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Depiction of Revolutionist in Anna Bhau's Novel '*Warnechya Khoryat*'

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Abstract

Dalit literature is a kind of revolt against the injustice in the society. The writers of the Dalit literature mainly focus on the Dalit pathos, and sufferings. They use novel as a medium to give voice to the voiceless people. The Dalit writers also depict life of the patriotic people who died for the freedom of the country. 'Anna Bhau Sathe's novel 'Warnechya Khoryat' is about a man Hindurao, and young woman, his beloved freedom fighter, Mangala'

Keywords: *Dalit literature, injustice, freedom fighters.*

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Depiction of Revolutionist in Anna Bhau's Novel '*Warnechya Khoryat*'

Dr. Chandrakant Mandalik

The Dalits are ceaselessly exploited by the people belonging to upper classes. It is responsibility not only of the politicians but also of common persons to uproot the evils like Dalit exploitation which has kept the downtrodden away from the main stream of the social functions. The Dalit literature has been a source in order to create awareness among the people regarding Dalit exploitation. Dalit literature is a type of revolt against the injustice. The saints and writers like Kabir, Rohidas, Tukaram, Dadu Malukm, Guru Nanak, Narsinh Mehta, Annabhau Sathe, Shankarrao Kharat and Baburao Bagwat, express Dalit pathos in their writings. Anna Bhau Sathe the son of '*mang*' family tried to establish his own identity by writing novels, short stories, folk dramas, plays, playlets, verses and travelogues on the real life.

Anna Bhau Sathe and his Contemporaries-

During Anna Bhau Sathe N.S. Phadke and V.S. Khandekar were recognized as the prominent writers in Marathi literature. Their writing moved around the theme of middle class and upper-class life. H.N. Apte was the only author who focused on social problems in his writing. The writers after Phadke and Khandekar started portraying life of people who live in the rural area and slums. Anna Bhau Sathe explores life of downtrodden, Adivasi and criminal people in his novels. The theme which is reflected in his novels is based on various subjects like adventures, women's problems, love and rural life. The novels like '*Waranechya Khoryat*' (1951), '*Fakira*' (1959), '*Warnecha Wagh*' *(1970)*, '*Master* and '*Agnidivya*' are the novels of adventure. In the very beginning of his career as a novelist Annabhau Sathe presented stories of adventures in his novels.

The novel, '*Warnechya Khoryat*'

The novel, '*Warnechya Khoryat*' (1951), by Anna Bhau Sathe is a story of patriotism and tragic life of Hindurao and his beloved Mangala. Hindurao, a young freedom fighter whom Mangala supported for the cause of Indian freedom. They participated in the '*Quit India Movement*' in 1942 against the British rulers and became martyr. The atmosphere in Warna Valley was generated by the adventurous deeds of freedom fighters. Anna Bhau Sathe was the important segment of freedom movement. Therefore, he tries to project life of a person related to the particular event of freedom struggle. At the initial stage of life Anna Bhau wandered through the valleys and hills of Varna in order to understand the life of people. Unfortunately, Anna was forced to live life in the underground. Because of this experience he could present life of freedom fighters from 1939 to 1947 in his novels.

In the present novel, '*Warnechya Khoryat*' (1951), Anna Bhau Sathe shows two groups. The first group of people which was led by Hindurao worked for the freedom of the country and justice for the poor people. The second group was headed by Nagoji Patil who was at the side of the rich and aristocratic farmers. He was against the poor people. This group includes people who were harmful to the society. They were selfish, robbers, criminals and thieves. On the contrary, the first group of Hindurao consisted of young men who were honest, kind, co-operative, and courageous. They had love for their mother land. This group was revolutionary and it wanted freedom to the country at any cost. One may underline fight of this group against the people who acted as obstacles in the freedom movement. The novel '*Warneycha Khoryat*' is a thrilling picture of the revolutionist's strong attempt for the freedom to the country and the difficulties they found in their way to reach their goal. The responsible persons for the freedom were tortured by opportunists and selfish people. Mangala, a young girl was Maratha revolutionist. Anna Bhau Sathe explains how a young girl suffers in her life while working for the country by actively participating in the movement.

'*Warnechya Khoryat*' is a fine representation of the activities which had taken place in 1942 during freedom movement in the north part of Maharashtra. Love for the country, attacks and re-attacks, actions and reactions, are typically projected by the novelist in the story of the novel. It also shows support of the Hindurao's beloved, Mangala to him for seeking freedom. Because of the central and pivotal role of Mangala in the freedom movement the novel '*Warnechya Khoryat*' was published in the name of '*Mangala*'. The title of the novel is rightly symbolic and applicable. The woman character Mangala is at the center of the novel. Her lover is haunted by the thought of freedom to the country. He had sacrificed his happy life for the sake of country.

Conclusion

The Novel '*Warnechya Khoryat*' by Anna Bhau Sathe is a depiction of the tragic story of the patriotic village man Hindurao. The novel is a picturization of freedom movement which is generated in the north part of Maharashtra in 1942. The theme of the novel moves around the woman, Mangala who died of fighting against the people who were at the side of Britishers. Anna Bhau Sathe through this novel wants to give message to the Indian people that even a woman in the village sacrificed her life for the sake of the country.

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Lahiri's Understanding of Humanity of Maladies

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Abstract

In the Pulitzer prize winning collection of short stories, everyday items and events expose the luminal situation unique to the first-and second-generation immigrant characters, but also embody the author's timely lament over the failure of global living to bridge the gaps between cultures and between individuals. In fact, although firmly grounded in the concrete and in the present, Lahiri's collection weaves together universal themes of alienation, connection, and loss as her characters embark on unique quests to find the union between understanding the human experience and finding satisfaction, in their individual lives.

Keywords: *human maladies, injustice,*

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Lahiri's Understanding of Humanity of Maladies

Mr. Pradip Kumar

A plate of peanut butter crackers and a Jesus trivet become, in Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies, icons of alienation and loneliness. In the Pulitzer prize winning collection of short stories, everyday items and events expose the luminal situation unique to the first-and second-generation immigrant characters, but also embody the author's timely lament over the failure of global living to bridge the gaps between cultures and between individuals. In fact, although firmly grounded in the concrete and in the present, Lahiri's collection weaves together universal themes of alienation, connection, and loss as her characters embark on unique quests to find the union between understanding the human experience and finding satisfaction, in their individual lives. Moving between values of collectivist and individualist cultures, they are perfectly suited to navigate the relationship between the universal and the unique, but they find that the homogenizing forces of globalization, the chaos of mechanized living, and the silence of loneliness threaten cultural identity instead of fostering a sense of community and that they threaten individual identity instead of nurturing self-knowledge. It is, ironically, only in the most transient of relationships that the sought-after union between understanding humanity and understanding self is found, creating in the collecting a dialectic between the failure to understand the human condition and the hope of embracing its richness.

In "Mrs., Sen's," the title character attempts to become a global citizen by maintaining her Indian Identity at the same time she adapts to American culture. Newly arrived from Calcutta with her husband, she struggles to maintain the traditional role of the wife to Mr. Sen through her careful attention in preparing Indian cuisine. Although she laments the fact that bhetki is not available, she finds that fresh halibut will suffice. Collected from a seaside fishmonger, the fish is prepared with a special blade from India. This blade, Mrs. Sen explains to the young boy she baby-sits, recalls to her the community of women she has left behind: "Whenever there is a wedding in the family […] my mother sends out word in the evening for all the neighborhood women to bring blades just like this one, and then they sit in an enormous circle on the roof of our building, laughing and gossiping" (Lahiri 115). In India the women's "chatter" extends into the night, filling the silence with meaningful companionship and common purpose (115). In the United States, however, Mrs. Sen is assaulted sometimes by a cacophony of voices and street noises and other times by an unbearable "silence" that keeps her awake at night(115).Longing for her home, where anyone who raised her voice to "express grief or joy of any kind" would find the "whole neighborhood" at her doorstep, Mrs. Sen has lost her sense of belonging, her sense of shared human experience(116). Likewise, she loses her own uniqueness as she must make a traditional meal without green bananas, an essential ingredient, thereby failing to fulfill the role she finds

most satisfying. Finally, when the chaos the noisy flow of machinery with which she cannot merge. If the commonality she found in communal cooking fostered her identification with other and her own sense of purpose then the despair with which she abandons her cutting blade in favour of peanut butter and crackers after the accident exposes the fact that she has lost the only identity she has ever known-nurturer, homemaker, wife of Mr. Sen. In her effort to adapt, Mrs. Sen has lost herself to the silence of loneliness and the noise of modern life.

