

JEMUBHAI'S HYBRID WAY OF LIFE IN  
KIRAN DESAI'S *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS*

THESIS

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

According to Sir E.B. Tylor, culture is a complex entity of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other capabilities and way of life acquired by man as a member of society (qtd. in William 15). However, there are many definitions of culture. Selo soemardjan and Soelaeman Soemardi define that culture is all of society's sense, creation, works and arts. Society's creation produces material cultures and technologies; sense is human spirit, it embodies social values and norms to regulate society's problems. Within it, there are religion, ideology, spiritual, art, and every elements of human expression that live in a society. Moreover, work is a mental ability, thinking ability of the society. Work's concrete is pure theory or something that has been arranged to be applied in society (qtd. in Soekanto 189). Furthermore, Soekanto cited Selo Soemardjan and Soelaeman Soemardi who quoted from Melville J. Herkovits and Bronislaw Malinowski formulated 'Cultural Determinism' that was everything that existed in society was determined by culture of the current society ( qtd. in Soekanto 187). From the definitions above, it can be concluded that dominates human brain and their creation. Therefore, culture determines human's behaviour and human's works especially literature.

Literature is a metaphysic of subjectivity and the imaginative process that reflects culture (William 15). The imaginative process of literary writers is

determined by culture. It is called *Cultural Determinism* (Soekanto 189).

Raymond adds that literature is the impulse of human spirit because cultures live within it. This is related to E. B. Taylor's definition of culture that culture is a knowledge that is acquired by man as a member of society (William 15), so, literary work must contain knowledge of the writers as members of current cultural society.

Culture always changes over time. The change can be a progress or a regress. Schaefer states that culture always develops from pre-historic age until now because humans have been producing many achievements in every era that make a progressive change. (Schaefer 58). Furthermore, culture can also change. It can change under certain situation. There are no cultures that stagnant, frozen and pure because most cultures are changed by cross-cultural contact and military invasion or colonization. For example, ancient Celtic culture was changed by Roman when Roman armies attacked British isles (Tyson 422). This cultural change can be studied with cultural studies.

Cultural studies has analyzed all varieties of cultures such as high culture, low culture, public culture, popular culture, mass culture, rock culture, youth culture, black culture, black British culture, gay culture, style culture, colonial culture, post-colonial culture, post-modern culture, cyber culture, post modern culture, and global culture (Sardar and Van Loon 23). Cultural studies also examines through all varieties of cultural forms and practices such as art, architecture, advertising, music, film television, dance, theatre and literature (23). Thus, the researcher tried to examine cultural studies that can be drawn from literature.

Literary works that reflect cultures develop in response to colonial domination, from the first point of colonization to present is called postcolonial literature. Thus, Postcolonial literature is the subject matter of criticism. Moreover, postcolonial can be a theoretical framework because postcolonial studies examine social, political, psychological and cultural colonization of indigenous people. The indigenous people are those established among non-white people through the force of British army's such as India, Africa, West Indies, South America, The Middle East, and Southeast Asia. It mainly analyzes the ideological forces that press the colonized to internalize colonizers' values and, on the other hand, it promotes the resistance of colonized people against their oppressor (Tyson 418).

Some of postcolonial literatures are written by the colonizers writers. Most of them are written by the colonized and formerly colonized writers. The former colonized are the nations such as Africa, West Indies, South America, The Middle East, and Southeast Asia and India (Tyson 426). Therefore, this research attempts to analyze the novel of a former colonized writer named Kiran Desai.

Kiran Desai was born in India at 1971. She studied in India, England and America. Kiran studied creative writing in Columbia University. Her first novel entitled *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* got a good response widely (Desai 1). *The Inheritance of Loss* is Kiran Desai's second novel (2005) and won the Man Booker Prize in 2006. The novel talks about Desai's inheritance and disinheritance that had come with globalization. It deals with a number of present day issues such as economic inequality and poverty, family and the consequences



effect of post-colonialism paradigm. This study uses post-colonialism theory of Homi K Bhabha to examine Jemubhai's act to combine two cultures, specifically his way of life.

Jemubhai's hybrid way of life is the representation of Indian people at present. It reflects the traumatic experience after colonialism. It represents Indian's changing point of view towards themselves, their culture and their former colonizers. Hence, the researcher tries to analyze Jemubhai's hybrid way of life using post-colonial theory of Homi K Bhabha. Post-colonial theory examines problems after colonialism as the consequences of colonialism (Gandhi 7).

