

I: Introduction to *Seasons of Flight* in the Light of Transnationalism

This research project explores the idea of transnationalism in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* by applying the theories of transnationalism and diaspora. Transnationalism as concept, theory and experience has nourished an important literature in humanities and social sciences. In practice, transnationalism refers to increasing functional integration of processes that are related to cross-borders or bordered relations of individuals, groups, firms and to mobilizations beyond the national boundaries. Individuals, groups, institutions and states interact with each other in a new global space where cultural and political characteristic of national societies are combined with emerging transnational and multinational activities. This research project is an attempt to read Manjushree Thapa's novel, *Seasons of Flight* as an expression of the exile experience that a non-native individual experiences after living in a foreign land. The reflections of every individual who lives in a different cultural country, is similar to the case of Prema and other characters of *Seasons of Flight*. The characters are the metaphors to represent all the migrants living in around the world either to earn money or to earn a further degree. This project examines the sensitive experiences of Manjushree Thapa herself living in Canada.

The novel is at once a personal drama depicting the life of Prema, a Nepali immigrant to United States of America, and a social panorama pointing up aspects of identity and cross-cultural experiences. Thapa's narrative skills and keen observations are evident throughout the text rendered in its restrained, reasonable, almost matter-of-fact ventilation of her own attitudes and experiences and the ones of those whose culture has left distinguishing scars on her identity. Her observations include comments on the life of Prema as a Nepali Immigrant, the mechanics of immigration, traditional Nepali society, and the condition of immigrants in

America. The lived reality of relocations and dislocations of vast populations makes the phenomenon of diaspora a commonplace in our time.

Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* dramatizes national imagination beyond the geo-cultural boundary of a nation. At the heart of this novel is the projection of how the nationalistic feelings those Nepalese immigrants in the United States of America repeatedly experience. By showing Nepalese immigrants in the United States of America submerged in nationalistic sensibilities through different mediums, Thapa critiques the false consciousness of nationalism rigorously and monolithically defined by the state on the basis of geographical boundary. In the era of globalization, the sense of nationalism can transcend the territorial boundaries of the nation, thus bringing a vibrant transnationalism to the fore. Before interpreting the mentioned novel from the lens of transnationalism, it is imperative to discuss about the concept of transnationalism in relation to diaspora in detail.

Transnationalism as concept, theory and experience has nourished an important literature in social sciences. In practice, transnationalism refers to increasing trans-border relations of individuals, groups, firms and to mobilizations beyond state boundaries. Individuals, groups, institutions and states interact with each other in a new global space where cultural and political characteristic of national societies are combined with emerging multilevel and multinational activities. Transnationalism is a process of globalization. The assumption that people will live their lives in one place, according to one set of national and cultural norms, in countries with impermeable national borders, no longer holds. Rather, in the 21st century, more and more people will belong to two or more societies at the same time. This is what many researchers refer to as transnational migration. Transnational migrants work, pray, and express their political interests in several contexts rather than in a single nation-state. Some will put down roots in a host country, maintain strong homeland ties, and

belong to religious and political movements that span the globe. These allegiances are not antithetical to one another.

As transnationalism refers to “increasing trans-border relations of individuals, groups, and firms and to mobilizations beyond state boundaries, a transnational subject interacts with each other in a new global space”(Brent, 23), where cultural and political characteristic of national societies are combined with multiple layer of activities and enterprises.

Transnationalism is a part of the process of globalization. In the 21st century, more and more people belong to two or more societies at the same time due to the frequency of movements and transnational migrations.

Transnational subjects work, pray, and express their political interests in several contexts rather than in a single nation-state. Some simply put down roots in a host country, maintain strong homeland ties, and belong to religious and political movements that span the globe. These allegiances are not antithetical to one another. The concept of transnationalism is connected with the idea of multiple links and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of the nation. Transnationalism “creates a greater degree of connection between individuals, communities and societies across borders, bringing about changes in the social, cultural, economic and political landscapes of societies of origin and destination. Cross-border connections between societies resulting from migration make one’s life distinctly dynamic and dynamically distinct” (Blunt 45).

Transnational migration is not new. In the early part of the 1900s, European immigrants also returned to live in their home countries or remained active in the political and economic affairs of their homelands from their posts in America. Some things are new, however, including ease of transportation and communication, the mode in which migrants are inserted into the labor market, sending-states' increasing dependence on remittances, and

the policies they put in place to encourage migrants' enduring long-distance nationalism. Most migrants are occasional transnational activists. At some stages in their lives they are more focused on their countries of origin while at others they are more involved in their countries of reception. Similarly, they climb two different social ladders, moving up, remaining steady, or experiencing downward mobility, in various combinations, with respect to both sites.

Transnationalism is “often associated with globalization. **Globalization** is the accelerating interdependence of nations in a world system linked economically and through mass media and modern transportation systems. **Transnationalism** also refers to the extending or going beyond national boundaries” (Altar, 102). Globalization also involves the diffusion or exchange of custom, media, technology, finance, and ideas through specific points of departure and arrival and works to promote change and development in our world in which nations and people have become increasingly interlinked and mutually dependent. Although globalization and transnationalism may not seem mutually exclusive in some contexts, “transnationalism is the term of choice when referring, for example, to the migration of nationals across the borders of one or more nations” (Altar, 111). In many instances, transnationalism becomes an agent of globalization. For example, migrant workers who spend half the year in Nepal and half in the India are simply referring to cross the national borders by the workers, who are working in compliance with another nation for a certain gain. As a result, the favored outcome is the interlacing of social relations 'at a distance' with local contextualities, or globalization. In this case, transnationalism is a vehicle of globalization.