If Mrs. Sen, a recent immigrant, loses both her sense of community and her sense of identity to the forces of the global market that called her husband to work at an American university, Sanjeev and Twinkle of "This Blessed House" suffer a similar fate as they are overwhelmed after settling into a lovely suburban home, which they find hides "a sizeable collection of Christian paraphernalia" in its corners and closets (137). Whereas Twinkle delights in uncovering and displaying trinkets, including feels only irritation and repeatedly reminds his bride that they are not Christian, but Hindu. To him the objects lack "a sense of sacredness," a spiritual value and meaning, but to her, they bring joy (138). Like the din of the traffic in "Mrs. Sen's," the trinkets in "This Blessed House" expose the relationship between the characters and the modern, global world they inhabit: While Sanjeev pursues happiness in the form of the American Dream through his job, his pretty bride, and his home, Twinkle pursues her own whims, finding happiness in the search for trinkets. In a sense, they are both seeking meaningless tokens and avoiding the complexities of communication with each other, thereby distancing themselves from their humanity. By the end of the story, when Twinkle descends the stairway carrying a huge silver bust of Christ (a scene that fills Sanjeev with hatred), an object which emanates "dignity, solemnity, beauty" yields in him the same silence, the same lack of meaning and intimacy, that haunts Mrs., Sen (157). Although Sanjeev knows Twinkle will display the bust proudly on their mantle, he says nothing. Her joy remains unknown to him and his animosity is unknown to her. The invasion of the Christian token into the Hindu household has created a personal and spiritual vacuum; the clutter- in this case the visual cacophony compared to the aural assault Mrs. Sen experiences on the roadway-overcomes any opportunity for a meaningful exchange of religious or cultural experience and any opportunity for two people to understand each other or themselves.

Although the married characters in the collection tend to suffer silently and separately, the most transient of relationships are the ones that offer a hope of fostering individual and universal understanding, an understanding of what it is to be unique and of what it is to be part of the human collective. The silence suffered by Mrs. Sen, Sanjeev, and Twinkle is finally shattered in "The Third and Final Continent," in which a single word, "splendid," punctuates the story like a refrain. Significantly, the first-person narrator is unnamed. Although the use of the first person emphasizes his individuality, his namelessness simultaneously celebrates his universality, thus creating a glimpse of a unity that the other characters have not experienced. In this final story in the collection, the narrator seeks temporary

housing with a centenarian, Mrs. Croft, when he first moves to America. She welcomes him into her boarding house in her own idiosyncratic way, insisting that he say "splendid" after she tells him of the recent moon-landing (179). This brief conversation becomes a nightly routine for them, one which he first finds awkward. But after time passes, the seemingly trivial exchange becomes the foundation of something more intimate than the feelings revealed between the two married couples. Through their brief exchange, the narrator pleases Mrs. Croft and, in doing so, satisfies himself. He discovers that if he was unable to care properly for his own mother when she went insane, he can care for his landlady in this exchange and in handing her his weekly rent money. In "these simple gestures," the unnamed narrator finds his humanity and confirms hers (189). As a result, he evolves from the groom who could not console his weeping bride on their wedding night to a husband who prepares thoughtfully for her arrival to America. Thirty years later, the narrator has described what Mrs. Sen, Sanjeev, and Twinkle cannot: "As ordinary as it all appears," he says, referring to his own life," there are times when it is beyond the imagination" (198). He mourned, he loved, and he raised a child; he has, in other words, lived a life that is rich with the universal feelings that bind men and women together across continents and across time. But at the same time that his life has been "ordinary," universally human, it has also been unique, unimaginable, for he has lived on three continents, he has been profoundly touched by Mrs. Croft, and he has loved a woman named Mala. The universal and the individual have converged.

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Portrayal of Familial Relationship in Kamala Markandaya's Novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*

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Abstract

In the familial relationship, husband-wife relationship is an interesting field of research. However, with the changing time, the relationship underwent some changes that call for attention. This paper aims at discussing the portrayal of husband-wife relationship in the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, by Kamala Markandaya. D. H. Lawrence writes, "The great relationship for humanity will always be the relationship between man and woman. The relation between man and man, woman and woman, parent and child will always be subsidiary" (130). The subject of man-woman relationship has been treated differently at times by novelists. Earlier novelists portray the relationship between man and woman as how it should be, whereas, twentieth century novelists portray as it is. It has been mostly found that the modern writer is concerned with the quality of life, people and with world and value. It appears that the prevailing quality of relationship of husband and wife is one of the important issues for research as well as society.

Keywords: *family, husband-wife relationship, representation, marriage, society*

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Portrayal of Familial Relationship in Kamala Markandaya's Novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*

Ms. Pranita Dey

Dr. Saugata Kumar Nath

A work of art is usually seen as a portrayal or representation of reality. A discussion on representation may invite a reference to Plato, Aristotle, Dina Scherzer and Stuart Hall. Plato, the Greek philosopher who introduced the term mimesis in literary history over two thousand years ago in his dialogue the *Republic,* pointed out that art merely imitates something real and it is an illusion that needs to be distinguished from truth and nature. Plato views that a work of art is an imitation which is concerned with appearance and not reality and "The art of imitation therefore is far removed from the real, and, it seems, achieves all its results because it grasps only a small part of each object, and an image at that" (Plato 39). Thus, *Republic, Book X* suggests that any imitated work of art represents only a fraction of reality or appearance and not the reality. Aristotle adds that representation speaks of the manner of imitation, which in other words, the art of presentation. Apart from Plato and Aristotle, Dina Scherzer also speaks of representation. She defines representation in the following words:

> Representation is not a mirror image copying a pre-existing reality but a fiction in which it is possible to visualise and to imagine actions, spaces, places, characters, and objects…. Representation in any work of art, then, is a construction that has a reference in that it represents something for the reader/ observer; however, it may have no referent in that it does not necessarily reproduce anything actual in the real world (1-2).

This definition implies that representation is a fiction which is created through the faculty of imagination and a work of art is not a mirror image of the reality. It also implies that representation does not reproduce anything of the actual world rather it has a reference to the real world. Stuart Hall, similarly opines, "To represent something is to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses ..." (2). It can be concluded that representation is not mirror image of reality, rather a likeness of reality.

Family is often considered an important component of any society; however, defining family has always been a controversial issue because of its variations in nature. David Cheal mentions, "... 'family' is something that is socially constructed by particular groups of people in their interactions about the meanings of social relationships" (7). Anthropologist George Peter Murdock, is of the opinion that family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic

cooperation and reproduction. Theorists also view that family and kinship are socially constructed and not natural, universal or normal. The social theorist Anthony Giddens notes:

> Among all the changes going on today, none are more important than those happening in our personal lives – in sexuality, relationships, marriage and the family. There is a global revolution going on in how we think of ourselves and how we form ties and connections with others. It is a revolution advancing unevenly in different regions and cultures, with many resistances (51).

Giddens opines that family, relationships, marriage and sexuality have faced tremendous changes and have become matters of concern. It is not stipulated to a particular culture or region, but a global phenomenon that has taken the form of revolution. Irrespective of region and culture, the first place to which any human being often belongs to after his or her birth is family. Families are basically divided into two kinds – nuclear family and extended family. The nuclear family is typically made up of a husband, a wife and their biologically or adopted children. On the other hand, the extended family consists of other members or network of relatives, along with the nuclear family. Now a day, it is often seen that the preference has shifted from extended to nuclear family. Family can hence be defined as a group of two or more people related to one another by birth, adoption or marriage.

Marriage, family, gender, social class, financial condition, community, citizenship, race and such are believed to be in the domain of social construct which could not have existed without society. *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* mentions, ". . . a social construct is an idea or notion that appears to be natural and obvious to people who accept it but may or may not represent reality, so it remains largely an invention or artifice of a given society" (web). In order to simplify the concept, the game of football has been analysed in encyclopaedia. Football could have been played in any way, but certain rules have been formulated for proper organization. It gave meaning to the game and therefore socially constructed. Further, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann mention, "The sociology of knowledge understands human reality as socially constructed reality" (210). It would be pertinent to say that society constructed some social phenomenon or a convention which have been mostly accepted by members of culturally cultivated society. However, often the ideal norms prove fruitful or futile to individuals, depending on the quality of marriage.

