POLITICS OF DIASPORA: KNOWLEDGE, POWER AND FREEDOM IN SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORIC NARRATIVES

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By

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that this dissertation entitled "Politics of Diaspora: Knowledge, Power and Freedom in South Asian Diasporic Narratives" was prepared by Rudra Prasad Paudel under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examination by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in ENGLISH.

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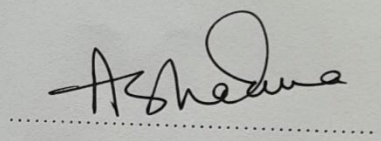

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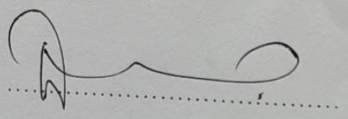

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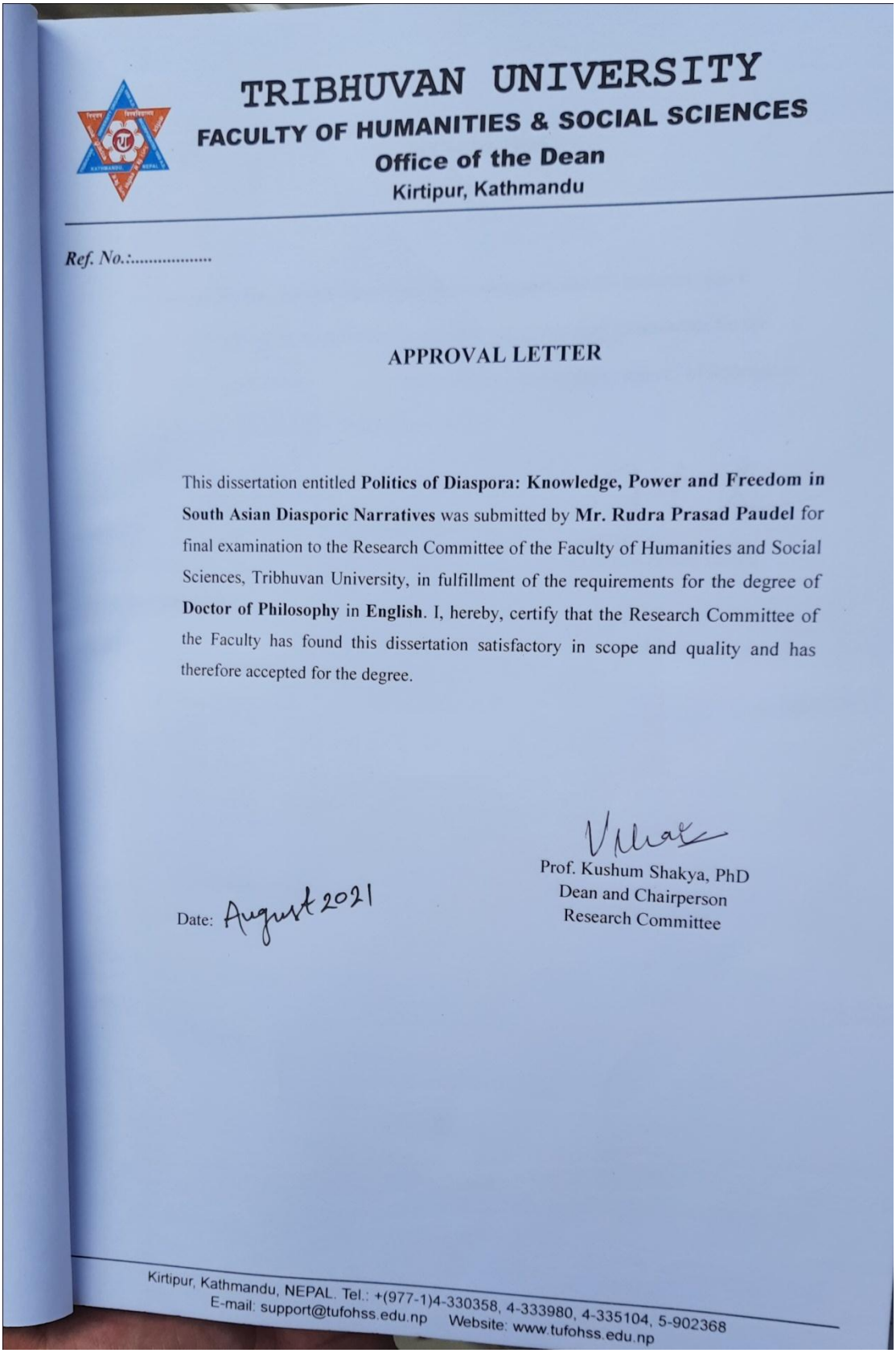

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APPROVAL LETTER

This dissertation entitled **Politics of Diaspora: Knowledge, Power and Freedom in South Asian Diasporic Narratives** was submitted by **Mr. Rudra Prasad Paudel** for final examination to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in **English**. I, hereby, certify that the Research Committee of the Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore accepted for the degree.

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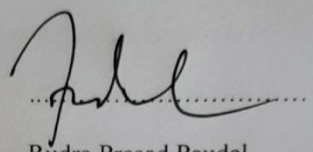
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Dissertation is my own work and the materials that it contains have not been published previously. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind and any other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.



Rudra Prasad Paudel

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Writing this dissertation has been a most vigorous effort for me for two reasons. First, I do not have sufficient knowledge to generate unique theory. Second, I have not had enough resources to accomplish this task both logistically and economically. Yet I have completed this in its present form and this is now open to the rest of intellectual community for criticism and scrutiny and submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Dean's office for the final evaluation.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the politics of diaspora that includes the search for knowledge, power and freedom as embodied in diasporic literature, a postcolonial body of writings, in general and the representative South Asian diasporic narratives, in particular. This project has thus two fundamental claims: one is general and other is specific. First, it seeks to explore that diasporization is the process of entire human civilization and has always been a part of human experience. Second, it explores the way that the more the diasporas suffer, the stronger they become and the greater knowledge, power and freedom they achieve. Diasporas' success and progress, which come from suffering and change, are never ending. This research explores about why the diasporas move from known to unknown or comfort zone to strange world.

In order to examine the postulations, this study hooks theoretical insights from the premises of postcolonial diasporic critics, mainly Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Sturt Hall, Steven Vertovec, Vijay Mishra, Victoria Cook, Paul Gilroy, James Clifford, Avtar Brah and Daphne Grace as well as their critical insights of cultural pluralism, diversity, consciousness and dynamism of new diasporas. It particularly examines the dynamism of diasporas demonstrated in South Asian diasporic narratives in which the new diasporas stay in liminal third space and produce and reproduce, promote and practice innovative cultures, identities and worlds as being the custodians of cultural heritage and connectivity.

The primary data of this research work are mainly based on the reading of Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989), Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (2000), Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* (2010). The researcher is of the opinion

that these diasporic narratives under scrutiny cover and represent the issues of entire South Asian region.

This research adopts qualitative methodology by utilizing narrative inquiry approach for interpreting and analyzing the primary sources. The major concept used to frame the present study is diaspora theory, which helps to unfold the politics of diaspora by providing the theoretical foundation.

More specifically, this research work explores the connection between the modern diasporas in the South Asian diasporic narratives of the South Asian diaspora writers who celebrate and glorify the activism of new diasporas and their politics, in relation to Bhabhaen third space that emerges when two cultural forms interact to create a new form and from that space the three worlds are visible. The diasporas' inner and outer journeys are unending because they are in such a fertile and powerful postcolonial diasporic free cultural space from where they achieve empirical and firsthand experience, and exercise for greater knowledge, power and freedom. For this politics, the diasporas abandon their birthplace and their nears and dears without any regret and melancholy. They happily endure and embrace the loss, uprootedness and suffering for the purpose.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Preview

This research explores the politics of diaspora that involves the search for knowledge, power, and freedom as represented in diasporic literature, a postcolonial body of writings, in general and the South Asian narratives in particular. It examines in this body of literature different experiences of diasporas who have been rooted in their native lands but have been living in other parts of the world. It particularly examines how South Asian diasporas in the literary representation have experienced in their host countries.

First, this chapter offers the notion of diaspora as found in different definitions provided by various scholars. Second, it offers the brief history of origin and development of diaspora, which sets concrete parameters and tendencies for analyzing the diasporic writers and their narratives. Third, it presents a review of literature on basic concepts, theoretical modality and primary texts, with different categories of diasporas, particularly the South Asian types who produce and practice cultures in cultural circuit. This segment also offers the comparative analysis of different views of diasporic theorists and critics who describe some important phases and features of diasporas that are found common in all diasporic literatures. Fourth, it identifies the research gap and point of departure, develops the research questions, sets the objectives, postulates a valid claim for inquiry, proposes theoretical/critical approaches and methods, presents the research design with appropriate methodology,

and fixes the universe of the entire research. Finally, this chapter offers the organization of the entire dissertation.

The Notion of Diaspora

The term 'diaspora' refers to the segment of people living outside the native homeland. It originally was associated with the scattering and exile of Jews from Israel and Jerusalem, now denotes the dispersion of people, forced or voluntary, who have resided in places other than their homeland with a sense of dislocation, anguish and nostalgia. However, they do not lose their hope to return, whether spoken or silent, to their home country ultimately.

Diasporas have deep cultural ties with their native land and people. According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffins and Helen Tiffin, "Diasporas, the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions, is a central historical fact of colonization" (*Key* 68-69). It means that diaspora includes the people dislocated from their native homelands through migration or exile as a result of colonial or imperial expansion or other causes like trade (slave), famine, labor, strong political or religious ties, study, employment, etc. The aforementioned definition of diaspora is narrow in modern context. In *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures around the World*, Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember and Ian Skoggard apply the term 'diaspora' more broadly as, "A people dispersed by whatever cause to more than one location. The people dispersed to different lands may harbor thoughts of return, may not fully assimilate to their host countries, and may maintain relationships with other communities in the diaspora" (xxvi). It demonstrates that diaspora means not only the forceful movement of Jews but also the "dispersal of various peoples away from their homelands" (Wolfreys 296) by any cause. It is generally understood as a group of people with a common origin,

language, culture and belief who currently live, more or less on a permanent basis, outside the borders of their homeland and yet keep connections and ties to their kinstate. Yossi Shain defines diaspora as "a people with a common origin, who reside, more or less on a permanent basis, outside the borders of their ethnoreligious homeland, whether that homeland is real or symbolic, independent or under foreign control" (130). The diaspora members identify themselves or are identified by others inside and outside their country of origin.

Etymological definition of diaspora presents a more brutal and catastrophic meaning. The word 'Diaspora' (capitalized) points out to the scattering of the Jews to countries outside of Palestine after the Babylonian captivity. Etymologically:

> The word, diaspora comes from the Greek word meaning 'to scatter and to sow', and originally referred to the dispersal and settlement of Jews outside the Palestine following the Babylonian exile (586 BC). Subsequently, the term became associated with the whole catastrophic history of the Jews and their multiple expulsions from different European countries over the centuries, culminating in the Holocaust of World War II. (Ember et al xiii)

Since then, 'diaspora' (un-capitalized) refers to the communities of people of other origins or ethnicities dislocated from their ancestral homeland. Another diasporic critic Walker Corner goes to the same root and defines the term more specifically, "The word is etymologically derived from the Greek *diasperien*, dia = 'across' and sperien = to sow or 'scatter seeds'" (qtd. in Braziel and Mannur 2). This definition compares diasporas with the seeds scattered and sown across the borders. Likewise, Shyam Selvadurai writes:

> The word diaspora (a term unfamiliar to many who are diasporic themselves) comes from Greek and implies a scattering of seeds. In its most classical

> sense, diaspora was used to define the experience of Jews expelled from Palestine and forced to disperse to the various parts of the earth. It is now broadly used to define other groups that have, through forced or voluntary migration, taken up abode in places other than the original center. The Chinese, Irish, Turkish, Armenian, South Asian, and Greek diasporas are examples of this dispersal. (4-5)

As the seeds multiply, so the diasporas get extended in several forms of dispersal at one or the other time in human history and civilization.

Padma Rangaswamy, one of the South Asian diaspora critics, defines the term Diaspora as the "'scattering of seeds', suggesting movement only in one outward direction with, the idea that once people leave, they are in exile and alienated from the homeland" ("South" 285). This alienated community of people is constantly under production creating new diasporas in the contemporary world. With new experience and policy, "they may undergo new phases of scattering or rediasporization as the case with the Jewish and Greek diasporas" (Faist 18). The proliferation of diasporas in the globalized world makes the networks of migrants with various legal links to the home country. They have become important actors in development policy.

In academia, diaspora discourse has enlarged to a great extent and also has proliferated. In this regard, Khachig Tololyan, an Armenian-American scholar writes, "We use 'diaspora' provisionally to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with large semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile-community, overseas community, ethnic community" ("The Nation" 3). This definition of diaspora covers a large number of people. Similarly, William Safran adds, "diaspora community seems increasingly to be used as metaphoric designations

for several categories of people – expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and minorities . . .” (83). However, these terms cannot be used randomly though different critics often use them synonyms because they carry varied experiences of diasporic writers. Scholarly speaking, ‘migrants’ refers to those who move from one place to another. An ‘emigrant’ denotes a person who leaves one’s own country to settle in another. An ‘immigrant’ is one who comes from one’s permanent residence to a country other than one’s native land. ‘Expatriates’ are those who are living abroad especially for a long period. A ‘diaspora’ is one who refers simply to “any kind of dispersal” (Baubock and Faist 12) and bridges cross-border experiences of homeland with destination.

Also, diaspora and transnationalism are sometimes used interchangeably in postcolonial discourse. Nicholas Van Hear is of the opinion that “there is some kind of exchange—social, economic, political or cultural—between or among the spatially separated populations comprising the diaspora. I use another, broader term in the text—transnational community” (6). For the formation of diaspora and transnational community, immigrants’ connection is necessary. According to Thomas Faist, “While diaspora is a very old concept, transnationalism is relatively new. . . . the terms have fuzzy boundaries and often overlap” (11). This shows that diaspora contains a very long history whereas the concept of transnationalism comes after the establishment of nation-states (independent states having their own fixed territory, sovereignty, population and government with diverse ethnic and cultural groups). Transnational communities are made up of individuals or groups of different national societies and use networks to strengthen solidarity among them. In this regard, diasporic critic Steven Vertovec states, “Transnationalism refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states” (*Transnationalism* i).

Vertovec points out that transnationalism seems to be everywhere now. Supporting Thomas Faist, Vetrovec clarifies that, "the dispersed diasporas of old have become today's transnational communities" (5) which involves various cross-border activities through social organization, mobility and communication.

Nowadays, the diasporas are considered as global citizens due to their mobility for more than one reason. The new global technologies such as transportations and communications, print and electronic media with Internet have socially, economically, politically and culturally facilitate them to connect home and host lands, location and dislocation. The new technologies have changed the face of migration and diasporic traditions. Some diasporic communities in the globalized world play an active role in the world politics. Moreover, the world has become more aware of the activities of diasporas because they produce their own distinct literatures, films and fine arts which are read and seen in many places around the world. The diasporic people have diverse identities and experiences. Therefore, their creation of literatures has a distinct taste.

Historical Background: Origin and Development of Diaspora

Historically, the notion of diaspora points mainly to Jews and less commonly to Greeks, Armenians, Africans and South Asians. The origin of diasporas was catastrophic and uncomfortable because they were forcefully dispersed and scattered to other lands. When we go before Jews, in Judeo-Christian tradition, the fall or departure of human beings from God or Paradise initiates a diasporic situation and the new settlement is a diasporic home from where they long to return. During the ancient time, the idea of diaspora constituted the punishment for people who had rejected the moral paths and denied the old ways. So, the concept of diaspora had become associated with unfavorable Jewish tradition. Robin Cohen in his *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* mentions:

> The most characterizations of diasporas emphasized their catastrophic origins, their mass nature and their disturbing effects. The idea that diaspora implied forcible dispersion was found in Deuteronomy (28:28) with the addition of a thunderous Old Testament warning to the people who had forsaken the righteous paths and abandoned the old ways. (21)

The Jewish diaspora refers to the expulsion of Israelites or Jews out of their ancestral homelands i.e. Land of Israel and Jerusalem and their subsequent settlement in other parts of the globe. According to Robin Cohen, when we trace to the history of diaspora we can go back to 586 BC, when the Babylonians conquered Judah, leading to the enslavement of Jews. Cohen says:

> Babylon subsequently became a codeword among Jews for the afflictions, isolation and insecurity of living in a foreign place, set adrift, cut off from their roots and their sense of identity, oppressed by an alien ruling class. Since the Babylonian exile, the homelessness of Jews has been a leitmotiv in Jewish literature, art, culture, and of course, prayer. (22)

But many Jews remained permanently to live in Babylonia and maintained their cultural identity, national spirit and religious tradition in a foreign land. This is considered to be the beginning of the Jewish diaspora.

Also, the Greek diaspora consists of another oldest diaspora in history. Many Greeks dispersed from their native land after the fall of Constantinople, the capital city of Roman Empire in 1453. Tracing the Greek history of diaspora, Waltraud Kokot, Khachig Tölölyan and Carolin Alfonso in *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New Directions in Theory and Research* write:

> Greek enclaves or trading posts in major Western European cities of the Middle Ages, forming a paradigmatic 'trade diaspora', may be seen as

> successors of, but not deriving from, Greek colonization in antiquity. These enclaves received significant input after the fall of Constantinople, a catastrophic event characterizing a 'victim diaspora'. (3)

However, this city was prosperous from the mid-fifth century to the thirteen century. The role and influence of the expatriate Greeks in the different parts of Europe became significant for the emergence of Renaissance. The migrated Greek populations as refugees in Europe especially in Italy, Venice, Florence and Rome brought with them many ancient arts, cultures, writings and other Greek works that had been lost in the West. During that time, the Western Europe was facing the Dark Middle Ages due to the decline of Roman Empire and the rise of orthodox Christianity. In such an intellectual darkness, the Greek expatriate people became the spreaders of enlightenment in Europe. Therefore, Renaissance humanism began in that part of the globe with their progressive development of classical ideas, literatures and cultures.

The subject of diaspora equally relates to the process of Western colonization. Under colonialism, diaspora is a multifarious movement. More clearly, colonialism itself is a diasporic effort. According to the postcolonial theorists, Bill Ashcroft, Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their *Key Concept of Post-Colonial Studies* (2004), "Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions of Europeans over the entire world" (69). European colonization began in 1492 when a Spanish expedition headed by the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus sailed west to find a new trade route to the Far East but carelessly landed in what came to be known to Europeans as the New World. Since then, England and France succeeded in establishing permanent colonies in

America in the 16th century. Then widespread efforts of the migrations continued on a global scale.

With the idea of spreading their power, many nations nurtured their interest to make colonial centers in the different parts of the world. The colonizers developed their "settled regions as plantations or agricultural colonies to grow food stuffs for the metropolitan populations, and thus a large-scale demand for labor was created in many regions where the local population could not supply the need" (69). For agricultural purpose, they needed many workers as laborers. Therefore, they took the laborers from South Africa and other poor countries based on slavery. This leads to the diaspora resulting from the enslavement of Africans in colonial settlements such as British colonies in America, India and Mauritius. According to Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin, "The practices of slavery and indenture thus resulted in world-wide colonial diasporas" (69). Now the descendants of the diasporas created by colonialism have produced highly unique cultures by modifying their indigenous cultures. Thus, the diasporas are of great importance to postcolonial studies.

For the diasporic people of transnational community, identity is often bound up with culture, "Culture is very powerful force in our lives . . . culture is everything that we are socialized to do, think, use and make" (Brown and Hood 29). However, culture creates human identity, which is not constant and fixed. It is unstable and dynamic. In the process of change, the original culture of human beings confronts with the new culture and the people become aware of both. In this regard, Lois Tyson says, "For cultural critics, culture is a process, not a product; it is a lived experience, not a fixed definition." (296). Tyson is of the opinion that, the clash of cultures creates existential anxiety and the people find themselves at a transit station filled with

memories of the root culture which create conflict with the realities of new culture. With the live experience, this process of making new culture never ends.

Review of Literature: Basic Concepts, Theoretical Modality and Primary Texts

Many critics, writers and researchers such as Sturt Hall, Homi K Bhabha and Robin Cohen have written a lot about diasporic literature. Most of them present diasporas as the producer and practitioner of new cultures. Chris Barker argues that diasporas are "concerned with the ideas of travel, migration, scattering, displacement, homes and borders" (51). Diasporas transport cultures from one place to another and exchange them. Neither the root culture of the diasporas nor the culture of the host land remains pure as Chris Barker claims, "The physical meeting and mixing of peoples across the globe that is exemplified by diaspora throws the whole notion of pure national or ethnic cultures into doubt" (52). The production and reproduction of new cultures, and practice and re-practice of them continues. This process goes on unending as the unending process of human civilization.

Robin Cohen, in his *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* specifies four phases of diaspora, "Arguably, diaspora studies have gone through four phases" (1) in terms of historical developmental process. First, the classical use of the term usually capitalized as 'Diaspora' and used only in singular, was mainly confined to the study of Jewish prototype and experience. The classical model of diaspora focuses on prototypical victim diaspora that extended from the 1960s and 1970s and became more common and closely resembled with a description of the dispersion of Africans, Armenians, Irish and Palestinian. In this phase, the diaspora had the traumatic experience of victimhood at the hand of the cruel oppressors.

The second phase indicates from 1980s to the mid-1990s. In this phase, Cohen takes reference from William Safran's categories as the "diaspora was deployed as 'a metaphoric designation' to describe different categories of people – expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities tout court" (1). The historical experiences and collective narratives of such diasporas are different from the first phase diasporas because this stage represents a number of groups that lived outside of their countries of origin and had an engagement with their home lands in terms of ethnicity, history and cultural memory.

Cohen specifies the third phase from the mid-1990s to the turn of the century when the diasporas were influenced by postmodernist readings in which "identities have become deterritorialized and constructed and deconstructed in a flexible and situational way" (2) because the identity of the diasporas and postmodern people is very complex. In this stage, social constructionists began questioning the concepts of homeland and ethnic/religious community. The concept of 'home' becomes no longer an actual place. Home is more about a desire to belong and homeland is a place in the diasporic imagination that may not be visited or returned to.

The fourth or current phase that Cohen calls "consolidation phase" (11) makes the turn of the century. In this phase, the conceptual definition of 'diaspora' shifts from negative associations with the terms such as exile, loss, and suffering to more positive connotations such as opportunity, mobility and freedom. The category of such diasporas is mobilizing or global diasporas or postcolonial diasporas.

We have seen that the concept of diaspora from the beginning to the present has undergone changes from too narrow to too wide. In the present scholarship, diasporas are discussed in the context of globalization in which national boundaries are becoming less important than they once were. They are considered not as isolated

victim groups but as groups of cultural formation due to their attachment to both home and host lands. In reality, people who move to another country in search of work rarely lose their attachment to their place of birth. They maintain links to their homeland with their culture, and also absorb some ideas and practices from their host land yet they choose not to return to their place of birth till they are able to see opportunity and freedom in the new dwelling land.

As stated above, the common features of diaspora signify any people who reside outside their homeland. The semantic dimension of diaspora changes from Greek root to the present days. The Jewish diaspora became a metaphor for people who suffered "loss of homeland and ethnocidal violence" (Tololyan, "Rethinking" 12). However, the diasporas have been constructed in the context of globalization where the opportunity seeking people are accommodated. In such a case, the displacement of people arises according to their conditions that are neither traumatic nor disastrous but "pursuit of work and the seizing of opportunities to study and travel abroad, facilitated by the globalizing process" (Reis 49). This clarifies a great shift of classical notion of diaspora into the modern globalized context.

Many diaspora theorists such as William Safran, Khachig Tololyan, James Clifford and Paul Gilroy have characterized diaspora in many ways. According to an American political scientist William Safran, diaspora denotes not only the exiled Jewish community that he calls "ideal type" (84) but also any community that disperses from a single homeland. Safran attempts to bring ideal type or archetypal diasporas who have a strong attachment and connection with the ancestral motherland in their aspiration to return to their homeland when the time comes. Safran shows the desire of diasporas' physical return. However, he does not clearly say that their dispersal is forceful or voluntary.

Regarding the features or characteristics of diaspora, Robin Cohen has used Safran's perspectives that form an ideal type of diaspora. However, Cohen seems more positive because those diasporas who have no willing to return become transnational and transcultural. For them, their desire to return to native home becomes a myth. Cohen demonstrates broader concept of diaspora than Safran because diasporas also involve in searching of work, pursuit of trade and colonization, possibility of distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with tolerance of pluralism which Safran has not included.

Another diaspora scholar Khachig Tololyan describes diaspora slightly different from Safran and Cohen. He specifies that the diasporic communities actively construct a collective memory, which forms their identity. They keep more or less tight control over their ethnic boundaries and maintain relations among themselves and with their country of origin, provided it is still in existence (qtd. in Dorais 5-6). Tololyan includes two elements that Safran and Cohen do not. He points out the root of dislocation due to severe political, economic and other constraints. Then he asserts that before leaving the country, these people already shared a well-defined identity.

James Clifford, another diaspora theorist and anthropologist, brings in the similarities between border theory and diaspora. Border theory and diaspora both suggest connections and multi-localities. Border implies a politically or geographically defined line whereas diaspora connotes a further distance of separation. In his article "Diaspora", Clifford says that both theories "border and diaspora bleed into one another . . . . for transnational identity formations" (453). Clifford states that Safran cannot accommodate all areas of diaspora. Clifford argues that "diasporas are dispersed networks of people who share common historical experiences of dispossession, displacement, adaptation, and so forth, the kinds of

transnational alliances currently being forged by the Fourth World Peoples [autochthones] contain diasporic elements" (452). In Clifford's opinion, even dispersed tribal people should be addressed as diasporic, when the tribal groups disperse from their homeland. He concludes that there is no possibility of giving clear-cut definition and features for diaspora. He focuses on newly emerging diasporas who may not be the 'ideal type' that Willian Safran has described because the new diasporas do not have a dream of returning to their native land as "homecomings are, by definition, the negation of diaspora" (452). Clifford calls such a concept of diasporas as antinationalist nationalism, "Whatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist" (452) because they have national aspirations but do not have a dream of returning home. In such a way, James Clifford does not accept the traditional notion of diaspora.

Gabriel Sheffer, a Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, summarizes the most significant common features of historical diasporas and modern diasporas in his *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*. He says that diasporas maintain their ethnic identities and establish ethno-national diaspora organizations (83).According to him diasporas are political agents in the modern world because they have a triadic network involving homeland, diaspora community and host country. So, they create trans-state networks.

One of the pioneers in the field of Diaspora Studies, Avtar Brah in her essay "Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities" offers a set of ideas on diaspora, with the view that diaspora is a historical account about journeys that involve settling down in another place outside the homeland. Diaspora is based on the idea of "multiple journey but the image of journey cannot be equated to casual travel. Instead it is based

on the idea of settling down, about putting roots 'elsewhere'" (616). For Brah, at the heart of notion of diaspora is the image of journey. Nevertheless, she denies the casual travelers as diaspora people and they do not refer to the people who temporarily stay for a short time. Regarding 'home', she is of the opinion that home is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return but a place for visit.

Equally, the cultural theorist Stuart Hall also rejects the traditional notions of diaspora who has a strong attraction for homeland that results into nostalgia, homesickness, alienation, sense of loss, etc. and keeps a hidden desire for homecoming. He claims, "The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference, by hybridity" (119-20). Hall denies that the identity of diaspora can only be secured in relation to homeland, as identity is never complete, always in process.

Paul Gilroy, another theorist of diaspora puts forth his views on diasporic cultures, especially, Black Atlantic diaspora in his book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, which marks a turning point in the study of diasporas. He has a new concept of diasporic peoples who suffered from the Atlantic slave trade. His concept breaks with the traditional diasporic model based on the idea that diasporic people want to cut off the communal source or origin because their past is more painful than the present. He offers a second model of diasporas that always privileges them in hybridity, ambivalence, multiple and transnational identities, travel, movement, displacement and relocation with double consciousness. Gilroy states, "The distinctive historical experiences of this diaspora's populations have created a unique body of reflections on modernity and its discontents which is an enduring

presence in the cultural and political struggles of their descendants today" (45). He borrows the concept of double consciousness from W. E. B. DuBois to describe the transnational experience of diasporic people.

Observing the features of diasporas from the above mentioned diaspora theorists, it can be drawn that there is a three-dimensional framework or three criteria in diaspora studies. The first is the 'dispersion or dislocation' from native land to other countries. The second is 'homeland orientation', whether it is imagined or real homeland. In this criterion, James Clifford has different concept. He notes that many aspects and experiences of the dispersed African, Caribbean and South Asian do not qualify because they are "not so much oriented to roots in a specific place and a desire for return" (452). The third constitutive criterion is 'boundary maintenance'. It is an indispensable aspect of diaspora, which enables diasporas to make a social, cultural relationships among the diaspora groups as distinct communities with an active solidarity. The dense social, cultural political or economic relationships among the diaspora communities cut across the state boundaries and link the diasporas in different countries into a single transnational community.

James Clifford, Avtar Brah, Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy play a significant role to give new dimension to the term diaspora. Their views of diaspora are postmodernist in feeling because under the influence of postmodernism, which began to spread in 1980s in many disciplines, the idea of diaspora is radically changed in its setting. Clifford, Brah, Hall and Gilroy as the postmodernists celebrate paradoxical identity, non-center home and hybridity. For them, diaspora is celebration but not melancholy. However, the theorists mentioned above except Clifford, Brah, Hall and Gilroy focus on the desire for native home as a center of diasporic identity. Thus, analyzing the features of diasporas described by different theorists, we can conclude

that there are only two features: the dispersed people who have willingness to return home and those dispersed who have national aspirations but do not have a dream of returning home.

Robin Cohen categorizes diasporas into five types: victim, labour, imperial, trade and deterritorialized. He identifies that "the Jewish, Irish, Palestinian, African and Armenian diasporas . . . can be labelled with the preceding adjective of 'victim'" (*Global* 39) who have been banished from their place of origin and sent to another land forcibly. These diasporas have traumatic experience of conquest, persecution, enslavement, genocide or exile. He concludes that the African diaspora occurred due to the practice of slavery while the Armenian one occurred due to invasions. Similarly, Irish migrated due to famine and the Palestinian due to war.

Labour diaspora includes that class of diasporic people who were made to migrate as slaves and servants to the countries in order to work in their plantation. Indentured Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Sikhs, Turks and Italians were included in this category. Another synonymous expression of labour diaspora is "proletarian diaspora" (18). The proletarian diasporas are characterized by unskilled labour who have low communication skills thus low possibilities of mobility and entrepreneurship.

Imperial diaspora refers to the migrants who go to another land that has been seized forcefully and made colonial center by their own nation. Such people enjoy higher status than the citizens of that country because of their ethnic ties to the ruling power. Especially, British and other European colonizers were in this category. Cohen says, "Nearly all the powerful nation-states, especially in Europe, established their own diasporas abroad to further their imperial plans" (69). Imperial diasporas are also called "settler or colonial diasporas" (18). The European settlers in the name of

voluntary or missionary established their 'white settlements' in the other parts of the world with close political or cultural connections to their homelands.

Trade diaspora goes abroad to conduct and develop business in a host society. Generally, Lebanese, Chinese, Venetians, Indians and Japanese are included this type. "A trade diaspora was a nation of socially interdependent, but spatially dispersed communities" (83). Trade diasporas involve not only in international trade but also in spreading their cultures and ideologies that have much influence in the place of settlement

Deterritorialized diaspora highlights cultural transformation or acculturation of the immigrants. This category of diaspora refers to "hybrid, cultural and postcolonial" (19) diasporas who have developed tactics to challenge their subordinate status. Generally, the third-world peoples, their religious groups such as Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, etc. and the Caribbean and African people comprise this category. They are mobilizing diaspora in this globalized world. Robin Cohen focuses on the mobilizing diasporas who mobilize economy, new forms of international migration, development of cosmopolitan sensibilities and the revival of religion as a focus for social cohesion. These aspects of globalization have unlocked several new opportunities for present diasporas to emerge, reemerge, survive and prosper in this globalized age.

The first type of diasporas becomes the victim of dispersion, the second type moves in search of works, the desire of the third category is to motivate the colonial expansion, the fourth one emigrates for commercial purpose and the last one experiences multiple displacements and cultures.

Another scholar of diaspora studies Vijaya Mishra classifies Indian diaspora into two groups: Old and New. He argues, "I would want to refer to them as the old ('exclusive') and the new ('border') Indian diasporas" ("The Diasporic" 446). The old

diasporas are confined within colonies whereas the new diasporas occupy a desired space, the dream-world of wealth and western luxury.

Conflicts force people to migrate. Other factors such as ecological crisis, natural disaster, poverty, underdevelopment and political instability at home, economic opportunity abroad and increasing global trend in population migration make people leave their homeland. It is also clear that the old diasporas become new through re-migrations. For instance, when the Fiji-Indians or Trinidadian-Indians migrate to other countries like the UK, USA, Canada, etc., they become new diasporas. In comparison to previous generations, the development of global communication has reduced the emotional distance for the new diasporas by enabling them to keep in touch with home country.

During the turn of the twenty-first century, diaspora literature has become popular among academics and activists due to social, economic and political networks that help to construct and reconstruct national and transnational narratives. An Oxford University scholar and anthropologist Steven Vertoveceffectively presents three current meanings of South Asian diaspora, "These three meanings refer to what might we call diaspora as a social form, diaspora as type of consciousness, and diaspora as mode of cultural production" ("Three Meanings" 277). Each meaning has certain utility for conceptualizing and interpreting diasporic narratives, and for analyzing a variety of dispersed and displaced peoples.

Diaspora communitiesconstruct cultures and practice them. The modern diaspora is free from its indication of any Jewish history. Besides, they are culture-makers and practitioners. Different diasporas are a key factor in the production, reproduction, promotion and protection of cultural diversity, and intercultural understanding and tolerance. They explore new technological avenues for developing

cultural connectivity among different cultural communities in global, regional, national and local levels.

Writing about South Asian diaspora, Mukesh Yadav and Shalini Yadav illuminate the journey of the diasporas. They state, "South Asian diaspora writers relate to the issues of racism, the experience of displacement, the process of transculturation, the tensions between individuals and so forth" (221). They focus on the heterogeneity of identities of the South Asian diasporas as the product of political, social and cultural forces.

Critic Amit Sarwal points out that South Asian diasporas have become integral part in the host lands. He says, "The diaspora has helped in opening up borders between cultures and has inspired various critics and scholars to theorize the diasporic condition in relation to its historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and personal contexts" (49). However, the dilemmas of the South Asian diasporas become more upsetting when they find that despite all their new opportunities, they still remain alienated in the host lands.

David N. Gellener and Sondra L. Hausner discus the clusters of Nepali/Gorkhali diasporas and their consciousness in the different parts of world in their edited book *Global Nepalis: Religion, Culture, and Community in a New and Old Diaspora*. They assess the diaspora movement of Nepalis from a global perspective saying that "the Nepali diaspora by geographical region, beginning at 'home' in South Asia, before first moving east to Southeast Asia and then west to the Gulf and the USA" (xvi) is simultaneously old and young. They only deal with Nepali diasporas and their dynamics that are constituted globally.

Nepali critics such as Narendra Bahadur Bhandari, Taranath Sharma, Govinda Raj Bhattarai, Ramji Timalsina and Netra Atom have written about the experience,

emotion, desire and identity of diaspora people, especially Nepali diasporas in the West. Narendra Bahadur Bhandari claims that diasporic writers always express sad experiences in their writings. Their diasporic characters in the literary representation "cannot totally be free from their 'being', the shared cultural and historical experiences" (261) due to their bicultural loyalties to their host and native cultures.

Taranath Sharma thinks that in the diasporic Nepali poetry, "the voice of Nepal has been expressed incorporating pure Nepali music and vibration of Nepali soul" (qtd. in Timalsina 146) and has immersed into imagination with the memory of native feelings and cultures. The diasporic literature of Nepali diasporas connect the lands of home and settlement.

Critic Gobindra Raj Bhattarai in his *Diaspora: Siddhanta Ra Samalochana (Diaspora: Theory and Criticism)* gives a detail history and analysis of the major issues of diaspora. He contextualizes diaspora theory and criticism examining Nepali literature, especially diasporic Nepali poetry. He raises the issue of identity and diversity of feelings in the foreign land. He argues, "Despite their creation of any forms of literature, the diasporic writers express their sad feelings, anxieties and lost cultures. The greatest worry to them is the leaving of homeland and living in the host land" (my translation, 180). Bhattarai observes that even when the diasporas have lost their cultures, they are entangled with the past memories and compelled to live in conflicting situation.

Netra Atom analyzes Nepali literature from diasporic perspective. His view is not essentially different from Bhattarai's view point on diasporic literature. Analyzing some diasporic Nepali novels, he says, "Diasporas are not only divided into duality geographically but also psychologically. They feel identity crisis because they cannot completely love their desired land and they have already left their ancestral

homeland" (my translation, 33). He also finds alienation, melancholy, anxiety, insecurity, foreignness and nostalgia in the diasporic characters of different writers' literary representation.

Ramji Timalsina, a researcher of diasporic Nepali poetry states, "For a diasporan, there is nowhere to return; and even nowhere to make a definite reach. The whole life is destined to soar in the cloudy sky that does not provide satisfaction either" (149-50). He means that the diaspora people desire for freedom and they think that the host land society is a space for it. However, despite their wish-fulfillment, they are compelled to face innumerable obstructions. Thus, they have melancholic feelings.

Several scholars such as Subrata Kumar Das, C. Gowripriya, Athira Prakash, Anjana Sukumary Warren to name a few have done researches and written criticisms on the primary texts selected for the analysis of this research work. The primary texts that have been studied for the purpose of this study are Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*. To visualize the research gap of this work, the researcher of the dissertation has reviewed on these South Asian diasporic narratives.

Writing on Mukherjee's *Jasmine*, Subrata Kumar Das from the University of Hyderabad argues, "*Jasmine* depicts the whole corpus of immigrant literature: assimilating, transcultural, transnational, forward-looking approaches by immigrant writers. . . . It is like an odyssey from unhousement to rehousement in the US" (25). He means that the diasporic protagonist of the novel wants to dissolve into the new culture leaving aside the feelings of marginality, alienation and nostalgia.

C. Gowripriya maintains, "Mukherjee's female characters are immigrants and suffered cultural shock but they are courageous women and are anxious to establish

their identity by taking their journey" (370). Her novels demonstrate various personal experiences of the diasporic people who undergo many struggles and difficulties.

Athira Prakash comments on *Jasmine*, "Bharati Mukherjee, an American writer of Indian origin, raises the question of space and identity of the Indian immigrants in the US" (1477). Her novel depicts the process of negotiating the borders, both physical borders of states and the metaphorical borders of cultures.

Anjana Sukumary Warren says that Mukherjee "attempts to position the process of psychic transcreation (Indian/American) within a border epistemological framework. India is 'Being', America is the state of 'Becoming', the ever expanding horizon where . . . nothing is terrible or so wonderful that it won't disintegrate" (925-26). It shows that Mukherjee's diasporic narrative becomes the collective expression of the diaspora psyche.

Critic of Mukherjee, Chetan Deshmane claims, "*Jasmine* would emerge as Mukherjee's daydream which seeks to realize the desire of every potential immigrant, who is marginal in contrast to explore how and why she does so" (51). He means that Mukherjee celebrates marginality and her eponymous diasporic character has negotiating power.

Victoria Cook addresses the issues of identity raised in the narrative of Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* in which the diasporic writer Ondaatje examines identity as both a construct and a process. Cook writes, "Ondaatje explores the notion of nationality as just such a construct and examines the roles played by syncretism and hybridity through the discourse of *Anil's Ghost"* (6). This novel, according to Cook, provides an investigation of identity reflective of cultural conflicts that are the result of interweaving nationalities, histories and border divisions.

For the critic Ryan Mowat, Ondaatje's novel presents an ethical aesthetic through its narrative structure, "*Anil's Ghost* supports no single political perspective, its structure is ethical in the sense of Derrida and Levinas: it points to the non-present tresses of silent suffering, and yet depicts the terror of political violence without judgement" (38). Here, the political perspective of this novel is not obvious but ambivalence. He approaches the Sri Lankan crisis from an ethical point of view.

Ratika Kaushik in her PhD Dissertation carried out in 2017 from the University of Sussex explores the journeys of South Asian diasporic protagonists through the transnational lens as their diasporic journeys signify a sense of continuous travel between nations, homeland and host land. Kaushik claims that the South Asian diasporic characters when move from their native land to the new settlement feel a "sense of liberation and freedom from the confines of domesticity" (139). Kaushik further argues revealing the position of Ondaatje's protagonist Anil who "is not able to fathom the intensity of public chaos and private woes in the homeland" (75) so she feels "freedom to leave the war-stricken homeland" (75). For Anil as being a transnational diaspora, her ancestral land is more painful than the land of settlement. However, Kaushik does not focus on the new diasporas' strategies.

Critics and researchers of Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* depict the position of South Asian Muslim diasporaswhile in their diasporic writings. Ruth Maxey writes:

> *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* . . . deals with the messy repercussions of 9/11 for South Asians. Subjecting US foreign policy to even greater transnational scrutiny than Sidhwa does, Hamid's novel suggests the impossibility for many South Asian Americans of remaining free from the impact of international

> events. . . . Changez, Hamid's protagonist, experiences his life-changing disillusionment with the United States. (38)

Maxey demonstrates that Hamid's diasporic narrative reveals the South Asians diasporas' unfree situation in the US due the impact of international events.

Comparing the novel and the film adaptation of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes comment that both texts are informed by the post-9/11 distrust of the Muslim other. They write,"Both novel and film ultimately demonstrate that representations are still unable to escape the loop of orientalism and re-orientalism, highlighting the tension of how East and West continue as locked into this circular mode of relational identity" (78). Hamid reveals the changing Western public perceptions toward South Asian Muslin and vice versa.

Reading *The Reluctant Fundamentalist,* Aamer Shaheen and Muhammad Ayub Jajja highlight that this novel deals with "the post-9/11 plight of American society plagued with xenophobia and Islamophobia" (176). The South Asian Muslim diaspora protagonist of the novel is a prodigal son whose decision to return to his homeland is direct result of the inability to anchor in the host land and trauma of his nightmarish social experience of the 9/11 event.

Another critic of Hamid, Tufail Muhammad Chandioobserves that the protagonist of the novel, Changez Khan, though a cultural Muslim diaspora, "never practices religious orthodoxy" (61). He succeeds in getting quality education and lucrative job in his dreamland – the USA. However, the 9/11 event develops the negative image of Muslims which finally changes the perception of public at large.

Researcher Ratika Kaushik argues that Hamid's diasporic narrative, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* "narrates a tale of disillusionment with America and depicts an eventual return to the homeland, simultaneously foregrounding the complex and

messy relationship between the migrant and the host land, and the fading possibility of assimilation and integration in America" (105). She focuses on the messy situation of the South Asian Muslim diasporas in the US after the 9/11 event. Since then the Westerners look at the Muslims not only 'other' but also the terrorist.

Critics and researchers of Manjushree Thapa's*Seasons of Flight* focus on Nepali diaspora's cultural dislocation and contesting identities in the West. VG Deepthi notes, "Thapa presents a negotiation of identity of displaced individuals who dangle between acculturation and inbetweenness fulfillment and frustration in her novel" (482). Deepthi discloses the diasporic factors such as cultural dislocation and conflict, isolation, identity crisis and diasporic sensibility.