From the explanations above, post-colonialism theory is precisely applied to investigate Jemubhai's hybrid way of life in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Specifically, using Homi K bhabha's theory of 'hybridity', 'mimicry', and 'ambivalence', the researcher would like to find out how Jemubhai as one of main characters merges his way of life that is described in the novel because Tyson states that postcolonialism examines both cultural merger and antagonism (Tyson 419). The cultural merger happens in Jemubhai's way of life because Jemubhai as the character from former colonized who interacts with former colonizer that forces him to mix and assimilate his manner and behaviour. Thus, his merged-way of life can happen as the side effects of assimilation. Moreover, some characters oppose Jemubhai's hybrid way of life and it results negative effects towards Jemubhai and the other characters. Further, the hybrid lifestyle of Jemubhai emerges different reactions in both colonized and colonizer societies but both reactions awake him to his consciousness of his existence.





notice the common readers about how young generation must respect and preserve their own cultures. Theoretically, this study can be an illustration to apply cultural analysis in literary works.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

Since this study is about cultural studies that can match with many disciplines, the researcher chooses Post-Colonial studies to make it narrower and focused. Moreover, the researcher uses Post-colonial theory to examine Jemubhai's hybrid way of life in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Specifically, this study employs Homi K Bhabha's Theory of 'hybridity', 'mimicry' and 'ambivalence'.

### **1.6 Method of Study**

This study uses qualitative method because the data are narrative text of the novel that consists of words, sentences of conversation, narration and description without numerical data. According to Hancock, qualitative research focuses on description and interpretation and may lead to develop new concepts or theory, or to an evaluation of an organizational process (6). He also added that it is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena.

### **1.7 Data Source**

There are two types of data in this research. They are primary data and secondary data. The primary data is the narrative, dialogues, description of Jemubhai's hybrid way of life from the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED STUDY

#### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* mainly tells about cultural issue, especially about colonial effects. Therefore, the researcher chooses Postcolonial as the main theory to analyze the cultural issue that reflected by Jemubhai's hybrid way of life. Homi K Bhabha explained the theory. Furthermore, the researcher uses Hybridity, Mimicry and Ambivalence theory to limit a broader analysis that focuses on Jemubhai's hybrid way of life.

#### 2. 2 Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is the study of culture that is interesting to be analyzed because culture always changes toward progressiveness (Tyson 422). Cultural studies is a broad study. It does not have a specific object. However, cultural studies uses anything to describe and analyze about the culture. Cultural studies can be done by borrowing all social sciences disciplines and all humanities and arts branches and select the perfect match with its purpose. For instance, cultural studies can be done with the combination of philosophy, anthropology, psychology, political science or literary criticism. Furthermore, cultural studies typically use a qualitative method because it uses textual analysis from any disciplines that can be drawn from linguistics, anthropology, psychology and literary criticism that use qualitative method of analysis. Therefore, cultural studies can be done with "close reading" in literary analysis which focuses on the text ( Sardar and Van Loon 7).

The purpose of cultural studies is to observe subjects of cultural practice and their connection to power. Its absolute goal is to interpret power connection and analyze how these connections manipulate and shape cultural practices. Moreover, cultural studies dedicate to a moral review of modern society and to a fundamental line of political action. Conventionally, cultural studies is dedicated to social reconstruction by critical political involvement. Thus, cultural studies try to understand and change the structures of domination everywhere (Sardar and Van Loon 9).

“Cultural imperialism, a direct result of economic domination, consists of the “takeover” of one culture by another: the food, clothing, customs, recreation, and values of the economically dominant culture increasingly replace those of the economically vulnerable culture until the latter appears to be a kind of imitation of the former.” (Tyson 425)

Superiority is caused by the domination of one culture towards the other. This domination exists because of colonisation. It affects the indigenous culture, because colonizers“ always make new regulations that can change the indigenous culture. Moreover, the domination constantly remains in spite of the independence of colonial subjects. The imperialisms continue through „Cultural Imperialism“. Thus, the imperialism is not only happened when the colonisation occurs, but it continues even after the end of colonisation. It influences colonizer and colonized. Therefore, the study of relationship between colonizer and colonized is called post-colonial study and the theory is known as postcolonial theory.

### 2. 3 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory examines dynamic relationship between former colonizers and colonized. It studies the relationship psychologically and socially between colonized and colonizers that becomes a broader field of postcolonial study. It observes how the former colonizers that consider the former colonized as savage and destroy their indigenous cultures (Tyson 418).

The former colonizers cause a cultural merger and cultural antagonism which are difficult to identify and separate. It happens when British interfere into government and education system, daily life and cultural values of its colonial subjects. In other words, the colonizers' armies had left the land of colonial objects but they influence and change the culture of colonial objects. The colonization continues by attacking the colonial objects psychologically and culturally (Tyson 419).

The indigenous people begin to deny their identity. The indigenous people see themselves as negative image and they isolate themselves from their own original culture. This happens because British make regulations that forbid the indigenous culture to be practiced. The prohibition automatically lost because the culture is devalued. As a result, many indigenous cultures are changed with western cultures and some of them are prohibited and crisis of identity emerges.

