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Culture, Identity and Dislocation: Contingent Selfhood in

Anita Brookner's *Visitors*

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Letter of Recommendation

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Abstract

Focusing on the novel *Visitors* by Anita Brookner, the present research work studies the protagonist's making of contingent selfhood. In this regard, the crises of culture, identity and location are trapped to dislocation and nebulous existence. The social scenario and time, places and circumstances play vital role for creating selfhood. And these are the alchemists for changeability of the protagonist, Dorothea May's self identity. So, human identity is always contingent.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Anita Brookner's novel *Visitors* (1997) presents its characters in continuous changing perspectives. From British conservative life style to American liberal style of pop music, food, clothing, and visiting, just to name a few, cause such changes in their lives. This very changing perspective is described as contingency of selfhood. The possibility of happening something different in selfhood is changeability or contingency of selfhood. This very contingency occurs in culture, identity and location.

The contingency of culture, identity and location evolve unprecedented changes and in this course crises in selfhood also emerge sharply. So, this project focuses on the protagonist Dorothea May's contingency of selfhood. She has not found any fixity in life keeps moving relentlessly and as a result the stage of destinationless is created. She has been bullied and compelled to accept a stranger, Steve Best from America, to put him in her flat that was occasioned by Steve Best's friends, David and Ann, in their marriage ceremony. So, Best started to live with seventy years old Dorothea May. Despite huge age gap, their relationship was developed as a boyfriend and a girlfriend. Her British and his American way of life thus started to mingle into each other. Here American culture and identity developed its relationship with British culture and identity.

Naturally, thus, it got the situation of hybridization of culture and identity. This made them feel gradually and slowly inbetweenness of cultures, identities and locations. Because, the true selves of them have been mingled with opposite cultures, identity and locations. Dorothea's identity of an old spinster to spouse; spouse to widow woman of 70 years; widow woman to a young boy's girl friend has slowly and

gradually evolved to the condition of cross-culture, cross-identity and as an output to dislocation.

Dislocation refers to the lack of 'fit' when one person moves willingly or unwillingly from known to unknown location. Dislocation can also be extended further to include psychological and personal replacement and displacement. It is also the cultural denigration as well as voluntarily chosen status. In this way, in Dorothea's life, she is getting changed culture and identity. Now she is being identityless, and her selfhood of 'British Dorothea May' is eliminating. This is the process of not having single identity in her life.

Especially, this project focuses on changing status of self identity, culture and location of the novel's protagonist Dorothea May. The socio-cultural scenario and time, places and circumstances have significant impact in her personal life. So, the existence of herself identity is always contingent.

This study is a kind of seminal effort in discussing Anita Brookner's novel *Visitors*. So it is very important to give a brief outline of the novelist and her works and also the theory, 'contingency of selfhood' is a fresh approach in this kind of research work.

Anita Brookner is a brilliant novelist and writer of so many award winning novels: *Hotel du Lac* (1984; Booker Prize); *Visitors* (1997); *A Start in Life* (1981; U.S. title, *The Debut*); *Providence* (1982); *Look at Me* (1983); *Latecomers* (1988); *Brief Lives* (1990); *Fraud* (1992); and *Undue Influence* (1999). In the early 1980s she began to concentrate on writing fiction. Brookner's novels have been compared to those of Jane Austen in that they are witty comedies of manners limited in scope to the experiences of a small group of people.

Brookner (born in July 16, 1928, London) is an English art historian and an author known for her novels of lonely people, especially middle-aged women. In her works they feel that they have been betrayed by life into expecting more than they are able to achieve. She is a master of character and telling of details.

Brookner received a Ph.D. from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and then held several teaching positions, including one year as the first woman Slade professor of art at the University of Cambridge. She wrote several books of art criticism during this time, including *Jacques-Louis David* (1967), *The Genius of the Future: Studies in French Art Criticism* (1971), and *Greuze: The Rise and Fall of an Eighteenth-Century Phenomenon* (1972).

To sum up, Anita Brookner is a writer of so many novels and criticisms. In this respect, her *Hotel du Lac* (1984) won the Booker Prize also. In truth, she has explored the deep psychological reality of women. How women feel in their lives has also been discovered studying their activities and its guiding principles. In a nutshell, she is a master of women's psychological reality.

Anita Brookner's *Visitors* has contributed immensely to establish her as a well known British writer in literary arena. Right from its publication in 1997 the book has been analyzed, studied, and interpreted from different perspectives. It has received great critical acclaim and wide ranging responses from numerous critics and commentators. Many critics have poured their critical sensibilities from different perspectives. Though, this study brings the glimpse of the Victorian female scenario, it advocates about the postmodern style of human life where human selfhood is questioned through unstable, heterogeneous, and plural culture, identity and their location.

In *Visitors*, Brookner explores what happens when a woman's quiet resignation to fate is challenged by the arrogance of a youth. Dorothea May is most at ease in the company of strangers. When her late husband's relatives prevail on her to take in a young man for the week before an unexpected family wedding, Thea's carefully constructed, solitary world is thrown into disarray. As the wedding approaches, old family secrets surface and conflicts erupt between the generations, trapping an unwilling Thea in the middle. Confronted by the company of Steve Best, a carefree young wanderer, Thea's fragile facade of peaceful acceptance is pierced, forcing her to face in a new way both her past and her future.

The story seems to be trying to cover several different themes simultaneously. For this purpose, Claire Messud in *britannica.com* reviews: "Brookner often presented a bleak view of life in her fiction, much of which deals with the loneliness experienced by educated middle-aged women who meet romantically unsuitable men and feel a growing sense of alienation from society (*Falling Slowly*)."

This also presents a sense that if life is not under the guidance of existing human selfhood growing sense of alienation from society is not far from us. It is also an important stimulation for being dislocated culturally and identically. Like George Bland in Brookner's novel *A Private View*, or Dorothea May in *Visitors*, Miriam and Beatrice are ultimately torn between an idealized hankering for connection and, far more powerfully, an almost greedy complacency about their unruffled existence. Just as George Bland fantasizes about marriage to the much younger intruder, Katy Gibb, or as Dorothea May imagines taking off to travel the world, so too does Beatrice trifle with the idea of a marriage of convenience to Max Gruber, her retired agent, and an old age in Monaco. But Brookner's characters act only in their dreams; like Chekhov's

three sisters, who never make it to Moscow, Beatrice and Miriam are ultimately consigned to be stoical in the face of dullness, to embrace vacancy.