Recent anthropological research acknowledges both the point of departure and the point of arrival are in a constant state of cultural flux, making the search for steady points of reference exceedingly difficult. Moreover, the preconceived notions of **isomorphism** and

border-oriented culture are giving way to the idea of culture as fundamentally fractal and overlapping. In many cases, globalization and global interactions create tension between **cultural homogenization**, emulation or acculturation towards a multitude of foreign influences, and **cultural heterogenization**, or maintaining the traits and integrity of the initial culture.

Although cultural homogenization, often associated with Americanization and **commoditization**, may be a legitimate concern in some instances, it is important to note that the fears of homogenization can be exploited by nation-states in relation to their own minorities, by posing global commoditization (or capitalism, or some other external enemy) as more real than the threat of its own hegemonic strategies. Furthermore, as the spread of media and technology increases in speed, quantity, and influence, states find themselves pressed to stay open to these forces that have fueled consumerism throughout the world and have increased the craving, even in the non-Western world, for new commodities and spectacles. To elaborate further, these forces of globalization function through, and are maintained by, international commerce, travel, tourism, transnational migration, the media and other forms of technology.

It is also important to note that unlike many other theories, globalization and transnationalism are modern theories, so they are still being studied, constructed and critiqued. Transnationalism is a part of the process of capitalist globalization. The concept of transnationalism refers to multiple links and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of the nation. Transnationalism “creates a greater degree of connection between individuals, communities and societies across borders, bringing about changes in the social, cultural, economic and political landscapes of societies of origin and destination. Cross-border connections between societies resulting from migration make one’s life distinctly dynamic and dynamically distinct” (Altar, 114).

The term “transnationalism” was first used by Randolph S. Bourne in his 1916 article “Transnational America,” to refer “a new way of thinking about relationships between cultures” (qtd. in Wiles, 117). A transnational perspective on migration is increasingly relevant due to the forces of globalization and their impacts on mobility. It is now easier than ever to be connected to two or more realities across national borders. The accelerated development of communication, transport, trade and information networks through globalization has strengthened the connections of migrants to two or more places. Migration patterns have also been changed. Today, migration can be short-term or long-term, temporary or permanent, or consist of a series of multi-stage itineraries including back to the point of origin.

Migrants keep moving from one particular region or city to another particular region or city in another country often with the help of networks. While not a new phenomenon, it is one medium of transnationalism. As a result of these transformations, Beena Agrawal in her article “Transnationalism and Identity” says, “migrants may obtain education in one country, work and raise children in another and retire in a third, as one of many variations” (16). It means people keep on moving from one country to another country from different purposes in the era of globalization. In their constant movements, there will be the movement of idea, capital, objects and many more. In this connection, Blunt expresses “the cultural geographies of mobility, transnationality and diaspora refer to the mobility of people, capital, ideas and objects, and the production of space, networks and politics by and through such mobility” (6). Transnationalism, in fact, seeks to facilitate the flow of people, ideas, and goods among regions. It has increasing relevance with the rapid growth of capitalist globalization. It links specific nation-state boundaries with for instance migratory workforces, globalized corporations, global money flow, global information flow, and global scientific cooperation to other specific nation-state boundaries. Explaining transnational space, Brickell and

Dattawrite “situates within the intersections between place and displacement, location and mobility, settlement and return, cities are critical to the construction of migrant landscapes and the ways in which they reflect and influence migratory movements, politics and narratives” (16).

The movement from origin country to host country also means the process of searching new home and identity in the transnational boundaries. Searching home is an important step of the cross-border migrants to get solace from diversities. As Blunt and Dowling put:

Home as a sense of belonging or attachment is ... very visible as one of the key characteristics of the contemporary world: the historically unprecedented number of people migrating across countries, as, for instance, refugees and asylum seekers, or as temporary or permanent workers. Notions of home are central in these migrations. Movement may necessitate or be precipitated by a disruption to a sense of home, as people leave or in some cases flee one home for another. These international movements are also processes of establishing home, as senses of belonging and identity move over space and are created in new places. (2)

Home is a key concept in understanding processes of diaspora and transnationality. The family can be an emotional center for the transnational individual, providing the feelings of comfort and support typically associated with being at home. Home can also be a process, a project in the making. As Nowicka observes, “home is something that one constructs, not a particular place, not a location but an entity in becoming” (77). Among the challenges of setting up a home in a foreign country, many transnationals seem to enjoy the sudden sense of freedom and independence to build a life and create a home that best fits their needs and

their personalities, not the expectations or the customs of their home countries or their families.

The sense of freedom can come not only from the self-designed nature of the new home, but also, unexpectedly, from the home one leaves behind. The knowledge that there is a permanent base somewhere else, always available, always willing to go back home, allows for a greater willingness to experiment with new homes.

The globalization process, marked by increased frequency and ease of travel and communication, has changed the nature of immigration. Most immigrants establish their host country as a permanent base, while still maintaining strong political, social and cultural ties to their homeland. Immigration has come to mean transnational migration. As Glick Schiller says, “it is the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous, multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (55). This process allows the transnational migrants to fashion a cross-national existence that engages them in the political and social life of both their home and host country. The sense of familial ties always haunts the transnational subjects. They enjoy in their host country and again through nostalgia they are haunted by the family fun of the country of origin.

To understand transnational families better, one needs to consider the role emotions play in establishing a transnational family dynamic. As Skrbis puts “migrant stories are linked with the experiences of adjustment, settlement, nostalgia, a shattered sense of belonging, renewal, loss, discrimination, abrupt endings, new beginnings and new opportunities—all potent sources of emotions” (236).

