

Psychosis in Hybridity: Locating the Identity of the Postcolonial Subject in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

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Abstract Cultural hybridity is a burning issue in recent times especially for the postcolonial individual whose contemplation of culture and the creation of new cultural forms is characterized by a form of coercion to adopt western mores. This issue finds expression in postcolonial literature across the various continental and cultural regions. This paper is therefore an attempt to explore the cultural formations and expressions of the postcolonial individual to ascertain whether they result in a form of self-realization or perpetual conflict and dissatisfaction. In doing this, aspects of the postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories will be employed to the characters in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. The various stages from lack of confidence in indigenous culture, a preference for western culture, and a complete denial of indigenous culture will be explored as phases in the identity formation and expression of characters in the text, leading up to unbalanced hybridity. Consequently, an explication of these phases will result in the demonstration of psychosis of postcolonial individuals in a state of failed hybridity. In light of this, the paper presents as a major conclusion the idea that; a postcolonial individual's failure to incorporate in a balanced manner, aspects of the dual cultures confronting him or her results in a conflicted identity which leads to dissatisfaction and in its highest state, could result in psychotic behaviour.

Key words conflict; psychosis; postcolonial subject; self-realization; failed hybridity.

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Introduction

Identity and its affiliates such as hybridity, self-expression, self-realization and fulfilment have begun to gain increasing importance in recent times. For the postcolonial subject, this trend is also the case especially as for this individual, various factors are at play in the identity discourse. The postcolonial individual is a conflicted individual. This is because in the aspect of culture which permeates and affects every other sector of life, this individual is pulled in different directions. Thus, Edward Said says of it: The people were faced with a plethora of issues and came to realize that they had “freed themselves on one level but... remained victims of their past on another” (207). The postcolonial subject is therefore faced with new problems upon regaining his independence from the West because there is a new form of colonization taking place, that of “labour and power” (Quijano 533-538). These factors at play in the interaction of the West and other cultures of the world allow for the prevalence of the former over non-dominant cultures, especially those which are not to a large extent, economically independent. Thus, the Gramscian notion of hegemony comes in where Western culture has been and is continually privileged in the minds of postcolonial individuals, over their own indigenous culture in line with the binarism discourse. It is in light of these that hybridity is explored in this paper. The conflict and lack of self-realization associated with the form of hybridity which privileges western culture over indigenous culture is what will be pursued.

Hybridity in the Postcolonial Subject: Forms and Patterns

Hybridity involves a mixture of aspects of more than one culture, here, the Indian and western. Whether the degree of this mix results in fulfilment or a form of balance for the individual involved is another question altogether. For some postcolonial characters, this mixture results in harmony because they are contented with taking on aspects of western culture but careful to make sure their postcolonial cultures also reflect and are not eclipsed by the adoption of western cultural values.

For others, the reverse is the case which leaves them in a state of imbalance as they cannot fully relate in places where their indigenous cultures dominate seeing that they have rejected it altogether, neither can they properly relate in the West as their mimicry is never fully intact (Bhabha 86), thus demonstrating their unbelongingness. However, because the present world is one becoming increasingly characterized by cultural affiliation and cooperation,

Peoples and nations are attempting to answer the most basic question humans can face: *Who* are we? And they are answering that question in the traditional way human beings have answered it, by reference to the things that mean most to them.... They identify with cultural groups.... non-Western societies increasingly assert their own cultural values and reject those 'imposed' on them by the West. (Huntington 21-28)

Accordingly, postcolonial individuals are on a path of rediscovering and re-privileging their indigenous cultures and postcolonial texts such as *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie and *Devil on the Cross* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o as well as *Wizard of the Crow* by the same author, demonstrate this idea.

Hybridity therefore comes into play to further demonstrate this rediscovery and significance of indigenous culture to the postcolonial subject. In this context, it is cultural hybridity that is in question and Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, refer to it as "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone Produced by colonialization" (108). It is also "an operative verbalization of ambivalence and mutability illustrating a dynamic stride of (remonstrance) and resistance in opposition to a domineering ideological and cultural colonial hegemony" (Raj 125). In spite of this option of hybridization, there are postcolonial individuals who are unable to reconcile the aspects of the varying cultures in their daily activities to result in harmony and a certain level of self-realization and fulfilment. Such individuals go through the various stages of hegemony and western subjugation but instead of fighting back and struggling to retain a sense of cultural uniqueness and selfhood, in a form of balanced compromise, they give in and conform to the image of them created by others, the West. Consequently, they go through a number of stages.

