CHAPTER-V

GLOBALIZATION: THE PURVIEW OF AESTHETICS

Globalization may be associated with the wider social process such as post-industrialization, post-modernization and the disorganization of capitalism. Globalization has three major arenas which gives meaning and content to Globalization

1. The Economy Arena: It includes social arrangements for the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and tangible services

2. The Polity Arena: It includes social arrangements for the concentration and application of power, especially in so far as it involves the organized exchange of co-ercion and surveillance (military, police etc) as well as such institutionalized transformations of these practices as authority and diplomacy that can establish control over population and territories.

3. The Cultural Arena: It includes social arrangements for the production, exchange and expression of symbols that represent facts, meanings, beliefs, preferences, tastes and values.

Thus a broad survey of the definities of Globalization brings forth two major aspects – one is economic context and the other is non-economic. The non-economic broadly includes Socio-cultural, historical and political dimensions of Globalization. Economic context of Globalization seems to be stronger and louder. The developing countries in Asia and Africa are much scared about the expansion of Globalization. They consider it to be a new kind of imperialism, which exercises its hegemony in the fields of economy
and culture. The U.S. is the leading champion which subordinates the nation-state cultures. The nation-state and grass root culture are always in fear of its extinction. The other side of such a notion is that the proliferation of Globalization would in the long run establish a uniform social order. The end of this process is homogenization. On this argument globalization may be considered a powerful vehicle of culturalization. What Globalization has done in India is to play upon our diversity and plurality. India is now a vulnerable country where everything has taken a hybrid dimension. Here ‘Core Values’ of culture are still intact though there is bombardment of values released form Globalization.

The inception phase of globalization is well-depicted in both the novels Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard and The Inheritance of Loss, though the former carries it Comically. The life of Sampath after his escape into the orchard is an altogether different life. Sleeping on bough of the trees, feeding on fruits and surrounded by monkeys is a new but his choicest world. Parallel to this rustic world of his followers, followed by hawkers and fruit-sellers making money and catering to the needs to devotees waiting for the blessings of the monkey-baba. This new consumerist culture is the reflection of the globalized world. The world of Mr. Chawla is Worldliness possible through the process of transaction now degraded as only consumerism, possible through the exchange of ideas, concepts, commodity or information or technique.

This process of transaction may be identified as Globalization or cosmopolitanism but with altogether different shape and colour. The juxtaposition of these two worlds implies – “… integrating and connecting cultures and communities in new space –time combination, and making the world in reality and experience more
interconnected” (Hall, Stratt. Questions of Cultural identity in Moderninty: An Introduction to Modern Societies., 23)

Sampath’s refuge on a Guava tree is his escape from the ‘McDonaldisation’ but nightmarishly falls into another ‘Mcworld’. The Exploration of cheap labour, the concentration of extreme wealth in a small number of hands and the growing gap between those who have access to technology and those who do not refer to the ill effects of globalization interconnectedness. While it, may have brought new opportunities has however, also brought uncertainty. Zygmunt Bauman in his book Globalization: The Human Consequence: singles out as “Globalizing Process” – the phenomena of progressive spatial segregation separation and exclusion. It also brings with it the desire for rooted ness and a certain resistance to the homogenization and anonymity of modern living.”(98)

Desai’s craft enforce the fact that Globalization, as perceived and experienced by the developing world including India, raises a series of serious problems on equity and empowerment, justice and freedom. It gives a feeling that the whole world is undergoing the process of churning – a kind of transformation with an unimaginable speed and impact on society, economy and culture. The part of complexity of globalism comes from different ways in which globalization is approached. Some analysts treats it positively of which Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard is an illustration. Desai herby suggests that Globalization promotes integration not only of cultural barriers but of the negative dimension of culture. It helps access to technology, information services and markets to local communities where dominant forms of social organization will lead to universal prosperity. The money –
minting strategies of the Chawla and the others once they house the orchard is a gain for the dwellers of Shahkot. The ways in which local communities of Shahkot engage the forces of consumerism bear much semblance to the ways in which colonized societies have historically engaged in and appropriated the forces of imperial dominance.

