

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Diasporic Identity in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in English

By

Ram Prasad Bashyal

University Campus, Kirtipur

June, 2011

**Tribhuvan University**  
**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Ram Prasad Bashyal has completed his thesis entitled "Diasporic Identity in Manjushree Thapa's Seasons of Flight" under my supervision. He carried out his research since 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2010 A.D. to 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for Viva Voce.

.....

Puspa Acharya

(Supervisor)

Date: .....

**Tribhuvan University**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Approval Letter**

This thesis entitled "Diasporic Identity in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Ram Prasad Bashyal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

.....

.....

.....

Internal Examiner

.....

.....

.....

External Examiner

.....

.....

.....

Head

Central Department of English

Date: .....

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my teacher and supervisor Pushpa Acharya, Lecturer at Central Department of English for his scholarly guidance and corrections that he made on the work. It would not have come into its present form without his help.

I feel very happy to express my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Amar Raj Joshi, Head of the Central Department of English, Kirtipur and other member of the Research Committee for granting me an opportunity to carry out this research. Similarly, I am highly indebted to Dr. Taralal Shrestha for his invaluable suggestions. Mrs. Renuka Bashyal deserves my special thanks for her financial support in completing this work.

I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to my parents, Om Prasad Bashyal and Kanti Kala Bashyal, who made a lot of sacrifice for my higher studies. I would also like to express my gratitude to my brother, Lok Nath Bashyal and Tilak Ram Bashyal. Similarly, I am thankful to my friend Jems Thapa and Everest Computer, Kirtipur for their help in bringing this research work into completion.

June, 2011

Ram Prasad Bashyal

## Abstract

This research attempts to explore the struggle of an immigrant to be established socially, economically and culturally in the USA in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*. The protagonist of the novel Prema undergoes noticeable struggle and hardship, seemingly, being adoptive in relation to culture, custom and technology ultimately finds her failure to reinvent herself in an alien land. Thus, the present study explores why and how all her struggles in the new land turn into meaningless.

## Contents

### Page No.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

I. Prema's Cross-Cultural Experience in Manjushree Thapas's *Seasons of Flight* 1-16

II. Prema's Immigration and Cultural Adaptation 17-34

III. Prema's Memory and Ambivalence 35-42

IV. Prema's Meaninglessness and Futility 43-50

V. Prema's Diasporic Sensibility 51-53

Works Cited

## I. Cross-Cultural Experience in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*

*Seasons of Flight* by Manjushree Thapa depicts the problems in the life of Prema, the protagonist of the novel who immigrates to America in order to reinvent herself. This research explores the absurdity of her life. Prema's struggle in the U.S. ends in meaninglessness. Her coming back to Nepal turns futile and her return to America cannot give meaning to her life. Prema, a Nepali immigrant to the U.S.A. experiences the issues like immigration, adoption, memory, ambivalence and questionable 'self' that ultimately makes her identity diasporic. Her diasporic identity as an immigrant to America neither lets her completely adopt the new American culture nor allows her to reject it. The in-between situation without reconciliation culminates all her struggles meaningless.

Thapa's first book *Mustang Bhot* in fragment was a travelogue published in Nepal in 1992. In 2001, she published the novel, *Tutor of History*, which she had begun as her MFA thesis in the creative writing programme at the University of Washington. Her best known book is *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005), published just weeks before the Royal coup in Nepal on 1 February 2005: After the publication, Thapa left the country to write against the coup and she came back later when there was no crisis. In 2007, she published, *Tilled Earth*, a collection of short stories. Her stories have been published in the Magazines and Journals like Bellingham Review, Thapa Review, Artful Dodge, Himal South Asian, and elsewhere.

Manjushree Thapa came to be an established writer with the publication of *Tilled Earth* and *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy*. According to the paper like the Indian Express, *Forget Kathmandu* is a splendid brief history of Nepal and according to the Economist, it is part memoir drawn from living through the recent turmoil, part history of the Royal family and party also 'a reflection on what has gone to desperately wrong with her country. In this best selling study of the tangled politics of Nepal, Manjushree Thapa

examines what has gone wrong with her country over the years, and why has it happened. Starting with an account of the June 2001 Massacre at the Narayanhiti Royal Palace and its aftermath, she goes back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and of the struggle in the 20<sup>th</sup> century for genuine democracy. She ends with a record of her trek into Maoist held territories in Western part of Nepal, where teenagers have taken to the gun as compulsion.

Thapa's latest work *Seasons of Flight* has been analyzed from various perspective like Third world Feminism among others. There are some critics who have analyzed the text from cultural ground reality. Abdullah Khan examines the novel as "an account of Journey Undertaken by Prema from a scenic Nepali village to a cultural and socially multihued metropolitan in the U.S." (3).

Regarding the personality, C.K. Lal, one of the prominent contemporary Nepali writers states "Manjushree Thapa has the reputation of being as fiercely independent recluse. What sets her apart from all other Kathmandu based written men and women is the fact that English is the primary language expression from her"(7). Commenting on the technique of the novel, Amishraj Mulmi remarks:

One of the things about being a published writer is that the reader always expects the next book to be better than the last one, that the writer has improved upon the art of storytelling, and that the new book is more published in term of style, language are creativity. It would not be in appropriate to say that with *seasons of flight*. Manjushree Thapa has done exactly that: her prose has become more lyrical, her story telling grabs your attention of the right time, and she displays the kind of control, at freely flowing writing that is a hallmark of authors who know their craft. In essence, This is Thapa's most accomplished work yet. (4)

For Mulmi, Manushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* can be summed up as a book for the twenty first Century Nepali: young eager to migrate because of the lack of opportunities and tormented by the constant turmoil back home. It is a book that must be read, it only to understand the variably difficult questions that plague the youth today.

Likewise regarding her latest novel, *Seasons of Flight*, Rabi Thapa writes as a review focusing on contemporaneity of the novel as:

So this country of immigrants finally gets some immigrant literature in English. Its only fitting that *Seasons of Flight* comes from Manjushree Thapa, Perhaps the most accomplished of Nepali courtier, who have published fiction in English. The book puts one in mind at Thapa's most recent collection of short stories, *Tilled Earth*, not simply for its smooth practiced prose and the abundance of charming, touching episode, but also because of the way the novel is put together. The short chapter of *Season of Flight* are morsels into themselves, illuminating as they do particular aspects of Nepalipan abroad, such as Prema's encounter with American ignorant of Nepal and the Mundaneness of working menial jobs to it by. But does this add up to a substantial repast along the well-worn lines of immigrant literature? one can't help but think Manjushree Thapa's herself prove to considerable migratory flight, is addressing herself rather more to an audience outside Nepal. (7)

For her *Seasons of Flight* is a serious attempt to delve into the Journey of life across time, space and human society. Undoubtely, it will speak to many Nepalis who have experienced the pleasure and pain of leaving one's home behind the seeking another. It will also reach those who have wondered, however fleeting what the lives of the other in their own cities are like. Thapa manages to capture the nuances of America and its variegated social and physical

landscape, as seen through the eyes of Prema. As an addition to the Corpus of immigration literature, *Seasons of Flight* makes for absorbing reading.

Tracing the causes of immigration, Devyani writes:

Winning a green card in the U.S. government's diversity lottery, a young Nepali girl arrives in Los Angeles. Her journey follows a trajectory familiar to many immigrants: from finding a corner of home away from home- in her case living with a Nepali family in little Nepal- to moving out and embracing the American way of life to realizing that the past can be put on hold but can't really be shaken off and that reinventing oneself is not as final as it sounds. "It was and it was not far, where she came from. Some days her birth village felt centuries away, and other days it was too close, she could not get far enough away from it" (3) .

In Manjushree Thapa's novel *Seasons of Flight*, Prema leaves behind a country caught between Maoist emergence and brutal counter-interagency, and the sister who has joined the Maoists. Her Height takes her from her village up in the hills of Nepal to a beach side neighborhood of L.A. She leaves behind an ageing father to work as a homecare attendant of one elderly American Woman.

Thapa has brilliantly presented Nepalis' psyche pining for flying abroad, the political upheaval that tend to stagnate the country and decade long bloody war (almost every writer might use this as the backdrop of his/her plot for quite a few more years). The novel ends in a pleasing manner. Prema in her course to find completion in life despite some resentment resigns to the situation of hand and opts to accept it to live with. Thapa who has already carved a niche in writing from Nepal in English, has firmed up her stature as a distinctive author from South Asia through her latest magical work.