On the same ground, Mahesh B. Bhatta explores the diasporic protagonist, Prema's crisis of identity, nostalgia and her struggle to adjust in the host land. He says, "Prema seeks nostalgically to recapture her 'happy days' of childhood past in her imagination" (9). He means that diasporas are nostalgic in the alien land. The memories of the past fill the gap between the past and the present and they feel relief from their frustration or the harsh reality of the present.

Reading Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*, Dilu Gurung examines, "It is a transnational text as it occupies multiple nations' characters and their experiences. It shows the mixing of the East and the West" (11). This text stresses the hybridity of the diasporas who neither completely go off from their native culture nor assimilate with the new one.

Scholars from Gujarat University Jagdish Joshi and Mahesh Bhatta remark that *Seasons of Flight* "gives voice to the predicament of an immigrant for assimilation in an alien land" (78). They focus on the issues of adjusting the self by a diaspora from the Himalayan nation Nepal in America.

Pooja Swamy from Hislop College Nagpur remaps women's identity in Thapa's novel. She records the memory, search for home and problematic of identity of Nepali woman diaspora who "experiences the feeling of not belonging anywhere and is trying to assimilate herself into the American multiculturalism" (493). For her, identity crisis in South Asian women, especially in diasporic women is the theme dominant in Thapa's narrative.

Himadri Lahiri, a Professor from the University Burdwan, West Bangal observes that *Seasons of Flight* creates a sense of tension of the diasporic character who has ethical choices of staying in the native country and leaving it for a diasporic zone. He says, "The choice between the nation and the diaspora is a serious concern in Thapa's work and the gilt of not being there in the nation creates an anxiety in the mind of the characters" (80). The split between the two ethical choices creates a state of melancholia in the diasporas. Thapa's protagonist is one of such examples.

Many critics, writers and researchers have written a lot about postcolonial theory, diasporic literature, cultural hybridity, identity crisis, multiculturalism, displacement, homelessness, subjugation and anguish of diasporas in their discourses, but no one has yet appeared to have attempted to show that the desire of diasporas is to get power, knowledge and freedom. Thus, this research sets its point of departure from the general assumption that the new diasporas do not feel traumatized and melancholic in spite of their rootlessness and displacement rather they suffer much for the sake of freedom, power and knowledge. They find beauty in suffering, alienation and unhomeliness. In the process of human civilization, territorial, psychological and cultural change is inevitable. In such a globalized world, diasporas are free and content. This study has attempted to fill this gap by analyzing and calling upon a wide range of works in this field. On this issue, the researcher has studied the politics of

new South Asian diasporas in the narratives produced by the representative South Asian diasporic writers, and taken the most challenging task of revealing their purpose.

The Universe of Research: Research Questions, Objectives, Hypothesis, Methodology and Limitation

The researcher of this study limits the area of research, that is, the politics of South Asian diasporas in the literary representation of South Asian diasporic narratives. The main claim of the dissertation is that diaspora literature produced by the diasporic writers addresses the politics of power, knowledge and freedom of the diaspora people in the narratives because they are not confined in one nation. The mission of diasporas is not to be exploited but to achieve, learn and exercise the power, knowledge and freedom. Hence, this dissertation aims to explore the politics of diasporas living in the West focusing on their desire. Being the world citizens in the modern globalized era, the diasporic people's desire is to get much more knowledge, freedom and power than they exercised in the past. Particularly, diaspora connotes the evolution of human civilization all over the world. It is a journey across advancement.

Diasporic condition is one of the ways of enhancement of civilization because constant exploration and immense fluidity mark the 'away from home' experience. My argument is that diasporas are not agonized or melancholic living far away from their native land despite the discrimination on the grounds of race, color or creed. They are free and prefer to reside in the alien land though they have emotional attachment with their nativity.

The central research problem of this dissertation is to explore the body of writing that reveals the mission of modern South Asian diasporas. The main queries are: What is the politics of diasporas in the narratives produced by the diasporic

writers? Why do new South Asian diasporas of literary representation such as Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine, Michael Ondaatje's Anil, Mohsin Hamid's Changez and Manjushree Thapa's Prema celebrate their lives in the West? How can we say that they are producer, practitioner and promotor of new culture? Why do they not mourn abandoning their birthplace, and near and dear? How is diaspora condition a metaphorical journey across human civilization?

The general objective of this study is to examine the mission and the journey of diasporas as an evolution of human advancement through the representative South Asian literary narratives. The specific objectives are: identify and explore the politics of diasporas in the body of South Asian diasporic narratives; to examine the causes of the celebration of diasporas' sufferings and hardships by critically analyzing the representative South Asian diasporic narratives; to scrutinize their contribution to produce and reproduce, to practice and promote new cultures and identities in order to build a new world; to assess or investigate the cause of aestheticizaton of their experience through literary narratives; and to analyze the diaspora condition as a journey of all human civilization and culture.

This dissertation has hypothesized that the politics of South Asiandiasporas in the narratives is to aestheticize fluid identity and culture and to promote greater knowledge, power and freedom. The new or voluntary diasporas celebrate their lives with new cultures and identities. They are not melancholic while settling in the host land leaving their ancestral homeland. The main proposition is: "Diasporization is the process of the entire human civilization and has always been a part of human experience; and the more the diasporas suffer, the stronger they become and the greater knowledge, power and freedom they achieve".

Regarding the research methodology, the present research in its nature is qualitative and employs textual narrative analysis of the selected primary texts from the vintage point of postcolonial diasporic literary discourse. The collected data for this dissertation are descriptive and narrative to find new truth. Therefore, the qualitative tools like definition, explanation, interpretation are employed to analyze the data and draw conclusion. The theoretical insight has been taken from postcolonial diasporic critics such as Homi K Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Vijay Mishra. Every chapter has precisely focused on the theoretical framework used in the introductory parts of specific chapter.

I have limited this study critically analyzing the representative South Asian diasporic narratives. The parameters of diaspora theory applied by analyzing the issues of immigrants are of Edward Said's orientalism, Homi K. Bhabha's cultural transformation, diversity and difference, inbetweenness and liminal third space, Stuart Hall's fluidity and cultural identity, Steven Vertovec's transnational connectivity, Vijay Mishra's new diaspora, Victoria Cook's antithesis of subalternity, Paul Gilroy's double consciousness, James Clifford's antinationalist nationalism, Avtar Brah's diasporic multiple journeys, and Daphne Grace's diasporic consciousness and dynamism of power. It exploits the theoretical observations of these scholars to provide a theoretic framework for the analysis of the diasporic narratives.

The primary texts studied for the purpose of this dissertation are Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989), Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (2000), Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* (2010). The researcher has selected these diasporic narratives as primary texts thinking that these narratives under scrutiny cover and represent the issues of entire

South Asian region. The research format, mechanics and citations of entire dissertation follow *MLA Handbook* eighth edition.

An Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation has been divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter provides the blueprint of the entire research. It offers the research questions, sets the objectives, presents the hypothesis, defines the universe of research, and fixes the theoretical framework and methodological approaches. The second chapter explores the significance and strategy of diasporic narratives, formation of identity-politics, cultural power and consciousness, and mapping the location of the South Asian diasporic narratives.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters investigate the core issues of the inquiry testing its hypothesis and proving the issues analyzing the textual data within the theoretical framework. These chapters examine the extent to which the politics of the modern diasporas in the narratives produced by the South Asian diasporic writers celebrate their fluid cultures, identities and promote the power and freedom in them. With diasporic consciousness, the diasporas as the independent actors and public ambassadors desire greater power, knowledge and freedom than they exercised before because they are not confined within a nation. These chapters also explore that the voluntary diasporas in this globalized world do not lament and mourn for displacement. They have not any regret for leaving their land of origin, family, relative and culture. The third chapter explores the issue in Indian diasporas by the close analysis of Indian narratives, the fourth by Sri Lankan, the fifth by Pakistani and the sixth by Nepali narratives hoping that these diasporic narratives cover and represent the entire South Asian region.

The final chapter ends with the synopses of the successive chapters. It condenses the main findings that have been explored in the earlier chapters. It concludes that diasporization is the main process of human civilization. Diasporas are always in pursuit of power and freedom that promote human evolution. They are the producers of new cultures, identities and knowledge as well as the bearers, translators and transformers of them in this globe.

Chapter II

POLITICS AND POWER: DIASPORA CULTURES AND STRATEGIES

Preview

The introductory chapter set the foundation for this research. It briefly introduced the notion of diaspora, diasporic body of writings, and the critical/theoretical views about them. It presented a concise account of the historical background of the origin and development of diaspora, a brief review of available literature on the diaspora and diasporic writings, and the critical/theoretical approaches to its study. The previous chapter finally presented the point of departure, developed the research questions, set the goals, made a claim, and proposed theoretical approaches to the study, and laid ground for the this research.

This chapter offers a detailed explanation of the theoretical grounds to further explore the main issue that involves politics of diaspora concerning the search for knowledge, power, and freedom. First, it relates diaspora discourse with postcolonial body of writings as the scholarship of otherness and difference produced by the migrant writers. Second, this chapter examines the increasing significance of diaspora politics in globalization. Third, it describes diaspora strategies and engagements in nation branding process. It explains the politics of diaspora in order to build a global image and reputation of diaspora's nation. Fourth, this chapter presents diaspora

identity politics in order to construct cultural power and consciousness. Finally, this chapter seeks to map out the histories, locations and formations of South Asian diasporic narratives produced by South Asian diasporic writers.

In order to explore the main issues of this dissertation, this chapter presents key concepts and theoretical/critical insights and framework for the further third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters.

Currency of Diaspora Discourse: Scholarship of Otherness and Difference

Postcolonial diasporic literature embraces the concept of otherness and difference. Otherness exists only because of difference. "The place of difference and otherness, or the space of the adversarial within such a system of disposal as I've proposed, is never entirely on the outside of implacably oppositional" (Bhabha, *The Location* 156). Generally, class, race, ethnicity and gender specify cultural difference. In diasporic discourse, the diaspora people or their cultures are depicted as others that appreciate difference and lack purity. In such a literature, the colonizer or imperial subject treats the native people as 'other' and tries to control over them due to the difference between them. The colonizers/Westerners consider themselves as 'self' and the diasporas/non-Westerners as 'other' whose culture is different from theirs. The 'other' is ruled by the 'self' because the other's culture is hybrid, ambivalent and impure, and identity is fluid. In this context, Bhabha argues, "These hybrid signifiers are the intimations of colonial otherness" (*The Location* 177) due to the cultural diversity and difference or the distinct systems of manners, outlooks and beliefs.

Diaspora discourse mainly deals with people's displacement, migration or movement from one region or country to another and the consequences of the dislocation and relocation. Though the diasporic condition (the dispersal of human beings to establish human society in different parts of the world) has brought negative

influences in human life physically and psychologically, such as identity crisis, assault from host community, cross-cultural conflict, alienation, home and host issues, trauma of uprooting and rerooting, existential rootlessness, nostalgia and gender problem in diasporic people, it also has brought positive influences to develop in all fields to the diasporic people as well as the people of homeland. The process of globalization has ensured in the extensive migration that has brought economic and social developments in the nooks and corners of the world. Now, the notion of diasporas has been associated with one more important scenario. Diaspora's contributions to "development in terms of remittance, investment and democratization are also receiving growing attention" (Aikins and White 9) because the present world is more globalized, interconnected and interdependent than ever before.

The body of writings written by the authors who live outside their land of origin is called diaspora literature. However, this definition may not cover its notion because diaspora literature does not only express the physical movement of an individual from one place to another but it also discloses how with the movement of the individual his /her culture comes, interacts and influences. Broadly, all those writings associated with the writers who write outside their native land but remain related to their homeland through their works are regarded as diaspora literature. Such a literature focuses on its contents regardless of where it was written. It addresses the issues and experiences of diasporic people. In this context, Bed Prasad Giri opines that postcolonial diasporic theory discloses the sensibility of diasporas who are always in search of power and freedom in the host land. In his article "Diasporic Postcolonialism and its Antinomies", Giri claims:

This is how the discourse of diasporism has found expression in the

> Jewish context. Somewhat analogously, postcolonial diaspora theory, which came to prominence in the 1990s, also presents a sensibility . . . represents exile, movement, and deterritorialization as a pursuit of self-empowerment and freedom—however unattainable these goals may, in fact, be. Postcolonial diaspora theory thus presents the displaced subject as a bearer of radical political sensibility. (215-16)

This observation presents that the discourse of diasporism denies cultural boundary and reveals the experiences of dislocated people as the source of its study.

It is important to note here to avoid the confusion of diaspora discourse in relation to postcolonialism. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin clarify the distinction in spelling, "Post-colonialism/Postcolonialism is now used in wide and diverse ways to include the study and analysis of European territorial conquests . . . the differing responses . . . in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities" (*Key* 187). Here, hyphenated term indicates to the historical period of post-independence cultures whereas the unhyphenated term denotes to the concept, approach or methodology to analyze the "impact of European imperialism upon world societies" (187). The meeting point of diaspora discourse and postcolonialism is imperial dislocation and disruption. The dislocation that "occurs as a result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with this event" (73) can be physical, social or cultural. The dislocation or migration, "may be a result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement, a consequence of willing or unwilling movement" (73) provides the migrants energy, power of resistance and negotiation, and makes them culturally civilized, politically conscious and personally assertive.

The location of diasporic literature lies in the physical, social or cultural dislocation of people. Dislocation is the effect of imperial or colonial domination which creates postcolonial condition/mind. "Postcolonialism deals with the effects of colonization or cultures and societies" (186). In this sense, diasporic literature cannot be produced without postcolonial mind. It emerges and grows in postcolonial condition. Thus, diasporic literature is considered as the body of postcolonial writings. For instance, when we go to the history and root of diaspora, the dislocation/migration of Jews from Israel and Jerusalem is the cause of imperial or colonial effect that creates postcolonial condition/mind in the Jews. The Jews were physically, socially or culturally disrupted or dislocated from their ancestral homelands. "Hence, the disruptive and disorienting experience of dislocation becomes a primary influence on the regenerative energies in a postcolonial culture" (74). It means that the postcolonial condition emerges from dislocation or migration whether that happened in the ancient time or after independence or now in the age of globalization or neo-colonization. In this sense, the dislocation is the basis of postcolonial diasporic literature. "Many postcolonial texts acknowledge the psychological and personal dislocations" (75), so the production of diasporic literature emerges from the postcolonial condition/mind.

Padmini Mongia opines that in postcolonial diasporic literary theory and criticism, postcolonialism is an umbrella term under which diaspora studies, orientalism, subaltanity, and the theories of hybridity, ambivalence, third-space, third world, inbetweeness, multiculturalism, diversity, resistance and reconciliation come as reactions to Eurocentric thought. She argues, "[P]ostcolonial theory is an umbrella term that covers different critical approaches which deconstruct European thought in areas as wide-ranging as philosophy, history, literary studies, anthropology, sociology and political science" (Mongia 2). In the recent century, the postcolonial theory is

increasingly used to describe that form of social criticism which "bears witness to those unequal and uneven processes of representation by which the historical experience of the once – colonized third world comes to be framed in the West" (1). As a critical tool and methodology, postcolonial theory reveals the unequal distributions of power in the globe and demands explanations among intellectuals in different parts of the world.

Postcolonial diasporism refers to the literary or critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were under imperialism or colonialism or are now under cultural hegemony. It also deals with the literature written in or by citizens of colonizing countries. Such literature takes colonies or their people as its subject matter. It deconstructs colonial mental set-up and unmasks the imperial project of European universalism and humanism. It responds positively or negatively about the superiority of western cultures. In this regard, James Clifford maintains, "Diaspora consciousness is thus constituted both negatively and positively. It is constituted negatively by experiences of discrimination and exclusion. . . . positively through identification with world-historical cultural/political forces" (454). The prerequisite for such a discourse is the recognition of the Other and of his/her difference.

The proponents and promoters of postcolonial diasporic studies such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Paul Gilroy, French Fanon, Robin Cohen, James Clifford to name a few examine the ways in which writers from colonized countries attempt to articulate and even celebrate their cultural identities because their identities are recognized by the colonizers. Postcolonial diasporism focuses particularly on the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and misrepresents the realities of the colonized East or Other.

Postcolonial diasporism became part of a critical toolbox in the 1970s and many practitioners give credit to Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978) as an inaugural and fundamental text of postcolonial cultural studies:

> Published in 1978, Edward Said's *Orientalism* is a crucial text for what has become known as postcolonial theory. Said's most influential argument was that Orientalism needed to be understood 'as a discourse . . . by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post- Enlightenment period. (Mongia 3)

Since the publication of Said's *Orientalism*, much academic discourse has begun to use the term 'orientalism' to refer to a general patronizing western attitude towards Middle Eastern, South Asian and North African societies. According to Said, the West essentializes these societies as inferior, static, uncivilized, barbarous and undeveloped, thereby constructing a view of oriental culture that can be studied, represented and reproduced. Implicit in their construction of East is the idea that western society is superior, civilized, rational, developed and flexible. It means that orientalism, the founding stone of postcolonialism, is the prejudiced and biased eyeglass of western imperialism or colonization toward the eastern civilization. Even though the westerners construct superior vs. inferior and 'we' vs. 'other' ideology in literature and culture, their main source of civilization is the East as Said's *Orientalism* points out:

> The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the

> West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles. (1- 2)

Said is of the opinion that the Occident survives on the Orient and vice versa. They are interdependent. So, there should not be the question of superiority and inferiority is the subject matter of postcolonial studies. The thesis of the same founding work of postcolonialism develops Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony and Michel Foucault's theorization of discourse, knowledge and power relation to criticize the tradition of Oriental studies.

In Saidian conception, the colonizers see themselves at the center of the globe whereas the colonized are at the margins. Lois Tyson argues:

> This practice of judging all who are different as less than fully human is called 'othering' and it divides the world between 'us' (the civilized) and 'them' (the others or savages). The 'savage' is usually considered evil as well as inferior (the demonic other). But sometimes, the 'savage' is perceived as possessing a 'primitive' beauty or nobility born of a closeness to nature (the exotic other). In either case, the savage remains other and therefore, not fully human. (420)

This presents that the viewpoint of orientalists is to subjugate the orients. When they invade into the land of original inhabitants, they begin to contrast with the natives thinking that their whole culture is civilized, sophisticated and highly advanced whereas the cultures, customs and codes of behavior of indigenous people are savage, backward and undeveloped. This notion functions in orientalists' ideology. According

to postcolonial critics, the West has misrepresented and misinterpreted the East. Defining Saidian Orientalist ideology, Richard J. Lane in *Global Literary Theory: An Anthology* argues:

> Going back to the days of the European Empires, Orientalism is a body of western knowledge used to stereotype and subjugate those people who resided in what used to be called the 'Orient' (the Middle East and Far East). The Orient was perceived to be both inferior yet paradoxically also a severe threat to the political and religious stability of the west; the European response was to use considerable resources in studying and consolidating their knowledge of the Other. (186)

Said means that the western thought is imaginative. The West has radically polarized geography dividing the world into two unequal parts as 'our' and the 'other'. But it is interesting to note here that the orientalists realize the East a big threat to the West due to its potential power and greater size. This idea refers to the two evidences. The first evidence shows the attack on the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001 and the second is the world's available oil resources owned by Middle Eastern nations that the West depends on.

Postcolonial literature deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. Further, it deconstructs the hidden codes and assumptions of the colonial powers and their traditions. Regarding this, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin state:

> As originally used by historians after the Second World War in terms such as the post-colonial state, 'post-colonial' had a clearly chronological meaning designating the post-independence period. However, from the late 1970s the

> term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization. (*Key* 186)

Generally, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point to the Second World War as the starting point of post-colonialism in various fields. However, this concept is used in literary criticism and theory from the late 1970s. Since then, post-colonialism has been used to describe remarkably heterogeneous set of subject positions, professional fields and critical enterprises.

Postcolonial literature, which resists colonialism's oppressive ideology by depicting the misdeeds of the colonizers and the sufferings of the colonized sometimes, is classified as writings from the Third World. Writing about the origin of postcolonial literature, one of the postcolonial critics, Arif Dirlik raises a theoretical question and answers the question himself, "When exactly . . . does the 'postcolonial' begin? . . . . When Third World intellectuals have arrived in First World academe" (295). This answer reveals that postcolonial critical discourse crosses national boundaries and becomes the product of transnational intellectual activity.

Postcolonial writing is produced by third-world people or "simply a polite way of saying non-white, not Europe . . . . In this view, postcolonial theory is about the Third World or recently decolonized nations" (Mongia 8). It shows that postcolonial literature focuses on the voice of marginalized people or Ohers of the West. Gayatri Spivak also judges the location of postcolonial studies in the western academy saying, "to (re) consider the status of the appellation 'Third World' and the effects that follow from its function to give a proper name to a generalized margin" (qtd. in Mongia 9). In other words, postcolonial writing is the experience not of the West but of the Rest.

Postcolonial literature, moreover, includes not only the cultures and literatures after independence but it covers "all the cultures affected by the imperial process from

the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin, *The Empire* 2). This is because there is a continuity of constant interest throughout the historical process initiated by European imperialism. For Ella Shohat "the 'post' in 'post-colonialism' suggests 'after' the demise of colonialism . . . the 'post-colonial' tends to be associated with Third World countries which gained independence after World War II" (323). It suggests that postcolonial literature spreads from East to West with the dispersion of the people of third-world countries. Such a literature emerges in its present form out of the experience of colonization. In the postcolonial text, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin support this view, "So the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all postcolonial literatures" (2). Certainly, many intellectuals from the third-world countries are the producers of the postcolonial literature. Though the above critics put the literature of the USA in this category, its postcolonial nature has not been generally recognized because of its current position of power and the neo-colonizing role it has played in this present globalized situation.

Postcolonial literature demonstrates the relationship between the cultures of majority and minority people. Responding to the dominant/colonialist or imperialist culture, it emphasizes on the culture of 'others' and pursues the inclusion of the culture of ethnic/minority, marginalized, racial or diasporic people. Diasporic culture is the culture of dislocated people. Mirroring the culture of diasporic life, the diasporic writers in their narratives create characters who get caught in dilemma and uncertainty. Culture is not only the way of life but it is also a strong device for survival, a policy to change and to be changed. In this regard, Bhabha maintains:

> Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, whether they are the 'middle passage' of slavery and indenture, the 'voyage out' of the civilizing mission, the fraught accommodation of Third World migration to the West after the Second World War, or the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World. Culture is translational because suchspatial histories of displacement – now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of 'global' media technologies - make the question ·of how culture 'signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. (*TheLocation* 247)

Here, Bhabha demonstrates that the postcolonial diasporic culture manifests diverse cultural experiences in art, literature, life, etc. It becomes crucial to distinguish between the one from another because the symbols across the diverse cultural experiences circulate as signs within specific contextual locations and social systems of value. The transnational dimension of cultural transformation in migration, diaspora, displacement and relocation makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification.

Diasporic cultures are basically informed by translation processes due to the global interconnectedness of media cultures. In diasporic narratives, it is no longer viewed as a special original description of life and world but it is considered as an impure blended hybrid formation of meaning and experience. The translated cultures have transnational qualities of cosmopolitanism that advocates the formation of the world culture as an endless process of cultural translation. One of the causes of the increase of diaspora subject is the global interconnectedness of people. However, globalization is not experienced at the same time in the same way in every corner of

the world. The people receive certain elements of global cultures and economics translating them into their local contexts and conditions. In other words, culture is an endless practice of negotiating cultural differences and a vital technique of survival. An example is found in V. S. Naipaul's novel *A Bend in the River* (1979) in which an Indian living in Africa translates an African river into a representation of Ganges and transforms it into a displaced reference point for transnational experience. Another example is found in Bharati Mukherjee's outstanding novel *Jasmine*. The novel depicts Jasmine's journey of transformation from a passive, traditional girl at the mercy of fate in a village in India to an active, modern, and most importantly cross-cultural hybrid woman in America. All through the novel, her identity is transformed in line with shifts in her name from Jyoti to Jasmine to Jazzy to Jane. Accordingly, she stands in-between two cultures, "shuttles between identities" (Mukherjee 77), welds opposing identities, enters the third space and emerges as a hybrid. Thus, translation of culture for diasporic people becomes existential process. Diasporas cannot be separated from cultural translation.

Diasporic critics such as Giorgio Shani, Afal Ahmed Hasan Al-Saidi and Stuart Hall have a great concern about diasporic people's identity. They say that the world in which we live in is progressive with profound economic, political and social transformation affecting every aspect of our lives, including our understanding of 'who we are' because globalization assumes that the world is becoming more global. In this regard, Giorgio Shani, a Japanese professor of Politics and International Relations at the International Christian University in Tokyo, says:

> In recent decades, however, as a result of advances in communications, it is possible to view images of the world from outer space. This has enabled us to visualize our common planet as a globe. Viewed from space, our planet has no

> natural borders or frontiers and human beings are merely one of the many different species of life living on it. The concept of globalization, therefore, assumes a progressive movement towards a 'global consciousness' and ultimately 'a global identity'. (380)

Shani means that diasporic people possess global identity which is both relative and culturally constructed as he further says, "Identities are relative because the 'self', one's understanding of whom one is, is always dependent upon the existence of an 'other', whom one is not" (380-81). The invention and growth of Internet has facilitated and often enabled the formation of transnational networks among individuals and groups with a shared cultural background or interests. Globalization is possible through communication technologies and it has deterritorialized diasporic identities possible on a global scale.

In the globalizing process, the local and global cultures, languages and whole civilization contradict each other and are emerged as power in diasporas. According to Stuart Hall, the hybrid and multicultural power that the diasporic people have "coexists with 'older' identities based on ethnicity, religion and language within the 'self'" (qtd. in Shani 389). Human identities are plural and fluid. Diasporas are in between cultures. They have liberation to choose this and that world, culture, religion, language, politics, etc. Their culture is "seen as a source of strength rather than weakness as it opens up 'multiple worlds' in which to inhabit and multiple sources of political obligation: to the local, regional, national and global" (Shani 389). Giving an example of IT workers from China and India in the USA, Shani presents a diasporic context and the power and politics of diasporic people in such a way:

> Being Chinese and Indian in the US is different from being Chinese or Indian in one's homeland – it refers to one's 'place of origin' rather than one's 'place

> of settlement'. One's place of origin becomes deterritorialized through the process of migration. The offspring of the Indian and Chinese IT workers may never see their 'homeland', or place of origin, India or China, but they will not cease to be Indian or Chinese within the context of their place of settlement, the United States, just as many of their fellow citizens continue to categorize themselves, and be categorized as Irish Americans, Italian Americans, and African Americans many generations after their 'arrival' in the US. The significance of being Indian or Chinese therefore changes in what may be termed a 'diaspora' context. (389)

Diaspora's diverse identities contain power and freedom and help to overcome prejudice and ethnocentrism by highlighting the benefits of multiculturalism. They enrich societies, transfer knowledge, keep harmony among the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-language and multi-political people, and broaden people's horizons in spite some threats of changes in their communities.

Discussing about diasporic power and politics, Giorgrio Shani, as one of the transformationalist critics, spotlights the creolized ethnic identities of the forty-fourth president of the United States, Barak Hussein Obama in his article "Identity-politics in the Global Age" (2014):

> Nowhere is this better illustrated than in one of Hawaii's most famous sons: the forty-fourth president of the United States, Barak Hussein Obama. The son of a Muslim Kenyan father and a Caucasian mother from Kansas, Obama was born in Hawaii and raised in Indonesia (he has a half-Indonesian step-sister who is an academic at the University of Hawaii at Manoa) before returning to continue his education in the fiftieth state. Elected to serve in the Senate as representative for Illinois, Obama can lay claim to possibly seven different

> socio-cultural and regional identities: Hawaiian, Illinoisan, Kenyan, Kansasa Christian, Indonesian (possibly) and American ! This no doubt goes someway to explaining the breadth of his appeal not only among Americans, who voted for him in 2008, but also global audiences as exemplified by the award of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize. (390)

Obama is thought to be an example of successive migrant who receives political and cultural power, and takes interest in diasporic people, their rights and freedom in the US. Millions of immigrants living illegally in the US were allowed to apply for work permits by President Barack Obama. During his tenure, he untied and reformed the migration policy of the US. His policy facilitates the diasporas enforcing them to be rightful citizens of the US by breaking down the barriers of territorial identity as Paul Gilroy's term "diaspora consciousness" (qtd. in Shani 395), a complex mixture of multiple powers and forces like cultural, ethnic, national entities and certain psychological issues that come into existence due to the displacement. Postcolonial diasporic criticism analyzes the culture and concept of the contemporary diasporic people who are considered independent from the European colonization. It examines the cultural practice of decolonized diasporic people who have developed, presented and extended their own distinctive cultures interrogating the essentialist center/margin model of colonialist discourse.

In the sense of decolonization, postcolonial diasporic studies also represents Commonwealth Literature whether that is written in English or in local languages as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin highlight, "Contemporary postcolonial studies represent the intersection of Commonwealth literary studies" (*Key* 52) produced in the former British colonies and dependencies that are now sovereign nations. Broadly speaking, postcolonial literature covers "multiplicity of terms: Commonwealth literature, New

English literature . . . Third World literature, minority literature or multicultural literature" (Ako 2) which emerged as resistance to European imperial domination. For Stephen Slemon, the definition of postcolonial literature seems to be more comprehensive as it embraces all the possible categories of subalterns and marginalized groups as "the term postcolonial is an outgrowth of what formally were commonwealth literary studies" (Slemon 73-74). It is clear that postcolonial literature deals not only the cultures and politics of diasporic societies but also the problems of gender, caste and class as they are represented textually.

The significant features of postcolonial literature are resistance, subversion and reconstruction with the anticolonial consciousness of the third-world intellectuals. Resistance can be seen as the category of literary writing that emerges as an integral part of an organized struggle for national and cultural liberation. The writers in the postcolonial space voice against the dominant discourses of the West by developing counter-hegemony and arouse a sense of subversion to reconstruct the hegemonic notions of the West among leading men of letters from once colonized countries.

Postcolonial diasporic discourse incorporates the notion of 'Otherness' as one of the key concepts of diaspora. "It is Frantz Fanon who develops the idea of the 'other' in his writing to be a key concern in postcolonial studies. To him, the 'Other' is the 'not me' he is the 'other'" (Al-Saidi 95). Simply, the other is any person who is separate from one's self. In postcolonial diasporic theory, "The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism as a means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key* 169). In postcolonial context, otherness is defined by difference, typically difference marked by outward signs like class, race, ethnicity

and gender. As such, otherness has also been associated predominantly with marginalized people, those who by virtue of their difference from the dominant group, have been disempowered, robbed of a voice in the social, religious, and political world. Difference, in literature is often articulated as either some kind of weakness or superior strength or intellect depending on the sympathies of the dominant cultural voice. For example, in colonial literature the native is portrayed as Other, the innocent or savage. In postcolonial literature, the diaspora people are depicted as Others who lack identity, respectability and purity. They are regarded as foreign, unfamiliar, uncanny and unauthorized who do not belong to the group or culture of the host land whereas the westerners, white men, who maintain authority over the 'Other' are considered as 'Self'. The imperial subject tries to control over the 'Other' as different from the 'Self' thinking that it has sufficient identity and authenticity.

Even though "The term [Othering] was coined by Gayatri Spivak for the process by which imperial discourse creates its 'others' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key* 171) in 1985, the idea of it draws on several philosophical and theoretical traditions. The concepts of 'other', 'othering' and 'otherness' have taken root in "F. W. Hegel's master-slave dialectic as developed in *Phenomenologie des Geistes* [The Phenomenology of Spirit (1807)]. Hegel is often . . . read as a theory of 'self' and 'other' in which the juxtaposition towards the other constitutes the self" (Jensen 64). Here, Hegelian 'self' refers to master and 'other' to slave. The Other's life is ruled by the Self's needs and desires, which the Other must learn to think as a matter of survival. However, Hegelian concept of self and other grows Marxism. Highlighting the term, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write:

> Although the term is used extensively in existential philosophy, notably by Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* to define the relations between Self and Other

> in creating self-awareness and ideas of identity, the definition of the term as used in current post-colonial theory is rooted in the Freudian and post-Freudian analysis of the formation of subjectivity, most notably in the work of the psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Jacques Lacan. Lacan's use of the term involves a distinction between the 'Other' and the 'other', which can lead to some confusion, but it is a distinction that can be very useful in post-colonial theory. (*Key* 169-70)

In Lacanian theory, the small 'other' describes the other who resembles the self, which the child discovers when it looks in the mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate being. But the big 'Other' represents other subjects such as mother or father. In this context, this self/other dichotomy helps to develop Lacanian psychoanalysis.

Moreover, this notion of self and other occurs frequently in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1953), a major work of feminist philosophy that describes how men are regarded as the norm and women as other. Beauvoir, summarizing the long tradition of thought states, "Thus, humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being . . . she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other" (xvi). Here, she criticizes patriarchy and in her writing, self/other refers to man/woman dichotomy, which is repeatedly used in feminism.

Regarding the postcolonial diasporic narratives, the 'self' and 'other' are politically and culturally presented as colonizer and colonized. Originally, the postcolonial diasporic narratives deal with that literatures which are written in or by the writers of previously or currently colonized countries. Diasporic writers through their writings express their personal experiences of dislocation as they feel themselves

others. The concept of otherness is different from self as Said's claim that the West has constructed orient as other, chaotic, irrational, feminine and evil whereas the West is ordered, rational, masculine and good. Such a construct of the 'West' to the 'Rest' is their stereotypical ideology as Homi K. Bhabha in his article "The Other Question" maintains, "An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of fixity in the ideological construction of otherness" (37). Here, Bhabha's notion of the relationship between self and other in colonial discourse resembles with Hegel's idea of master-slave relation in Marxist ideology. The postcolonial diasporic writers demonstrate the dichotomies such as self/other, us/them, colonizer/colonized, white/black, first world/ third world, superior/ inferior, etc. through their writings. Besides, they not only expose the binary opposition but also protest western ways of categorization. The postcolonial diasporic writers want to rewrite the canonical stories, which are based on biasness and try to reverse and deconstruct the dichotomy and constructed ideology of Otherness.

It is worth noting here that 'othering' can be described as a multidimensional process and several different forms and systems of oppression. It comes in Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, postcolonialism, racism, etc. and sometimes political, cultural, economic and sociological theories can be combined or they occur as interlocking system of oppression based on social class, gender, national identity, race and ethnicity.

Postcolonial diasporic discourse encompasses the experience of protest and resistance. Many diaspora critics have written on the subject of diaspora in conflict. Babhar Baser and Ashok Swain say that diasporas are "peace spoiler" (46). Here, they focus on the negative roles of diaspora. Further, they claim that diasporas are responsible for the recurrence of conflict and are also a security threat for the

countries in which they reside. Indeed, the notion that diasporas can be a threat for the security in western countries became more significant after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. In the same way, Hazel Smith and Paul Stares state, "Some diasporas are peace-makers as well as peace-wreckers who have the capacity to support armed conflicts and that through their network structures, arms and money are being sent to state and non-state actors such as terrorist groups. However, they can support more deserving causes as well, such as humanitarian assistance" (3). For examples, the Sri Lankan Tamil diasporas in Europe support the Tamil guerrilla group LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam) for their separatist movement. Also, the Kurdish diasporas in Europe contribute to conflicts in the homeland by providing financial support to the rebel groups. They raise large sums of money in Europe to financially support the violent activities in Turkey and most of these contributions appear to be voluntary.

Writing about literary resistance, Stephen Slemon in his seminal essay "Unsetting the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World" refers Selwyn Cudjoe and Barbara Harlow's concept and says that resistance literature is the category of literary writing which emerges as an integral part of an organized struggle or resistance for national liberation because "resistance is an act, or a set of acts that is designed to rid a people of its oppressors, and it so thoroughly infuses the experience of living under oppression that it becomes an almost autonomous aesthetic principle" (77-78). Equally, another postcolonial critic Ziauddin Sardar, focusing on non-western tradition as alive, innovative, life-enhancing, flexible and dynamic force, argues that tradition can transform non-western societies into cultures of resistance. He claims, "Traditions of resistance have maintained non-western enclaves of cultural autonomy as heavily defended redoubts" (224). Yet, the role of diasporas in this age of globalization is very important in cultural, political or economic fields.

In contrast, postcolonial diasporic experience contains positive elements. It does not only consist of protest, resistance or conflict but it is also characterized by coexistence, reconciliation and endurance of opposites. Reconciliation is very much significant for preventing repetition of conflict. In diasporic theory, resistance and reconciliation go together because reconciliation is an important factor for lasting peace. Diasporas are increasingly building bridges between their home and host societies. Increasing in numbers and growing economic strength makes diaspora groups stronger. Due to modern information and communication technologies, diasporas have greater potential to interact between the homeland and the host land. They have distinctive attitudes towards the homeland, especially in terms of highly valuable symbolic attachment because they have strong potentiality to return to homeland. Diasporas have reconciling identity. Politically or culturally, they are always in give-and-take position.

Reconciliation can mean different things to different people. The diasporic people need to accept the cultures and politics of their host nations for their existence and also they cannot forget their originality. They culturally, politically, socially, linguistically reconcile with the country of their residence for their transformation and adjustment. They acquire the power of flexibility, merge, adjustment and tolerance yet "the reconciliation is not permanent, but that the relation between the groups that are reconciling keeps changing" (Kriesberg 1). Here, Louis Kriesberg means that reconciliation, an important characteristic of diasporic people, is dynamic, not static. It helps them transform from one level to another, one identity to another and one involvement to another involvement. Sometimes, for the diasporic people, reconciliation becomes motivating factor for their betterment in the new land because it is a process and means of achieving their goals.

Postcolonial diasporic discourse carries with it the literature of difference and diversity. According to Jinato Hu, "Diversity in the world is a basic characteristic of human society, and also the key condition for a lively and dynamic world as we see today" (qtd. in Aikins and White 11). In diasporic world, the notions of ambivalence, hybridity, in-betweenness, third space, multiculturalism, etc. challenge the concepts of fixed identity and purity in culture, politics and nation as coherent and unified entities. Distinguishing between cultural diversity and difference, Homi K. Bhabha sates "Cultural diversity is an epistemological object – culture as an object of empirical knowledge – whereas cultural difference is the process of the enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable', authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification" ("Cultural" 206). Though these terms are used interchangeably in common usage, Bhabha shows distinction between two ways of representing culture. He means that cultural diversity is the recognition of pre-given cultural contents and customs, the category of comparative ethics, aesthetics or ethnology whereas cultural difference is the process of signification and identification that sees culture as the point at which two or more cultures meet. With this point of view, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin quote:

> Bhabha argues that it is insufficient to record signifiers of cultural diversity, which merely acknowledge a range of separate and distinct systems of behavior, attitudes and values. . . . Cultural difference, on the other hand, suggests that cultural authority resides not in a series of fixed and determined diverse objects but in the process of how these objects come to be known and so come into being. *(Key* 60)

Bhabha means that cultural diversity makes issues of race, class, gender and sexuality as matters of identity politics whereas cultural difference emphasizes the significance

of the cultural object and the interaction of cultures in the postcolonial diasporic world which is always filled with particular quality of power and authority.

A number of postcolonial diasporic critics such as Stuart Hall, Arjun Appadurai, Homi Bhabha, Gyayatri Spivak, Robin Cohen, Avtar Brah to name a few, have said that the present world contains both local and global characters simultaneously. In their writing, "the contemporary world is characterized by transnational migrations, cultural appropriations and diasporic peoples, all contributing to increased cultural contact and mixing, and to the intermingling of the local and global" (Kuortti and Nyman 3). They celebrate difference, hybridity, ambivalence and third space which are the actual experiences that the diasporic people possess in their countries of residence.

Hybridity generally denotes a cross between two different species, "As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third 'hybrid' species. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, etc. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key* 118). It indicates a cross between different languages, cultures and politics. According to Joel Kuortti and Jopi Nyman "As a critical term, hybridity is often discussed in connection with a set of other terms denoting 'intercultural transfer' and the forms of identity such a change generates: the three other key terms include syncretism, mestizaje (or métissage) and creolization" (4). In diasporic discourse, hybridity is connected with syncretism that often describes the cultural mixing evident in the religious and musical traditions; with mestizaje that describes the racial mixing or mixed-ethnicity; and creolization that suggests a process of intermixing and cultural change, a new identity formed from various cultural roots.

Describing the hybrid cultural identity, Stuart Hall in his seminal essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" argues, "Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. . . . we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (110). He further clarifies his notion about diaspora's identity, "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new through transformation and difference" (120). From these evidences, it can be said that diasporas and diasporic narratives celebrate difference and diversity culturally and politically.

The notions of hybridity, ambivalence, in-betweeness, mimicry and third space are crucial to describe postcolonial diasporic identity. "Hybridity expresses a state of 'in-betweeness' as in a person who stands between two cultures" (Habib 750). This concept is embodied in Bhabha's own life. Bhabha claims that "the colonial hybridity is the articulation of the ambivalent space" (*TheLocation* 160) and this ambivalent space is the third space to him that enables other positions to emerge. According to him, the relationship between colonizer and colonized is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never completely opposed to the colonizer as ambivalent condition is the ambiguous way in which the colonizer and colonized regard one another. The colonizer often respects the colonized as both inferior and yet exotically 'other' while the colonized regards the colonizer as both enviable, privileged yet corrupt. Both have the mixed or hybrid feelings of blessing and curse, love and hate, provider and provided. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, "Ambivalence also characterizes the way in which colonial discourse relates the colonized subject, for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time" (*Key* 13). In Bhabha's discourse, ambivalence disrupts

the authority of colonial domination and it is therefore unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer. Even though the colonized subjects are assumed to mimicry the habits and values of the colonizers, it becomes nothing more than the mockery. Therefore, in Bhabha's theory, the relationship between colonizer and colonized subjects is always mixed feelings of attraction and repulsion, mimicry and mockery or fluctuating and unsettling. Such a relationship becomes the seed of the destruction of colonizer.

The other dominant concepts of postcolonial diasporic discourse, in-betweeness and third space, resemble together. They are a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. The third space is the in-between space between the oppressors and oppressed. In that area or space, there is the formation and reformation of new cultural identities, which are constantly in a state of becoming. On the one hand, this is the space where the oppressed/colonized plot their liberation. On the other hand, it is the space of negotiation, reconciliation, settlement and solution. One of the prominent postcolonial critics, Lila Gandhi outlines this 'third space' as a site of "communication, negotiation and by implication, translation. It is in this 'indeterminate' zone or place of hybridity where anti-colonial politics first begins to articulate its agenda" (131). Like Bhabha, she claims that the third space or ambivalent position or hybrid identity is a strategic reversal of the colonial gaze. Through this device, the colonized people perceive the life and world.

In addition, Gandhi encompasses the idea of in-betweeness with diasporic identity. She argues, "The notion of 'in-betweeness' conjured up by the term 'hybridity' is further elaborated the accompanying concept of diaspora" (131). Gandhi ties in with Stuart Hall's claim that identity is always constructed, always in process but is never complete.