The more recent directions of globalization studies concern the development of ‘Global Culture’ a process in which the strategies, techniques, assumptions and interactions of cultural representation become increasingly widespread and homogeneous. Further, global culture can be seen to be focused in mass culture in what Stuart hall calls, a ‘new globalization’. The kind of globalization is not English, it is American. The transformation of the guava orchard into another “Shahkot” is an interesting example of homogenization of culture. Mr. Sampath segregates himself from the world which is constantly in a flux and devoid of any settled conventions. With his poor adaptability and native rootedness, he seeks shelter in the new world and changes more and more to his traditional identity as a deference against the globalized as well as homogenized reality. The struggle of Sampath develops curiously and humourously from this global to local question of migration and conflict of survival and ambition to the local aspect of fulfilling his wish for a quiet life:

Sampath rubbed a geranium petal against his lower lip, staining it red. He rolled a flower up and down his cheeks colouring them to match his lip … Tremors ran through him. These people were trampling on him. They were invading him, claiming him, polluting the air about him. They
were dirtying him with their dirty minds. How could they bring their horrible thoughts and ideas to him? And how dare they? They were using him for their own purposes. He felt sick (166-67)

Much before the transport of the global culture to the orchard, Sampath rejoiced in the local serenity, but once it is inroad, Sampath’s pleasure is lost:

Sampath remembered his early rapture in the orchard. It had been a love affair; how he had bloomed and blossomed, how his joy, his playfulness had shone upon his face. He remembered regarding the remains of his collection, how he had spent hours stringing necklaces of seed pods about himself. How he had put flowers behind his ears, sipped their nectar. He had unzipped pods with his teeth and prised upon buds to uncover parasols of pink. The longer he spent in such activities, the more engrossed he had become. (167)

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard does not carry an optimistic view of globalization, hybridity and transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultural ideas and so on. The novel in a light vein meditates on Sampath’s loss afflicted and tormented by his passive encounter with modern world:

How much had changed since he had first arrived in the orchard such a short time back. How quickly it was becoming more and more like all he hoped he had left behind forever. Ugly
advertisements defaced the neighbouring trees, a smelly garbage heap spilled down the hillside behind the tea stall and grew larger every week. The buzz of angry voices and the claustrophobia he had associated with life in the middle of town were creeping up upon him again. And now they were getting rid of his favourite company in the orchard! Didn’t they know how fond he was of monkeys? … why didn’t they take their minds bond leave him to his peace and quiet to his beloved monkeys, to his beautiful landscape that was being so dirtily and shoddily deface? (181-2)

The quietude and solitude that Sampath desires is once again inroaded to such intensity that he once again disappears for want of physical and psychological ‘localization’. The global factors chase him but the run is thrown into mystery as the novel comes to ‘reader’s guess’ Closure.

In the contemporary world of globalization, the construction of identity around ethnicity and culture is one of the most significant phenomena. Identities are recognized at both levels: to a certain local culture and still participating in the global cosmos. Most complex is the one which relates to the local culture because it directly relates to human instincts, talent, experience, individual social realities which helps in generating a fixed concept about a certain society. The locale of the novel Hullabaloo… is an orchard grove whereas The Inheritance… is Kalimpong rural area located at the foot of mount Kanchangjunga full of beautiful natural landscape. Where as Hullabaloo… has Shahkot set against the guava orchard, the other novel has Newyork – the most advanced
and developed city of America. The two places totally different from each other in interconnected by the presences of Sampath in the former and Jemubhai in the latter. Sampath like Biju and Jemu is an interesting watch first as an employee of the postal office at Shahkot and later as monkey baba striving to fulfill his dream of a remote living with serenity and natural beauty. The personal self tries to assert supremacy over the public self –

What on earth was he to say? He imagined himself declaring; ‘I am happy over here or asking in a surprised fashion: But why have you come to visit me? He could answer their accusations with a defiant: ‘But for some people it is normal to sit in trees; or Serene with new found dignity he could say; I am adopting a simple way of life. From now on I have no relatives. (53-54)

This builds a stage for cultural conflict – one of the recurring issues of the novels of Kiran Desai. The novel also entails the ethnic tensions which are prevailing across the world in the era of globalization:

Sensitive to the atmosphere of expectation beneath him, Sampath looked into the upturned eyes of the devotees. He thought of his old school and the postal office and entire roomfuls of people awaiting the answer to questions he had often not even heard. He wondered how it could be that he had never felt comfortable among people. Here he was alone caught up in the enigmatic rituals of another species. “Go on with your own lives, he
wanted to short ‘go on, go on, leave me to mine’.
(65-06)