The relationship that is generally constructed between a man and a woman through marriage is husband-wife relationship. D. H. Lawrence writes, "The great relationship for humanity will always be the relationship between man and woman. The relation between man and man, woman and woman, parent and child will always be subsidiary" (130). The relationship of husband and wife seems to be more important than other familial relationships. But marriage may be different experience to both the genders. Simone de Beauvoir rightly states:

Marriage has always been a very different thing for man and for woman. The two sexes are necessary to each other, but this necessity has never brought about a condition of reciprocity between them; women, as we have seen, have never constituted a caste making exchanges and contracts with the male caste upon a footing equality (415-416).

Though women and men are complimentary to each other, men are mostly held socially independent as compared to woman. In the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, marriage appears to be of different experience to Irrawaddy and her husband. For Irrawaddy, marriage turns out to be a havoc, in spite of being a "good wife" (Markandaya 63) to her husband. Her husband brings her back to her parents' home saying, "She is barren woman" (Markandaya 52). In due time, she is cured through medical treatment, but it was too late. Her husband marries another woman and continues his married life. Irrawaddy becomes a prostitute after the separation for mere survival. She even bears a child out of prostitution. The analysis shows that marriage proves to be different for Irrawaddy and her husband.

The novel *Nectar in a Sieve*, by Kamala Markandaya represents rural India delineating the plight of a landless farmer, Nathan and his family. The novel also represents husband-wife relationship in an interesting way. According to Burgess, Locke and Thomas, marriage is a socially sanctioned amalgamation of a man and a woman with the expectation that they will develop the relationship of husband and wife. The husband wife relationship of Nathan and Rukmani has been represented as angelic and divine. Though the major part of their life is miserable, unhappy, disappointing, still they face challenges with confidence and trust in each other. In the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, Nathan and Rukmani belong to different backgrounds, but are united through marriage arranged by parents. They manage to keep their relationship intact, in spite of hurdles that came on their way. Rukmani and Nathan arrange the marriage of their daughter Ira. Though it appears to be a good match, but due to circumstances their relationship ends with separation. Hence, it can be said that there is no doubt that marriage unites two individuals into the relationship of husband and wife, but it depends mostly on the couples to continue the relationship smoothly.

In the husband-wife relationship, communication is often a means to express feelings of each other. *International Encyclopaedia of Marriage and Family* explains communication in following words:

> Knowing that a relational partner might not fully appreciate or feel loved by a certain action makes it clear that communication on this topic between spouses is essential. Likewise, it requires communication to know what positively increases a spouse's sense of satisfaction. If the two people in the relationship take the time to talk about the expressions of affection that the other spouse could perform to make them feel loved, they could specifically attempt to meet their spouse's needs in an informed and deliberate manner. This, of course, demands a certain degree of selfless behaviour by both partners in the marriage. But doing so would increase each person's good

> moments, which, in turn, gives the relationship a greater degree of satisfaction (45).

The quoted lines explicate that communication often increases good moments among couples. The relationship of Nathan and Rukmani in the novel remains intact throughout, because of communication. It was due to verbal communication that Nathan could confess to his wife his guilt of illicit relationship with another woman. Nathan confessed, "I am the father of her sons. . .. I was very young, and she a skilful woman. The first time was before our marriage…" (Markandaya 88). This confession was enough for any wife to feel "Disbelief first; disillusionment; anger, reproach, pain" (Markandaya 88). But Rukmani looked upon the matter with maturity and understanding which prevents their relationship from facing marital discord. The confession of Nathan helps Rukmani to speak her concealed part about the treatment that she underwent for pregnancy. A conclusion may be drawn from the analysis that communication can often clarify doubts in husband-wife relationship.

Children turn out to be crucial and important aspects and assets in married life. Once married, society starts judging the couple in terms of children. Begetting children turns out to be a responsibility of the husband and the wife. Often women are said to be barren if a couple has no children and to declare her barren, society generally does not even wait for medical test. For a childless couple, society has some different constructs to make them feel guilty. Mandelbaum writes, "Her greatest responsibility is to bear a child, preferably a son. Barrenness is a fear, a curse, an unending reproach. . .. An unfortunate who must at last conclude that she will bear no child may well urge her husband to adopt a son or to take another wife so that there may be a child to his name" (86). Barrenness in most cases leads to imbalance in the husband-wife relationship. Bearing a child often seems not enough in patriarchal society. Leslie opines that a male child is preferred to a female child in patriarchal society. The marriage of Irrawaddy has been arranged by her parents and the couple was said to be perfect. But the couple remains childless for five years which results in separation. Ira is considered to be barren, which, however, proves false. The married life of Ira devastates because of being childless. On the other hand, Rukmani was dissatisfied on the birth of her first child, as the child was a baby girl. Rukmani says she had, ". . . tears of weakness and disappointment; for what woman wants a girl for her first-born?" (Markandaya 16). In patriarchal society, male child can only continue the patriarchal line and so female child is generally considered as outsider as she will be married off one day. The concept has been injected in such a way that a woman often fears and feels disappointed on giving birth to a girl child.

Separation or divorce is another phase which often couple face due to various reasons. *International Encyclopaedia of Marriage and Family* mentions that divorce affects not only economically, emotionally, mentally or physically, but also influences the current and future relationships of the couple. In the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, the married life of Ira appears to be different from that of her mother

Rukmani. The arranged married life of Ira is affected because of her being childless. As she failed to bear a child to her husband in the first few years of their married life, her husband deserts her, in spite of the fact that she had always been a nice wife. But her barrenness forces her to be deserted by her husband and later she became a prostitute for mere survival. Moreover, Rukmani's son walks out of his married life deserting his wife and children in the city to face the hurdles of life. Kunthi, the sex symbol in the novel, had illicit relation with Rukmani's husband, Nathan and other men. But in due time, Kunthi's husband deserted her for another women. It would be pertinent to say that there may be various reasons for separation in married life, but such separation in most cases affects the individual's present and future life in patriarchal society.

A conclusion can be drawn from the analysis of husband-wife relationship as represented in the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, that the relationship of husband and wife is often a matter of interdependence and their relationship is often responsible for the happiness of a family. The mutual understanding of husband and wife does not only affect themselves, but it also affects the future of their offspring. Marriage often appears to be different experience to a man and a woman, but in a patriarchal society, a man has more liberty compared to a woman. The concept of family, kinship, marriage and the norms are social constructs, which appear to be normal, but they are not natural. However, in order to remain as a member of society and not an alienated being, people mostly follow and abide by the socially constructed norms.

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Geographies of Intimacy in Jhumpa Lahiri's Unaccustomed Earth

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Abstract

Negotiating intimacy is one of the pressing issues facing diasporic studies today. How can a group of people who are considered to always be in the margins be able to establish communities and identities when, by certain definitions of intimacy, they are outsiders? How can they find power and agency in foreign lands where their modes of intimacy are denied or rejected? It is through exploring questions like these that alternative ways of experiencing intimacy emerge to destabilize hegemonic notions of public/private and personal/political.

Keywords: *Geographies, Intimacy*

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Geographies of Intimacy in Jhumpa Lahiri's Unaccustomed Earth

Mr. Pradeep Kumar

Lauren Berlant in her study of intimacy challenges the prevailing notion that intimacy is utopian and optimistic by studying the way in which intimacy is negotiated in minoritized communities. One of her objects is to "engage and disable the prevalent U.S. discourse on the proper relation between public and private, spaces traditionally associated with the gendered division of labor. "The twentieth century US embraced intimacy as an ideal, promising "warmth, authentic disclosure, and boundless closeness, "which critics argue has "led to the detriment of the public sphere and sociability."

Focusing on the experiences of diasporic people reveals a dystopian intimacy that "is not opposed to up rootedness and defamiliarization but constituted by it." Svetlana Boym in her essay "On Diasporic Intimacy: Ilya Kabakov's Installations and Immigrant Homes" explores how immigrants navigate alternative modes of domesticity and intimacy in different modes of Diaspora. As with most immigrant stories, the people Boym studies face multiple pressures to preserve the homeland and inhabit an entirely new place. Though Boym focuses on diasporic homes in general, it is easy to see how the multiple pressures to preserve the homeland and inhabit an entirely new place. Though Boym focuses on diasporic homes in general, it is easy to see how the burden of inhabiting exile is largely placed on women. Boym's essay opens with outrage at the sight of an embroidered teapot which the critic saw as "an example of domestic kitsch that compromised the purity of Russian nostalgia." The object in question is an article of the home, and one that is in the traditional sphere of women. In diasporic homes, the women are often expected to negotiate this fine line between preserving home, inhabiting up rootedness, and assimilating to a new place.