Here, Bhabha's, Gandhi's and Hall's arguments clearly demonstrate that hybridity and ambivalence are unavoidably linked with the identity of the diasporic people. Hybridity, for Bhabha, isa liminal Third Space, "the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (*The Location* 56). Moreover, the postcolonial diasporic literature, which is situated tightly in the present but continuously looking back to the colonialist past, is the literature of the 'third space' because it is hybrid in form. Especially, for Bhabha, all cultural statements and systems are constructed in the 'third space' that is contradictory and ambivalent. The statements and systems or diasporic narratives that emerged from the 'third space' make the hierarchal purity of cultures untenable and invalid or hybrid in the present time. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin admit this view, "In recent times, the notion of a 'diasporic identity' has been adopted by many writers as a positive affirmation on their hybridity" (*Key* 70) because diasporas are the sources and sowers of innovative culture and identity. It means that postcolonial culture and identity are defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity. Postcolonial consciousness produces and reproduces diasporic cultures and identities through transformation and difference. In this respect, individuals' cultural identityas a construct consists of a countless number of facets.

Concisely, diasporic literatures emerge in the third space – an ambiguous and ambivalent area – and grow and spread with hybrid nature. The third space as a zone of diasporic discourse develops interaction of two or more cultures and then challenges historical identity of culture as a homogenizing unifying force. It, as a forming site of multiculturalism, claims that purity and fixity of culture is invalid. The third space is the kernel hybrid position and the in-between space – the platform for

resistance and reconciliation – that produces fluidity of culture and carries its burden. In other words, hybridity, ambivalence, in-betweeness and third space indicate the similar concept in which two or more cultures contact and collide, and the diasporic literatures emerge out of that friction vigorously with hybrid and ambivalence in form and content. Thus, in the recent times, diasporic literature has become popular and widely-used literary genre due to its location of emergence.

Diaspora Politics: Increasing Significance in Globalization

The significance of diaspora politics and diplomacy in the twenty-first century world has been increasing due to the various aspects of advanced globalization such as new communication technologies, increased travel and global economic integration, and an abundance of transnational activities with global connectivity. Highlighting global interconnectedness, Richard J. Lane quotes Mark Kesselmen's idea that globalization is a worldwide social relations that connects distant localities in various areas of academia:

> Economists tend to focus on the activities of transnational corporations, technological change, international trade and investment, and financial flows across borders; political scientists often focus on the role of international organizations such as the United Nations or International Monetary Fund; and sociologists and anthropologists tend to analyze the diffusion of culture and popular resistance to economic and political globalization. (861)

Kesselmen indicates that globalization is a two-way process by which social relations link distant localities by creating global interdependence and consciousness across time and space. In this process people, ideas and goods spread throughout the world, encouraging more interaction and integration between the world's cultures, governments and economics. It creates free transfer of capital, goods, and services

across national frontiers. Broadly, globalization is the movement of people, knowledge and technology across international borders. Because of the rapid advances in technology, telecommunications and global media, the free flow of knowledge, ideas and cultures are flowing with increasing speed. Today, the accelerated globalizing process increases the importance of diaspora politics and encourages diasporas in political engagement.

Diaspora and globalization are not new phenomena "even though the word [globalization] became more commonly used in the early 1960s, it was not until the 1980s that it entered academic discourse" (Lane 861). Since 1990s, under the effects of globalization the size and intensity of international migration flow have multiplied. Due to the increased flows, rapidly growing immigrant population and their role in the global economy and politics, the concept of diaspora has revived its importance in international relations and academic research. Now, diasporas have become a significant source of power and influence in the world systems such as economic, political, cultural, etc. and evolutionary process of human civilization as well. Stating the spreading position and growing importance of diaspora politics, Fiona B. Adamson, a senior lecturer in international relation at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London admits:

> A few decades ago, there was little interest in diasporas and their politics beyond a few 'classic' cases such as the Jewish or Armenian diasporas. Today, diaspora politics—forms of political engagement that link constituencies in one country with a real or imagined 'homeland' somewhere else—are omnipresent, part and parcel of everyday politics around the world. Diasporas are being courted by state policy makers, heralded by international

> organizations such as the World Bank, and increasingly seen as influential global actors. ("Growing" 291)

During the end of the twentieth century and the turn of the twenty-first century, the world has entered in an age of accelerated globalization fueled by "neoliberalism" (Johnson 31). Neoliberalism is one of the dominant ideologies of public policies of many governments in developed and developing countries which are facilitated by global agencies such as International Organization for Migration, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, World Health Organization and the United Nations. Neoliberalism has increased the significance of diasporas as productive and useful members, a bridge between nations, potential mediators, transmitters of values and promotors of development for both home and host lands. Diasporas are very keen to take advantage of globalization as they are often centralized into global cities and bring the ability to communicate and travel easily.

By the dynamic activities of the current diasporas, the historical definition of diaspora, i.e. the forced dispersal of Jews from their homeland with traumatic situation, has been changed and widened with their fluid identity. They do not remain only as minority communities of immigrants, but they have also become cultural, political and social connections with their homelands. Moreover, they are fully accepted by host countries due to the new migration policies in the modernized and globalized era because "it must be viewed through the global lens of migration and encompass those who are defined as 'diaspora'" (Aikins and White 1-2) so, they have a commitment to survive as a distinct community with a myth of return to their imagined homelands.

Also, the migrant-sending governments welcome diaspora-held projects more easily than other organizations due to their honesty. In other words, the governments

believe on diasporas, their way of doing and willingness. They consider the positive impacts that the diasporas bring to the country. Considering the significance of diasporas politics, both developed and developing countries have planned their effective policies and programs as their diaspora strategies. Many countries have implemented them by a variety of agencies. In this context, Kingsley Aikins and Nicola White examine the diaspora policies carried out by developing and developed countries:

> Diaspora strategies that extend across a range of social, cultural, political, educational and financial dimensions are now being implemented by both developing countries and developed countries, including New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Israel, Ireland and India, to name but a few. (2)

The main thrust of the argument is that specific types of policy intervention can enhance flows of remittances, investments, knowledge transfers and political influence through diaspora groups back into their homelands. Remittances are becoming a more important source of funds for many Third World or South Asian countries like Nepal than foreign aid, bank loans, and foreign investment. Thus, by using new information and communication technologies to transmit expertise, the governments of origin countries have started to design diaspora strategies, policies, schemes, and programs to capture, enhance and increase the possibilities of cooperation with diaspora population.

The diasporic networks that tie populations across different countries can be used to facilitate the cross-border transfer of resources, skills, ideas, and influence. Such advantageous situations provide them political power. “In the United States, in the late nineteenth an twentieth centuries, many migrants maintained close tie with

their countries of origin, sending remittances or participating in homeland political movements" (Adamson, "Growing" 291). It demonstrates that diaspora politics has also been studied in the past under emigrant or ethnic politics. Currently, what have been changed is the conceptual frame used to understand such politics with the other features of rapid globalization. Considering the value of diaspora politics, the governments of developed and developing countries now think about their diasporas in new ways and seek to build mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with them. According to Aikins and White, diasporas serves as the two-way flow of various forms of capital such as human, social, intellectual, cultural or financial. They contribute to the improvement of the living standard of relatives or even the economy of the country by sending money back home. Focusing on the significance of diasporas, they claim, "Rather than viewing them as being 'lost' to the homeland, they can re-engage with the homeland through strategic diaspora initiatives such as formal mentoring programs, investment and trade programs, and cultural initiatives. They do not need to return in order to make a difference" (3). They assert that the diaspora members do not have to return home to play a significant role in the economic, cultural, political, or any other developments because this is the era of globalization. They can contribute their knowhow living in any corner of the globe. Thus, now, in diaspora studies, the major challenge for national and international governmental bodies is to create an environment with conditions that facilitate diaspora contributions.

Diplomatically speaking, diasporas are considered as public ambassadors who can facilitate bilateral relationships. We can argue that any manifestation of a diaspora is a political phenomenon because they may gain access to policy circles, resources and networks in both their country of residence and their homeland. They can be

politically useful for a range of different types of actors. Now, "many states are seeking to secure a political advantage by engaging with or managing their diaspora." (Adamson, "Growing" 293). Many diasporas are viewed by state actors as potential sources of political power, revenue and investment, art, literature and culture for promoting state interests abroad.

Some developed countries such as Australia, the UK and the United States have appointed immigrants and their descendants to high profile diplomatic positions in their countries or origin. Steven Vertovec, a Professor of Transnational Anthropology, Sociology and Ethnology at Oxford University and Gottingen, examines the role diasporas play in migrant-sending and receiving countries in the following way:

> Different diaspora-based associations may lobby host countries (to shape policies in favour of a homeland or to challenge a homeland government), influence homelands (through their support or opposition of governments), give financial and other support to political parties, social movements and civil society organizations, or sponsor terrorism or the perpetuation of violent conflict in the homeland. ("The Political" 5)

Vertovec admires Indian diasporas who "do not emphasize the melancholy aspects long associated with the classic Jewish, African, or Armenian diasporas. Rather, they celebrate a culturally creative, socially dynamic, and often romantic meaning" (2). To him, the Indian diasporas (whether they are Returning diasporas or Affinity diasporas who they have been described previously in this thesis) are very special because they are residing in the distant lands and have succeeded in their chosen professions by their will power, single-minded dedication and hard work. Diasporas are also philanthropists because they assist in rebuilding the communities in their home

country, and rescue and relief processes after a natural disaster or post-conflict by fundraising, public relations and lobbying.

By understanding the growing importance of diaspora politics and power in the twenty-first century, the migrant-sending and migrant-receiving countries have changed the patterns of migration that strengthen the potential for diaspora engagement. They have made their migration rules easier to cross the borders than before. Due to the changing patterns, there is a continual growth in number of transnational citizens. According to Vertovec, "It is estimated that more than a half-million children born in the United States each year, who are American citizens automatically, have at least one additional nationality" (6). Similarly, looking at the figure of migrants "1 out of 33 persons in the world today is a migrant" (Aikins and White 5). The reason behind it is globalization that increasingly empowers diasporas to exercise direct political influence on their homelands rather than limiting their activities to lobbying the governments of countries in which they reside. Writing about the context of Nepal, "On average, more than 1,500 people leave Nepal each day to work in overseas destinations. . . . The country received NPR. 1.49 billion (USD 15 million) daily in remittances in 2013/14" (Maharjan, Prakash and Gurung 70). It shows that Nepal's economy relies on migrants' remittances.

According to the *International Migration Report 2017* published by the United Nation, "The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly in recent years, reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000. . . . In 1917, India was the largest country of origin of international migrants (17 million), followed by Mexico (13 million)" (v). To engage with as many of its diaspora as possible, India has introduced a number of different categories of overseas Indians: Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), People of Indian Origin

(PIOs), American-Born Confused Desi (ABCD) and Overseas Citizenship of India (OCIs).The report displays that South Asian region is the origin of the largest diaspora-sending region in the world. The report further reveals:

> In today's increasingly interconnected world, international migration has become a reality that touches nearly all corners of the globe. Modern transportation has made it easier, cheaper and faster for people to move in search of jobs, opportunity, education and quality of life. At the same time conflict, poverty, inequality and a lack of sustainable livelihoods compel people to leave their homes to seek a better future for themselves and their families abroad. (1)

Not only have the diaspora-sending countries taken advantages from destination countries but the destination countries also have taken significant benefits from diasporas as the different diasporas often fill critical labor gaps, create jobs and pay taxes and social security contributions. Some diasporas are among the most dynamic members of the host society contributing to the development of science and technology and enriching their host communities by providing cultural diversity.

The power and politics of diasporas become highly important in their country of origin. According to Yossi Shain, the growing impact of diasporic South Asians, Indians in particular, influence a lot to the home politics. In January 2003, India's government, in an effort to draw upon diasporic money and political power, held the Global Indian Family conference in New Delhi. Addressing the conference, Shain emphasizes the Indian authority's voice:

> Prime Minister Atal Bihar Vajpayee called on the diaspora to strengthen their ties with India, preserve their Indian identity abroad, and use their resources to uplift their ancestral homeland. He offered people with Indian origin dual

> citizenship and urged the diaspora to continue to invest their money in their homeland. (38)

The above excerpt demonstrates that the Indian government valued the financial and political power of diasporas. Here, the diasporic money has been a major influence on the Indian economy. Shain further elaborates the power of Indian diaspora, "In recent years many accounts describe how the Indian-Hindu communities in the United States are raising substantial funds for Hindu nationalist agendas of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), promoting a movement of Hindu religious nationalism" (38-39). It can be said that BJP came in power in Indian politics with the help of Indian diaspora communities living in the United States. Active diasporas are also the political actors whose support (that they can mobilize in their host lands) in national politics is remarkable.

Even the highly educated and skilled people do not get jobs equal to their qualification in the Third World countries like the countries of South Asia. So mass emigration of highly trained and qualified professional class begins in the 1970s, which is termed as 'brain drain'. India's cream of highly skilled professionals comprise doctors, engineers, scientists, teachers, architects, entrepreneurs, and more recently the IT workers, and nurses. India has experienced a loss of skilled professionals migrating abroad to the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These skilled and highly qualified diasporas are of a great significance in the countries. According to Akbar S. Ahmed and Hasting Donnan, "Muslims constitute a large proportion of this population movement. It is in this manner that Muslim societies have today become part and parcel of Western countries. Muslim doctors and engineers live as American or British citizens. Their children have no intention of going back to their place of origin" (906). Besides, the

host countries feel great significance from diasporas because some diasporas work for less pay, for longer hours, and in worse conditions than native-born workers. Some western countries such as the UK have taken much benefit from the Gurkha soldiers who involve in more risky jobs than the native-born soldiers do.

Additionally, the rise of diaspora politics impacts homeland politics. In some cases, diasporas seem to be more radical and support local political leaders and movements. There are many examples of diasporas' contributions in local levels. According to Terrence Lyon and Peter Mandaville, "India in the diaspora contributed to the expansion of Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)" (4) by playing important roles in promoting good governance, democratization and increased transparency. In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) "extracted crucial resources from the Tamil diaspora to sustain their war effort" (3). Similarly, in some cases, diasporas maintain geographic proximity to the conflict, such as "Afghani refugees in Iran or Rwandans in eastern Congo, retain their links to militarized networks and play significant roles in homeland conflict "(3). In some cases, politically active diasporas favor hardline militants and can make civil wars whereas in other cases, they can be a force for peace.

Diasporas as being transnational political actors (those who create a connectivity that develops cross-border or trans-border relations) play one or another role like political parties, interest groups, civil society organizations and insurgencies to influence political agendas in the real or imaginary homelands in this globalized world. One of the examples is taken from Tamil diasporas. When civil war began in 1983 in Sri Lanka that forced many Tamils to flee to different countries especially in its neighboring countries, and in Europe, America and Canada. The fled diaspora communities from different parts of the world began to help the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Diasporas have a two-way process. Most aspects of their lives occur and take place across borders. Global networks of diaspora associations sometimes engage in mass protest and

consciousness-raising about homeland-related issues. They maintain strong ethnic and transnational bonds in some issues in their residing or origin countries. For example, in the 9/11 event, not only the citizens form Islamic countries, but also the Muslim diasporas form different parts of the world keep a strong ethnic bond against the West in general and America in particular with an unspeakable support. Other impacts of diaspora politics can be traced from the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988). Due to the global media, many people in the world read the book and the Muslim people living not only in Islamic countries but also in Europe and America united politically against Rushdie's idea. This novel ignited Muslims' fury because they thought that their deepest belief had been offended. Then banning the book, the Iranian Islamic leader Ayatollah Khomeini announced fatwa calling for Rushdie's death for the blasphemy. Some other examples of diasporic politics can be taken from the Gulf War and Saddam Hussein's execution (30 Dec. 2006) which helped polarize the world politics. Similarly, it is said that because of the widespread number of Indian diasporas, Bollywood movies that are released in India watched by a large number of diasporas, especially by NRI and PIO, in the same day all over the world. For example, "the popular television series *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* was watched by six to seven hundred million people" (Ahmed and Donnan 909) in the same day as it was released in India and it ran for years. This is all because of the increasing diaspora politics and transnational ties between diasporas and homeland linkages.

Diasporas constitute the role of 'soft power' in the world politics by attempting to shape social and public opinion within host countries. They are considered as an important instrument and source of soft power and public diplomacy because they advocate the cultural and civic attractiveness of their home country and execute its soft power over the host society. In fact, the concept of soft power – a power of appeal and attraction which has the ability to shape the preferences of others – is very important in the international relations or politics like any other powers.

Joseph S. Nye, the distinguished Professor of Government at Harvard, defines power and soft power in such a way:

> If we think about power, power is simply the ability to affect others to get what you want, and you can do that in three ways: You can do it with threats of coercion; sticks. You can do it with payments; carrots. Or you can do it with attracting others and persuading them to want what you want; that's what I call 'soft power' And if you can generate enough soft power, you can economize on sticks and carrots. (1)

Here, soft power refers to the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force of coercion. In other words, soft power means the ability to get what one country wants by attracting and convincing others to adopt its goals. Soft power differs from hard power, the ability to use the carrots and sticks of economic and military might to make others follow its will. Soft power is the evolving notion of power in a new world of non-state actors such as diasporas. The combination of both hard and soft powers is called "smart power" (10) according to Nye. In this perspective, we can say that the South Asia's soft power is its culture, knowledge, spiritualism, Indian cuisine, music, dance, Indian fusions, Bollywood films, yoga, Ayurveda and a tradition of good learning of the diasporas in Europe and America. Among the South Asian countries, India is a global player of soft power diplomacy in political, cultural and economic sphere. Besides using military and economic powers, the European and American nations also use soft power by international actors to carry out strategies in favor of their interests and to maintain their leading role in the world.

In this third millennium, Nye focuses on two power shifts: power transition and power diffusion. The former is regarded as the issue of rising powers while the

latter focuses on power shifting from states to non-state actors. In Nye's words the two shifts are going on globally, "One is what I call 'power transition,' which is a shift of power among states. In this case, I think it's largely from West to East. The other is 'power diffusion,' which is the movement of power away from states or governments to non-governmental actors" (2). Here, the second is the soft power and public diplomacy, and networking by which the countries use diaspora actors to implement their comprehensive strategies. Diaspora "is an important tool for India's diplomacy" (Aikins and White 20). It is diasporas who promote specific foreign policy agendas such as political, religious, economic, etc. beyond the borders of the nation-states. They implement the agendas through cultures and other public activities by influencing the people and the governmental institutions of the counties where they reside. When we talk about South Asian countries, especially India, one of the Spanish critic Nachatter Singh Garha traces:

> Indian nationals living abroad still have no right to vote or participate in the local elections in India. Since the new Indian government, led by Narendra Modi, took power in May 2014, several structural reforms have been introduced to the existing diaspora engagement policy. . . . The main idea of the Indian government is to use the diaspora community members, as a soft power tool to influence the strategic decisions in favor of Indian businesses and its position in the world politics. (15)

This remark demonstrates that diaspora as a soft power is often used by the origin countries to influence the decisions of the host countries and big transnational corporations to acquire some economic and political gains, mostly through prosperous members of diaspora community. For example, the South Asian countries like Nepal, India and others have an image of relatively non-violent, tolerant and pluralistic

democracy with a non-threatening international influence. Their foreign policy also has the same traits as soft power like non-violence, democratic set up, cooperation, peaceful resolution of the disputes and friendly relations with other countries. Their diasporas have also carried these characteristics and spread them in their residing lands. The values of these peace-loving diaspora communities increase the soft power diplomacy of their countries.

We may relate soft power diplomacy with 'cultural hegemony' developed by Antonio Gramsci because cultural hegemony, like soft power diplomacy "works not by persuading everyone to think the same, but by convincing enough people that there is no alternative" (Johnson 91). It means that soft power or hegemony is the indirect domination by manipulating the politics or cultures of that society. In politics, it is geopolitical strategy of indirect imperial dominance without using military hard power. However, cultural hegemony is more related to the power of developed countries whereas soft power diplomacy is related to both migrant-sending and receiving countries which employ diaspora groups abroad not merely as lobbying agents that target foreign policy but as instruments of soft power that attempt to shape social and public opinion within host nations by attracting and appealing others or by persuading them to achieve what they need.

Diasporas have emerged as new and powerful actors in internal politics. Scholars such as Prema Kurian and Gabriel Sheffer admit that in the age of globalization and rapid development of communication technologies, diasporas' role in contributing peace or conflict in international politics is significant. Prema Kurian, a Professor at Syracuse University quotes Tony Smith, "In the era of 'multicultural citizenship' the politics of immigrant groups can have powerful impacts, affecting their countries of residence and ancestry" (759). There has growing impact of

diasporas in international affairs. They feel less accountability in the host land. Whereas Gabriel Sheffer's distinction suggests that state-linked diasporas are more accountable in their country of origin and country of residence. They engage in harmless political activities or involve in peace-keeping process in their homeland. He argues, "Basically, however, most state-linked ethno-national diasporas are interested in cooperating with host societies and governments. They can serve as bridges between friendly segments in their host societies, on the one hand, and their homelands and international actors, on the other" (83). Whereas stateless diasporas protest and challenge the government of their motherland. One of the examples of stateless diasporas is Tamil diasporas. Though the Tamils were defeated and surrendered to the Sri Lankan government, the stateless Tamil diasporas have still mobilized their political and financial resources to protest and challenge the government's extrajudicial violence and killing to Tamil population. Thus, the diasporas' concern in homeland and international politics is significant

Thus, the significance of diaspora politics in this globalized world has been growing because the expected roles and functions of diasporas now are highly important. The diasporas of the transnational communities play prominent roles in global economic development, knowledge and skill production, cultural politics, social-global media networking, mobility, connectivity and bridge-building, transforming, promoting and creating systems. They also play the role of soft power and public diplomacy as being public ambassadors and non-state actors in the field of International Relations. Their final objective is always to achieve mutual benefits or the triple win: benefits for the diasporas, their place of origin and the place of settlement. By these roles, there is the increasing significance of these strategic people in the twenty-first century world. Along with these significances, the achievements of

the South Asian diaspora – entrepreneurs, IT professionals, CEOs, Nobel Laureates and prize-winning writers, musicians and filmmakers have helped to enrich cultures and build bridges.

Diaspora Strategy: Building a Brand of Nation

Every diaspora in the globalized world engages in pursuit of 'nation branding' purpose. Here, nation branding means improving a nation's image or reputation by applying various strategies. The phrase was first used by Simon Anholt, a British independent policy advisor to Heads of States to develop and implement strategies in the areas of national identity and reputation, public diplomacy, cultural, social, educational policies, tourism, trade and export promotion and many other international events. According to him, "I first began to write an idea I called 'nation branding' in 1996. My original observation was a simple one: that the reputations of countries function like the brand images of companies and that they are equally critical to the progress and prosperity of those countries" (22). This concept is still important today's world because almost every country wants to manage its reputation. Aikins and White also support Simon Anholt whose nation-branding concept refers to the application of corporate marketing strategies to individual countries. In Anholt's explanation, brand can mean three different things: first, it can refer to the designed identity of a product; second, it is sometimes used more ambitiously to refer to the culture of the country or organization behind the product; third, it can refer to the reputation of product or country in the minds of its target audiences (Aikins add White 31-32). It means that nation branding presents the identity, image and positioning of the brand country.

The politics of diasporas is to build a nation branding as how their country is perceived in the foreign lands and how they attempt to enhance its reputation. The primary principle of building a brand of a nation is to create and promote a distinct self-image and global reputation of the diaspora's country of origin. Aikins and White further clarify:

> When we speak of 'the brand' of a country, it generally means the common images, perceptions and associations people have with that country. Every country has a brand, whether it likes it or not. So, it should be strategically managed to challenge the unfavorable stereotypes and close the gap between perception and reality. (32)

In the world, every country has made its brand with its politics, economics, history, religion, social behavior of people, food, dress and fashion, national heritages, natural gifts, etc. such as developed, developing or underdeveloped, rich, poor, peaceful, democratic, autocratic, terrorist, etc. Ying Fan, a Chinese scholar, argues that since every country is characterized by a unique name and images, it does have brands to show to the outside world. According to him, "a nation brandis the total sum of all perceptions of a nation in the minds of international stakeholders, which may contain some of the following elements: people, place, culture, language, history, food, fashion, famous faces (celebrities), global brands and so on" (98). Similarly, Keith Dinnie, the Founder of Brand Horizons at Temple University Tokyo, claims, "The principles of nation branding can be applied successfully by any nation whether small or large, rich or poor, developed or emerging" (ix). The country's common image can affect relations with the outside world. It is found that the citizens of country are treated as per their country's brand when they go abroad whether to study, work, conduct business or participating in seminars from public or governmental levels. A

strong brand of a country can be that country's greatest asset and power. They can play vital role in shaping and disseminating the brand in the foreign country. It is known as reputation, image or prestige of a country or its citizens.

The concept of nation branding refers not only to the market-products of a country but also to "the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences" (Johnston 15). It shows that the cultures and trends of any country, the ethical and behavioral characteristics of its citizens, their religious and social mores and economic interactions influence strong brands, which become the country's icons, national identities, images and reputations. In the globalized world, diasporas involve as key stakeholders in nation-brand development because the nation's reputation is their prestige and respect abroad. For this, a country needs to acknowledge its reality avoiding the misconceptions of it from the others, especially from the migrant-receiving countries and adopt a long-term strategic view when building its nation-brand. In order to erase the misconceptions of a country and to shape the nation branding, the power politics of diasporas and their transnational communities can be the major role on the global stage.

According to Leslie de Chernatony, an honorary professor at Birmingham University, "Nations are making increasingly conscious efforts to hone their country branding in recognition of the need to fulfil three major objectives: to attract tourists, to stimulate inward investment and to boost exports" (17). Chernatony is of the opinion that the key goals of nation-brand strategies are to create international credibility, make investor confidence, increase international political influence and stimulate international partnerships by nourishing confidence, pride and harmony.

Diasporas of transnational communities are nation-branding practitioners who need to be aware of potential consequences from their politics abroad. They should give more attention on how their country of origin perceives itself than how it is perceived by outsiders and other publics around the world. It is the fact that nations are evaluated in this globalized world through their brand images. The key components and determinants of nation-brand identity are culture, history, language, territory, political regime, architecture, sport, literature, art, religion, education system, icons such as flag, military uniform, currency and anthem, landscape, music, food and drink culture, fashion, the diaspora, media, films, etc.

A country's reputation determines the way people inside and outside feel and relate themselves to their country. In today's globalized world, the country's image has become a critical success factor in many areas because the immigrants, tourists, consumers or investors tend to depend on the country's reputation. Though diasporas are not officially appointed to play the role of nation branding, "the concept of brand ambassadors is the diaspora that a nation may possess. The diaspora may be viewed as a pre-existing network of potential nation-brand ambassadors awaiting activation" (Buttle 72). Undeniably, the diasporas of transnational communities are the crucial bridges between their home and host lands to ensure the promotion of nation branding. Highlighting the role of diasporas, Anthony Gortzis respects diasporas whose networks build a strong nation-brand. He asserts, 'The strategic development of diaspora networks may well represent a more effective manner of building strong nation-brands rather than glossy television-advertising campaigns, for example. (153) This observation indicates that diasporas, who are increasing in the present world, are development-actors because they have reputation-building capacity of their country of

origin. The growing diaspora communities from the developing world promote development in both host countries and the countries of origin

The networks of diasporas in transnational communities, their mobilization and engagement are unique and precious resources for every country. In the present world, the measurement of power is connectedness. The vertical world of hierarchies has been replaced by the horizontal world of networks. In the twenty-first century, many nations have taken advantages from the diaspora networks spread across the globe, not only through remittances sent by diasporas members in order to alleviate poverty but also through diffusing knowledge and institution-building capacity. Those nations who fail to mobilize and activate diaspora networks are wasting the unique and precious resource, and they cannot build a positive brand of their nations. For example, "the diasporas of China and India have had a considerable positive impact on home countries, whereas Armenia has failed to benefit from its wealthy diaspora" (Akutsu 228-29). The countries with good reputation for peace, security, political fairness and stability, natural beauty, hospitality and vibrant cultures are admired all over the world. The diasporas of such countries get high respect abroad. Thus, their mobilization and engagement with strong motivation promotes their nation branding.

However, the diasporas of many Third World countries which are wrecked by wars, poverty, famine, corruption, religious intolerance, political instability etc. possess the nation-brand by the same tags and receive disrespect in their countries of residence, "How can a nation branding help a country's image building if it is plagued by war, poverty, crime or terrorism. . . . Facial make-up will not help a cancer patient feel healthy (Fan 98). With such an image, diasporas' endeavor to promote nation branding cannot be impressive and the strategies of their countries of origin fail to take benefit from mobilizing and activating the diasporas. For example, Nepal's

nation-brand was not impressive during Maoist insurgency for a decade before. There was not the flow of tourists, foreign investments, appropriate environment for education, etc. Even the remittances, skilled human resources, talented students, skilled film artists and so on drained to the foreign lands, especially to the developed countries. Due to the internal political conflict, Nepal also failed to mobilize and engage its diasporas (the brand ambassadors) during that time. Even Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, and Mount Everest brands could not provide cultural and financial benefits. But the situation seems to be gradually improving.

While building a brand of a nation, words of mouth are more effective and powerful than advertising. In promoting a country's brand, face-to-face communication is highly effective. For this, "diasporas are the most powerful brand ambassadors" (Aikins and White 29) who, having the knowledge and experience of both cultures, people's attitudes, geo-politics, bio-politics and networks among transnational communities, can implement nation-branding strategies effectively such as persuading, building and maintaining relationships, engaging with publics and so on. At the heart of many diaspora strategies lies the creation of networks. Diaspora networks aim to establish and develop communication and exchanges between members living abroad and to connect them to their colleagues in their country of origin. "In order to mobilize its diasporas, the home country needs to develop a structure and process to ensure that diaspora members who wish to help in the country's nation branding can do so" (39). For instance, to promote tourism activities in Nepal, Nepal Tourism Board (1998) can take advantage of the Nepali diaspora activation and mobilization through nation-branding campaigns in diaspora-residing areas like America, Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan, etc. by promoting the country as having unique cultures, privileged tourist locations, abundant natural beauties and

resources, and cultural diversity. By the networking process, the diaspora people contact, connect, involve and evolve a relationship with other diasporas of transnational communities to build the brand of their nation.

The politics and power of diaspora strategy is to build a brand of a nation, spread national identity, enhance nation's competitiveness, and promote political, cultural and economic activities among the people abroad. As being the brand ambassadors, they play the role of avoiding misconceptions about their country of origin and the citizens. For example, 'Nepal is a part of India', 'All Nepali are 'Bahadur', 'India is the birthplace of Buddha' to give a few examples which are not true. Such types of big misconceptions are rooted in foreign lands. For instance, Manjushree Thapa's protagonist-diaspora, Prema in *Seasons of Flight* answers to many Westerners while giving her identity with the icons of Nepal like "Where 'Mount Everest is' or You have heard of the 'Sherpas'" (11), birthplace of Buddha, etc. as nation branding. Successful nation branding campaigns and networks by the diaspora people in transnational communities help create a more favorable image and reputation of their country of origin on the international stage.

Diaspora Identity-Politics: Forming Cultural Power

Diaspora identity-politics connotes cultural conflict that forms the power of culture. When two cultures collide, the third culture emerges, i.e. the diasporic culture, which is new with aesthetic value. The clash of culture produces power that brings change. The simple fact is that when two things collide, a power generates from the friction with full of aesthetic value. It is applied in the generation of electric power and the energy of earthquake. We know that when the two tectonic plates collide underground, power emerges. Then, its consequences are not only destructive but also constructive and beautiful such as formation of Mt. Everest, graceful mountainous

ranges, caves, beautiful plains and landscapes, etc. In the same way, diasporas' native culture clashes with foreign culture in their land of residence and the clash forms new and unique culture and identity having aesthetic value.

Here, the researcher would like to reflect upon how the culture and identity of people get formed, influenced and transformed in diasporic situation. In diasporic narratives, we can see how external (global/foreign) and internal (local/native) forces play different roles to metamorphose cultural identities into new versions through a system of fusion or synthesis. "In the context of the accelerated globalization of late modernity writers have begun to talk about hybrid cultural identities rather than a homogeneous national or ethnic cultural identity" (Barker 89). Even though culture and identity can be used interchangeably depending on the context, they are different. Culture is basically defined as a group of people's way of life. Identity describes how individuals define themselves within their environment through a given culture. Therefore, cultural identity is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is also the feeling of being different from another group. In comparison to culture, identity is more fragile to change at a slightest encounter with others.

Regarding the conflict of diasporas, a London University scholar, Fiona B. Adamson, points out, "Diasporas are increasingly being examined as agents of conflict perpetuation or conflict resolution; as forces for development or democratization ("Constructing" 25). Culture has a power that pervades social, political, economic and institutional life. The present-day diasporas, like the South Asian diasporas in the Europe and America, are crisscrossing their cultural boundaries. Due the collision of cultures, there has been emergence of new identities, revitalization of old identities and transformation of existing identities.

Conceptually, identity-politics implies not to the traditional-based party politics but to the wide range of experiences based on culture, religion, language, nationality, ethnicity, race, thoughts, assumptions and beliefs about who they are and what their relationship is to others as well as the wider world. Anthony Elliott, a Professor at the University of South Australia, in his *Routledge Handbook of Identity Studies* affirms, "Identity is also, fundamentally, political. The political currents which dominate the global agenda in the early twenty-first century – including environmental politics, sexual politics, and ethnic struggle – place identity at the center." (xxi). According to him, identity-politics focuses on race and ethnicity. It is concerned with the making and maintenance of cultural rights within society and culture. One of the cultural studies writers, Chris Barker connects identity politics with cultural politics. He claims:

> Identity politics is a sub-set of cultural politics and is thus also concerned with the 'power to name' and to make particular descriptions stick. In particular, the representation of identities is a 'political' question because they are intrinsically bound up with questions of power as a form of social regulation that is productive of the self and enables some kinds of identities to exist while denying it to others. (95)

Identity is fluid. It has transformative power. The lived experience of identities is always associated in processes of transformation. The transformative power of identities means that we always need to be aware of the gains and losses of life-politics in all dimensions of our lives. All we human beings contribute to our world and society is a product of who we are.

In academia, identity-politics studies has been used in various forms since 1960s with the different movements such as feminist movement, civil rights

movement, black movement, nationalist and postcolonial movements. Since that time, "people have forged unities and come together in search of specific forms of social and political change, the outcome has been termed 'identity-politics'" (xxi). Identity-politics spreads with human consciousness and contrasts traditional institutional politics with a demand for social, cultural and political change. Especially, marginalized groups such as women, racial and ethnic, carry the agendas of change in different areas.

Culture plays an important role in shaping human identities. Identity is one of the fundamental characteristics of being and culture is a source of identity, innovation and creativity. Without an identity, one cannot define one's personhood. Cultural identity means knowing who we are. It is a feeling of belonging to a group or society by different entities such as language, religion, politics, ethnicity, sex or gender, fashion, food, social class, institution or nation. As the identity is fluid and has transformative power, so the culture is and has, in the rapidly fragmenting and crisscrossing society of the twenty-first century. Avtar Brah argues:

> Cultures are never static: they evolve through history. That is why the process of cultural reproduction is, in part, a process of cultural transformation. At any given time, a group will inherit certain cultural institutions and traditions, but its acts of reiteration or repudiation, its everyday interactions and its ritual practices will serve to select, modify, and transform these institutions. (*Cartographies* 18)

There is interrelationship between diaspora identity-politics and cultural power. Culture and power have reciprocal relationship. Culture is an object to increase power, and power is the way to influence culture. Culture influences the daily state of

society and its direction of development while politics determines the nature and form of culture and has the function of transformation.

Culture as a set of practices bags changes because it is an evolving dynamic force relevant to all societies, local or global. It changes itself and enables to change others according to the time and space. Cultural power is the use of arts, language, rhetoric, beliefs, etc. to influence other groups, spread knowledge and create pride in members of that group. Connecting the culture with power, Richard Johnson et al in *The Practice of Cultural Studies* claim, "Implicit in the culture-as-power issue and the questions that arise from it is the idea that everyone participates, however unequally, in the cultural process of making meanings and fixing and shifting identities" (10). It exhibits that culture as a social construct has a power to make meanings of life, any texts, arts or literatures and to determine human identities. Moreover, culture holds the power of social integrity as well as unity in diversity in this modern "rapidly fragmenting society" (Elliot xiv) because "culture as a source of social cohesion and belonging" (Johnson et al 11) is one of the main research agenda of humanities in the present world. In a sense, the diaspora identity-politics forms cultural power that emerges from 'in-between space' or 'third space' pushing one-step ahead to human civilization, humanity and human consciousness.

Giorgio Shani notes, "[I]dentities are cultural and social construct" (380) and diaspora identities encounter with other identities, spill outside boundaries exceeding the frame of representation and form new culture. This process goes on giving rise to something different and something new. This dynamic process of forming and reforming cultural power works not only for people living in diaspora communities but also for people residing in homelands around the world. Regarding this notion, Chris Barker asserts, "All forms of cultural representation are intrinsically 'political'

because they are bound up with the power that enables some kinds of knowledge and identities to exist while denying it to others" (41). Barker argues that neither all forms of cultural representation can be detached from political entities nor they can be imagined without power. In other words, culture and power are inseparable entities.

The residing place of diaspora people is a juncture-point where many cultural tributaries meet. It is the space where strangers from different shores of the globe "as Americans, we come originally from many different shores – Europe, Americas, Africa, and also Asia" (Takaki 7) collide and construct new culture, which has "a very powerful and creative force" (Hall 111). The continual formation of new culture is possible by negotiation of cultural identities across categorical differences of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality in liminal spaces or the in-betweenness within postcolonial and transnational contexts. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha argues, "Differences in culture and power are constituted through the social conditions of enunciation" (347) as the social condition of enunciation of every person is different. Besides, not only the social condition but also the image of every individual is different. The image is human identity as Bhabha further claims, "This image of human identity and, indeed, human identity as image – both familiar frames or mirrors of selfhood that speak from deep within Western culture – are inscribed in the sign of resemblance" (70). He means that human identity or image, "Barthes calls it a mystic prestige" (70), is fluid and indeterminate. In other words, diasporas' sense of identities are situationally determined.

Cultures are never unitary in people. People construct and reconstruct their cultures and identities through dialectical process. In addition, the forming and reforming process of cultures and identities never ends like Michel Foucault's notion of power-knowledge as Foucault says, "Relations of power-knowledge are not static

forms of distribution, they are 'matrices' of transformations" (99). For Foucault, power is not just a negative, coercive or repressive thing that forces us to do things against our wishes, but can also be a necessary, productive and positive force in society. His reading concerning the role of power in society and its productive function enriches the study of diasporic culture in the ground that his notion about power is productive and pervasive. The reciprocal relation between power and knowledge situates his thought.

Concerning the cultural power, Foucault is different from Stuart Hall on theoretical planes. Hall emphasizes the centrality of ideology in culture whereas Foucault leaves ideology. Foucault examines the workings of cultural power though local. He points out, "Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (93). Power spreads horizontally. He does not agree the proposition that power represses and truth liberates. He argues that power is not only governmental or economic power but it is also in human cultures, languages, identities, institutions, etc. The pervasiveness of power is diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and regimes of truth. Power is widespread throughout our social systems. Similarly, truth is not static and pure. It is linked in a circular relation with systems of power. It means that truth also changes into discourse/thesis according to the time and place. Relating to Foucault's notion of discourse-power-knowledge-truth with diasporic culture, the identity-politics of diasporas enables to produce and reproduce, translate and retranslate, and renovate the cultures worldwide due to their journeys, experiences of migrations and the condition of being born hybrid.

Given these points, the formation of the source of culture and identity is a liminal 'third space' to Bhabha. However, different theorists understand this space in different ways. The researcher of this dissertation takes this space as a mutable

source-space where there are uneven and unequal forces of cultural representation that always clash for the construction of unique cultures. The researcher means that the liminal third space passes down to every generation as a source of cultures up to the time of human existence. It means that every generation of diasporas in the globe produces and reproduces newer and newer cultures from the "every-time-new-third-space" (my emphasis). Thus, the migrants, whether they are internal within countries or cross-border, and the generations of diasporas residing in any part of the globe are the representatives of formation and promotion of innovative cultures since time immemorial. The processes of globalization involve huge migrations and relocations challenging the traditional notion of nation-state and opening up borders and boundaries. The internal migration as well as the population movement across international borders have contributed significantly to cultural change in new locations. In this sense, the diaspora identity-politics that clashes and then negotiates with the other cultures is significant for the formation of cultural power. The diaspora communities of diverse citizens, as the products of transnationalism, help build culturally productive societies that flourish human civilization.

Mapping the South Asian Diasporic Narratives: History, Location and Formation

Under this subheading, the researcher seeks to map out the histories, locations and formations of South Asian diasporic narratives produced by South Asian diasporic writers. In this writing, South Asian is an umbrella term for several national, religious and ethnic contexts. The term synonymizes with Indian subcontinent. As a geographical region, South Asia encompasses a multiplicity of nations: India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, the Maldives and Afghanistan. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were colonized by the British Empire and made

up most of British India before its independence in 1947. "The term South Asian diasporas connotes peoples who have at some time in the past come from all the countries that comprise the Indian subcontinent" (Shukla 553) and also known as Third World people by the Western countries. According to Padma Rangaswamy, "The South Asian diaspora is estimated to be around 24 million, or about 2% of the South Asian population, with 20 million Indians comprising the lion's share. The history of this diaspora is usually told in two distinct phases – the nineteen-century colonial phrase and the twentieth-century post-independent phase" ("South" 285). The twentieth-first century has witnessed a sharp rise in the migration of people from South Asia to the West for the sake of professional, economic and academic purposes.

The contemporary South Asian diaspora "one of the oldest, largest and most geographically diverse" (Koshy 2) is mainly voluntary. It is not the forced one at the dawn of the twenty-first century as in the eighteenth and nineteenth century for indentured labor. In the colonial phase, many South Asians migrated to foreign lands for indentured labor. Even the foreigners wanted South Asian as Roland Takaki claims in his *Strangers from a Different Shores*, "Many California farmers, however, were eager to hire Asian Indians" (302) because especially, "the Hindus are very efficient" (303) and responsible at the works assigned to them. Furthermore, he clarifies the attributes of the Asian-Indian laborers who were in America:

> Asian-Indian farm laborers were organized in gangs – three to fifty laborers in each group. The gang leader, usually the member most fluent in English, received a commission from the gang and was also paid a wage by the employer; in return, he found employment for the workers, negotiated the terms of labor, arranged board and shelter, and served as general supervisor. (303)

Later, they share and buy the land. Their landownership indicates a "shift from sojourner to settler" (308). Now, Indian Americans have entered every aspect of American daily life and made their mark on the American landscape. In this regard, Rangaswamy states, " Indians from India first arrived in the United States much later, in the nineteenth century, and since then, they have been called by various names, including 'Hindu,' 'East Indian,' 'Asian Indian,' and 'Indian American'" (*The New* 12). He says that when Indian Prime Minister Dr. Mohan Singh visited President George Bush in the White House in July 2005, United States was home for more than 2 million Indian Americans, an active community of immigrants and their American Born Confused Desis (ABCD). They migrated there from the days of Columbus.

