the cultural binarism” (Bhabha, 1992a: 57). The binarism makes the distance between the colonized and the colonized in hierarchy, meanwhile, when the two encounter each other, there is negotiation equally, because a master cannot kill the slave while he needs the slave. This is the third space. The third space is the borderless

Bhabha stated clearly that Third Space “overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation: a place of hybridity” (Bhabha, 1994: 25). In postcolonial society, there is laid cross-intervention from colonial practices. But, as a hybrid society, there is actually negotiation which makes the post-colonized can deconstruct the colonial practices and experiences. It is the Third Space. It occurs as an encounter between the colonizer and the colonized in a space beyond them. When it is beyond them, there is no hierarchy and no binary opposition.

The Third Space itself is the imaginary space, both mental and physical. As the previous part has exploded, mimicry has created the possibility for the colonizer and the colonized people to encounter in a space. It is not merely about the physical territory, but it is also about the mental which is bounded in what Bhabha terms as hybridity.

Hybridity is not simply botanical term that explains a condition of two kinds specimens crossing to each other and it results (re)creation of new specimen. It means that, everything cannot be said as creatures naturally and originally from a single creation (from nothing to a thing). Bhabha disagreed that individual has single identity. He believed that individual is constructed with an account of multiculturalism. Thus, individual is created by cultures. Both the colonizer people and the colonized people are same. They must not be pure single identity.

For Bhabha, there must be cultural hybridity. Hybridity makes all things fall apart in all cultural space. Bhabha’s idea of hybridity is related to mimicry. Those indicate the resistance in its understanding. Generally speaking, the encounter (between the colonizer and the colonized) does not only create a space, but also binary opposition; the superior and the inferior. From the essay *Signs Taken for Wonders* in Bhabha’s *Location of Culture*, it is stated that “colonial hybridity is not a problem ... Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal ... cultural differences are not simply there to be seen or appropriated” (Bhabha, 1994: 114). There are two important things interrelated to each other. First, Bhabha assumes that the two different cultures are “not the source of conflict” but rather “the effect of discriminatory practices” (Bhabha, 1994: 114). Second, Bhabha seems to give reaction to the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized. Hybridity brings a question of traditional colonialism analysis, if the colonizer people let the colonized people learn their cultures for slavery purpose.

These two important points relate to Bhabha’s the third space. He believed that every encounter must explain the negotiable space. It must happen in the third space. There is no dominant space in which the dominant group takes the larger portion. Bhabha stated, “for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the third space which enables other positions to emerge” (Bhabha, 1991: 211). It means that, if everyone is hybrid, everyone must be from the third space. The hybridity explains that everyone is same, no one is either inferior or superior, all people are hybrid. Bhabha continued, “This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom” (Bhabha, 1991: 211).

## METHOD

The type of this research is qualitative because the taken data are collected qualitatively or based on the proposed

problems. The used approach is objective or textual approach. The data collection technique is documentation. The source of the data itself is Kiran Desai's novel entitled *The Inheritance of Loss*, published by Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, in 2006.

As it is known, the used perspectives postcolonialism while the used theory is Bhabha's third space including mimicry and other problems of identity in deconstructive perspective. Therefore, the collected data are analyzed based on the used theory to make synchronization of them. The data are taken from the quotations both direct and indirect speech in the novel. The steps of data collection are; (1) Reading, (2) Quoting, and (3) Classifying based on the proposed questions. The technique of data analysis is critical interpretation. The steps of data analysis are; (1) initiating the problem to throw a case/problem for the discussion, (2) giving quotations to prove the problem in the object, (3) analyzing to interpret the problem in critical analysis that is reinforced with theoretical understanding, and (4) concluding to point out the result of the findings.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Postcolonial Society in Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* was the novel won Man Booker Prize for Fiction 2006. This novel consists of a parallel story of post-colonial Indian society and some of them who live in the United States. The story is set in the 1980s, in Kalimpong village near the Himalayas. The story itself focuses on some main characters; Jemubhai Patel (in this novel, he is called The Judge, an old man of Cambridge graduate who now spends his retirement in an old house named Cho Pyu with his beloved dog and a loyal cook), Sai Patel (a 16-year-old girl, the grandson of The Judge who became orphaned because her parents had an accident, and she fell in love with Gyan—his math tutor, a Nepali student), and Biju (son of The Judge's cook who is fighting for a decent life as an illegal immigrant in New York, United States).