Traditionally, sex has been a very private, secretive activity. Herein perhaps lies its powerful force for uniting people in a strong bond. As we make sex less secretive, we may rob it of its power to hold men and women together. Moreover, following the tendency of commenting on new novel, Mahabir Paudel in *The Republica* writes over the sex features in the novel as follows:

A Nepali woman called Prema, who wins a DV lottery, from sexual inhabitation in Nepal to her sexual liberty in America. While in Nepal she has secret assignations with Rajan. But it is devoid of any emotional attachment. When she reaches America, her sexual thought, pattern, behavior, and notions change. She has a number of sexual encounters with Americans. With one Luis, the affair lasts a little longer but with him, relation is more sexual than emotional. Perhaps no Nepali litterateur has depicted lovemaking scenes in as bold, explicit and direct a manner as in this novel. Prema practices with Luis what she has seen in the internet or in porn movies. She tasted him where he was tender and ran her tongue along his vein taking him in. There is a great deal of crooning. "Oh, god. Oh, God," Luis moans. " Please, Please," she demands. Such an encounter not only makes in her. " She had never in her life walked about naked...she had never played physically the way she did with him.

There is clearly a great deal to understand from the acceptance of these fiction into Nepali readers' community: Nepali society is ready to talk about social taboos, including sex, through books, literature, and newspapers. It also shows that society's attitude towards sex is changing. Despite this, instead of pandering to the pornographic impulse of readers, Nepali writers in English could still add some aesthetic overtones to their sexual representation. It

will not only save them from the criticism of moralists but also keep the readers from having to perceive their creations as pulp fiction.

Prema's story starts in a small village near Kathmandu, ascending quickly through the loss of her mother in childhood and the common place hardships of poverty, to a college degree in forestry, resulting in a job with an NGO. Secondary plot-lines include a younger sister who runs off with Maoist rebels when they come calling, an anemic romance with a fellow NGO worker and stoic undemanding father who only wants to see her daughter go forward in her life. One day, in a spirit of difference, Prema signs up for the U.S. Green card lottery. When she wins, her response is characteristically laconic, as if resigned to her fate. Her inner world, however, is taut with emotion and she turns her face westward with a faint quickening of hope. When she finds a lover in the U.S. an attractive Guatemalan she responds with an openness to her own passionate nature and her Mountain culture.

We can trace some other views as well on Thapa's latest novel *Seasons of Flight* which discusses on the various issues such as Feminism, existentialism, postmodernism and globalization studies etc. Similarly the novel is more increasingly associated with the diasporic experience faced by the fictional character Prema, an immigrant to America from Nepal. She had a great hope of gaining financial prosperity and reinvent herself in the new land.

The protagonist of the novel, Prema is a young Nepali girl who drifts to the U.S.A. having the hope of great opportunity to reinvent herself. But her experience in the alien land surpasses contrary to her thought. Instead of being financially stronger, she remains poorer than in Nepal and compels to travel through her hardship and hindrances, humiliation and bitter feelings with no hopeful return. The protagonist of the novel is constantly haunted by the contemporary and the memory of the past coexisting in an alien land. She achieves nothing except sour feelings in the lovemaking process with Luis and falling from "Money saving

American Tree" (8). The distance between the expectation and achievement carried out by Prema invites her identity crisis, dislocation and ambivalence position in her life. Thus, the analysis of the novel remains incomplete until and unless it is done through the diasporic window.

Diaspora study is one of the major areas to study post-colonial theory. The word 'Diaspora' is derived from a Greek word, which means dispersal and was originally applied to describe the condition of the Jewish people living outside Palestine. The word Diaspora which has initiated in beginning from an easily identification with Jewish communities is elaborated including the experience of people marked by forced migration and enslavement (the African Diaspora in the U.S. Latin America and the Caribbean), and as a shifting condition of colonial and postcolonial period.

Narrowly diaspora has concerned to the migration of the people. But in English literature, it is studied its area along with cultural studies. The new concept of diaspora insists the idea that it explains the complexity, diversity and fixity of migrant identities and experience. It relates the idea of uprooting of migrants from their societies and cultures of origin, and given the sense of alienation, displacement, exile and dislocation.

Dislocation refers to the lack of fitness when one moves from a familiar to unfamiliar location. It is a socio-cultural phenomenon, which is the result of transportation by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion or settlement a consequent of willing or unwilling movement from the known to unknown location. The term has been extended to cover a range of different cultural or religious commitment that gives the sense of exile from a place or state of origin or belonging. Defining Diaspora, Ashcroft et. al write:

Diaspora, the voluntary or forcible movements or people from their homelands into new religious, is a central historical fact of colonization. Colonialism itself

was radically diasporas movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions of European over the entire world. (68-69)

This is to say that the colonized people back to the metropolitan centers are the most recent and most significant Diaspora movement. Nowadays, many critics have accepted 'diasporas identity' as a positive affirmation of their hybridity.

Diaspora is the movement of people from known location (their homeland) to the unknown location (new regions). Hence, it creates a sense of dislocation and alienation because they could not adjust themselves in new location and culture. Avtuh Brath further views:

"Diaspora is the search of identity not in the means of identifying with the native land and culture but travelling itself. When the culture travels, it mixed up with the other cultures that changes, develops and transform according to the encounter cultures" (5).

According to Hall, the face of the society is that ruptured place where there is instability of the identities. It happens so that the dislocation and displacement can be created with the social structure. The reason behind is that of the decline of old identities which stabilizes the social structure for long time. That is why it brings new identities, which stabilizes the social structure for long time. That is why it gives raise to new identities and fragments modern subject. it indicates the identity crisis. Dislocation can also be defined to describe both displacements that occur as a result of imperial occupation, and the experience related with it. Hence, ambivalence, dislocation, adoptiation, identity crisis etc. are the keys of diasporas.

Young adds, "Psychoanalytically, ambivalence tends to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a Simultaneous attraction and repulsion towards one object, a person and action" (67). The term ambivalence indicates a misstate of mind in which there tile simultaneous existence of contradiction

tendencies, attitudes, feelings concerning single object especially the existence of two opposite ideas, concepts, beliefs, creeds, subjects and behaviors such as love, hate, sacred in good, bad, colonized, colonizer and civilized, uncivilized. It is also a psychic condition in which positive and negative components of the emotional, physical attitudes and actions are simultaneously in evidence and they are inseparable.

A character having ambivalence stage in his cultural uprootness has a situation of dilemma 'to do or not to do' at the initial stage which has to suffer extreme pain to adjust himself with the new culture he has to undergo with respect to the situation, an individual or person is in great trap in between the two worlds: mother land and a foreign land. In addition, the forthcoming result of the third space will be no one knows but dream of uncertainty and critics follow him or her, thus, the critics such as Homi K. Bhabha in actuality wants to purpose: "This luminosity of migrant experience is no less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one's there is no resultation is it because the two conditions are ambivalently enjoin in the survival of migrant life" (224). This clearly indicates that the migrant characters get the situation between two worlds and cultures. It is necessary for them to survive there. When they have this kinds of dual situation, It follow them that they have the an deity of dualism. Though they are ambivalently struggling they always suffer from the compulsive dilemma and endeavor to get rid of it. In this sense, Bhabha further says:

The concept of cultural difference focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority. The attempt to dominate the name of a cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of defecations. And it is the very authority of cultural as a knowledge of referential truth which is at issue in the concept of movement of enunciation. the enumerative process introduces a split in the per formative present of cultural identification a split between the traditional culturalist demand for a model, a tradition, a community, a stable

reference, and the necessary negation of the certitude in the articulation of new cultural demands, meaning strategies in the political present, as a practice of domination, or resistance. The struggle is often between the historicist teleological or mythical time and narrative of traditionalism of the right or the left and the shifting, strategically dip laced time of the articulation of a historical politics of negotiation which a suggest above. The time of liberation is, as fanon powerfully evokes, a time of cultural uncertainty and most crucially, of significantory of representational under ability. (51)

In the process of adopting himself a character has to mediate and reconcile which is nothing other than the Diasporic mediation. However more importantly ambivalence is also regarded as unwelcome aspect of the colonial discourse for the colonizer because it violates the clearcut authority of colonial domination and leads to the situation of dilemma. Contrarily, it is the attitude of colonized subjects who strongly tends to resist or separate that colonizer's authority hegemonic attitude on the one hand they want to involve into the complicity interrelation. They also reproduce assumptions, habits, values, pattern of tendencies of the colonize that is the minimum of the colonizer on the other hand.

In terms of diasporic identity R. Rhadhakrishna in his book *Diasporic Mediation* opines:

The diaspora of the history of the present" within the longue duree of colonialism nationalism: if nationalism in a deep structural sense is the flip save of colonialism and if the diasporas in nationalism's significant other" how is the diaspora related to colonialism? This question takes on ever greater complexity when we consider the fact that the Diaspora's we are taking about \are "metropolitan diasporas" that is, dispread that have founds home away from home is hill of lies and duplicities. A diasporas citizen May very likely

find economic betterment in the new home, but this every often in allied with a sense of political cultural loss. (174)

All the migrants are the evident of diasporic identity. The situation is not on behalf of them. Yes, no doubt, the diasporic people might be successful to retrieve economic prosperity, they can reach from the beginning state to the top of economic betterment. They have no other alternative to escape from in-between situation between home land and new land. R.