The South Asian diaspora, predominantly Indian, with its global presence and a history dates back to the Indian civilization. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, there are three phrases of these diasporas: ancient, medieval and modern. The ancient diaspora refers to slave laborers. In medieval times, "when slavery was outlawed by the European powers" (*Key* 69), the colonizers discovered a method of recruiting contract laborers from Indian subcontinent in the name of indentured laborers. They had settled in the host lands, even after the end of contract. The descendants of those indentured laborers are now the inhabitants of the host lands and they have become the citizens of those countries, especially Trinidad, Tobago, Mauritius, Fiji islands, the UK and the USA. In modern times, skilled, educated and intelligent Indians moved to the USA and other European countries for economic and professional reasons. This 'new diaspora' is made of experts in different fields like IT, medicine, space technology and engineering, management, business, university students and so on. There are eminent intellectuals, writers, orators, economists and financial experts etc. The Indian diaspora has attracted attention of the media and the

people in general all over the world. In this sense, South Asian diaspora has its roots both in colonial and postcolonial migrations. Such diasporas are shaped and created by shared histories such as colonialism and 1947 post-independent nation-making. Thus, South Asian diasporic narratives often consist of former homelands and postcolonial nations either in celebratory or in critical approach.

To point out the exact location of South Asian diasporic literature is a complex task. Is diasporic literature a part of national literature or completely different genre of writing? This rhetorical question brings together the subject of immigrant literature, post-colonialism and globalization. In this context, Rebecca L. Walkowitz in her "The Location of Literature" points out that immigrant literature functions across communities, and new hybrid values explored may be challenging to any one national culture. She says, "[T]he location of literature depends not only on the places where books are written but also on the places where they are classified and given social purpose" (919). She emphasizes that in diasporic literature, there are analytic paradigms of migration and migration's transformation of literary cultures. This means that the diasporic writings speak of diasporic experiences that the diaspora undergoes resulting from geographical displacement, alien customs, problems of adjustment, longing for the homeland and emotion of anxiety.

According to Salman Rushdie, immigrant literature emerges from the place where the immigrants live though the subject of narratives and settings belong to the native place of diasporic writers. He says in his *Imaginary Homeland*, "America, a nation of immigrants, has created great literature out of the phenomenon of cultural transplantation, out of examining the ways in which people cope with a new world" (20). This shows that America is not only the land of immigrants but also the land of freedom. Literature is the passion of mind. If a writer is not free, he/she cannot

produce great literature. The South Asian diasporic writers, who are in the West, have greater freedom than they have in their native lands. Thus, the great South Asian diasporic narratives emerge from the West because "Western writers have always felt free to be eclectic in their selection of theme, setting, form . . . we must grant ourselves an equal freedom" (20). In other words, diasporic narratives fascinate with cross-cultural sensibilities and practices. They coexist within and outside long migrant history of a nation.

Diasporic writers have double obligations. They write about their homeland for the natives of the country they have adopted and speak of their diasporic experiences to the readers of their homeland. A diasporic text must have a structure of location followed by dislocation and relocation. There should be crossing of borders or boundaries, moving from one culture to another. Some South Asian diasporic writers take foreign countries as their homes quite eagerly. Bharti Mukharjee can be cited as an example whose work *Jasmine* demonstrates the fact that the protagonist experiences the feeling of dislocation both in the location from where she emerges and in the location where she finally arrives. Hence, *Jasmine* is unquestionably a diasporic text with diasporic awareness. Another example can be taken from Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flights* in which the female protagonist feels free in the Western 'open' society coming out from Nepalese 'closed' society. Thus, South Asian diasporic narratives visualize dual perspectives that of the insider as well as the outsider.

Now, South Asian diasporic narratives have received remarkable attention and compliments due to their pluralistic and multicultural outlooks which make the narratives universal. Because of this, some South Asian diasporic writers such as Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, etc.

received Booker Prize and V. S. Naipaul was awarded the Noble Prize for their diasporic narratives, especially for novels and stories. Many others South Asian diasporic writers got prestigious international prizes for their pluralistic and diverse viewpoint in narratives.

The South Asian diasporic literature develops hand to hand with globalization as a different discipline in humanities and social sciences. In this setting, Gurharpal Singh explains:

> Since the 1980s, the study of the South Asian diaspora has developed into a distinct sub-discipline that is characterized by specialist publications, new journals and much social-science theorization. Indeed, one could argue that it has become the premier subject of theoretical reflection in ways that not only mirror the 'otherness' apparent in the traditional approaches to the studies of migrant communities, but also provide the most innovative new departures for theoretical reflection in the humanities and social sciences. (532)

It does not mean that there were not South Asian diasporas in the West before 1080's. It means that there was little systematic research into overseas South Asian communities. It is fair to say that globalization brings dynamic changes not only in economics but also in literature, art and culture. Globalization has immense effect on South Asian diasporic literature in which the South Asian diasporic writers express their innovative and comparative experience responding to new global opportunities.

South Asian narratives locate the colonial and postcolonial history of South Asia. The recurrent themes in the narratives of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi writers are the struggle for independence, the suffering of Partition and its wounds and traumas, and "the politics of Islamic identities" (Ali 326) in the Western world as well as the effect of 9/11 event as it is presented in Mohasin Hamid's *The Reluctant*

Fundamentalist. Likewise, we find the ethnic tension between the Sinhala and Tamil Tigers, violence and bloodshed and its result as displacement in Sri Lankan narratives as it is exhibited in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*. Equally, in the Nepali narratives, we find the tendency of recruiting in Indian and Gurkha Armies for economic prosperity, and demanding freedom, power and knowledge in the 'open' dreamlands as shown in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flights*. The migrant characters embrace the openness of the Western culture and regard it with enthusiasm and joy.

A large bulk of South Asian diasporic narratives embrace secular humanism and tolerance and address the broad spectrum of South Asian diasporic experience. The root of South Asian diasporic narratives is the liminal space, in-between identities, two cultures and two histories. The formation of these narratives are characterized by split and dislocated identities by which the diasporas suffer both psychologically and geographically. However, the narratives emerge from the experiences of suffering of nowhereness of diasporas. In the South Asian narratives, the experiences of South Asian diasporas visualize postcolonialism or the reactionary effects of colonized people and their lands, racial and ethnic formation, and globalization. In this context, Sandhya Shukla clarifies:

> As peoples from South Asian countries move around the world, they repertoire of images and experiences from the past and present that meet narrative productions in new places of settlement. Postcolonialism, ethnic formation and globalization might be seen as three kinds of narratives with which South Asian diasporas come into contact. (553)

Shukla means that South Asian diasporas in the narratives are also the subject of research in this twenty-first century because the South Asian diasporic narratives

incorporate individualism, celebrate the individual freedom from traditional controls, empower the ethnic identity, and favor the marginalized people and minority communities. Besides, they usually constitute a discursive field in which narrowly conceived national, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural relationships are frequently deterritorialized and negotiated. The characters in such narratives encompass tolerance in ambiguity, diversity, flux and rootless sensibility. By their narratives, some of the South Asian diasporic writers like Barati Mukherjee, Michael Ondaatje, Mohasin Hamid and Manjushree Thapa, whose narratives are the key studies of this dissertation, advocate that through adaption, adjustment and acculturation, the diasporic characters of literary representation can overcome the trauma of displacement and rootlessness. Their narratives display that diasporic writers try to seek safer grounds on imposing imaginary homelands on certain geographical places. The settings of their narratives are diverse, mobile and transient. Most of the settings are their lands of origin and settlement.

The location and formation of South Asian diasporic narratives is the product of displacement of diasporas between place and identity, their experiences of rootlessness, emotion of anguish and melancholy, trauma and sufferings. The narratives emerge out of the conflict between South Asian and non-South Asian cultures, and then negotiation between local and global. The location and formation of South Asian diasporic narratives is glocal, the interconnection of global and local issues.

Chapter III

AESTHETICIZATION OF DIASPORA: CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION FOR ASSERTIVENESS AND FREEDOM IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S *JASMINE*

Preview

This chapter analyzes the aesthetic experience of diasporas in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989). Mukherjee views diasporic experience as artistic conception of life.Here, aestheticization signifies celebration and appreciation of the experience of the diasporas and their art of survival. Mukherjee advocates diasporas' experiences which are associated with ancestral impulse and host culture in her literary representation. For their easy survival, the diasporic characters adopt the new culture and language. In the process of cultural and linguistic adjustments, they resist and negotiate to the discourse of power in the adopted culture in various forms. Diasporic literature may be defined by its contents regardless of where it is written.

Cultural transformation in diasporas is an inevitable phenomenon by which the immigrants living in the foreign lands shape their identities and reinvent their selves. The main queries of this chapter of research are as follows: Why are Indian diasporic characters like Jasmine ready to face difficulties in the new lands? What makes them strong, assertive and free? In the process of transformation, diasporas struggle

throughout their lives, face cultural conflict and encounter with new environment to adapt in the mainstream society. The cross-cultural conflict and suffering, sense of rootlessness and dislocation, nostalgia and alienation experienced by the diasporas push them not only to be strong and conscious but also to be assertive and free. Hence, the presentation of diasporic strength, consciousness, fluid identity, challenges, assertiveness and freedom obtained by cultural transformation are some primary forms of aestheticization of diaspora. Bharati Mukherjee (1940-2017), one of the South Asian diasporic writers, celebrates these forms in her novel *Jasmine*.

In *Jasmine*, Mukherjee's protagonist, the representative title character, expresses her diasporic experiences and various threads of her transformations. For her transformation, she has to struggle and encounter with several cultural identities. However, she resists and negotiates with every new identity and environment transforming herself from one individual to another and achieves more autonomous selfhood, assertiveness and freedom than she had before. Resistance and negotiation are inherent assets of aestheticization and strategic methodologies of diasporas for assertion of power and freedom.

Introduction: *Jasmine* as a Diasporic Narrative

This section depicts the life and world, experiences and cultures of South Asian diasporas especially Indiatype in the West by examining Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. It explores how the culture and identity of diasporic people shift in different stages of life and become a way to survive and develop through transformation. Theoretical insights have been anchored from Homi K. Bhabha's cultural transformation, in-betweeness, liminal third space, hybridity; and Stuart Hall's fluidity, cultural identity and diaspora, past and present selves wherever their ideas have been found essential for the analysis of the text. This segment also reflects upon

suffering of diasporas as a primary source of obtaining their consciousness, power and transformation through the representative title character, Jasmine. Typically, Jasmine acts as a mouthpiece of the writer whose root belongs to India. Mukherjee was born in Calcutta, took up her doctoral studies in USA, wrote many works of fiction and non-fiction, and taught as a Professor at many colleges and universities before she joined the University of California, Berkeley. She married to a Canadian writer, Clark Blaise. She died at the age of seventy-six in 2017 in Manhattan, New York. So as Mukherjee's experience, the title character of*Jasmine* faces unavoidable frustration with her hostile environment. However, her experience generates a sense of rebirth and metamorphosis in which she finds a new self, identity and a sense of courage. Like Jasmine, every change of the diasporic people through their journeys generates anguish and consciousness in them through which they seek to create a harmonious relationship with the new environment. Thus, the purpose of diasporic transformation is not only to fit in the relocation but also to be assertive and free.

Mukherjee as a South Asian diasporic writer expresses her experiences of both places, place of origin and place of residence, where her narratives are set and documented. "[T]he Indian diaspora presents us with a case history that has been thoroughly documented . . . the Indian diaspora began as part of British imperial movement of labor to the colonies" (Mishra 447). Vijay Mishra, a Professor of English literature at Murdoch University, Perth, divides South Asian diasporas, especially Indians into two categories: old (exclusive) and new (border) as:

> I would want to argue that the old Indian diasporas were diasporas of exclusivism because they created relatively self-contained 'little Indians' in the colonies. The founding writer of the old Indian diaspora is, of course, V. S. Naipaul. The new diaspora of late capital (the diaspora of the border), on the

other hand, shares characteristics with many other similar diasporas such as the Chicanos and the Koreans in the US. . . . Diasporas of the border in these western democracies are visible presences – 'we are seen, therefore we are' says the Chicano novelist John Rechy – whose corporealities carry marks of their hyphenated subjectivities. (447-48)

According to Mishra, the indentured laborers of the old diaspora suffer horrible, dehumanizing or fatal journey across the black waters. The ship never comes back as it only presents a one-way journey. They have no contact with their family and native land. But the new diasporas keep in touch with their native land through family networks. They are highly mobile and free for coming and going. Bharati Mukherjee falls under the second category because she speaks of the diasporas whose overriding characteristic is one of mobility. The new diasporas move for economic welfare, employment, better status in the society, power, knowledge and freedom. Mukherjee stands a representative voice in the South Asian literary diasporas. Her *Jasmine* as a diasporic narrative reflects their lives and wins acclaim creating a distinct literary space for her.

Mukherjee's narrative tells the story of transformation of immigrants renewing and reasserting in the cultural pluralism, i.e. America. This is found in the eponymous character in *Jasmine* who faces a lot of sufferings and problems from the phase of immigration to adaptation. However, Jasmine's willpower, merging capacity and flexibility overcome her nostalgic feelings and make her assertive in the host land. The compassion and the cruelty of America are compressed in the experiences of Jasmine who accepts her changed names and identities with equal comfort. She travels to numerous places such as Caribbean, Vietnamese, Filipino and other nationalities.

Jasmine discovers a balance between the two cultures and attains a new identity on the alien soil. She undergoes several transformations during her journey of life. Her numerous naming from Jyoti to Jasmine to Kali to Jazzy to Jase to Jane are revealing her numerous identities, which go on shifting as she moves on as an immigrant in America. Diasporic identity is dynamic, multi-dimensional and evolving as Stuart Hall says, "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (120). In producing and reproducing her identities, Jasmine attempts to forget the old identities and achieves new faces in a new land. In this regard, in diasporic narrative, 'home' is not a specific place of residence but an idealized flexible place. It is constantly reinvented and relocated like the name of Jasmine who is referred to numerous names depending on where she makes her home and who with. The traditional concept of home is a confining boundary that limits the sense of self. Hence, rerouting plays a significant role in Mukherjee's narratives, which echo Hall's view of diasporas as "syncretic dynamic" (120) communities and Bhabha's celebration of diasporas' "in-between states and moments of hybridity" (*TheLocation* 298) that shape and reshape their own ancestral culture as well as the cultures they come into contact with. Mukherjee's protagonist negotiates her identities hovering in an in-between contradictory space until she can achieve her goal.

Jasmine portrays migration as a self-inventive and transformative experience. Narrating in first person and in flashback, Mukherjee, in *Jasmine,* introduces her protagonist as a fighter, survivor and an adapter. It is the story of a Hindu rural Indian Panjabi Hasnapuri girl, Jyoti, whose strong mental strength and bold nature creates her identity on the American soil. Jyoti, a rebellious girl from her childhood, is born as a fifth daughter of her parents in a feudalistic and gender biased society where

female child is considered as undesirable and curse for family. In her childhood, her mother tries to smother Jyoti to death believing that daughter may bring curse in the family, but she survives. From her childhood, Jyoti is courageous and has no faith on superstition. She boldly protests against the prophecies of the village astrologer about her widowhood and exile at the age of seven. She does not believe that a human being can foretell the future of other persons. "You're a crazy old man. You don't know what my future holds!" (3). The astrologer chucks hard on her head so she falls on the ground and gets a star shaped wound on her forehead. For others, this scar is a curse but Jyoti asserts, "it's my third eye" (5) that can peer out into invisible worlds like sage through the eye. In this regard, Geoffrey Kain argues:

> The novel's immediate emphasis on the 'third eye' thus sets the stage for what clearly emerges as the novel's cyclical narrative pattern of destruction and renewal, as well as the characteristic energy of Jasmine's own life: she becomes a force of both creation and destruction in the lives of others, and experiences a series of deaths and rebirths as her identity evolves in her passage from life as Jyoti and the Punjabi villager to Jasmine the questing immigrant enroute to California. (152)

Jasmine is intelligent in study so Masterji chooses her for English education. For him, she is "a lotus blooming in cow dung" (46). Another instance she projects her rebellious spirit when she refuses to marry a widower with three children selected by her grandmother, Mataji. After her father's death in an accident, the fifteen-year-old Jyoti falls in love with Prakash Vijh, a twenty-four year-old modern young man from the city, Amritsar. He wants to migrate to the United States for better prospects. His former professor lives in the US and could help him. He thinks, "When I go to work

in another country, it will be because I want to be a part of it. Can you imagine working in a place like Qatar? That's blood money they pay you. You come back a rich slave . . . I wouldn't go because I was afraid of the Sukkhis putting bullets in our heads" (67). They marry in the civil court. Prakash is a free-minded man who inspires Jyoti to establish an individual identity and gives her a new name Jasmine. "You are small and sweet and heady, my Jasmine, You'll quicken the whole world with your perfume" (77) to help her break from the past. Jasmine transforms herself from a feudal village girl to a modern woman after her marriage. She "shuttled between identities" (77). Prakash initiates the process of transformation in her life. She transforms from Jyoti to Jasmine. They have a lot of dreams to fulfil.

On the eve of their departure to America for Florida International Institute of Technology, Prakash is killed in a terrorist bomb attack by Khalsa Lion. After the death of Prakash, Jasmine has to live the life of a widow in the house of her father at Hasnapur. She decides to go to America to materialize her husband's unfinished dream. She fearlessly leaves Hasnapur for America with fake documents prepared by her brothers. She takes with her the idol of "sandalwood Ganpati . . . , a god with an elephant trunk to uproot anything in . . . path" (102). Generally, the immigrants take with them cultural artefacts to make their life bearable in the foreign land. Jasmine's journey to America brings her many difficulties. She is raped by Half-Face, the captain of the ship in which she has travelled, in a motel after reaching Florida. For a moment, Jasmine decides to put an end to her life but she inspires herself by saying that it is not the time to die; she has not yet completed her mission. She says, "I could not let my personal dishonor disrupt my mission. There would be plenty of time to die; I had not yet burned my husband's suit. I had not stood under the palm tree of the college campus" (118). Then she bites her tongue, adopts the image of *Kali,* who is

typically depicted as naked, black-skinned and holding a dagger while her bright red, bloody tongue projects from her mouth, "I extended my tongue, and sliced it. Hot blood dripped immediately in the sink" (118) murders Half-Face ensuring her own survival. The attack on Half-Face becomes a practical repetition of the earlier attack on a diseased beast. In Hasnapur, when a dog "bigger than a pariah, much bigger than a jackal, almost the size of wolf" (56) was about to bite her, Jyoti had killed it with a pointed staff, crushing its snout. Before striking the dog, "I'd never seen that much blood" (57). Stabbing Half-Face courageously, she cleans her body, changes her clothes, burns her suitcase, which has a widow's white sari and Prakash's suit and makes her free from the burden of her past. She leaves the old Jasmine behind and begins the life of an illegal immigrant. Her killing of Half-Face is a self-assertive act that changes her whole life.

In Florida, Jasmine starts walking on the road without thinking about any fixed destination. At one time, she meets Lillian Gordon who takes her home. Lillian Gordon calls the doctor to sew Jasmine's tongue which she "sliced" (118) being the incarnation of *Kali*, the destroyer of evil. Lillian gives shelter, food and her daughter's clothes to her. Lillian calls her "Jazzy'" (133). She, who has sheltered many illegal immigrants, teaches her to walk, talk and dress like an American. Jasmine wears American clothes and improves her English proficiency so the police cannot identify her as an illegal immigrant. Jasmine is amazed by her own transformation. "Jazzy in a T-shirt, tight cords, and running shoes" (133). After Lillian Gordon's training, she is ready to encounter the American society. Lillian finds her different from other illegal women whom she shelters. She encourages Jasmine to go to New York to

meet her husband's teacher, Professor Vadhera. She provides her daughter's Manhattan address to Jasmine and suggests, "if you walk and talk American, they'll think you were born here. Most Americans can't imagine anything else (134-35). In the meantime, Jasmine is "reborn several times" (126). She feels like an American. In fact, when the diasporas change their citizenship, they are reborn. Though Jasmine does not have an American citizenship, she seems to be American linguistically and in her manners.

In New York, Jasmine stays with Prof. Devinder Vadhera and his family. But the Vadheras are very orthodox. For them, Jasmine is a widow. Their native tradition irritates her. They force her to wear plain sari while she feels comfortable in American clothes. She says, "American clothes disguised my widowhood . . . I wanted to distance myself from everything Indian, everything Jyoti-like" (145). Jasmine is in a hurry to get a green card, as her status is of an illegal immigrant. "If I had a green card, a job, a goal, happiness would appear out of the blue . . . I wanted a green card more than anything else in the world that a green card was freedom" (149). So, she requests the professor to arrange a green card for her. She promises him to pay the all expenses incurred in future. She tries her best to adopt all the American traditions. Jasmine leaves the house of Vadhera after five months acquiring a fake green card. Then she re-starts her new life as a day-mummy of Duff, the adopted daughter of Taylor and Wylie Hayes on Claremont Avenue with a new name "Jase" (176). Taylor, a professor of Physics and Wylie, a book editor help Jasmine to adjust herself in the new society. She falls in love with Taylor when Wylie goes to Paris. Jasmine stays with Tailor and Wylie Hayes for nearly two years. These years are the best period of her life in America as an immigrant because she becomes more Americanized and her English improves significantly. Unfortunately, she has to leave

the house of Taylor after she sees in the park the terrorist, Sukhwinder, who murdered her husband. After seeing him in the park, she moves to Iowa for the safety of Taylor's family.

In Iowa, Jasmine meets Mother Ripplemeyer, counterpart of Lillian Gordon. She gives her job as a teller in a bank of her son, Bud Ripplemeyer, a paralyzed wealthy man. There, Jasmine also has to take care of Bud and Du Thien, a fourteen-year-old Vietnam War victim adopted by Bud. Later, she becomes a live-in companion of her colleague Bud, the father of two sons. Bud, a tall, fit, fifty-year-old banker, divorces Karin and lives with Jasmine. She becomes pregnant and says, "I am carrying Bud Ripplemeyer's baby" (12). Bud gives her new identity as 'Jane Ripplemeyer', "Bud calls me Jane. Me Bud, you Jane" (26). Bud and Jasmine's mutual relationship is based on mainly give and take policy. Bud needs caring help of Jane as he is handicapped and on the other side, Jasmine's need is to secure a permanent identity in the new society and for this Jasmine grabs every opportunity that comes her way. Though Jasmine wants to assimilate to the American society, she never denies the Indian part of her own self.

In America, Jasmine's every decision is calculative to become an American and her personality changes gradually. It is another birth of Jasmine. Bud's life is also changed after her arrival in Iowa as Mukherjee says, "Asia had transformed him, made him reckless and emotional" (14). Her repeated renaming with initial 'J' such as Jyoti, Jasmine, Jazzy, Jase and finally Jane shows that she is entering gradually into the American mainstream culture. However, for this assimilation she has to undergo so many difficulties that increase her self-confidence and pave her way for future course of action. In

every new birth, she has had a husband, "Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane. Half-Face for Kali" (197). Finally, Jasmine's settlement in Iowa makes her "happy enough" (21) with the job and American life. Transforming from South Asian to American, she overcomes many obstacles in her life. She tries to forget her past because her past is more painful than the present. However, as a diaspora, she never forgets root. But through her tremendous mental strength and power of adjustment, she fights with odd situations and comes out as a winner of life.

Mukherjee's *Jasmine* as a diasporic narrative presents the experiences of global diasporas through the representative title character. Migration is inevitable and travel is unavoidable in this globalized world. This novel foregrounds that humans are freedom and happiness seekers, which they sometimes fail to find in their original homelands that propels them to the West. They find freedom in the West especially in the US as Jasmine explains that America is a free country where she can make her own choices. Jasmine goes to America to fulfill her husband's wish and finally adjusts herself into the American society as a diaspora. Discarding her old identity, culture and tradition, she embraces a life of modernity, happiness and freedom with Taylor and Bud, and is ready for further transformation. In the process, she faces innumerable problems such as alienation, isolation, inferiority complex, cultural conflicts, racial discrimination, nostalgia, identity crisis, violence, etc. which are the features of diasporic narratives. Every step of hurdle that she faces adds strength and experience in her life. She lives in 'in-between state' with diasporic life. Desires of immigrants and impacts and predicaments of immigration are the main themes of diasporic narratives, which we find in *Jasmine*. Thus, Mukherjee's *Jasmine*is considered as a genre of diasporic narrative.

Diasporic Culture: Shifting Identity

In recent times, diasporic experience has become a popular topic of concern for diasporic writers like Bharati Mukherjee whose *Jasmine* reveals shifting identity and culture of diasporic people.Culture denotes the characteristics and understanding of particular group of people. It is a shared practice as Stuart Hall says, "Cultural formations are complex or composite, relational rather than expressing single identities. They include free-floating elements" (qtd. in Johnson et al. 30). It means that culture as shared patterns of behaviors and interactions encompasses religion, food, fashion, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things, or culture is as Raymond Williams says " whole ways of life" (17). In other words, cultures are like tissues of lives, which are connected under pressure. Then, identity is culturally constructed. Cultural identity is not fixed and it is constantly changing. According to Bhabha, diasporic identity is indeterminate as he says, "The indeterminacy of diasporic identity" (*TheLocation* 322) is fluid, flexible and temporal.

The character Jasmine from the novel of the same name possesses indeterminate cultural identity. Her identity shifts from one to another as she shifts from one place to another place. Jasmine's multiple identities are intricately linked with each other like the tissues of lives. In the beginning of the novel, Jasmine is Jyoti, a village girl in the Indian village called Hasnapur. After marriage to Prakash Vijh, she comes to Jullandhar, Amritsar and is renamed Jasmine. When she comes to Florida in America, she is called Jazzy. In Columbia, New York with the Hayes family, she becomes Jase. Again, in Baden, Iowa, she is known as Jane to Bud and others. Her various names mark the journey undertaken by her. She travels in a pre-globalized world and more importantly, she is an illegal immigrant carrying fake documents. Nevertheless, Jasmine knows her condition, as she muses, "We are the

outcastes and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trucks. . . . We ask only one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue" (Mukherjee 101). Here, the narrator informs us the real picture of how illegal immigrants of South Asian countries are transported to the shores of America by 'agents' who enjoy humiliating and violating the self-respect and simplicity of helpless people. Her journey is a struggle and symbolizes the restless quest of a rootless person. Each name that Jasmine gets is symbolic and she takes up a new identity because "identity is never established as an achievement" (Brah 20). Jasmine's journey through life leads her many transformations not only through geographical locals that establishes her identity but also through emotional, social and cultural states.

Jasmine does not name herself but others give her new name and identity. In Hasnapur, she is named Jyoti, which means light, by her grandmother, Mataji. At that time, she is identified as a village girl without a dowry among a number of siblings. After marriage in Amritsar, her husband Prakash Vijh gives her new name Jasmine, fragrant flower. Here, she shifts from village girl to a modern city woman. In Florida, Lillian Gordon names her Jazzy, a fashionable American lady with self-confidence. In New York, as a caregiver of Duff, Taylor Hayes shortens her name Jasmine to Jase, an adventurer and opportunity-seeker. In Iowa, Bud renames her as Jane, "a fighter and adapter" (40). In this way, Jasmine accepts all identities given to her at different places and in different situations as she says, "I changed because I wanted to" (185). This indicates that cultural identity of diaspora never completes as Stuart Hall argues, "identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always continued within, not outside, representation" ("Cultural" 110). In this novel, as

Hall's claim, the shifting identities of Jasmine exhibit that diasporic people have a series of transformations.

Cultural identity is not only what we are given by our society but it can also be acquired and earned. Defining culture, identity and diaspora, Stuart Hall in his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" shows two different positions. "The first position defines 'cultural identity' 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" (111). Hall means that our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which define us as one people. Such notion plays a critical role in all postcolonial struggles which have so deeply reshaped our globalize world. In *Jasmine,* the eponymous diasporic character tries to forget her past self and ancestor's history but she never forgets it, "I told him [Taylor] everything: the marriage, the bombing, the murder" (Mukherjee 189). She tells her history to every family and person in America, and even to her rapist Half-Face. Among them, Taylor Hayes listens Jasmine's past self and her family tradition more seriously than others do.

When the diasporas do not have a shared past or shared history with the host nation, it becomes difficult to define their selves newly. Jasmine's true self is hidden by her cosmetic identities created in the new land. Because of the true hidden selves, the diasporic people like Jasmine walk in the host society with their ethnic identities as Hall defines such identities as, "the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past" (112). The past and the present

selves/identities of the diasporas react. The reaction of them makes the diasporas rigid and resistant, strong and conscious because the new definition creates as a defense and resistance against hostility. Jasmine has such a reaction at the end of the novel when she is living with Bud and carrying his baby in her womb, "It isn't guilt that I feel, it's relief. I realize I have already stopped thinking myself as Jane. Adventure, risk, transformation . . . . I whisper to the astrologer who floats cross-legged above my kitchen stove" (Mukherjee 240). Thus, the dislocated people have at least two dominant cultural identities: true and cosmetic. The cosmetic identity or self and cultural transplant may multiply in many.

Hall's second position of cultural identity is quite applicable in diaspora's shifting identity. According to Hall, "This second position recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather – since history has intervened – 'what we have become'" (112). He means that human beings are dynamic. We cannot stay for a long time with one position, one experience, one identity and one culture without acknowledging its other side. In this sense, "cultural identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'" (112), as it comes from somewhere and it has histories, so it undergoes constant transformation. If cultural identity does not proceed, we cannot understand cultural formation.

In the present age, globalization has become facilitating and cooperative. It has given new meaning to cultural identity by replacing 'shared past' with 'shared present'. Cultural identity in this globalized world is not a fixed essence, universal, and one-and-for-all. It is changeable, transformative and also as Bhabha says, "postcolonial migration – that is not only a 'transitional' reality, but also a 'translational' phenomenon" (*TheLocation* 320). The diasporic people in the host

society feel easier and more comfortable with new cultural identity than their shared past. Jasmine accepts the present, compromises with her Indian values and tradition. Living with Taylor and Wylie Hayes as a caregiver, when their son Duff attends a full day school, Jasmine gets a job of answering phone calls in Mathematics Department at Columbia University. She also teaches Punjabi language in the Indian Language Department at the same University. She also accepts the new culture in which the American women can fall in love with other men after marriage, which is prohibited in Indian culture. These incidents comfort her. Because of their culture, she does not feel guilty for her love to many men like Taylor and Bud. She feels a sense of relief. "It's not guilt that I feel, it's relief" (Mukherjee 240) being pregnant without marrying Bud. Another notable incident that she feels easy and comfortable in new culture is American getup. Jasmine feels comfortable in American clothes. When Professor Vadhera's wife Nirmala buys plain saris and salwar kameez for Jasmine, she does not like them though she cannot say anything it to Nirmala, "I could not admit that I had accustomed myself to American clothes. American clothes disguised my widowhood. In a T-shirt and cords, I was for a student . . . . To them, I was a widow who should show a proper modesty of appearance and attitude" (Mukherjee145). This indicates that Jasmine wants to replace her shared past with the shared present, which gives a new meaning to her identity.

The South Asian diasporic characters like Jasmine feel relatively free in the new world, i.e. the West because they are not compelled to confine themselves there as Mukherjee speaks through Taylor in *Jasmine*, "It's a free country" (239). When they shift from old cultural identity to new cultural

identity, they have many prospects and opportunities. The following lines clearly demonstrate Jasmine's shift, "But Jyoti was now a sati-goddess; she had burned herself in a trash-can-funeral pyre behind a boarded-up motel in Florida. Jasmine lived for the future, for Vijh &Wife" (176). The key part of South Asian culture is family, which is ignored in Western culture. Living together as family, respecting each member and being responsible is the root of South Asian culture whereas westerners give importance to the individual freedom. In the final part of the novel, Jasmine has choices between her identities represented by the names Jane and Jase. As Jane, she can live in Iowa with Bud, a crippled banker who wants to marry her and whose child she is carrying. As Jase, she can choose to be an adventurer and go with Taylor to California. In the evolution of Jasmine, we also notice an increasing sexual freedom. She experiences that sexuality is more flexible and open in the West.

In contrast to the South Asian culture, Jasmine accepts the new culture in America. She compares her past with present and finds that her condition with present identity which "is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (Bhabha,*The Location* 3) is freer and more dignified, self-ruling, self-confidence and secure. She wants to live a dignified and meaningful life in an alien land as she says, "I wanted to become the person they thought they saw: humorous, intelligent, refined, affectionate. Not illegal, not murderer, not widowed, raped, destitute, fearful" (Mukherjee 171). This depicts that Jasmine has ability to adjust in the new culture. Adapting to the requirements of changing environment is her survival skill.

The existence of diasporas to a great extent depends on their shifting identities which constantly produce and reproduce themselves anew as the transformation of Jasmine from the archetype of Sati-Goddess to an American

assertive woman. Her journey from Punjab through Florida, New York and Iowa to California portrays the various stages of mythological avatars. Rejecting the sati-tradition, she emancipates herself from an illegal immigrant to a self-assertive woman with Indian dutifulness. In this way, Mukherjee presents not only how the South Asian diasporic people uproot and reroot but also how they survive with the shifting situation through the continuous process of creating cultural identities.

Suffering of Diaspora: Source of Diasporic Consciousness and Power

Suffering and consciousness go together. In this regard, it is appropriate to refer Albert Camus's idea from "The Myths of Sisyphus", "But from the moment he [Sisyphus] knows, his tragedy begins" (69). Suffering is the source of consciousness and the other way round. It is said that life is a struggle that creates will power in us; without struggle and suffering, we cannot walk on new paths. Diasporic people suffer a lot not only in the process of migration but also in the new locations. "Their suffering has been embellished on the consciousness . . ." (Cohen, *Global* 41). Suffering seems to be the true source of diasporic consciousness and power. Diasporas have the experience of loss, marginality and ethnicity as well as the experience of empowerment, freedom and hope. Writing about diaspora's consciousness, James Clifford suggests, "This constitutive suffering coexists with the skills of survival: strength in adaptive distinction, discrepant, cosmopolitanism, and stubborn vision of renewal. Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension" (454). Clifford means that suffering teaches immigrants about how to struggle for survival in the new place.

The loss of culture and identity, and the hope of new opportunities of diasporas create consciousness in them. With a direct allusion to W. E. B. Do Bois of 'double consciousness', Paul Gilroy describes a kind of duality of diaspora's

consciousness. Their condition is "simultaneously 'home away from home' or 'here and there'" (322) with the awareness of multi-locality. In this sense, diasporas serve to bridge the gap between the local and the global. *Jasmine* highlights sufferings of its heroine who attains empowerment and consciousness, becomes independent and assertive. Jasmine is an evolving diasporic character who faces several challenges and complications such as gender, racial, ethnic, etc. from the process of immigration to her new residence. Mukherjee creates such a diasporic character who has innate desire and tendency to engage in the act of exploration in order to find new horizons. Jasmine travels to the dreamland with forged visa and passport to fulfil her aspirations with great suffering and faces a huge number of challenges. Her transformation is not forcible but desirous as she says, "Taylor didn't want to change me. . . .I changed because I wanted to" (Mukherjee 185). The consciousness that she achieves from suffering and struggle widens her horizon of thought as she lives in America being an independent diaspora.

Suffering becomes synonym to Jasmine who passes through a series of obstacles and hardships. She is a self-made person who realizes that obstacles and misfortunes are inevitable and interwoven in human life. Jasmine, on the one hand, suffers from physical brutality and violence on her journey, for instance, the brutality of Half-Face. So, she is also involved in violence killing Half-Face to save her life. On the other hand, she suffers from psychic violence such as isolation, nostalgia, hatred, etc., which becomes internal part of her life. Jasmine is both the victim and agent of violence, which is another form of power of diaspora. Though she faces hunger, ill-treatment, violence and rape, she never compromises them at any time since her mission moving from old world values to the "brave new world" (184).

Rather the sufferings and hardships that she experiences make her conscious and give her strength and power to survive in this world independently.

The complex journey of immigration and the hardships that the immigrants undergo are common themes in Mukherjee's writings. In the novel, *Jasmine,* Mukherjee uses three types of immigrants to show how different the hardships of adhering to life in an adopted country can be: the refugee, the hyphenated immigrant, and the chameleon. Refugee immigrant type is seen in Professor Vadhera. The character Du Thien is "hyphenated" (222) and Jasmine herself is chameleon. Every hardship that Jasmine faces in her journey awakens her and shows her path ahead as Robin Cohen comments in his *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, "Awareness of their precarious situation may also propel members of diasporas to advance legal and civic causes and to be active in human rights and social justice causes" (148). Suffering increases knowledge and awareness in Jasmine. Her suffering and grief changes into power, "As diasporas become more integrated into global cities, their power and importance are enhanced" (Cohen 155). Jasmine displays courage and ability to survive even while in Hasnapur by killing a rabid dog. Earlier, she escapes her mother's snipping at her birth, "My mother was a sniper. She wanted to spare me the pain of a dowryless bride" (Mukherjee 40). Jasmine tries not to be a victim of the feudalistic society in Hasnapur and after her husband's death, begins a journey to America. Even though raped by Half-Face, she moves on and prepares herself to embrace life in America. A fighter and survivor in her battles against sufferings, she overcomes numerous obstacles in her path and proves herself a successful immigrant with willpower, consciousness and life-force.

When immigrants journey from the old to the new world, they have to face obstacles and suffer a lot because, culturally, they are in-between world that "allows them to move back and forth between two worlds" (Aneja 73). The in-between space is the space of consciousness and power in which the diasporas dwell and construct their position. For Bhabha, the 'in-betweeness' and "liminality" (*TheLocation* 207) is the intercultural space in which hybrid identity is constructed. Bhabha emphasizes neither the native land nor the host country. He highlights the middle ground that he calls "Third Space" (54), the space of hybridity where cultural meanings and identities produce and reproduce other meanings and identities. Jasmine dwells in this space with liminality/consciousness and infinite possibilities of inventing identities/selves. As a result, it is her "many selves" (Mukherjee 214) that steer her to survival. Jasmine in the novel "is neither Indian nor American, but both Indian and American; she enacts the cosmopolitan identity" (Warhol 53). It means that Jasmine, a traditional girl at the mercy of fate in a village in India becomes a modern cross-cultural hybrid woman in America where she stands in-between two cultures or navigates through the third space as a liberated person.

Why the diasporas are ready to face difficulties in the new land is for consciousness, power and freedom. The reason is provided by Jasmine. "I know, why I [Jasmine] left" India is for "Education, which is true enough", she answers to Mother Ripplemayer. Moreover, she replies "I had a mission" (Mukherjee 16). On the one hand, after the death of her husband, Prakash, Jasmine moves to America because she has to complete her mission. Her mission is to burn her husband's suit and to lie on a bed of fire under palm trees and to perform sati where Prakash wished to go to university because she "had sworn before God. A matter of duty and honor" (97). Being a conscious and ideal Hindu widow, she wants to commit sati on a dead

spouse's pyre "under the palm trees of the college campus" (118) at Florida University. This is her mission to make a journey to America before she stabs Half-Face. On the other hand, Jasmine's most prominent purpose to immigrate to America is to avoid her fate and Indian feudalism, to be educated, prosperous, independent and prestigious. She wants to be free from lifelong "bad luck" (41). According to her, if she "could just get away from India, then all fates" foreseen by the old man under the banyan tree "would be cancelled" (85). Then she would "start with new fates, new stars . . . on the other side of the earth, out of God's sight" (85). After killing the evil monster immediately after reaching America, she cleans her body, purifies her soul with all the prayers that she remembers, burns her husband's suit and wears American T-shirt and cords. She does not carry a cultural baggage when she travels across the borders. All these activities function as symbolic act of committing sati and leaving Indian feudal culture behind her, and embracing new opportunities, cultures, and identities in the new "free country" (239). She discards the old culture and is baptized step by step with new names and identities to fulfil her dream of achieving knowledge, power and freedom.

However, Jasmine's memory and consciousness wrap her life. Her "narratives of the past" (Hall, "Cultural" 112) keep alive to negotiate with her present in the 'liminal' "Third Space" (Bhabha, *TheLocation* 54) though "My [Jasmine's] transformation has been genetic" (Mukherjee 222). She does not fully discard her past, as she cannot omit the "permanent scar left on her forehead" (Babu 37). Traces of the past persist somewhere in the corner of her mind. Yet she is successful in dismantling the remnants of her earlier life. The

more she tries to attach herself to America, the more she distances herself from her past making her a willing and successful diaspora.

The suffering of diaspora becomes the source of consciousness. In *Jasmine*, the eponymous character making a journey to the dreamland without job, husband and legal documents struggles to live from the very moment of her birth till the end of the novel but never gives up her hope though she loses many people and makes numerous sacrifices on her journey. Even in her most difficult time, she turns out to be victorious and involves in the quest of a dignified life. In diasporic consciousness, the sense of loss, nostalgia, alienation, social isolation, cultural shock, etc., are interconnected with each other. They all come from the feeling of disconnection. Exhibiting tremendous will power and flexibility in combatting against fate, Mukherjee's protagonist transforms her suffering into consciousness and power standing in the liminal third space.

Transformation of Diaspora: Assertiveness and Freedom in *Jasmine*

Diasporas like Mukherjee's protagonist celebrate their transformation towards assertiveness, power and freedom in this globalized world. Their everlasting process of journey from one place to another, from one self to another transforms their being with new culture, identity and consciousness. The South Asian diasporic writers such as Bharati Mukherjee examine the dislocation, relocation and transformation of migrants under the banner of transnational and trans-local diaspora. According to Bhabha, in the contemporary world, literature is concerned with "transnational histories of migrants" (*The Location* 17) with the distinctive features of hybridity, mimicry, difference and ambivalence. The emphasis of diasporic literature is not on the "sovereignty of national culture, nor the universalism of human culture" instead such literature concentrates on "social and cultural displacements" (17) that the

diasporas undergo. Similar to Bhabha's notion, Mukherjee's narratives are the records of experience of the diaspora communities living in diverse social and cultural settings. Mukherjee reflects the reality of the modern world of globalization depicting the characters who undergo changes in their movements from culture to culture. This section of the paper focuses on how the eponymous character of *Jasmine* undergoes transformation from a village passive girl in India to an active modern woman in America.

Mukherjee portrays the title character's constant journey of transformation from one situation to other representing different selves in each situation. Her diverse transformed selves or identities are accompanied by a series of names that starts from Jyoti (a village girl) to Jasmine (the city woman) to Kali (destroyer to evil) to Jazzy (the fake documented immigrant) to Jase (the Manhattan nanny) to Jane (the Iowan woman who finally moves to California). This write-up focuses on Jasmine's cultural transformation as a transformation of immigrants from the Third World to the First World, notably from South Asia to America for confidence, power and freedom. Initially, Mukherjee presents her protagonist as an 'object' within the confines of Indian culture but finally she appears as 'subject'. According to Anu Aneja, Jasmine's metamorphosis is "equally a movement from object – someone whose personality is viewed, examined, made note of – to subject, a character who seems to carry the action of the text with her" (75). The researcher analyzes the protagonist-immigrant's transformation dividing into five phases: innocence, rage, delight, ambivalence and freedom.