The story above is written with a simple language style conversation between the characters. It also displays description of the settings such as place, character and background in great detail. The novel is able to handcuff the reader to sympathize with the characters with their respective conflicts. Sai Patel, Biju and Gyan represent the young Indian figures giddy, searching for identity between the conflicts of Western and Eastern values, and the social and psychological effects felt by them in the between space of Western and Eastern cultures. While Jemubhai represents a strong character, who seems to get the greatest effect of colonization culturally.

From those characters, the story builds up the postcolonial problems that can be calculated in the most important aspects that center on the two characters; first is about Jemubhai who seems to reject his Indian identity and the second is, Biju who is so poor living in the United States. Those problems are actually the problem of the Eastern society; lost identity, chaos, and poorness (see Sayeh & Bouzerouata, 2015: 14-22). It is important to sort it one by one.

From those character, it can be known that one of the important issues to enhance in postcolonial study is the lost identity. This lost identity refers to the condition in which an Indian does not want to admit the Indian identity and it is a way "to beat off their traumatic suffering rather than to confront" (Qasim & Mustafa, 2016: 51). It is like forgetting the heritage. It is like draining out the blood of the bloody. An Indian denies the Indian identity. It is the main problem of the postcolonial society. There is something going wrong in that way. The discussion can be started from The Judge, or Jemubhai Patel. Colonial trauma, violence, and experiences seem to have determined Jemubhai's identity to hate anything related to India. He becomes an Indian who has lost his Indian identity. When he retires, he considers himself as having a higher status than the rest people in the Indian society.

Jemubhai used to live as a student in England. His experiences in England is the experiences of being neglected, rejected, and abandoned. When he was in England, he is alienated. He was considered as an Indian, poor, and stranger. These experiences make him become a person that hate Indian identity, although he is an Indian. When he was home, he treated his Indian cook like a slave.

The judge was shouting: "Mutt, Mutt." It was her stew time and the cook had boiled soy Nutrinuggets with pumpkin and a Maggi soup cube. It worried the judge that she should have to eat like this, but she'd already had the last of the meat; the judge had barred himself and Sai from it, and the cook, of course, never had the luxury of eating meat in the first place. There was still some peanut butter, though, for Mutt's chapatis, and powdered milk (Desai, 2006: 295).

For Jemubhai, the Cook is just a man with poor life. He is the representation of Indian. So, Jemubhai never gives meat to the Cook to eat. He does not care whether the Cook has been serving him for years. Jemubhai may think that he is blessed for becoming like English man, not like Indian.

As a note, Jemubhai has a pet, a little dog. He treats it better than the Cook. Here, Jemubhai considers dog is

higher than the Cook. Jemubhai sees that western dog is higher than a man from India. In that way, Jemubhai treats his Cook in cruelty. The Cook is asked to work hard with small salary. Jemubhai places him in the small house. As Jemubhai's servant, the Cook must do everything Jemubhai asks.

In the quotation above, it is known that Jemubhai shouted "Mutt" to the Cook. He yelled at him. He did not ask him calmly. When he shouted "Mutt", it means that the Cook should prepare the food for the dog. What he had to prepare was the nuggets. He had to boil the soy with pumpkin and a Maggi soup cube. The cook never had the luxury of eating meat in the first place. There was still some peanut butter. Of course, it is the food for Mutt. It is just a simple example how Jemubhai is described as a person who thinks he is an Englishman.