The crisis of identity is a side effect of colonization. The former colonized have double consciousness of their identity and existence. Double consciousness is a way of perceiving the world that is divided between two antagonistic cultures: that of the colonizer and that of the indigenous community. It causes unstable



feeling of belonging between two cultures that happens because of migration. The immigrant feels neither their current culture nor their indigenous culture. This feeling is called “Unhomed” that results psychological exile (Tyson 421).

Based on the cases above postcolonial criticism observe the problem of hybrid and dynamic cultural identity that is represented in postcolonial literatures (Tyson 420). Moreover, the important theorists of postcolonial theory are Edward Said; C.G Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha. However, the researcher chooses Homi K. Bhabha theory to analyze *The Inheritance of Loss* because the researcher intends to expose the postcolonial phenomenon using Bhabha’s theory such as mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence.

### **2. 3. 1. Homi K. Bhabha**

Homi K.Bhabha is one of the most important thinkers in the influential movement in cultural theory called post-colonial criticism. He was born in 1949 in Mumbai, India. Bhabha’s work develops a set of challenging concepts that are essential to post-colonial theory: hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence. These concepts describe ways in which colonized peoples have resisted the power of the colonizer, a power that is never as safe as it seems to be. This highlighting enlightens our present situation, in a world marked by a paradoxical combination of violently proclaimed cultural difference and the complexly interconnected networks of globalization. Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, Bhabha illustrate how its histories and cultures constantly entail on the present, challenging that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations (Huddart 1)







cultural synergy and transculturation. The criticism of the term referred to above stems from the perception that theories that stress mutuality necessarily downplay oppositionality, and increase continuing post-colonial dependence. There is, however, nothing in the idea of hybridity as such that suggests that mutuality negates the hierarchical nature of the imperial process or that it involves the idea of an equal exchange. This is, however, the way in which some proponents of decolonization and anti-colonialism have interpreted its current usage in colonial discourse theory. It has also been subject to critique as part of a general dissatisfaction with colonial discourse theory on the part of critics such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Benita Parry and Aijaz Ahmad. These critiques stress the textualist and idealist basis of such analysis and point to the fact that they neglect specific local differences (Tiffin 60).

### **2. 3. 1. 3. Ambivalence**

Ambivalence was a term first developed in psychoanalysis. It describes a „Mind fluctuation“, Confusion between wanting one thing and its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action (Young 161; Tiffin 12). It is adapted into colonial discourse theory by Homi K. Bhabha, it describes the combination of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizers and colonized.

Ambivalence is unstable sense of self. This is a feeling of being caught between cultures. the feeling of belonging to neither rather than to both (Tyson 421). Ambivalence results cultural fluctuation where the colonial subjects who migrate to their former colonizer country and experience both indigenous and colonizer cultures. Moreover, they assume that both cultures are theirs. However





experiences the same identity as Jemubhai who leaves their family abroad. Jemubhai's realization come with the accusations from Sai about his own lack of sincerity and humility to his own identity and background. His own lifestyle was fake and superficial, and was almost a superficial display of his lack of judgement and decision. Sai, to Gyan, represents a solution that could stoop and understand the underlying fabric of existence and its dilemma, that pricks the underprivileged. They transcend the narrow They transcend the narrow confines of their community to give birth to a new culture that will allow them to exist as new beings in a new world order

Sri Nurhidayah and Mamik Tri Wedawati's research entitled *Hegemony in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss and Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing* in 2012 is about the colonization that is continued to maintain the colony power. It causes the colonized follow and receive voluntarily the domination power of ruling class. Therefore, British Imperial hegemony to maintain their power that is reflected in both novels will be discussed as the main topic. This thesis formulates three problems; how hegemony reflected in Jembhai's characters as ex-colonized of imperial British in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss, how hegemony reflected in Mary's characters as female member of Imperial British Government in Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing, and how the relation Jembhai and Mary in hegemony. This thesis uses descriptive quality, intertextuality, and mimesis method. These problems will be examined by using Antonio Gramsci's Hegemony theory. The comparative literature will be used to examine the result of Jemubhai's hegemony and Mary's hegemony that will be compared and contrasted. To support the examination, Intertextuality will



contradictorily enough, strength and self-acceptance. The influence of hegemony is crucial; internalised racism and social inequalities effectively turn hybridity into something the characters lament. However, it also becomes clear that for hybridity to be a place of liberation, it is precisely hegemony that needs to be identified and, eventually, undermined. The possibility to do so is restricted by factors related to social, economical and historical conditions, which makes hybridity into a source of power only for a privileged few. Hence, the essay also underscores the importance of relating hybridity to hegemony.