Here social disharmony is highlighted in full intensity which is also the part of globalization agenda. Simon Gikandi in “Globalization and the claim of postcoloniality” draws attention to Pisterse who says that globalization brings the universal and the local together in a moment of conceptual renewal (South Asian Quarterly, 100 (3), 2002). He also talks of Appadurai’s global mediascapes and ‘ideoscapes’ which have become the site of tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. The novel “Hullabao...” also shows by the end, that it is not easy to change or bend an identity into one with respect and appreciation for all people. As the world continues to integrate and the boundaries of countries and cultures disappear through globalization it, is becoming more and more unacceptable and politically incorrect to separate people based on race, wealth, origin, religion, gender, language or any other distinguishing trait. Desai rightly brings home the idea that home, family, identity and history are what hold people together in the midst of chaos and cultural division. This re-echoes in the later novel where she says

The reality is that the world is full of racism segregation and cultural divisions, but it does not mean that hope does not also exist change can happens if people initiate it people will always be stuck in the same place in the same mindset until they decide to change, to move, to escape.

(The Inheritance of Loss, 357)
The question that still looms large is – in this world of selfishness and jealousy does a simple hearted soul prefer being a monkey than a human? Is it a blessing for him? Though he wishes for seclusion, the world does not allow it and is exposed to the blind belief of superstition and ignorance. The contemplative life that Sampath is hankering after is a search for every individual but he fails to attain it as Sampath has done. For mankind the Saintly aroma is as elusive as are the borderless boundaries. This is suggested by Sampath’s disappearance in an unknown destination forever. The disillusioned world of disappointment localized first in Shahkot and then in the guava orchard subtly hints at the kind of the new global world we are venturing into.

The Inheritance of Loss has more issues than can be filled in one novel. True that the novel examines subjects like home, identity, dispossession, shrinking and fading borders, racism, class disparities injustice, inequality and aggression. But those are packed Choc-o-block through the various strands and the novel shifts from one strand to the other. The natives are built in this fashion of moving back and forth; structurally such rapid shifts prove to be problematic to the reader.

It evokes a stunning portrait of people with crumbling hopes nurtured on the western notion of rationality and superiority of the white race; the global recession and the bursting of the American bubble. As a powerful Critique of the contemporary Socio-political situation, it projects the class-differences, inequality, insurgence and terrorist violence,. It is a harrowing picture of how the individual lives are crushed by the terrorists and make a mess of all acceptable values.
Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* questions the very existence of the immigrants in the present multicultural and global scenario. She equates the anguish of the lost identity felt by the immigrants with the lost an agony of Indians who are caught in the mirage of the glamour and splendor of the British empire. In her novel she drew on her own experience of living both in and between two cultures. Her paternal grand parents came from Gujrat and her father was educated in England. Her grandfather was refugee from Bangladesh. Based on her experiences, the novel attempts to capture what it means to live between East and West and what it means to be immigrant. The novel also traces at the deeper level the impact of the introduction of Western element into a country that is not of the West which happened during the British colonial days in India and happening again with India’s new relationship with the state.

Sai is a true representative of the globalized world. She is a westernized Indian brought up by English nuns. She represents a type of estranged Indian living in India. She speaks English as her first language instead of a more indigenous Indian language. Although there are many characters in the novel but it is very much focus on a central theme, rather than a central character. To illustrate the novel’s interest in cultural division, the story progresses by presenting glimpses into the lives of each character.

The Judge had no family in England, no real friends, no real friend, no one to talk to, no family in him or support him; he was utterly and miserably alone as that giant squid which Sai read about in the beginning of the novel, “theirs was a solitude so profound they might never encounter another of their tribe” (*The Inheritance of Loss* 39). He felt himself to be hated and mocked of by the
English who said, “Phew, he stinks of curry” (Desai, 39) and he became so introvert that he started hating himself, his skin colour and anything that made him Indian, his true identity.

The judges selection in England caused him so much pain and suffering that he desperately tried to become as English as possible, and hated anything Indian, including his family and wife who brought money which could send him to England. The Judge’s encounter with the English culture is so humiliating and filled with such strong feelings of resentment and anger that he becomes doubly displaed when he returns home. He is neither European nor Indian, and becomes an immigrant in his own self.