The way Jemubhai treats the cooks can be seen as the indication that Jemubhai makes a gap that differs him from the Cook. He shows that he is high class person and the Cook is low class person. Jemubhai shows that he imitates the acts of colonial against the colonized people. He violated the Cook like a colonizer slaves a colonized person. Of course, what Jemubhai did to the Cook influenced the mentality of the Cook. The Cook is inferior. He is an Indian that is colonized by an Indian. He feels terrible and frightened if he did a mistake.

"If I have been disobedient," he slurred, approaching the foot of the judge's bed with unfocused eyes, "beat me ... I'm a bad man," cried the Cook, "I'm a bad man, beat me, sahib, punish me. Sahib, beat me— If it will make you feel better," said the judge, "all right." (Desai, 2006: 326).

Based on the quotation above, it can be known that Jemubhai shows his power. He has power because he feels that he used to live in England and he has been like an Englishman. This colonial identity makes him feel like a colonial. Therefore, he hates Indian. He hates the Cook because the Cook is the representation of Indian. The Cook is poor and for Jemubhai, the Cook deserves to be slaved.

In the quotation above, we see that the Cook must obey Jemubhai. Jemubhai is the boss. Everything Jemubhai wants, should be fulfilled. If the Cook has been disobedient, the Cook is automatically trembling. He will slur and approach the foot of the judge's bed. After that, the Cook will ask to be beat. The Cook will feel that he is a bad man. He will feel that he deserves to be punished.

From the case, it can be known Jemubhai has so great power over the Indian around him. Jemubhai is the superior one. He has the power to dominate the inferior

because he feels like he is an Englishman. He used to live and study Law in England. Over there, he assimilates himself to English. English people did racial acts to him and it gave him pains a lot. This experience finally becomes the source for Jemubhai to become like an Englishman. In the process, he finally gets away from anything with Indian identity. He imitates to become an Englishman. He adapts and adopts English identity.

In England, Jemubhai is treated racially. However, when he came home in India, he did it to Indian. In England he is inferior but In India, he is superior. Therefore, Jemubhai has power to dominate the Cook. Jemubhai can be seen as the imitation of Englishman. He dislikes everything about India, including the way Indian speaks, eats, acts, even if they are his family members. It is filthy for Jemubhai eats the food with hands. He wants to be like European people who have tradition and custom in eating food. They, European people, eat by using knife and fork. He thinks that eating with hands shows that Indian eats like animal. It also shows that Indian people are uneducated. As the result of his imitation of becoming like an Englishman, he shows how he hates India. He sees that West is good and East is bad. It can be known from this quotation, "He did not like his wife's face, searched for his hatred, found beauty, dismissed it ... An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one" (Desai, 2006: 175). He sees that his wife is not beautiful because his wife is an Indian woman. He thinks that Indian woman is not beautiful. For him, English woman is beautiful one.

This perspective exposes that Jemubhai has been far away from Indian-ness. Not only his perspective toward woman, the way he speaks also has imitated Englishman. He speaks English and he tries to hide his Indian accent just to keep up his English standard. Of course, he cannot speak Urdu or Hindi well. He even forgets how to speak it up. Therefore, any document or speech from Jemubhai are in English and no Indian people understand it well. They do not understand what Jemubhai wrote in the document. With that way, they just nod, agree, approve anything written in the document without reading it. People around Jemubhai are not taught English well, so they do not know English, both speaking and writing, even spelling the Latin alphabet. The way Jemubhai does not want to speak Indian can be seen with a reflection that he wants people to respect, amaze, and admire him. Of course, he believes that English is much higher than Indian.

He heard cases in Hindi, but they were recorded in Urdu by the stenographer and translated by the judge into a second record in English, his own command of Hindi and Urdu was tenuous ... Still, despite the leaf shadow and language confusion (Desai, 2006: 68).

Besides, Jemubhai also has appearance like Englishman. He speaks English to keep his reputation and he also uses powder to whiten his face. It should be remembered that Indian has darker color skin than English, Jemubhai wants to look whiter like Englishman, so he uses powder to whiten his face. It can be seen from this quotation.