Radhakrishna through his book *Diasporic Mediation* dissects the milieu of diasporic identity and says that he is a pure mediator between his father and son. It means that he is an agent of diasporic mediation, he has not got to play the significant role of mediation between homeland and new land. He accepts that it is a painful process for the migrants so as to balance the mediating role between the two cultural poles: "that of the present location and that of its past" (176).

He has lost his identity. The migrants who are known as the people of diasporic identity, feel consistent erosion of identity, the identity s/he would have in his past mother land. It is the concept, through which it can be understood that the people living between two historic are under going the difficulty having a concrete identity. If we significantly try to analyze how the diasporic identity is the process of fluid location, it vividly seems that the people with doubted experience don't feel complete, rather the compulsion of assimilating both sides of the same time, creates anxiety, confusion and alienation, so these situation among the diasporas people help us understand about the issue of diasporic identity.

Radhakrishna further says:

The location is also one of painful incommensurable simultaneity: the Chinese/Indian past as contemporary one memory (depending upon one's actual generational remove from one's "native" (and) coexists with the modern

or the post modern present within a relationship that promises neither transcendence nor return. (175)

For him, the migrant can't be totally detached from his native land because he has taken with him his modes and identity as memory, which does not help him to exist well there in the foreign home the present realities of the new land, where he has arrived as a process of migration.

Diasporic writing captures both the problems and experience of immigrants. For instance, in the case of cultural identity loss, they seem trying to recollect their past through the help of memories. Regarding it, Ondaatje's novel "Running in the Family" is one noted example. In the novel, we find the theme of recollecting the lost identity of writer's old homeland portrayed very significantly. In this sense, Sudhir Kumar comments:

The narratives of the diasporas are framed by memory and distance and motivated by desire to construct their own reality. For the culture back home their writing fulfils a role similar to that of an "Introduction" to a translated text. It sets out of parameters and the principles of interpreting the text, for decoding it, and as such it limits reader, a space which does not necessarily belong to it. (87)

Immigrant people seem to be torn between their country of origin and their country of residence, their suffering and sense of attention intensity and in the same desperate situation, they try to reinvent in memories which eventually help them to remain in a state of ambivalence and identity crisis.

Moreover, Cross-Cultural Adoption Theory includes its domain all individuals who have been born and raised in one culture and have moved another culture for varied periods of time. It refers to physical relocation of individuals into a societal, linguistic and national environment that are different for the culture of their childhood. The cross-cultural adoption

process is viewed as common to both long-term settlers, immigrants and refugees and short-term sojourners. All are considered to go through at least some adoptive experiences even though the degree of intensity and extensiveness may differ between two groups. Yun, young kim, in his book *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adoption* writes:

Cross-cultural adaptation, refers to the process of change over time that takes place within individuals who have completed their primary socialization process in one culture and then come into continuous, prolonged first-hand contact with a new and unfamiliar culture . In this new cultural context, the individuals are, at least to some extent, dependent on the host society and experience some uncertainty and unfamiliarity in carrying out their daily activities. (37-38)

Cross-cultural adaptation takes place regardless of the circumstances or the specific time and space in which individuals are from one society to another. In all cases, they are strangers who willingly or unwillingly undergo some degree of change in their original cultural patterns.

For the textual analysis of the novel *Seasons of Flight* by Manjushree Thapa, ambivalence, cross-cultural adaptation and memory will be contextualized in diasporic situation. As a methodological and structural form, this dissertation has been divided into five chapters.

The first chapter is based on the introduction of the overall dissertation including the critical tool. It has summarized the thesis in brief with general technical and thematic modality. The second, third and fourth chapters are about the textual analysis which are the main part of the thesis as they are about the justification of major argument with the textual evidences. In this unit the text *Seasons of Flight* by Manjushree Thapa has been discussed indetail to justify how the protagonist of the novel Prema's struggle in America ends in

meaninglessness and her coming back to Nepal turns futile. The last chapter is about the sum up and finding out the research. It will conclude the overall thesis contextualizing an immigrant Nepalese young girl's condition in the U.S.A.

The overall study has focused the major character, the protagonist Prema who performs the series of activities in both alien and homeland ultimately she finds her struggles meaningless and futile.

## **II. Prema's Immigration and Culture Adoption**

In ancient Greece the term 'diaspora' meant "the scattered" that has a sense of voluntarily or forcibly exile from the native country and struggle in an alien land. Those diasporic people live in a space between the old world from where they have come from and the new world where they are trying to create their new identity and hold position in completely different environment. However they work hard to establish in the foreign land, the memory of their native and lack of proper opportunities in new land make them impossible to adjust themselves in the new surroundings. The struggle for holding their social and economical position in the unfamiliar place is a special feature of diaspora. So far as the novel *Seasons of Flight* by Manjushree Thapa concerned, the series of fragmentation and ruptured identity become rampant with the protagonist Prema due to her diasporic experiences and its consequences. The protagonist Prema represents the vivid picture of Diaspora in general and Nepalese female character in the U.S.A. in particular. She undergoes the process of immigration, adaptation, memory ambivalence and state of meaninglessness which are the demarkable keys of Diaspora.

### **Immigration**

Geographical transformation of the people from one country to another for the purpose of permanent settlement is called immigration that is foregrounded on the background of many issues like political, economical, cultural and search for opportunities.

### **Political Cause**

So far as the political causes concerned, the protagonist of the novel, prema being a representative of all Nepalese people immigrated to the U.S.A. due to decade long bloody home war of Nepal. The current situation of Nepal was very painful. The nation was engulfed by political turmoil, atrocities, violence and massacre. youth of the remote village had very limited options. Either they should be affiliated with Maoists rebels or Royal Army. Those

who denied both were compelled to displace from their villages. The protagonist of the novel, Prema being an enthusiastic and energetic young girl left home at seventeen with the “ammonite” from her mother's shrine. She had held on through college and kept it with her. After completing her forestry education, she went to work on a hill bazaar on the side of the country as an employee of an NGO. By then, the war had approached to her own village. The Maoist rebels had come one day, recruiting one member from each family. From prema's family they had taken her sixteen years old sister, Bijaya. Her father had feared a similar fate for Prema, month after month, when she had telephoned home, her father had advised her not to visit. Years passed but she did not go home.

Internal condition of Nepal was deteriorating day by day. Many innocent people were losing their lives with no any specific reasons. Human hunting was in competition. Sibling war was flourishing overnight. Innocent youths of the remote village were mainly victimized by both sides of conflict. Moreover, Royal Army in the name of their promotion, tortured, abducted and shut the common people. Though the rate way less in proportion to Royal Army, Maoist rebels, too, were repeating the same in allegation to spy. The following quotation helps for the palpable description of the then eerie situation of Nepal:

A team dragged a boy out of the cyber-cafe, shouting abuses: 'Saala chuthiya chor!'. It was Kanchha they were dragging. The atmosphere in the bazaar grew tense. The bazaar dwellers watched as the boy writhed in the soldiers' gasp, screaming: Let me go, let me go! His father, the retired Kurkha soldier, ran behind, pleading: There's been a mistake, sah'b he is not a maoist, he is my son, let him be! The soldiers paid no attention to him. At the centre of the bazaar they hurled kanchha on to the ground. Where are they, saala? Chuthiya ! Tell us where they are !' They sat upon him. Beside prema, the School teacher wife screamed: Launa! Launa ! He's my son, sah'b, he's not a maoist

spare him! 'Sah' b he is only fourteen, let him be! Shut up or we'll finished you too, old man!'[...] that night prema listened radio with the school teacher couple. There was no mention of Suk Bahadur Ale on the local or national news. (47)

The protagonist of the novel, prema has been already displaced from her home. And the condition of city too is being poor day by day. Moist had declared that eighty percent of the country part had been under their control and rest of the twenty percent city area is highly influential. Therefore, inhabitants' of city are not away from tension and turmoil due to randomly blockade, unwanted rallies, bomb explosion, untimely strike, merely staging bandha and rumor of possible attack by moists. Because of all those factors, they are not only upset but also looking for safty land for their happy conjugal lives:

Daily, labor union members, students, political activists, human right defenders, teachers and lawyers gathered here to press the king and the army for peace talks with the maoist rebels. The king and the army accused these activists of abetting the rebels. Sometimes there were crackdowns. The police would fire tear gas to disperse the crowds and the demonstrators would respond by hurling rocks or burning tyres. The avenue would descend into anarchy. (44)

The protagonist of the novel is convinced that the war would escalate from here on. The Maoists will not give up and neither will the king and the Army. So she considers that her decision to be immigrant is faultless and timely.

