



The Cultural Landscape of Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai

Kamal Kumar Raul

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The 2006 Man Booker Prize winner Kiran Desai, for her novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*, and the recipient of 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, Jhumpa Lahiri, are two post-colonial immigrant migration writers whose writings are fabulously rich in conflict of class and culture.

Jhumpa Lahiri's debut short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies* took the literary world by storm and won her accolades from the critics. It was followed by her bestselling first novel, *The Namesake*, a finely wrought, deeply moving family drama that illustrates her signature themes: the immigrant experience, the clash of culture, and the tangled ties between the generations. Her latest literary piece, *The Lowland* presents a nice blend of immigrant pain and pensiveness.

Kiran Desai's comic fable, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* points out different conflicts of class and culture in the spirit of R.K. Narayan's humour, irony and satire with Chaucerian temper. Her *The Inheritance of Loss* is "a magnificent novel of human breadth and wisdom, comic tenderness and powerful political acuteness", said Hermione Lee, the chairperson of the Jury of the Man Booker Prize for 2006.

The characters in the novel are trapped between two cultures—the dominating western and the degenerated native counterpart—and the writer leaves their enigma unsolved, like E.M. Forster in *A Passage to India*, in broad sense.

The book will be useful for the students, and teachers of English literature, Indian English literature and diasporic writing, and researchers in these fields.

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