

## Diaspora as Subaltern: A study of V.S Naipaul's *In a Free State* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

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### Abstract

Diaspora mainly refers to the movement and scattering of people due to several factors. The paper studies the theme of Diaspora in two Booker Prize winning novels: V.S Naipaul's *In a Free State* (1971) and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). The objectives of the paper are to study why the people who leave their homeland, especially from the third world countries to the first world countries feel like a subaltern and they lead a subaltern existence even after their immigration to the transnational land. The present paper studies multifaceted problems that originate since the time an immigrant lands on the alien shore and an amalgamation of conflicting emotions which he/she undergoes after being transplanted in a culture which neither accepts nor rejects him/her and the ways in which economic, political, social, cultural life of immigrants is transformed due to transnational migration. In a nation subalterns remain deprived of dignified status, are inarticulate, poor, resourceless, and passive. Privileges are enjoyed by the people belonging to the upper caste, rich class, higher position, power etc. The people who move to other countries because of various reasons also live like subalterns and suffer from alienation, insecurity, and rootlessness, distorted form of human relationships and the subsequent loss of history. The paper also compares the presentation of the theme of alienation, mobility, migration, and dislocation by V.S Naipaul, and Kiran Desai in their selected novels.

**Key Words: Migration, Identity, Alienation, Diaspora**

Diaspora is a community of people who migrate to other lands. There are two kinds of diaspora: forced and voluntary. Forced diaspora often occurs due to traumatic events such as wars, imperialistic conquests, enslavement, natural disasters etc. As a result, the people of a forced diaspora share feelings of persecution and loss, and a desire to return to their homeland. In contrast, a voluntary diaspora is a community of people who have left their homelands in search of better opportunities. Unlike the diaspora created by force, voluntary immigrant groups generally maintain close cultural and spiritual links to the land of their origin.

Stanley J. Tambiah, in his book *Transnational Movements, Diaspora, and Multiple Modernities* has mentioned that diaspora's generally undergo through three-way process of assimilation, exclusion, and integration/multiculturalism:

The assimilation process expects migrants "to take the initiative of adapting themselves to the host society with the aim of becoming indistinguishable from the majority of society" e.g. melting pot. The exclusion "involves the participation in or incorporation of migrants only into selected and marked-off sectors of the host society." Under this process, migrants are constrained to certain areas under lawful process thereby leading to "discrimination and liminal existence". The third process that is the integration, involves "positive two-way processes of mutual accommodation between migrants and their host society". (167-168)

The attributes of diaspora are endless and always in the process of producing the new things to be added to the earlier ones, and such production continues until the end of the existence of the diasporic personality.

The particular emphasis of the paper is to study the change, if any, on subaltern sensibilities and situations of characters in the selected novels, but before discussing the diasporic issues in the novel it is necessary to explain the concept of subalternity in brief. The concept of the subaltern was first referred to by the Italian Marxist political activist Antonio Gramsci in his article "Notes

on Italian History” which appeared later on as a part of his widely known book *Prison Notebooks* written between 1929 and 1935 and in his essay “On the Margins of History.” The subaltern classes refer fundamentally to any person or a group of people in a particular society suffering under the hegemonic domination of an elite ruling class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation. Literally, it refers to any person or group of inferior rank, whether of class, ethnicity, race, religion, and gender. Under this category come individuals, and social groups who are socially, politically, and geographically outside the hegemonic power structure and include the groups that are marginalized, oppressed, and exploited on different fronts of life. With time, it is now used for the oppressed, the exploited, and the discriminated who are subject to the dominance based on race, gender, colour, caste, rank, region, or in any other form. Asok Sen ( a theorist of the subaltern) in his article "Subaltern Studies: Capital, Class and Community" avers:

The term subaltern is used to denote the entire people that is subordinate in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office, or in any other way .(203)

Ranjit Guha is of the view that , subalterns are those inferior people who have been left out of the historiography of colonial India, and differentiating them from the elite of India states that subaltern classes and groups constitute the "mass of the labouring population and the intermediate strata in town and country—that is, the people". (4)

The present paper through V.S Naipaul's *In a Free State* (1971) and Kiran Desai's, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) examines the portrayal of diasporic experiences and how they feel subaltern.