### **Economical Cause**

The second dominant factor behind the Prema's immigration to the U.S. can be considered as economical issue. The protagonist, prema is not a daughter from sophisticated family background rather she was born in a countryside of a hilly region in Nepal. Her family

was pushing their days under austerity due to meager income derived by unproductive small piece of land. Beside, her parents were going on their lives of hardship and toil under a sunny dream of a son. But the result happened against their expectation. Their hope smashed when they begot a daughter child, Bijaya. The family was soon covered by the dry and dark cloud surrounding their house, that ultimately took the life of Prema's Mother, Rewati as shown below:

She had been eight when her mother had given birth to a baby, a baby who, unlike the ones before, had come warm and pulsing into life. A sister ! Her parents had named the baby Bijaya: Her mother had complained of the cold, Shivering despite the blankets her father drew over her and the coal-fire, he lit by the beside. At night her tremors rattled the bed. One morning she lost consciousness. When prema returned from school that afternoon, she saw that the neighbors' had gathered outside. Inside, her aunt-her mother's sister was nursing her sister Prema rushed to her mother's beside. It took her a while to understand why it was vacant. Her father had already taken her mother to the riverside for the cremation. Prema had been oblivious of her dying. (5)

Despite her mother's loss, her father tried his best not to let them feel the lack of mother's love. Mother is mother whose love never be substituted at any cost. Positive thing is that she turns her lacks into courage and determines to pull out her family from a deep trench of poverty. Immediately after completing her college education, She is appointed by an NGO. But, she is not satisfied by her job due to distance between high expectation and lower achievement. While Prema is thinking about alternative of her job, she receives congratulation from the American DV. She consideres it as the best opportunity to make a "money saving American trees." Therefore without thinking twice she decides to be immigrated in the U.S. with the great expectation to quench the economical thrust of her life.

## Cultural Cause

Cultural cause is no less responsible in Prema's immigration to America. Her native country Nepal is dominated by Hindu religion and society is in the control of patriarchy. The female is economically, culturally, politically subjugated and exploited regarding them as the second sex. The cultural system like early marriage prevents to flourish the female subjectivity. Even a literate and intellectual people follow the same tradition neglecting the female position and possible development of their subjectivity as mentioned in the text; "When the Monsoon rains ceased the organization's work resumed at full face. The school teacher couple's youngest daughter got married too much fanfare on a sun-soaked was just sixteen"[45].

Sexual relation before marriage is supposed to be immoral and pervasive. One should be married to come into physical relation. Most of the people are compelled to have unwanted marriage. They marry only to appease their sexual emotion. Unlike Nepalese culture, American culture does not have any boundary to get full exploitation of their reproductive organs before marriage as substantiate in the text:

He lay with his head between her thighs. Not-I know oral sex. 'Eating', he said. Eating out. Some people say eating at the Y.

What do you call it in Nepal?

People don't talk about it.

'I don't know if people do it.' She confessed.

He said.' But you have done this before. Or someone's done it Do you.'

'No'.

'I only saw on line and papers. She said.(82)

Hence, Prema's immigration to America is intensified due to its cultural freedom.

### **Search for Opportunities**

Another dominant cause behind the Prema immigrations to the U.S.A can be taken the search for opportunity. America is supposed to be the centre of capitalism and store of materialistic extremism. Most of the people get chance to have material prosperity and full mobilization of them. Americans can do whatever they like to do under the cultural liberty. They can get opportunity for the full utilization of new invention and innovation having a great possibility of reinvent one's 'self'. But the context of Nepal when Prema has immigrated to America, is very different. Though Nepalese people have very limited means, They cannot get chance to use them properly due to the lack of infrastructure, its remoteness and political disturbances as exemplified in the text:

She thought back to her childhood to the new form entertainment that there had been. 'I played marbles, she said. She told him that when she was growing up there was no electricity in her village; there was no radio, no television, no diversion. But now there is telephone office. (84)

In the country side, there is lack of fundamental infrastructure and city is completely sunk into political turmoil. There is no any sign of resolution and progress in Nepal . Realising her winning in green card lottery as the first glimpse of opportunity, Prema as a carrier conscious young girl immigrates to sink into material facility and opportunity in the U.S.A that ultimately helps to reinvent her 'self' creating a new identity in the Newland.

### **Escapism**

Escapist nature of Prema is somehow responsible in Prema's immigration to the U.S. Early in the childhood, Prema has experienced the sorrow and mourning for her mother's death caused by poverty. Since then, she seems to be surpassed individualistic sense of life with the determination to fight against the family poverty. Immediately after completing her S.L.C. education, she joins to have a job and continues to her education without any

economic support from her family. After her college education, she becomes a forester and holds a job with good salary. Contrary to it, her mother's death affects negatively to her sister, Bijaya. When she becomes conscious about her family deteriorating condition and its history, she unites in the PLA to fight against the whole structure. Her target concentrates to derail the mechanism controlled by handful bourgeoisies. At the end, though her struggle does not culminate in the hopeful success, she doesn't feel humiliation and regression rather she has been passing her life with self esteem as shown in the text below:

'But I love my country',

[...]Everything I have done

I do- is for my country, My people, How can anyone hate where they're from ?

She said, spitting out of her words. (212)

Prema surpasses through different modes and struggles to bring economical upheaval in her family. In the course of her job, Prema witnesses an arrest to innocent Kanchha by the Royal Army at her neighborhood in the city. It disheartenes Prema but it raises opposite effect to her lover, Rajan. He decides to fight against such brutality and atrocities but Prema thinks to escape from her homeland. It is so, she is convinced that the war will escalate from here on. The maoist will not give up and neither will the king and the Army. As the text shows:

Kanchha's abduction disheartened Prema, and made her withdraw into herself.

It had the opposite effect on Rajan. The outraged energized him. then he lobbied Amnesty International which appealed for the boy's released. [...]

After someday Rajan heard that two soldiers had killed Kachha while interrogating him and had buried him in a mass grave behind the barrack. The next week he heard that no, the boy was still alive. (50)

Due to her escapist nature, she displaces from her village and begin to stay in the city. When the maoist insurgency becomes escalate day by day she finds to be immigrated in an alien land, America.

All in all, economic, political, cultural and escapist nature of Prema support to create diasporic identity of Prema. Prema immigrates to the U.S.A and begins to struggle in an alien land where people never hear the name Nepal. Even if they hear, they mispronounce it.

## **Prema in Los-Angels**

Prema is undertaking a journey from a scenic Nepali Village to a culturally and socially multi- hued metropolis in the U.S. The journey in this case is not only a geographical distance but also the mental and cultural one. Prema whose life follows a butterfly like trajectory in every sense of the world. She flies from her village in Eastern Nepal to Kathmandu, then to Los- Angels, courtesy of the green card lottery. Her choice going to the U.S. and struggles in the new place is remarkable as she faces lots of difficulties and hardships in the U.S. Her problem of recognition can be visualized even through the following lines:

An American woman a school teacher, Earnest and Frizzy, once come to Prema and asked 'mind if I ask where are you from?' [...] It is near India; or where mount ever is ,of you have heard of the Sherpa? the foreign ear the country name could sound like 'neples as in: I just love pasta; or my husband and I went to Rome for our honey moon, but we never made it to Naples.(1)

Prema is a moving character who is a young girl, a drift in a war torn rural Nepal, with little to bind her family, village and country and she wins a green card in the U.S. government lottery and chooses to immigrate to Los-Angles of the United States. In this metropolis, she struggles to reinvent her life she can call her own, even on love, Sexual awakening transforms her.

## **Adaptation**

Diasporic people undergo the process of cross-cultural adoption like customs, culture, language and technology to assimilate them in the new environment and the new culture. The concept of cross- cultural adoption refers to a process in which an individual achieves an increasing level of psychological and functional fitness with respect to the receiving environment. As the individual acquires some of the characteristics of the host culture he/she

may lose some of the characteristics of their original culture, such as language, customs, and rigid original cultural identity. An immigrant struggles for equilibrium when she meets with adversarial environmental conditions as experienced in a new culture. This experience is not limited to anyone region, cultural group or nation, but is a universal concept of the basic human tendencies, that accompany the struggle on each individual when they are faced with a new and challenging environment.

In the context of our text, curious and enthusiastic lady, the protagonist of the novel, prema to 'reinvent' her 'self' in a completely new land, has been working in a Salimar Restaurant in Little Nepal accompanying with a couple of compatriots called Neeru and Sushil. In little Nepal, she spends almost one year after her departure from Nepal and learns many things about customs, behaviors and life style of American people .While working in a restaurant, Prema has acknowledged that until and unless she dissociates herself from Nepali company, her thought of self development will not be completed. Therefore, one day, leaving little Nepal, She walks for a centre of America where she can remain aloof from the psychological and sociological intervention of nativeness. In this sense the text explains:

Prema left little Nepal as abruptly as she had left Nepal. One summer's day a year after her arrival, she saw some greenery from the bus. She got off at the next stop and made her way back to the greenery. Mac Arthur Park, enjoying the crowded feel, Prema pressed past the stalls. There were clothes for sale at another stall, and on a whim she bought a low-cut indigo dress. At another stall she bought a field guide to southern California. (98)

Identity is the matter of 'transformation' as R. Radha Krishna says. Prema too is in the process of transformation of her identity. She is in truth struggling to discover how she feels. She is getting a chance to leave one life and starts another one. As the text mentions, Prema immediately after leaving little Nepal, she buys a "field guide" and "indigo dress". A young

Nepalese girl in America taking a low-cut indigo dress and "a field guide" can be seen as Prema's green signal towards the adoption of American customs in the U.S.A.