Dorothea "... abhorred atmospheres and portents" (36) because all the things haunt in her life. "... she preferred to keep the door of the spare room permanently closed" (36) and endeavored to exceed bad circumstances from her life because time is also fed up with unimaginable condition. So, this is her 'dare to think' to avoid it from her life.

But, we are sure that time has also no power to prevent uncertainties. Now, Dorothea May is compelled to provide the spare room for a wedding period. Now, a stranger is going to be managed for shelter. Although, she is unwilling to manage him a room, circumstance is making her disgusting. If it had made her only to provide the shelter for a stranger it would had taken into her favour. Instead of that she now changed into a widow young woman through the impression taken from an American Steve's life style. She also got impression from him that she had become hybridized with pop music forgetting her own standards of British motherhood. For this clarification *Time Out Daily* writes:

Dorothea May has had a reclusive life, particularly since the death of her husband Henry some fifteen years ago. Genteel faint-hearted and solitary, her closest relatives are Henry's cousin, the imperious Kitty, and her husband Austin. When Kitty's granddaughter comes to London to marry, Dorothea is bullied into providing a room for Steve, the best man, thus plunging her into a world of youth that finds both puzzle and transforming. 'One of the best thing Brookner has done ... Brookner, skillful and compassionate as ever, reveals her old-fashioned moral code to be both honourable and horrific.' (Back cover page)

In *Visitors* the central character is Mrs. May, a widow in her seventies, Brookner's oldest heroine so far, and in some ways the one most critically deprived. As a widow, she is missing love in the present; but she also misses out on love in the future, when the possibility of developing a friendship with a young American fizzles out, and reflects on her loss of love in the past, as she spends her days sitting on a straight chair, gazing out into her garden, and remembering happier times. *Visitors*, richly repays the reader, not in novelty of plot incidents, but in moments of stylistic brilliance. As Mary Kaiser Jefferson reviews:

If she were not a serious novelist, Anita Brookner might be accused of having a formula. But Brookner, who is also a distinguished art historian, works as much like a painter as a fiction writer. Her books form a series, like Cezanne's versions of Mont Sainte Victoire or William Bailey's still life. The subject matter may be narrow, but Brookner delves into it more deeply each time she returns. Any reader familiar with two or three of her novels will feel immediately at home within the first few pages of *Visitors*. (*JSTOR*)

Based on the classic British novel of the nineteenth century and embracing the post-Freudian angst of the twentieth, *Visitors*, like all Brookner novels, begins with a perceptive, virtuous, introspective, but deprived central character who is drawn into the lives of people of another type altogether: self-indulgent, extrovert, sometimes mildly corrupt, at other times vicious. So far, the outline sounds like *Mansfield Park* or *Persuasion*, however, Brookner's lonely heroes and heroines are far more deeply deprived than Austen's. For one thing, they live in the twentieth century, and spiritual comfort of any kind is utterly impossible. Brookner's characters find that their virtue is not only un-recognized and unrewarded, it is fundamentally absurd. They realize

this bleak fact at some critical moment in each novel, but by this time their renunciation of pleasure has become a habit too deeply ingrained to break. The spirit of Freud hovers just out of sight in *Visitors* as it does in all of Brookner's novels.

Although, the deep psychological reality revealed by the novelist, Anita Brookner, in the same value, this psychological development between the characters; Dorothea May and Steve Best, developed to the position of cross-cultural identity. The oneness of identity changed into hybridized culture. This is what, we say, is the greatest punch for grandnarratives, singularity, and monolithic ideology of center seeking tendency of, and for them, who sacrifices for stabilization of human self.

Similarly, *The Times* editor opines:

Like Jane Austen, this novelist works on a little square of ivory rather than a broad canvas ... Like Virginia Woolf, her aim is not to draw characters in the round, but to reveal psychological reality in the deep. Brookner's novels are seductively deceptive. Swirling underneath their elegance and order are huge, if guarded, reservoirs of turbulence.

(Back cover page)

According to *The Times*, within a limited space, time and circumstance all things are possible. So, the aforementioned examples give the view as contingency of selfhood is human life's reality.

Culture

Culture is the widely used term in the field of anthropology. In a way, anthropology is the study of human culture. It includes environment and technologies as well. Culture shapes and protects a person's identity and position. Culture is a means of articulation of identity and is a whole way of life. Speaking explicitly, an

individual gets his/her identity through his/her culture. Thus, culture is a kind of space, and it creates people's identity and provides, direction in their lives.

The origin of the word 'culture' goes far back to the Latin word 'cultura', which means 'the act of cultivation'. But at present, the term implies any custom, art, social institution, literature, music etc that is cultivated in society. Culture, thus, belongs to "the realism of broader human consciousness that is both developed and shaped by society, religion, history, and geography" (Saraswathi 223). Since there is no single autonomous history, religion, society and geography, cultures vary accordingly. And, the literature as the product and reflection of them also vary. Apart from this, culture can be used to refer to individual style or character, the state of artistic or intellectual development, to the expressive life and traditions of a social group, to a social historical moment as a broader epoch. In this sense, we can talk of different cultures like football culture, film culture, Nepali culture or culture of any particular time.

In this line of thought, historically, in the late 18th century there emerged the idea of culture as a whole way of life of a social group of whole society. Regarding culture, British cultural Marxist Raymond Williams gives three types of definitions assuming culture as 'one of the most complicated words in English language. According to him the three definitions are: first, culture can be used to refer to a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development'. Similarly, the second use of the word 'culture' might be to suggest a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group. Finally, Williams suggests that culture can be used to refer to the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity (1-2).

According to E.B. Tylor, "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art,

morals, law, custom and any other capability and habits acquired by a man as a member of society" (1). But Edward Said argues "culture with its superior position has the power to authorize, to dominate, to legitimize denote, interdict and validate: in short i.e. the power of culture to an agent of and perhaps the main agency of powerful differentiation, within its domain and beyond it too" (9). Thus, culture for Said is not only positive doctrine of the best that is thought and known but also a differentially negative doctrine of all that is not best. This double faceted view of culture makes one aspect of culture more powerful than the other. Culture, thus becomes a powerful means of domination and appropriation.

Apart from the main agency of powerful differentiation, the perspective of normative usage, culture seems to be claiming to represent the organic voice of people. Out of the conflict between culture in normative sense and culture in the anthropological sense, there emerged a third way of using the term, "one that refers neither to a people's organic way of life nor to the normative values preached by leading intellectual but to a battle ground of social conflicts and contradiction" (Graff and Bruce 421). In the similar context Samuel P. Huntington says the "peoples and countries with different culture are coming apart" and at the same time he insists the fact that "cultural identity is the central factor shaping a country's association and antagonism" to other (s) (125). Thus, culture is also the medium of unification and cause of antagonism at the same time.