They have the means to travel and communicate with the family and friends in the home country, making the transnational experience less challenging. Having professional employment and a green card could alleviate, but does not eliminate, the emotional burden of

being separated from one's home and family. As Falikov writes, "it is indisputable that the integrated economies of today allow for much greater transnational activity, and offer an attractive, and at times, deceiving, imagined possibility of living with two hearts rather than with one divided heart" (399). Living with two hearts is distinct and dynamic than that of divided self.

Due to technological advances and the relative ease of travel, geographical locations are no longer limiting in terms of people's professional and personal lives. This mobility has caused national boundaries to be losing their past significance, if not gradually dissolving. Along the same lines, national identity is becoming a thing of the past, as individuals are adopting cross-national and multicultural identities. The concept of transnationalism, as a process through which people adjust to a new culture but maintain social and cultural ties to their home countries. The redefined concept of immigration has pushed for reconsideration of the concept of home. Home has been traditionally conceptualized as a fixed place; being at home means being stationary, centered, bounded, fitted, engaged and grounded. The sense of freedom comes from both the detachment from geographical constraints, as well as from the ability of people to create a home in a new environment, free from the expectations, familial constraints, or norms of their society of origin.

Transnationalism thus has significant implications for the way we conceptualize immigration. Traditionally, immigration has been seen as an autonomous process, driven by conditions such as poverty and overpopulation in the country of origin. Even though overpopulation, economic stagnation, and poverty all continue to create pressures for migration, they alone are not enough to produce large international migration flows. The globalization process, marked by increased frequency and ease of travel and communication, has changed the nature of immigration. Most immigrants establish their host country as a

permanent base, while still maintaining strong political, social and cultural ties to their homeland. Immigration has come to mean transnational migration today.

Thapa's protagonist Prema, in *Seasons of Flight* as a transnational subject undergoes with multiple and dynamic forms of life. Due to the frequency of mobility from one place to another place, her national identity is becoming a thing of the past as she adopts the cross-national and multicultural identities with heightened sense of dynamism.

The novel revolves around the transnational subject, Prema, its protagonist, a woman who immigrated to America from a misty hilly region of Nepal, and lives in Los Angeles. Thapa, through Prema interrogates the issue of Nepali identity, belonging, sense of home connection, and Nepaliness conflated with Indianness in modern metropolitan city. Prema's quest for fulfillment and desire to reinvent herself gets shattered in America where she lands after winning Green Card Lottery from her birth place in Nepal.

Moreover, her Nepaliness and her identity get constantly conflated with Indianness, as she encounters challenging situation. Prema is not able to say she is Nepali but, instead, she claims to be an Indian in her journey to find completeness in life. Prema constantly makes an attempt to embrace it. Prema has to undergo a cultural transformation to embrace American culture, and assert her identity.

The transnationalistic experience is defined not by purity, but by heterogeneity and diversity. Thapa also links the Nepali language, Hinduism and nationhood through her protagonist, Prema, who seeks to fit herself into multicultural American society, which constantly denies her Nepaliness and her desire to retain her separate identity amidst multicultural people of the Los Angeles metropolis. Language and religion become the strongest markers of nationality and ethnic identity in the foreign land. Hindu rituals and

practices largely shape Prema's cultural values. She seeks to find solace and comfort in an ammonite, a Hindu religious emblem, which she has acquired from her mother's shrine. Prema's story starts in a village near Kathmandu, a poor Maoist war-stricken village in the hills of Nepal. Her story moves quickly through the loss of her mother in childhood, and the commonplace hardships of poverty, to a college degree in forestry, resulting in a job at an NGO in the hilly bazaar, and a romance with a fellow worker at the NGO. Prema's younger sister runs off with Maoist rebels when they come calling despite her objections, and she resigns. Her undemanding father only wants her to be progressive in life.

One day Prema happens to sign up for the US Green Card Lottery. When she wins, she is more driven by a faint hope of opportunity for liberation from her present situation and decides to leave her country for good. Now, she is in a new location with new experiences and freedom. When she finds a lover in the US, an attractive Guatemalan, she responds with an ardor of native to her own passionate nature and her culture. Prema accepts living with her boyfriend, Luis, but cannot enjoy the relationship with him for long. Her sexual encounters with other men are not only unexpected phenomena but also very distinct and dynamic.

Prema is in a hybrid position. Hybridity challenges the very idea of center and margin and challenges the established hierarchies. Thus, hybridity subverts the notion of identity as fixed and stable. It assumes it to be changing as we encounter different cultures. No language or culture can be presented in pure form but always the zones of shifting national boundaries and hybridization. The instability of meaning in language leads us to think of cultural identities and identifications as always a place of borders and hybridity rather than stable entities. The protagonist of the novel keeps visiting different people and places in America. She has a kind of attachment with other Nepali immigrants there. She also visits

Nepal time to time. Even if she is there is America, she realizes that she is in Nepali community as she finds different localities established by Nepali in America.

The sense of nationalism without nation has increasing relevance with the rapid growth of globalization. It links transnational boundaries with migratory workforces, globalized corporations, global money flow, global information flow, and global scientific cooperation to other specific nation-state boundaries. As Prema has undergone with these situations in the mentioned novel, she is one of the brilliant examples of transnational subjects.