Jhumpa Lahiri captures this in her newest work Unaccustomed Earth. In her short stories, Lahiri explores stories of women from Bengali communities who negotiate the unfamiliar and attempt to build homes in new spaces. Lahiri maps out the way in which different spaces determine intimacies, disrupt traditional narratives of intimacy, and re-form intergenerational intimacies. At the same time, Lahiri breaks down the division between the public/private and personal/political though the agency of her female characters. Not only do they manage to maintain their homes and homelands, but they also challenge traditional narratives of "progress" for immigrant women that by definition close off alternative experiences of intimacy.

Since her Pulitzer prize-winning novel Interpreter of Maladies, scholars have focused on Lahiri's use of space and identity as points of departure from traditional

notions of intimacy and community. In "Borderlands of Identity and a B-Side to the Self" Leah Harte argues that Lahiri's use of borders and space impact diasporic identity, and how unfamiliar geographies make it difficult for diasporic people to negotiate intimacy. Judith Caesar in "American Spaces in the Fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri" argues that Lahiri's unique insider/outsider perspective on American spaces opens up contemporary American culture and how intimacy is experienced in American spaces. Both of these authors and other Lahiri scholars focus on the ways in which Lahiri's expression of immigrant life subverts normative assumptions about intimacy and identity.

Though Caesar writes about the connection between knowledge, intimacy, and power, the specific role of women in the stories of Unaccustomed Earth is not addressed even though there is a marked difference between the way women experience home and intimacy and the way men experience the same. There are further differences between the way first generation immigrants and second-generation immigrants experience intimacy. Of course, there are similarities as well differences are significant in Lahiri's development of her diasporic community. And though this analysis includes women from both generations, Lahiri's emphasis in Unaccustomed. Earth is on the second generation. Lahiri not only explores some of the challenges for women new to America, trying to build homes for their families, but she also shows how a second generation of women experience similar pressures to negotiate intimacy in familiar and unfamiliar terms.

The short story "Hell-Heaven" is told through the point of view of a second-generation Bengali girl whose mother is trying to adjust to living in America with her family. In the first scene, Lahiri depicts the kind of "unpredictable encounters" upon which diasporic intimacy thrives as well as the typical role women play in producing intimacy in Diaspora. An intimacy develops between the narrator's family and a Bengali while walking through Cambridge. Because he is Bengali, he is invited to the family table where he becomes a member of the family "in practice as well as name." For Pranab, Aparna, the mother, is like a beacon for all that is familiar and comforting. When he sees her, he cannot mistake her familiarity as a Bengali woman because she dresses like one, talks like one, and even has the "full round face and large dark eyes that are so typical of Bengali women." When he sees her, he sees his mother and his sisters. For Pranab, she embodies home and homeland.

In the space of home is where Aparna negotiates this intimacy with Pranab. He brings a sense of Bengali community to her life when he drops by without calling and recalls the neighborhood where they grew up. She discovers that because of their shared past in India, she is more familiar with him than with her husband. Though she cannot act on her potential desire to be with Pranab, she uses the space of home to play out her legitimate intimacy with a fellow Bengali. The presence of the daughter in the home enables her to meet him without breaking any rules.

Aparna experiences another loss of "home" and the intimacy that she had created when a white woman, Deborah, enters the picture and becomes the other

against which Aparna constructs her image of familiarity and family. Both Pranab and Deborah are banished from Aparna's realm of domesticity. She breaks the teacup that she used to set out for Pranab's cigarette ashes when he decides to marry Deborah, effectively breaking a symbol of his welcome in her home. When Aparna receives birth announcements for Pranab's children, she does not display them on the fridge or preserve them in an album. These gestures, though seemingly private and small, are Aparna's attempt to negotiate different modes of intimacy in an unfamiliar home. She cannot control the loss her homeland or the distance from her husband, but she can control who is allowed in her diasporic community. Her daughter finds this behavior backward and envies the children who do not have parents "clinging to another way of life and exhorting their children to do the same."

Aparna's daughter struggles as well with the pressures she faces of a "home" (India) that is not her home, with rules of intimacy that do not align with her experiences in America, and who should be included in her family. Interestingly, Aparna discovers that it is Deborah who has always been the faithful family member-not Pranab. Unbeknownst to Aparna, Deborah has included the Bengalis in her realm of home and family for years, but Pranab would not allow the connection. Aparna's daughter too comes to the realization that she does not have to choose between to opposites to have the family and life that she wants. She is a child of her parents and "American as well." Both the first and second generation of Bengali women had the opportunity to resist the pressures placed on them to maintain different ideas of home (Aparna by suicide and her daughter by completely rejecting her family), but the end of the narrative suggests an acceptance of the dual identities and modes of intimacy they share as well as a commitment to renegotiate the space of home and family.

"Unaccustomed Earth" is another short story told through the point of view of Ruma, a second-generation Bengali woman whose mother passed away. Uma had grown up with contempt for her mother and her traditional ways, but after her passing, Ruma sees her mother as familiar, as home, and as a vital part of her identity construction. Just as she felt unbearable loss at her mother's passing, so she felt lost when her father said their childhood home. In contrast, her brother and father are depicted as "citizens of the world" with little need or desire for the roots that Ruma desperately wants.

Ruma's father chooses to exist in transit, to maintain the kind of diasporic intimacy that Berlant and Boym write about. Becoming a rootless citizen of the world enables him to develop an intimacy with a fellow traveler who is also Bengali (another "unpredictable encounter"). He develops an attachment to her that he never felt with his late wife. Existing in a state of flux, he is able to experience intimacy fully.

Ruma, like her mother, uproots her family and moves to the west coast. Similarly, she feels no connection to her life there, and decides to stay at home with her child. She develops an intimacy with her dead mother through this experience, though she tells herself that this intimacy is "an illusion, a mirage, and that the

distance between them was now infinite, unyielding." Ruma attempts to negotiate her home and her identity, but faces past and present pressures to make the "right" choices. The story circles around the question of whether or not Ruma should invite her father to live with them. Ruma notes that "in India, there would have been no question of his not moving in with her" where a different geography of intimacy is the norm.

As Ruma struggle with deciding who should be included in her household, she makes the statement that she does not want to be like her mother: "She couldn't imagine tending to her father as her mother had, serving the meals her mother used to prepare." At the same time, she realizes that she is essentially following in her mother's footsteps which frightens her even as she reaches for a connection to her mother, to what she imagines as familiar and home. Her father is struck with how much Ruma resembles his late wife. Whereas her father has become "an American in his old age," Ruma has become an image of her mother. Her father "could be from anywhere," but Ruma has become distinctly more Bengali. This comparison of physical appearance highlights the difference between her father's status as citizen of the world and her own as seeking her father's status as citizen of the world and her own as seeking the comforting roots of home and family.

Her father counsels against this new Ruma who stays home with her child and resembles his late wife so much even as he is surprised to find a "home" in his only grandchild. It is his grandson with whom he feels a "sense of himself reconstituted in another." However, unlike Ruma who decides to include her father in her construction of self and home, he does not want to inhabit permanently this new "home." He instead prefers to remain in flux, inhabiting the realm of diasporic intimacy. As a citizen of the world he is able to move in and out of "home." He can have the pleasures of the home Ruma built while maintaining his freedom.

Ruma is aware that she has been "unfairly cast, by both her parents, into roles that weren't accurate." She wants to maintain the sense of herself that she has built off of her connection to her mother; however, she fears that this connection will compromise her ability to negotiate intimacy and space. By the end of the story, Ruma realizes that her father has managed to develop a relationship with another woman while keeping in memory his late wife. He plants her favorite flower in the garden at the same time as he attempts to send a postcard to his new companion. He is, effectively able to maintain the roots that are important to him while embracing a life of up rootedness and alternative intimacies. Ruma does not express plans for change in her course, but she does acknowledge that her mother "no longer existed" and mails the postcard to the other woman for her father. In this scene Lahiri hints at Ruma's reconciliation of her desire for roots and her desire for a home of her own.

At the end of her essay, Boym suggests that "it would be misleading to view diasporic intimacy solely solely as a search for identification through suffering or as a nostalgic reconstitution of past identity." Instead diasporic intimacy allows immigrants to survive the sense and reality of displacement. Since they can't

"manage to live in the eternal present of the American myth, but neither can they afford to dwell in the past" they must learn how to "inhabit exile."