He acquired a fearsome reputation for his speech that seemed to belong to no language at all, and for his face like a mask that conveyed something beyond human fallibility. The expression and manner honed here would carry him, eventually, all the way to the high court in Lucknow ... he would preside, White powdered wig over white powdered face, hammer in hand (Desai, 2006: 69).

As an Indian, Jemubhai has dark complexion. He uses white powder to whiten his dark skin. Of course, he wants to look like Englishman. His dark hair is also hidden by white wig. As he knows, a judge in England or European countries has white wig as the appearance. Behind that way, he wants to show that it is what English does. He wants to show his superior position. His way and style imitate how an Englishman behaves. The way he speaks is full of dignity that explains what he wants to be like an Englishman. He is so proud of being like an Englishman. The problem is, he cannot be an Englishman. He imitates, but the way he imitates just makes the difference. Therefore, it is similar, but actually it is simply not quite.

Moreover, he really hates to have Indian accent. He wants to have accent to make him able to speak English fluently. It means that he does not want people to see him in an Indian identity. He refuses Indian things although he is an Indian. He rejects his identity as an Indian. His detestation against India can be seen on this quotation:

Thus, it was that the judge eventually took revenge on his early confusions, his embarrassments gloved in something called "keeping up standards," his accent behind a mask of a quiet. He found he began to be mistaken for something he wasn't—a man of dignity. This accidental poise became more important than any other thing. He envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become (Desai, 2006: 126).

The quotation shows that Jemubhai adapts and adopts what Englishman does in almost every aspect. As Bhabha (1994: 86) says implicitly, people who try to imitate cannot be the same with people they imitate. Sure, it is the

same, but it is not quite. Besides, he should live in India. He cannot stay in England for permanent because his passport is only functioned for his study, not for changing his nationality. In that case, Jemubhai uses his condition to show his superiority over other Indian, especially to the cook and Sai. It is also the result of what he received in England. In England, everybody treats him an inferior. Everyone insulted him. People yelled at him as curry smell. As we know, curry is an Indian traditional yellow soup and the smell is sharp. It can be seen from this quotation.

For entire days nobody spoke to him at all, his throat jammed with words unuttered, his heart and mind turned into blunt aching things ... The young and beautiful were no kinder; girls held their noses and giggled, "Phew, he stinks of curry!" (Desai, 2006: 46).

The experiences that Jemubhai had in England was actually not beautiful experience. In England, he was discriminated. He was treated as a stranger. He was alienated. He was the minority and he always got tortured. It made a kind of trauma and it also made him hate India. He seemed to regret of being an India. Therefore, when he was home, he practiced his hatred to his servant, the Cook.

When he lives in India, people praises him. He becomes like a king. People think that Jemubhai had education in a University in England. People admired him. What Jemubhai did showed an extraordinary thing. Not everyone could do what Jemubhai did. When Jemubhai came home, people cried out as if Jemubhai is the son of India. Everyone was proud of him. This condition does not change Jemubhai. He does use his condition to empower himself. He shows his arrogance. Of course, it is the effect of his experience and after coming back to India, he seems not to be the previous Jemubhai, he is a stranger in his own land.

Again, in India, he feels superior. He rejects a fact that he is an Indian. He is proud of being an Englishman. He feels to have a power, the power to dominate the Indian as the inferior. Therefore, in England, he was the inferior, but in India, he is the superior. It shows that people in India still impacted the effect of colonization that makes them think that English is good. It also makes them to imitate what Englishman does. Jemubhai does it. He tries to control it all, including controlling his family, Sai.

Sai falls in love with Gyan. Gyan is her tutor. Of course, the relationship between Sai and Gyan is not accepted by the judge because of their status. Moreover, Jemubhai knows that Gyan is a Nepali, a second-class minority in the eyes of the Judge. Although initially Gyan

loves Sai, but gradually the attitude of the Judge and Sai who become like English people make Gyan hate both. Gyan has hatred to Englishness because he joins the separatist groups who fight for independence for the nation of Nepal. Politically he shows his love to his country and he hates anything related to the colonizer, English. Jemubhai and Sai act like English people, so Gyan hates them.