Literature Review

From the very outset of its publication Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* has got critical attention from scholars and critics from different countries. In this regard, Abdullah Khan's says, "*Seasons of Flight* is an account of a journey undertaken by Prema from a scenic Nepali village to a culturally and socially multi-hued metropolis in the U.S. The journey in this case is not only the geographical distance, but also the mental and the cultural one" (5). Another critic, Om Tiwari focusing the novel as extraordinary journey meant for progress says:

The book is named on span of the year when Butterflies begin flying and subsequently dies. Prema is a Nepali girl who travels all the way to America from a distant village near Kathmandu. An extraordinary journey meant for progress – that her father always says life is all about. She is a run-away from life in the village that is infested with Maoist aggression – place where even girls are taken away to build a militant-army, her sister is forced to join it. (4)

Similarly, Archana Thapa in *The Kathmandu Post*, by highlighting the theme of identity and exile in the novels puts:

Along with the theme of feminine subjectivity, the theme of identity is equally strong in the novel. Identity, as a socio-cultural constructs, provides a narrative structure to an individual's or group's life. The novel opens with Prema's experience of "being Nepali" in the US. A very simple question, "Where are you from?" and the chain of conversation that follows, not only project Prema's attempt to articulate her national identity but also delivers a sense of 'shared experience' to the readers. For many Nepali readers, who have similar experiences abroad, Prema's answer "from Nepal"—which is often misunderstood by Americans as "Naples"—highlights the struggle of Nepali diaspora to retain their national identity. (12)

In the same way, PallakGupteinterprets the novel in the light of home and exile. He further says that the exilic life in foreign countries galvanizes the sense of homelessness and rootlessness in Prema. He says:

Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* takes us to Nepal and America with Prema. Born and brought up in a small hamlet of Nepal, moves to the strife torn Kathmandu for higher education and then to take up a job. However, the increasing Maoism and violence in Nepal suffocates her and she longs to escape 'home' and go elsewhere for solace. Home which signifies peace leaves her in a state of restlessness and she flies to America on an unexpected green card lottery. But does changing countries bring her peace? Does America help her forget home? Does the American soil change her love for the beautiful ecology of Nepal? The novel eventually answers these question, but Nepal figures large as both 'home' and 'exile' for Prema. (7)

By the same token, highlighting this novel as delving into the journey of life across time, space and human society Rabi Thapa says:

Seasons of Flight is a serious attempt to delve into the journey of life across time, space and human society. It will speak to many Nepalis who have experienced the pleasure and pain of leaving one's home behind and seeking another. It will also reach those who may have wondered, however fleetingly, what the lives of the "Other" in their own cities are like. Thapa manages to capture the nuances of America and its variegated social and physical landscape. What invisible lines lie between the native and the interloper, and how fluid are these identities? (3)

Likewise, *The Boston Globe* describes *Seasons of Flight* as "beautifully crafted story that reaffirm Thapa's status as one of Nepal's most accomplished and graceful young writers" (26). In the same fashion, Shraya Pandit writes in *The Kathmandu Post*: "though the major female character in this novel, Prema, is--or was--Nepali, I see most of the episodes in her story as stories of broken identities and discarded languages and the will to bond oneself to a new community against the ever-present fear of failure and betrayal" (5). Exploration of themes of exile, isolation and assimilation has been of particular research interest to various critics on the works of Thapa. Sanjeev Shakya describes *Seasons of Flight* as "beautifully crafted story that reaffirm Thapa's status as one of this country's most accomplished and graceful young writers" (6). "Though she is a young writer, her work is confident and timeless," Shakya reiterates, "*Seasons of Flight* is a fiction that will be read deservedly for years to come" (27).

Speaking to Prem Dhakal on the issue of her characters often playing the life of exile, Thapa clarifies her stance:

It interests me to imagine characters shifting from one situation and location to another for whatever the circumstances may be. In the first collection, the characters were all moving for more or less the same reason (which was also the

reason my parents came to the United States): for opportunities or job. In this collection there is a similar pattern of movement, but the reasons are more personal somehow-they are reasons of family dynamics or death in the family or things like that. In this book, I spent more time with characters who are not immigrants themselves but the children of immigrants. (6)

Thapa tells the stories of immigrant characters and their experience as Nepali immigrants living in America in *Seasons of Flight*. In the course of her narrative, Thapa discovers alienated self in her characters: the heroic, triumphant, and even glorious episodes in the lives of Nepali-American people often marked with material prosperity is permanently undermined by the loss of culture left behind. They are spiritually orphaned and alienated. Thapa's characters in the novel suffer; it is hypothesized, because immigrant's life is the unbearable rift protruded as a gift of globalization forced between a human being and a native place, between self and its true home. Focusing on female protagonist, Shraya Pandit writes in *The Kathmandu Post*: "though the major female character in this novel, Prema, is--or was-- Nepali, I see most of the episodes in her story as stories of broken identities and discarded languages and the will to bond oneself to a new community against the ever-present fear of failure and betrayal" (5).

Although we have many criticisms on *Seasons of Flight* by different critics from different countries, none of them has highlighted on the burning issue of transnationalism. My thesis seeks bridge that critical gap adding one more brick into critical insight to this novel.

II. Transnationalism in *Seasons of Flight*

Seasons of Flight is a haunting tale of transnational identities, and at the same time, an expression of being in transnational location with the constant migration and movements. The novel opens with a feminine experience of "being Nepali" in the US. Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* dramatizes national imagination beyond the geo-cultural boundary of a nation. At the heart of this novel is the projection of how the nationalistic feelings those Nepalese immigrants in the United States of America repeatedly experience. By showing Nepalese immigrants in the United States of America submerged in nationalistic sensibilities through different mediums, Thapa critiques the false consciousness of nationalism rigorously and monolithically defined by the state on the basis of geographical boundary. In the era of globalization, the sense of nationalism can transcend the territorial boundaries of the nation, thus bringing a vibrant transnationalism to the fore.

This research project comes to illumine Thapa's immigrant characters and their experiences as first generation of Nepali Immigrants in America— that is, life of immigrant is strongly compelling to think about but dynamic to experience. Immigrant's life is the unbearable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home— its essential dynamism is so wonderful and distinct.