Mukherjee fictionalizes the process of Americanization by highlighting the young immigrant's experiences of shock and success in America. In the first phase, the phase of innocence, the protagonist of the novel, Jyoti, is depicted "as an

unformed mass of stereotypical values and beliefs" (Aneja 75). She is the fifth daughter, the seventh of nine children of her parents. Although she is confined within Hindu culture, she is clever and beautiful like "a lotus bloomed from cow dung" (46). Her transformation begins from her association with Prakash who has a dynamic vision of life and makes her conscious of the modern world baptizing her by the new name, Jasmine, a fifteen-year old innocent girl. He knows that the modern world of globalization has created a transnational world where the nations across the globe interact culturally, socially and politically losing their borders and boundaries as she reveals, "My husband, Prakash Vijh was a modern man, a city man. He did trash some traditions right from the beginning. . . . He wanted me to call him by his first name" (Mukherjee 76-77). Prakash thinks that the new Jasmine "can't jump into the wells" (92) rather she becomes able to live on her own being independent. The writer illustrates the concept of marriage in India at a young age "he was twenty-four and I was fifteen, a village fifteen, ready to be led" (78). Prakash prefers her to call him by his first name, which is uneasy to Jasmine. He educates her saying that only in traditional villages, wives remain as slaves to husbands. Nevertheless, when they see the world wider than their previous location, they "also hear the uncertain and threatening process of cultural transformation" (Bhabha, *TheLocation* 48). The process of cultural transformation for Jasmine is uncertain and difficult; however, she practices because it is her desire. The following context illustrates the transformation of the rural innocent girl into a modern city woman:

> The first months, eager and obedient as I was, I still had a hard time calling 'Prakash'. I'd cough to get his attention, . . . 'Are you listening?' every time I coughed he'd say 'Do I hear a crow trying human speech?' Prakash. I had to practice and practice (in the bathroom, in the tarped-over corner of the

verandah which was our kitchen) so I could say the name without gagging and blushing in front of his friends. (77)

Mukherjee compares Jasmine's innocence with the innocence of Eliza Doolittle in Barnard Shaw's *Pygmalion* in which Professor Higgins, like Prakash, transforms her culturally and linguistically into a modern woman. "*Pygmalion* wasn't a play I'd seen or read then, but I realize now how much of Professor Higgins there was in my husband. He wanted to break down the Jyoti I'd been in Hasnapur and make me a new kind of city woman" (77). The change of Jasmine is much symbolic here as a shift from the non-western culture to the western one. She builds her confidence and acquires willpower. Yet, her happy life is shattered when Sikh terrorists murder her husband. Being a Hindu widow at early age,Jasmine leaves India for America because her life in India is intolerable with other widows in dark hut as she narrates, "I felt myself dead in their company" (97). Then her real suffering and struggle begin with her journey in life. Her journey of innocence to experience/consciousness and process of immigration go simultaneously.

In the second phase, the phase of rage, Mukherjee has presented culture as a driving force in immigrants' life. Full of grief and aspiration, Mukherjee's protagonist journeys to America with fake documents to escape her painful past and to achieve her mission. Jasmine carries a cultural artifact, i.e. a sandalwood Ganpati, a mighty god, who in Hindu mythologyis worshippedto destroy all hardships of the worshipper. She narrates, "I keep my sandalwood Ganpati . . . to uproot anything in my path" (102) and leaves to America. Mukherjee here focuses on cultural attachment in immigrants that reveals their identity and sometime gives them relief. Jasmine, as an illegal immigrant, is full of fear and anger. She has been asked many times to show her travel documents and proofs by officials. Once she shows her anger, "when the

American visa bastards turned me down, I tried to kill myself" (102). But, when she shows her "forged, expensive passport" (103) they let her go and she feels renewed. Her fury raises in climax when the disfigured sailor Half-Face who "had lost an eye and ear and most of his cheek in a paddy field in Vietnam" (104) rapes her. Feeling disgraced, Jasmine stabs the monster transforming herself into the image or reincarnation of Kali, the revengeful goddess of Hindu mythology in her full rage. From this successful event, the narrator-protagonist of *Jasmine* gains confidence and power, which she had never experienced in her life.

Rage holds energy that transforms one from weak to strong, ignorant to conscious as Bhabha in his *TheLocation of Culture* notes, "The symbolic consciousness gives the sign (of the Self) a sense of autonomy or solitariness 'as if it stands by itself in the world' privileging an individuality and a unitariness whose integrity is expressed in a certain richness of agony and anomie" (70). As Bhabha's 'symbolic consciousness gives the sign of a sense of autonomy', Jasmine's symbolic fragrance changes into rage, agony and anomie, and her feeling of suicide alters the direction. Gathering energy from anger, pain and alienation, she transforms herself into Kali, the South Asian Goddess of Grace, Rage and Knowledge, and clears her future course. Jasmine as Kali possesses these metaphors as Arun Gupto clarifies:

> The attribute of Grace manifests motherly sublimity, warring protectors and various personifications of sexuality. Rage is both the fearful aspects of goddesses and independent identities of women. The association of goddesses with Knowledge is about the order of intellect, which otherwise in multiple hegemonic cultures is considered to be in the possession of the male. (3).

With the energy of rage, Jasmine's development of autonomy and immigrant-agency in her odyssey adds self-empowerment and self-emancipation. Then, she burns her

husband's graduation dress and her widow's white sari, washes her body and purifies herself by chanting "prayers for the dead, clutching my Ganpati" (Mukherjee 120). This symbolically refers to her 'sati,' a cultural purification. Overall, she discards her cultural baggage that has a great significance of transformation from eastern culture to western culture.

The third phase of transformation, the phase of delight, connotes Jasmine's rebirth with American identity when she meets American benefactor, Lillian Gordon in Florida. Jasmine's happiness bounds no more when Lillian Gordon "appeared with food on a paper plate and a plastic fork. It was the first hot prepared food I'd had in over a month" (130). Gordon protects her from tiredness and hunger. Besides, acting as loving and inspiring mother, she Americanizes the new immigrant baptizing her with American name, Jazzy. Jasmine as Jazzy gets shocked by her own metamorphosis, wearing American clothes, she narrates, "I checked myself in the mirror, shocked at the transformation. Jazzy in a T-shirt, tight cords, and, running shoes" (133). It is also significant to note here that Jasmine sees escalator, revolving doors and American dollars for the first time in her life. She appreciates American life. Jasmine is totally changed adopting an American accent and a different style of walking, and is interested to mimic American cultures, behaviors, language, food, etc. As a citizen of Third World,her mimicry of the First World cultures empowers her like Bhabha's notion of mimicry:

> [T]hen colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its

> difference. . . . a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which appropriates the Other as it visualizes power. (*TheLocation* 122)

Jasmine's mimicry of American life is the strategy of her survival and for empowerment. She desires and continues mimicry in her new breath. Being an illegal immigrant and 'Other',Jasmine's mimicryis her compulsion to follow the new cultures, and language as the American benefactor, Lillian Gordon, instructs her, "Now remember, if you walk and talk American, they'll think you were born here. Most American can't imagine anything else" (Mukherjee 135). Her process of transformation continues because she wants to be more liberated an assertive than every previous step.

Still, Jasmine's delight increases when she moves to New York and joins Taylor and Wylie Hayes with their adopted daughter Duff. She becomes happy with the identity of au pair and home manager in their house. When Wylie leaves Taylor because of his impotency, Jasmine acts as his wife. Then, he names her 'Jase' and makes her an independent woman helping her to get an employment at Columbia University. He never orientalizes her. However, the protagonist's peaceful life is disturbed when she sees the Sikh terrorist in a park. She then decides to move to Baden, Iowa. Anyway, her third phase of transformation is delightful and successful.

Jasmine's fourth phase marks with ambivalence when she is introduced to Mother Ripplemeyer and her son Bud, a banker who names her 'Jane'. Here, Jasmine's duty is to take care of the banker who has been shot by his neighbor. She carries Bud's child in her womb and "Bud wants me to marry him, 'officially', he says, before the baby comes" (7) but she does not want. "She denies the material comforts of her domestic life and succumbs to the mysterious calling of adventure by eloping with her former lover" (Banerjee 12) because Americaasserts a neoliberal

political notion of democracy in which there are many choices. One finds ambiguity in choices. According to Suchismita Benerjee, America is a new world of hope, progress and freedom where Jasmine fully wants to use her flexible and fluid identity:

> It is this 'liberal' America, where identity could be a choice that forms the core of Mukherjee's Americanization. In Mukherjee's worldview identities remain frozen in countries like India while it is fluid and flexible in the United States. She continuously delineates America as the New world of hope and progress in contrast to the Old world (India) of stasis and oppression in the novel *Jasmine*. (14)

In this position, Jasmine has ambivalent representation in her sexual role-playing. Jasmine is in ambivalence situation, "a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key* 12). Her consciousness splits between who she wants to be, Jase or Jane. On the one hand, Taylor is a lover of freedom and understands her. He listens to her grief, loves her Indian roots and leads her to modernity, which is the image of her dream. But he is impotent. He cannot fully satisfy her sexual need. On the other hand, she is carrying Bud's child and Bud likes old-world dutifulness, which is not her dream. In this context, Jasmine reveals her ambivalent situation "I am not choosing between men. I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness. A caregiver's life is a good life, a worthy life. What am I to do" (240). She is in "the complex mix of attraction and repulsion" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key* 12) simultaneously. Therefore, she is in the condition of ambivalence.

In the final phase, the phase of freedom, Jasmine makes her individual choice because in America there is individual freedom so, as the novel ends, the readers feel a chilling surprise when she is about to set off to California choosing Taylor over Bud in love with the "Adventure, risk, transformation" (Mukherjee 240). Jasmine follows

a steady westward movement over the course of the narrative battling and surviving. In this respect, the diasporic critic, Anu Aneja remarks, "Faced with the choice between 'old-world dutifulness' and 'the promise of America' the many times reborn Jane will go for latter. America is no longer just the big nation far away, but has become, in its lesson of impermanence, the movement and rhythm of her pulse" (73). She really tastes the freedom of America by running off with one man when she is pregnant with another man's child. She finds Prakash in Taylor. Jasmine says, "Time will tell if I am a tornado, a rubble-maker, arising from nowhere and disappearing into a cloud. I am out the door . . ., greedy with wants and reckless from hope" (241). This shows that she is a free-spirited person and self-willed diasporic subject of the West who murders her past self and becomes a part of west. "This concept that the loss of old culture is exhilarating, is foregrounded in the novel *Jasmine* where the protagonist takes on new identities with ease and felicity and does not express any regret at losing connection with her old culture" (Babu 4). This is because the protagonist's journey connotes the journey of *atma*/self (South Asia) to *paramatma*/absolute (America) in the perspective of third world immigrants.

The third world individuals see America as the land of opportunity where "Nothing was rooted anymore. Everything was in motion" (Mukherjee, *Jasmine*152) so they can evolve freely without any bondage of family tradition. They murder their past and take rebirth to get success as Jasmine says, "We murder who we were so we can rebirth ourselves in the image of dreams" (29). Mukherjee's protagonist undergoes multiple identity transformations in her quest for self-empowerment and happiness. She consumes the freedom in the 'free country' with American identity however, not in accordance with her will. Thus, Jasmine's transformation has become possible due to her boldness since her childhood. In every step of her transformation,

she asserts herself that she is not zero but an individual who can swim against the current for assertiveness, empowerment and freedom.

Conclusion: Beauty in Suffering

Cultural transformation of diasporas involves physical as well as psychological suffering like the transformation of larva into a fully grown butterfly after coming out of the cocoon after a tremendous struggle and suffering. Cultural change and adjustment in this globalized world are mandatory functions in diasporic people in the alien culture and setting. But the question is, what is the purpose of diasporic suffering? Why do Jasmine-like diasporas celebrate suffering and pain? Do they suffer for the sake of suffering? This research has clearly proved and answered these questions listed above discussing Bharati Mukherjee's diasporic novel, *Jasmine* as a representative diasporic narrative that the diasporic people suffer hoping to make a better life. They adventure, take risk and transform for the purpose of political, financial and cultural boldness, and freedom inserting themselves in the flesh and blood of America. To murder their past selves and to take rebirth is painful task of diasporas. However, they do it in order to enable them to advance into unknown but promising futures and potentialities. They see the beauty and power in suffering, nostalgia, alienation and displacement; thus, diasporas embrace both physical and psychological sufferings and demonstrate celebratory attitude to them.

The journey of the narrator-protagonist stands for ever-moving journey of diasporas encountering several obstacles. Jasmine becomes westernized as she changes from one name to another. At the end of the narrative, her journey does not end but begins on a message of optimism because she has 'cocooned a cosmos whole' in her womb. Geographically, she moves from East to West for a greater freedom, knowledge and power but symbolically, she is ready for a next departure because she

has carried Bub's baby, a new life, another American dream by which Jasmine may have different challenges, identity and transformation ahead. In this sense, diasporas through many changes and fluid identity learn to confront pains, sufferings and harsh realities of life with courage and hard work. At the heart of these pains and sufferings, they see beauty, romantic optimism and dream.

Diasporas have to face adverse conditions in every step of life, and only the heroic and adventurous diasporas can successfully face them. Moreover, cultural transformation has never been easy for them because they need to cope up with the new surroundings, adapt to new challenges and to reroot on the new land. The eponymous character and narrator of Mukherjee's *Jasmine* is such a diasporic character who endures innumerable hardships, and goes through many different destinies and huddles with her courage and effort in order to reinvent her new self. Mukherjee presents Jasmine as a Phoenix who rises from her ashes. This novel does not only involve the struggle against the sufferings and troubles of normal process which is experienced by every South Asian immigrant, but also challenges the problems related to sexual, racial, national and cultural identity. The novel's protagonist determines to fight her destiny empowering herself through learning English language because she gets transformative effect in this language. She faces cultural crises and undergoes physical and mental sufferings in every phase of transformation stated above. However, she sees beauty in these crises and sufferings because they are for her self-development and assertiveness.

This way, Mukherjee aestheticizes the suffering and struggle of diasporas in the process of cultural transformation for their greater freedom, assertiveness, strength, knowledge and power. As a South Asian diasporic writer, Mukherjee creates such a female protagonist in her diasporic narrative who does not only get

transformation through the sufferings of her internal agency and external environment but also creates her as the agent of transformation. Jasmine is not only transformed herself from a traditional village girl to a modern self-willed sophisticated American individual but also transforms her American lovers into her will and becomes an extremely choosy adventurer. She knows that suffering is hard, but it is necessary element of life by which, she gains a sense of self-awareness and becomes stronger. Besides, Jasmine has been depicted as a personification of strength. She gathers strength through adverse conditions and harsh realities of life in order to find meaning in life. Assertiveness and freedom, power and consciousness in diasporas are only possible through sufferings, struggles and hard works. Such an empirical knowledge and firsthand experience of immigrants achieved from cultural diversity is the aesthetic pleasure of diasporas which Mukherjee aestheticizes, celebrates and advocates in *Jasmine*.

Chapter IV

TRANSNATIONAL DIASPORIC ACTIVISM: POWER OF INVESTIGATING HISTORY, POLITICS AND CULTURE IN MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S *ANIL'S GHOST*

Preview

This chapter of the dissertation explores the activism of transnational diaspora in Sri Lankan post-civil war period in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (2000). Transnational diasporas are those immigrants having fluid identity who create social fields to connect their native country with their country of settlement. They involve in transnational activities such as political, sociocultural and economic creating a connectivity that develops cross-border or trans-border relations. Anil Tissera, the female protagonist and West-trained forensic specialist is a transnational Sri Lankan diasporic character who, with some native helpers, possesses the capacity to investigate history, politics and culture of her native land affected by the horrors of postcolonial civil war. She works for the Human Rights Organization at United Nations. The International Center for Human Rights of UN sends Anil her native country as a representative and consultant forensic pathologist to investigate the organized campaigns of murder in the island.

In *Anil's Ghost*, the involvement of Anil in investigating extrajudicial execution of her native country discloses her actual power and knowledge that she has

acquired from the East and the West. The significance of transnational diaspora politics in the twenty-first century world has been growing due to the various aspects of advanced globalization. The Sri Lankan-born Canadian writer, Michael Ondaatje (b. 1943) often focuses on the role of international organizations to analyze the flow of politics, history, culture and economic of the local and global. Anil is anew diaspora who revisits her birth country with her newly learned skills as an international investigator working as a representative of a transnational organization, Human Rights, Geneva. On this setting, the main queries of this section of dissertation are as follows: How do the transnational diasporas like Anil Tissera contribute to their native country in the social fields such as history, politics and culture? Why does Anil try to find voice of the voiceless victims of the war? As a new diaspora, does she have a courage to dig out historical truth of government-protected zone? The transnational diasporas acquire specific knowledge and experience from different parts of the world because they are the global travelers. Michael Ondaatje, one of the famous South Asian diasporic writers manifests and advocates the knowledge, experience and power of transnational diasporas in his influential novel *Anil's Ghost*.

This chapter examines the power and influence of transnational diasporas highlighting the South Asian historical, political and cultural issues especially of Sri Lanka through the close study of Ondaatje's diasporic narrative, *Anil's Ghost*. In this narrative, Ondaatje's Westernized protagonist, Anil presents her positionality against any abuses of power and atrocities that may plague her country of origin. Being a more responsive diaspora to the politics of authenticity and representation, Anil writes back home and tries to give justice to the marginalized and ethnic communities.

Introduction: *Anil's Ghost* as a Historical, Political and Cultural Memory

The narrative of *Anil's Ghost* offers a record of historical, political and cultural memory of one of the South Asian countries, Sri Lanka. It combines the fiction and historical fact set against the backdrop of civil war that began from the mid-1980s in Sri Lanka. In this study, the researcher has hooked theoretical insights from the diaspora theorists, especially Stephen Vertovec's transnational diaspora, Vijay Mishra's new diaspora or the diaspora of the border and James Clifford's diaspora and cultural anthropology. Similarly, Sturt Hall's cultural identity and diaspora, and play of history, culture and power, Avtar Brah's concept of diaspora and Victoria Cook's antithesis of subalternity are also used as theoretical tools and interpretations wherever their theories have been found necessary for the enquiry of the primary text. The research has put Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* into these diasporic critics' theoretical frameworks and analyzed the text for the purpose of the research. The primary source of this dissertation is the text itself in which Ondaatje's diasporic protagonist, Anil shows the futility of war, advocates freedom and fluid identity leaving her oppressive husband, and digs out the history that has merged with the personal histories of the characters. Understandingly, Anil is an alternative subject of the writer Ondaatje whose root belongs to Sri Lanka. Ondaatje was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka, got secondary education in England and emigrated to America and then "In 1962 he emigrated to Canada where he has lived ever since" (Ondaatje i). Anil was also born in Sri Lanka and educated in the West. Anil Tissera has a transnational existence because of her multiple identities and consciousness. She was born in Sri Lanka, educated in England, living and working in America, travelling with "a British passport" (12) and identifying herself as a westerner. Her identity is shaped in Sri Lanka, England and United States like Ondaatje himself. After her adjustment in the

cultures of these countries, she is no longer able to speak Sinhalese or Tamils except some language codes. Anil is a global traveler with no fixed identity.

Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* narrates the forgotten history, politics and cultural root of those who were killed in the mindless ethnic violence of Sri Lankan civil war, especially the common and downtrodden people. Politics, history and culture play a decisive role in Sri Lanka where politics and culture are seldom discussed without referring to history. In "Author's Note", Ondaatje himself displays the evidence of the historical war:

> From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, Sri Lanka was in a crisis that involved three essential groups: the government, the antigovernment insurgents in the south and the separatist guerrillas [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or Tamil Tigers] in the north. Both the insurgents and the separatists had declared war on the government. Eventually, in response, legal and illegal government squads were known to have been sent out to hunt down the separatists and the insurgents. (v)

The novel sketches how the three sides involved are responsible for the conflict. Ondaatje deeply points out the terror and conflict of the history of the island as, "There had been continual emergency from 1983 onwards, racial attacks and political killings . . . . The disposal of the bodies by fire. The disposal of the bodies in the rivers or the sea. The hiding and then reburial of corpses" (38-39). In the novel, the pain and agony of war victims is evidently examined through the reconstruction of skeletons. The suppressed and unidentified past comes into existence. It is one of the best ways to renovate native history, politics and culture within the literary text. Ondaatje, as a literary artist, gives voice to those who were unheard or voiceless in the official history and records them in his literary art *Anil's Ghost* by creating a

transnational diasporic protagonist as an activist. In this regard, the transnational diasporic critic Steven Vertovec claims in his *Transnationalism*, "Transnational political activities are also undertaken by ethnic diasporas. . . . Awareness of their precarious situation may also propel members of diasporas to advance legal and civic causes and to be active in human rights and social justice issues" (11). Here, Ondaatje historicizes the text and textualizes the history, politics and culture of the South Asian island. He fictionalizes the real history of the island challenging the boundaries between fact and fiction and narrates the historical events in third person point of view. This novel is the bridge between the two poles as he says, "*Anil's Ghost* is a fictional work set during this political time and historical moment" (Ondaatje v). The narrative is told through Anil's memories combined with Sri Lanka's war in this realist fiction.

The title of the novel demands the figure of the ghost. However, no literal ghost appears in the narrative. The figurative ghost that represents all victims of political killings hunts the main character of this novel, Anil Tissera. It may also refers to Anil's struggle to unify her past in Sri Lanka and America with her present life. Describing about the title, Chitra Krishnan says:

> *Anil's Ghost* could be a reference to Anil's struggle to unify her past in Sri Lanka and America with her present life, or her troubled relationship with her lover in the past. The ghost might also be a reference to the skeleton Sailor whom Anil and Sarath try to identify for it symbolized the war victims. Another interpretation of the title may be a reference to the 'ghosts' of the Sri Lankan violence that had caused deep psychological scars on the identity of everyone in the book. (215)

In a sense, Anil's recurring memory gathered in her place of origin that hunts her repeatedly might be the ghost. In addition, from the angle of identity, it could refer to Anil herself being a ghost of her brother from whom she had taken her name and made it a part of her female self. Referring to her name and identity, Ondaatje discloses:

> Her name had not always been Anil. She had been given two entirely inappropriate names and very early began to desire 'Anil', which was her brother's unused second name. She had tried to buy it from him when she was twelve years old, offering to support him in all family arguments. He would not commit himself to the trade though he knew she wanted the name than anything else. (63)

From the beginning of her life, Anil desires to get power and freedom. She wants to be bold having manly nature. Throughout the novel, ghosts and skeletons keep on coming side by side as the result of the turmoil on the island and because of that turmoil, many people have lost their identities.

Anil's Ghost opens in the Guatemala where the protagonist of the novel and Ondaatje's diasporic transnational character, Anil, reaches there with her forensic team as a representative of human rights organization to identity the victims of civil war. There, the team works at a gravesite to unearth the dead while family members, who have lost loved ones, wait for justice. "One day Anil and the rest of the team walked to a nearby river . . . they saw a woman sitting within the grave . . . . She had lost a husband and a brother during an abduction in this region a year earlier" (1-2). Anil is unable to describe "the woman's face" or the "grief of love in that shoulder she will never forget, she still remembers. The woman rose to her feet when she heard them approach and moved back, offering them room to work" (2). The intense

emotion and grief of the unnamed Guatemalan woman makes the deepest impression on Anil as the narrator says, “There are no words Anil knows that can describe” (2). However, the responsibility of Anil is to find out the objective truth using her skill, knowledge and experience as she has worked far from her homeland including Guatemala, Haiti, Ghana and many other countries. *Anil’s Ghost* follows a unique structure and is divided into eight sections: "Sarath", "Grove of Ascetics", "A Brother", "Ananda", "The Mouse", "Between Heartbeats", "The Life Wheel", and "Distance". Each section corresponds to a narrative that deals primarily with a specific subject or character as denoted by the section’s title.

The incident that happened in Guatemala mirrors the situation in that of Sri Lanka. Anil, the UN consultant diasporic transnational protagonist of Ondaatje “arrived in early March, the plane landing at Katunayake airport before the dawn” (5) for the first time after fifteen years absence abroad with power and knowledge of the United Nations to investigate “unknown extrajudicial executions” (14). She had left Sri Lanka when she was eighteen. So, she can speak Sinhala, her mother tongue, “a little” (5) and cannot comprehend a world of Tamil. She travels “with a British passport” (12) although she has not lived in the United Kingdom for well over a decade. “Anil Tissera was chosen as the Geneva organization’s forensic specialist, to be teamed with an archaeologist in Colombo. It was to be a seven-week project” (12). Her goal is to determine whether she can provide evidence to support or to deny claims of mass killings by government forces.

On her arrival in Sri Lanka, Anil is met by Sarath Diyasena, a government appointed archaeologist. They set off in search of the evidence in the killing fields. They search new and unmarked gravesites among the ruins of ancient monasteries and sacred burial grounds in the jungle, hill top caves. Their investigation reveals that the

whole country seems to be a killing field. They find many skeletons. Anil notices that the bones of certain skeletons do not seem to be sixth century as Ryan Mowat says:

> Anil's investigation into the origins of a skeleton she has recovered from a government-protected archaeological preserve forms the novel's central story. Having been given access to a burial site on the preserve, she discovers a four-to six-year-old skeleton among other sixth-century ones buried there. (29)

Among them, they level the recent ones "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier and Sailor" (Ondaatje 47) which they find in Bandarawela. The skeleton that Sarath has discovered in a site that can only be accessed by someone working for government is the most recent one, which "was found within a sacred historical site. A site constantly under government or police supervision" (48). The other skeletons have no skulls but the Sailor has. So, they want to focus their investigation on it.

Anil is skeptical of Sarath's help because she has a hint of suspicion on him that his loyalty lies with the government. He gives Anil the detailed of this innocent killing "There is no clear issue now; the reason for war was war" (39). She nicknames the corpse 'Sailor' who has been partially burnt and other evidence clearly indicates that the man was murdered. She makes a report about violent death after examining "the skeleton under sulphur light" (60). When she reads the Sailor's last actions by knowing the wounds on bone, she finds that the Sailor "puts his arms up over his face to protect himself from the blow. He is shot with a rifle, the bullet going through his arm, then into neck. While he's on the ground they come up and kill him" (61). Then, to avoid their suspicions and to get more evidence, they meet Sarath's teacher, Palipana, a blind man whom his niece a young girl Lakma cares him. Though he is blind, he relies on other senses rather than sight. He also knows that the Sailor is a

recent death. To recognize his face, he recommends an artist, Ananda, who can reconstruct Sailor's face from clay. To meet Ananda, they agree to go to a small village named Galapitigama. There they meet Ananda who has learnt the traditional Buddhist art of sculpture. Anil also meets Sarath's brother, Gamini, an emergency doctor because she discovers that Gamini who is nicknamed "the Mouse" (203) by his family, was a perfect participant in the war to save the lives of numerous victims. Together, the team attempts to determine the true name and identity of the victim in the belief that this will provide the necessary evidence to allow them to accuse the government of having been involved in systematic violence against its own people. Through one victim, they hope to reconstruct the stories and histories of hundreds of others who suffered a similar fate. "One village can speak for many villages. One victim can speak for many victims" (272). Sailor, the anonymous victim, is a representative of all those lost voices and therefore to give him a name would name all the rest. Anil perceives the skeleton 'Sailor' as a metonym of the hundreds of mysterious deaths and disappearances.

In the process of sculpting the face of the skeleton, the memories of Ananda's dead wife, Sirissa, intervene in him and he realizes the pain she must experience. Then, he fails to create the face of Sailor. By the help of Sarath, Anil investigates and identifies that the Sailor is the skeleton of Ruwan Kumara, "Sarath and Anil had identified Sailor at the third plumbago village. He was Ruwan Kumara and he had been a toddy tapper" (265). Instead of constructing the actual face of Ruwan Kumara, the artificer, Ananda, reconstructs a younger face that radiates a peacefulness that he wanted for any victims. Anil watches Ananda working at recreating the skull. Anil notices that Ananda adopts an unusual position when he is adding clay to the skull. Anil sees that he uses all his energy in reconstructing Ruwan Kumara's skull but

Buddha's face and head. As Anil prepares a report to present to the authorities, claiming the skeleton as a recent death, and therefore evidence of state or state-sponsored terrorism, the skeleton of Sailor disappears. She becomes frustrated and angry by the betrayal of Sarath. Her belongings and research, especially her papers and tape recorder, are "confiscated" (271) and she is left with nothing because Sarath wants to hide the truth. "You'll never get them back. Do you understand? Forget them" (279). Outside, she meets Sarath, who surprises her with the body of Sailor that he has placed in a van, "the skeleton, wrapped in plastic, was wheeled in" (272). Sarath instructs her to leave quickly and catch a plane out of the country. Anil's previous suspicion on Sarath comes to truth. Anil worries about Sarath's politics and says him, "You as an archeologist should believe in the truth of history" (272). Perhaps, Sarath understands that the truth found by the West may be dangerous and give rise to further violence. He tries to make Anil understand that the truth is often in the hands of those in power and the consequences may be disastrous. When he recognizes that the Sailor has been murdered by government with provable fact, this leads to Sarath's death.

The novel begins with Anil's efforts to identify an anonymous victim, Sailorbut it ends with the identification of a much more familiar victim: Sarath. In a surprising twist at the novel's close, Sarath is tortured and killed probably by the supporters of government for helping Anil. Then his brother, Gamini discovers his body among the anonymous corpses of political prisoners whose injuries he reviews and documents. In addition, unlike the majority of the disappeared, his body is quickly identified by his own brother, whose medical insights remove much of the uncertainty about Sarath's final hours of life. Even Sri Lanka's president is assassinated by a Tamil suicide

bomber as the text narrates, "At four p.m. on National Heroes Day, more than fifty people were killed instantly, including the President" (Ondaatje 291). The novel ends in the undecided future after 1993, at which time Ananda reconstructs a Buddha statue. The history, politics and culture of this postcolonial country is one of the most debated topics. Thus, Michael Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost* has become a historical, political and cultural memory of this former British colony.

Then this memory of Sarath as a ghost becomes heavier for Anil to carry in her mind than the ghost of Sailor. However, she feels relief in the hope that the evidence of the death of Sailor will be sufficient. At the end of the narrative, readers find Ananda carving the eyes of Buddha statue that was dynamited by armed forces. The novel ends not with truth but with beauty. This shows that there is relationship between art and history. Art is ever-present in history and history strengthens with the touch of art. Moreover, history and art record human instincts and cultures. In conclusion, Anil's mission of historicizing the historyless people becomes successful. Ondaatje ends his novel with some amount of hope. In the "Author's Note" of the novel, he opines that the war is still continuing in a different form in Sri Lanka, while in the final section "Distance", he gives hope for a better nation through the reconstruction of Buddha statue and the eye-painting ceremony "Netra Mandala ceremony of the new Buddha statue" (300) that symbolizes the restoration of peace. In Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, the diasporic character takes the bold step keeping her life in danger and becomes able to construct a new history.

Anil's Transnational Mobility: Diasporic Crosscurrent

Transnational mobility refers to the cross-border relationships and long-distance networks of nation-states. The mobility of diasporas in the postcolonial situation is intense and fluid. According to James Clifford, there is "contrast between colonial

fixity and postcolonial mobility, between indigenous roots and diasporic routes" (*Returns* 59) because we find travelling culture more in postcolonial world than colonial culture. When the diasporic subject travels, so does culture. "Thus, while diasporas change their countries of arrival, so are their cultures change in turn" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Postcolonial* 427). Due to the facilities of improved transportation, new communication technologies such as internet and mobile phones, transnational mobility has increased global interconnectedness across human domains such as history, culture, politics, etc. According to Steven Vertovec, "Enhanced transnational connections between social groups represent a key manifestation of globalization" (*Transnationalism* 2). In this modern age, the mobility of diasporas has become a process by which they establish and maintain multi-threaded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. Michael Ondaatje is not an exception to make use of these facilities by his diasporic characters in his narratives. In fact, all of Anil's past connections with Sri Lanka seem to be defined by absence, rupture, and failure. For example, her decision to get married to a fellow Sri Lankan student to provide relief her feelings of cultural "uncertainty" (Ondaatje 137) leads to disaster and eventually to her abandonment of her Sinhala language and her Sri Lankan past. Anil's diasporic existence frequently generates a state of nervousness in England. It is this state of individual and social alienation that also characterizes her relationship with her lover Cullis and her girlfriend Leaf. They are long-distance relationships without commitment and, at times, are almost anonymous in their lack of intimacy. Ondaatje's protagonist character, Anil in his narrative *Anil's Ghost* represents one of the mobile diaspora activists involved in the transnational institution, i.e. the United Nations Human

Rights Group. This part of dissertation explores the triangular relationship among the diaspora and her home and host societies as well as her transnational mobility.

As a diaspora and agent of transnational practices, Anil performs the role of transnational connectivity and mobility. Soon after her arrival, Anil visits Lalitha, an elderly woman who worked in the household during her childhood. In a conversation between a Tamil young girl and Anil, we can find Anil's link to her society of origin:

> How old were when you last saw my grandmother?
>
> 'I was eighteen. I've been away since then.'
>
> 'You have parents here?'
>
> They're dead. And my brother left. Just my father's friends are still here.'
>
> 'Then you don't have any connection, do you?'
>
> 'Just Lalitha. In a way she was the one who brought me up.'(Ondaatje 19-20)

When Anil arrives in her native country, she completely feels a Westernized outsider. When the old woman and granddaughter communicate in Tamil, Anil does not understand. There is a recognition of "a lost language between them" (18). She does not have any relatives there except the fifty-year old Tamil woman, Lalitha, who brought her up from her childhood days. "When they turned back to her, they saw Lalitha had fallen asleep" (20). Moreover, the local people know her as a good swimmer when she was a child in Sri Lanka. "So – you are the swimmer!" (12) is the statement she hears everywhere in the locality. Though she has these links with her country of origin, she has arrived there to investigate the "organized campaigns of murder on the island" (12) committed by all three sides: "by the insurgents or by the government or the guerrilla separatists (14) because since she left the country, "A lot of blood under the bridge" (12) has flooded there. "Though Anil returns to the island,

she does not feel any pangs of nostalgia or yearning to relate to her old home" (Krishnan 224). Only her photograph at a swimming championship establishes her native identity as a Sri Lankan. "Though a visual sign is a collective memory sign of recognition, with time it can lose its semantic meaning seenin the case of Anil who, though she is the same person, she is nolonger the swimmer" (224). A diaspora becomes stranger in his/her country. Anil faces the same problem however; she concentrates on her own responsibility.

The textual data proves Anil's mobility when Ondaatje begins his narrative with brief scene depicting Anil at work excavating a secret burial site in Guatemala. "In the worst hours of the Guatemalan heat they held up a serape or banana leaf to provide shade" (Ondaatje 1). From its first pages, the novel presents Anil as a global citizen whose forensic work for a human rights organization takes her from war-torn Guatemala to the Congo eventually finds herself back to Sri Lanka, her country of origin. It shows that the mobility of the skilled diaspora is a hope and value to the people of any corners of the globe. In this context, one of the transnational diasporic critics, Chitra Krishnan claims, "Immigrants take nomadic cultural routes which lead them to many places and bring them into contact with many people" (217). Anil's mobility and her cultural routes are clearly presented by the writer in the text. She leaves her native Sri Lanka at the age of eighteen to become a forensic anthropologist and she travels to places like Central America to dig up the victims of Guatemala's war. Then she moves to England and then America, and tries to assimilate into the host land and adopts "a Western attitude to her work and life" (217). Her view of her native country is that of an outsider. She knows the tragic incidents of her country by reading documents and news reports, and interprets "Sri Lanka with a long distance gaze" (Ondaatje 7). In such a way, she acquires "a diasporic identity due to her

nomadism. She was a transnational facing cultural and social displacement and embodied a privileged immigrant who was content with her lifestyle in the west" (Krishnan 218). As a transnational diaspora and cosmopolitan traveler, her works give her a global status. Krishnan further says:

> Anil is a visiting migrant, a xenocentric, who returns to her native homeland purely for professional reasons. Her diasporic experience reflects her collective experiences, and multiple journeys and her exploration of her Self and her community is reflective of Ondaatje's own self-discovery" (218).

In fact, the privilege of her mobility marks her as a cosmopolitan traveler in the postcolonial world of what Arjun Appadurai calls the "global modern" (21). Diaspora as a global traveler becomes the witness of global power.

The geopolitical border of a country is open for transnational diaspora. The textual evidence shows it clearly that Anil was born in Sri Lanka, now settles in America but travels "with a British passport" (Ondaatje 12) with "the light blue UN bar" (5). Does her visit to Sri Lanka have the same tragic effects on her life as it has on Sarath's life? Certainly not. After all, Sarath cannot escape his torturers and killers, while Anil is able to flee from Sri Lanka's bloody theatre of war because of the privilege of her mobility and transnational diasporic identity. In Bijay Mishra's division of diaspora, Anil falls in the category of "the new diaspora of the late capital (the diaspora of the border)" because her "overriding characteristic is one of mobility" ("Diasporic" 446). She is different from "old (exclusive)" diasporas because she has nomadic identity, not limited "in the colonies" (447). Such a diaspora is dynamic and has crosscurrent and transnational relationship with the non-diasporic people. In *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje demonstrates Anil's "hypermobility" (449) because she is

flexible, fluid and transnational; and is the postcolonial diaspora of voluntary movement different from pre-colonial or colonial forced diasporas.

The transnational diasporas have dialectical relationship and cultural crosscurrent with non-diasporic or native people. The narrative of *Anil's Ghost* informs us that there is ideological difference between Anil as an outsider and Sarath as an insider. Anil has looked at "Sri Lanka with long distance gaze" (Ondaatje 7). Her Western education, diasporic identity and status at the UN create conflict with the non-diasporas. On the one hand, she has emotional attachment toward her native land. On the other hand, she has professional responsibility as a UN representative. In such a complex situation, she is caught between her personal emotion and professional duties. Anil's position in Sri Lanka is "in the antagonistic in-between" (Bhabha, *Location* 225) location of the postcolonial consciousness. This ideological crosscurrent between her professional motives and homeland realities is visible in *Anil's Ghost* when the finding of her investigation i.e. the skeleton of 'Sailor' is lost. Ondaatje demonstrates this scene clearly in the conversation between Anil and Sarath:

> 'The skeleton I could have proved something with has been confiscated'.
>
> 'We seem to have too many bodies around. Is this one less important than the confiscated one?'
>
> 'Of course not. But the confiscated one died less than five years ago.'
>
> 'Confiscated. Confiscated . . .Who confiscated it? Sarath said.
>
> 'It was taken while I met with Dr Perera in Kynsey Road Hospital. It was lost there.'
>
> 'So you lost it, then. It was not confiscated. . . .
>
> 'So you misplaced it.'. . .
>
> 'I don't know.' . . .

> Mr Diyasena, I'd like to remain you that I came here as part of a human rights group. As a forensic specialist. I do not work for you. I'm not hired by you. I work for an international authority'. . . .
>
> 'This international authority has been invited here by the government has it not? Is that not right?'
>
> 'We are an independent organization. We make independent reports'. (271)

This political dispute as a crosscurrent between diasporic and non-diasporic forensic anthropologists presents their ideological difference. Anil as an outsider intends to globalize the truth of the murders and disappearances whereas Sarath as an insider wants to limit it within his country. Perhaps, Sarath thinks that the revealed truth may create more violence in the country.

Anil, the transnational diaspora in Ondaatje's narrative, engages in search of the truth of political violence in the South Asian island with the help of non-diasporic people such as Sarath, Palipana, Ananda and Gamini. She is a truth-seeker. She uses her foreign empirical knowledge and finds that the indiscriminate murders and disappearances of the innocent people are from government level. This shows that diasporas are bold to take any risk for creating the new history, culture and politics. However, the government appointed officials may become obstruction to internationalize the truth of their government's weaknesses. To report the atrocity of Sri Lankan government to her transnational institution, Anil requires evidences. But her evidences are confiscated by the non-diasporic people. Thus, the researcher here concludes that though the transnational character created by the writer is unable to present her report with evidences, she is able to find out the truth. It is a technique and strategy of transnational writer, Michael Ondaatje, to fuse the protagonist of his narrative within himself and globalize the historical, political or cultural truths

through his narrative art. It means that Ondaatje himself is a powerful South Asian transnational diasporic writer whose narrative, *Anil's Ghost*, is an evidence, report or document not only to expose the truth to global readers but also to present at the Centre for Human Rights Organization in Geneva.

Ondaatje's Protagonist: Instrument of Human Capital in *Anil's Ghost*

Diasporic writers consider diasporas as human capital. Human capital means skilled human resources. Diasporic writers emphasize on human qualifications, skills, talents, experiences and dynamism. In this postcolonial and globalized world, human capital is more productive and valuable than other capitals because it is human capital that generates other capitals and resources such as economic development, social security, health and education systems, etc. In pre-colonial and colonial periods, the imperialists or colonialists considered land and money as their main capital. That world was the feudal world. Even now, the developing countries are afraid of losing their qualified labor and stand against the 'brain drain'. However, recently, the situation has been changed. They get the benefit from the migrants who possess skills and knowledge. In the world, human resources precede all other resources. In Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, the protagonist character, Anil is an instrument of human capital. She is a high-skilled worker. Due to her skill, talent and experience, she is "chosen as Geneva organization's forensic specialist" (Ondaatje 12). Her skill is as valuable in homeland as in the host land. As a transnational diaspora, Anil transfers knowledge and skill, and bridges the gap between East and West or developing and developed countries.

Since the United States and the United Kingdom first opened their doors to skilled workers and students, they have been accused of tempting the best and the brightest people to the West. The developing countries termed this process 'brain drain'. However, the scenario has been changed now because of the migrants' contributions to both West and non-West. In this regard, a transnational diasporic critic, Anjali Sahay maintains:

> In recent decades, the discourse on brain drain has shifted to . . . 'brain gain,' it primarily looks at contributions (both monetary and knowledge) that 'Western trained knowledge workers' can make to their home countries. Increasing importance of networks as well as monetary benefits have led to many conceptual and empirical developments in the study of international migration of the highly skilled. Other stylized terms such as 'brain exchange' and 'brain circulation' have also come to the fore. Here the former refers to no net loss or gain of human capital, but movement between areas, and the latter to the circulating immigrants who would bring back valuable experience and knowhow to their local economies. This positive aspect of brain drain thus ushers in a sense of hope: both for the diaspora members in their countries of settlement and for their home countries. (vii-viii)

Sahay's idea indicates that in the recent time, the previous brain drain discourse has changed into brain gain because the First World countries like the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, etc. have trained the people of the Third World as a skilled human capital and the skilled human resources are benefit for both developed and developing countries e.g. the South Asian. In Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, the protagonist character Anil is such a human capital who was born in Sri Lanka, studies in the UK and USA

and works for the United Nations. She plays a significant role in bridging her country origin and the country of settlement.

Human capital also refers to cultural capital. Anil as a US-trained skilled immigrant and a member of transnational community in the United States, returns to her native land, Sri Lanka to fulfil her professional duty. She indirectly imparts information flows and provides linguistic and culture knowhow and then presents her western knowledge that help to promote native people. Her behavior, way of life, culture, knowledge, skill and courage influence the native people like Sarath, Palipana, Ananda and Gamili. In a part of narrative, when Anil investigates and finds the reality of condition and cause of the death of the Sailor, the native people are surprised by her continuous hard work and knowledge as the text narrates, "She could read Sailor's last action by knowing the wounds on bone. He puts his arms up over his face to protect himself from the blow. He is shot with a rifle, the bullet going through his arm, then into the neck. While he's on the ground, they come up and kill him" (61). The native people are impressed by her power of knowledge that she has received from the West. Besides, Anil clarifies the profession of the skeleton, "Sailor worked in a mine too. . . . I know this. This was my professor's area of specialty" (175-76). Understanding the power of her knowledge, the native people get hesitation from their training. According to Ondaatje, "They [natives] seemed nervous, even afraid" (10). This textual evidence shows that Ondaatje makes the diasporic people superior to the non-diasporic people and highlights the Western knowledge. He convinces his readers by such evidences.