The first of these is the stage of alienation. Having been brought up to view themselves as members of a particular culture and group, the western vision of themselves results in a form of conflict or confusion. Who they are does not fit

into the new society which they find themselves. When this happens, the second stage occurs. This stage can be either one of two things. Fatimeh Pourjafari and Abdolali Vahidpour give them as “ambivalence and adjustment” or “Abandonment and return” (787-689). While ambivalence and adjustment occurs when the migrant postcolonial subject is able to navigate between his or her indigenous culture and the majority or western culture to create a balance, abandonment and return is associated with a failure to achieve hybridity. This failure is exhibited in a number of ways and will be the object of this paper. Abandonment and return can be further re-categorized into ‘unbalanced hybridity’ where the characters who demonstrate this have taken on so much foreign culture that their indigenous culture is almost eclipsed. Failed hybridity on the other hand involves the not only the ‘hostile take-over’ of indigenous culture by foreign culture in the lives of postcolonial individuals, but also the utter contempt for indigenous culture demonstrated by characters who exhibit this. At this stage, the individual cannot find anything good or admirable in his or her indigenous culture. Not only does contempt well up in him. Intense shame and self-loathing for being associated with the indigenous culture is also present. This is what this paper terms failed hybridity and it results in psychosis as it creates a severe case of conflicted identity in individuals.

Psychosis is a “syndrome that markedly interferes with an individual’s functioning, entails a significant departure from reality, often including false perceptions or beliefs and disordered thoughts and speech” (Larson, Walker and Compton 1). Larson et al go further to say that often times, “these psychotic symptoms are... accompanied by blunted or inappropriate emotional expressions and motivational deficits” (1). Sigmund Freud in his contemplation of neurotic disorders cites emotional excitement, tied to the innate sexuality of individuals, left unrepressed and allowed free reign as causes of psychosis. Thus, when it is no longer repressed or expressed only in dreams and fantasies, it becomes exhibited as neurotic or psychotic symptoms. Additionally, Rafey Habib on the subject posits: “Freud hypothesized that, in the neurotic, any powerful impulse or instinct which was embarrassing continued to operate in the realm of the unconscious where it retained its full “cathexis” or investment of energy. This instinct began to seek substitutive satisfaction by circuitous routes and would produce neurotic symptoms” (574).

Emotional excitement for the postcolonial subject is tied to the ability or lack of it, to create and express cultural identity. This creation is influenced by the colonial experience as it produces continuously a site of enunciation or continuous articulation of culture. The culture of the postcolonial individual is therefore always

at play with that of the coloniser, thus creating a new cultural form(s). While the successful creation and expression of cultural identity by postcolonial characters leads to a form of satisfaction or fulfilment, failure to achieve this results in the exact opposite. This is the situation expressed *The Inheritance of Loss*.

The Inheritance of Loss is a postcolonial text in numerous ways. It encapsulates the struggle for integration and recognition of certain peoples within the postcolonial nation of India as well as presents the migration and aspiration to higher societal status which characterizes postcolonial nations. In doing this, the various mix of people resident within society are explored. There are hybrids who are citizens of postcolonial nations as well as Westerners who have resided for lengthy periods in the Postcolony and also become hybrids. The entire events in the novel revolve round these characters and their relationship to and with each other. It is in these relationships and lack of it that the ideas of hybridity, migration, race, class, gender, nationality, lack, loss, despair and disillusionment in the text are demonstrated.

Psychosis in Hybridity: Jemubhai Popatel Patel

Jemubhai Patel is the central character of this text and like many others in the novel does not achieve fulfilment in the attempt to blend or harmonize the dual conflicting cultures of India and the West which characterize his society. However, the difference or peculiarity of his experience lies in his complete lack of control over his emotional excitement, spurred on by the desire to be like the westerner. Homi Bhabha in his *The Location of Culture* discusses how the colonial encounter results in mimicry by the colonised, of the coloniser. This mimicry is desired by the West as articulated in the words of the educationist T.B. Macaulay in 1835 who in his mission to India desired: “a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (Bhabha 87). In light of this, the postcolonial subject’s mimicry of the culture of the colonised is never fully accurate or complete. It is constructed “around an ambivalence... (thus, it) continually produce(s) it slippage, its excess, its difference” (Bhabha 86). This is the case with Jemubhai. He fails at his attempt at hybridity because he is unable to harmonize the conflicting cultures which he is faced with and he also fails in complete mimicry of westerners. His search for fulfilment sees him adopting an isolationist tactic; as he isolates himself from the westerners he comes in contact with and from his fellow Indian people. This tactic does which do not work and he does not achieve self-realization. All he has at the end of the day is loss. Loss of respect, love and the ability to love,

friendship, material things, family and dreams of regal living. This condition he shares with a large number of other characters in the texts.