Sai too becomes a westernized Indian growing up in the house removed from mono cultural influence, which the Judge creates. An example of cross cultural influence is seen when Sai comes in contact with Gyan. Sai and Gyan both are Indian, but are from separate castes and are culturally very different. By birth Sai is part of the upper class or at least upper-middle class. She speaks English celebrates western holidays like Christmas, eats English food, and lives in Chow Oyu, which is fairly nice home with some modern conveniences. Gyan, however, is not part of the same class as Sai; he has different mother tongue and eats more indigenous food. He is Nepali, which is a minority group in India, but a majority group in Kalimpong. He dislikes her celebrating festivals like Christmas.

During the mid 1980s in the border region of India, including Kalimpong, there were numerous processions, demonstrations, and some violent riots by minority groups who wanted fair treatment. The issue of racism and the demand for a new Gorkhaland is an effect of globalization. Due to the unequal distribution of wealth
and power of the rich continued to become richer while the poor section remained unaffected.

Gyan sees Sai as part of the upper class westernized Indian who is responsible for the mistreatment of the Nepalese. Referring to the oppressive upper class, Gyan shouts at Sai calling her a slave who was ready to clasp the western way of living as her grandfather. Sai later says that there was one reason why he will not get anywhere because he does not deserve to. After Gyan accuses her as a mere imitator, she yells that there were bigger reasons for his hatred for her.

The insurgency and the fight for Gorkhaland is an effect of such differences. Before she meets Gyan, Sai’s first tutor was Noni, the spinster who lives with her widowed sister, Lola. Both Noni and Lola are well known in Kalimpong for belonging to the same westernized Indian class as Sai. They are two comical and wealthy ladies who live in a spacious cottage with all sorts of comfort, and keep multiple servants including a maid, sweeper, gardener, and watchman. The sisters greatly admire the British and adopts as many English customs as possible. They grow western vegetable like broccoli in their garden, They only wear Marks and Soencer garments that “Surely the queen” herself must also wear (The Inheritance of Loss :44), they drink English tea, eat English jam and pastries, love manor house novels, and have the complete works of Jane Austen. Part of their obsession with the British is due to Lola’s daughter, Pixie who lives in England and work for BBC. Lola beams with pride when her daughter’s voice comes over the radio.

Biju like the Judge, is met with hostility and discrimination from other higher-class cultures. One of his white bosses complains that
he smells and even gives him soap, toothpaste, shampoo and deodorant to subtly tell him this. The Indian college students adopt many American or foreign customs, including clothing, food, and behavior. However, they are high class and Biju is not. Halfway around the world, thousands of miles from India, both these people and Biju still carry their Indian identity with them. His experience as an Indian immigrant in the US provides a slow contrast to the westernization of the rural India.

Eating habits too seem affected by the wave of globalization and so has been reflected in this novel. Apart from the reference to the foods Lola and Noni take there are references to the rise of ‘Chicken tikka Masala’ as British national dish. Moreover Sai calling the vegetables with their English names like snap peas, French beans, spring onions and being feared by calling loki, tinda kathal, kaddu and local ‘saag’ is an effect of western wave. The judge uses folk and knife even to eat chapattis, puris and parathas. Further it is seen that non-vegetarian food is being served at the Gandhi restaurant, it can also be acclaimed as an effect of globalization.

Due to the rise of globalization and increase in education there has been a tremendous change in one’s life style. This also affects one’s identity to a great deal. Harish becomes Harry; Gaurish is called Garry and Dhansukh Danny. Similarly Harish’s daughter rejecting the ancient Indian style of living by using nose ring and feeling more comfortable in western attire shows the hybridity in these people.

The issue of separateness is also an impact of this wave of globalization, be it getting separated from one’s parents, one’s family, hometown, nation, culture and also identity. It’s not just
moving physically but also emotionally. Its illustrated at many places and one such example is the separateness between Biju and his father, judge and his wife and Gyan and Sai.

The novel gives a feeling that the whole world is undergoing the process of churning, a kind of transformation with an unimaginable speed and impact on society, economy and culture. So, if there is one single central issue meriting debate and discussion in current times, it is globalization: its agenda and directionality. Roland Robertson stressed that globalization needed to be understood as involving contradictions, resistances and countervailing forces, as involving dialectic of opposed principles and tendencies: local and global, particular and universal, integration and differentiation (Tomlinson, 1999:16).

The Inheritance of Loss also critiques the ambiguities and ruptures the snobbery of globalization which proves only opulent and never fulfills the desire of Biju in the novel, and specifically brings our attention to the fact how one person’s gains turned out to be legacy of loss. In contemporary world of globalization the construction of identity around ethnicity and culture is one of the most significant phenomena. Identities are recognized at both levels: to a certain local culture and still participating in the global cosmos. Most complex is the one which relates to the local culture because it directly relates to human instincts, talent, experience, interaction and individual social realities which helps in generating prefixed concepts about a certain society.