Similarly, the culture is a mutable term and a simple definition or analysis appertaining to its fluctuating nature can be misleading. The term has been viewed differently by different thinkers in different periods of time. This means cultural studies, as discussed and defined, by writers like Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Peter Brooker, Chris Barker, Homi K. Bhaba, Edward Said can be regarded as crucial

for its study. By tracing the ways in which the concept of cultural studies has been defined by these critics, we can explore the changing concepts of cultural studies.

Chris Barker, a cultural critic views culture as:

Culture is not 'out there' waiting to be correctly described by theorists who keep getting it wrong. Rather, the concept of culture is a tool which is of more or less usefulness to us as a life form. Consequently, its usage and meanings continue to change as thinkers have hoped to 'do' different things with it. (35)

Barker believes that culture is not something that is out there. It is a tool for him and he focuses on 'how and for what purpose the language of culture is used'. So, for him culture is a set of practices constituted by the language game.

The term culture, however, has a very broad meaning. According to a British Marxist cultural theorist, Raymond Williams, the term culture in its most widespread use in later nineteenth and twentieth centuries, refers to the world of arts (literature, music, painting, sculpture, theatre, and film). Williams, thus receives the term as being intricately related to changing history, exposing different forms in different periods (36). Culture has, therefore, been defined in relation to this historical form of society, and the forms may oppose each other. As a result, culture is seen as a reflection of necessary automatic and spiritual values of a particular period, but demands a continuous and often superstitious continuation. With the emergence and dissemination of post-colonial criticism, this very notion of culture is extended and now it is most often dealt in association with different concept like 'power', 'discourse' and 'representation'. It has become the most contested space. For post-colonial critic Homi K. Bhabha, culture is a strategy of survival. He believes "postcolonial criticism focuses us to engage with culture as an uneven incomplete production of meanings

and value . . . produced in the act of social survival" (438). Defining the idea of 'culture' in this regard, he further says:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are in specific histories of cultural displacement . . . It is translational because such spatial histories of displacement . . . make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. (438)

The transnational dimension of cultural transformation – migration, diaspora, displacement, and relocation – makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. Thus, the cultural translation develops the condition of transnational. The outcomes of all of them give us the displacement of culture and the displacement of identity as well.

'Cultural studies' is an institutional name often given today to bring together all new vocabularies and practices emerging in the field of cultural criticism and theory. It is difficult to define cultural studies because it has no referent to which we can point. For Chris Barker, Cultural Studies is a set of practice constituted by the 'language-game' of cultural studies. It is not a tightly coherent unified movement with a fixed agenda but a loosely connected group of tendencies, issues and questions. Cultural Studies is composed of elements of Marxism, New Historicism, Feminism, Gender Studies, Anthropology, Studies of Race and Ethnicity, Popular Culture Studies, and Postcolonial Studies. Regarding its diversities, Kenneth Womack writes:

Cultural Studies manifests itself in a wide array to interpretative dimensions, including such intersecting fields of inquiry as gender studies, postcolonial, race and ethnic studies . . . The politics of

nationalism, popular culture, postmodernism and historical criticism among a variety of other topics. (243)

On this regard, cultural studies refuses the idea of 'universal' culture. So, Cultural Studies is a multi or post-disciplinary field of inquiry, which blurs the boundaries between itself and other subjects. It remains difficult to pin down the boundaries of cultural studies as a coherent, unified, academic discipline with clear cut substantive topics, concept and methods which differentiate it from other disciplines. But what is crucial here is Barker's view on cultural studies. He believes it is always connected to 'power' and 'politics'. He says "cultural studies is a body of theory generated by thinkers who regard the production of theoretical knowledge as a political practice" where knowledge is never an objective phenomenon but a matter of positionality (5).

In the same way, a number of Anglo American critics now agree that V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie find a unique and a fertile place from where they can write about their anguish toward the west as well as they can express a hunting search for their true culture identity. They, therefore, seek their belonging and write about that. Their writings are full of cultural expression relying on the fact that the notion of cultural identity is in fact is problematic and they struggle to adjust as well as assimilate with the notions of identities by both aspects: failure and success.

The proposition from these observations can be drawn as – cultural studies refers to multi stranded intellectual movement that places cultural analysis in the context of social formation, seeing society and culture as the product of historical processes unlike frozen artifacts, emphasizing the inextricable relations between culture and power and calling attention to social inequalities – thus always making a committed call for democratization.

In synopsis, culture is a source of identity and rather a combative entity. It is a sort of theatre where various social, political and ideological causes engage one another. According to Huntington the war of ideologies has been transformed into the war of cultures or civilizations. In order to find their place in culture people use to ask such questions: "Who are we?", and "Where do we belong?" (126). Therefore, the relation between individual and his culture is an active give and take relation.

Identity

Identity is the meaning or self-concept that one gives to oneself or the meaning in general that human beings give to themselves. In other words, it is the sum totality of values attached to individuals by an age and a community, in terms of their class, group or culture and institution of any kind. Thus, with the change in values, or the intellectual developments in human history, man's concept of self has always changed. It has sometimes only been modified and at other times radically changed.

Identity has become the central area of concern in cultural studies during the 1990s. Identity is the process how we describe ourselves to each other. Cultural studies explores how we come to be the kinds of people we are, how we are produced as subjects, and how we identify with descriptions of ourselves as male or female, black or white, young or old, Asians or Europeans. As perceived within the domain of cultural studies, identities are not things which exist simply there with universal qualities, rather they are discursive constructions. Thus, in this sense, identities are constituted or made. Balibar perceives: "Identity is never a peaceful acquisition: it is claimed as a guarantee against a threat of annihilation that can be figured by another identity or by erasing of identities" (186).

Identity, a discourse of tradition, is not transparent or unproblematic. For critics like Stuart Hall, identity is a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within representation. There are, according to Hall, at least two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Hall writes, "within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people' with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of references and meaning" (111). Such a conception of cultural identity played a critical role in all the postcolonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world.

Cultural identity, in the second way of thinking, along the many points of similarity has critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather 'what we have become'. Hall writes about the second notion of cultural identity as:

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, may undergo constant transformation. (112)

In this second sense, identity is subject to continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a 'mere' recovery of the past, waiting to be found, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past. It is only from this second

position of the identity proposed by Hall that we can properly understand the traumatic character of the 'colonial experience' out of which are constituted the identities such as Indianness, Carribeanness, Africanness and Blackness. The ways in which such identities were positioned by and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalization. The dominant or superior culture has the power to influence or dominate the other. So, not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, were we constructed as the other within the categorize of knowledge of the West by those regimes, but also, they had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'other'.