Lahiri captures the complexity of this existence in her short stories and highlights the experience of diasporic women in negotiating intimacy. With her focus on immigrant women, Lahiri does not draw the eye away from the subversive potential of diasporic intimacy, but to the unique way's immigrant women create, monitor, and maintain ideas of home and community. As Lahiri shows in her work, immigrant women face a multitude of pressures as they attempt to survive displacement and inhabit exile. From embodying home (Aparna) to being weighed down by conflicting expectations (Ruma), women feel the pressure to put themselves aside and yet they are able to negotiate their homes, their families, and their own identities to successfully inhabit exile and embrace diasporic intimacy.

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Agrarian Outbursts in Colonial India: A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract

The peasant's movements created an atmosphere for post- independence agrarian reforms, for instance,' abolition of *Zamindari*. They eroded the power of the landed class, thus adding to the transformation of the agrarian structure. The peasants suffered from high rents, illegal levies, arbitrary evictions and unpaid labour in *Zamindari* areas. In *Ryotwari* areas, the Government itself levied heavy land revenue. The overburdened farmer, fearing loss of his only source of livelihood, often approached the local moneylender who made full use of the farmer's difficulties by extracting high rates of interests on the money lent. Often, the farmer had to mortgage his land and cattle. Sometimes, the money-lender seized the mortgaged belongings. Gradually, over large areas, the actual cultivators were reduced to the status of tenants-at-will, share croppers and landless labourers. The tyranny of *Zamindars* along with the exorbitant rates of British land revenue demands led to a series of spontaneous peasant uprisings in different parts of the country during this period. The periodic recurrence of famines coupled with the economic depression during the last decades of the 19th century further aggravated the situation in rural areas and, consequently, led to numerous peasant revolts.

Keywords: *zamindari, tyranny, peasants, revolt*

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Agrarian Outbursts in Colonial India: A Critical Appraisal

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Mr. Arif Ahmad Dar

Indian economy is primarily an agrarian economy. More than 70% of the people are related to agriculture and its allied activities. Before Independence, India was a poor country owing to the exploitative rule of the British, and its agriculture was primitive in nature. Further, feudal lords had complete domination over the lands and there was an unequal distribution. After independence, the government's agriculture policy evolved a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, there was a need to modernize agriculture and increase production, and on the other, bring about a uniform ownership system. In the early 1960s, new agricultural policies were introduced popularly under the banner of *Green Revolution* primarily to increase production. These policies were designed to provide financial support to the landowners and in turn increase their output by assuring access to all irrigational facilities. It was, however, only the rich and middle-class farmers, who could secure loans, invest in fertilizers and procure high-yield variety seeds. As the agriculture policies did not touch upon redistribution of the agriculture produce, the condition of small and marginal farmers deteriorated drastically. Further, constant oppression and exploitation by the rich farmers became rampant. (1)

The failure of governmental measures in resolving agrarian problem has been widely recognized and admitted today. The land reforms and community programmes meant for promoting capitalist footing in India have only succeeded in intensifying the agrarian crisis. The government has not only failed in providing relief to the vast bulk of deficit farmers and agricultural proletariat, but its agrarian policy has aggravated their miseries. This fact has been sufficiently demonstrated by the various Government Evaluation Reports and non-official enquiries on the impact of welfare measures on rural society. Consequently, Indian agrarian society is seething with discontent-even after independence. This has led to a series of peasant struggles in different parts of the country. (2)

The following were the notable agrarian revolts of this phase:

Santhal Rebellion (1855)

With the introduction of permanent settlement in Bengal in 1793, the Santhals were employed as labourers with the promise of wages or rent-free lands. However, they were forced to become agricultural serfs, exploited at will. The first rebellion of the messianic character erupted in 1854 under *Bir Singh* of *Lachimpur*, but was ruthlessly crushed. (3)

The second Santhal rebellion in 1855-56 and was marked by some of the worst features of elemental tribal passions and open denunciation of the British rule.

The rebellion covering the districts of *Birbhum*, *Hazaribagh*, *Singhbhum*, *Bankura*, Bhagalpur and Monghyr in Orissa and Bihar, was precepted mainly by economic causes. It was aimed against the exploitation by moneylenders and colonial administrators. The dikus (outsiders) charged usurious interest on loans, ranging from 50 to 500 per cent, and exploited and cheated the tribal in many ways, often grabbing their lands. The company's government too protected the oppressors rather than redressing the grievances of the Santhals, which turned them against the British. [(4)] Under the leadership of two brothers *Siddhu* and *Kanhu* more than ten thousand Santhal's assembled in *June 1855*, when a divine order was issued asking the Santhals to break the control of their oppressors and "take possession of the country and set up a government of their own." They armed themselves with their traditional weapons of bows, arrows, axes and swords. They began to march to Calcutta to place their petition before the governor to free them from their oppressors. [(5)]

On 7th July 1855 one of the Government Inspector obstructed their march and provoked them into violence. The rebels cut off the postal and railway communications between *Bhagalpur* and *Raajmahal*, proclaimed the end of company's rule and commencement of Santhal regime. They attacked the houses of moneylenders, Zamindars, white planters, railway engineers and British officials. The open war with the British continued till February 1856, when the rebel leaders were finally captured and the movement brutally supressed. The British officers who had been smitten with remorse later conferred that it was execution; we had orders to go out whenever we saw the smoke of a village rising about the jungle. The magistrate used to go with them surrounded the village and called upon the rebels to surrender. To such an unjust and peremptory order, the brave Santhals knew only one answer to give that was defiance. There upon they were brutally tried upon and butchered in masses. The Santhals displayed such exceptional courage and military discipline that they faced successive follies of British bullets with reckless heroism and abandon. [(6)]

Bombay Peasants' Revolts (1871-75)

These revolts were neither well planned, nor were they wide spread. They took place haphazardly in many districts like *Kaira*, *Ahmednagar, Poona,* all unconnected with each other. The peasants aimed their blows not on government but on moneylenders and even when whole villages were in revolt, great care was taken not to harm anyone else but Marwari moneylenders. General object of the rioters was to obtain and destroy the bonds, decrees, etc. in the possession of their creditors, when these were peaceably given up to the assembled mob, there was usually nothing further done. When the moneylender refused, violence was used to frighten him into surrender or to get possession of the papers. Again, the might of British Raj came down on them and suppressed their risings. Yet it had to yield and redress their grievances, at least in part. Hence the *Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act*, was passed whereby an exception was made for the Maharashtra peasants from the operations of the civil procedure code in that they could not be imprisoned for failure to repay debts. [(7)]

Deccan Riots: (1867)

The Ryots of Deccan region of western India suffered heavy taxation under the *Ryotwari* system. Here again the peasants found themselves trapped in a vicious network with the moneylender as the exploiter and the main beneficiary. These moneylenders were mostly outsiders - *Marwaris or Gujaratis.* The conditions had worsened due to a crash in cotton prices after the end of the *American Civil War in 1864,* the Government's decision to raise the land revenue by 50 % in 1867, and a succession of bad harvests.[8] In 1874, the growing tension between the moneylenders and the peasants resulted in a social boycott movement organised by the *ryots* against the "outsider" moneylenders. The *ryots* refused to buy from their shops. No peasant would cultivate their fields. The barbers, washer men, shoemakers would not serve them. This social boycott spread rapidly to the villages of *Poona, Ahmednagar, Sholapur* and *Satara.* Soon the social boycott was transformed into agrarian riots with systematic attacks on the moneylender's houses and shops. The debt bonds and deeds were seized and publicly burnt. The Government succeeded in repressing the movement. As a conciliatory measure, the *Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act* was passed in 1879. This time also, the modern nationalist intelligentsia of Maharashtra supported the peasants' cause. [9]

The Kisan Sabha Movement

After the 1857 revolt, the *Awadh Talukdars* had got back their lands. This strengthened the hold of the Talukdars or big landlords over the agrarian society of the province. The majority of the cultivators were subjected to high rents, summary evictions *(bedakhali)*, illegal levies, renewal fees or *nazrana.* The First World War had hiked the prices of food and other necessities which further worsened the conditions of the UP peasants. In order to redress the grievances of the people, the Home Rule activists, formed Kisan Sabhas in UP. The UP Kisan Sabha was set up in February 1918 by *Gauri Shankar Mishra* and *Indra Narayan Dwivedi. Madan Mohan Malaviya* supported their efforts. [10] By June 1919, the UP Kisan Sabha had 450 branches. Other prominent leaders included *Jhinguri Singh, Durgapal Singh* and *Baba Ramchandra.* In June 1920, Baba Ramchandra urged Jawaharlal Nehru to visit these villages. During these visits, Nehru developed close contacts with the villagers. In October 1920, the *Awadh Kisan Sabha* came into existence because of differences in nationalist ranks. The *Awadh Kisan Sabha* asked the peasants to refuse to till *bedakhali* land, not to offer *begar* (forced unpaid labour), to boycott those who did not accept these conditions and to solve their disputes through Panchayats. [11]