Jemubhai's failed hybridity begins from his youth and is linked to his migratory experience. When on completion of high school, he gets a scholarship to study for the Indian civil service examination in Cambridge, England, he is overwhelmed by excitement. Excitement here connotes Freud's notion. On board the SS Strathnaver, on his voyage to England, he first demonstrates a lack of inhibition in suppressing his ambivalence spurred by the conflict for dominance which western and Indian culture have in his mind. In the attempt to act and be 'civilized' like an English man, exuding the type of power welded by the plain-faced Queen Elizabeth whose portrait graced the hall in his elementary school, he rejects his parents advice and gifts. He refuses to throw the coconut as offering for good passage which his father provides. He also scorns the food wrapped and prepared for him by his mother as well as the love involved in this gesture. He thinks she did it to provide him with an alternative if he was too shy to eat on deck in the company of others or if he found himself too nervous to use European eating utensils. Either way,

He was furious that his mother had considered the possibility of his humiliation and thereby, he thought, precipitated it. In her attempt to cancel out one humiliation she had only succeeded in adding another. Jemu picked up the package, fled to the deck, and threw it overboard. Didn't his mother think of the inappropriateness of her gesture? Undignified love, Indian love, stinking, unaesthetic love — the monsters of the ocean could have what she had so bravely packed getting up in that predawn mush. (Desai 38)

This marks the beginning of Jemubhai's failure to rein in his emotions on account of his shame and contempt for Indian culture as well as his admiration and longing for western and specifically, English culture. It is also the first step in the beginning of his psychosis as he becomes increasingly worse. He is not only anti-Indian but anti-social and delusional. Thus his departure from the shores of India in that moment of his migration marks the death of his innocence, its attendant peace, self-knowledge and the ability to love. "Jemu watched his father disappear. He didn't throw the coconut and he didn't cry. Never again would he know love for a human being that wasn't adulterated by another, contradictory emotion" (37).

Upon arrival in England, Jemubhai faces discrimination, hostility and racism due to his difference from Caucasians and their lack of tolerance for people from other cultures and regions. Because of this, he becomes alienated and rather than

looking for other immigrants like himself to associate with, he isolates himself, spending almost all his waking hours at the library or in the room he rents off an English family. It is in this place and at this point in his life that he learns to deny himself. He does this by denying the truth of his past, his being an Indian and his immersion in Indian culture. Thus he avoids as much as possible speaking so as not to demonstrate or portray his accent. He covers up almost every part of his body to prevent his skin, not as pale as that of the English, from being on display. He also keeps to himself so as not to offend.

Thus, Jemubhai's mind had begun to warp; he grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him, found his own skin odd-colored, his own accent peculiar. 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 gums, his teeth. They seemed too private. In fact, he could barely let any of himself peep out of his clothes for fear of giving offence. He began to wash obsessively, concerned he would be accused of smelling.... To the end of his life, he would never be seen without socks and shoes and would prefer shadow to light, faded days to sunny, for he was suspicious that sunlight might reveal him, in his hideousness, all too clearly. (Desai 40)

These actions of his suggest schizophrenia which is a form of psychosis. He is hallucinating, seeing things that are not and imagining things that are not true. This is the second stage of his descent to psychosis. It is at this stage that he demonstrates a preference for western culture in all aspects of his life. Thus, when his landlady tries to be friendly to him and inquire after his welfare and advises him not to study too hard, he is shocked before he replies in the third person: "'One must, Mrs. Rice.' He had learned to take refuge in the third person and to keep everyone at bay, to keep even himself away from himself like the Queen" (111). Even in the euphoria of passing his examinations and making it on the list of civil servant enlisted, he informs his hostess: "'One is done. One is finally through" (117). He also rebuffs the friendly banter of the sale's girl at a convenience store where he goes to buy a shaving brush. "The shop girl said her husband owned the same item exactly, at the acknowledgment of their identical human needs, the intimacy of their connection, *shaving, husband*, he was overcome at the boldness of the suggestion" (40). He is thus completely wrapped up in his own make-believe world where things done and words said by people carry on new and additional meanings and weight. In carrying out his act, Jemubhai "eventually took revenge on his early confusions,