A number of Anglo American critics now agree that V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie find a unique and a fertile place from where they can write about their anguish toward the West as well as they can express a hunting search for their true culture identity. They, therefore, seek their belonging and write about that. Their writings are full of cultural expression relying on the fact that the notion of cultural identity is in fact is problematic and they struggle to adjust as well as assimilate with the notions of identities by both aspects: failure and success.

Thus, it becomes clear that the identities are fluid, and are both consciously and unconsciously delimited. Any numbers of factors are likely to be under negotiation in either cases; whether of religion, nation, language, political ideology or cultural expression.

Dislocation

Dislocation refers to the lack of 'fit' when one person moves from known to an unknown location. It is the outcome of willing or unwilling movement from known to unknown place. The phenomenon of dislocation in modern society is the result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion

and settlement. As quoted by Hall, Ernesto Laclau defines dislocation as a structure that is characterized by a never-ending process. He claims, "a dislocated structure is one whose center is displaced and replaced by another" ("The Question" 278).

In postcolonial discourse dislocation is the outcome of transformation from one country to another. In defining the term dislocation Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write:

A term for both the occasion of displacement that occurs as result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with this event the term is used to describe the experience of those who have willingly moved from the imperial 'Home' to the colonial margin, but it affects all those who, as a result of colonialism, have been placed in a location that, because of colonial hegemonic practices, needs, in a sense, to be 'reinvented' in language, in narrative and in myth. (*Key* 73)

Dislocation can also be extended further to include psychological and personal dislocation resulting from cultural denigration as well as voluntarily chosen status. In many cases, dislocation exists within the country as well. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin add ". . . dislocation is a feature of all invaded colonies where indigenous or original cultures are, if not annihilated often literally dislocated i.e. moved off what was their territory" (75).

Withstanding the instability of the identities, dislocation and displacement can be created with the social structure. It is caused by the doctrine of old identities, which stabilizes the social world so long. It gives rise to new identities and fragment modern subject. This is the crisis of identity. A term often used to describe the experience of dislocation is Martin Heidegger's term ' *unheimlich* or *unheimlichkeit*

that literally means 'unhousedness' or 'not-at-home-ness' which is also sometimes translated as 'uncanny' or 'uncanniness'.

Place and displacement are the crucial features of post-colonial discourse. The concepts of place and displacement demonstrate the very complex interaction of language, history and environment in the experience of colonized peoples and the importance of space and location in the process of identity formation. Dislocation is not only transformation to different locations; rather is a key factor which helps to form a distinctive form of culture. The very term place does not simply mean the physical landscape. It is rather a issues of culture and its elements. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin see 'place' as a term that can not be separated from the issue of culture.

According to them:

. . . place in postcolonial societies is a complex interaction of language, history and environment. It is characterized firstly by sense of displacement in those who have moved to the colonies or the more widespread sense of displacement from imported language of a gap between the experienced environment and descriptions the language provides, and secondly by a sense of immense investment of culture in the construction of place. (*Reader* 391)

Linguistically speaking a sense of displacement, of the lack of 'fit' between language and place, may be experienced by both those who possess English as a mother language and those who speak it as a second language. In many contexts, 'Place' does not become an issue in a society's cultural discouragement until colonial intervention radically disrupts the primary modes of its representation by separating 'space' from place" (*Key* 177). The necessity of dislocation has indeed become the mother of invention. Hence, the disruptive and disorienting experience of dislocation becomes a

primary influence on the regenerative energies in post culture. Similarly, a sense of place is embedded in cultural history, in legend and language of specific areas but such a sense is disrupted due to the profound discursive interference of colonialism.

In addition to the separation of 'space' from place, brought about by European ways of measuring a universal space and time that becomes an issue within language. The concept of place itself may be very different in different societies and this can have quite specific political as well as literary effects in the context of displacement. For example, in aboriginal societies, place is traditionally not a visual construct, a measurable space or even a topographical system but a tangible location of one's own being. As Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra point out, "place in aboriginal culture, rather than existing as a visual construct, is a kind of "ground of being" (*Reader* 792). Thus what becomes more vivid is the 'place' is much more than the land. The theory of place does to propose a simple separation between the place managed and described in language, and some real place inaccessible to it, rather indicates in some sense "Place is language, something in constant flux, a discourse" (*Key*182).

Chapter II

A Critical Reading of (Anita Brookner's) *Visitors*

Anita Brookner's *Visitors* depicts the crisis of culture and identity, taken to the estrangement of dislocation. The protagonist, Dorothea May and her best visitor man Steve Best are the victims of it. Although, they look like good mannered but are compelled to redirect their lives to the dislocated culture and identity. The time, places and circumstances have been alchemist for their changing identity or selfhood.

American teen age boy, Steve Best, gradually haunted the British Dorothea May of seventy and vice versa. Identity of spinster, wife, widow and girl friend of teenage boy are the changing identity of her life. She never got involved in a stable status. This paradigm of life says there is nothing except changeability of selfhood, where nobody can flee from.

If simple thing affects the total life and diverts to another, what are here which do not affect human lives and their identity. Changing ingredients are pervasive. And, the development of information technology has also affected unavoidably those perhaps deeper and more slowly moving cultural changes with the dawn of the new century. In this regard, Douglas Kellner, in "Cultural Theory" opines:

These include the increasing impact that new technologies are having upon our lives. Biotechnology and especially genetics promises to fundamentally change our understanding of what it is to be human. The expansion of the internet and the integration of our lives with the diverse virtual worlds that constitute cyber-culture similarly promise enormous changes to our self-identity and to our interactions with other people. (Introduction, x)

Environmental changes also impact upon our cultures, and our cultures nurture the resources upon which we will draw to cope with and check environmental degradation. In such a rapidly changing cultural and political world, the creativity of cultural theorists in thinking about that world, in imagining possible futures, and beginning to outline the moral, political and aesthetic arguments that will shape that future, is increasingly important.