Prema does the telephone for the shared house of an advertisement and a few days later, she takes a bus past the sky scrapers downtown to a tooth paste-green house with iron grills at the windows. After she rings the bell, she hears the sound of three latches opening. A black –African American woman answers the door. "You Prema?" I'm Meg. At boulevard skyscraper prema began to pass her American life style hiring a room with a single bed. In Little Nepal, Neeru gets very upset when Prema says she is leaving. Neeru redens, takes off her glasses, wipes them on the kurtha, and puts them back on, garling "How will you get by in this land, Bahini', she sputters', when you don't even know how to drive?"

Slowly and gradually, Prema socially and psychologically begins to adjust in diasporic land. In this sense, young Yun Kim remarks: "Cross-cultural adaptation as the multi-staged process. It focuses on the unitary nature of psychological and social process and the reciprocal functional personal environment interdependence" (4). Prema, for the first time puts on the "indigo dress" she has bought at the Salvadorian street fair and went to a date with Andy who had dressed in jeans and tight, shiny T-shirt as the text mentions:

That evening she put on the Indigo dress she had bought at the Salvadorian street fair. This was the first time she was wearing it, the first time she saw that it made her look like a Bolly wood heroine [...] 'I have a date', Prema announced. She rummaged through her hand bag and brought out a palastic pack. A condom . Thrown off balance by this, Prema walked to the bar was dingy on the outside, it was lively inside. Andy was standing at a counter, dressed in jeans and a tight, shiny T-shirt. He had spiked his hair up with gel. He smiled, 'Bear, pray-muh ?'

Prema has wanted to reinvent herself by melting in American culture. To fulfil her such thrust, she doesn't let her back at any cost. She subverts general norms and values of Nepalese culture by substituting it with an American cultural norms and values. A girl from country side of Nepal, in an indigo dress, a condom in a pocket and a boy friend on her hand, undoubtedly supports her to be intermingled in an American way of life.

In the US. while working as a homecare attendant for an old lady, Easter King, she comes to enjoy with an American man Luis. She easily forgets the relationship with Andy and assimilates with an American man Luis. She leaves Rajan, a boy friend in Nepal and goes in developing relationship with Luis, an American who has a daughter and divorced and pursuing Buddhism. They visit Kathmandu Kitchen, swimming and other places began to confide in each other. It doesn't take much time to break Nepalese cultural normativity and intertwines in American sex culture as the following lines show:

Nothing was enough for her after that, she needed Luis, only he would do or was it sex? on their next date he invented her over his place and she tingled for him during the entire drive there. She couldnot help wondering how he would be in bed. She knew from magazines and the internet that Rajan and she not done all the things that Americans did. From Andy She had learnt nothing, Luis, Luis. Her blood was on fire. (76)

They involved in the wild sex. They kiss everywhere softly-lips, neck, ear lobes, cheek, lips. She says "I want you to teach – I do not know so many things ? ... Teach me " (7). As the text states, the scorching island heat, the wildfires in the hills, the breezes along the coast: everything kindles a blind lust in her and these thoughts and feeling roam around her, "Had she been so stupid? ... sex. Had this not been the point of life all alone? Her spirit effervesced, she felt speedy, propelled by joy. Luis was so free. He freed her. She had never in her life walked about necked, as an adult, the way she did in his flat" (80). Prema has never played

physically the way she does with him and her played physically the way she does with him and her whole being sizzles with satisfaction. He allows her to "learn about him, to put her lips there, to kiss, to lick, to feel him, to rob, to suck. To slide the hand there, feel, slip a finger in" (80).

According to the traditional belief, the white people are untouchable called phirangis (the abnormal visitors) and the marriage and sex between them are taken as a perversion. But for Prema, to have sex, make love, get naked and fuck are very normal and a matter of her need, pleasure and satisfaction whereas the American man Luis had drunk his first beer at the age of fourteen and smoked the same year. He had lost his virginity in the back of his father's ford to a girl in high school called Serenity white. He and Tina had married after a year of their relationship, and she had immediately got pregnant and later got divorced. How can a Nepali Unmarried girl make her boyfriend or think of getting married with someone foreign like Luis who is a father of seven years daughter, Juli. Isn't it her passion for American culture and identity as an Americance ?

In the mids of her passionate relationship with Luis, she is conscious about her thought of her economic prosperity and reinvention of her 'self' as the following lines show:

Luis said, 'I really think I love you'.

'I love you; Prema said again.

They kissed. And the kiss was reassuring ... she had become one of those Americans she used to look at from the buses, those Americans whose lives she wanted for herself. (86-87)

How easily they slips into a relationship, prema is certain. She has learned as much from Meg and Susan. Susan uses to call what she calls with men dating. When she is not around, though, Meg calls it sleeping around, and said Susan has never had a relationship with her boy friend Luke is a committed relationship, which prema gathers, is what one has after being

in a relationship a while : From this Prema becomes able to deduce that Luis and she are no longer dating; they are in a relationship, and they seem to be heading inexorably towards commitment. These things are normative and essential in normal activity at day-to-day American life. But for the typical Nepalese woman, these things are supposed to be pervasive.

According to Yun, Young Kim: "The dominant culture of the society controls the life activities of individuals immigrants and sojourners, which necessitates adaptation of the individuals, not Vice Versa" (37). The way Prema performs her activities seems to be assimilation and adaptation of American cultural way of life. One night Prema and Luis feels celebratory. They start playing with each other in the kitchen. Then they stumble to the living room, tearing off each other's clothes, rolling off the sofa to the floor that are signs of getting linguistic and cultural competence having extreme point of pleasure. Text further justifies as follows:

Luis's fingers on Prema's lips, his breath on her neck, her cries and pleas. He pressed her, naked, against the wall, and had her there, then they threw themselves into the bedroom. 'Make love to me everywhere', Prema cried. 'I'll make love to you here. And here. and her', Luis said, giving her the force of his coming. Afterwards , they lay in bed laughing about having used up all the sex spots on their first night of living together. (119)

A girl from Hindu community of Nepal, living in an apartment with Luis before their marriage and having wild sex are not supposed to be possible if Prema is not liberated from her cultural background.

Prema not only touches to be included in American style of love making process but also shows her presence in the celebration of an American festival. She has been mixed up with the American culture and manners. She takes things and activities associated to Luis and

his relationships normally they occur in American culture and social functions. To quote few lines from the text:

The gathering brok up late, with hugs all around, and promise meet soon,  
 promise that no one would be able to keep, but which nevertheless rang warm  
 and sincere. At the door Peggy hugged prema. Americans hugged so much.  
 Prema hugged Malt, Mike and mark .... she Planted lipsticky kisses on both his  
 cheeks ... (123)

In Nepali culture, girls and boys hugging and kissing publicly are not taken as a good manner, rather a perversion but it is a part of life in American culture. She not only presents at a visit organized by Luis step father and mother but also at the party offered by Luis's ex-wife and her husband, Christopher. The ex-husband Luis and present beloved prema visit Luis ex-wife and her husband and hug each other which is completely new experience for Nepalese but prema doesnot demonstrate any confusion and hesitation to play her brilliant and affectionate role in American relation.

R. Radhakrishna in his book *Location of Culture* opines: "In the Diaspora, immigrants suppresses their ethnicity in the name of pragmatism and opportunism, initially, then assimilate actively hiding their distinct ethnicity to be successful in the new world and Lastly seeks the hyphenated integration of ethnic identity with national identity".

In the initial period, immigrant surpasses under hardship and toil to assimilate them into a new environment and they, without any hesitation, actively hiding their native culture, adopt new culture linking with language, technology, customs and life style in the new world. In the context of our text, the protagonist, prema has come from the mountains, all the way to the ocean, from Nepal to America. A hill bazaar to a metropolis of millions. Her mother's life to hers. A front of sea palm in her hands. She was completely unknown how to swim when she was hill bazaar. But in America, she goes to the tourist beach and buys a red bikini for \$

24.99, and flip-flops for \$ 4.47. She changes into it at a public toilet-restroom-examining in the mirrors, the way the bikini curved over her breasts and back. She jumps its foamy crest checking afterwards to see if the bikini had stays in place. She has curious to entertain in the ocean like other American do. To quote from the text:

A young couple were jumping the crests nearby. Mimicking them she jumped as the water level rose', then, she jumped again when it rose again. She did this successfully a while, but then a massive wave swelled up without warning and with a force she had not anticipated knocked her side ways and dragged her roughly over the sand. sputtering, blinded by saltwater, she scrambled to her feet as the wave receded, just as another wave swelled forward. She did get that the next few waves, finally regaining her balance, and slowly, slowly, she began to feel at ease in the water. (64)

According to R. Radhakrishna: "identities, perspective and definitions change when people move" (185). In the text protagonist Prema undergoes to accept provisional nature of truths that makes her identities plural and partial. In prema's case, her diasporic identity lets her additional and new experience in Americans society.