Brainpower transcends national boundaries with transnational diasporas like Anil Tissera in Ondaatje's narrative. "The diasporas with high human capital make great contributions to their homelands not only production period but also in the

marketing period" (Durmaz and Kalka 100). The power of human capital is stronger and more valuable to develop socio-cultural factors of any countries than physical capital in the long term. Good education and health policies promote human capital, which are in miserable situation in the developing countries like the countries of South Asia, especially Sri Lanka due to civil war, poverty, etc. "Every side was killing and hiding the evidence. Every side. This is an unofficial war, no one wants to alienate the foreign powers" (Ondaatje 13). Consequently, people of developing countries migrate to the West. Anil does the same. She goes to the West for her education. She "won the scholarship to America" (21) after studying some years in the UK. Then, she "was chosen as the Geneva organization's forensic specialist" (12) to work as human capital in the different parts of the world. Anil, a South Asian woman, studies and settles in the West, works as a representative of the United Nations Human Rights section and creates transnational networks as a global visitor.

It is a policy of the West to welcome brainpower, and disseminate and globalize their ideas, cultures, politics and knowledge all over the world. The diasporic writers like Ondaatje argue that such a policy has two-way benefit. Both local and global or non-West and West have "brain exchange" (Sahay vii). Ondaatje claims in the novel that no developing country "wants to alienate the foreign powers" (Ondaatje 13). Recently, the West and the non-West focus on the highly skilled human resources rather than refugees and political asylum seekers because they find that the human capital offers great potential benefit for both sending and receiving countries of diaspora. Even the diaspora exports can help home countries without physically moving back to homeland. The sending countries use diaspora resources regarding the 'brain gain' scheme.

Anil's Diasporic Activism: Power of Investigating Historical, Political and Cultural Truth

In *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje's diasporic character, Anil Tissera engages in investigating historical, political and cultural truth. The writer once again takes his readers back to the South Asian island, the postcolonial Sri Lanka, one of the former British colonial political worlds in the past. In this island, there was civil war among the three groups: the government, the antigovernment insurgents and the separatist guerrillas. After the political violence, the International Centre for Human Rights of United Nations sends a consultant forensic anthropologist to investigate the truth of "unknown extrajudicial executions . . . committed by all sides" (Ondaatje 14). The US-trained United Nations consultant is Anil Tissera who is a thirty-three years old young Sri Lankan-born transnational woman. She had left her native land "fifteen years" (5) ago when she was eighteen. Settling in the West as a diaspora, she has "distinctive historical experiences" and "multiple travelling" (Brah 444) that empower her and make confidence in her activism. Now, she returns to her homeland not to live permanently but to work on "a seven-week project" (Ondaatje 12) as a Westernized outsider in the company of Sarath Diyasena, the Sri Lankan-government chosen archeologist from Colombo. But from the beginning of the narrative, Sarath has doubtful eye on Anil. He disregards and discourages her for finding the truth. After investigating the historical, political and cultural truth, she has to submit her report. The narrative of *Anil's Ghost* informs us that her job is risky and difficult because the three camps involve in the unofficial war "using weapons, propaganda, fear, sophisticated posters, censorship. Importing state-of-the-art weapons from the West, or manufacturing homemade weapons. . . . And no one can tell who the victims are" (13). Besides this difficulty, this Westernized transnational diaspora can no longer fluently speak her

mother tongue. Even in such a condition, her activism concentrates in pursuing the truth with full of Western knowledge, power, energy and strategy unbiasedly.

Anil's Ghost explores the buried historical, political and cultural truth of the South Asian country, Sri Lanka. It unearths the truth with the help of transnational diaspora protagonist who has a return journey to mourn the death of humanity. One of the diasporic critics, Vijay Mishra says, "Diasporas of the border [new diasporas] in these Western democracies are visible presences" ("Diasporic" 448) because of their mobility. They "can now connect with the politics of homeland even as they live elsewhere" (449). This theory is quite applicable in Anil's life because she is such a mobile/new diaspora who makes "multiple journeys" (Brah 180) not only in her country of birth but in the other parts of the globe by involving professionally in transnational institution. In *Anil's Ghost,* for the diasporic protagonist, Anil, finding out the truth is like bringing back the lost and disappeared lives of the brutal war. She thinks that truth gives justice to the murdered, families and relatives. She wants to expose the political murder and give justice to the voiceless victims.

Anil's activism of digging out the skeletons, not only in the Banderawela cave, "a sacred historical site . . . constantly under government or police supervision" (48) but also in the other parts of the country symbolizes her digging out of the geographical, political and cultural history of the island. From the beginning of the narrative, we find full of blood, horror and injustice in every page of the novel. "Every side was killing and hiding the evidence . . . . A couple of years ago people just started disappearing. Or bodies kept being found burned beyond recognition" (13). When we read such types of incidents in the text, we find ourselves taking part in the daily struggle of the people to survive, to identify and do justice to the

innumerable dead in the conflict between ethnic groups and government. Before Anil's arrival in the country, this historical and political reality remains hidden.

In the course of the journey of the transnational diaspora, Anil, with the help of native archaeologist Sarath Diyasena, discovers many skeletons. One of them is of a recently murdered man at a government archeological site. They name it Sailor. Suspecting that the killing had a political motivation, she identifies the skeleton, "He was Ruwan Kumara and he had been a toddy tapper" (265). Due to her activism, she finds the truth using her knowledge of pathology, ontology, radiology as well as her anthropological studies to determine the skeleton's death, death and sex. She wants to do justice to such types of innumerable anonymous victims of the civil war. Anil presents her report to the local authorities, "military and police personnel trained in counter-insurgency methods" (268) in the Auditorium of the Arsenal in Colombo about the historical and political truth of the island. After presenting the report to the local government, she leaves the country as Sarath threatens for her safety. She finds the truth but cannot bring the evidence to report her "international authority" (271) due to the threat of the local authority. Disclosing of the historical, political and cultural truth of the anonymous victims may be the justice for the victims and their families.

Ondaatje informs us that there is cultural disparity between Western and Eastern values concerning the truth and reality. Westerners, represented by Anil, want to expose the truth whereas non-Westerners, like Sarath, hide it. Ondaatje exposes it through Anil's mouth, "I have to make a report and I need help . . . there is may be a political murder" (267). The local authorities think "her work good" (268) but they do not like to expose the truth. They give a reason that it is "unsafe" (268) and can "result in chaos" (272). Thus, her evidences are "confiscated" (271). In such a case,

the famous diasporic critic James Clifford's theory is hooked here, "But are diaspora cultures consistently antinationalist? What about their own aspirations?" ("Diasporas" 452). Taking his argument in consideration, one can ask a question: Is Anil, in Ondaatje's novel, antinationalist? This question problematizes the diasporic cultures and strikes to everyone.

Clifford solves the problem by claiming that diaspora cultures are not separatist though they may have separatist moments. The native and the foreign cultures are inseparable in diasporas. He argues:

> Whatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist. They are deployed in transnational networks build from multiple attachments, and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to, host countries and their norms. (452).

Clifford means that diasporas are transnational networks. They do not completely support the extreme nationalism. "There are, of course, antinationalist nationalisms" (452) in the diasporas. In this world of globalization, extreme nationalism or "oppressive national hegemony" (453) creates problem. Sri Lankan civil war is the result of extreme national feeling of the government and the insurgent groups. Thus, Anil is in the favor of "liberal state" (453). Diaspora culture is liberal, flexible and fluid. It connects global and local.

According to Clifford, "Diaspora cultures thus mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place" (453). Putting the diasporic protagonist of Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* in Cliffordian theoretical framework, Anil is a transnational network who mediates the local and global using her global knowledge in local while digging out the history,

politics and cultures. Such types of transnational cultures to Clifford are "antinationalist nationalisms" (452). It means that diasporas can be at once cosmopolitan and particularist, transnational and nationalist depending on the position. In this sense, Anil is antinationalist nationalist because on the one hand, she has affiliation with her ancestral homeland by her name and her childhood activities. Her connection to her native Sri Lankan culture comes from "the new sarong her parents sent her every Christmas" along with "news clippings of swim meets" (Ondaatje 6) as she had once won a swimming contest. On the other hand, Anil has settled in the West and worked as a transnational activist in the transnational organization and is against hiding the historical and political truth of her native land. In this sense, she is against the native anthropologist's ideology to mask the truth as Clifford' s definition of diaspora, "Diasporas are caught up and defined against (1) the norms of nation-states and (2) indigenous and especially autochthonous, claims by tribal people" ("Diaspora" 451). Though Anil cannot present her report with sufficient evidences due to the native people's way of masking the truth, this text *Anil's Ghost* has become itself an evidence to expose the political, historical and cultural reality of the country.

Revealing the reality to the global readers is possible only through the activism of the transnational diasporic character created by the diasporic writer, Michael Ondaatje. We can assume that if Ondaatje was not a transnational diasporic writer, a Westernized outsider, he could not bring the reality to the surface like Sarath Diyasena.

Illuminating the activism of diaspora, Ondaatje insists the power of global citizens like Anil who are the new models of human beings. In this regard, one of the diasporic critics James Clifford argues:

> "[D]iaspora can be useful in bringing something of this complexity into view. . . . when diasporic displacements, memories, networks, and reidentifications are recognized as integral to tribal, aboriginal, native survival and dynamism, a lived, historical landscape of ruptures and affiliations becomes more visible" (*Returns* 71-72).

Clifford considers diasporas as a new form of consciousness and connectivity because "diasporic consciousness 'makes the best of a bad situation'" ("Diaspora" 451). Like Clifford's argument, Anil in *Anil's Ghost* explores the best of the bad situation. Investigating the skeletons in the horrific land, Anil dares knowing that minorities can get the power and voice for their existence. She digs out the history, politics, culture and identity of the minority people and becomes able to record them in the mainline-history of the country though she is tempted into the traps of bureaucracy and corrupt officials. History, politics, culture and identity are not fixed. In this context, Stuart Hall's notion is crucial in this novel, "Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialzed past, they [identities] are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" ("Cultural" 112). In the novel, the reconstruction of the statue of Buddha, which was dismantled by armed forces, symbolically refers to the reconstruction of the culture of the past.

The history of downtrodden and minority people, which was destroyed by the political civil war, is being reconstructed. The unheard history of the subaltern, minority and oppressed people is recovered through the medium of art. When Anil moves to the USA, she does not really miss her roots, rather she "had read documents

and news reports, full of tragedy, and she had now lived abroad long enough to interpret Sri Lanka with a long distance gaze" (Ondaatje 7). Indeed, the fifteen year-distance makes her conscious about the pursuit of truth, history and memory. Ondaatje, by creating a bold transnational diasporic character, presents the opportunity to the Sri Lankan people to understand their hidden and suppressed history, politics and cultural root through the literary artifact. Besides, Ondaatje claims that the transnational diasporas like Anil Tissera, who are trained by the West, are unbiased and independent investigators as Anil says, "Mr Diyasena, I'd like to remind you that I came here as part of a human rights group. As a forensic specialist, I do not work for you; I'm not hired by you. I work for an international authority . . . . We are an independent organization. We make independent reports" (271). Anil is outsider in her own country of birth. Her memory after unearthing the history, culture and politics of the South Asian island is more remarkable in her future life for her transnational diasporic activism because Anil's activism does not confine within her native land. She does not intend to deal with such problems only in Sri Lanka. Her scope and target is larger or preciously global.

Ondaatje creates the forensic anthropologist, Anil as a transnational diasporic character to unearth the Sri Lankan history, politics and culture. He fills the fuel-power in her with the Western knowledge and experience of the transnational human rights organization. Her main texts to study the history, politics and culture are bones and other artifacts such as stones and inscriptions, which tell the stories of the history. We can assume that if Ondaatje did not create the diasporic character, the hidden and unheard history, politics and culture of one of the South Asian countries would be unidentified and unexposed even now.

Anil as Antithesis of Subaltern Diasporic Activist

Through the close analysis of Ondaatje's postcolonial diasporic narrative *Anil's Ghost*, this part of dissertation portrays Anil as an antithesis of subaltern activist. Subalterns are colonized subjects who are socially, politically and geographically outside the hierarchy of mainstream power and the relationship between subaltern and elite is like the relationship between master and slave. In diasporic discourse, diasporas are subalterns. Similarly, in gender studies, females are subalterns. The members of Subaltern Studies Group, a group of South Asian scholars, including Ranajit Guha and Gayatry Chakravoarty Spivak borrow the term 'subaltern' from Italian Marxist critic Antonio Gramsci. They "set out to produce a non-elite history of modern India which would express the 'politics of people' i.e., the politics of the subaltern/people of inferior position rather than the viewpoint of the Raj, or the Indian bourgeoisie who took over from the British after independence in 1947" (Lane 489). Spivak addresses the subalterns from feminist approach in her key theoretical text and central document of postcolonial studies "Can Subaltern Speak?" and clearly says that "the subaltern cannot speak" (524). She admits that female is subaltern in traditional gender role whose own voices are silenced, denied and expelled. The ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant, so the female as subaltern has no history and cannot speak.

In contrast to Spivak's argument, the researcher locates that the central character of Ondaatje's*Anil's Ghost*, Anil Tissera, a South Asian woman, transgresses the ideological construction of gender and presents her the antithesis of Spivak's subaltern woman. Even though Anil is a female, her westernized diasporic activism, adopted masculine name "the one she'd bought from her brother" (Ondaatje 132) and her role and responsibility as spokesperson for the United Nations Human Rights,

challenge Spivak's notion of subalternity. Spivak claims, "If, in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" ("Can" 524). From a postcolonial diasporic perspective, the voice of Ondaatje's female protagonist does not only break the silence imposed by imperialist/colonialist/male discourse but also speaks loudly for those silenced by Sri Lankan civil war. Ondaatje speaks the power of transnational diaspora through Anil who incorporates the positions of colonized and colonizer, and supports humanism with "visible presences" (Mishra, "Diasporic" 448). It means that she is neither colonizer nor colonized but transnational, because she is a woman born into a South Asian or Eastern culture and empowered with Western ideologies. Her identity is interwoven, multicultural and complex. Her activity exceeds white patriarchal hegemony as she gives voice to the subaltern. In *Anil's Ghost*, Anil makes speak to the victims, "One victim can speak for many victims" (272). She breaks the silence imposed by the Sri Lankan authority and reveals the unheard truth of the country. In short, Anil blurs the boundaries of traditional gender role in her construction of character. Equally, she crosses the geographical and cultural boundaries in her construction of transnational diasporic identity.

In the process of getting power and freedom, Anil denies the position of Spivak's gendered subaltern by rejecting the imposed cultural identity and diasporic domination. She distorts the Western hegemonic tradition to the East by exceeding the Western males and constructing both male and female traits as Ondaatje's narrator says that she loves "being one of the boys" (143). In this sense, she is transnational in nature. Then, she admires women who are "better at dealing with calamity in professional work than men. . . . Women doctors were more confident in chaos and accident, calmer in dealing with the fresh corpse of an old woman, a young beautiful

man, small children" (137). Besides, she confesses that she did not like only male's name before she was thirteen but she also liked her father's profession. Her father, Nelson K. Tissera was a doctor. This proves that Anil's behavior is predominantly masculine. Moreover, Anil in Sri Lanka mostly finds herself working in a man's world.

The central character of Ondaatje's novel, Anil Tissera, a female forensic pathologist demonstrates her transnational diasporic power and identifies herself as "the antithesis of Gayatri Spivak's 'subaltern woman'" (Cook 7) by her vigorous action and risky job. She expresses her experience, "Forensic work during a political crisis was notorious" (Ondaatje 24) as she involves in investigating the skeletons of the subaltern victims in the "government-protected zone" (17) like Ruwan Kumara who "had been a toddy tapper" and "worked in a local mine" (265). Though she is a diaspora, a female and an Easterner, the textual evidences present us that she is not subaltern. By transgressing all the traits of subalternity, she presents herself as an intellectual, bold and humanist. According to Victoria Cook, "[S]he does indeed cross and re-cross many ideological boundaries" (7) by using her transnational thinking that has changing mixture of a variety of cultures that she has encountered.

Ondaatje in *Anil's Ghost* has presented his female protagonist character as a transnational diasporic activist who opposes herself as a subaltern woman. As a new diaspora, she transgresses the established notion of Spivak's subalternity and Western concept of Orientalism. Ondaatje communicates to the global and local readers that the politics of diasporic people is to get power, knowledge and freedom by crossing cultural or geographical borders. He foregrounds the US-trained non-western female's activism by which she becomes able to find the unknown skeletons like 'Sailor', the representative of all those lost voices in the brutal Sri Lankan civil war. By using her

Western knowledge and experience, she does not only speak herself but also makes the voiceless speak loudly by digging out the truth.

Conclusion: Diaspora Dynamics

The female protagonist of Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* falls in the class of new diaspora who encompasses the quality of dynamism. New diasporas move from one place to another not by obligation but by motivated desire and pride. The identity and culture of diasporas are constructed and reconstructed, and when the diasporic subjects travel, so does their identity and culture. The new diasporas such as Anil Tessera are mobile, transnational and conscious. Diaspora consciousness is produced both negatively and positively; negatively by experiences of discrimination, loss, marginality and exclusion, positively by identification with world historical, cultural and political forces. The journeys of the new and positive diasporas are historicized. Anil possesses the second one because her journeys whether to Europe, America, Africa or South Asia have historical, political and cultural values.

Working for the Human Rights Organization at United Nations, the Sri Lankan-born Anil Tissera creates a connectivity that develops cross-border or trans-border relationship. Buying her brother's unused second name with one hundred saved rupees, she adopts male power and shows manly nature in actions. Perhaps, due to her confidence in actions assigned to her, the transnational organization gives her responsibility as spokesperson and sends her to the war-torn nations like Guatemala, Congo, Sri Lanka, etc. to unearth the truth and historicize the unhistoricized history, politics and culture. Ondaatje appreciates the power and knowledge of Westernized new diaspora who challenges the concept of old, colonial or forceful diaspora. The textual evidence presents us that Anil, as a new diaspora is human capital who shares her knowledge not only in her homeland but also in the host country. In the novel, we

find that her brainpower transcends national boundaries. Due to her multiple travelling, activism and engagement in digging out the truth, brainpower, and transcendental in nature, she unbiasedly works for the sake of humanism. Anil as a global visitor absorbs and contains both local and global concerns at once and the same time. She breaks the traditional gender role imposed by imperial domination, the notions of ancient diaspora and Spivak's subaltern woman. Moreover, she breaks the silence enforced by Sri Lankan authority by constructing new history in the island. Having such dynamically active, forceful and energizing qualities, Ondaatje's protagonist in the narrative of *Anil's Ghost* takes the ownership of diaspora dynamism.

Chapter V

DIASPORIC LIMINALITY: HAMID'S *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST* AS A POSTCOLONIAL POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Preview

This section of dissertation examines the diasporic liminality in the South Asian Muslim diasporas who are gazed differently by the West before and after the tragic incident on September 11, 2001 (thereafter it refers to 9/11) by analyzing Mohsin Hamid's postcolonial political narrative *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). Diasporic liminality indicates the consciousness of the dislocated subjects who wave between two worlds or cross the threshold or many national frontiers. It discusses Hamid's narrative as a postcolonial political discourse that responds to the Americanism and addresses the relation between Islamic diaspora and the West. This chapter mainly inquires: How does the West gaze diasporas like Changez, before and

after the 9/11 attacks? What is the counter response of Muslim Westernized diasporas, and how is it different from religious fundamentalists? Are the diasporas like Hamid's protagonist not trapped between religious fundamentalism and Western domineering foreign policies? Certainly, the 9/11 event is a turning point in the history of the relationship between East and West. The West portrays the East, especially Muslims as potential terrorists and a threat to America and values of Western civilization. It presents that Muslim diasporas are useful to strengthen American capitalism. Exclusion of the Third World migrant communities may weaken the soul of multicultural America. Mohasin Hamid (b. 1971), one of the renowned Pakistani diasporic writers deals with the image of South Asian diasporas in America.

This study emphasizes the liminality of the Western-trained diasporic characters like Changez who convey the warning message that the harshtreatment of the West on the East, especially on Muslim world, forces the ordinary people to turn into fundamentalists. Hamid's protagonist recounts his diasporic experiences in the form of dramatic monologue. Finally, the segment of research concludes that the West should not treat diasporic and non-diasporic people equally by their stereotypical conception. Thediasporas whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims are the lover of not only their countries of origin but also the countries of settlement. They are conscious and responsible people for the both worlds.

Introduction: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a Post-9/11 Political Narrative

Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, a postcolonial political novel, narrativizes the experiences of South Asian diasporic characters like protagonist Changez, before and after the 9/11 events and the impact of the events on the South Asian diasporas, especially Muslims. It explores several issues related to the relationship between the West and the South Asia in the context of the politicized climate. The novel is a

political narrative in which the Pakistani-born diasporic novelist, Mohasin Hamid narrates the postcolonial situation of the South Asia and the West, and reflects the real political reality in fictional form. Literature is a powerful tool to present political reality. In this sense, Edward Said in his *Orientalism* says, "Too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent . . . that society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together" (27). It shows that the postcolonial texts reveal the history and politics of former colonized countries like Pakistan, Indian and some other South Asian countries. Said informs that in addition to serving as agents of resistance, postcolonial texts serve to restructure positions of power placing local experience, culture and politics at the center. How the Third World people, especially South Asian get consciousness after decolonization and what experience and response their diasporas have in the postcolonial political world are some other issues of these research. To analyze these issues, the researcher of this dissertation has taken theoretical frameworks as methodological tools from Edward Said's notion of orientalism, Homi K. Bhabha's liminal third space, cultural diversity and difference, Stuart Hall's identity and diaspora, and Paul Gilroy's double consciousness borrowed from W. E. B. Du Bois. The researcher has also hooked some insights from James Clifford's notion of antinationalist nationalism and from other related diasporic critics' ideas, wherever their concepts have been useful for the analysis of the text.

Hamid as a South Asian postcolonial diasporic writer, a writer from formerly colonized country i.e. Pakistan, deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies of postcolonial state, which has often been used by "historians, economists and political theorists as a synonym for 'post-independent state'" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key* 193). Americans' attitude to Muslims after 9/11 incident reminds us

the treatment of British with Indians. Changez the protagonist of the novel *TheReluctant Fundamentalist*depicted as postcolonial subject represents the state of the Muslims, colonized by Europeans. Hamid uses postcolonial approach to show the power relations between Western and non-Western people in his frame narrative *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by creating a Pakistani narrator, Changez and an unnamed American interlocutor. A frame narrative is a literary technique in which a story is set within a story. "The framing device is the means of doing so, the fictional explanation of how a narrative has been discovered or recorded" (Mullan 31). This study encircles the outer incidents that happen to the South Asian and Western characters and their inner or psychological reactions and responses to the political situations. Hamid's narrative is about Pakistani perception of the tragic events of 9/11 as presented through a Pakistani professional, Changez who has worked in America during the time of historical 9/11 events. The story takes a unique form, i.e. dramatic monologue, "which Hamid has described as a 'one-man-play', performed by the erudite, Anglophone Pakistani, Changez, to a silent American listener" (Clements 71). Changez speaks directly to "you" (Hamid 1), an unidentified American who is silent, voiceless. In reality, the person whom Changez addresses is himself. He and his listener are the two broken selves of his personality in the dialogue. It seems that Hamid, by using monologue, fills power and freedom with Western knowledge in his diasporic protagonist who hegemonizes the supposedly dominant American and makes him silence entirely in the narrative.

Written in first person narrative, Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* tells the story of the real condition of Pakistani diasporas in the US. It is a realistic narrative as Madeline Clements says, "The transnational Pakistani novelist Mohasin Hamid recently observed that his fiction has what might be called a realistic narrative

– there is no magic, no aliens – but the frame" (60). Set in Lahore, but predominantly reflecting upon the protagonist's past in New York, Greece, Manila and Chile, the novel unties the effects of the growing distrust between the Western and the non-Western world. The narrative unfolds both a personal and political accounts of the Pakistani protagonist, Changez who addresses the American stranger the story of his life over a meal at a café in the Old Anarkali district, Lahore. The novel starts with an unexpected meeting between Changez and the mysterious anonymous American who seems "to be on a mission" (Hamid 1). Changez offers him his assistance, "Excuse me sir, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not frighten by my beard: I am a lover of America" (1) However, the stranger feels little uncomfortable in such a situation. After some initial talk, Changez begins to narrate his experience in America to the stranger. He narrates each and every incident of his life to him. Changez tells the American that he is an excellent student, A-grader, who, after completing his bachelor's degree from Princeton University in Finance, joins a prestigious company named Underwood Samson (US) as valuation transnational analyst. Underwood Samson stands for global corporate power in contrast to local enterprises. It symbolizes the power of the US, optimism, perfect meritocracy that feeds its employees a version of the American Dream. The US employees have opportunity to travel around the world. After graduating from Princeton University, Changez goes to Greece with his friends for his business tour where he meets Erica, a Princeton alumnus and aspiring writer who belongs to New York elite class. He instantly falls in love with her but he feels unanswered because she is still grieving over the death of her childhood sweetheart Chris who died of lung cancer. After a date, they return to his place and proceed to make physical relationship. However, her emotional attachment to Chris prevents her from becoming aroused. Then, to ensure

her desire for him, Changez directs Erica to pretend that he is Chris while they make love, "I was Chris and she was with Chris, and we made love with a physical intimacy that Erica and I had never enjoyed" (105). Her reason for attraction toward Changez is she finds Chris in Chagez and nothing more. Soon she admits in a mental hospital for her treatment. During that time, he travels to Chile on an assignment. When he returns to meet her, it is found that she has left the hospital and her clothes are found near the Hudson River. Officially, she is stated as a missing person, as her body has not been found.

Professionally, Changez impresses his peers and gets praised by his superiors for his work, especially his boss Jim, who recruited him. Due to his skill and hard work, the firm reaches at the apex of American business. So, the firm sends him to Manila of Philippines and other countries. When Changez is in Manila, he is surprised by his own reaction to the terrorist attacks of 9/11:

> The following evening was supposed to be our last in Manila. I was in my room, packing my things. I turned on the television and saw what at first I took to be a film. But as I continued to watch, I realized that it was not fiction but news. I stared as one—and then the other—of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center collapsed. And then I 'smiled'. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased. (72)

After the apocalyptic events, all the foreigners become the objects of suspicion. Young American Muslims especially immigrants are the targets of suspicion after 9/11 attacks. Actually, the war on terror is waged primarily against immigrants. "Pakistani cab drivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] was raiding mosques, shops and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention center for

questioning or worse" (94). He observes the air of suspicion towards Pakistanis. Due to his privileged position in society, he is not among those detained or otherwise abused, but he notices a change of the Westerners' treatment in public. Noticing the US response to this situation, Changez, "lover of America" (1) moves back to Lahore.

After returning to Lahore, he becomes "a university lecturer" (181) of Finance at the local place. His Western experience, knowledge and insight in world issues gain his admiration among students. As a result, he becomes a mentor to large groups of students and public on various issues such as "from drug rehabilitation and family planning to prisoners' rights and shelters for battered spouses" (180). He and his students actively participate in demonstrations against American foreign policies that are harmful to the sovereignty of Pakistan. Changez advocates "nonviolence" (181), but a relatively unknown student gets arrested for an assassination attempt on an American representative, which brings the public eye on Changez. In a widely televised interview, he strongly criticizes the militarism of the US foreign policy as well as Pakistani extremism. This act makes people surrounding him think that someone might be sent to intimidate him or destroy him.

As they sit in the cafe, Changez keeps noting that the American stranger is very nervous of their surroundings that he is in possession of a sophisticated satellite phone on which he is repeatedly messaging, and that under his clothing there is a "bulge" (138) which might be a gun. Changez walks the stranger toward his hotel. As they walk, the American, now highly suspicious that he is in immediate danger, reaches into his pocket, possibly for a gun. Changez says that he trusts it is simply his holder of "business cards" (184). But the novel ends without revealing what is in his pocket, leaving the reader to wonder if the stranger is a CIA agent, possibly there to

kill Changez, or if Changez, in conspiracy with the waiter from the cafe, has planned all along to do harm to the American.

At the end of the novel, when distrust seems to grow between Changez and his listener, Changez asserts repeatedly that he will not harm him because he says "I am believer in non-violence: the spilling of blood is abhorrent to me, save in self-defense" (181). From the very beginning to the end of the narrative, because of the tense politicized atmosphere between the American and Changez, the reader expects Changez to move towards fundamentalism. Nevertheless, the writer informs that real fundamentalism is that of American capitalism which is practiced by the employers of Underwood Sampson, whose motto is to "focus on fundamentals. This was Underwood Sampson's guiding principle, drilled into us since our first day at work." (98). Here, the Pakistani diasporic writer reverses the stereotypical concept of fundamentalism. In this setting, a postcolonial diasporic critic, Geoffrey Nash, in his *Writing Muslim Identity* (2011) argues:

> The terms 'fundamentalism' and 'fundamentalist' are applied in the novel neither toPakistan, Islam, nor any Muslim individual or group. Instead, Changez associates fundamentalism with the most astringent form of American business practice, embodied in the ideals and practice he picks up working for Underwood Samson. (110)

This remark suggests that the real fundamentalism is the harsh American business policy or American capitalism that has global influence and domination not only on business or finance but also on American supremacy of politics and cultures. In other words, America's fundamentalist ideology is in the guise of global capitalism.

Hamid's protagonist lives a grand life in New York working for an elite company. He enjoys with prosperity there. He is proud to be "the product of an

American University . . . earning a lucrative American salary . . . infatuate with an American woman" (73) named Erica. So, he is "not at war with America" (73). Though the tragedy of 9/11 takes place, "Nothing troubled me, I was a young New Yorker with the city at my feet" (45). As a South Asian diaspora, the assessments of Changez about America are of loyalty and support because he believes that America offers a wide range of opportunities in education and profession. He is faithful toward America from the beginning to the end of the narrative. In the beginning, he says, "This is a dream come true" (3) when he is a student at Princeton. "Princeton inspired me the feeling that my life was a film in which I was the star and everything was possible" (3). Also, at the end of the narrative, even after the 9/11 attacks, he still loves America. He speaks with the American fellow, "We call each other comrades" (181) and further persuades him that "you should not imagine that we Pakistanis are all potential terrorists, just as we should not imagine that you Americans are all undercover assassins" (183). It shows that diasporas, the lovers of both the host and homelands, reveal their position as Changez says, "I lacked a stable core. I was not certain where I belonged – in New York, in Lahore, in both, in neither" (148). This is the real positionality of every diaspora. Changez's identity is fragile. He is in love with Am(Erica). Erica for him becomes America.

Changez is promising young man of Pakistani origin obsessed with loving (Am)Erica. He believes America and Erica to be everything to him but he finds America too narrow for him because neither Erica owns him nor America accepts him. He loves America in the same way as Erica loves Chris(t). Her nostalgia for Chris reflects the American post-9/11 nostalgia, and her grief for Chris reflects a sense of complex national grief for what and who was lost in the 9/11 attacks. Change(z), the Pakistani diaspora is a lover of both, his homeland as well as

Am(Erica). Changez, phonetically resembles 'changes' that decodes camouflage or "chameleon-like Changez" (Clements 27) personality. Hamid expresses his motto in the novel, "Time only moves in one direction. . . . Things always change" (96). Then he clarifies his motto that the Westerners "try to resist change. Power comes from becoming change" (97). In addition, the diasporic hero of Hamid's narrative does not only change himself like chameleon but he is also a changer of others. Transformation is the inevitable characteristic of diasporas as Bhabha claims, "their transformational power depends upon their being historically displaced" (*The Location* 213). Diasporas cannot exist without change. They are bound to transform themselves culturally and politically in the place of settlement, and they are also the agents of change of the history of the nations.

Concisely, diasporic identity is constructed, fluid and changeable. Diasporas have power of observing here and there, inside and outside. While living in Lahore, Changez is nostalgic for America and Erica. He is obsessed with American life and Western ideals. Thus, the writer informs the readers that America need not force South Asian diasporas and ordinary Pakistani Muslims to be fundamentalists by discriminatory treatment. Thus, the narrative of Mohasin Hamid articulates the post-9/11 politics of misrepresentation on South Asian diasporas. The politics of West and their gaze on South Asian diasporas before 9/11 is one but after this events, they have another. The conclusion is that they have to change their political gaze on South Asians and South Asian ordinary Muslims. Moreover, they should welcome the South Asian diasporas because the diasporas are the souls of American multiculturalism.

Fundamentalism: Western Capitalist Guiding Ideology

Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* depicts the narrative of an ordinary Muslim with different political and religious perspectives. By exploiting the dramatic

monologue technique, Hamid creates the Third World fictional protagonist, Changaz, a non-American highly educated US-trained diaspora who is different from those other Islamic extremists who attack on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon, and demolish the Twin Towers to the ground on September 11, 2001. The textual data proves this difference as Changez persuades his American interlocutor, "I can assure you that I am a believer in non-violence; the spilling of blood is abhorrent to me, save in self-defense. . . . I am no ally of killers; I am simply a university lecturer, nothing more nor less" (Hamid 181). This creates "ambivalence between origin and displacement" (Bhabha, *Location* 158) in the Western stereotypical concept of Islam. Hamid's narrative arouses the readers and compels them to think twice in such an ambiguity.

The title, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, makes the reader wonder what fundamentalism is, and who the reluctant fundamentalist of the title is. Is Changez transformed from a market analyst in prestigious Underwood Samson into an Islamic fundamentalist in Lahore? Is Changez's silent interlocutor, the American citizen, a fundamentalist who plans to murder the so-called anti-American Pakistani lecturer? At the end of the novel, it also remains mystery whether Changez's silent listener is reaching for a business card or his potentially harmful weapon. "But why are you reaching into your jacket, sir? I detect a glint of metal . . . I trust it is from the holder of your business cards" (Hamid 184). In the beginning of the narrative, Changez expresses his love for America. At the end, he trusts the American that the things inside his jacket are business cards but not guns though he notices a flash of metal. After a close reading of the novel, we cannot find Changez's loyalty and support to any religion. It is a falsehood to think that he undergoes from a market analyst into a

religious fundamentalist. He has no religious passion and never declares to have any sympathy for Islamic fundamentalists throughout the novel.

Hamid as a postcolonial writer throws the Western weapon of fundamentalism toward the West. The West has prototypical concept about the East as Erica's father comments, "I like Pakistanis. But the elite has raped that place well and good, right? And fundamentalism. You guys have got some serious problems with fundamentalism" (55). Hamid uses the term every time in his narrative pointing to the Underwood Samson as a perfect representation of America's political and economic global domination. Hamid's non-American protagonist is trained in America from the first day of his service by the administrative norm of, "'Focus on the fundamentals'. This was Underwood Samson's guiding principle, drilled into us since our first day at work. It mandated a single-minded attention to financial detail, teasing out the true nature of those drivers that determine an assert's value" (98). Changez is often advised by his instructors in Underwood Samson to pay attention to the 'fundamentals' by which it is meant the finance of the company that he is asked to evaluate This fact indicates that the real fundamentalism is that of American capitalism represented by Underwood Samson, abbreviated US as United States. When Changez begins to work for Underwood Samson, he is overwhelmed by the company's impressive, high-rise office in midtown Manhattan, "On that day, I did not think of myself as a Pakistani, but as an Underwood Samson trainee, and my firm's impressive offices made me proud" (34). Here, the Pakistani diaspora's metamorphosis into American e.g. the indication of 'my firms' demonstrates that he loves the host country more than his homeland. Changez's identity is changeable. His diversity in identity is theorized in the framework of Stuart Hall's theory, "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew,

through transformation and difference" ("Culturas" 120). It is the life of diaspora that inevitably transforms culturally, politically or geographically as Changez confesses, "Underwood Samson had the potential to transform my life" (Hamid 14) though he is still in touch with his origin and personal history.

In addition, the textual fact informs us that Underwood Samson is a capitalist firm in this twenty-first century of globalization. It promotes 'systematic pragmatism', 'professionalism' and 'maximum return' as its first priority as Hamid states through his diaspora's voice:

> It was a testament to the systematic pragmatism - call it professionalism - that underpins your country's success in so many fields. At Princeton, learning was imbued with an aura of creativity; at Underwood Samson, creativity was not excise . . . but it ceded its primacy to efficiency. Maximum return was the maxim to which we returned, time and again. We learned to prioritize . . . and then to apply ourselves single-mindedly to the achievement of that objective (36-37).

Underwood Samson whose basic guiding principle is summed up in the slogan "Focus on the fundamentals" (98) represents capitalist ideology in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Changez as an employee of the company becomes an economic fundamentalist in contrast to the religious fundamentalist.

Denoting to the American capitalism, this slogan refers to non-negotiable Americanism and can be interpreted as strongly indicative of the economic fundamentalism, which resides in the system of globalization. When Changez is inspired by Juan-Bautista, the manager of an unprofitable company in Chile, he perceives himself as "a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire" (152) to eradicate his own civilization thus, he turns dramatically. He realizes that

Underwood Samson has army-like constitution that represents the neo-colonial tendencies of American political aggression. Consequently, when he is in Manila and sees the collapse of "the twin towers of New York's World Trade Centre" (72) on 9/11, he smiles. However, this facial expression, according to Amir Riahi Nouri and Ali Salami, is "a kind of political revelation" (9) and anger toward American unnegotiable foreign policy but it is not shaped by his religious convictions because he admits that he is "a believer in non-violence" (Hamid 181) and is not the members of fundamentalist killers. The South Asian diasporas like Changez are not responsible for the act of Islamic terror.

When Changez returns homeland and becomes a lecturer at a local university of Lahore, he can be considered as a reluctant fundamentalist because he abandons the non-negotiable fundamental ideology of Underwood Samson or American capitalist guiding principle. Then he wears a full beard to show his political awakening and identity by which he can be different from Americans and help them with his identity as he reassures to his American listener whom he encounters in Lahore, Pakistan, "Do not be afraid by my beard: I am a lover of America . . . . I am both a native of this city and a speaker of your language" (1). Physically and linguistically, some Pakistanis like Changez are similar to Americans. Changez acts and speaks "more like an American" (65). They need to be different to show their identity. So, he asks to the American tourist, "How did I know you were American? No, not by the color of your skin; we have a range of complexion in the country, and yours occurs often among the people of our northwest frontier" (1). This textual data demonstrates that Changez needs to grow his beard as a mark of his Pakistani national identity but not of religious fundamentalism. Thus, he is doubly reluctant: firstly, reluctant to Islamic

religious fundamentalism and secondly, reluctant to American capitalism and its global unnegotiable supremacy.

Due to the above two reasons, Changez comprises multiple nations, identities and cultural politics. In the postcolonial diasporic critic James Clifford's term, Changez contains "antinationalist nationalisms" and "diasporic cultural politics" ("Diaspora" 452). Putting Hamid's narrative into Cliffordian framework, Changez's diasporic cultural politics is not separated from his past and present. Clifford further argues, "Whatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist" (452). Clifford's theory informs us that Changez is not exclusively Muslim extremist. Religiously, Changez is "secular, liberal, progressive man" and "anti-terror" (Clements 62), not extremist. He is not like other Muslim terrorists who involve in the attack of "the twin towers of New York's World Trade Centers" (Hamid 72) on 9/11 because he is a returnee diaspora and frequently tells, "I was not at war with America" (73). Islam in Hamid's narrative is much more a cultural identifier than a religious dogma because in every occasion of the narrative, he presents his protagonist as a critical secular humanist. Hamid presents no religious motivation and special bond to religion in Changez. However, he has anger toward American political foreign policy to diasporas after 9/11 because of the death of the diasporas' dream.

As a postcolonial political discourse, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* throws the Western stereotypical concept of 'fundamentalism' toward the West. Hamid suggests his readers that fundamentalism is the capitalist business pursuits and guiding ideology. The above analysis has proved that the diasporic protagonist, Changez of the narrative, on the one hand, takes pride in his heritage and culture; on the other hand, he is fully prepared to embrace Western culture as well. But he does not support

the merciless corporate America which is represented by Erica's depression, and also the negative side of Muslim fundamentalism which is represented by jihadist violence. He means that the corporate America must be stopped and the real America needs to be healed and brought back out of its depression. Similarly, the jihadist movement of Pakistani Muslims must be stopped and the real Pakistan needs to be established.

Diasporic Liminality: Changez's Double Consciousness and Power for Deconstructing Self and Other

Diasporic liminality, a psychological subject, refers to the transcultural space of diasporas in which the sensibility of diasporas involves in strategies to empower them and to produce new culture and identity making them difference "where difference is neither One nor the Other but something in-between" (Bhabha, *The Location* 313). Liminality is a conscious state, threshold, in-between space, a state of transition or border zone of diasporas which celebrates dynamic cultural change characterized by shifting identities. The postcolonial theorists, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, in their *Key Concept of Post-Colonial Studies* say, "The importance of liminal for post-colonial theory is precisely its usefulness for describing an in-between space in which cultural change may occur" (130). In postcolonial diasporic theory, liminality is the ambivalence condition of diasporas, "the ambivalence between origin and displacement" (Bhabha, *The Location* 157) that characterizes "the third space where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences" (312). For Bhabha, the liminality of diasporic experience is important because the multiple conditions in the liminal space are ambivalently enjoyed in the survival of diasporic life. In Bhabha's concept, liminality and hybridity of diasporic subjects go hand in hand. Regarding *The Reluctant*

Fundamentalist, Mohasin Hamid's diasporic central character Changez, the reluctant fundamentalist of the narrative, represents Bhabha's liminal third space who celebrates dynamic cultural change, and deserves the power of deconstructing self and other or West and East or colonizer and colonized.

Hamid's diasporic narrative, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, realistically draws upon the postcolonial political events of 9/11 and portrays the journey of a US-educated, ambitious, corporate star, conscious Pakistani diaspora Changez who begins to question his loyalty to his firm Underwood Samson, his newly acquired identity and his love for Am(Erica). In this regard, a postcolonial diasporic Muslim critic, Sundas Ali states:

> The journey of Changez, the hero in Mohasin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) offers a powerful account of identity dilemmas faced by many young Muslims today. With a qualification from Princeton University under his belt, Changez is the most prominent new employee at a New York firm. Yet the events of September 11, 2001 make him question all the allegiances which he had hitherto held onto so strongly: to America, the beacon of his educational and professional success, and to Pakistan, the country of his birth and upbringing as well as his religion and culture. (325)

The diasporic narrator looks retrospectively over his experiences in America and narrates his silent American tourist in Lahore, his hometown where he returns after 9/11. After this terrorist attack, the West constructs stereotypical concept of Islamophobia not only on the Islam of Arab and Al-Qaeda but also on all the Muslims including Pakistani diasporas like Changez. However, this concept encourages all the Muslims of the world to unite and lead racist attacks and activities at many different levels of society. Now, in this globalized world, due to the unity of Muslim world

"Islam represents not only a formidable competitor but also a latecoming challenge to Christianity" (Said, "Islam" 187). Said's point is that the more the West stereotypifies the Islam as terrorist, the more aggressive they become and cover the global news. The West has created the concept as not Islam verses Christianity but the West verses Islam. Such a type of political conflict between the East and the West is unfortunate to the whole humanism.