Talking about Gyan story is not far from the moment when the Nepalese separatists demonstrates to fight for their independence. A peaceful demonstration suddenly turned into a riot. Violence spreads throughout Kalimpong. Control is operated and it cuts Kalimpong from the outside world. During this riot Biju finally decided to return to India to meet his father.

Another story, thousands of kilometers from Kalimpong, Biju, son of the Judge's cook is fighting for a decent life as an illegal immigrant in New York. Biju stumbles in the wilds of New York. He works as an unstable waitress in order to avoid pursuing immigration. The only link between Biju and his father is only via correspondence. Biju never complains about his life to his father, because he wants his father to be proud of him. He wants his father think that he has a successful life in America.

Sometimes every single paper the applicants brought with them was fake ... "How do you find so much money?" Someone in the line was worried he would be refused for the small size of his bank account. "Ooph, you cannot show so little," laughed another, looking over his shoulder with frank appraisal (Desai, 2006: 190).

The novel also describes the story of Biju who is so poor. Biju is told to be lucky to get the way to be in the United States of America. Although he is just an illegal immigrant, he can reach the United States of America. Most people cannot pass it. Of course, the way to get it is by bribing and it is not cheap. So, what we can assume is that poor people in the Third World pay a lot just to be in the United States of America although it is better to use the money for making their own business. They have perspective that living and working in the United States of America can guarantee them richness. It is not only about richness, they are also proud of living in the United States of America.

The way they are proud of being in the United States of America is because it is Western country. Anything related to Western thing is actually considered as something better than in the Eastern country, in this case, the Eastern country is India. Therefore, Biju's father feels proud of knowing that his son is working in the United

States of America, although his son is only working as an unstable immigrant worker with low salary. Biju even lives with suffers, pain, and poorness. It means that the feeling of pride is much more important than the reality that living in the United is very tough for Indian immigrant. The point is working in the United States of America, no matter what jobs they do.

He worked at Don Polio—or was it The Hot Tomato? Or Ali Baba's Fried Chicken? His father could not remember or understand or pronounce the names, and Biju changed jobs so often, like a fugitive on the run—no papers (Desai, 2006: 10).

One of the jobs that Biju has is working as a waiter. Of course, he works as unstable waiter. If he is stable, he must be caught up by the immigration officer because he is an illegal worker. Therefore, he is unstable and must be moving. His father even cannot spell the name of the restaurant very well. But, the Cook has been proud of knowing that his son is in the United States of America.

Based on the fact that the Cook wonders that his son is in good condition, it can be seen as the effect of Western colonization in Eastern country like India. It makes Indian people think that Western is better. It makes Indian people think that their nation is worse. This prejudice also works in the perspective of Western people. They think that Eastern people are people with low class, poor, and uncivilized culture. In Said's *Orientalism* (1991) Western people seem to have negative image toward Eastern people, and it also happens to Biju when he is in the United States of America.

He smells, said the owner's wife. I think I'm allergic to his hair oil ... The owner bought soap and toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo plus conditioner, Q-tips, nail clippers, and most important of all, deodorant, and told Biju he'd picked up some things he might need (Desai, 2006: 55).

The quotation shows that Western people dislike the Indian. Biju's employer does not like Indian employees. The Indian employers provide toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo with conditioner, nail clippers, and deodorant. It is a form of a feeling that Western people dislike Eastern people because they have perspective that India is dirty and full of smelly fringe people. Biju is demanded to be cleaned indirectly because Biju smells bad. It shows symbolically that the owner think all Indian is like Biju.

Those are things that can be seen from the description of Indian characters in the novel. Those character are mostly suffering from the effect of colonization. They

suffer the problem of having the cross identity between Western and Eastern. It is the impact of their history of colonization. Therefore, the real problems occurred to Jemubhai and Biju, while Gyan, politically, resists against Indian people who become like English. The independency has shown that Gyan resist the colonization.