Life keeps on changing its various colours and shapes under various socio-cultural perspectives. Hence, in this respect Brookner argues in *Visitors*: “She was a born spinster...She had been thirty-nine when she married Henry...” (13). It is true that when Henry’s first marriage was unhappy, Mrs. May was a second wife and it happened in her “thirty-nine”, till now “she was a born spinster”. To clarify this, Brookner again writes:

Nothing of Henry remained in that room except the knowledge of his disappearance from her life. Yet in the spare room, the room that was to be invaded, plundered, she could still see him as she had so often seen him when he woke from an afternoon nap, his hair wild, his gaze turned inward ... (13)

Because Dorothea May, explores the marital relationship as of the dignity and fame. Although she remembers it in her later life, nevertheless, her identity of wife to widow woman has been created. Now, she is the landmark of English culture, identity and location. But human’s position is not always stable i.e. contingent.

Her old identities which stabilized the social world for so long are in the ebb, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual of a unified subject. This so-called ‘crisis of identity’ is seen as part of a wider process of change which is dislocating the central structures and processes of societies and undermining

the frameworks which give individuals stable anchorage in the social world. Hall claims that “modern identities are being ‘de-centred’, that is, dislocated or fragmented” (“The Question” 274). He sees the fragmentation of the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality which once gave us firm locations as social individuals, undermining our sense of ourselves as integrated subject. So, there is this loss of “stable ‘sense of self’ ” which is also called the dislocation or de-centering of the subject, creating a crisis of identity for the individuals (274). He quotes Kobena Mercer and says that “identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis; when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable, is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty”(275). For this purpose, Stuart Hall, thus writes:

If we feel we have a unified identity, from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or “narrative of the self” about ourselves. The fully unified, completed secure of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities _ any one of which we could identify with at least temporarily. (228)

Identity, in fact, is formed in the interaction between self and society. Wherever there is the disturbance in such relation, the subjects get the problems of cultural identity. Hall adds, "Correspondingly, the identities which composed the social landscapes ‘out there’, and which ensured our subjective conformity with the objective needs of the culture is breaking us as a result of structural and institutional change" (277). Hall, thus, posits the problem of identities in what he calls “structural and institutional change”. In such situation, contradictory identities grow within Dorothea May,

pulling her in different directions, so that her identification is continuously being shifted about.

Hall, however, considers the role of globalization to be crucial to bring such crises of identity. Globalization suggests that global culture is brought about by a variety of social and culture developments: the existence of a world satellite information system: the emergence of global patterns of consumption and consumerism has created identity crises of Dorothea May.

Hence, Dorothea May wrestled against globalization effect because she wants to avoid all unhealthy environment before her. Those were:

She regretted anything nebulous, mysterious, immanent. She abhorred atmospheres, portents. Nevertheless, she preferred to keep the door of the spare room permanently closed. (36)

Because, Henry's death created the circumstances as contingent. "She abhorred atmospheres and portents" (36) which were haunted things in her life. What happens in future is impossible to guess. "Nevertheless she preferred to keep the door of the spare room permanently closed" (36) and endeavored to exceed it from her life because time is also fed up with unimaginable portents. So, it is her 'dare to think' to avoid it from her life.

But, we are sure that time has also no power to prevent uncertainties. Now, Dorothea May is bullied to provide the spare room for a wedding period. And, a stranger is going to be managed for shelter, "Are you asking me to give house room to a complete stranger?" "Best, his name is. Steve Best. His name is neither here nor there. I simply don't want anyone in my flat, let alone an unknown young man" (26).

Although, she is unwilling to manage him a room, circumstance is making her disgusting. If it had made her only to provide the shelter for a stranger it would had

taken into her favour. Instead of that she now changed into a widow young woman through the impression taken from an American Steve's life style. She also got impression from him that she had become hybridized with pop music forgetting her own standards of British motherhood.

Willingly or unwillingly, her identity got dislocated. The dislocation has one-to-one correspondence with culture and identity. Nevertheless, dislocation refers to the lack of 'fit' when one person moves from known to an unknown location. So that Steve Best's move from America to Britain has lacked the identity and made him dislocated. It is the outcome of willing or unwilling movement from known to unknown place. The phenomenon of dislocation in modern society is the result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement. As quoted by Hall, Ernesto Lau defines dislocation as a structure that is characterized by a never-ending process. He claims, "dislocated structure is one whose center is displaced and replaced by another" ("The Question" 278).

As like Hall's argument, Dorothea May and Steve Best share the same quality of displaced and replaced by another culture, identity and location, and this displacement and replacement evolves to the condition of dislocation.

Dislocation is a socio-cultural phenomenon. Historically it was developed in the institution of slavery as well as the system of indentured labour. For instance, scholars like Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin say, "the practice of slavery and indentured labour resulted in world wide colonial diaspora" (69). In this sense, diasporic communities, formed by slavery, indentured labour and forced or voluntary migration are dislocated and displaced and alienated in new socio- cultural milieu. Means, the hybrid American culture created new impact into virgin British culture. Thus, diasporic movement seems to be the beginning of dislocation and alienation as well.

When we speak about Dorothea's husband's characteristics, it is to ignore of others. It is to praise the culture of her husband and identity as well. Because Brookner comments about her protagonist and says:

Henry would never have let things get this far, she thought. It was true that Henry did not enjoy loud music either. She had only been able to indulge her tastes since his death. And until she met him she had only had reasonable tastes to indulge. (47)

It was the love of Dorothea's second culture earned after married life. Her husband, Henry May, was a mannerful man of conservative social codes of conduct. Henry "did not enjoy loud music either" (47). Here, this is typical Britishness. But, after his death, when Steve Best was welcomed, there was mixed up of various cultures; in the replacement of British to American and instead of old lady to young woman. But this was the unimagined dislocation and hybridization. But, simultaneously, Steve has also been dislocated and hybridized culturally and identically through British culture. Because dislocation is the outcome of willing or unwilling movements from known to unknown location. This is the result of transportation from one country to another.

Dislocation can be extended further to include the psychological and personal dislocation resulting from the cultural denigration as well as voluntarily chosen status. Furthermore, dislocation is related to 'homelessness.' Someone who has been abandoned by tradition is a 'homeless' man, who is 'alienated' and haunted by the same (Nixon 14-17). People often realize this fact of loss when they are displaced and dislocated. This displacement is dislocation of the subject, which gives them the sense of alienation. In modern society, there are a number of internal rupture and fragmentation in cultures resulting in dislocation and displacement. Regarding this Hall writes:

A dislocated structure is one whose center is displaced and replaced by another, but by a plurality of power centers, and the societies have no center, no single articulating or organizing principle. It is constantly being decentered or dislocated by force outside itself. ("The question" 278)

The Protagonist's life has also faced same in the sense that she was forced by her husband's relatives to accept their proposal of having Steve Best into her flat. Because, *Time Out Daily* writes: "Dorothea May has had a reclusive life, particularly since the death of her husband Henry some fifteen years ago. Genteel faint-hearted and solitary, her closest relatives are Henry's cousin, the imperious Kitty, and her husband Austin. When Kitty's granddaughter comes to London to marry, Dorothea is bullied into providing a room for Steve, the best man, thus plunging her into a world of youth that finds both puzzle and transforming." (Back cover page)

It is customary for Hall to see the face of society with ruptures where no stable identity of individual is possible. Withstanding the instability of identities, the dislocation and the displacement can be created with the social structure itself.