So far as the American culture, Prema seemed to be more adoptive but professionally, she can't get success in proportional to her struggle. Prema is mentally prepared to work hard in the U.S. When she was accompanied by Neeru didi, she was instructed saying "Don't hesitate to work in America" (9). Following the American persuasion, she at the first time after leaving Little Nepal, began to be haunted by boaring time. So she telephones at different types of announcement. She calls for tutoring but they are looking for math instructors. She calls for dog walking, but pay is too low. Again she telephones for babysitting, but it is too few hours. Several attempts are going in vain. At last, she is hired for one hour to mopping the floor.

After some day's, Prema has been appointed in Korian Supplies. Though duty is not so hard except time bounded, income is meager that only crossed her daily bread line. Prema leaves that service too. Then she applies for the job of homecare attendant where she spend her several years serving an old woman Easter. Professionally in Nepal, she was a forester but in America she compromises as a homecare attendant as the text states:

Following the instruction, Prema would feed Easter's cat every morning as the jet-black Bengal brushed against her legs, purring. Then she would check in on Easter. In her room, the old lady would be sitting up in her gilt-frame bed. 'Good morning, dear. Can you help me get to the little girl's room? After Esther's was done with her toilet, Prema would help her into one of the fine, finicky dresses she liked to wear, allowing her to fuss a while in front of a full-length mirror-something's chafing. Can you redo the belt, dear? The button goes like this. That's right, 'Prema would brush and set her hair and help her put on cream, perfume, lipstick [...] Afterward prema would take Easter home, bathe her and put her soft and warm, into bed, where she would read novels. (15-16)

Prema carries out her job and love relation with Luis simultaneously. Her income from her job is not above than in Nepal and her love relation with Luis too is not in balance as it was before. Even though Prema is competent in material adaptation like computer, banking transaction and American root, she slowly and gradually begin to see that her "ammonite" carried from home is teasing her.

### III. Memory and Ambivalence

Diasporic characters who leave their homeland always suffer from the haunting memory of their homeland. In this sense, bookbyte.com writes: memory establishes a connection between origins, heritage and history. Those who left their place of birth to make homes elsewhere are familiar with the questions. "Where do I come from?" and respond in innumerable wellhearsed ways.(1) Memory always connects the diasporic people with their homeland that turns them restless and arises emotion towards their native land.

The protagonist of the novel, Pema is a diasporic character who is now in the U.S.A. away from her native country, Nepal. She suffers from the memory of her homeland which stands in her way to be settled permanently in diasporic land as show in the text:

They stood in his small kitchen as he drank another Heineken. Through Andy's shiny T-shirt, Pema could see his impressive musculature. When he moved closer she did not move away. When he kissed her she kissed him back. But when he held her she could not help thinking of Rajan. (109)

Even a tiny subject matter associated to Nepal becomes significant for Pema. When she is trapped by national memory, she goes beyond her normality and feels puzzling then counts no one in an alien land as the text states:

Pema made out a hall full of people seated on benches. A cross loomed over an altar, back lit afloat in ultramarine. Pema and Luis seated next to her. Some children were whispering in the row in front of them. A man culped a boy, who just giggled. A woman behind them said something to the other, who suppressed a grunt of laughter. For the first time in years, Pema thought of Nepal. The war. She thought of her father. Was he safe? Her sister Bijaya Still a Maoist? Was she even alive? She thought of Kanchha, back in the hill bazaar.

Had he ever been found ? she felt an ancient shivering in the marrow. She thought of her mother. (145)

Phantom of memory always keeps Prema inconsistent in the diasporic land. Whenever she eyes and visits places and people alike Nepal and Nepalese, she uses to go near it and tries to communicate but shocks when it turns into phantom. The text delineates:

The middleman kept leering. ' Kahaabaata yahaan aaipugnuhaeko?' she repeated. The middleman coughed and his eyes darted. 'Tapaai Harihar Bohora haine? Harihar Bohara, Haina? 'Comona dicho?' The man said. No habalingles.' Of course. Prema reeled. Of course it was not him. (147)

Soon Prema feels that life a burden and she starts to visit her Nepali friends without giving information to him. Prema steals away to the dry, grassy hills and she does not tell Luis that she is going there. As soon as he and July (Luis daughter) have left the flat, Prema leaves too. She has stopped enjoying as she enjoyed before with Luis. She comes to know that there is cease fire in Nepal. She phones to her father and she is surprised by hearing about her sister, Bijaya.

Information about Bijaya intensifies her memory and keeps her in the state of restlessness. Her sister Bijaya has come home after the cease fire. She has spent the war years travelling from village to village, finding new recruits for the party. In the telephone call, her father narrates all these events that after the cease fire she has married a member of the rebel militia, and then has a baby, a boy. She has returned to the village for his help in raising the boy. Her father says to Prema:

'We are all living together here', Not our son-in-law, we don't know where he is, but your sister is safe. I'm well; her father said. By your mother's blessing everything is all right here'. Then he said, it's been an eon, daughter. Its safe too comes back now; nobody knows how long the peace will. (180)

Bijaya has returned back to home with a son but there is no husband as he is a member of the rebel militia of the Maoist and they do not know who and where he is and what he is doing.

Prema is different from the day she knows that there is a cease fire in Nepal, she does not care Luis, rather she does not like to be servile or obedient to him. She is firm in her autonomous decision and rejects his help. She even rejects Luis when he is willing to support her as shown in the text:

Her anger flared 'you do not need to take me anywhere! I'll go by myself!'

'Um, Prema!' you want to tell me what is going on?

Nothing! She shouted. I want to go there! You do not? So why don't

I go where I want, and you go where you want? (185)

Prema's relation with Luis becomes thinner and thinner day by day. Even their bed turns in cold. They both can notice decreasing impulsion to each other. Prema feels that her 'ammonite' from her bed side is rejecting her presence in that apartment. She begins to mark cultural differences between them and looked him a sense of "other". And Luis too is in his mental distress. Prema's psychological condition in relation to Luis can exemplify as: "I don't have the world! Prema cried. I left the world I had and do not belong in the one. I'm in now your world. I don't have any place to take you. I don't have the place in the world" (186).

Prema suffers from her diasporic and homelessness condition for the first time in America. Neither she gets herself in native home land nor can entertain in an alien land. Prema's subjectivity seems to be questioned in the diasporic land.

Luis asks her to take him in her world but she replies that she has left the world, she had. And she is in this world in his land and she tells that she doesn't have any world or place as her own. She leaves the following weekend and she can't bear to tell Luis beforehand. On Saturday, Luis takes July to the birthday party of her friend Gemma and as soon as they have left the flat, Prema orders a taxi, took all her clothes in a suitcase and leaves behind the chess

set. She steals away and that night she telephones Luis that she has to go. Then she engages watching the beauty of nature and butterfly. Prema left Luis apartment for the sake of her homeland and to appease her memory. Homi K. Bhabha opines regarding the subject of nation and homeland as "A Nation is soul, a spiritual principle. Two things which is in truth are but one constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories', the other is present day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an individual form. Man, gentlemen doesnot improvise. The nation like the individual, is the culmination of the long past endeavors, sacrifice and devotion. [...] one loves the house, that one has built up and that one has handed down" (19).

Prema does not see her contribution and sacrifice in the U.S.A. Therefore, she realizes that the diasporic land does not belong to her. She runs up towards her nation, Nepal where she can see her inherited right and contributions for the sake of nation building. Hence, Prema culminates her decision to leave the diasporic land for the sake of nation where memory of her homeland always haunted and followed every step of her march.

### **Ambivalence**

Like other diasporic characters, Prema too is not exceptional being victimized from ambivalent position in an alien land. Though that weekend Prema steals away to the dry, grassy hill. She does not know why she did not tell Luis, she is going there. As soon as Luis and July have left the flat, Prema leaves too. And when Prema walks down the road, she thinks that is not her direction. Even though she is going home, she hires room in Little Nepal.