his embarrassments gloved in something called 'keeping up standards,' his accent behind a mask of a quiet. He found he began to be mistaken for something he wasn't — a man of dignity. This accidental poise became more important than any other thing.... He worked at being English with the passion of hatred" (119). Therefore, he combines the first stage of his psychosis which involves his shame and distaste for his 'Indianess' with the second stage where he shows blatantly in every sphere of his life, a preference for western culture. Jemubhai's preference for English culture is seen in his use of powder to colour his face, thereby hiding his brown skin under white powder, effectively putting on a mask, camouflaging his identity.

Hence, he finds it easy to disassociate himself from his wife, abuse her physically and emotionally as well as disown the child produced by their union. In their years of marriage, upon his return from England, he does not speak with her in the manner of having a conversation. She is no longer worthy of his attention and he decides that they have no common ground other than the fortune which their union provided him with to enable his travel. He travels to the various stations where he is assigned to alone, leaving her at home and without a companion but her English teacher. When he returns, he suppresses her spirit by demanding she speak to him in English and uphold English standards of culture. She cannot cope and she who was nurtured in love and affection with companionship from family becomes isolated and unwanted. She feels his hatred for her and becomes withdrawn into herself even while he rapes her, taking from her the remaining shards of her individuality and humanity. He easily dismisses her beauty and "it seemed beside the point. An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one" (168). His love for western things and his inability to fully relate with them leave him unwilling and unable to love, to appreciate and take interest in things not western or imitating the West. Thus he destroys the relationship which he had never really even developed as well as his wife. "He... took her head and pushed it into the toilet bowl, and after a point, Nimi, made invalid by her misery, grew very dull.... She peered out at the world but could not focus on it, never went to the mirror, because she couldn't see herself in it, and anyway she couldn't bear to spend a moment in dressing and combing, activities that were only for the happy and the loved" (173).

Jemubhai's parents are not spared either. He strains and eventually destroys his relationship with them. Thus even when he sends Nimi away, telling her that if she remains in the house, he might kill her from his hatred of her, his father comes to his house to make him see reason and rescind his decision. He refuses to do so and his father leaves, defeated. Jemubhai has become someone who nobody can appeal. He is an authority unto himself. Because he is unable to reconcile aspects of Indian

and western culture, he accuses his father: ““You are the one who sent me and now you come and say it was a mistake! A fine thing”” (306). The text continues by explicating the situation. “He had been recruited to bring his countrymen into the modern age, but he could only make it himself by cutting them off entirely, or they would show up reproachful, pointing out to him the lie he had become” (306). The text predicts this when he is yet in England, becoming a servant to the state and enrolling in the Queen’s service. Because he cannot reason with his people any longer, seeing that unlike him, they do not revere western culture to the detriment of theirs, he “envied the English. He loathed Indians... he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both” (117). When his father leaves him having failed to persuade him to take back his wife Nimi into their home, he does not ask about anyone in his home town of Piphit. It is fruitless as he no longer has ties with them. His father refuses his money and goes away, seemingly never to return and Jemubhai becomes truly alone.

Having toured India as a member of the Indian Civil Service and risen to the position of judge, he buys the house; Cho Oyu, off a Scottish man. The house is located uphill, with the Kanchenjunga Mountain in sight, isolated from neighbours and Kalimpong town’s people. He buys it because he believes he could live there “with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country, for this time he would not learn the language. He never went back to court” (29). This action symbolizes his utter alienation from India. He no longer desires to make an effort like he did while in England and immediately after his return to India when he toured the country, speaking a smattering of Hindi, Urdu and other local dialects in the attempt to dispense with the idea of justice handed over to ICS men. His contempt for India is also demonstrated in his abandonment of his duties as he no longer goes back to court. He does not go because the British have left and he feels the country is headed towards a path where he can no longer fit in.