The novel also sheds light on transnational values and consumer culture’s ideology with objective entailing the crux of markets (black market of Kathmandu) and hi-fi restaurants of
America. Biju’s dreams are to be an American citizen possessing a
green card and an affluent man, He, therefore, is mesmerized by
the glamour and opulence of the city and recognizes the city as the
emblem of wordly possessions. His desire to be a modern man with
all possessions that a man has if also the desire of his father as
Desai has narrated at length:

This the cook had done for Biju, but also or himself. Since
the cook’s desire was for modernity: toaster ovens, electric shaves,
watches, cameras, cartoon colors. He dreamed a night not in the
Freudian symbols that still enmeshed others but in modern codes,
the digits of a telephone flying away before he could dial them, a
garbled television.

Biju’s journey to USA in order to earn money and become
rich is also his journey from innocence to the experience. The USA
is known as the land of the free, a place of opportunity. It holds
promise, keeps poorer nations and individuals ‘enthrall’, due to its
superior economy. But here too the poor have a raw deal. The
marginalized poor come to USA from all over the third world
countries hoping to become rich. But even here they remain
marginalized. Biju serves as a cook in various restaurants in New
York.

Here, the real status of the haves and the have-nots has been
very effectively portrayed. The deprived come to the USA from
different third world countries. They are all, by and large, illegal
immigrants in search of a green card which keep eluding them like
the horizon. For quite some time Biju lived in the basement of a
building owned by a so called a management country that gave its
address as One and a Quarter street. Here basement were rented out illegally to illegal immigrants.

There is a good deal of illustration of situation he had undergone for his survival. How Biju passed the night is interesting to see:

Biju joined a shifting population of men camping out near the few box, behind the boiler, in the cubby holes, and in odd savedm corners that once were pantries, maid’s room, laundry’s rooms, and storage room and the bottom of what had been a single family home, the entrance still adorned with a scrap of colored mosaic in the shape of a star, The men shared a yellow toiled; the sink was a tin laundry trough. There was one fuse box for the whole, and if any one truns on too many appliances or lights, PHUT, The entire electricity went, and the residents creamed to nobody sense there was no body, of course, to hear them.

In America which for immigrants emerges outwardly as the true home of universal, in due course of novel it proved to be the defender of colonized culture and also come under the severe censure. Here everything is criss-cross by the money and class location even for the American not to talk about Indians like Biju or other immigrants of underdeveloped countries.(The Inheritence of Loss , 192). Biju found himself cast in a world which was constantly in a flux and devoid of any settled conventions. With his poor adaptability and native rootedness, he found himself an ill-equipped foreigner in the new world and clung more and more to
his traditional identity as a defence against the globalized as well as homogenized reality. He cannot forget. The growing sense of frustration cause by his failure to find a satisfactory job and the continuing green card problem makes Biju ill so much that he begins to lose his temper: “The green card m green card the Machoot sala oloo ka patha char sau bees green card that was not ever green. It roosted heavily, clumsily, pinkishly on his brain day and night; he could think of nothing else” (The Inheritance of Loss). The gut annoyance at the green card combines with irritation caused by his father’s endless letters requesting him to find jobs for other people’s sons too make him violently angry. He failure fills him with self-fpity and the thought of going back to India crosses his mind.

The Inheritance of Loss has globalization as its epicenter. Sometimes it’s the west which is trying to globalize its ideals as in the case of the judge and Sai and his westernized neighbourhood on the other hand India is the power which is being spread across the west. So the novel is actually depicting the tug-of-war that is taking place between the western culture and the eastern one.
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REFERENCE BOOKS


**Articles:**


CHAPTER – 1

GLOBALIZATION: EVOLUTION AND ANALYSIS
CHAPTER-II

KIRAN DESAI: A STUDY
SIGNATURE IN GLOBAL
VISIBILITY
CHAPTER-III

HULLABALOO IN THE GUAVA ORCHARD: LOCALISING CULTURAL HOMOGENIZATION
CHAPTER-IV

THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS :
NEW IDENTITIES OF HYBRIDITY
CHAPTER-V

GLOBALIZATION : THE PURVIEW OF AESTHETICS
REFERENCE BOOKS