Dislocation makes the individuals feel a loss of their cultural belonging giving victim a sense of cultural alienation. It comprises the dimension of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, normlessness and self-estrangement of the individuals. Those dimensions of dislocation are created by loss of cultural identity. Steve Best's American culture and identity of Americanhood is transformed into British culture and apart from that the British lady, Dorothea May has lost typical British culture and identity. "...Henry did not enjoy loud music either..." (47). Dorothea had been enjoying soft, British music but after her association with Best, she developed her taste into rock music. And Dorothea's internalization of Steve's life style got shaped

like her own one. To build that concept in mind is to have same characteristic within him. Now, Brookner writes “She knew nothing about him beyond the fact that he was reasonably tactful; beyond that, and his reclusiveness, which almost matched her own ... (79). He has no cared about his whole way of life. But she wants to mildly interrupt into his life’s characteristics which were unproductive. This is the stimulation for getting changed and transformed into British life style. These all are the conditions of losses creates the question on own selfhood. It is the degrading stage which is mild corruption on power, meaning, integration, norm and value and selfhood.

The earned standards of them have sunk into alienation. To get culturally and identically alienated is to be drowned into problems of inbetweenness of power marginalization and meaning or self devalorization. The question arises in every steps of life that cannot flow smoothly in right direction. Then after, human feels automatically alienated and gradually gets dislocated. This ungovernable feeling evolves the human to self-estrangement. This is the dislocation of culture and identity of individuals.

The unfounded and devalorized personal standards are the by-products of cross-culture and cross-identity. There automatically arises the questions that who are you? and where are you? Those questions create the problems in self-identity. To have questions in culture and identity is to have problems in own culture and identity. The British dignified lady, Dorothea May and American Steve Best, have shared and faced the same crises in life and have victimized. Thus, they have lost their powers, meanings, integration, selfhood, norms and values and become dislocated in their cultural identities.

Uprooting of migrants from their societies and cultures of origin creates the problems of identity a lot. The problems related to culture and identity can be solved in relation to culture itself. Culture is the defining principle of mankind which provides them their valuable identity. Moreover, culture is the power that is related to both repulsion and attraction. As Huntington says that the "peoples and countries with different cultures are coming apart", and at the same time, he insists the fact that "cultural identities is the central factor shaping a country's association and antagonism" to others (125). This is already said by Kellner that it is the great impact of globalization, and dangerous supplement of culture and identity.

The same impact has fallen on Steve Best and Dorothea May. American Best has come to London as a visitor and Dorothea is the receiver. To be a visitor itself is contingent. To visit is to gain and transform culture and identity as well. So it becomes culturally, identically and locationally hybridized. So, he is in the position of cross-cultural identification. From this perspective, their identity does not exceed than 'Contingency of Selfhood'.

When a monk is asked about his /her identity and so on, he /she answers that they accept everything. Like that *Visitors* have the same qualities. It is universal that their identity, culture and location are contingent. Moreover, like that qualities of visitor and changing style of life, the following extract clarifies:

It was a pity that the pills had such a sedative effect; she was ready for a nap, in her own room, in silence, the curtains drawn. She knew that she should be asking him questions, making it clear that she expected him to be out all day, showing him the kitchen and the bathroom, feeling a tug of despair at the complications still to come. And the

coverlet was not yet in place, was still in the plastic bag, which she was caring like a 'visitor', a stranger in her own home. (41)

Dorothea May is not in good position. Her changing psychological expression has given her way to a 'visitor'. Her identity has not stopped her from being stranger. It is said that nothing has power to control culture and identity having transformed. This is the universal truth that the cultural and identical selfhood is always contingent. The contingency of selfhood questions the whole metaphysical tradition by deconstructing the Pre-Nietzschean philosophers believed in the "given" and essential selfhood. It is not the matter of necessity but that of contingency. Because "she expected him to be out all day ..." (41) and the environment and condition provided the chances of an unavoidable and always essential wants and wishes for opposite sexes, although it did not took in its climax.

The psychological development according to Freudian Psychoanalysis has made it also questionable in culture and identity. Is this her culture to develop the relationship which makes her to indulge with Best even psychologically? This is the great impress found from an American postmodern visitor boy. These all things have been the Alchemies for her and neighbors, these are automatically created. Because this is the proof that "she understood what it was that made people want to change their identity. Even her own identity was threatened by recent events, and yet she might, she reflected, find the change beneficial. It was to be hoped that the others would as well" (61).

The then circumstances made her identity, culture and location changed. She has been dislocated culturally and identically. Cross-cultural encounter made them to feel typically different from their originality. In the life of Dorothea, when Steve came as a visitor, was the by product of marriage ceremony of his friend, David and Ann.

That was the stimulation for Dorothea to meet Steve as her company. As an example, Kitty said “I thought you might be glad of the company, Kitty’s voice went on, now as mild as milk. All alone in that big flat. Molly and I often wonder why you haven’t thought of taking a lodger. This was the insult direct, and was noted as such on both sides” (27).

Now, time made her compelled to accept the condition because due to her rejection there would be very disappointment in Kitty’s family. Although she rejected their proposal, it was not the condition to deny their voice. Moreover, she counteragued “I have all the company I want, she said. I’m afraid I can’t do anything for your friend. I don’t want a stranger in my flat” (27). But, her unwillingness to accept the complete stranger was in vain.

Now she is totally surrounded by the circumstances which are always contingent or changeable. The Steve’s American life style attacked to her. How much the circumstances rolled her that she could not do anything except to accept that condition. In Brookner’s expression:

She did not invite sympathy and received none. To outsiders she was a typical English widow, dignified, uncomplaining, comfortable in her mind, no longer visited by unseemingly thoughts. She did not languish: that was the characteristic by which she was recognized. (176)

Is this not a good culture and identity, located in a single environment? But slowly and gradually she has faced the identity crisis. Mismatch of culture known as a cross-culture, creates another identity. “She did not languish...”, “a typical English widow”, “dignified”, “uncomplaining”, “comfortable”... (176) these all are the characteristics which gave her identity as the best which smells very good in life. But the then circumstances made her compelled to accept the proposal of her neighbours.