Hamid reverses the actual political hierarchy within the text where he gives voice to the Pakistani Muslim, Changez and makes the US listener silent. By reversing the power structures of the actual binary of the US and non-US and keeping them in a balance, Hamid also uses his national and religious affiliations to present a case of an enlightened and progressive Pakistan to his Western readers by creating a counter argument to the post 9/11 hegemonic Western discourse. When Changez and his silent US listener are ready to drink tea in a café of Old Anarkali Bazaar, Changez offers him to exchange the cup of tea in order to avoid suspicion and hostility between East and West, "Do not look so suspicious . . . it has not been poisoned . . . . Come, if it makes you more comfortable, let me switch my cup with yours" (Hamid 11). On many occasions in the novel, Changez draws attention of his silent American interlocutor expressing the Western gaze upon the East and the Eastern gaze upon the West. Here, though Hamid gives voice to the stereotypical 'other' i.e. Pakistani diaspora, he also reduces the voice of the 'other' and decenters them by using dramatic monologue in order to blur the binary opposition between stereotypical self/West and other/East. Hamid makes us read the novel from a third-world perspective giving the appropriate voice to the American, which functions as an ironic reversal of orientalist discourse.

Diasporas encompass a peculiar sensibility, a power of looking at oneself through different perspectives. They have experiences of here and there. The power of diasporas or subordinated groups that describes the internal conflict experienced by them is called double consciousness according to W. E. B. Du Bois. He claims, "The double consciousness which *The Souls of Black Folk* argues is the founding experience of blacks in the West is itself expressed in the double value of these songs which are both American and black" (qtd. in Gilroy 91). Hamid's diasporic narrator, Changez has the personal experience of his racism as well as foreignness. Du Bois refers to this double consciousness in a Negro slave who sees oneself through the eyes of others. It means that the black has twoness i.e. two souls, two thoughts or two ideals in one dark body. A diasporic critic, Paul Gilroy to characterize the diaspora's two identities and two cultural formations, borrows Du Bois's theory of double consciousness in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993). Changez as a diaspora embraces the two identities and cultures: ethnic and foreign, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. He is in "ambivalent or two-powered" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key* 13) situation. On the one hand, he, as a US-educated scholar, has the knowledge of Americanism, American superiority and ideal. On the other hand, he has his personal experience of being Pakistani diaspora in the US. In this sense, Changez is Bhabha's 'in-between space' or 'liminal third space'. The textual data proves it when Changez announces on the opening page of Hamid's narrative, "I am both a native of this city and a speaker of your language" (Hamid 1). Having double consciousness at once, Changez identifies himself as Pak-American simultaneously.

Changez offers unwanted support to the smartly dressed American when they come across in Lahore's famous Anarkali Bazaar, protesting and loving for America

despite his evidently anti-American appearance i.e. his beard, "Excuse me Sir, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened of my beard. I am a lover of America" (1). This expression ironically spoken by Changez to his American listener depicts his internal conflict that is created from the 'third space' or "the in-between space that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (Bhabha, *The Location*56). Such diaspora consciousness of Hamid's hero transforms him psychologically and socially into 'reluctant fundamentalist'. After 9/11 events, he possesses the double vision of understanding about the East and the West. He neither becomes complete fundamentalist supporting the Eastern values nor becomes Western/American capitalist supporting the fundamentalist "guiding principle" (Hamid 98) of Underwood Samson. He remains in the hybridized position in 'third space' from where he makes his strategies to empower him again more than before and to produce new cultures, politics or social values. Thus, the diasporas whether they are returnees or not, are always in this awakening position like Changez, containing the multicultural power and double consciousness.

Diasporas' double consciousness emerges from transnational travels. When the diasporas encounter with the new cultures they resist and tolerate them. The power of resistance and tolerance in diasporas awakens them to understand their actual position. Hamid's diasporic narrator has the same situation. What we see in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is that Changez is straddling a sort of contradictory ideological and identity position. He neither completely accepts the culture and ideology of ordinary Pakistanis being fundamentalist nor he is completely detached from it and assimilates with Western fundamentalism. He has a feeling of discomfort in his affiliation with Pakistani religious restriction and American hegemony/supremacy. The statement, "I am both a native of this city and a speaker of

your language" (Hamid 1) proves that Changez having Pakistani "beard" (1) but not American, and speaker of American English, but not Pakistani English, contains diaspora consciousness. He understands the false ideals of Americanism as well as the cold-blooded ideology of the Islamism. The foundation of Changez's double consciousness is his diasporic experience after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Diaspora's double consciousness deconstructs the binary opposition of 'self' and 'other'. In postcolonial diasporic theory, 'self' refers to the colonizer and 'other' to the colonized. "In general terms, the 'other' is anyone who is separate from one's self" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Key* 169). According to the theory of orientalism, the Third World countries are considered 'other' and the First World countries are 'self'. Putting in this framework, Changez is a third world-born diaspora considered as 'other'. However, his double consciousness blurs the line between self and other. As a returnee diaspora, he presents himself having dual/hybrid identity. He is at the threshold of self and other. He is in ambivalence situation. He has "simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from" (12) the Islamic fundamentalism and Western hegemonic ideology. Being a diaspora,Changez decenters the center i.e. American idealism, which he thinks great, ideal and humane before 9/11. The vice president of Underwood Samson explains to Changez the terms and conditions of working in the firm like this:

> 'We're a meritocracy', he said. 'We believe in being the best. You were the best candidates at the best schools in the country. That's what got you here. But meritocracy doesn't stop with recruiting. We'll rank you every six months. You'll know your rankings. Your bonuses and staffing will depend on them. If you do well, you'll be rewarded. If you don't, you'll be out the door'. (35)

The explanation of vice president of the company demonstrates that the corporate America functions without any bias, prejudice or preference whether he/she is native or non-native because it is the principle of American capitalist system. The company employs and promote its workers on the basis of meritocracy. Changez shares the same capitalist ethos. He narrates his initial idealism towards the self/First World, "When I arrived at Princeton, I looked around me at the Gothic buildings . . . and thought, this is a dream come true. Princeton inspired in me the feeling that my life was a film in which I was the star and everything was possible" (Hamid 3). However, the Western idealism goes false when he finds "Multinational corporations on both sides of the border ordered senior employees to leave, and travel advisories were issued throughout the nations of the First World" (177). His previous illusion becomes clear and he comes to state of consciousness. He understands the capitalist principle of meritocracy. He finds that it is an illusion because the company is ready to sack the honest, intelligent, skilled and hardworking employees like Changez on the basis of their stereotypical concept toward East/other. He is able to evaluate his actual positioning.

In addition, the American idealism that he thinks is shattered when he finds that America is as terrorist and fundamentalist as the Islamic countries when it begins organized and politically motivated killing indiscriminately to the civilians of the Third World in the guise of the fight against terrorism with principle of 'War on Terror'. He narrates:

> I recognized that if this was to be the single most important priority of our species, then the lives of those of us who lived in lands in which such killers also lived had no meaning except as collateral damage. This, I reasoned, was why America felt justified in bringing so many deaths to Afghanistan and Iraq,

> and why America felt justified in risking so many more deaths by tacitly using India to pressure Pakistan. (178)

Changez's monologue informs us that he is in dilemma created by his sense of belonging in two spaces simultaneously. When he stands 'in-between space' with his awakening, he has simultaneous attraction and repulsion toward the both sides. Hamid clarifies the double consciousness of diaspora through Changez, "I was not certain where I belonged – in New York, in Lahore, in both, in neither" (148) with fluid identity and unstable culture. Here, the argument of the researcher is that the narrative of diasporic protagonist speaks neither from essentialist Pakistani point of view nor does participate in American centric 'othering' to create a gap between self and other. He blurs the line between self and other because the diaspora stands on the line, which Bhabha frequently calls threshold, in-between space or liminal third space.

The diasporic Muslim writers like Mohasin Hamid have not only decentered the Western hegemonic power by writing-back strategy but they also "have decentered the Islamic terrorist threat and attempted instead to account for the events of 9/11 in terms of US activities in the Third World and the Muslim migrant's experience of racist othering in America" (Nash 108). It means that they have unmasked the Eastern and Western false idealism and humanism through their narratives. Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is one of the examples of such narratives that unmasks the disguised Western humanism as well as Islamic fundamental ideology by referring to the real historical events of 9/11. Moreover, the mental collapse of depressed Erica, Changez's American beloved, symbolizes the collapse of American idealism. In the novel, Hamid demonstrates the resemblance of Erica with America. Similarly, Changez's obsession with Erica symbolizes diaspora's obsession with America. The last part of the novel, "But I am still young and see no

need to marry another, and for now I am content to wait" (176) informs us that Changez does not like to marry except his American girl friend, Erica. He is still satisfied waiting Am(Erica)'s love. He is hoping for impossible/center. It is Hamid's philosophy of decentering the center. He philosophizes here that we all human beings are hoping and searching the impossible center.

The blurring of the line between self and other is only possible by the double consciousness of diasporas as Paul Gilroy says, "The lines between self and other are blurred and special forms of pleasure are created as a result" (79) because of the flexibility of identity and political ideology. The theories of diasporic writers such as Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Avtar Brah and Salman Rushdie deconstruct the fixed, naturalized conceptions of diasporas. They acknowledge the instability and flexibility of identity, homeland, political ideology of the diasporas because diasporas are global travelers with transnational connectivity. Rushdie writes about the homes of diasporas that are "not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, India of mind" (10). He means that the homes of diasporas are mythical mental constructs based on reconstituted fragments of memory firmly rooted in the past. Bhabha calls such an imaginary homeland "unhomely" (*The Location* 13) home. Rushdie and Bhabha deconstruct the totalized image of the concept of diaspora's home. Similarly, Hamid in his narrative deconstructs the diasporic narrator's own position. He lacks his cultural home. He is not certain "where I belonged – in New York, in Lahore, in both, in neither" (Hamid 148). His home is unhomely, fictional, imaginary or mythical mental construction.

Hamid deconstructs the cultural and political identities of diasporic subject in relation to Changez's origin, homeland culture and the conditions of settlement in the host land as Hall says that diasporic identities are producing and reproducing

themselves a new, through transformation and difference. It is "always in process" ("Cultural" 110). Changez's cultural identity and political ideology are not fixed. They emerge out of cultural and political antagonism while applying Bhabha's and Hall's theories. The textual data "As for myself, I was clearly on the threshold of great change; only the final catalyst was now required, and in my case that catalyst took the form of lunch" (Hamid 150) presents that he neither completely supports Islamic national ideology nor Western imperial power. He is characterized as reluctant/ hybrid subject having transcultural/cross-cultural position. It is because the cultures of diasporas "are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic as in the relation self/other, rather there is a Third Space, which can neither be reduced to the 'self' nor 'other', neither to the First nor to the Third World neither to the master nor to the slave" (Wolf 135). He belongs neither to any extreme side nor to the center. As a diaspora, Changez's position is "complex form of signification" (Bhabha, *The Location* 247) due to the fusion and interaction of the antagonistic forces, i.e. center and margin, self and other, inner and outer or West and East. Finally, because of the fusion and interaction, newness comes into the world. This is the process of social development and human civilization.

Thus, the above discussion points out that the narrative of Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* succeeds in equalizing the Western and Eastern power by the monologic voice of the intelligent and resourceful diasporic character over the Western tourist. He blurs the line between self and other, and opens the space for the global readers to visualize the negative stereotypical concept of the East and the West.

Conclusion: Diasporic Power for Connectivity

Diasporas possess the power of connecting between Self/West and Other/East. They bridge the gap between their home and host lands. The researcher of the dissertation

has focused on diasporic subject neither as Self nor as Other. Many diasporic narratives tell the story of diaspora's nostalgia or longing for home. Their diasporic characters are sad and homesick. In contrast, this chapter has highlighted that the diasporic subjectsare neither melancholic nor nostalgic rather they are celebrative. It means that we find the empowerment of the diasporic characters in South Asian diasporic narratives by constructing their identity, culture and civilization in the West. One of the South Asian diasporic writers, Mohsin Hamid in his diasporic narrative, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* demonstrates this idea enlightening to the readers that diaspora is the subject of celebration but not melancholy. Culturally, geographically or ideologically, they link East and West. Though his hero, Changez is a returnee diaspora, he repeatedly states that his foreignness gives him advantages in personal, social and business interactions. He is nostalgic not for the loss of his native land, Pakistan but for Am(Erica) because America is not only a land of individual freedom but also an emblem of new identity and opportunity. His Western knowledge makes him not to be religious fundamentalist. Rather he is in in-betweenness. In the narrative, Changez meets the American stranger at a tea shop in Lahore and takes him on a mythic ride to Changez's past and tells him about his study at Princeton, his job at Underwood Samson, a valuation farm by being its rising star, his trip with friends to Greece, his love affair with Erica and about Erica's dead lover Chris. Then he tells his final dissatisfaction with his job at Underwood Samson in particular and America in general due the Western treatment to Muslim diasporas after 9/11, and his return to Pakistan and successive role as a university lecturer. However, Changez has strong ties to both worlds. He reports that in America he conducts himself in public like a young prince, generous and carefree. He claims with a certain degree of pride and self-satisfaction. He never feels any fear of solitude. During that time, his family

encourages him to stay in America for progress. Even his mother sometimes suggests him not to grow beard. All these things excite him to live in freedom.

However, the 9/11events bring earthquake and upheaval in the lives of both South Asian diasporas and Western native people, especially Americans. On the one hand, after 9/11 events, the lives of innocent diasporas in America becomes hard. The American treatment toward innocent diasporas like Changez is inhumane and injustice. On the other hand, the East, especially the Islam becomes threat to the West. Changez hates indiscriminate and ferocious attacks of both sides. He hates the terrorist attacks of 9/11 at the twin towers of World Trade Center in New York City and Pentagon, and also he hates the American unnegotiable supremacy over the East. In fact, the real attackers were Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia financed by al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden. Being a diaspora and reluctant fundamentalist,Changez has love-hate relationship to both the East and the West. Having diasporic consciousness, he is on the threshold or in-between the self and other. In the novel, he is a Third Worlder, a Muslim, a Pakistani as well as a New Yorker and a Princetonian. The textual evidence presents us that though Changez is a lecturer at a Pakistani university, he manages every year to pay class dues in order to receive the American journal *Princeton Alumni Weekly* which he reads unfailingly from cover to cover with particular attention to the class notes and obituaries sections at the end. Moreover, Changez is increasingly hunted by the memory of Erica, the shorted form of America. His hope to meet her again discloses his psychological attraction and attachment toward the West.

Being a South Asian returnee diaspora, Hamid's protagonist, Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* connects culturally and ideologically the East and the West. Changez connects culturally because he cannot avoid western culture such as going to

parties, taking beer and wine and freely loving to American girl, Erica. He connects ideologically because he disagrees both Muslim and American fundamentalism. He stands between them and advocates democratic principle. In the opening words of the narrative, he introduces himself to the American as a guide and bridge between their cultures because he knows both cultures, manners and languages. Hamid subverts orientalism because he provides parallel between the diasporic Changez and the American native. Changez's level of understanding about the world is as powerful as his listener because he is a US-trained returnee diaspora. He never forgets America as it is the beacon of his educational and professional success. Morally, he leans towards the both worlds standing at the crossroad of the clash of civilizations. Changez connects the East and the West culturally, linguistically or ideologically because being Pakistani in the US or with American-training is different from being Pakistani in one's homeland. Due to this reason, Hamid's Pakistani-born US-trained hero frequently assures us that he is a believer in non-violence and different from Muslim fundamentalists. He believes on multiculturalism and pluralism.

The geopolitics of the world has changed after 9/11 events. It means that the international relations influenced by geographical factors have been changed by this event. The Muslim countries before the 9/11 were regarded as 'others' but after it, they are considered as terrorists. In the context of US politics, 9/11 becomes so important and catastrophic that it has tossed the political world upside down, put new issues on the agenda, and changed the political, cultural, and economic climate overnight. The US has formed new foreign policies against terrorism that create double injustice for the westernized South Asian Islamic diasporas. The innocent US-settled South Asian diasporas are caught in the web woven by the both fundamentalists, American unnegotiable supremacy and Islamic extremism. Their

American dreams turns into American nightmares. Hamid informs us that 'fundamentalism' is a movement that seeks to gain political and economic power by restricting plural ways of understanding. After 9/11 events, when Hamid's diasporic hero enters into the world of consciousness, he rejects both religious and corporate fundamentalisms. He becomes aware that religious fundamentalism restricts the plural identity, culture and ideology evoked by the terrorists like the attackers of twin towers and Pentagon. Also, he becomes conscious about the corporate fundamentalism mentioned in the novel evoked by Underwood Samson that always wants him to focus on the fundamentals. The Underwood Samson consists of a set of rules that govern the company's global expansion, which takes no interest in anything except economic gain. These both fundamentalisms are against the real American multiculturalism and pluralism, which are the soul of real American societies.

However, Changez has exercised greater freedom, knowledge and power in the US multiculturalism with his beloved Erica, his ideal job and luxurious life than in his native land. Even he returns his birthplace after the 9/11 event, the taste of power, knowledge and freedom that he exercised in America lures him to be back. The textual data demonstrates, "When the time came for me to return to New York I told my parents I wanted to stay longer, but they would not hear of it" (Hamid 128). Hamid in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* creates such a diasporic hero who tilts toward the West, connects Eastern and Western societies, favors multiculturalism, plural ways of thinking, flexible identity and secular humanism. Having such characteristics, the returnee diaspora, Changez wants to reconcile the Eastern and Western politics and cultures by talking politely with his American interlocutor. While talking to the silent listener, Changez never becomes aggressive and never makes the American aggressive. He possesses double consciousness. He understands the psychology of

aggressive Pakistanis who support the terrorists, and also the aggressive Americans who represent the principle of Underwood Samson and dehumanize the innocent diasporas. Changez presents his power of connectivity between the stereotypical concept of self and other and is able to blur the line between them.

As a conscious diaspora, Changez has a power to control the Eastern and Western aggressiveness and to create connectivity, intimacy and reconciliation in his dramatic monologue. The textual data depicts it very clearly at the final part of the narrative in such a way that when the American citizen reaches his hand into his jacket perhaps to take his pistol out against the Pakistani fundamentalists, Changez trusts it not a gun but business cards. Diasporas are also public ambassadors. Changez as a public ambassador uses his diplomatic power to settle the unfortunate issues and to connect and keep harmonious relationship between the East and the West in the novel. He states that though he detects a flash of metal inside the American's jacket, he trusts it as American's business cards. He diplomatically expresses that he and his American friend are bound to share a certain intimacy and harmony so he trusts that the things inside his jacket are the American's business cards. In such a way, Mohasin Hamid conveys the message to the global readers through his postcolonial political discourse, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* that the diasporas whose way of living is totally different from South Asia, whether they are returnees or not possess the liminality or transcultural or trans-political power positioning themselves in the liminal space of change. In short, Hamid ascertains us that how Muslim diasporas, in an individual capacity, dispel negative images and perceptions about the Eastern gaze upon the West and Western gaze upon the East.

Chapter VI

DYNAMISM OF DIASPORA: PURSUIT OF FREEDOM IN MANJUSHREE THAPA'S *SEASONS OF FLIGHT*

Preview

This part of dissertation investigates the dynamism of South Asian diasporas and their pursuit of freedom and knowledge in the West through the close reading of Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* (2010). Diasporic literature, a different branch of literature, emerges due to displacement and migration of people to different corners of the world. In diasporic narratives, the representative diasporic characters possess energizing quality and willpower by which they involve in the pursuit of individual freedom. They go into the journey of life across time, space and human society, and exercise power and freedom. The diasporas' journey translates them into free humans

culturally and politically by which they value freedom. The translation of diasporas such as South Asian into Westernized, changes their consciousness. The cultural translation or transformation in diasporas shapes their identities, consciousness and understanding of who they are in the globalized world because identities are cultural and social constructs as well as the constructions of meaning of one's life. Search for freedom and experience, and their successful exercise in order to make life meaningful is the dynamism of diasporas.

The main inquiries of this section of dissertation are: Why do South Asian diasporas like Thapa's protagonist, Prema in *Seasons of Flight* change themselves culturally and socially in the host land? How do they form new world? What is their positionality in the new space? The South Asian diasporas in the West struggle throughout their lives from the postcolonial place to form a new world and identity which are always unstable. They experience suffering and change to exercise freedom and power. The more they struggle and suffer, the stronger they become. The experiences of not belonging anywhere, rootlessness, dislocation, cross-border situation, cultural conflict, feeling of nostalgia and alienation, fluid identity, unhomeliness and painful process of change make the diasporas dynamic and conscious. Manjushree Thapa (b.1968), one of the South Asian diasporic writers, especially from Himalayan nation Nepal, rejoices the dynamism of diasporas and their pursuit of freedom in her diasporic narrative *The Seasons of Flight*.

Introduction: Diasporic Journey for Self-empowerment in *Seasons of Flight*

The present section of dissertation focuses on the vigorous activities of representative South Asian diasporic characters who make their journey from East to West, especially from a Nepali village up in the hills to a beach side of cosmopolitan city in the USA though the textual study of Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*. The diasporas admire

freewheeling independence and connect with the wilder world. In this novel, Thapa's female protagonist, Prema's every activity centers on the search for freedom like the flight of the butterfly that suffers to be full butterfly and flies freely in the open space for the sake of sweet nectar. Thapa explores Prema's diasporic journey and experience transforming and translating herself from one identity to another for individual freedom and empowerment. This chapter emphasizes the diasporic characters' thirst of freedom and their achievements represented by Prema, a Nepali young girl who flits from Nepal to the United States.

South Asian diasporic literature occupies wide range in the field of world literature but Nepali diasporic writers in English are overshadowed by the bigger countries of the subcontinent like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Manjushree Thapa, a Nepal-born, American-educated and Canadian-tied diasporic writer has become a nation brand of this Himalayan country Nepal. She is one of the handful of Nepali authors successfully writing in English. Her fictional works such as *Tutor of History* (2001), *Tilled Earth* (2007), *Seasons of Flight* (2010), and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016); and non-fictional works like *Mustang Bhot in Fragments*(1992), *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005), *A Boy from Siklis: The Life and Times of Chandra Gurung* (2009) and *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions of Nepal* (2012) recognize this Himalayan country to the globe. The researcher of this dissertation examines critically only her novel *The Seasons of Flight* for the purpose of the part of this dissertation. This selected South Asian diasporic narrative highlights a certain kind of desire for freedom of Nepali diasporic character Prema in the United States. In order to analyze the text critically and to empower the research work, the researcher has applied theoretical insights from Vijay Mishra's notion of new diaspora; Avtar Brah's diasporic multiple journeys; Steven

Vertovec's current meanings of diaspora; Daphne Grace's diasporic consciousness and dynamic of power. In the same way, Homi K. Bhabha's cultural translation/transformation and third-space; Stuart Hall's cultural identity and diaspora as well as other diasporic critics' ideas wherever they have been found essential for the analysis of the text. The present work depicts the journey of the representative South Asian diasporic character, Prema, for her self-empowerment. In the process of journey, she faces innumerable hardships and obstacles. However, her suffering becomes the source of consciousness that provides her freedom and power. The sense of freedom in her comes from suffering and change.

Being a South Asian diasporic voice, Manjushree Thapa, in *Seasons of Flight* expresses her diasporic experience and search for freedom as she says in an interview given to a magazine named *South Asia* published from National University of Singapore, "I am aware that if my family had not left Nepal and sent me to study abroad, I might not be able to exercise my freedom the way I do now. During my time in college, I became very Americanized. It completely changed my consciousness" (30). Thapa was born in Nepal, studied in America and has settled in Canada having Canadian Nationality. As an immigrant in the West, she articulates her experience, change, new self, identity, and a sense of courage through her female protagonist Prema in *Seasons of Flight*. She presents her protagonist as a dynamic diaspora who struggling with various obstacles pursues freedom and self-empowerment and changes from unfree to free situation. Her successful exercise of individual freedom becomes significant and makes some values in human life, especially in the life of diaspora.

Seasons of Flight portrays the journeys of a young Nepali girl, "the new diaspora of late capital" (Mishra, "The Diasporic" 447) from a war-torn

Nepali village struggling to survive in Los Angles, United States after winning a green card through lottery. Deepthi VG writes:

> The novel narrates a pragmatic instance of up rootedness through Prema who similar to a butterfly flies from a picturesque village in Nepal to a socially and culturally flamboyant metropolis in the United States. The journey in Prema's case is not just territorial, but also psychological. She sets out on this extraordinary journey in order to escape from her village that is infested with Maoist aggression/civil wars. The novel portrays how her life, thoughts and behavior change under the influence of a new culture. (485)

Prema migrates from a Nepali village to a colorful American metropolis. Her journey is not only physical or geographical but also psychological and cultural for greater freedom and prosperity. It is a historical fact that the Nepali people were trapped between Maoist insurgency and the army of monarchy in Nepal for about ten years from 1996 to 2006. The conflict was characterized by executions, massacres, kidnappings and other war crimes against humanity. The result of the insurgency is deaths of over seventeen thousand people including civilians, insurgents, army and police. It brings internal and cross-border displacement/migration of hundreds and thousands of people. This conflict in the country affects the life of the main character, Prema in *Seasons of Flight*.

In the third person point of view and flashback technique, Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* set in a village in eastern Nepal and Los Angles, America as "a cultural space" (Appadurai 173) tells an account of a journey undertaken by Prema, a Nepali woman in her mid-twenties, from a scenic Nepali village to a culturally and socially multi-colored metropolis. Prema wins a green card lottery and goes to America in search of

greater freedom and ability. She faces several problems during her journey of life. However, her willpower and flexibility overcome them. In the very beginning of the narrative, the writer presents the irony that her country Nepal is not famous or even recognized as a separate nation to many Americans. Prema is frequently asked in America, "Where are you from?" (Thapa 2), she replies that she is from Nepal. But for the Americans, the country's name can sound like "nipple" (1). More commonly, they hear Naples as if it is a part of Rome. When the Americans do not recognize Prema's origin, Prema clarifies, "It is near India, or Where Mount Everest is or You have heard the Sherpas?" (1). In this way, the narrative begins with Prema settled in America and her past is recollected through memories. After finishing her school education in her village, Prema goes to Kathmandu to study forestry. Only at that time, she is aware that her life in the village is full of poverty and sorrow.

Thapa's narrative tells the journey of her diasporic protagonist, Prema whose early life is full of sorrows. Her mother dies after the birth of her younger sister, Bijaya. During that time, Prema is only eight. There is Maoist revolution. At the age of sixteen, she leaves her village to Kathmandu because her father, a progressive man, allows her to go to college. "All he wanted was a better life for his daughters" (15). Writing about diaspora's education Avtar Brah states, "In the main, Asian parents were initially quite favorably disposed toward Western education . . . Western education remains a coveted possession in the Third World" (Brah 24). Thus, Prema's father wants her to get Western education.

Besides, it is a high time of Maoist insurgency. They are recruiting one member from each family and Bijaya joins it. In Kathmandu, Prema is "hired by a non-government organization" (Thapa 16) for a job with a senior forester, Trailokya "to offset the carbon footprint of a British corporation" (16). To perform her duty, she

visits hill bazaar to run non-formal education classes. After completing her college, Prema's friends suggest her to "migrate to India, or further, to Australia, Europe, Canada, America. There was so little in Nepal, everyone just wanted to leave. . . it was hard not to believe that life in richer land was more proper, solid" (17). So, one day due to the insistence of Kanchha, a son of Gurkha and the owner of a computer center, Prema enters her name in the American green card lottery visiting cyber café. She does not like to go back to her village because of two things: Maoist insurgency and her own poverty. While working in the hill bazaar, Prema gets attached toward Rajan, a student of communist student union, who also works in the poverty-alleviation program of a non-government organization and has visited many countries like Russia, Poland, Mongolia, etc. She spends night with him. She has a dream of more freedom, knowledge and prosperity, which are not in her village.

Without journey and displacement, we cannot imagine the notion of diaspora as Avtar Brah argues, "At the heart of the notion of diaspora is the image of journey" (179). Prema is selected for Diversity Visa but she has no money and idea where to stay in America. Rajan's friend, Harihar-dai, a middleman wants to help her. He has his nephew Narahari Bohora in Los Angeles who manages her job and settlement. Before leaving Kathmandu, she starts learning English, makes effort for driving, visits cyber café to read *Los Angeles Time* online. Taking with her cultural artifacts such as lustrous stone named Shaligram, which her mother used to worship as an avatar of Vishnu, Prema flies to Los Angeles. "Culture is essentially process, but this does not mean that we cannot talk about cultural artifacts, such as those understood in terms of customs, traditions and values" (Brah 231). At the airport, she sees "Welcome to America" (Thapa 107), and the middleman's nephew comes to receive her. The boy arranges for Prema in "Little Nepal" (108), a ghettos where Nepali immigrants live.

She lives in a rental room neighboring with Sushil and Neeru who work in a restaurant named Shalimar.

Prema also begins to "work at a restaurant alongside Neeru" (109) with other people who have come from Nepal. In the initial phase, Neeru guides Prema about how to get credit cards, where to buy phone cards, where to check email, how to get a State of California identity card, social security, health care and unemployment benefit. She gives her a name of lawyers and social workers in case of crisis. Prema opens a bank account. Sometimes, Neeru says Prema "It is a nice country if you have money" (109). However, Prema is not that migrant who lives with Nepali in America. The sense of freedom and new experience cannot be found in the Little Nepal. She thinks that she has come to America to live not with Nepali people who seem to be refugees or hyphenated but with white ones. She sees her freedom in Americanized culture. Thus, she decides to leave the ghettos.

In the process of getting freedom and a new world, she leaves the Nepali ghettos and works as a homecare attendant for an old lady Esther King. Esther's granddaughter, Natalie, a lawyer hires Prema to take care her grandmother who has the symptom of dementia. Prema lives in that house with two young women-housemates, Meg and Susan. The Nepali immigrant gets opportunities to understand American life with these white women. She experiences the luxurious life of American metropolitan people. Prema, who spent her miserable childhood life in a Nepali village has never visited a sea beach. Now, she frequently visits sea beach near Los Angles with Esther. More than this, she knows the life of Americans. Ester's husband Tim died many years ago. Manjushree Thapa describes American married and unmarried people's social life through Esther, Meg and Susan. On the one hand, Tim and Esther are husband and wife. Esther's stepson Theo and Tim's stepdaughter

Mary marry. Natalie is Esther's granddaughter. On the other hand, Meg and Susan frequently make relationship with boyfriends. They do "with men dating" (133). Most evening, they go and date, stay out all night or bring back men and make "a committed relationship" (133). In such an environment, Prema also makes relationship with an American man, Andy exercising Western freedom.

Prema begins to exercise American freedom with the companionship of American people. One of the main aims of the Western people "is to facilitate the freedom of movement" (Brah 169) and "freedom of choice" (85). Living with Americans, Prema expresses her happiness, "I have reached America at last" (Thapa 122). At Meadowvale, she meets Luis, a thirty-three years old Mexican having ex-wife, Tina and a daughter, July. He is the General Administrator of a nursing home. Prema develops friendship with him. During her company with Luis, Prema adapts American culture. She buys "a red bikini for $24.99, and flip-flops for $4.47" (79), goes to beach, eats in McDonald's, Thai's, Indian's, Korean's, learns new techniques of making love and sex, visits Luis's ex-wife's residence for Christmas and teaches Luis Nepali language. She enjoys new experience with American life. She wonders when "Prema discovered, that day, that Luis called his mother by her name" (144). Prema also visits with Meg's and Susan's places and finds that South Asians are conservative in comparison with Americans. According to the narrator, Prema "was getting a chance to leave one life and start another" (58). The change of her life from a Nepali village-girl to an American cosmopolitan-lady is a transformation of diaspora. It is because she experiences that Nepal is a land of "sorrows" (76) and America is free and "nice country" (109). She enjoys the material luxury.

When Prema goes to meet Sushil and Neeru in Little Nepal, she feels nostalgia. She recollects the time she has spent with her parents and sister. She

remembers her father's words at the time of leaving Nepal, "But your mother's blessings you're getting this chance to cross the seven seas. Use this opportunity well, Chhori . . . You'll progress, Chhori, I know you will . . . lead the life she could not have. You will lead a complete life" (74). She also convinces her poor father strongly "I'll keep sending money, Ba" (74). Through this conversation, we understand that her father is gentle man and wants his daughter's progress. Besides, he is poor and has full hope on his daughter. The economy of South Asian countries like Nepal heavily depends on remittances as Brah reveals:

By the early 1980s, almost every family in the *municipio* had a member who had worked abroad, and the local economy washeavily dependent on migrant remittances. In time, these migrants haveestablished several outposts in the United States, working largely in theservice sector as cleaners, dishwashers, gardeners, hotel workers,housekeepers and childcare workers. (197)

Prema sends some money to her father from her saving by money-transfer company. She says, "I always used to send money, earlier. There is no income there – ." (Thapa 211). Prema works as a helper of an elderly lady, Esther. Finally, she works as a conservationist.

After reading the text closely, we find that Western people enjoy greater freedom than the South Asians. They take a small misunderstanding seriously. Prema and Luis quarrel on the point of going to Luis's friends, Steve and Camilla. Prema denies going there but Luis insists her. Then he also insists Prema to take him to meet her world and friends. However, she also denies it saying, "I do not have a world! I left the world I had, and do not belong in the one I am now – your world. I do not have any place to take you, Louis. I do not have a place in the world" (212). Prema

leaves Luis's home. She continues her job at Esther. On the way to Esther's home, she enjoys the natural beauty of wetland with wildlife. There, she meets a woman Fiona, an environmentalist-searching butterfly, El Segundo Blues, "a butterfly on the federal endangered list" (222) at the side of chain-link fence. Fiona begins to work in Life Corps that tracks "the presence of pesticides in Southern California's marine life. There is still lots of DDT . . . though its use was banned in seventy-two" (222). What brings a sense of purpose back in her life is a chance of meeting with Fiona, a lepidopterist by passion and a lawyer by training on the lookout for El Segundo Blues, a tiny butterfly that stays still for long stretches and then takes flight in "a flutter of blue" (221). A creature that goes through cycles of transformation before it is finally "ready for a season of flight" (227). As forester in Nepal, Prema is interested for such wildlife's conservation. She feels satisfied in the group with activities of her choice. She works with them after the death of Esther. Though Neeru and others insist her to marry a Nepali boy in America, she decides not to marry anyone and not to have children. She finds her real place "Not in America, and not in Nepal, but in the wilderness at the heart of human habitation" (224). This is the place of diaspora and the life of diaspora is also like the life of butterfly that undergoes "a violent metamorphosis" (227) or transformation from the diasporic journey.

The journey of diasporas refers not only to physical and geographical but also to cultural and psychological. "While the diasporic subject travels, so does culture" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial* 427). Prema in *Seasons of Flight* carries her culture in America and she is not only changed but she also tries to change the foreigners. As she flies from one place to another, she meets people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and tries to understand the American way of life. Unlike most protagonists of diasporic narratives, she does not mourn the loss of her

homeland nor does she regret her decision even in making relationship with men and changing her jobs. The textual data shows that unlike most immigrants who prefer the companionship of their own people in a foreign land, Prema believes that her relationship with them has kept her outside of America. Before reaching to America, she determines not to return to her native country to live permanently. "Paradoxically, diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots 'elsewhere'" (Brah 179). Once, when Prema's father telephones her and asks many times, "When will you come back, Chhori?" She replies, "No, I am going to live there [America]. Forever" (Thapa 74). She also disconnects her connection with Little Nepal in order to create a cosmopolitan identity. Her nostalgia of Nepal does not provide comfort to her and she treats Nepali as "the language of her sorrows" (76). She discards all connection with her homeland in order to soar social-cultural journey of becoming American. To be Americanized, she starts by mimicking American dressing, life style, culture, food, etc. which Homi K Bhabha calls 'mimicry' which emerges as the representation of difference and "the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective" (122). Prema's imitation of American culture creates her different identity, i.e. a camouflage-like identity. She is obliged neither with Nepali culture nor with American. She cannot avoid both cultures. Prema's sex scenes are direct without vulgarity and obscenity. Her journey from small village in Nepal to the big town in the USA, from being Nepali to being American and her phase of transformation empowers her sense of self and freedom.

Thapa's diasporic narrative, *Seasons of Flight*, portrays the representative Nepali diaspora's journey of 'crossing the seven seas' with full of dreams and ambitions leaving behind her birthplace and family. After winning green card lottery, Prema's flight takes her from her village up in the hills of Nepal to a beachside Los

Angeles, America in order to pursue freedom. Besides, she flies from one job to another, a forester in Nepal to a restaurant worker to a storekeeper to a caregiver of an elderly lady and finally to a conservationist in America. She also journeys from culture to culture. She flies from Nepali nationality to immigrant Nepali in Little Nepal and to Nepali diaspora/American nationality in the United States with greater freedom.

Celebrating Diaspora: Prema as a New Westernized Diaspora

Manjushree Thapa's diasporic narrative, *Seasons of Flight* highlights diaspora's struggle for survival and acculturation rather than nostalgia for homeland and sense of displacement and rootlessness. It displays the re-rooting of human beings. Re-rooting may not be quite easy however, people in the history of humankind have migrated from one place to another and have produced new civilizations. Geographical boundaries are manmade. Thapa's primary concern of the narrative shows the change and transformation of Nepali representative diasporic character, Prema with new experience in new society. The protagonist diaspora is slowly Americanized in the host society at all levels, psychological, social, cultural and linguistic. Except racial level, Thapa presents Prema's assimilation with Americans as one of the American ladies appreciates her "You speak very good English" (Thapa 11). Physically, Prema travels from Nepali hill-village to American metropolis but metaphorically, she travels from one state of awareness or knowledge to another. She pushes herself into a new dimension of existence.

Thapa has celebrated diasporas in her narratives. Prema's decision to leave her homeland coincides with her desire to escape the narrowness of her cultural identity, traditional Nepali society and the contemporary political situation. To leave a country of her birth would mean new beginning in her life. Diasporas are both celebrated and

melancholic. Celebrated diasporas are new and dynamic whereas melancholic are old and submissive. Highlighting the celebrated diasporas, Vijay Mishra maintains:

> Celebrating diasporas as the exemplary condition of late modernity – diasporas as highly democratic communities for whom domination and territoriality are not the preconditions of 'nationhood'– is a not uncommon refrain. In the late-modern celebratory argument on behalf of diasporas, diasporic communities are said to occupy a border zone where the most vibrant kinds of interaction take place, and where ethnicity and nation are kept separate. In this argument, diasporas are fluid, ideal social formations happy to live wherever there is an international airport and stand for a longer, much admired historical process. (*The Literature* 1)

In Vijay Mishra's term, Prema is a new diaspora of the late capital or the diaspora of the border. According to him, the new diaspora tries to assimilate the new culture like "chameleon replacing an old skin with new one through molting, dispensing with singular narrative forms, is the metaphor of the new diaspora, multiple, selective, hybrid and in the end free of national jingoism" (51-52). But the old diasporas create "relatively self-contained 'little Indians' in the colonies" ("The Diasporic" 447). Applying Vijay Mishra's theoretical framework in *Seasons of Flight*, we find that Thapa creates new diaspora in her narrative and celebrates diasporic subject. The text demonstrates that the female diasporic protagonist, Prema as a modern South Asian woman goes through internal and cross-border migration breaking the traditional identity imposed on her for being an unfree Nepali woman. In her internal migration working in a non-governmental organization, she does not feel guilty for making physical relationship with Rajan in Maya Lodge. In this context, the narrator says, "Every few weeks he [Rajan] would come by the bazaar, and he and Prema would

walk together to the town at the base of the hills and spend a night, or sometimes two nights, there" (Thapa 22). She then migrates to America after winning Diversity Visa lottery. Her struggle of creating her American identity starts from the very day she steps in the foreign land.

For any immigrant, it takes time to know the host land. Prema feels displaced in America. At first, she stays in Little Nepal in Los Angeles with Neeru and Sushil. She works in a restaurant. As Mishra's theory, those who live in Little Nepal are not new diasporas. They are old diasporas because everything there is like Nepal. So, Prema is not happy with her work there as she feels that she is not in America but in Nepal. Workers in Little Nepal speak Nepali so she thinks she is living in Nepal as the narrative reveals, "Her compatriots spoke in the Nepali language among themselves; and their talks invariably turned homeward: the Maoist rebels, the king and the army, the faltering movement for peace" (112). The diasporas in the Little Nepal wear Nepali dress, especially women wear "kurtha-surals" (109). Prema feels no newness there.

Prema wants to change the place and job there as she is in search of Western freedom. She leaves that old diaspora's place as the narrator says, "Prema left Little Nepal as abruptly as she had left Nepal" (117) without telling Neeru and Sushil. Then she lives in another part of the city sharing house with Meg, an African-American lady being a new diaspora. She then works in a Korean store. There she gets no chance to speak in Nepali and cannot understand Korean. Thus, she is compelled to speak English. She feels "Not homesick" (126). After that, Prema works as a caregiver in the American elderly lady, Esther. She begins to follow American lifestyles, keeps physical relationship with Luis, experiences love in America with an American being happy. She participates in American festivals, Christmas and

Thanksgiving, with Americans. Prema wears Western dress, eats American food, talks in English, earns dollars and visits sea beaches with American boy friends like Louis, Andy, Bobby, Jose and others with red bikini and flip-flops. With the American companions, she explores the city, discovers new life, and understands cosmopolitan society and the family system, which is very much different from her homeland Nepal. Thapa describes free life style in the West. In Nepal, she has relationship with Rajan but she has to keep secrecy of it otherwise she may be called whore. But in America, the situation is different.

Prema as being a new Nepali diaspora living in America sees more freedom changing herself into Westernized as Manjushree Thapa expresses in an interview with Wafa Marican in the magazine *South Asia* "During my time in college, I became very Americanized" (30). She exercises her freedom being Westernized. If she is not Westernized, she cannot be free and she has to live within the Nepali traditional confinement imposed on her by the Nepali society as Thapa states, "I might not be able to exercise my freedom the way I do now". Western culture and tradition "completely changed my consciousness. It even made me a Feminist and someone who really values my freedom" (30). Thapa's protagonist, Prema experiences the same freedom in *Seasons of Flight*.

The new South Asian diasporas like Prema feel free in Western democracies because almost all in the South Asian region, they cannot exercise their individual freedom in comparison to the West as it is mentioned in Thapa's expression above. Vijay Mishra also agrees it saying, "Diasporas of the border in these Western democracies are visible presences" ("The Diasporic" 448) as Prema's open presences in the novel. Prema tries to be Americanized from every aspect. She does not contact her father and her friends in Nepal. She never calls home again. The textual data

proves the argument, "She stopped looking up the news of Nepal on the Internet, and let her email account expire" (Thapa 116). Instead, she wants to know about America. She feels Western life free and happy, and finds her past painful and miserable without mother and because of poverty, insurgency and Eastern imposing culture and tradition. Finally, when she begins to work as a conservationist that she has done in Nepal with other like-minded foreigners, she feels her life "complete" (233). Upto this time, she has transformed herself into Westernized going through various transformations in terms of culture, language, work, lovemaking, place, etc. After finding her positionality in the foreign land, she begins to touch with family, relatives and friends in her homeland. This is the feature of new diasporas as "diasporas can now connect with the politics of homeland even as they live elsewhere" (Mishra, "The Diasporic" 449). Unlike old diasporas, she does not believe that woman needs a husband to be secure in future in foreign land. She is a new woman having willpower.