*In a Free State* consists of three short stories- ' One out of Many', 'Tell me Who to Kill', and 'In a Free State' including a Prologue and an Epilogue. Though all stories takes place on different continents (North America, Europe, and Africa respectively) and have vastly different facts, they are tied together by the themes of displacement and dependency. The novel describes a world in which diaspora, especially those from the Third World, continue to have subaltern existence in the countries of their relocation and they suffered from alienation, insecurity, and rootlessness. The characters also grapple with what it means to have freedom, when you are an outsider and the balance of power is not in your favor. The novel offers the vision of placelessness through the solitariness of the characters. They appear to be uprooted, moving about in a free state. The immigrant subalterns are made to believe that they belong to an inferior race and so not fit for making any real contribution to the new society.

'One out of Many' is a first-person narrative by an Indian domestic servant named Santosh who is from Bombay and who has been brought to Washington by his employer. He is a man of the hills who has been moved away from his original home to the city. The writer has very well depicted both the external and internal aspects of Santosh's life in Bombay. He feels that he has come a long way from his former condition as a man from a village in the hills, working as a porter during the tourist season. That was the hard life; his Bombay life seems nothing short of luxury to Santosh. He is respected; he has a position as the servant of an important man, and he has his own privileges, though he sleeps on the pavement. There is a whole cupboard below the staircase for his use. When he moves to Washington, he feels that many people in India think that he has made a right choice by taking this decision but his life and freedom here are illusory, and he is now caught between the life which he spent in Bombay and the life which he is spending in Washington. He feels that he is used as dirt by his employer, even in Washington and is leading the life of a subaltern. The isolation begins with the starting of the Airplane journey from Bombay to

Washington itself. The first shake in his self-respect and security occurs during his flight to America. Feeling the passengers gaze upon himself because of his shabby clothes frightens him (after his arrival in America and there he encounters even worse). He observes the passengers around himself and says:

Worse, they were all dressed as though they were going to a wedding... (24)

With his domestic's clothes, his luggage in cloth bundles, he at once becomes an isolated, fragmented figure in the plane. Santosh's self-established identity begins to undergo devastation. He loses control of himself and wishes that the plane would crash, thus feeling as diasporic and subaltern.

He realizes that he has left his self-respect and security behind in Bombay to which he feels belonged in spite of his lower status in the society. Washington welcomes him with cold colors of "the blue metal door," "plain concrete corridors," "blank walls," "the noise of machinery", and the strangeness around himself make him alienated, and he feels just like "a prisoner" (Naipaul, 22) in this new country. All these feelings and expressions are called "enunciation" by Homi. K. Bhabha in his book *The World and the Home* where he defines "enunciation" is the act of utterance or expression of a culture that takes place in the third space:

the third space acts as an ambiguous area that develops when two or more individuals or cultures interact. (37)

According to Bhabha, it is through enunciation that cultural difference is discovered and recognized. Thus, Santosh enunciates himself by underlining the cultural differences. Firstly, he questions:

Why must they [American people] wear out shoes and fine clothes for no purpose? (29)

because even shoes and clothes become different cultural signs with which Santosh is unfamiliar. Thus, his 'enunciation' reveals that culture has "no fixity, and even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew" (37).

Wearing out shoes inside or putting on smart clothes except on extraordinary occasions seems meaningless to him. Not being allowed to enter a bar with bare feet makes him surprised. Oppressed by the weight of the dominated culture, Santosh becomes alienated with a feeling of inferiority.

Santosh considers himself only as a prisoner all the time he has been in Washington. Out of sheer desperation, he deserts his employer and joins Priya, an Indian, running a restaurant. Materially he is much better off- having a room of his own, a salary more than ten times what his employer was giving him. But Santosh finds his freedom burdensome; he yearns to be able to surrender his responsibility. Santosh also envies Priya because he was like a man to whom life could bring no surprise. On the advice of Priya he marries a Negro, to whom he considers Kali and settles down legally in Washington. Chandra Joshi in his book *The Voice of Exile* rightly observes about the unsettled status of Santosh:

He lives in three unrelated worlds; the restaurant is one world, the park and green streets of Washington are another, and every evening some of these streets take him to a third. (180)

Overall, the story of Santosh is an example of a diasporic person alienated from self and life. The price of freedom are loneliness and responsibility that is demonstrated convincingly in the story. Apparently having attained freedom, Santosh is actually unable to use its essential qualities in a meaningful or productive way. Abandoned and alone, he can feel only loneliness, placelessness, and void. Santosh is completely a product of Indian culture, which is almost the

antithesis of American culture. He has no education or knowledge of the world, and for the Indian life he was destined to live, that would have been sufficient. But immigrating to a new country requires bridging cultural divides, which is perilous, as the other stories also show. Thus, for Santosh, freedom offers nothing but an illusion and a sense of alienation. His alienation and loss, however, become revulsion at being separated from his master and the dominant culture rather than separation from his own essence.