*Food Practices and The Construction, Performance and Politics of Identity in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss* by Johan Bernard van der Winden is about the use of food in novels and other works of literature opens up the possibility to interpret and explore its function as a signifier of identity. References to food and eating function as a central theme throughout Kiran Desai's postcolonial novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), which will be the focus of this thesis. These conspicuous references elicit a closer look into the significance of food habits, as well as its effects in the novel. The result shows that in *The Inheritance of Loss* Desai effectively employs the versatility of food and food practices as a recurrent motif that links narratives, which take place on three different continents and in different time frames. Using food as a trope Desai sheds light on complex identity issues in the context of a globalising postcolonial world. Food tells the story about Jemubhai, the Anglophile judge, who is torn between identities and is losing his authority while falling back into solitude. Desai employs food imagery to shed light on the origin of the judge's lack of balance: a fetishizing and copying of the English colonial ruling class, a painful

construction of a new identity through active identity performance and the subsequent process of attempting to assimilate into English culture while simultaneously suppressing his Indian identity and excluding his fellow-countrymen.

The previous researches only examine the main issue directly and some of them compare it with other literary works. Yet, this research attempts to examine the issue by an explanation of process and a description of cause and effect. The previous research did not focus because they examined all the characters. Therefore, this research only focuses on one main character named Jemubhai to examine his hybrid way of life with the description and the explanation of cause and effect.

## CHAPTER 3

### JEMUBHAI'S HYBRID WAY OF LIFE

In this chapter, the researcher provides the analysis of Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of loss* based on the research problems. The analysis uses Postcolonial theorist Homi K Bhabha's theory of Hybridity, Mimicry and Ambivalence. The researcher divides the analysis into three main sub-chapters to avoid broader analysis. They are depiction of jemubhai's hybrid way of life and depiction of jemubhai's hybrid way of life effects towards Jemubhai and other characters and the description of the colonizer and colonized societies' reaction toward Jemubhai's hybrid way of life.

#### 3. 1. Jemubhai's hybrid way of life

The researcher analyzes Jemubhai's hybrid way of life based on Homi K Bhabha's theory of Hybridity, Mimicry and Ambivalence. This novel told about an old judge named Jemubhai who merged his culture or his way of life after he studied in Britain. Jemubhai Patel was born and raised in India. He married at young age and had to leave his family in order to study abroad to England. Jemubhai had to struggle and survive in England because of white people culture's judgement about dark skin men. British judged dark skin men as savage, disgusting and should be banned. Therefore, the researcher wants to highlight Jemubhai's original culture that is depicted in the novel before examine the merger.





































































orchids." The judge was not interested in agricultural possibilities of the land but went to see it, trusting the man's word, the famous word of a gentleman—despite all that had passed" (Desai 35).

Jemubhai moved to Cho Oyu in 1957. He bought a house because of Scotsman's suggestion about agricultural potentials in that land. However, Jemubhai is not interested with that he just want .to alienate himself. He hopes that he can heal his loneliness and find peace when he lives by his own lifestyle.

Jemubhai's alienation to Cho Oyu is caused by his feeling of "being Unhomed". Jemubhai feels loneliness shock when British in England rejected him. Further, he does not suit to live in Phiphit because his standard of living has been influenced by British lifestyle. He feels that he belongs to England, but in fact, he is a pure Indian. The result is he belongs to none of them. Thus, Jemubhai's alienation to Cho Oyu is caused by his consciousness of being unhomed.



mimics British manner when have supper because he always eats british menu when he stays at Mrs. Rice's house. Furthermore, Jemubhai's way of life after hybridity happens when he has been accustomed with British culture because he has done mimicry and he produces hybridity. The hybridity that can be seen are the hybridity of language, manner, thought and lifestyle. Jemubhai mixes English and Indian accent. He also combines British and Indian manner and lifestyle.

The second findings are the effects of Jemubhai's hybrid way of life as follow; Jemubhai's hybrid way of life affects himself. Jemubhai's hybrid lifestyle makes him denies his existence and identity because he feels that he belongs to neither Indian nor British. Furthermore, Jemubhai's hybrid way of life also affect the other characters such as the cook, Nimi, Gyan and Jemubhai's father. Jemubhai occupies the cook because Jemubhai's thought has been contaminated with colonizer's way of thought. Nimi is under pressure because Jemubhai forces her to follow his hybrid way of life. Gyan feels isolated because he feels confuse and strange when interacts with Jemubhai. Then, Jemubhai's father gets a great embarrassment because of Jemubhai's hybric way of life.

The third findings are the reaction of colonizer and colonized society towards Jemubhai's hybrid way of life as follow; the colonizer society, in this case British cannot accept Jemubhai's hybridity because Jemubhai is not a native British. The rejection can be seen when the colonizer mocks his way of speaking and insults Jemubhai. In the other hand, colonized society, Indian society can accept Jemubhai's hybrid way of life. They feel proud of him. It can be seen when Jemubhai arrives from England, Indian society gather to welcome him at the station.