While it is true that *Seasons of Flight* contains heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in immigrant's lives, these are more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrows of estrangement. The material achievement that the immigrant family gets is permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever, living the life of succeeding generation spiritually orphaned and alienated. This research work explores the distinct and dynamic transnational experiences that Prema, a character of the novel, undergoes as an immigrant in America borrowing from the critical insights of postcolonial literary theory. Thapa's story objectifies plural and democratic transnational experience that

immigrants do most experience in the foreign locations. The postcolonial 'global' world has begotten millions of dynamic people who enjoy pluralism and multiplicities beyond the so-called monolithically and artificially drawn demarcation line of national boundaries. Thapa's work has primarily focused on Nepali first generation immigrants, exploring themes of exile, isolation, and assimilation and finally reconciliation. *Seasons of Flight* continues to examine this territory while enlarging and further universalizing its scope. Thapa's insights into the psychology of relationships, aging, maturity, loss of remarkable, and her prose is a marvel — slightly formal and luminously straightforward.

The novel unravels the multiple facets of experience of Prema, the protagonist of the novel, "being Nepali" in the US. Prema, a Nepali girl from a rural hill-town happens to win a green card in a US government lottery and immigrates to Los Angeles who is overwhelmed by her environment at every moment of her life. In the multicultural American social set up, Prema strives and aspires to locate herself. As she remains aloof from her Nepali language, cuisine, homeland and Hindu religion, Prema attempts to safeguard her national identity in her new location by defining to everyone who asks her where she is from. She is frequently asked if she was from India, but she says that she is from Nepal, the country of Mt. Everest. A very simple question, "Where are you from?" (*Seasons of Flight* 1) and the series of conversation that follow compels her to think about her national identity.

Migrating people are dislocated from their indigenous homelands and are relocated elsewhere. The effect has been the production of permanently shifting localities. Prema constantly has to define her national identity amidst different people in America. More commonly the Americans would say 'Naples' as if it was a part of Rome. Prema heard a lady saying: "My husband and I went to Rome for our honeymoon, but we never made it to Naples" (1). Prema, all the time, negotiates her identity by trying to locate herself to her hill-village, to the Shiva-Parvati temple, the ammonite given by her mother, Nepali Language and

food on the one hand and she wants to be real American through her physical and mental attachment with her Latino-American boyfriend Luis on the other.

Prema breaks her ties with her family back at home and the Nepali community in Los Angeles in an attempt to assimilate her identity into a “vague pluralism of American multiculturalism” (A. Thapa 8). Identities are increasingly liminal and hybrid as capital, commodities, information, technologies, images and ideologies circulate across the borders due to “ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes and mediascapes” (Appadurai 31). It produces the growth of new local identities. She, as a subject engages to channel existential fears and feelings of loss and despair. It is at such times of homelessness and alienation, the protagonist in the novel tries to reinterpret and redefine her national and cultural identity in a foreign land.

In the era of new global cultural economy supersaturated by overlapping, disjunctive and complexity, nationalism can be visible beyond the national boarder in different forms which Thapa is very much conscious of in the novel by showing her female protagonist meandering here and there in the state of homelessness and alienation by trying to reinterpret her national identity. Though, Prema tries to assimilate her identity into a vague pluralism of American multiculturalism, she can never find any link to either genealogical or geographical origin, therefore, she often takes recourse to nostalgia. By submerging into nostalgia she strives and aspires to locate herself in the supreme boundary of her own nation and hometown. One way for the Nepalese immigrants' generation like Prema to deal with identity crisis is to reestablish connections with its past through nostalgia.

There are various ways of connecting with the past, but the most important is remembering. Remembering is the material objects and photographs on display or people we encounter that are tangible links to the past. Prema's encounter with Mata Sylvia in Los Angeles, a preacher of Hindu religion, reciting lines from Bhagavad Gita, The Mahabharat,

The Ramayan, and the books about Osho, Krishnamurti, Vivekananda, Ram Das, Sai Baba takes her back to "Nepali home" away from her "present home". It is a kind of place where Prema could find refuge and claim to be real and yet not real enough to feel authentic. Prema is confused when she listens to Mata Sylvia reciting lines from Hindu religious book.

An encounter with her mother in "Nepali home" through memory is a space where she could find a trace of identity and completeness though too fragile to call her own. The construction and reconstruction of her indigenous identity through historical symbols and religion supply her alternative identity to everyday insecurity. Nationalism has overwhelming impression in one's life; it is in a sense a spiritual force that constantly and continuously stirs one's feelings and emotions in alien territories. As Ernest Renan puts:

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present.

One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together. (19)

Unlike the territorial boundary, nation for Renan is a spiritual principle which bears immense potentiality to bind one with the glorious memories of living together with the members of same community to get rid of the ignominious present due to the situation of homelessness. In the novel, Prema by remembering her home town, cuisine, and Hindu religion she locates herself in her own national territory despite being in American metropolis.

Prema, a traveling woman, is always in search of her fixed cultural and national identity. Stuart Hall in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* states, " 'cultural identity' can be thought in terms of one, shared cultural, 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" (234). The oneness underlying all the other is the

truth, the essence of Neaplitan which Prema is trying to discover, excavate and bring into light. Though she is physically located in Los Angeles, she is occupied by the memory of genealogical and geographical links to her village. The narrative in the novel goes:

Some days her village felt centuries away, and the other days it was too close; she could not get far enough away from it. Her family home was sturdy, two-storied, of stone. It had felt sheltering, and safe, when she used to run through the bamboo grove past the Shiva-Parvati temple that bordered the terraced rice fields, to school. (2)

At the center of this nostalgia is a concern for meaning; and national and cultural identity newly problematized by the conditions of contemporary life. Who am I? What am I doing here? These questions continually make her ponder. Under these conditions nostalgia becomes a means of identity construction. Nostalgia connects her to her past, compels her to articulate her generational experience in narratives, and contrasts the present, increasingly dominated by economic, geographic and genealogical inequality and instrumental rationality, with the past which she could call her own.