To conclude, Santosh's plight in America shows the collapse of the 'American Dream' of the poor of third world countries like India. These subaltern people suffering deprivation in their own countries are lured by the hope of better prospects abroad, but ironically they are compelled to live in disgrace and wretchedness there.

The second story, 'Tell me who to kill' covers the life of the two brothers, Dayo and the unnamed narrator who find themselves totally lost in their effort to make a recognizable place for themselves in London by keeping their identities intact. Dayo's elder brother loses his self, his sanity, and his individuality to make his brother a big man. In the process of pursuing the dream, Dayo "becomes a mimic" (as in Bhabha's term), loses his self completely, surrenders his personality, and becomes the part of other culture by marrying an English girl, thus loses control over himself. The reason of their losing control over themselves lies in their personalities because they dream of achieving those things of which they are not capable. This is another kind of subalternity which some of the diaspora's says in other cultures.

The third story, 'In a Free State' examines the activity of a newly independent African country. People here are illiterate, unknown, and ignorant, and they are incapable of independent thought. They are mimics of the ways of their ex-colonial masters. The Americans supported everything in that part of Africa, so it is simply an English-speaking outpost in the midst of the African wilderness.

These Africans possess no identity independent of the one given to them by their white benefactors. Like the characters of other stories, the Africans in this story are the products of white civilization, incapable of independent thought and economic activity. In the name of civilizing the East and purifying the people from barbarity, the European forefathers imprinted their foot-marks on various countries as a source of autonomous power. In order to carry out the administration in new colonies, the Europeans established political order, and it was executed either by force or by hegemony. The strategic plan of colonialism is very well described by Shelly Walia:

Colonialism is accompanied by exploitation, annexation, and conquest. Its hegemonic power rests on creating the binary opposition of self/other, white/black, good/evil, superior/inferior, and so on. Thus a part of the world was able to enjoy supremacy because it convinced the rest of the world about the "white man's burden" and his civilizing machine. (77)

Through Bobby and Linda, the novel unfolds the story of African nihilism. The story of the novel is set in East Africa, in Uganda, and it takes place during a revolution when the President's men are chasing after the king (the colonialist support) in order to kill him. The central tale describes Bobby and Linda's drive from the capital city to the blandly-named Southern Protectorate, in the area of the country that its King comes from. The King is on the run from the country's President, who has taken power and is looking to purge the supporters of the man who was formerly propped up by the colonial powers that ruled the country before independence. Bobby and Linda witness the escalating violence first-hand, as they see people fleeing their homes, army vans on the roads, prisoners in chains and, ultimately, the site of the apprehension and murder of the old

King. Naipaul leaves the reader questioning whether the "free state" of the title is really an improvement on the previous colonial regime. The rural Africans are living a primitive life, and the city African so intense desire to be recognized by the 'whites'. Self is unknown to them. All of them are unable to come out of their enslaved mentality and colonial consciousness. They do not possess the sense to own responsibility; that is why freedom and identity are of no use to these people.

Finally, there are two more tiny wisps of stories, a Prologue and an Epilogue, both of which happen to have to do with Egypt. The first follows an English tramp who is abused senselessly by others on board a ship to Egypt. Obviously, this functioned as a metaphor for post-imperial Britain and was rather provocative in its illustration of the imperial perspective. By contrast, the Epilogue is far more immediate in its depiction of displacement, with the narrator, the Egyptian children, the Egyptian master, the Chinese circus, and even the Egyptian soldier all caught up in this swirl of inhumanity and alienation.

Fragmentation of the societies, colonial rule, clash of cultures, and racial issues lead individuals in the novel *In a Free State* to become either prisoners of their own egoism or they become mere puppets in the hands of fate and circumstances thus making them feel like a subaltern. Their cleverness, resourcefulness, their reflexes towards the situations, their existential struggle- all together make them remain in the constant search of real self. Their homelessness, their migration, the feeling of non-rootedness and displacement, result in the self-centered and self-enclosed personalities of the character. "They always try to resist the reciprocity of the society as well as of other human beings. This makes them sometimes more inclined to become distrustful and even paranoiacs. They are trapped in their own energy or inertia. Their private neuroses place them out of communication with the reality of other people. They all remain lonely, residual, obsessed, non-entities, unconcerned, pathetic, and helpless. They find themselves unable to go with the situations, the cultural web in which they are placed, and customs and conventions of social life about which they are not explained, makes them more reactive less active. The result is their deformed personalities, aggression, insecurity, and nihilism". (Bisht,215)