From the earlier forms of mass meetings and mobilisation, the patterns of activity changed rapidly in January 1921 to the looting of bazaars, houses, granaries and clashes with the police. The centres of activity were primarily the districts of *Rai Bareilly, Faizabad* and *Sultanpur.* The movement declined soon, partly due to government repression and partly because of the passing of the *Awadh Rent (Amendment) Act.* [12]

Indigo Revolt

Indigo growers' revolt had flared up in Bengal in the autumn of 1859. On the one hand, this revolt was directed against the indigo planters, on the other, it grew into a rent strike against the planter zamindars. We shall refer briefly to the system of indigo cultivation in order to comprehend the issues involved in this peasant uprising, which was a landmark in the history of peasant movements in Bengal. The British merchants embarked upon indigo cultivations in Bengal and built factories in *Malda, Padna, Nadia, Lessore, Midnapore, Rangpore, Rajhsahi* and *Purnea*. There is a great deal of evidence to show that the planters had to pay rent to the Bengal zamindars to get land for indigo cultivation Some of them, notably *Dwarkanath Tagore* chose to be planters. The value of land increased in villages where indigo cultivation had extended. Apparently, the Bengal zamindars had a stake in indigo cultivation. (13)

There were two forms of indigo cultivation-one of the systems represented the cultivation on the planters' land with the help of hired labour. Under the other system, peasants grew indigo on their own land under contract and received advances from the planters: they had to hand over the entire produce to the planters at fixed prices. The system based on advance, virtually became forced cultivation, further-more it was becoming un-remunerative, since peasants could get better prices when they grew jute or tobacco, the evidence of *Ashley Eden* before the Indigo Commission reads, "Cultivation is not the result of free agency, but it is always compulsory. First, I believe it to be unprofitable and therefore, cultivator will not consent to take up that cultivation; second, it evolves an amount of harassing interferences; recently as soon as the ryots became aware of the fact that they were by law and practically free agents they at once refused to continue the cultivation". (14)

The indigo revolt started in *Barasat*, which had been the centre of Farazi disturbance in 1838. In March 1859 Eden, the magistrate of *Barasat,* declared that the ryots were free to grow whatever crops they liked. *Hem Chandra Kar*, the deputy magistrate, issued a *parwana*, based on Eden's instructions, on 20 August. As the knowledge of this *parwana* spread to villages, the peasants refused to sow indigo. By 1860 the revolt had spread to *Nadia, Jessore, Palna, Rajsahi, Malda, Faridpur and Murshidabad*. In February 1860, *Herschel,* the Magistrate of Nadia reported that "there appeared among the Ryots a general sense of approaching freedom". The peasants resisted the planter's attacks with whatever weapons they could collect; indigo factories were raided and burnt: the factor servants were beaten. Kling vividly describes the form of peasant resistance in this passage. The fact was that power still remained with Zamindars, who wanted to teach the Sahib planters a lesson. In the decade following the indigo revolt, which surely radicalized the peasants, rent disturbances continued to occur in a few regions and snowballed into an uprising in 1873. (15)

Conclusion

The history of peasant movements can be traced to the economic policies of the British which have brought about many changes in the Indian agrarian system. The consequences of the British colonial expansion were felt the most by the Indian peasantry and it rose in revolt from time to time. These peasant uprisings certainly did take place but were not recorded as such under colonial history, and they were considered acts of bandits and dacoits in the official records. A vast amount of information can be found in the archival data, which has only recently been uncovered and written about. India is basically an agrarian economy with the bulk of rural population following the occupation of agriculture. Peasants formed the backbone of the civil rebellions, which were often led by zamindars and petty chieftains.

The best example of this is the revolt of 1857. Another set of peasant revolt occurred primarily on the issue of religion. Although they started out as movements of religious and social reform and purification, they could not hide their agrarian interests for long and openly attacked the new zamindars, landlords, and moneylenders, irrespective of their religion. At the end, they clashed with British political and economic hegemony, which led to the mass peasant movements. Even after independence, interests of the peasants have not been safeguarded. There were many peasant movements in the post-independent India.

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Contested Terrains: A Geocritical Analysis of Scale and Power in *The Inheritance of Loss*

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Abstract

Kiran Desai's Booker Prize-winning text, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), has garnered acclaim for rendering the textures of postcolonial displacement and globalizing anxiety. Scholars have productively deployed lenses of hybridity, diasporic consciousness, and identity politics; yet the novel's granular spatialities have yet to receive commensurate attention. The present essay seeks to redress this lacuna by conducting a geocritical reading, positing that Desai orchestrates a richly stratified literary cartography in which contested coordinates and variable geographies—moving from a stifling domestic micro-space to the expanding lattice of global capital—are deployed in concert to denounce the predatory spatialities of neoliberalism and the territorial deficiencies of the postcolonial nation. Drawing upon geocritical paradigms of space, place, and scalar articulation, the analysis dissects three interlinked spatial registers: the global-local binary foregrounded by the polarized fields of New York and Kalimpong; the national-regional dynamic staged in the eruption of the Gorkhaland agitation; and the intimate microcosm of the judge's feeble, crumbling bungalow, Cho Oyu, which gathers and refracts the larger conflicts. This study argues that Desai's narrative exceeds the framing of a tale anchored in topographic sites; instead, it becomes a rigorous interrogation of the

phenomenon of place—its manufacture, its regulation, and the struggles that contest its authority, all shaped by converging vectors of power. By tracing the operations of landscape, memory, and margin within the novel, the investigation establishes that the geocritical method discloses the inherited loss to be decisively spatial: a disjunction not only of birthplace and homeland but of the substratum—extra-corporeal and corporeal—upon which the aspirational stability of identity depends.

Keywords: *Kiran Desai, The Inheritance of Loss, Geocriticism, Spatial Theory, Postcolonialism, Scale, Globalization, Literary Cartography*

Contested Terrains: A Geocritical Analysis of Scale and Power in *The Inheritance of Loss*

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In Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, the ever-creeping Himalayan fog surpasses ordinary meteorological phenomena; it emerges instead as a devouring force that "ate up the mountains and the city and the people" (Desai 4). This atmospheric obliteration performs the function of an eager agent of erasure and renewal, crystallizing the book's urgent concern with the cruel and shaping interventions of the environment into individual lives. Acclaimed for its grieving, finely tuned account of postcolonial loss and the fractures wrought by global circulation, the text has yielded a steady and instructive scholarly harvest. Critics have charted the syncretic identities of its protagonists (Sharma 45), the spectral traces of earlier colonial burdens (Rizvi 112), and the jagged temporalities of the diasporic threshold (Kumar 88). Such scholarship, consistently informed by the relational vocabularies of Bhabha and the historicizing optic of Said, offers a durable scaffold for apprehending the novel's interlocking themes of erasure, fragmentation, and tentative survival.

Nevertheless, the prevailing emphasis on identity and culture has tended to assign the novel's complex spatial relations to the status of secondary frame—a passive backdrop for the everyday human theatre. In his influential geocritical work, Robert T. Tally Jr. warns that literature neither occupies nor is merely enfolded by space; instead, it actively participates in "the mapping and remapping of the world" (Tally 15). Consequently, a clear, critical void has emerged in academic analysis: the absence of a sustained reading of how Desai leverages space, place, and scalar relations not merely as decorative locality but as the vital mechanism of critique. This essay addresses that void. To be sure, scholars such as Amina Youssef have illuminated the "symbolic juxtaposition of Kalimpong and New York" (Youssef 63);

yet the insight demands, and has yet to receive, a rigorous, theoretically informed geocritical excavation to reveal the full ramifications of Desai's spatial project.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai orchestrates a multiscalar cartography of contested spaces, illuminating the violent spatial logic of neoliberal globalization and exposing the postcolonial nation-state's territorial aspirations as irreparably compromised. Throughout the novel, characters navigate a lattice of antagonistic spatial claims: the vertical, isolating anonymity of New York's global capital; the horizontal, fog-bound inertia of a small Himalayan town long ago surrendered to forgetting; the abstract, fractious domain of the emergent Indian nation; and the corroding, porous walls of a colonial villa. By tracing the interrelation among these registers, I will demonstrate that the "inheritance of loss" is above all a form of spatial dispossession. The argument will unfold in three sections. I will begin by identifying the theoretical framework of geocriticism, clarifying its central concepts. I will proceed to elucidate the novel's sovereign spatial antagonisms: the global-local antinomy, the national-regional impasse, and the domestic microcosm. The conclusion will integrate these observations to propose that Desai's work operates as a complex act of literary cartography, charting the emotional and political fallout of a world in which the ground itself persistently erodes.