However, the notion of cultural identity is not only limited to 'what we really are' but also to 'what we have become'. One cannot speak for very long with any exactness about one's identity. Such is the second notion of cultural identity as Hall argues:

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. (112)

Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, identities are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Rather than merely grounded in a 'recovery' of the past, which is to be found, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past.

Imagination and globalization have accelerated the movement of people from one place to another resulting into the confrontation and interaction among people with diverse cultural backgrounds. The identity of these people is plural and partial at the same time. This is the situation of having no stable identity and a fully integrated subjectivity.

Thus identity is neither once-and-for-all nor is a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute return. The fully unified, completed, secure and coherent identity has been merely a fantasy. Rather than an essence, identity is a positioning which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'. The concept of culture is associated with the knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of

society. In its early usage, it was used to refer to intellectual and artistic works or practices defining human society as socially constructed. Later the term is applied to any custom, art, social institution, literature, music and so on that is cultivated in the society. Every human society has its own shape, purpose, and identification. Cultures vary because each society has its own history, religion, norms and customs. Thus, the literature as a reflection of culture also becomes vary. And when someone brought up in one society or culture is placed in another culture, s/he may feel alienated and dislocated. So the concept of culture is associated with identity.

Her single foundation of life and identity has been changed. For this matter, the undermining factors are the bullied circumstances, time and places. This was caused by unseemingly thoughts of Steve Best. He made her life full of changeable. This changeability is contingency of selfhood. If contingency occurs in selfhood, mind also becomes full of uncertainty. Because according to Brookner, Dorothea May expressed in her letter to Susie thus:

Dear Susie, I thought I would not wait until Christmas to give you my news. I may be going away for a while. I have no particular destination in mind, but I think it is time to_’ Here she broke off; time to do what? ‘...time to see more of the world before it is too late. I will let you know where I end up. If you ever think of joining me do let me know. It would be great fun. (216)

Now not to find any destination in mind is the situation of being inbetweenness of uncertainty. And if uncertainty has haunted the mind, it automatically makes human beings questioning the identity. Identity is formed through culture and locality. When identity is not fixed, culture and location also has no any fixity. They are interchangeable. And, the characters, Mrs. May and Steve Best, are the victims of

same token of uncertain condition. They have not met any fixed destination, so they have become destinationless and biased by culture, identity and location. And, these all are the by products of contingent time, places and circumstances. Apart from this culture has that sort of capacity that it is first of all created by human but the same persons get changed. When human surpasses, the culture also gets that quality.

Dorothea May and Steve Best share the same quality but in their transition phase they have also been victimized by the destinationless mind and thinking. These all are the by product of cultural changeability. Culture has this power that it is not easily defined; it can have different meanings in different contexts. However, the concept that lies at the core of cultural studies, it may be suggested, is very much the concept that is found in cultural anthropology also. So Douglas Kellner in his "Cultural Theory" writes:

It entails recognition that all human beings live in a world that is created by human beings, and in which they find meaning. Culture is the complex everyday world we all encounter and through which we all move. Culture begins at the point at which humans surpass whatever is simply given in their natural inheritance. The cultivation of the natural world, in agriculture and horticulture, is thus a fundamental element of a culture. (81)

As such culture has this power that can cultivate whole everyday life which man cannot imagine. The most important effect of culture is the ability of human beings to construct and build the identity. Culture thus, belongs to the broader human consciousness that is both developed and shaped by society, religion, history, and geography (Saraswati 223; "culture"). A postcolonial critic, Edward Said in his work *Culture* defines culture as:

A concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought, as Matthew Arnold put it in the 1860s – this differentiates 'us' from 'them', almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity, a rather combative one at that, as well see recent 'returns' to culture and tradition. (13-14)

Thus, Said's definition highlights the importance of culture as "the source of identity" and equalizes the term to somewhat "reservoir of the best". So, culture appears to him as "a protective enclosure" (xiv).

Identity is the meaning or self-concept that one gives to oneself or the meaning in general that human beings give to themselves. In other words, it is the sum totality of values attached to individuals by an age and a community, in terms of their class, group or culture and institution of any kind. Thus, with the change in values, or the intellectual developments in human history, man's concept of self has always changed. It has sometimes only been modified and at other times radically changed.

Identity has become the central area of concern in cultural studies during the 1990s. Identity is the process how we describe ourselves to each other. Cultural studies explores how we come to be the kinds of people we are, how we are produced as subjects, and how we identify with descriptions of ourselves as male or female, black or white, young or old, Asians or Europeans. As perceived within the domain of cultural studies, identities are not things which exist simply there with universal qualities, rather they are discursive constructions. Thus, in this sense, identities are constituted or made. Balibar perceives: "Identity is never a peaceful acquisition: it is claimed as a guarantee against a threat of annihilation that can be figured by another

identity or by erasing of identities" (186). Thus, identity or selfhood is not universal. It is discursive construction but in the same way it also celebrates the loss, because:

A child ran towards her, cheeks aflame. To be able to run like that again! 'Bobby, Bobby', called his mother. 'Wait for me. Don't cross the road.' He looked back, laughing, and then ran on again. The mother smiled her excuses and hastened her step. But Mrs. May silently willed the child forward, as if his unbroken stride, his flaring colour, were a portent, and when the dull sky briefly brightened she thought how fitting it was that speed and light should be celebrated, and the long evening kept at bay.(216-17)

Dorothea and the child both seem optimistic. Because in child's running and dull sky's brightening symbolizes the unending process of activities or open-endedness.

Anita Brookner's *Visitors* brings both British and American Worlds together affirming the cross-cultural identity of inbetweenness. It is an attempt of British May and American Steve's recreation of their own space of existence in between both cultures that reshape their identity. The expression of culture is inextricably bound up with the notion of identity. People express their identity: they question it if they find the difficulty of belonging; they even seek their relation to the source culture; and thereby try to establish their identity. Identity as such has been a topical issue in the study of culture, and the scholars like Kobena Mercer in "Welcome to the Jungle" say that the concept of identity is in crisis (109). Almost everywhere people say that this crisis is caused by Globalization, a concept responsible for the experience of migrancy, altering relations between Western and other cultures and the sense of identity of the individuals whose lives have taken them across the borders between so-called the first worlds, the second worlds, and the third worlds, or across in effect,

pre-modern and postmodern societies. The globalization in its long run has caused the interfusing of identities which can be termed as 'the hybridity of culture identities'.