Almost all the characters in *A Free State* fail to find any support systems for themselves, and thus, their feeling of alienation and their strangeness in an alien culture and unknown place makes them totally disturb. "Change seems to them hard to be handled, because their societies and their life are stagnated. They move outwardly, but inwardly, they feel that they are products of a diseased factory which is just on the brink of collapse". (Bisht,217)

Thus identity is constructed on an individual basis, but within a given social structure, the alienation of which could lead to a corresponding alienation of identity.

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, published in 2006, explores insightfully almost every contemporary issue such as globalization, multiculturalism, economic inequality, fundamentalism and terrorist violence. These issues, as portrayed in the novel, have a harmful effects on the social systems. With problems of alienation as a recurrent theme, most of the characters in the novel fall victims to isolation and alienation, which give rise to the breakdown of human communication. The novel demonstrates how men and women at global and local levels face racial discrimination, live a precarious isolated existence, and stay in tense and tangled relationships. Unable to use their potential to good advantage in the midst of class conflicts, racial differences, and colonial hangover, the men and women have no option but to suffer homelessness, rootlessness, patriarchy, oppression, loneliness, and so on in a multicultural and post-colonial settings.

The primary focus of the novelist is on the distorted form of human relationships under the impact of alienation, mobility, migration, dislocation, and the subsequent loss of background,

history, and family. With the majority of characters in the novels alienated or displaced, the novel tries to explore the identity crisis faced by the characters who very often fail to define themselves in a positive way. According to Tejinder Kaur:

Desai has shown her characters leading the lives of dislocation-physical, psychological, emotional, ancestral, and political- both in the alien land homeland and has also problematized the issues about home, homeland, diaspora, and belongingness by treating these from multiple angles. (138 )

The novel is set in Kalimpong hills, against the backdrop of the 1980's GNLf movement and deals with national and international diaspora, legal as well as illegal, taking the reader on the journey to different places in India as well as abroad. A parallel narration also happens on the conscious and unconscious level and on the level of perception and reality. In spite of its plurality of experiences and narrations, the novel projects the major theme of the condition and conditioning of subaltern and subalternity.

One of the main characters of the novel is the anglicized Gujrati judge Jemubhai Papatlal Patel. His training to subalternity starts at the very early period of his life. A familial bond plays a crucial role in this process. Family is a place where culture makes an entry into the mind and behaviour of a social subject. As Gramsci observes:

... the children find in their family life a preparation, a prolongation, and a completion of school life; they "breathe in," as the expression goes, a whole quantity of notions and attitudes which facilitate the educational process properly speaking. (31)

The story of the novel centers around Jemubhai Patel, his granddaughter Sai, his cook Pannalal, and the cook's only son Biju. Born in colonial India, Jemubhai's father made him convinced about the superiority of West and Westerns long time before which is also an obvious reality for them and this also make them believe that they like all other Indian are subordinate to them. Convinced about their subalternity, they want to rise above the ladder of social order. The possible route available to them is western education and the mimicry of westerners.

Jemubhai's father sows his own ambitions in his son's young mind and teaches him to follow the Britishers to understand the powerful discourses. To achieve this dream Jemubhai is first sent to Mission School where at the entrance, the portrait of Queen Victorian plays a vital role in shaping his mentality and roots a sense of inferiority in him. The continuous encounters, with the picture of the queen and its odd relation to the power, imprint in the mind of Jemubhai that everything that is English is superior. In fact, the educational institution reinforces the idea of British superiority by posting the picture at the entrance of the school and the portraits signify the world order and, in its hierarchal colonial force-British Empire, is at the peak. By just looking at the portrait every day the slavery gets strong further as with these colonial images, the natives accepting the idea of their supremacy.

For his further studies Jemubhai is sent to England to study law and there he remains in almost complete isolation and riddled in an alienated human relationship, suffering the brutal racialism and facing a deep-rooted identity crisis. His boastful journey, from India to England, proves like his journey into the darkness and further degrades him and reinforces the idea of his inferiority/subalternity in him. While he is in England, it is his own mindset of not being at par with the colonial people makes a dent in his confidence and ability to stand up to fierce racial discrimination. This situation compels him to retreat into his own room.