Theoretical Framework: The Geocritical Lens

To engage rigorously with Desai's critique of spatial order, one must supplement the conventional interpretation of the backdrop with a framework that posits place as a dynamic agent. Geocriticism, as elaborated by figures such as Bertrand Westphal, offers a robust instrument. It constitutes a critical practice that examines "the exchanges between individuals and the material milieus they inhabit" (Westphal 8). Departing from older methodologies that ontologically reduce landscapes to figurative resounding chambers of the psyche, this approach posits place as a component with its durability and capacity. Its principal enquiry is not into semantic embodiment but into performative enactment: how a spatial configuration permits, limits, and thereby actively fabricates specific modes of perception and networks of power (Tally 22). From this vantage, the literary text itself becomes a mobilized form of "geosophy," a heuristic by which the world is cognized in its spatial determinations (Fletcher 198).

This analytical framework proves especially apt for *The Inheritance of Loss*, a text preoccupied, almost obsessively, with latitude and longitude, cellar depths, Himalayan elevations, and the cartography of longing. Accompanying the reader through its serpentine territories requires several analytical fulcrums.

Space and Place: Taking the lead from Yi-Fu Tuan's geospatial philosophy, geocriticism maintains a strict distinction between the two terms. 'Space' remains abstract and measurable—an a-skew dot on the cartographer's vellum—while 'place' is that same dot whose coordinates have been thickened with human affect, memory, and habitual practice (Tuan 6). The novel, in its episodic structure, rehearses the

ritual of attempting to saturate arid, menacing spaces—an immigrant cellar in New York, a mossy, discretionary quadrant of Kalimpong—with the warmth of ordinary belonging. For the dominant characters, the ritual backfires: the attempted sanctification is aborted, and the occupants remain estranged within their designated geographies. The immigrant cook Biju exemplifies the arc: the continental space of America eludes the alchemy of domesticity, leaving him still measurable in coordinates, still without a 'place' that would accommodate him in reciprocal sensation.

Scale: Geocriticism directs attention to the contested and relational nature of scale in the spatial exercise of power. Neil Smith's argument that scale is a produced and continually negotiated social effect continues to resonate: it is never a disinterested envelope containing phenomena (Smith 56). Desai illustrates this insight with remarkable compression, letting multiple scalar registers interlace. The planetary currents of migratory routes and financial circuits reach, almost viscously, the domestic scale of Biju's father's kitchen. The national canon of Indian sovereignty stirs the regional surges of the Gorkhaland agitation, whose political violence eventually trespasses the judge's domestic sphere. Such nested scalar politics (Gibson 211) disassembles the familiar outlook that segregates the proximate from the remote and registers how distant global circuits imprint upon the minute dramas of everyday habitation.

Literary Cartography: The concept holds that novels draft their geographies, internally conceived terrains that demand active reading and interpretive reckoning. Such cartographies routinely interrogate or even subvert the sanctioned maps that organize power and sovereignty (Cooper 140). In her novel, Desai forges not merely a replica of the empirical landscape; she fabricates a transoceanic lattice of shared disaster, suturing a flooded Queens basement to a sagging Himalayan bungalow. The cartographic reading of her text reveals a profound critique of official cartography—whether national borders or the grids of world capital—by showing how each erasure of corporeal experience permits the accumulation of distance. Jhumpa Lahiri, writing of the immigrant's dismembered consciousness in The Namesake, observes, "he has no ABCD to his name. In Calcutta, his good name knows him, Nikhil. It is in this country that he is known as Gogol" (Lahiri, The Namesake 124). The injury of disjoined identity is thus reproduced in the disjoined map, a unifying wound that Desai dramatizes with unrelenting precision.

Vertical and Horizontal: New York and Kalimpong

The novel's structural pulse beats through the deliberate confrontation of New York and Kalimpong. Beyond the level of setting, the two cities embody opposing spatial orders that ensnare the characters in a mutually reinforcing alienation. David Harvey's insight that capital accumulation generates "uneven geographical developments" reads, in the context of the narrative, as both process and effect (Harvey, 95). In Manhattan's glass skyline, verticality dictates an overload of aspiration and isolation; monasteries above and markets below refuse the possibility of human scale. Kalimpong, by contrast, unfolds horizontally in terraces

that layer memory and expectation, yet its geography tightens the net of backward-looking nostalgia. In the moment of crossing from one to the other, the characters discover that the supposed geographical rupture only multiplies the coordinates of their dispossession.

New York appears as an enormous vertical anonymity, the leading image of global capitalism's spatial order. Biju's movement through the city charts a downward vector, a plunge into what he names the "basement of the world" (Desai 12). Successive underground kitchens, each slightly lower than the last, illustrate a stratification of space and profit. He stands physically and socially beneath the flashing crown and, by that very placement, beneath the gradient of worth that the skyline embodies. The gradient is not metaphorical; it is measured in elevators and wages. Biju's gaze is fixed on the heights he cannot enter, on terraces and lounges that make him comprehend the city yet render him absent. "He was a creature of the last minute, helpless" (13): the claim anchors his paralysis to his position in the vertical matrix. The phrase echoes immigrant testimonies of a movement toward global centers that, as Marc Augé argues, obey the grammar of the non-place, where airports, delivery corridors, and loading docks accelerate transit while erasing identity (Augé 78). Biju cannot gather the shards of sociality; the corridors that summon his effort refuse to acknowledge his presence. He is the spectral labor that lubricates external lounging, a passenger of the underground. The awareness of being the operative tissue of another's elevation, yet remaining without face or name, is therefore not an exception but a norm of present diasporic life.

Biju's existence in Lahiri's oeuvre embodies perfectly the condition of inhabiting a life that the subject recognizes as inauthentic, a sentiment the narrator of Unaccustomed Earth articulates as the present being "a shadow of the one they'd known" (Lahiri, Unaccustomed Earth 45). The language of shadow contains the dual semantics of memory and absence, mapping the distance between a once-actual life and the diasporaized present. Every phase of Biju's labor—the ferrying between restaurants, the clandestine living arrangements, the watchful attendance at border-circle interviews—impresses the same flattened temporality onto the subject, so that the quotidian gestures of survival accumulate into a numbing mimicry of the self he once was. The emotional contour of being thus reduced to a pale duplication of the original self combines the space of the immigrant's borrowed body with the siege of the mind that knows the disjuncture yet lacks the means to translate it into a new legible existence.

If New York rises in explosive lines of steel and glass, Kalimpong sinks into a matter of blurred, wintry levels that stretch, depress, and finally immobilize the eye. It is a settlement gagged by high, sad walls of rock, sealed by the slow yeast of fog, and firmly pressed into a liquefied, flat temporality that no gossip of the outside world ever ripens. Sai, the district judge's granddaughter, experiences the closure literally. The abandoned edges of the Cho Oyu compound are the outer tang of her daily limit; the town that Henna and border traders christened Kalimpong is the remaining circumference. The fog that, as she writes, "slid in and separated them

from the world" (Desai 107), reveals itself as a breathable curtain of solitude. In a Mumbai station, Biju is dissolved into the mass, a name in a queue of names; in Kalimpong, Sai is dissolved in the untouched. The mountain's flat, foreboding sweep ought to suggest emancipation; instead, it intensifies the sense of closure. Her modest, fevered longing for Gyan the tutor collapses beneath the intractable social, communal, and linguistic partitions that the subcontinent's late cartographers bequeathed; the high valley, meant to be a haven, hardens into cellular confinement. The troubleshooting project of regional insurgency finishes the task: roadblocked routes and dusk-dawn curfews slice the flat sight into white, red, and black-in-name-only zones (Patel 204), and both children, in their different countries, remain spatially sentenced. One is crushed by the lucid, humming verticals of global stock and modular living; the other is marooned in the slow horizontal hum of a postcolonial limbo.