In the cosmopolitan city like Los Angeles, Prema frequently dwindles between absence and presence. Prema, in the company of Luis, feels the presence as she finds herself assimilated to American multiculturalism but the moment when she idealizes her lost realm of culture, geography, innocence, purity and happiness; she is overwhelmed by absence. Her search for presence continues throughout the novel.

Prema seeks nostalgically to recapture her "happy days" of childhood past in her imagination, in turn, often associated with fond memories of food and festive meals: reminiscences of those culinary delights that brought her such warm feelings of pleasure, security, and even love as a child. When Luis, her boy friend in Los Angeles, says: "Hey Prema, know what I had for dinner last night?" "Dull-bath. A kind of Nepalese, I mean,

Nepali food” (61), she is very happy and says she cooks it often but “just – the ingredients. I don't know where to buy them” (61). When Luis says:

'There was also – tur-curry?'

'Tarkaari. Vegetables.'

'It was great. Really great.'

'That is nice, ' she said. 'Yeah.' (61)

The moment she discusses about the Nepali cuisine, she feels like eating them and being very near to her ‘nation’ and 'home'. Due to the pervasive migration caused by globalization, the artificially drawn national boundary has become so fragile that for the immigrant Nepalese people in Los Angeles to enjoy typical Nepali food and meet the localities produced by Nepalese Diaspora is not a far cry.

For the diasporic people like Prema, construction of the national and cultural identities is possible by relocating and regrouping them in a new points and scenario that can be more potential to evoke the sense of nationalism than the kind of nationalism evoked within the limited territory of national boundary drawn by the state. As Jana Evans Brazil and Anita Mannur explains, “diasporic movement marks not a postmodern turn from history, but a nomadic turn in which the very parameters of specific historical movements are embedded and –as diaspora itself suggests- are scattered and regrouped into new points of being” (3). When Prema visits *Neeru-didi and sushil-bhinaju*, she is very happy to see them offering Nepali food. She exclaimed with joy when she finds two plates of hot dumplings before them: “*Momos! Can you believe? Momos in America*” (171). We see how rhetoric of nostalgia – a rhetoric saturated with gastronomic images of food, feasting, and festive dining – is used as a plea for Nepalese to resist against the hullabaloo of multicultural social set up. Manjushree Thapa, in the novel, uses food and eating as a marker of nationalism so as to reflect a means of security and solace for the immigrants. Prema, in the company of Nepali

people in Los Angeles by eating, drinking and merrymaking regroups herself in the new localities produced by Nepali immigrants in America. In so doing, she can feel as if she is in her own country of origin.

When home as a category of security is lost as a result of immigration and rapid socioeconomic changes, then new avenues or a new home – a new identity – for sublime security are sought. Longing for home is a strategy for coping with the sense of homelessness. Yearning home as a strategy means making and shaping a political space for oneself in order to surpass the life of contradictions and anxieties of homelessness in the milieu of pluralistic transnational social clamor of America. This may simply involve becoming a member of an exile community, by finding common places of assembly such as gurdwaras, mosques, or meditating place as of Mata Sylvia. Prema, like other immigrant Nepalese, takes part in the *Bhajan* and enjoys the privilege of kinship. The wails of harmonium and the tiny ching-ching of cymbals touch her heart. She claps when she hears: "*Jaya Krishna, jaya Krishna, Radhe swami jayajaya. Jaya Krishna, jaya Krishna, Radhe swami jayajaya. Jaya Krishna, jaya Krishna, Radhe swami jayajaya*" (157). With her involuntary clapping she feels secure in this desolate land.

Prema time and again, steals away to "the sleepy, elm-lined neighborhood of low, cream-colored houses. Little Nepal" (167). She speaks in to Nepali: "*Neeru-didihunhuncha*" (169)? When *Neeru-didi* and Prema meet they feel secured in the company of each other and promise to meet again. The recognized kinship provides them a sense of security. They hug each other in American style. Neeru says: "There's only one Nepali restaurant in Los Angeles, it's called Kathmandu Kitchen" (170). So she in her restaurant, The Shangri-La, offers Nepali food: *dal-bhat, momos*. In the transnational community, Prema involves joining a local identity-based group that seems to provide her answers and security. Patricia Clavin puts transnational community thus:

It is better to think a transnational community not as an enmeshed or bound network, but rather as a honeycomb, a structure which sustains and gives shapes to the identities of nation- states, institutions, and particular social and geographical spaces. It contains hollowed-out spaces where institutions, individuals and ideas wither away to be replaced by new organization, groups and innovations. (439) Prema, in the transnational environment keeps visiting Nepali people and their localities in Los Angeles and revitalizes her Nepali identity in an innovative way. In a honeycomb of Nepali community in America she is replaced by *Nepalipani* even if she is far from Nepal. In this globalized era people keep migrating from one country to another in such a way that the so-called national boundary turns out to be very much brittle. And still nationalistic feeling remains intact in different forms which Anderson calls imagined community. Anderson, critiquing the monolithically defined nationalism by the state goes far away and defines it, “nationalism is an imagined community[...] it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6).