One of the interesting parts of this novel, of course, is Jemubhai and Biju. The description of Jemubhai who hates anything about Indian shows something interesting to analyze. On the other hand, the description of Biju life as an illegal immigrant in the United States of America is also something important to realize. Through those two characters, we find out how Indian assume that Western country is the land of dreams to achieve success and to give pride. For instance, Biju and friends are struggling to get Green Card. How Biju struggled to obtain a Green Card is very interesting and full of bitter humor. When the Green Card fails to be obtained, Biju and most of his friends left for America illegally. To legalize their status, most of them marry American old woman to gain American citizenship. In addition, those who have managed to live in the United States of America should try to avoid their new friends from Indian because it will make problem. This makes Indian hate Indian, like what Jemubhai does to Kalimpong people. Jemubhai also struggles when he studied in England. Everything is not easy for Eastern people living in Western country, but they still think Western is better.

Additionally speaking, like most international literary-award winning novels, this novel is not an easy novel to chew. The plot of the characters is not linear, sometimes backward far back and then back to the present, so it needs extra concentration to read it. The story seems to be just spinning on the lives of the characters, no wonder the impatient readers will feel bored and cannot bear to finish this novel. With the complexity of his novel, Desai seems to be trying to capture the meaning of life between Western and Eastern. It composes problem people who used to live in poverty, suddenly are in a rich country. It is actually showing the effect of colonization to the perspective the characters have in the novel.

## 2. The Resistance of the Characters in Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

### 2.1 Jemubhai's Mimicry as Resistance

To criticize it and to show that they actually have resistant power, it is started from Jemubhai's case. In the previous explanation, it is described that Jemubhai really dislikes Indian. This can be seen from the following quotation.

He found he began to be mistaken for something he wasn't—a man of dignity. This accidental poise became more important than any other thing. He

envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become (Desai, 2006: 126).

Based on the quotation above, in the last part of the description, it is written that Jemubhai loathed Indian and he envied the English. This is enough to expose that Jemubhai does not like being called as Indian. He does everything about English instead of Indian. This leads an assumption to claim that Jemubhai is not patriotic, he has lost his identity of India, and so on. This also makes Jemubhai becomes the example character that is negative because of his hatred to India although he is an Indian.

From one side, it is not wrong at all to judge The Judge as a person who does not has identity because he imitates English. But, from another side, we can see that the life of Jemubhai is actually better than the Cook who is living in poorness. From the angle of wealth, Jemubhai lives as a rich man and he must be enjoying living that way. It is a contrast to compare it to the life of the Cook. The Cook lives as a poor guy and he is the slave of the Cook. The question is, is it better to live with poorness or richness? In this global and capitalism era, we cannot be so naïve to say that we should defend our nationality and our nation, because it is our identity. Another question is, how do we know that it is our identity?

If we question ourselves and ask it deeply to us, our identity is exactly not our identity, because we are just a construction of environment, society, norm, rules, and anything. Therefore, if we called that we have identity, it is exactly someone else's identity. Jemubhai has shown that he is not Indian, but he tries to be English and he never gets it enough, not even closer. He is not English and he is not Indian. Then, we need to think in deconstructive perspective that a person without identity cannot be claimed or judged. It is not negative at all because what we understand about identity, especially related to nation, it is always about politics and power.

For example, in *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) believes that in Eastern nations, there must be discourses created by Western people to dominate and to make distance between West and East. It is actually the identity we believe. We think that Indian is exotic, beautiful, and so on. It is the description they create and Indian believes in it, as if they are special. This discourse is actually a way the Western makes gap to differ them from Indian because they are white, they are modern, they are people who will enjoy the beautiful land with exotic girls, and so on. So, what Indian believes as their identity is actually colonial construction. With this perspective, we can see that Jemubhai does mimicry to mock. He is not Indian but he is also not English. He imitates English but he is never same. The difference that Jemubhai makes to be like an

English is actually a way to show that he becomes clown to mock English.