The situation with the judge is so bad in his old age that the only being he is capable of truly loving is the dog Mutt. He spends money on winter jackets for it and dog food as well as visits to the veterinarian. Even when his granddaughter Sai arrives, newly orphaned on his doorstep, he does not do much by way of a relative, he hardly knows how to relate with her even though he reasons once that it could be an opportunity for him to right the wrong he did in his relationship with his wife and the daughter she bore him who he never acknowledged. So warped is his mind that he is careful to use sweet words while addressing the dog, so as not to hurt its feelings. He also allows it to sleep in his bedroom, on his bed. It is the one thing that stirs up positive emotions in him. He physically and verbally abuses the cook

because of the dog. It gets stolen by a poor couple who come to beg him to influence the police to release their son and husband. When Mutt disappears, the judge becomes frantic. "He felt more keenly than ever that at nightfall in Kalimpong, there was a real ceding of power. You couldn't rise against such a powerful dark, so enormous, without a chink. He went out with the biggest flashlight they had, shone it uselessly into the jungle.... By the time dawn showed, he was frantic" (289).

The fact that no one can evoke such depth of emotion in the judge except a dog speaks volumes about his personality. Additionally, in his delusion he demands that the cook keep up the tradition of serving tea with scones, cakes or biscuits even though he doesn't provide for food and other necessities in the house as he ought to. "Why is there nothing to eat?" the judge asked, irritated.... Never ever was the tea served the way it should be, but he demanded at least a cake or scones, macaroons or cheese straws. Something sweet and something salty" (3). The cook augments the meagre money he gets by selling a local beer which he brews himself as well as farming local vegetables which instead of appreciating, the judge looks upon with contempt. In light of his delusionary tendency therefore, Jemubhai finds it easy to unleash his pent up anger and frustration at losing Mutt as well as the disrespect shown to him by the Gorkha boys on the cook when he offers himself to be beaten.

Consequently, for Jemubhai who is unable to reconcile the conflicting cultures in his life even to a little extent, there is no fulfilment. Rather, what he demonstrates is a deep seated discontent, spattered with demonstrations of psychotic symptoms from time to time. Thus, in his old age, he constantly recollects with regret and dissatisfaction, the manner in which he had lived even though he does not do much to change it.

Hybridity as Continuous Reassertion of Selfhood and Compromise:

The phases of emotional excitement which result in insecurity or lack of confidence in indigenous culture, a preference for western culture, and a complete denial of indigenous culture and therefore the self by postcolonial characters is not limited to Jemubhai alone. However, the other characters in the text do not follow it up to the third and final stage of utter rejection of their 'Indianess' like Jemubhai does which results in his psychotic behaviour and lack of self-realization. Sai, Jemubhai's granddaughter who is also closest in demonstrating a mix of western and Indian culture, hybridity, is taught from a young age to abhor all things Indian. "This Sai had learnedcake was better than *laddoos*, fork spoon knife better than hands, sipping the blood of Christ and consuming a wafer of his body was more civilized than garlanding a phallic symbol with marigolds. English was better than Hindi"

(Desai 29, 30).

With such a background, it is expected that she become even more severe in her negative perception of Indian related things than the Judge. However, she is glad to have escaped the confinement and rigid rules of the convent where she was raised and taught. Thus, because she feels no shame, only alienation from Indian culture and things. She does not develop a loathing for them. Rather, she demonstrates a certain level of comfort with English food, table manners, film and literature than she does with Indian ones. She is open to learning as towards the end of the text even after losing in her love affair with Gyan due to his passion for the Gorkha land movement, she realizes “life wasn’t single in its purpose... or even in its direction.... The simplicity of what she’d been taught wouldn’t hold. Never again could she think there was but one narrative and that this narrative belonged only to herself, that she might create her own tiny happiness and live safely within it” (323). This is in line with postcolonial celebration of the privileged position of cultural polyvalence which Henry Louis Gates projects. Simply because the postcolonial individual is not exactly like his or her predecessor does not mean that something is being missed or that the individual is less for that. Rather it means that like Sai, the individual is opported to take the best of each culture, the Indian and the western. However, because hybridity for the postcolonial individual is not only a recognition of the fact that “cultures are never unitary in themselves nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other” but rather, involves an act of enunciation or continuous articulation (Habib 752), the postcolonial subject is continually negotiating the third space. This third space is the space of contact, it is also a space of remonstrance which allows for possibilities from the cultures at play. On this note, Stuart Hall opines that: “instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact... we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (222). Thus, although Sai has a hybrid identity, she is still on her way to taking the best of what she can from the two cultures confronting her. For she has just realised towards the end of the story that she needs to leave Cho Oyu and her grandfather in order to improve on herself seeing that the world is much more complex and bigger than she had ever imagined.