Prema comes across with so many Nepali people in America as she identifies them as the image of her communion; and her global interactions with other Nepali people dispel her in a complex, overlapping and disjunctive social milieu. The flash of her nationalistic feeling comes to the fore when Prema teaches Luis to speak Nepali. She thinks by teaching Nepali, she could establish a linguistic link and possess him whole heartedly. She says:

'Ka, Khha, ga, gha, nga.'

'Come again?'

'The first five letters of the alphabets. Ka, Khha, ga, gha, nga.'

'Um.' He said, 'Ka, ka, ka, ka, ka.'

She laughed. (135)

She laughs at his inability to pronounce Nepali alphabets. She corrects all the Nepali words when they are mispronounced. When Luis asked if she was a Nepalese, she says it is not 'Nepalese', it is 'Nepali'. Luis wants to go to see the mountains of Nepal. He says: "I'd love to go to the Himmel-aa-yas.' 'Himal' Prema said. 'Sorry?' 'Himaals. Himaalayas' (36)." She does not like Luis pronouncing her name 'Pray-muh.' Prema seeks security taking recourse to language as she is afraid of losing her national identity.

Those who engage in resistance politics tend to feel a genuine sense of loss as expressed in the recreation of a real or imagined past, or through the distant and often romanticized memory of a home. In the process of identity mobilization, these are all likely to become political weapons. Prema, towards the end of the novel, renews her relation and reconnects with her national roots by visiting Nepali people in Los Angeles and by taking a trip back home in Nepal. Her effort to reconnect with previous relations revives the ties that had become numb while updating and renewing her national and cultural identity. As she feels increasingly uncertain about her daily life, the search for national and cultural identity takes its course.

Prema, the character of modern society, with her implicit anonymity and alienation in Los Angeles, has made her life ever-changing and mobile as she is uprooted from her original social milieu. The result, according to Berger, has been increasing attempts to "de-modernize" in order to seek "reversal of the modern trend that has left the individual 'alienated' and beset with the threats of meaninglessness" (qtd. in Kinvall 744). Going back to an imagined past by using reconstructed symbols and cultural reference points is, in other words, a response to the destabilizing effects of changing patterns of global mobility and migration. Prema brings in the images of Hindu religion, Nepali language and food – Momo – as imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation. It is her attempt to recreate a lost sense of cultural identity. Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* is a compelling tale of

alienation and homelessness. Away from 'home' – Nepal, in the foreign land – Los Angeles, Prema is disembodied from her root and she lacks the protective cocoons of home. Identity is newly problematized by changing conditions of Nepalese way of life in Los Angeles. Identities are increasingly liminal and she feels insecure in the foreign land. To overcome existential fears and feelings of loss and despair, she visits new Nepal in Los Angeles, eats Nepali food, visits Mata-Sylvia and recites *Nepali bhajan*. She joins a local identity-based group that seems to provide her answers and stability. Prema, an immigrant in Los Angeles desperately tries to recapture, excavate and bring to light the traces of indigenous homelands which is constructed and reconstructed in the face of globalization and cosmopolitanism through culture, language, culinary nostalgia, community and love. In the conclusion the paper suggests that the alternative identity sought out by Prema could be real and yet not real enough to feel authentic. It only gives her a sense of belonging and not belonging at the same time. This individual case of insecurity and homelessness experienced at a personal level find a larger parallel to the immigrant Nepalese in Los Angeles.

However, Prema in the novel is not that much sad being uprooted from her own hometown in Nepal but has been undergoing with vibrant experiences even in America amidst her acquaintances with other Nepali brothers and sisters. She keeps coming to Nepal and going to America. She experiences Nepali being Nepali even in America. With the constant movement and migration, she has been experiencing the sense of transnationalism in distinctly dynamic and dynamically distinct way.

Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*—a novel that deals with subjectivity and the question of identity—along with other sub themes such as ecological awareness and multiculturalism. *Seasons of Flight* presents an independent woman as its protagonist; a woman who not only crosses the domestic space within which women are often entrapped, but also dares to do things on her own without a conventional male savior to protect her from the dangers of the

world. By projecting a woman character as an autonomous individual, Thapa indirectly challenges the stereotypical projection of 'womanliness' defined as the "Other" of masculinity and generally masked with the so called "virtues" of decency and dependency. Prema, in a sense, is capable enough to handle the situation in multicultural social set up. Being there, she has also become able to enjoy the dynamic life in transnational social setup

The first chapter opens with Prema's desire: "Prema had wanted to reinvent herself in America" (Thapa 17). These words aptly project a strong feminine subjectivity. Prema not only, self-consciously, accepts her desire to reinvent her 'self' but also wants to go beyond the national borders within which her feminine subjectivity has been constructed. Prema, who is motivated by a strong desire "go beyond" mentally and physically, loves her 'binoculars'—an instrument of vision that literally takes us beyond our immediate location—and finally leaves for America after winning a diversity lottery visa. She does not need any permission from any one to make this life altering shift. Just like an explorer, she leaves behind her partner Rajan, informs her father and sets off alone towards an unknown journey.

According to the theory of oedipal complex as developed within Freudian psychoanalysis, humans can be divided into two categories: masculine, stable 'subjects' without 'lack'; and feminine, 'fragmented subjects' forever defined by some kind of a 'lack'. Prema's character suggests a new paradigm to rethink femininity by refuting the theory of fragmented feminine 'self.' This is to say that Prema's autonomous feminine presence topples the normative social division between the masculine and the feminine. Prema's individual struggles to find her own "direction" and her own "space" in a new land register the complex dichotomy of gender relation and gendered spaces. Though she has emotional and physical relations with men, she remains in charge of her body and mind. Fighting her

own battle and surviving, she not only disrupts the expectations of conventional masculine fiction but also challenges the conventional feminine roles as well.