In short, Manjushree Thapa, in her *Seasons of Flight*, celebrates the dynamic quality of diasporic life through a representative South Asian female diasporic character in the West. She celebrates cultural diversity and difference as a progressive force of producing new cultures. The cultural diversity is the refusal of fixity of meaning in art and literature. For Thapa, diaspora is celebration but not melancholy. The celebrated, new, or global diasporas are not traumatic, nostalgic, agonizing and homesick. They do not feel nostalgic for homeland and sense of dislocation and rootlessness. Rather they are bold, flexible, mimicking and vibrant. They become happy in new cultural or social environment. They want to flow with the current of newness occupying the border zone and keeping the concept of ethnicity and nation apart in this globalized world of transnational network. Thapa's central character, Prema is a celebrated, new, cultural or global diaspora who celebrates cultural

diversity, flexibility and plurality, and becomes happy in her transformation from a village girl to the metropolitan Westernized lady. She does not mourn for the loss of staying away from home nor does she regret for her decision. Unlike the diasporas living in Little Nepal, she gets rid of the cultural baggage of her homeland and adopts the new social mores of her adopted country. Her every activity centers for the pursuit of freedom, knowledge and power. She is satisfied engaging in the new world and environment, which is her desired or dream world of individual freedom, democracy, romance and infinite opportunities.

Formation of New World: Diasporic Consciousness and Power

Diasporas having the duality of consciousness construct their own new world. Diasporic "consciousness is a state of being with knowledge" (Grace 5) and diasporic literature is the interim report from the consciousness of the diasporic writer. Standing between here and there or in and out, the diasporas produce new culture, identity and lifestyle. Writing about diaspora's consciousness, Steven Vertovec argues, "The awareness of multi-localityalso stimulates the need to conceptually connect oneself with others, both 'here' and 'there', who share the same 'routes' and 'roots'" (*The Hindu* 147). In the process of forming newness, diasporas engage in interaction with their past and present. In this sense, they are evolutionary forces of cultures.

In Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*, the diasporic central character, Prema, occupies the space between past and present or East and West, and produces the new culture or new civilization, that contains hybridity. While producing the new culture, Prema engages in various kinds of changes. Her first change is geographical and other changes are psychological and cultural as the textual data demonstrates, "She had come from the mountains, all the way to ocean. From Nepal to America. A hill bazaar to a metropolis of millions. Her

mother's life to hers. A fond of sea palm in her hands" (Thapa 79). Culturally, she is changed. One of the examples is that she begins to call her boyfriend's mother by her first name, which is quite surprising to her. She has never called her father and mother by their first name in Nepal. She does not only face the new world but the new world also faces the similar kind of newness. Prema's influence on Americas is quite significant in the text. She teaches them "Nah-mass-tay" (143) instead of hello or hi but she does not want to use her language because she feels that it is the "language of sorrow" (192). So, she prefers to use English. She finds cultural freedom in America and tries to adopt American culture. However, she unknowingly makes Americans adopt her culture. Luis and other Americans know some few Nepali words like *nah-mass-tay, dull-bhat, tur-carry, himmals,* etc.

The world of diasporas refers neither their native land nor their host land. According to Bhabha, they live in the third-space or in-between space, which facilitates other positions to come into sight. It is that platform from where the diaspora's resistance and acculturation groom. "It is that Third Space, though unpresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity, that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (*The Location* 55). This is the place of diaspora consciousness from where diaspora's newness multiplies because it is the place of change. The narrator points out the third space or the new world of Prema when Luis requests her "Take me to your world!" (Thapa 212), she replies, "'I do not have a world!' 'I left the world I had, and do not belong in the one I am in now – your world. I do not have any place to take you, Luis. I do not have a place in the world'" (212). This evidence establishes that the world of diaspora is neither the first space or the place of origin nor the second space or the

place of settlement. Prema's world is new which enables other positions to emerge. She does not wish to trace the two moments. She rather focuses on the third space, which makes her other change.

The above new world or space of Prema in *Seasons of Flight* refers to any kind of cultural mixing or mingling between the East and the West, hill village and metropolis. It is a contact zone within which different cultures encounter and new culture emerges. Discussing about diaspora, Steven Vertovec writes three meanings of diaspora, "These meanings refer to what we might call 'diaspora' as social form, 'diaspora' as type of consciousness and 'diaspora' as mode of cultural production" (*The Hindu* 142). Putting Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* in this framework, the Nepali diasporic character, Prema incorporates these meanings. Prema as a social form is characterized by triadic relationship: homeland, place of settlement and her new world or elsewhere in diaspora. On the one hand, she helps her old father by sending some money. She "wired five hundred dollars from her account to her father's" (Thapa 213). She is in touch with her family in Nepal. On the other hand, she has her own new world in Los Angeles, "Prema has already found her own kind: Fiona, Randa and Thom, and Nancy, Haroun, Sarah and George, and others whom she got to know through them" (233). After constructing her new world, the diasporic character keeps three sides social relationship.

Prema as a type of consciousness comprehends variety of experience, a state of mind and a sense of identity. She has double consciousness or duality of consciousness as Paul Gilroy describes the diaspora condition "as living with the sense of being simultaneously 'home away from home' or 'here and there'" (qtd. in Vertovec, *The Hindu* 147) because Prema's experience of

suffering coexists with the skill of survival. Her experience of "loss and hope" (Clifford, "Diaspora" 454), empowers and strengthens her to exist in the new world with new identity. The liminal third space of Prema is the alternative world from where she neither completely follows her Nepali culture not the culture of the foreign land. In such a situation, the two cultures assimilate and the third culture emerges. Prema as a diaspora creates this kind of alternative world to adjust herself with newness and changes. She changes her lifestyle in America as she finds America and Americans curious. She looks at every American curiously. The narrator comments, "Prema found American so curious she could not help studying each one" (Thapa 31). The knowledge of multi-locality and link, the memory of the past and her present situation bring her in the state of consciousness and she is ready to accept multiple realities in the new world.

The main diasporic character, Prema in *Seasons of Flight* involves in producing and reproducing new cultures from the new world, which Bhabha calls third space wherein "the two conditions are ambivalently enjoyed in the 'survival' of migrant life" (*The Location* 321). Then the culture gets a new form called "syncretic, creolized, translated or hybrid" (Vertovec, *The Hindu* 153). Prema faces multiculturalism and hybridity in America. Her lover, Luis, is a Guatemalan-American, whose ex-wife, Tina, is a Chinese-American, and whose friend, Christopher, is a Mexican-American. Prema thinks about her lover's position, "If you are half Guatemalan-American, and Tina is Chinese-American, this makes July . . . what?" (Thapa 156). Prema is curious about the culture and identity of their daughter, July. The culture is not the only thing hybridized in America, everything is hybridized, even people. One can find more hybridization and multiculturalism in America than in any other place. It is because America is the dream of every migrant

where immigrants are more than the natives are. Not only are they hybridized, they hybridize America, too. The immigrants are from multiple nations, so there are multiple cultures in America brought by them. These diasporas do not only produce new culture but they also reproduce other new cultures. Thus, diasporas are the producer and reproducer of cultures changing from one culture to other and one identity to other. In every transformation, they create third space, a powerful source of cultural production and they change themselves and becomes the agents of change.

Not all diasporas enable to construct a new world for themselves. Some, who have willpower, agency and longing for freedom, can desire newness. Prema finds the Nepali diasporas in Little Nepal like refugees. They have not exercised Western freedom even they are in the West. It is a Nepali community/nation where they follow Nepali culture. Prema finds it a much-insulted space. Little Nepal is not her destination. She wants to see the real America, live the real American life. She wants to make progress, not just simply survive. So, Prema leaves Little Nepal and enters the American culture facilitated by Luis. Luis becomes a catalyst for her metamorphosis. She becomes her own agency for liberation and self-realization. She creates her new space out of her unique experience of diaspora going through the process of Americanization. Her position challenges the very idea of center and margin and the established hierarchies. However, Luis does not understand her. So, she decides to leave him at the point of her realization that she does not belong to anything anywhere. Prema and Luis cannot find any suitable space of negotiation so they break down the perceived hierarchies and she lives in an ideal liminal third space or in-between space. As Bhabha's argument, after the interaction of two cultures there emerges a third one or in-between space or hybrid identity where the hierarchies are

dismantled and the diasporas assert their new identities with respectable position. In this new space, Prema's identity and culture are always in process, but not stable. Here, she is not confined culturally or psychologically. She is free to exercise freedom. This process keeps going on in the course of human evolution.

Dynamism of Diaspora: Thirst for Freedom in *Seasons of Flight*

Dynamism of diaspora specifies diasporas' fluid, flexible and energizing quality of adaptation, change or transformation from previous world to the new world due to the result of multiple journeys. The change occurs because of geographical and psychological or cultural movement. The dynamic diasporas constantly produce and reproduce their identities anew "to create hybrid communities that are evolving new dynamic cultures" (Grace 20). The dynamic diasporas like the central character, Prema in *Seasons of Flight* embrace the new cultures of the new community. Her journey from a poor remote village, where "there was no electricity . . . no radio, no television, no diversion" (Thapa 103), to her education and employment as a conservationist for a non-government organization near the capital, Kathmandu, and finally to her new life in Los Angeles, traces the many levels at which dislocation can be experienced, both internal and external. Her female agency or life force pushes her ahead to translate her from a small village girl to an independent working-woman, and then to a diversity visa lottery winner with green card in America.

Diaspora's life is defined by loss and hope. Prema as a dynamic diaspora feels loss because of displacement and hope because of being American having green card. According to James Clifford, diaspora experience and "consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension" ("Diasporas" 454). Prema loses her mother when she is only eight. This event leaves a deep scar on Prema. Her mother ends her life out of herself by repeated attempts at giving birth to a son. She thinks that it is her sole duty

as a wife towards her superstitious husband who believes "Only a son can open the gates of heaven" (Thapa 181). Prema believes that it was love that killed her mother, the love of her mother for her father. Prema learns detachment from love, ironic to meaning of her name. She does not believe in marriage and never wants to experience childbirth. She rejects all conventional patriarchal roles of womanhood. "She had rejected her mother's faith in gods . . . she worked, she was modern" (55). Prema has assertiveness and willpower. She believes life full of struggle and challenges. She faces challenges to consume opportunities in the new space. She does not carry a romantic picture of her homeland either.

Seasons of Flight deals with the inner and outer journey of a South Asian diaspora. Prema's outer journey is territorial. Her inner journey is cultural and psychological. She wants to transform her from "Her mother's life to hers" (79). This narrative also deals with the diaspora's skill of tackling with the obstructions come ahead. When Prema arrives in Los Angeles, she finds that things are not as she imagined them to be. So she begins her struggle to survive in this totally different and new setting. The journey in this case is not only the geographical distance, but also the mental and the cultural one. Facing with the new problems, she strengthens herself and determines not to return to her native country. As she journeys from one place to another, physically and psychologically, she meets people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and tries to understand the American way of life. Prema exercises the Western freedom and changes all her way of life as a dynamic diaspora unlike the other Nepali immigrants like Neeru and Sushil, Shyam and

Ganga in Little Nepal. She enters the new world of opportunities which her parents do not have any knowledge.

Manjushree Thapa celebrates the dynamic quality of diasporic lives. She believes that the real diasporas have agency or ability to act or perform action freely and autonomously in the new world called "dynamic hybrid space" (Mishra, *The Literature* 201). In *Seasons of Flight*, the diasporic character, Prema is a conscious diaspora, who searches her own self, "the self ultimately is consciousness" (Grace 24), freedom and knowledge. Her inner and outer flights and adventures to the new space tend toward the quest for freedom, independence and "a complete life" (Thapa 229). Prema's inner flight is the flight of self by which she transforms herself psychologically to adapt in the new conscious space. This new liminal space is the dynamic space from where the dynamic diasporas like Prema try to fulfill their thirst of freedom. If the Nepali girl only took physical flight and did not take the inner flight, she could live her life even in the US like the members of Little Nepal in Los Angeles. In the interview given to *South Asia*, Manjushree Thapa reveals that the theme of her writing is freedom. She says, "With regards to theme, it does not stray much. It is usually about a search for freedom; personal, public and political. This is very personal theme and it reflects my own successful search for some power or ability to exercise my individuality" (30). Thapa expresses this theme in her novel *The Seasons of Flight*. Like Thapa, the central character of the novel does not like to be locked within the Nepali traditional culture where women have to care their husbands, children and house. She is the witness of her own family in which her mother loses her life to fulfill her husband's will. Prema does not like such a society where there is no individual freedom.

Furthermore, Prema does not regret for the loss of staying away from home. Rather she throws the cultural baggage of her native land and embraces the new social patterns of her adopted country. Although she once returns to her native country Nepal after five years, she visits like a tourist. In this regard, Thapa asserts in the interview:

> I am aware that if my family had not left Nepal and sent me to study abroad, I might not be able to exercise my freedom the way I do now. During my time in college, I became very Americanized. It completely changed my consciousness. It even made me a Feminist and someone who really values my freedom. Then I went back to Nepal as an adult and found it really difficult to adjust to a place where gender, caste, and community inequality is the norm. There is always a hierarchy, someone's high and someone's low. I could never adjust. So for me, the issue of freedom was something personal and important to both me, and I believe, the Nepali people as well. (30)

This evidence displays that conscious South Asian people have a thirst for freedom. In the process of searching freedom, they want to migrate to the free country like the US where they can exercise freedom fully like the writer in the above citation. The diasporas who have struggled and suffered to adjust in the West feel difficulty when they come back to their native lands like Prema in the *Seasons of Flight* who never plans to live permanently in her birth country, Nepal. In a dialogue with her father, Prema declares her determination to live permanently in America. The narrator discloses:

> 'Ba I'm going to America.'
>
> 'When will you come back, Chhori?' he asked, his
>
> voice soft and gravelly on the line.

'I'm going to live there, Ba.'

'And when will you come back?' he asked, uncomprehending.

'No,' she said. I'm going to live there. Forever. (74)

Prema has completely changed her consciousness to exercise freedom and ready to live in America forever. Witnessing her mother's life, she is tired of living in her homeland where there is inequality in the norm of gender, caste and community. Thapa highlights the issue of freedom in the citation above.

With the thirst of freedom, knowledge and power, Prema hovers in the wilder world and experiences the pleasure and pain. However, she determines to overcome the pain and enjoy the pleasure in multiculturalism and hybridity. She wants to be independent transforming her own 'self' from unfree to free. For this reason, she determines to leave not only her homeland, elderly father and younger daughter but also her compatriots in Little Nepal. She knows that she cannot exercise freedom there. For the sake of freedom, knowledge and power, she gives up her family, Nepali citizenship and identity. Prema gives priority to human freedom, which is much more valuable than other things in human life. Spotlighting the theme of freedom in *Seasons of Flight* and its central character, Prema, Thapa speaks in *South Asia*:

> In my last novel, *Seasons of Flight*, there was this one character who wins a US lottery that was giving away green card visas. When I wrote that novel, I wanted to write about a woman who does not understand herself at all. She is locked out of her emotions. She doesn't understand what she wants and because of that, she becomes an enigma to herself as well as to me and the reader. I would like to spend time with this character as I would like to see how she struggles to understand what she is going through and, maybe, help

> her. This would be more interesting than meeting someone who can already articulate their experiences and emotions in a lucid way. (30)

Thapa provides strength, consciousness and willpower to her central character by which she searches alternative world, the world of freedom. Prema's freedom and emotions are locked out in the previous worlds. So, she jumps to the alternative world i.e. Bhabha's liminal third space to exercise freedom and emotions in her life. The diasporic writers like Manjushree Thapa write about more than nation and this is the case with the diasporic characters too. There is nothing constant in this twenty-first century world. Prema is one of the representatives of the dynamic third space.

New diasporas embrace diasporic sensibility. Many South Asian diasporic writers in the recent years have created unique diasporic literature with dynamism of diasporic characters who possess dual sensibility: mingling and differentiating past and present. Manjushree Thapa is one of such writers whose protagonist in *Seasons of Flight* owns diasporic sensibility. Prema breaks all social taboos of Nepali cultures and resides in Los Angles. Thapa has shown that cross-cultural consciousness has universal significance in multiculturalism. Whether the person is Nepali or American, one needs to have cross-cultural sensibility. The dynamic diasporic characters having diasporic sensibility like Prema use "adaptive strategies" (Vertorvec, *The Hindu* 157) in the place of settlement to plan a better future for themselves.

According to Bhabha, diasporas use "Culture as a strategy of survival" (*The Location* 247) by which they transform and translate them to adjust in the new world by crossing ethnic boundaries. Prema as a modern Nepali woman and a new diaspora in the West applies the adaptive strategies for her better life in the host land. Unlike the native culture, she keeps physical relationship with foreigners before marriage. She celebrates American festivals with

Americans. When her boyfriend, Luis takes her to Mata Sylvia, an American Hindu meditator who believes, "Krishna is my lord and master, but he is also my friend, my brother, my father, my husband, my lover. My heart is awash in healing, divine love" (Thapa 187), Prema does not believe it. She talks with Luis, "I do not think those Hindu gods exist" (183). She refers to the book "The Manussriti. Do you know its message? . . . . The book where it says women are slaves . . . . All stupid" (183). She remembers the cause of her mother's death, "She kept getting pregnant because she wanted a son! You know how many times? One baby before me, two afterwards – they all died. And she wanted was son! In Nepal they still – People still – All these stupid white people American Hindus call this Krishna love?" (183). Here, Prema is very much aggressive with the Hindu scriptures which defend discrimination and the discrimination is very painful. So, she rejects such a discriminatory tradition. She throws that cultural luggage and wants to live freely transforming her 'unfree self' into 'free self'. She wants to create her new identity after going through numerous transformations in terms of place, language, work and love-making. She creates an alternative world in the foreign land.

The dynamic diasporas search their progress from the "zigzag trail" (Thapa 186). After the close reading of Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*, the researcher of this dissertation briefly analyzes the diaspora-protagonist's pursuit of freedom dividing into five phases: sorrow, awareness, determination, romance and freedom.

In the first phase, the phase of sorrow, the protagonist of the novel, Prema studies at school in her poor dry, grassy hill top village where there is no electricity, radio, telephone, etc. Every year her mother becomes pregnant hoping to give birth to a son, but the newborn babies die. One baby before her birth and two after her die in the family. Her miserable parents believe on superstition that without son the gate of

heaven does not open for them. Her mother dies after the birth of her younger sister Bijaya and this is end of her mother's love. Moreover, there is Maoist insurgency. Due to the conflict between Maoists and the King, the life in the village is difficult.

In the second phase, the phase of awareness, Thapa has presented Prema's journey for education at a college in the capital of Nepal and her job in hill bazaar. When Prema joins forestry, she also gets job in a non-government organization in near Kathmandu. She works with a senior forester, Trailokya. During that time, she meets Rajan who also works in another NGO, a poverty-alleviation program and makes her boyfriend. Her education and employment make her aware about her condition. Only at that time when she reaches Kathmandu, she knows the condition of her family about who they are. She does not like to go back to the backward village. She is aware that without progress, her life is worthless. Then, she begins to search her future. After finishing her college, Prema applies for the American green card lottery. She wins it. The narrator comments, "Till she won the green-card lottery Prema had been content enough, having wrested a middle-class life out of a childhood of poverty" (59). She is proud of it and wants to progress more.

In the third phase, the phase of determination, Prema takes a flight to Los Angles and lives in Little Nepal with Nepali immigrants. She lives in a rental room neighboring with Sushil and Neeru. In this ghettos, she does not find America, her dreamland of freedom. The Nepali immigrants have been living like refugees there. They speak Nepali, the language of sorrow, talk about the land of sorrow especially about Maoists and King, and follow every Nepali traditional culture. Prema thinks that it is not her destination. Thus, she determines to leave this place.

In the fourth phase, the phase of romance, the Nepali diaspora-protagonist of the narrative goes to live with foreigners like Meg and Susan and works as a homecare attendant for the old lady, Esther King in Los Angles. In this phase, Prema involves in romance. No Nepali can see her there because she has "crossed the seven seas" (206) so she feels herself American. She exercises American free life styles such as visiting beach with bikini and flip-flops with American boyfriend, Luis, having food in Thai, Mexican, Indian and Korean restaurants, making physical relationships with Americans, speaking only English with them, participating in American festivals.

Prema adopts American cultures and enjoys Western freedom. However, her Latino-American boyfriend, Luis does not understand her past life. He does not understand that Prema never likes marriage and children, "I have never wanted to have children. Having children is – dangerous . . . there are too many human beings already on the earth. It is not good for the environment" (250). Misunderstanding grows between them. She feels alienated. Prema leaves Luis. She wants much more freedom and the value of life than there with him.

In the last phase, the phase of freedom, Prema meets an environmentalist, Fiona and her group who save El Segundo Blues, "A butterfly on the federal endangered list" (222). After the death of Esther, Prema changes her job as a conservationist and enjoys the beauty of nature with wildlife. She feels psychologically and geographically free in this place with "her kind" (233) where her life becomes complete. The textual data demonstrates Prema's achievement, freedom and complete life in the lines, "She was free. She was in good health. She had not got rich in America, but she had enough to eat, she had shelter and clothing. She was not affected by war or afflicted by the basis for it: overconsumption. She was content. Her

life was complete" (233). After leaving Luis's home and visiting Nepal as a tourist, she enjoys working with conservationists. Then, she keeps in contact with her family being an Americanized free human from this alternative third space. About Prema's place, the narrator comments, "She had found her place. Not in America, and not in Nepal, but in the wilderness at the heart of human habitation" (224). This place is Homi K. Bhabha's location of culture from where new culture and identity can be generated.

In short, living with this alternative liminal third space and multicultural society where there are various nations and cultures mingled and fused, Prema and her group feel free and able to produce and reproduce other new cultures and identities. In Prema's group of environmentalists, there are Fiona, Randa, Thom, Nancy, Haroun, Sarah, George, Bobby, Jose and many others from different countries and cultures. For Prema, the first space is her birth place, the second is the host land and the third is the fusion of both. This space is, hybrid, in-between space or third space of diasporas, which is fertile location of culture.

Conclusion: Freedom from Suffering and Change

In this globalized world, diasporas need to embrace cultures and politics/laws of their place of settlement for their adjustment. For this, they have to suffer and transform applying different adaptive strategies as stated above. Freedom comes only from suffering and change. In Manjushree Thapa's diasporic narrative, *Seasons of Flight*, the diasporic-protagonist, Prema celebrates suffering for the sake of freedom and a life of her own. Her journey from a poor hill top Nepali village to an American metropolis can be compared with a journey of butterfly, which suffers much before it

flies freely in the open sky. The diaspora's journey of life in the narrative takes a zigzag trail like the trail of a butterfly.

Prema's physical, psychological and cultural journeys as well as her changing situations in job transform her from unfree to free position. In every transformation and act of questing for freedom, she struggles and suffers much like the violent metamorphosis of butterfly at all the different stages of its life such as egg, caterpillar, pupa, chrysalis, and butterfly. After a long struggle and painful effort with the passing different seasons, only then would the butterfly be ready for a season of flight. After tremendous struggle and suffering in journey, Prema changes into a complete life with individual freedom like the fully-grown butterfly flying in the open sky. The open sky for diasporas like Prema is the third space from where the three worlds are visible: native, foreign and diasporic. To find the freedom and to belong to the free world through her activism, Prema abandons not only places but also people of her near and dear. In America too, she abandons her boyfriend, Luis, her Niru-*didi* and Shushil-*bhinaju*, the Nepali couple of Little Nepal who helps her initially.

The journey of Prema, as a dynamic diaspora, does not end but begins on the message of her work in the wilderness of human habitation. Territorially, even though, Prema moves from East to West for a greater freedom, she is ready for the next departure because she has started to work with multicultural society. Culturally, she has reached in such a fertile place of culture from where other new cultures repeatedly produce and reproduce unending. Psychologically, she has changed her mother's life to hers. There is freedom in every transformation stated above. In this sense, Prema is always in the pursuit of greater freedom in her life. In this way, the Nepali diasporic writer, Manjushree Thapa has highlighted the dynamism of diasporas in her narrative, *Seasons of Flight* creating a fictitious Nepali female diaspora. After a

great suffering and change, she exercises the Western freedom, which is personal in the text but it values to the South Asian, especially Nepali people as well.

Chapter VII

CLOSING STATEMENTS: DIASPORA AS EVOLUTION OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION

This chapter condenses the whole dissertation unfolding the major points of previous chapters and finally opens up new avenues for further research. This dissertation explored four things. First, the South Asian diasporic narratives produced by the South Asian diasporic writers address the politics of power, knowledge and freedom of the new diaspora people. The new diaspora people of literary representation as being the world citizens and having transnational networks, exercise greater power, knowledge and freedom in the West. Second, the narratives of representative South

Asian diasporic writers discussed in this dissertation celebrate diasporas' fluid identity and their activism that help to produce and reproduce, and to promote and spread new cultures and identities. They do not feel agonized, traumatized, melancholic and nostalgic despite their rootlessness and displacement; rather they celebrate their lives with homeland connectivity. Third, the more the diasporas suffer to adapt in the new setting, the stronger they become. They find beauty, power and freedom in hardships, alienation and unhomeliness. Fourth, multiple journeys of the cross-border migrants and their diasporization are the primary processes of human civilization because the new/dynamic/voluntary diasporas are conscious agents and public ambassadors of human evolution who frequently bear, translate and transform the existing cultures and identities into innovative as they are not confined within a nation.

The general objective of this dissertation was to study the politics of diasporas and their journey as the evolution of human civilization. The more specific objectives were to explore the causes of the celebration of South Asian diasporas' sufferings and hardships by critically analyzing the representative South Asian diasporic narratives; and to examine their contribution to produce and reproduce new cultures and identities in order to construct a new world.

In order to test the hypothesis and find the answers to the fixed questions and to achieve the set goals, this dissertation has anchored the theoretical insights as methodological tools from postcolonial diasporic critics such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha and Stuart Hall. Besides, the researcher has also hooked the theoretical frameworks from Stephen Vertovec, Vijay Mishra, James Clifford, Avtar Brah Paul Gilroy and Daphne Grace as well as other postcolonial diasporic critics' ideas wherever they have been found necessary for the analysis of the primary texts selected for this study.

The researcher has connected the concepts of the theorists mentioned above to analyze the politics of diasporas by using qualitative method. I have explored the knowledge, power and freedom of the South Asian new diasporas or the diasporas of border in the literary representation of prominent South Asian diasporic writers. The writers and their narratives I have chosen are Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (Indian), Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (Sri Lankan), Mohasin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Pakistani) and Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* (Nepali). I assumed that these writers and their narratives cover whole South Asian diasporic narratives for the purpose of my study. On the basis of my research, I have drawn some important findings that are valid and are relevant to the contemporary politics of South Asian diasporic discourse.

Transformation in diasporas is an inevitable phenomenon by which they shape and reshape their identities, and invent new selves. Their politics is to be changed territorially, culturally and psychologically, and to be the agents of change in order to form new world. Diasporas' ultimate goal by changing from one situation to another through journey is to exercise knowledge, power and freedom. The South Asian diasporic writers selected in this study have advocated and glorified the politics of diasporas through their narratives.

In Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*, the female South Asian diaspora protagonists are similar type. Jasmine, a Hindu rural Indian Panjabi Hasnapuri girl and Prema, a Hindu Nepali hilltop village girl express their experiences and various threads of transformations, and achieve more autonomous selfhood, assertiveness and freedom than they had before. Both the Western-trained Indian and Nepali diasporas enjoy Western knowledge and freedom as Mukherjee and Thapa convey that America is a free country and a land of opportunities. Mukherjee

portrays the title character's constant journey of transformation from one situation to another. The numerous transformations of the diaspora-protagonist are accompanied by a series of names that starts from Jyoti to Jasmine to Kali to Jazzy to Jase to Jane. Her transformations gradually provide her self-confidence, power and freedom. Similarly, Thapa's protagonist, Prema changes from a dependent innocent village girl to a metropolitan modern American lady with self-empowerment. Being a new diasporas, having fluid identities, Jasmine and Prema both taste the greater power, knowledge and freedom, and swim against the current for assertiveness in the West where nothing is rooted anymore but everything is in motion. They enjoy multicultural flavor in the place of residence.

Both Jasmine and Prema celebrate suffering and pain, adventure and risk for exercising financial and cultural boldness, and freedom inserting themselves in the flesh and blood of the West. They see beauty and power in physical as well as psychological suffering, nostalgia, alienation and displacement. At the end of Mukherjee's narrative, her eponymous diasporic character's journey does not end but begins on the message of optimism because she has carried American baby in her womb. Geographically, she has moved from East to West for greater freedom and power but symbolically, she is ready for the next departure in which Jasmine may have different challenges, identity and transformation ahead. Similarly, Thapa's Prema centers her every activity for the quest of freedom and power like the flight of butterfly that suffers to be full butterfly and flies freely in the open space. Prema's diasporic journey and transformation from South Asia to America is compared with the transformation of larva into a fully-grown butterfly after coming out of the cocoon after a tremendous struggle and suffering.

Both diasporic writers, Mukherjee and Thapa, present dynamism of Westernized female diasporas who stay in Bhabha's liminal third space and ready to produce and reproduce new cultures, identities and worlds. Jasmine is ready to produce another new world carrying American baby in her womb whereas Prema is ready to produce new cultures being conservationist staying at the free multicultural world. The free world for her is neither Nepal nor America but the wilderness of human habitation, the third space from where the three worlds are visible. These diasporas' inner and outer journeys are unending because they are in such a fertile and powerful postcolonial diasporic free space that they become able to exercise cultural power to construct another new world. For the achievement of greater power and freedom, both Jasmine and Prema, the South Asian literary representative diasporic characters, in *Jasmine* and *Seasons of Flight* abandon their place of birth and their nears and dears without any regret. Moreover, both diasporas do not like to live with South Asian people even in America. Jasmine does not like to live with Prof. Devinder Vadhera and his family in New York. Likewise, Prema dislikes residing with Niru-*didi* and Sushil-*vinaju* at Little Nepal in Los Angeles. These places for both Jasmine and Prema are the places for old diasporas or refugees who do not have willpower and are not in quest of power, freedom and knowledge.

The new and dynamic diasporas, Jasmine and Prema, only like to visit their place of birth and the residence of South Asian migrant people in the West as being tourist. Mukherjee and Thapa in their narratives create such diasporic protagonists who do not mourn in their rootlessness and displacement rather they engage in exercising the power and freedom hoping to achieve further greater power and freedom, assertiveness, strength and knowledge with full of dynamism and willpower as Stuart Hall's notion of diasporas' cultural identity which is never complete but

always in process. Jasmine's and Prema's pursuit of power, knowledge and freedom is not complete but in process though they succeeded something, which is personal in Mukherjee's and Thapa's texts but it makes meanings and values to all dynamic South Asian diasporic people. The textual data and evidences stated in the third and sixth chapters above exhibit us that both protagonists of these writers feel free and successful after a long struggle and suffering in their lives. Mukherjee and Thapa have depicted the South Asian diasporas in their narratives as symbols of strength. Jasmine and Prema have gathered empirical knowledge and firsthand experience, assertiveness and freedom, power and consciousness through adverse conditions of diasporic journeys and harsh realities of life in order to find meaning and value of living life.

The other South Asian diasporic writers discussed in this study, Michael Ondaatje and Mohasin Hamid advocate the politics of transnational diasporas in their narratives. Transnational diasporas are those immigrants having flexible identity who create social fields to connect their native country with their country of settlement. Whether they are returnee or non-returnee diasporas, they involve in transnational activities such as political, sociocultural and economic creating a connectivity that develops cross-border or trans-border relations. Ondaatje's diasporic protagonist in *Anil's Ghost* possesses the capacity to investigate history, politics and culture of Sri Lanka affected by the horrors of postcolonial civil war. His protagonist, Anil Tissera, a Western-trained Sri Lankan diaspora working at the International Center for Human Rights Organization of United Nations as a forensic specialist, gains power, knowledge and freedom for being a diaspora, and is able to explore the organized campaigns of murder or extrajudicial execution in the South Asian island. Ondaatje demonstrates the power, knowledge and freedom of Anil and her contribution to her native country in Sri Lankan post-civil war period.

Hamid in his South Asian diasporic narrative, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* celebrates diasporas' power, knowledge and freedom. His diasporic character of literary representation, Changez reveals reality of Westerners' gaze upon Muslim diasporas before and after the 9/11 event which is the turning point in the history and politics of the relationship between the West and the East, especially South Asia in the context of politicized climate. Hamid's protagonist, Changez, an American-trained Muslim diaspora appears as a useful human capital to strengthen American capitalism like Anil in Ondaatje's narrative who has become a human capital for digging out the Sri Lankan history, politics and culture. Exclusion of the Third World migrant communities may weaken the soul of multicultural America. Thus, the West needs to change its stereotypical conception and political gaze on the South Asian diasporas whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims.

Both Ondaatje and Hamid by textualizing the history and historicizing the texts consider diasporas as human capital. In this postcolonial and globalized world, human capital is much more productive and valuable than other capitals because it has become the source of other capitals unlike in the pre-colonial or colonial periods. The 'brain drain' situation has shifted to 'brain gain' now due to diasporizaton. Both Ondaatje's Anil and Hamid's Changez are high-skilled workers. Their knowledge, skill and experience are as valuable in host land as in homeland. They transfer knowledge and bridge the gap between South Asia and the West. Anil as forensic specialist at the Center of Human Rights Organization in Geneva uses her knowledge for the development of not only the other parts of the globe but also her country of origin, Sri Lanka to reveal the historical, political and cultural reality. Likewise, Changez's knowledge, skill and experience working in the prestigious company, Underwood Samson in America as a valuation analyst become productive in his

country, Pakistan. These South Asian diasporas in the literary representations have become not 'brain drain' but 'brain gain' and instruments of human capital in their countries of origin. The textual data present us that both protagonists of the South Asian narratives, *Anil's Ghost* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* have power, knowledge and freedom of observing here and there or inside and outside from the diasporic space.

In all the selected South Asian diasporic narratives discussed in this study, Mukherjee, Ondaatje, Hamid and Thapa celebrate the activism of new diasporas and their politics of empowering and strengthening them by using different strategies such as nation-branding, soft power diplomacy, culture, resistance and negotiation in the West. The diaspora protagonists of literary representation of South Asian narratives such as Jasmine, Anil, Changez and Prema exercise greater power, freedom and knowledge, and engage in producing and reproducing, promoting and spreading new cultures and identities from the liminal diasporic space. Geographically, psychologically and culturally, they feel free without any regret of leaving their place of birth. Moreover, they play the role of powerful brand ambassadors creating a triadic connectivity among the nations. Having the knowledge and experience of both cultures, geo-politics, bio-politics, they can implement their strategies effectively such as persuading, building and maintaining relationships, etc.

The human populations are on move from one place to another throughout the history of human evolution for various reasons. External migration produces diaspora; diasporization is one of the processes and survival mechanisms of human civilization that has been practiced since the time immemorial by all human beings, and diasporas are its chief agents. Dispersion of people is an age-old practice of all human society in the quest for progress. Whether the diasporizaion may occur forcefully such as by

natural disaster, unemployment and conflicts or voluntarily, it has become a phenomenon of human evolution. Regardless of more and more restriction, no country is able to stop such human movement. Unlike earlier diasporas, the modern diasporas of dynamic dimensions on literature have become a very fascinating area of inquiry in this interconnected globalized world. The present day diasporas are largely motivated by their own interest such as quest for power, knowledge and freedom. Jasmine, Anil, Changez and Prema are the representatives of such diasporas from South Asian diasporic narratives who engage in the formation of new civilization.

Civilization never stops until there is existence of human kind. The space of diasporas is different from the space of non-diasporas. I found that from their postcolonial diasporic liminal space, the representative diasporic characters of the discussed literary texts create and recreate new civilization and culture by action and reaction, resistance and negotiation. It is an experimental truth that any new power, knowledge and freedom are generated from the friction of different things or thoughts. In the same way, new civilization can be generated from different conflicting cultures and identities of the diasporas' engagement. The newness contents multi-power of culture, identity, knowledge and freedom, which the South Asian diasporic characters like Jasmine, Anil, Changez and Prema of the literary representation of South Asian diasporic narratives produced by Mukherjee, Ondaatje, Hamid and Thapa exercise in their lives. In a word, diasporization and the multiple journeys of diasporas evolve human civilization.

I have organized this dissertation into seven chapters. Of the seven chapters in this research, the introductory chapter has laid foundation for the entire research project by outlying the notion, development, features and categories of diasporas. It also has showed the point of departure for the research, formulated the research

questions, mentioned the hypothesis, set the objectives, defined the universe of research, and fixed the theoretical framework and methodological approaches.

The second chapter has offered the conceptual framework for the entire research. It has outlined and mentioned the politics and power of postcolonial diasporas, significance and strategy of diasporic narratives, formation of identity-politics, cultural power and diasporic consciousness, and has mapped the location and formation of the South Asian diasporic narratives.

The third chapter has investigated the core issue of the inquiries in Indian diasporas by the close study of Bharati Mukherjee's diasporic narrative, *Jasmine*. It has begun with the aestheticization of South Asian diasporas. It means that the South Asian diasporas have got assertiveness, power, knowledge and freedom only from their cultural transformation. For the process of cultural transformation, Mukherjee's diasporic protagonist in the literary representation has struggled and suffered throughout life. This chapter has concluded that suffering is the true source of diasporic consciousness, power and freedom because it teaches the diasporas about how to struggle for survival in the new place. Thus, there is the beauty in suffering.

The fourth chapter has explored the issue of inquiries in Sri Lankan diasporic narrative, *Anil's Ghost* produced by the South Asian diasporic writer, Michael Ondaatje. It has examined the activism of transnational diasporas who are the instruments of human capital in the postcolonial and globalized world. After a close study of this text, I have found that the Western-trained South Asian transnational diasporas have power and knowledge of investigating historical, cultural and political truth/evidence that had hidden by the power. This chapter has explored the power, knowledge and freedom of the Sri Lankan diaspora, Anil to dig out the hidden

evidence about the extrajudicial execution made in the Sri Lankan ethnic-war. The diaspora's power and knowledge has global status.

The fifth chapter has examined the central issue of this research in Pakistani diasporas by the close reading of Mohsin Hamid'd postcolonial diasporic political narrative, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. It has explored diasporic liminality in the South Asian dislocated Muslim diasporas before and after the tragic event happened on 9/11, a turning point in the history of the relationship between East and West. This chapter has analyzed the power, knowledge and freedom of the highly educated US-trained Pakistani diaspora, Changez in the literary representation of South Asian Muslim diasporic writer. It has proved from the textual and theoretical data that South Asian Muslim diasporas have also contributed and strengthened American capitalism and multiculturalism, a soul of multicultural America. Hamid's postcolonial diasporic character, Changez in the narrative has gained the power, knowledge and freedom to throw the Western weapon of fundamentalism toward the West. The diasporic character has possessed the diasporic power and sensibility to deconstruct the stereotypical concept of non-negotiable Americanism.

The sixth chapter has explored the key issue of inquires in Nepali diasporas from Himalayan nation Nepal through the close textual reading of Manjushree Thapa's diasporic narrative, *Seasons of Flight*. It has scrutinized the dynamism of Western-trained new South Asian diasporas and their pursuit of freedom, knowledge and power. The inner and outer journey of diasporic character, Prema from a Nepali village up in the hills to a beachside of cosmopolitan city in Los Angeles, USA focuses on the thirst for individual freedom, empowerment and complete human. Prema's diasporic journey is compared with the flight of butterfly that suffers to be full butterfly transforming and struggling from one stage to another seeking for the

open sky. The open sky for the South Asian diasporas of literary representation like Prema is the liminal third space from where the three worlds: native, foreign and diasporic are visible. Moreover, being a female Nepali diaspora migrated from the traditional and superstitious Nepali society, she has changed her mother's life to hers staying at the fertile free space. This is a fertile space to produce and reproduce new culture and identity for the evolution of human civilization. The textual data has demonstrated that after forming such a diasporic, new or free world, the Nepali diaspora in Thapa's diasporic narrative has exercised greater freedom, knowledge and power in the West. Though it is personal in the text, it values to the entire South Asian dynamic diasporas who have got willpower.

On the basis of the conceptual framework fixed in the first and second chapters, I have drawn the findings from the close textual reading of the four South Asian diasporic narratives discussed in this dissertation. I found that the politics of the modern diasporas in the narratives produced by the South Asian diasporic writers is to celebrate their fluid cultures, identities, and promote the power, knowledge and freedom in them. With diasporic sensibility, the diasporas as the free actors and public diplomats exercise greater power, knowledge and freedom in their countries of origin as well as the countries of settlement than they had exercised in their past because they are not restricted within a nation-state. Furthermore, the voluntary diasporas in this globalized world do not lament despite their displacement and rootlessness. They do not have any regret for saying good-bye to their land of origin, family, relative and culture; rather they are always in search of power, knowledge and freedom for better future. I found that diasporization is the main process of human civilization. Having diasporic sensibility and consciousness with multiple journeys, the South Asian

diasporas are always in pursuit of power, knowledge and freedom that promote human advancement.

This research has opened up several avenues for further research. First, the future researchers can work on 'South Asian diasporas and international relations'. Under this study, the potential researchers can explore the power of South Asian diasporic writers and their contributions to make a good diplomatic relationship between South Asia and the West in this interconnected postcolonial globalized world. They can study the roles of diasporas in local, regional and global relations. It can be relevant to both the politicians of South Asian countries and the West. This study can also encourage the South Asian diasporas permanently settling in the West for contributing their homelands in many fields.

Second, the new researchers can investigate the condition of the high-skilled and low-skilled South Asian diasporas in the literary representation of South Asian narratives. They can reveal the diasporas' psychological and social position in the place of residence. They can seek out the experiences of the both kinds of diasporas.

Third, the future researchers can examine the different perspectives of first and the second generations of South Asian diasporas to their lands of origin and settlement. Taking some South Asian texts produced by the South Asian diasporic writers, the researchers can explore generational difference in the use of individual freedom in the West. This research is relevant to the governments of the related countries to make national policies on immigration.

Fourth, the future researchers can seek out on the issue of the South Asian diasporas as brain drain or brain gain in the postcolonial world. Under this research, the researchers can evaluate different types of diasporas and their engagement for local and global development. For some countries, diasporas are brain drain whereas

they are brain gain for other countries. The new researchers can explore on this debate in South Asian context. This research is also important for the South Asian countries to make foreign plans and policies because South Asia is one of the big regions of sending large number of skilled human resources like doctors, professors, IT engineers and cream students to Europe and America. The researchers can focus on the global circulation of skills through South Asian diasporas.

Fifth, the other rich area of diaspora studies for the future researchers is the issue of family disintegration and motivation to cosmopolitanism in the narratives produced by South Asian diasporic writers. Under this study, the researchers explore the disintegration of age-old joint families caused by migration. They can highlight the diasporas abroad from the Third World countries like Nepal who like to enjoy cosmopolitan individual freedom. Settling in such a comfort zone, the South Asian diasporas grown up in narrow, traditional and superstitious family do not regret for disinteresting their families.

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