In terms of ambivalence, psychoanalysts argue that it is a state of continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to the simultaneous attraction towards and repulsion for an object, person or action. Adopted into colonial

discourse theory of Homi K. Bhabha describes, "it is the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized"(85). To contextualize it in our character, Prema who has doubts on various matters. Relationship also confuses her. Or sex does. The first she dates after Luis is Fiona's friend Gary song, a Ph.D. candidate at the U.S.A. whom she has sexual relation. Then, substituting one another, prema continually dates and keeps biological relationship with many like Haron Rahman, Bobby Soensen, Jose Macro. Some of them ridicule Prema's relation. Even after all these relation, prema doesn't satisfy with anyone. Therefore, Prema once again before her departure to Nepal, confuses whether her decision to leave for Nepal is right. She is still caught by the position of ambivalence regarding the relationship with Luis as the text states:

The first time Prema returned to Meadowvale for Easter's check-up, she glanced beyond the registration desk, at Luis office. He wasn't there. The second time too he wasn't there. The second time too he wasn't there in his office [...] He was gone, following the schema of his life. (193)

Though Prema has gone to meet her lover Luis in his office twice a week after leaving his apartment suddenly. He is absence both the time. Here, Prema seems to be suffered from the state of ambivalent position in an alien land.

According to Homik K. Bhabha, The concept of cultural difference focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority: The attempt to dominate in the name of a cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation. And it is the very authority of culture as a knowledge of referential truth which is at issue in the concept and moment of enunciation. The enunciative process introduces a split in the performative presence of cultural identification,' a split between the traditional culturalist demand for a model, a tradition, a community, a stable system of reference, and the necessary negation of the certitude in the articulation of new cultural demands, meanings, strategies in

the political present as I practice of domination, or resistance. The struggle is often between the historicist teleological or mythical time and narrative of traditionalism-of the right or the left- and the shifting, strategically displaced time of the articulation of historical politics of negotiation. The time of liberation is, as Fanon powerfully evokes, a time of cultural uncertainty, and most crucially, of signifiatory or representational undecidability. As he says, it is the continual process of attractions and repulsion toward both cultures.

In our text Prema's state of indecision rapidly hightens after her separation with Luis. Though she has bought an airplane ticket to Nepal, her state of attraction and repulsion towards both places, native and foreign land goes on simultaneously as shown in the text:

She was left to the world.

Tracing her way along her ever directionless zigzag trail.

'It's been an eon'.

If she lived frugally for a few months, she would be able to buy an airplane ticker back to Nepal.

But what would she do there?

What would she do here, though?

Nepal? America?

America? Nepal?

Everything felt wrong. (191)

To seek sanctionary from her indecision, Prema begins to leave her room early and visits to the wetland every in the morning, bringing along her binoculars and field guide. Some morning she sees marbled godwits with long red upturned bills with black tips. Other mornings, she gets a glimpse of what lay within, the wounds of childhood. One particularly grey morning, Prema sees a break in the wooden fence. The grass is trampled down around the break. It is clear that people sneak into the wetlands from there.

Her going to wetland has been symbolic meaning. In Nepal, she was a forester. She used to visit forest time to time observing different kinds of birds and greenery. Her standing at wetland side in America and watching through binoculars can appease her thrust for homeland. Here, she stands in a liminal sphere of native and foreign land. Psychologically, she is in Nepal where as physically still remains in the U.S.A. In such a context her being at wetland represents her departed soul which leads her in the state of ambivalence.

Protagonist of the novel, Prema surpasses different stages of ambivalence in the U.S.A. She is suffered from the constantly nagging question like ' , "should I stay, should I go ? Have I gone too far, or not far enough way this progress enough? or Should I try to progress further ?"(223). Having made a decision to live in one place and experience pangs of doubt. Love still confuses her. Relationship confuses her and sex does the same.

#### IV. Meaninglessness and Futility

Prema not only becomes failure in American relation but also in her thought to gain material prosperity. When she had departure from homeland, she had great zeal to collect enough money so that she could fill up big trench of her family poverty. Prema has found herself away from her homeland due to her goal to accumulate enough money but her hope of economic prosperity is being weaker and weaker in the U.S.A. Though her struggle for money has been continuously going on, she finds herself in poor income in comparison her balance in Nepal from her job at NGO. Prema's pay at her work has minimum wage. Her rent is higher. Back in the hill bazaar, Prema had had several hundred thousand rupees in her bank account, a small fortune by Nepali measure. In coming to America, she has become poorer as exemplified in the text:

On pay day, Prema would count each dollar carefully: this note is legal, tender for all debts, public and private. She felt desperate. And was this what poverty did ?

- She felt hungry wanting. (105)

Prema's being distress towards American relation and her economic failure in the US accelerates her intensity to go back her homeland.

After all, Prema is returning from a visit to her birth village. Centuries away. It is the first time she has been back since leaving home at the age of seventeen. To get to her birth village, she has to take a bus from the capital, and after a day-long ride, stay overnight at a highway town. The following morning she sets out early on a seven hours trek with great zeal of family love and looking for solace in her life.

The air grows cool and moist as she enters her village. There was a few new buildings but her family house is smaller and sturdy made of stone. The bamboo grove, the shiva-

Parvati temple, the terraced rice fields are little altered. The village is covered in mist. Prema shivers throughout her visit.

Her father is overjoyed to see her as the text shows "By your mother's blessing you have crossed the seven seas and you have returned"(210). He greets his daughter with a tika of red powder and a marigold garland. He is very aged, but still spry. He looks at her proudly through milky eyes. His grandson, already toddling is clutching his legs.

Prema encounters re-entry shock due to gloomy and reserved response of her sister, Bijaya. She was much open and hearty before Prema had left home. But, at present, Bijaya is standing at the threshold staring at Prema. She is tall now, taller than Prema, with a sturdy build but with the same taciturn, mulish air she had as a girl. She smiles briefly when Prema acknowledges her, then returns to staring as their father led Prema in, fussing over her. Prema opens her heart and wants to be shared but Prema turns away to attend to her chores.

Prema meets her relatives neighbours family, friends. There is a small hubbub in their house, otherwise the village is moribund. Most of the young people have left for the cities. A few have joined the Maoists. Other have gone abroad in search of jobs. Most of the youths of a family have gone to Korea, Dubai, Qatar, Malaysia, Japan, Kuwait and Iraq. One of the most promising village boys has become a guard for an American security contractor in Iraq. Family members in the village are sustained by the earning of those gone abroad.

Prema and Bijaya do not share their experiences with openheart rather they position in answer questions as shown in the text:

'Your son looks just like you did as a child.

'It's natural, isn't it? '

'It's there anything I can do around the house?

'What is there to do?'

'I can help.'

'There is nothing to do'

'Did she think of prema politically as a class enemy? Prema found herself judging Bijaya in turn.

A former maoist ? A Maoist. The idiot girl. (211)

The way they behave each other when they meet after a long period of time is not normal fascinating and open rather it is more formal and reserve. Prema does not ask, and Bijaya does not tell her, about what she had done during the war. Nor does Bijaya talk about her husband. Prema thinks Bijaya, an idiot girl.

Prema has known early of the world's sorrow. She goes in flashback and recalls her memory. Prema had been eight when her mother had given birth to a baby and her parents had named the baby Bijaya: Victory. All that week, Prema had skipped the game of marbles that she used to play after school, running home in excitement to fuss over her sister. Her mother had complained of the cold, shivering despite the blankets her father drew over her and the coal- fires he lit by the bedside. one morning, she lost her consciousness. When Prema returned from school, that afternoon, she saw that the neighbours had gathered outside and Prema rushed to her mother's bedside and it took her a while to understand why it was vacant. Her father had already taken her mother to the river side for the cremation. Prema had been oblivious of her dying. Her mother's loss ended her childhood.

Once she was in the jungle while working as forester, Prema took a narrow footpath along a rocky incline, past wide, leafy oaks and narrow alder. As she walked uphill, dragonflies buzzed past and gnats danced in the sunlight. A man had turned a corner and appeared on the footpath. Behind him came another man, and then another followed: Fifteen or twenty, marching single file directly towards her with rifle slung across their back. Prema encountered her sister Bijaya and she lost her nerve to stay on.

Rushing back down the hill, she cursed her sister as idiot, an idiot girl and asked silently to herself if she really believed in war though Bijaya was a girl but she is no longer a girl as she was before.

One evening as Prema cooks dinner for the family, the father asks to prema about her work in the U.S. from the woodstove, Bijaya stares at her as a rejection of her life style in the U.S.as shown in the text:

'But I love my country; Bijaya eyes glittered fierily. Everything I have done I do is for my country, for the liberation of my country, my people. How can anyone hate where they are from ? she said spitting our her words. It's like hating you mothers she said. (212)

Stunned, Prema turns to the footpath, leading out of the village, desperate to be gone, she is completely rejected by her sister Bijaya. Her sweet dream and hope of affection has been smashed and faced re-entry shocked. Her birth village recedes into the mists, a sharp grief stabbed through her. Being alienated and desperate Prema goes out of home.