According to geographer Edward Soja, structurally unequal spatial distributions permeate social life in such a way that an individual's locational coordinates are often sufficient to predict social mobility and vulnerability. Soja's claim can thus be abstracted from the street to the arena of academic argument: the spatial strata of lineage, caste, and class, attuned to the rhythm of political economy and administrative practice, spatially annoint the marginal and the privileged alike (Soja 11).

The Nation Contested: The Spatial Politics of the Gorkhaland Movement

In a movement from the global to the subnational scale, Desai reframes the Gorkhaland demand to challenge normative understandings of the postcolonial nation as an uninterrupted, integrated domain. The contemporary campaign led by ethnic Nepalis seeking legislative autonomy—or outright secession from West Bengal—reworks the Darjeeling Himalaya into a live contest over political geography and legitimacy. Desai here plots the moment when the abstract stratification of sovereign space, codified in archive and statute, violently encounters the empirics of subnational consciousness, effectively disclosing that the nation remains not a given shell, but a political geography constantly rewritten by the very identities it imprisons (Ghosh 33).

In Kalimpong, the "nation" called India accrues for the characters as a remote and frequently antagonistic abstraction, a territory referenced only in Delhi cartographies and bureaucratic edicts that dismiss the region's history and lived cultures. The insurgents' openly proclaimed "Gorkhaland for Gorkhas" acts as a potent counter-cartography, a project to reconfigure the map according to ethnic bond rather than to inherited colonial revenue districts (Thakur 550). The violence that follows, therefore, is a crucible of spatial contestation. Throughout the text, the narrative is saturated with checkpointed roads, barriers manned in cold nights, and the hush of twilight curfews—each a geometry of power mobilized both by the state and by the insurgents in pursuit of territorial rule. The everyday resident must read the altered terrain as an inscrutable but necessary text: a habitual trajectory can transform into a lethal barrier before dawn. Gyan's recruits the insurgents not in

intoxicated fervour but in realisation of spatial wrong; the conviction that he dwells as an exile in the familiar valley is compounded by the anguished cry that his kin have "been cheated of a home" (Desai 156).

Desai wields this encounter to shatter the mirage of a cohesive postcolonial homeland. The magistrate, whose reputation was forged by fidelity to the ordinances of both colonial and successor regimes, discovers his holdings stormed and his judiciary shadow rendered hollow. The rebels who seize the premises and requisition his arms and rations afford neither his rank nor the propriety of his boundaries the slightest recognition. The incident serves as a vivid index of the way intimate precincts lapse before the operations of the national crisis (Nayar 18). The transgression of the Cho Oyu household insists that "no domain escapes the political conflicts that inscribe the land" (Baldwin 78). The magistrate's disconsolate manoeuvre to conceal his weapon beneath the mattress indexes the nullity of sovereign title when faced by a communal campaign for domain. Conversely, Lahiri's protagonists confront a subtler, psychic modality of the same dispute, wherein "home" is the arena for warring normative regimes. For the magistrate, the contention is brutally corporeal. The episode discloses that boundaries posited by the state are tenuous and that beneath the official cartography seethes a jittery matrix of rival assertions to place and to belonging.

A Microcosm of Decay: The Haunted Space of Cho Oyu

Nestled within the least expansive purview of Desai's inquiry is the judge's modest abode, Cho Oyu. The colonial bungalow, softening under decades of neglect, stands as a tangible metonym and intense symbol of the wider spatial and psychic disintegration that the text chronicles. The structure incarnates what Michel Foucault designates a heterotopia—an "other space" that neither wholly belongs to the given order nor fully withdraws from it, a zone where the culture's contradictions are at once lived and laid bare (Foucault 24).

Cho Oyu is, first of all, a spectacular site. It carries the ancestral weight of colonial rule, a trauma personified in the judge himself. Shaped in the corridors of imperial England, he returned, laden with psychic fractures, and transformed his home into a shrine of self-revulsion and brutality: the house, a tangible outgrowth of his sundering, exhibits disorders of the body and spirit alike. The sagging roof, the blistering walls, the gardens that choke in their ascent—each informs the slow corrosion of its dwellers. The refuge, its cardinal promise, is tortured instead into a hollow. It "leaked, cold and damp," and embodied "moss-and-fungus-growing-in-the-crevices decrepitude" (Desai 31). Such porosity, corporeal and psychic, declares its openness. The fog rolls in, the insurgents enter, and the mountain's chill is a constant conspirator. This inability to seal its edges condenses, in one damp and splintered frame, the metaphor of the postcolonial state that the mountain quietly underwrites (Abraham 92).

The household thus becomes a microcosm of competing spatial claims among its residents. The kitchen, owned by the cook, simmers with unvoiced

resentment, a rehearsal of small insurrections against the demand for invisibility. The judge's study stands walled with the sediment of colonial self-regard, its order a stubborn echo of patriarchal rule. Sai's room, however, is the brief, tremulous promise of adolescence, a promise that the universe conspires to dishonour. The characters' bonds to one another are ultimately bonds of territory, written in the traffic of doors and stairwells. The cook's quiet rage is that of one imprisoned in the scullery; the sullen hearth, the grimier echo of the detention cells in which his son is disappearing in the Bronx, attests to the unbroken circle of servitude (Lim 432). The judge's empire is enacted through his claim to the principal rooms, where his utterances of verdict and malice travel the same air the cook is forbidden to inhabit. It is the same itch that haunts characters in the literature of exile, the insistent quest for a corner of the world that will not require self-erasure. Lahiri suggests that for some, "home" is the brief interlude of a tourist's stay (Unaccustomed Earth 112), and the tourists, the transients, and the jailers of Cho Oyu recognize the same ache in each other's eyes. None of their bodies, however, can say the word "home."

The domicile does not shelter belonging; instead, it accumulates its solitary exiles, dissolving into a museum of ungrieved defeats. When the militancy marches in, they do not confiscate a dwelling; they fracture the ill-fitted geography of mast and ruin the authors of that geography, hoping the thickest of plaster would give shelter. Such brittle screens cannot fend off the world whose economy and ethics depend on the redistribution of loss.

Conclusion

The foregoing geocritical reading of *The Inheritance of Loss* shows that Kiran Desai's work offers an exacting and traumatic study of the spatial mechanics of dominance. Escaping the restrictions of a thematics confined to identity and globalization, the reading exposes the critique as anchored in a disciplined geometry of scale and of place whose joints are never neutral. The author's literary cartography places bodies in the punitive slippage between the identical rationalities of global capital and late-colonial nationalism. The sheer verticality of the faceless Manhattan non-places and the horizontal stasis of Kalimpong camaraderie are exchanged surfaces of the same process of exteriorization. The inseparable and violent pursuit of territory during the Gorkhaland agitation exposes the unrealizable dispenser of the nation, while the dilapidated, porous domicile of Cho Oyu, its rooms always admitting dust and uninvited rain, unravels the fiction of containment that dwindling plaster and greeting-ostrich screens had hoped to sustain.

Desai's individuals resemble contemporary cartographers charting their miseries, continuously endeavouring to designate a viable territory within a world that refuses their claim. Biju's frantic, recurring flight, Sai's enclosed stillness, and the judge's spectre-haunted solitude all recount spatial collapse. The bequest of loss thus reduces to the forfeiture of a permanent address, the disinheritance of the ground—concrete and symbolic—on which a consistent identity might decisively stand. A character in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake remarks that the gravest ordeal may be traversing "the baffling distance between one place and another" (Lahiri, The

Namesake 187). For Desai's protagonists, that distance lies beyond breach, and the geographies they occupy persistently contest their occupancy.

This geocritical interpretation establishes Desai as both an acute observer of postcolonial existence and an incisive thinker about space, whose fiction intersects powerfully with current debates in spatial theory. The narrative insists, again and again, that the conflicts over identity, the burden of history, and the weight of economic necessity are simultaneously conflicts over place. Future inquiries might enrich this perspective through comparative frameworks, juxtaposing Desai's cartographies with those of other contemporary transnational writers, or by engaging the novel's ecocritical dimensions, investigating how the material environment—flora, fauna, and geology—intervenes as an agent in the drama of contested geographies. At its core, *The Inheritance of Loss* remains an elaborate cartogram of an uneven and divided planet, in which home, for an ever-expanding number of people, is regrettably less a final refuge than a horizon that forever withdraws with distance.

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