In another case, Jemubhai also explains to us that we cannot stay in our single mind in believing that it is our identity. For example, in a culture of us, there is bad culture, then we become so furious if it is not generated. If it is bad to us, what makes us maintain it? For example, cannibalism, patriarchal tradition, tribalism, non-hygienic food, mystic, and so on. It is sometimes bad to our life, and we need to change it, and sure, it has been changing for long. If tradition can change, if rules can adapt to change, and if culture can be negotiated to transform, why is not identity changed? It is not a wrong to say that we must have an identity, but, what Identity we should maintain? Is it the identity of Indian who is poor, oily face, stupid, uncivilized? If it is the identity that we maintain, it is the indication of the success of the colonial discourse to make us left behind forever. If we believe that although Indian is mystic, religious, traditional, and so on but Indian is modern, rational, and civilized, then what is wrong with that? Indian can imitate to empower themselves. Indian can imitate to make chaos. The chaos functions to stop their identification to Indian.

With what Jemubhai shows, we can take a point that that the chaotic identity Jemubhai has, explains that he cannot be identified in any colonial discourse. If colonial discourse sees that Indian is nations full of poor people, uncivilized people, and traditional people, they will see the Cook who cannot see the reality that he actually can be free and become a freeman instead of being slave. But, if they see Jemubhai, they will not be able to identify Jemubhai as Indian, because he is not like Indian. Although in England, Jemubhai was bullied, but from the experience, from the subjugation of English toward Jemubhai, Jemubhai gains his power of making chaotic in their identification toward him. It is the resistance of Jemubhai's identity who is always categorized as a man without identity, while identity is the identity created by colonial discourse.

From Jemubhai, it can be taken some notes. The first thing to say, Jemubhai is rich. Richness becomes an indication that he can survive in the global and capitalism era. A nation cannot develop and grow bigger if it is not sustained by the wealth. Jemubhai shows that although he is Indian, with all characteristics of poorness and traditions, he can be rich. Richness is the way to survive in the globalization and of course, more rich people, a country or nation will grow up. It is not about he sells his identity, it is about what he deconstructs in the identity given to him and all Indian. He shows that identity is fragile, it can be deconstructed and he shows that Indian is not like what Western sees. And, that is the second thing to say, that identity of Jemubhai is chaotic. The chaos he

uses is to show that Indian can be also rich like Western, Indian is not poor and traditional.

## 2.2 Biju's Mimicry as Resistance

Another case is about Biju. Biju is the son of the Cook. The Cook is the forever-servant of the Judge. The life of Biju is as bad as his father. If the Cook lives in India with poorness, Biju lives in America with poorness. The two live in poorness. What makes them difference is only the place they live. If Biju lives with suffers in America, why just does not he move back to India? That question leads the assumption to say that Biju thinks America is better place. With the way to think America is better place, he has perspective that living in America, or Western, is better than Indian. He seems not to believe of living in India and he prefers to live in America while living in America does not change anything from his life.

However, if we think it in deconstructive perspective, we can see something different from what Biju did with all illegal Indian. It is to say that Biju and friends are problems, just to make it simple, the way he works is often moving.

He worked at Don Polio—or was it The Hot Tomato? Or Ali Baba's Fried Chicken? His father could not remember or understand or pronounce the names, and Biju changed jobs so often, like a fugitive on the run—no papers (Desai, 2006: 10).

If he always moves from place to another place, can it be said that American Taxes ministry cannot have anything from him? Illegal immigrant is exactly a disease for government because they do not pay taxes, and it is disadvantages for the government. Sometimes we think that it is negative, but can we imagine how British people colonized India for more than 3.5 centuries? Or India lived happily during that time? The immigrant worker is actually something wrong, but they have rupture in making the system and Indian illegal workers just dive into it and making the chaos in the system. It is actually the power of Indian who survives in America.

We also think that the life of illegal immigrant worker is bad, but they are not as bad as we think. Biju can still alive and some of his friends are married to gold widow. It is not a bad idea just to get visa, it is actually the process to dominate America. By marrying the old widows, it shows their masculinity over woman, and they can exploit American for the Indian benefit.