A few hours down the footpath, she falls in with a foreigner, a man with long shaggy hair who was working as consultant at Non Governmental Organization. He is from Peru. At first, he speaks to Prema in slow broken Nepali. When she switches to English, he gratefully follows. He distracts Prema from her confusions. Nearing town, they realize they are staying overnight in the same lodge as text states:

At dinner- freshly showered and feeling of lighter of spirit-Prema watched him drink too much whisky. Her being Nepali Seemed to make him nervous. After dinnner, he inivied her to his room but seemed to worry that she might be a prostitute. She could see the questions in his eyes. This didnt keep them from having sea. Prema returned to her room at midnight, and next morning paid the bills and boarded her bus before Sergio had worken up. (213)

Prema due to her diasporic identity couldnot assimilate even in her homeland where she was born and brought up her childhood. She is neither accepted by her family member Bijaya nor by a foreigner, a consultant in her native city. He suspects her as "a whore" and hesitates to keep contact with her. Though he comes into relation, he is not out of fear and suspension. How humiliating and shameful matter it is, a foreigner too rejects Prema addressing "whore" in her own birth soil.

Being rejected from her village in Nepal, Prema has no alternative except returning back to Luis's world again. In Little Nepal, she hires a room owned by Sushil Vinaju and Neeru didi. Then goes out in search of Luis. Fortunately, one week when she has gone to look for the EL Segundo Blue, she sees Luis standing with his daughter, July and her friend, Gemma. Luis sees prema and stops. She stares at him and he stares at her, and for a while their reunion neither found anything to say:

Then: 'Prema'.

'Luis'.

'Hey'.

'Hi'.

'Hi'.

'Hi there'.

'Hello'. (214)

After a slight conversation they are separated exchanging their contact and address with the hope of next meeting on Friday. Prema feels quiet solace from their first meeting after being dissociated with each other. Prema too was single and so the case in Luis. He shows up right on time on Friday evening. Prema answers the door, and asks him into the living room where Neru and Sushil are pretending not to be lingering around in the hope of meeting him. Prema makes them the introductions. After a while, they come out and make a conversation in Luis's

car. In Nepal she had bought a present for him what she now holds out to him. *A Rough Guide to Nepal*. As they drive Prema tells him about her experience in Nepal and asks about his progress in the US. Amidst their conversation they walk along the sand where Prema has thought to be employed at butterfly conservation.

From their conversation Prema can know that he has got a job and car what he had planned before they had away from each other. Luis proposes her to get married and have a child but Prema seems to be indifference towards marriage and having a child. To quote the conversation between Luis and Prema towards the end of the novel:

'A child'.

'No Children', Prema said.

'No Children?' Luis said.

'No Children', She said.

'like, never?' He said.

'I don't think so',

'But kids are. It's amazing having a kid. you know, the greatest things I ever did was have July.'

'I have never wanted to have children. Having children is dangerous,'

Prema said, 'And a there are too human being already on the Earth.

'It's not good for the environment'. (220)

Prema is a freedom fighter. She doesn't like to be imprisoned in an alien land therefore Prema rejects Luis proposal of getting marriage. Though, Previously, they have left nothing behind to recognizes their biological need and matter of entertainment but their further relation is in crisis due to prema's parted soul. Prema seems to be determined not to get married and Luis too is committed in his decision. Then a question is likely to be arised whether they will continue their relation or not. What will happen if they both remain rigid in their decision?

Nobody knows. Their further relation is hidden and uncertain as mentioned in the last part of the text:

'Bastard love'. Prema said.

'Think we could meet again?' Luis asked.

They kept looking each other.

Yes?

No?

Yes?

No? (221)

Prema like other diasporic character is deeply attached to her centrifugal homeland, yet learn to belong to their current abode. She is caught physically between two worlds and this double marginalization by both their root culture and their host culture negates their belonging to either location. This condition of being unhomed is associated further with alienation.

Prema, the protagonist of the novel is a representative character of all diasporic people. She shows up remarkable endeavors to be adoptive and intermingled in the new land for her reinvention but she ultimately falls down from all her attempts due to parted soul. Memory always haunted her and hampered in her progress so far as her work remain incomplete and unsuccessful forever.

Her being Nepali, the way she takes to her life, love, sex marriage and family neither let her to adjust in native culture nor in host culture. Though she wants to be free to live her life without any tinge of patriarchal hegemony, she can't be reinvent her 'self' as she has thought as an immigrant she has subverted all the norms and values established in native culture and she calls love in new land as bastard love despite her inability living without lover.

Prema gets assimilate neither in her homeland nor in an alien land. Her desire to reinvent her 'self' has been smashed like a broken glass and finds her 'self" worthless and dishonoured. After all, Prema is destined to get her position homelssness, meaninglessness and futile due to her diasporic identity.

## V. Prema's Diasporic Sensibility

Majushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* is an exploration into the meaninglessness and futile subjectivity of an immigrant in diasporic community. Protagonist of the novel, Prema's thought to reinvent her 'self' shattered due to her problematic identity in the new land, U.S.A. and her being rejected by her native village in Nepal. Despite Prema's living in materially prosperous land, she undergoes various struggle followed by the haunting memory of her native country. Though Prema transgresses all the established cultural norms of her native culture, she can't get socially, economically and culturally success. She can neither completely accommodate being happy in America nor can assimilate back to Nepal. Ultimately, She finds absurdity in her life eventhough she immigrates from one culture to another.

Protagonist of the novel, Prema leaves behind a country caught between maoist insurgency and brutal counter-insurgency, and a sister who had joined the Maoists. Her flight takes her from her village up in the hilly of Nepal to beachside neighborhood of LA. She leaves behind an ageing father to work as homecare attendant of an elderly American woman, Easter. She moves out and embraces the American way of life to realizing that the past can be put on hold but can't really be shaken off and that reinventing oneself is not a final as it sounds.

When Prema arrives in the U.S. and finds that things are not as she had imagined them to be. And she begins her struggle to survive and find her place in this totally different and new milieu. Confused she is never being sure about what she is doing but one thing she is sure about is that she is not going back. As she drifts from one place to another physically and psychologically she meets people with different ethnic and cultural background and tries to understand the American way of life.

Unlike most protagonist of the novels, she gets rid of the cultural baggage of her home country and adopts the new social modes of her diasporic land. She does not think twice while having affairs, including one night stands, with various American men. When Luis, an affable half-Latino, comes into her life, she is strongly attached to him.

In the diasporic land, Prema's is constantly haunted by the memory of her homeland. Memory always follows her as the tail follows the dog. Though Prema is not suffered much about the sense of loss, she is supposed to be surrendered in front of memory. It results in the end of relation with Luis and she decides to return to Nepal. In her native land Prema experiences the re-entry shock being ejected by the rejection of her won sister, Bijaya and her villagers. Strange thing is that even foreigner in her village branded her as a 'Whore'. Unsurprisingly, she is dissatisfied with her a lot and returns to the same diasporic land. Her reunion with Luis does not sustain long last rather it turns into confusion and indecision due to rejection of marriage proposal and desire of child proposed by Luis.

Hence, Prema's diasporic identity created by her immigration to America neither lets her completely adopt the new American culture nor reject it. The in-between situation without reconciliation makes all her struggles meaningless.

This research is a serious attempt to delve into the journey of life across time, space and human society. Undoubtedly, it speaks to many Nepalese who have experienced pleasure and pain of leaving one's home behind and seeking another. It also reaches those who may have wondered, however fleeting, what the lives of the other in their own cities are like. This research manages to capture nuances of America and its variegated social and physical landscape, as seen through the eyes of Prema. As an addition to the corpus of immigration literature *Seasons of Flight* makes for absorbing reading and one of the significant readings to this novel is, as this research, diasporic identity the central character Prema.

## Works Cited

Ashcroft, Bill et.al. *Key Concept in Post-Colonial Studies*. London and Newyork: Routledge, 1998.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Bhabha Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Bhabha, Homi K. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Brah, Avtah. "Thinking Through the Concept of Diaspora." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Ed.Bill Ashcroft et. al.2<sup>nd</sup> London and New York: Routledge, 2006. 443-46.

Michael Ondaatje, *Running in the Family*. New York : Vintage International, 1982.

Paudel, Mahabir. "Sex In Fiction", *The Republic* 30 July, 2010:11.

Rajgopalan, Radhakrishna. *Between Identity And Location: The Cultural Politics of Theory*. New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd, 2007.

Rajgopalan, Radhakrishna. *Diasporic Mediations*. London: Minesots, 1996.

Thapa, Manjushree. *Seasons of Flight*. New Delhi : Panchshreel Park, 2010.

Yun, Young Kim. *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adoption*. England: Multilingual matlers Ltd, 1988

<http://www.bookbyte.com /1/1/875071-diaspora-memory-identity.html>

<http://www.thehindu.com/arts/books/articles.html>