



the lack of either generally results in a 'state of loss'. It was known that Macaulay who created a sense of 'loss' in the minds of many Indians by developing a kind of feeling of superiority or inferiority to fulfil his dream of developing the colonial mentality among Indians.

Macaulay advised the British government on education in India "we must at present do our best to form a class [in India] who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." His words led the then cultural and educational policies adopted by the British government in India and making English the medium of instruction in some schools and universities in India in 1850 was the starting point of the impact of the western culture on the mind of a class of Indians. It re-stratified the Indian society. The Indians 'in blood and colour, but English in taste' were recruited into the British rule and thus enjoying a respectful social status.

Loss of identity is very clearly reflected in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. In the famous novel, it is his education in a school of British milieu and then in Cambridge University which makes him enjoy the status. In colonial days, the English literature which was introduced in schools and universities was western culture with it and thus fulfilling the dream of Macaulay. English poured the concept and importance, especially for social status, in the minds of Indians and thus people began to look power in relation to English this is best reflected in the character of the judge. There is an interesting scene in *The Inheritance of Loss* revealing the influence of English education in establishing cultural hierarchy among natives. Above the entrance to the mission school where the judge studies in, a portrait of Queen Victoria, a symbol of imperial power is hung. The judge, everyday entering the school, looks at her and feels that "her foggy expression compelling,"





prove himself to a western civilized being so as to impress the U.S. officials:

He dusted himself off, presenting himself with the exquisite manners of a cat. I'm civilized, sir ready for the U.S., I'm civilized, mam. Biju noticed that his eyes, so alive to the foreigners, looked back at his own countrymen and women, immediately glazed over, and went dead. (183)

The idea that the West represents the civil, actually denies the Indians for the possibility of being civilized. The older generations of Indians who are duped with colonial mentality unconsciously help the Britishers to propagate the western culture. The behaviour and activities of Lola and Noni suggest of their effort to look like typical Anglophiles. They read nineteenth century British novels, grow broccoli with seeds from England, listen to BBC, and wear Marks and Spencer panties. Lola's daughter is an anchor at BBC and she is so proud of her that she asks her to get settled there. The cook's mind is always filled with the American dream of getting sudden wealth and living a modern life. He makes every possible effort to send Biju, his son, to the U.S. The judge does not want to send Sai, his daughter, to a public school in Kalimpong because of his fear that she will learn the Indian-accented English. Thus, the colonial mentality, to a great extent, becomes the inheritance for next generation.

Even today, the Indians, the people from the 'Third World', as the West look at, remain at the bottom of society and really the rights of the people of the 'Third World' are not guaranteed. Kiran Desai, the Inheritance of Loss, depicts the basements of New York restaurants as full of illegal immigrants from the 'Third World'. The wage is too little and to fulfill the desire of becoming wealthy. Many times they are being exploited and the boss cut down their wages and living expenses.



complex but later on he refuses to adopt the western culture and retreats to his own culture. Gyan joins ‘Gorkha National Liberation Front’, he admits to “the compelling pull of history and found his pulse leaping to something that felt entirely authentic” (160), and recovers a sense of recognition by mocking at the judge’s mimicry of the western lifestyle but such attempts are nothing than illusions as Ashcroft maintains “within the syncretic reality of a post-colonial society it is difficult to return to an idealized pure pre-colonial cultural condition” (Ashcroft 108). The fact that today the whole world is toward a ‘Global Village’ makes cross-cultural exchanges and influences inevitable. Grown up in a convent school, Sai is influenced by western culture and impressed by her grandfather’s use of better English than Hindus but the idea that the Indian culture is inferior is intolerable to her.

Finally , Desai, through her characters, tries to reveal how, in colonial days, people were trying to find out their identity in between: the centre and the periphery, the powerful and the powerless, the superior and the inferior, the authentic and the inauthentic, the dominating and the dominated, order and disorder, and thus giving us a message to root out the colonial mentality. She challenges the dominance of the West and the reality of so called orderly and civilized “centre”. Desai unsettles the western hegemony by the description of New York City in the novel which reflects the same “disorderly” and “uncivilized” state both in the centre and the periphery. This is very clear in the last line of the novel: ‘The five peaks of Kanchenjunga turned golden with the kind of luminous light’ that made you feel, if briefly, that truth was apparent.

**Works Cited:**

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