This notion of hybridity suggests that it has the relation to 'racial' and 'ethnic' identities. Moreover, these identities are not pure but are the product of mixing, fusion, and creolization, following the mixing and movements of cultures.

Specifically from the slave trade to mass media, there lies the great shape of modern identities. The result is the fusion or hubridity of identities which cannot be taken as the product of 'assimilation' of one culture or cultural tradition by another, but the production of something new. This new notion of identity is equated with the studies of the hybridity of cultural identity that are closely allied to accounts of diasporic identity. Diaspora is a term that was initially used to describe black and other diasporas.

The identities are fluid, and are both consciously and unconsciously delimited. Any number of factors are likely to be under negotiation in either case; whether of religion, nation, language, political ideology or cultural expression. One example can be Islam: a religious faith that shapes the social, economic and political character of entire regimes and can reach into the detailed social and sexual lives of its adherents.

The reality should expose the fact that developments in theory have accompanied the general social processes indicated above and have played their part in underlying, and providing a vocabulary for a changing awareness of many subtleties of identities and of the allied affirmation of a given identity in relation to its supposed binary opposite. Stuart Hall observed the scene with the people creating their new but both constructed and emergent subject. Hall believes that cultural identity exists only in the representation. So, this concept, he puts:

It is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of

thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation. This view problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the terms 'cultural identity' lays claim. ("Cultural Identity" 110)

His idea is whoever "write and speak from a particular place and time, from history and a culture which is specific, get their 'I' "enunciated" (110). He, nevertheless, agrees to the point that, cultural identity is defined in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed selves, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common (110-11). Hall, after all, comes to conclude the fact that cultural identity "is not a fixed essence at all" (113).

In *Visitors*, Brookner also advocates through her main character Dorothea May that nothing is stable and fixed. So, she says:

Everything is provisional, she thought recklessly. Nothing matters very much. It hardly signifies that this person is here, since sooner or later he will be gone. By the same token I may soon be gone myself; my heart, contrary to Monty's anodyne assurances _ not very convincing, now that I come to think of it _ is almost certainly in a state of despair. We could all go at any minute... (123)

Crises of culture and identity have broken the endurance capacity of mind and created inconsistency in life. Disparity in life occurs when the question is aroused there. The provisionality of life is uncertainty in life. So this sardonic circumstance is the production of crises of culture, identity and location. The social codes of conducts

play the significant role to eliminate the self identity; nobody can flee from there.

The protagonist, Dorothea May has only accumulated and accomplished from her life of not having the single and stable identity and culture. She could not build the exactness of life. She was made and compelled to accept everything. Her avoidance of grotesque things blew in air. These were the ingredients to build her selfhood. It is metaphoric and metonymic. Accidentality, coincidences, different contexts, time, places and circumstances play vital role to determine human selfhood. Therefore, selfhood is contingent.

Chapter III: Conclusion

Anita Brookner's major character, Dorothea May, an old British lady of seventy, has come to the conclusion that 'everything is provisional' (123). The main alchemy for this change in her life is the American Steve Best. The society and time, places and circumstances have expanded their impressions to get her selfhood changed.

Both characters have shared the same sardonic experience of life. In the process of getting something, something has been missed, that is their indigenous culture, identity and location. Their location of Britain and America has been Brito-Americanized. This means, the identity or selfhood is created mixing old identities to new one.

Culture and identity are intricately related to each other. Culture helps to build the identity of human being. This is the selfhood earned in life. For this matter, globalization has as well bounded effects in culture. And by-product of this culture is human selfhood. When culture gets changed, the selfhood also gets changed.

The globalization of culture and identity is the amalgamation of culture and identity as well. This is the condition of cross-culture and hybridization. From the close relationship of those things the social codes of conduct cannot flee. By those impacts, protagonist, Dorothea May and her best man Steve Best slowly and gradually develop the selfhood as contingent. Although, it can be studied from the perspectives of Freudian Psychoanalysis and Feminism, it is appropriate to study on the theoretical basis of culture, identity and dislocation: contingent selfhood. Because, the present phenomena reveal the fact that every human being of this universe is having inter-changeability and intra-changeability.

The present novel also shares the same quality that every human being has

willingly or unwillingly and positively or negatively been acquiring the status of contingency. Human beings may or may not think that culture and identity are the richest things that are selfhood. Being this selfhood the most valuable, sometime has been devalorized by our unconsciousness. On this matter, Brookner has also given the same clue for our betterment. So, on the theoretical basis of 'culture, identity and dislocation: contingent selfhood' has been examined and analyzed. How one-to-one relationship among them has, and how they have played the significant role to change the self identity, also been analyzed.

Here, Brookner's heroine, Dorothea May had been bullied and compelled to accept a stranger, Steve Best from America, to put him in her flat that was occasioned by Steve Best's friends, David and Ann, in their marriage ceremony. And, Best started to live with seventy years old Dorothea May. Despite huge age gap, their relationship was developed as a boyfriend and a girlfriend. Dorothea's British and Steve's American way of life thus started to mingle into each other. Hence American culture and identity had developed its relationship with British culture and identity.

The situation of hybridization of culture and identity had created and developed the landmark impacts upon them. This made them feel gradually and slowly inbetweenness of cultures, identities and locations. Because, the true selves of them had been mingled with opposite cultures, identity and locations. Dorothea's identity of an old spinster to spouse; spouse to widow woman of seventy; widow woman to a young boy's girl friend had slowly and gradually evolved to the condition of cross-culture, cross-identity and as an output to dislocation.

The unwilling time, places and circumstances replaced and displaced them to the condition of dislocation. Especially Dorothea May, who was the lady of manner of discipline, dignified, and typical English widow got the culture and identity changed.

For this action, American Steve Best became alchemy. Now she has been identityless, and her selfhood of 'British Dorothea May' has been eliminated.

Eventually, thus, she got transformed due to the turbulences created for her although they seemed not huge in size. The socio-cultural scenario and time, places and circumstances played significant role in her personal life and her existence of self identity has always been contingent.

Lastly, this is argued that to have changed there is no need of apocalypse, war, and revolution. Only the simple things that the protagonists go through are also sufficient for it. Time, places and circumstances are the determiners for humans' daily activities and are always changeable. And the development of human selfhood cannot flee from those things. So, human's selfhood is always contingent or changeable.

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