Other characters like the cook, Biju, Lola, Noni, Mrs. Sen and Uncle Potty demonstrate their awe and admiration for western culture. They have all been socialised through the colonial encounter to view the western culture as superior to and more rational and developed than Indian culture. However, they only demonstrate this longing for and admiration of it because of what they stand to

gain through it which is social and economic mobility. It is this dream that drives Jemubhai's and Biju's migration to England and America in the text. It is also the reason why the cook is suddenly respected and sought after in Kalimpong by other lowly placed individuals because they think he can with his son's influence, aid the migration of their own children and wards to America thereby elevating their social and economic status in the process. Thus, the "cook's desire was for modernity: toaster ovens, electric shavers, watches, cameras, cartoon colors. He dreamed at 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" (55). It is this same preference for western culture that fuels his disappointment upon discovering that the Indian Civil Service man he is expected to serve is not a European but an Indian like himself. Thus, to beef up his reputation, he peddles stories of how well treated he is, how liberally he is paid and inflates the status and character of the Judge.

Gyan is another character in the text who achieves a sense of selfhood in his hybridity experience. Sai's physics teacher later turned lover, he tolerates Sai's ignorance and lack of interest in Indian culture. Although not an ardent admirer of western culture, he longs for and works hard to get western education which he feels is his ticket to an improved social and economic status. Before he gets involved in the politics of the Gorkha land movement, he longs also to demonstrate his western sophistication to Sai. Thus, he attempts to eat with the cutlery provided by the cook when he is invited to dinner at Cho Oyu. However, when he gets involved in resistance politics, he decries Sai's criticality and the pretence and hypocrisy in which she and her grandfather live. Hence he takes pride in his love for and comfort in Indian movies, food and manner of eating amongst other things.

Biju, the cook's son is also able to assert his selfhood in his demonstration of hybridity. Hybridity for him is very little and the only aspects of western culture which he takes on involve the fashion and dress sense. He does not eat beef as a Hindu despite serving it as a waiter in restaurants in the United States. After a while, he ceases to work in such restaurants altogether and works in Indian themed restaurants like the Ghandi where beef is not served. He also does not lose respect for his father like Harish-Harry's daughter does, calling him 'Dad' and using words like 'ass' while speaking to him. So secluded is he from American society on account of his lack of means as well as his repulsion for some of their cultures that he returns home without having seen even a little of the country where he stayed.

Biju saluted himself. Here he was, on his way home, without name or

knowledge of the American president, without the name of the river on whose bank he had lingered, without even hearing about any of the tourist sights — no Statue of Liberty, Macy's, Little Italy, Brooklyn Bridge, Museum of Immigration; no bialy at Barney Greengrass, soupy dumpling at Jimmy's Shanghai, no gospel churches of Harlem tour.... (286)

Harish-Harry like Jemubhai is another character who undertakes hybridity which leads to situations outside his control which he is unhappy with. Having migrated to America, he owns a restaurant and has a daughter who demonstrates to a large extent western culture. This grieves her father whose attempt to remedy the situation with corporeal punishment and having a peer relationship with her do not work. He is therefore dissatisfied with the level of compromise he has to make but is resolved to continue doing so for the material benefits. "He tried to keep on the right side of power, tried to be loyal to so many things that he himself couldn't tell which one of his selves was the authentic, if any.... It was only the recollection of the money he was making that calmed him. Within this thought he found a perfectly reasonable reason for being here, a morality to agree on, a bridge over the split" (148, 149). In light of this, hybridity for Harry is an ongoing compromise. He is constantly reviewing the gains he has to make sure they are worth the compromises he make. Balance or harmony in hybridity is therefore achieved only when the individual involved is satisfied with the choices he or she makes from day to day.

Conclusion

Hybridity for the postcolonial character could either be failed like in the case of Jemubhai or a pursuit for balance and harmony in the effort to assert the self like Biju, Gyan and other characters demonstrate. Either way, it is obvious that hybridity suggests a negotiation and re-negotiation in a constant state of flux as it is identity, "always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall 222). Thus, Jemubhai's failure to assert his notion of selfhood, his utter surrender to his image as 'perceived' by the West (in his thinking), is what results in his failed hybridity and ultimately, psychosis.

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