With the sense of alienation all around him, he fails in his healthy human relationship and falls into depression, and pervasive despair engulfs him that Nietzsche terms as “nihilism”. It is a kind of negation of a person in the purposeful and meaningful aspects of life.

The journey of Jemubhai from alienation to self-alienation is a curious journey. Ideology blinds him from observing his self-oppression. He never inquires about the reason for western supremacy. He never questions the biased standards of white people rather he questions the colour of his own skin and its texture but never looks objectively at western concepts. The ideological solitude starts playing the game of silence on Jemubhai, and like a subaltern he succumbs to its ferocity, “He forgot how to laugh, could barely manage to lift his lips in a smile, and if he ever did, he held his hand over his mouth because he couldn't bear anyone to see his gems, his teeth” (40).

He starts washing himself excessively. He fears his own smell. This impact does not end in England even when he returns to India, “...he never is seen without socks and shoes and would prefer shadow to light” (40).

He is scared of sunlight as he feels that sunlight can reveal the real colour of his skin, which he loathes and hide. These discourses of 'other' make him conscious of his own self, and "eventually he felt barely human at all" (40). This journey towards darkness once started has no end and he gets wrapped in the corner of his unconscious, where the monster of his inferiority dwells. The books, which he reads during his stay in England are *A Brief History of Western Art*, *A Brief History of Philosophy*, *A Brief History of France*, and during his return, he studies *How to speak Hindustani*. All these books lead him towards the imitations of the Britishers. As Bhabha observes:

Mimesis and Mimicry is writing, a mode of representation that marginalizes the monumentality of history, quite simply mocks its power, which supposedly makes it imitable. Mimicry repeats rather than represents. (125)

His mimicry marginalizes him further and he loses his previous identity too. It becomes a matter of mockery in Jemubhai's attempts to keep up with the standards set by colonial rule blindly.

He envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred, and for what he would become, he would be despised by absolutely everyone English and Indians, both. (119)

He does not consider himself an Indian, and Britishers do not consider him a Britisher. He is lost in the alley of darkness without any self-respect or even a solid presence. Jemubhai is a partial Indian and partial Britisher; thus, he has a different 'hybrid identity'. He is 'ambivalent' now neither complete nor real. He sets his unreal standards, and in pursuit to achieve them, he merges into unreal without any trace and keep himself aloof even in his own home.

Thus through the character portrayal of Jemubhai, who suffers racial discrimination, alienation, and social isolation in England, brings out some issues of diaspora from the third world country feeling subaltern. Desai has also shown how such unsocial behaviour of racial discrimination by the host country can be a gruesome human act to the diasporic subaltern hitting at his confidence and ability to form social contact and other such relationships based on humanity. In fact, Jemubhai is the first person in the novel who represents the subaltern in a foreign land. He is marginalized, humiliated, detested, and depressed everywhere and all the time. He tries to speak but could not dare to utter a single word, and all his feelings came as his frustration and depression. Because of racial discrimination, prejudice, and intolerance, he is full of hatred and bitterness for the British people and suffers from his 'fluid identity' without feeling at home either in England or in India.

The bitter experiences of Jemubhai leads to devastating consequences on his relationship with his wife Nimi, his granddaughter Sai, his cook, and other people around are not healthy and congenial because he wants everything to be as per the western standard. As a result he remains alienated from his social and cultural sphere and this isolation and loneliness are the root cause of his social hostility, and he becomes detached and self-alienated, failing to connect to his real-self.

Another interesting and paradoxical relationship depicted by Desai is that of Bose and Jemubhai Patel. Bose is Jemubhai's only friend during the time he studies in England. Bose is also Indian and strove to rid himself of his Indian culture in the hope of being accepted by the British. Both of them are the product of colonial discourses, but Bose is able to comprehend the falsity of these discourses; Bose finds it unbearable that he is treated differently than white officers. He is entitled to less pension than white men. He files a case and loses it. His son files the same case and loses it too. The court argues that "it costs less to live in India" (204). This discrimination prevails to make Indians realize that they are inferiors.

Other characters in the novel, like Sai, Gyan, and Biju, are the representative of the post independent India which is not free from the colonial rule of the Britishers. But this generation is equally affected by the western ideology and feels the heat of this displacement and subalternity. Their quest for self is lost in time and space. The cook Pannalal is another displaced subaltern character who also becomes the novelist's spokesman of diaspora within the nation. Jemubhai when he starts living in Nepal hires Pannalal as a cook. Since his childhood he had been serving the judge with honesty, truthfulness, devotion, and commitment. But the judge, who is his master and patron, shows no care for him and humiliates him like a dog.