We cannot claim something totally because every perspective, image, or meaning about this is bad and good, are not working at all. It is just about how we see something differently. Biju is called as the victim and he suffers a lot because the description over him is hyperbolic. While, if we see something clear, the illegal

immigrant workers are like parasites that will always gnaw, ruin, and find the rupture of Western domination.

The illegal immigrant workers can have their own community in America. They are the uncanny; the population that lives in another country and they always gain power. It is the power of them. Biju actually have power. Their fear is just the way it described, while they always negotiate to live and to stay in America to make chaos.

If it is not enough to explain that Biju has resistance against the colonial discourse, it can be seen from the fact that dares to live to go to America illegally. He can think general, with wider perspective, and tries to open up their mind that as Indian, he cannot just stay and wait for the end like his father. We can compare the life of Biju and his father; his father lives like a dog. He is so sure that staying and being faithful to his boss is good therefore, he does not want to move on. Is it Indian identity that we always try to echo? Indian is like a dog and Indian is low class? Of course, what we believe in any identity, national identity, cannot be like that. If they believe that Indian is not like what the colonial discourse give, it is so right for Biju to struggle in America, even it lures a lot of pains. This pain can explain that Indian is not as weak as Western think, they can be parasite in Western countries. Therefore, any encounter between Western and Eastern, there is no domination, there is just negotiation between them. Jemubhai experienced bullying, Biju also experienced bullying, but Westerners cannot do more than bullying. It means that their bullying shows their weakness and it exploits Jemubhai's and Biju's power.

## CONCLUSION

### Conclusion

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, there are two characters that expose resistance behind their mimicry. They are Jemubhai and Biju. Jemubhai's mimicry is how he likes behaving English while Biju is dominated by a thought that Western is better. It represents the postcolonial society's problem.

Jemubhai is said to be a man with the very high hatred against anything related to India. In this case, Jemubhai is said to have lost his identity as Indian. However, instead of claiming and judging Jemubhai as a man with lost identity. If it is so proud of being Indian while Indian identity is like what Western says (uncivilized, old, poor, and so on), so Jemubhai revised what Indian identity was. Jemubhai should be called as a man with chaotic identity because his identity is abstract, blur, and uncertain. But, from this ambiguous, hybrid, and uncertain identity, Jemubhai cannot be classified by colonial discourse to identify him. Jemubhai wants to be like English but he will never be the same. Jemubhai is neither an English nor

Indian. He is himself and it is the resistance that we can see. Postcolonial society cannot be simply identified by colonial discourse.

Biju with his poor life in America is also simple called as a person who gets the karma because he has thought that America is a pride, rich, and better than India has. This claim is also too narrow because we can also see that Biju becomes the virus in America and America cannot simply erase the illegal workers like Biju. Biju steals something from America because he does not pay taxed. Biju's friends marry with old woman and it means that the illegal workers nailed their root to be the chaos for America. It is actually the opposite perspective that deconstructs a perspective saying Indian is illegal worker.

Finally, it is found that this research has exposed, explained, and discovered that postcolonial society actually has power to resist against any colonial discourse that makes Indian and other post-colonized society feel inferior against Western people. This has been shown by Jemubhai and Biju that they do not lose their identity and people should not claim them negatively, because Jemubhai is success person while Biju steals taxes from America.

### Suggestion

The point of postcolonial analysis is that we need to be deconstructive in seeing something. We need to avoid any singular claim because postcolonialism is kind of deconstruction in the context of culture and anything related to the impact of colonization. With this understanding this research can give different viewpoint to reflect that Eastern, Indian, or other Third World people are not always inferior although Western culture dominates the global area, because inside of it, there is resistance and negotiation in every cultural encounter erasing the borders of the binary oppositions. This research can give an understanding of Bhabha's postcolonial perspective which is deconstructive especially about third space and mimicry. This research potentially can be the further reference or literature for any postcolonial literature, postcolonial understanding, postcolonialism, or other academic fields and institutions.

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