In the novel, fifty-three chapters are exclusively devoted to describe the insurgency rising in the North-East of India, i.e., the GNLFF Movement (Gorkhaland National Liberation Front), poverty, unemployment, socio-economic backwardness, xenophobia, and discriminatory policies that are deeply rooted in India. Gyan is a true representative of the national diaspora. Like others of his community, he is still deprived, inarticulate, poor, resourceless, and passive. Privileges are still enjoyed by the elite class who have migrated from other states of India and settled in Gurkha land and fail to come out of their colonial hangover suppress and overpower the natives of thi state who have risen in rebellion against the outsiders and the resultant effect of diaspora on subalterns like Gyan, make them suffer from alienation, insecurity, and rootlessness.

Kiran Desai gives a backdrop to the agitation in the book:

When England controlled much of India, they brought in Nepalis to work on the tea plantations, and although colonialism is officially gone, the descendants of these people still live in the border region but do not have equal rights. During the mid-1980s, in the border region of India, including Darjeeling, there were numerous processions, demonstrations, and some violent riots by minority groups who wanted fair treatment. (156)

It was the Indian Nepalese who think that they were treated like the minority in a place where they were the majority. They wanted their own country, or at least their own state, in which they can manage their own affairs. Their miserable condition causes their demand for their own homeland and their deplorable condition compels them to take very strong action.

In the novel, Kiran Desai has portrayed the subalternize existence of illegal diaspora who enter into transnational lands for better existence but become the victims of discrimination, racism, unsettledness, insecurity and a fear of deportation. Through the character of Biju, the son of the cook, Kiran Desai has foregrounded the plight of such illegal immigrants to America. He is the son of the cook at Cho Oyu and one of the young Indians who leaves for New York so that he may build



a future for himself and his father and fulfills his 'American Dream.' Biju, who initially works as a cook faces serious challenges, experiences a number of intense ups and downs, and finds many trials and tribulations in America. The illegal immigrants have no rights, and they have no choice but to accept any jobs, whatever that may be. It is a widely accepted fact that people from Third World countries are subjected to discrimination in Westernized countries. Getting disenchanted and disillusioned, Biju remembers his home and family in India and realize that he would not see his home and family again.

Other than these major characters, there are other minor characters too who present subaltern condition or consciousness in colonial discourses. Noni and Lola, Sai's tutors, also represent class consciousness. These two Bengali sisters live their life according to Western Standard. They are also drifted into alienation and away from social contact due to their hypocrisy. Lola has all praises for England that exists only in her dreamland, but she had all hatred for India and Indian leaders.

Thus the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* too is a diasporic discourse which reveals diasporic community undergoes experiences of the pangs of oppression, dispossession, and displacement from their motherland. That is why diasporas have often been viewed as subaltern. People leaves their original homelands for some foreign country for the fulfillment of their dreams and aims in life. But actually, they experience the sorrow of alienation. Though they themselves have deliberately made a choice, its outcome is displacement and dispossession. These tortured and tormented persons feel hopeless and directionless in life. In this situation, they try to seek shelter in the comers of their memory. This nostalgia makes their sense of suffering less severe and less painful. Kiran Desai, in fact, seems to have searched the subaltern voices in dreams, unexpressed desires, nostalgic recollections of past, unconscious mind, complexes, frustrations and depressions. It was not that, as Desai seems to give the impression, subalterns do not have a voice, or they do not want to give voice to their feelings, or they did not try; the fact is that, whenever they try, their voice is either crushed under physical violence or the feelings of disgust and humiliation.

Thus we can say that in both the novel, *In a Free State* and *The Inheritance of Loss*, though premise of immigration is relatively poles apart. The main interest of V.S Naipaul's fiction is focused on the transnational movement of immigrants. He discusses the many problems that come along with the integration process. On the other, Kiran Desai not only engages in the migration of people in transnational or national land but also in the multifarious problems that arise in the postcolonial societal framework. She comprehensively discusses the issue of porosity of borders, which results in the influx of irregular migrants who, in turn, affect the political, economic, and societal structure of the host nations. It brings to light the larger canvas of pursuit for national identity that infuses the individual to question the significance of his existential being in the postcolonial anxious state.

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