Along with the theme of feminine subjectivity, the theme of identity is equally strong in the novel. Identity, as a socio-cultural constructs, provides a narrative structure to an individual's or group's life. The novel opens with Prema's experience of "being Nepali" in the US. A very simple question, "Where are you from?" and the chain of conversation that follows, not only project Prema's attempt to articulate her national identity but also delivers a sense of 'shared experience' to the readers. For many Nepali readers, who have similar experiences abroad, Prema's answer "from Nepal"—which is often misunderstood by Americans as "Naples"—highlights the struggle of Nepali diaspora to retain their national identity. Through her tentative suggestions—represented by words such as *himal*, *Dal Bhat*, and *tarkari*, for example—she tries to reinterpret and redefine her national identity in a foreign land. At the same time, Prema tries to assimilate her identity into a vague pluralism of American multiculturalism while living with Luis, her Latino-American boyfriend. She does so by breaking ties not only from her family back in Nepal, but also from the Nepalis living in Los Angeles. Towards the end, however, she renews her relation with them, and reconnects with her national roots by visiting Nepali people in Los Angeles and by taking a trip back home. Her effort to reconnect with previous relations revives the ties that had become numb, while updating and renewing her "hybrid" cultural identity; an identity that has elements of both Nepal and US in it. Being in US, she doesn't have any sense of alienation but has great sense of happiness. As the novel goes "for the first time in America she was... happy. She felt it was possible to reinvent herself. Every morning now, leaving the hot, stifled inland for the coast, she wanted to go farther" (85).

When Prema meets Nirudidi in America, she feels so happy that for her the locality of Neapli in American cities becomes a mini Nepal. When Nirudidi says, "all our neighbors are

foreign! And Bahini, if you need a place to live, just remember that our home is your home” (198), Prema feels as if there is no difference between being in Nepal and being in America.

In fact, due to cross flow of the migration, the world has become a global village. Even if one far from ones country s\he gets attached with members of their own community or country. This is exactly going on in the life of Prema in the novel. When Prema keeps visiting different places like Dallas, Boston, Los Angeles, Washington D.C and so many other places, her personality becomes distinctly dynamic and dynamically distinct.

Now is the time of globalization. Globalization means increasing the interdependence, connectivity, and integration on a global level, with respect to the social, cultural, political, technological, economic, and ecological levels. It is the collaboration of countries to provide a boost to trade practices, and also to reduce cultural differences. Its various advantages can be felt all across the globe by one and all, and also to a very large extent in our daily lives.

Most of the countries have resorted to trade relations with each other in order to boost their economy, leaving behind any bitter past experiences if any. Nations now try to raise capital and fortify their stand in international trade, rather than hosting a war. Thus, globalization has induced international peace and security in a big way. Globalization has promoted international connectivity. With the use of the Internet, the world has definitely become a smaller place. There has been exchange of thoughts and ideas which has morally boosted and interlinked the mindset of people all round the world.

One of the most advantageous factors of globalization is that it fosters the generation of employment. This happens due to the emergence of new companies and new markets, where lots of skilled and unskilled labor is required. Immigration between countries also increases, providing better opportunities for people all round the world. By providing employment, globalization helps in increasing the standard of living of the people, and also reduces poverty. In the novel, the protagonist Prema has been highly affected by the cross

flow of globalization. Diversity Visa issued by America for the people of third world countries like Nepal is also one of the parts and parcels of globalization. Due to the emergence of globalization even the concept of so-called nationalism has become more parochial. For Prema, there is no fundamental difference between Nepal and America. Even if she is far from her country of origin, she finds mini Nepal in America amidst Nepali brothers and sisters.

Prema keeps coming to Nepal and going to America that makes her life full of information along with good understanding the world. This also leads Prema to the pinnacle of transnationalism— a platform for productivity and socio-economic dynamism which Prema wholeheartedly supports and enjoys.

Manjushree Thapa thus, in her novel, *Seasons of Flight*, superbly and craftily depicts national imagination beyond the geo-cultural boundary of a nation. The novelist very brilliantly projects how the nationalistic feelings come into being amidst Nepalese immigrants in the United States of America. By showing Nepalese immigrants in the United States of America submerged in nationalistic sensibilities through different mediums, Thapa pungently darts her criticism against the false consciousness of nationalism rigorously defined by the state on the basis of geographical boundary. In the novel, by implicitly showing the ongoing movement between two or more social spaces or locations facilitated by increased global transportation and telecommunication technologies, more and more migrants have developed strong transnational ties to more than one home country thereby blurring the congruence of social space and geographical space. In fact, Prema in the novel is not that much sad being uprooted from her own hometown in Nepal but has been undergoing with vibrant experiences even in America amidst her acquaintances with other Nepali brothers and sisters. She keeps coming to Nepal and going to America. She experiences Nepali being Nepali even in America. With the constant movement and migration, she has

been experiencing the sense of transnationalism in distinctly dynamic and dynamically distinct way.

Transnationalism gives the heightened sense of interconnectivity between people and the receding economic and social significance of boundaries among nation states. Prema obtains broader and more multiple perspectives to examine her life. Her identity making will continually moves in process. The life of culture exists in the continuous boundary crossing and represents the self-identity through the way of hybridity. Only through the multiplicity, can Prema find his own dislocated life a whole new and vibrating. Finally, Prema attempts to recreate a new sense of place, and thus of self, through a profound acceptance and “working through” of her own position as a permanent exile and dislocated subject. Transnationalistic experience itself is very painful but within the pain people make attempt to find pleasure. And the very pleasure is possible through globalization and multiculturalism and of course, with transnationalism. These all are the productive platforms (transnational locations) that make a person striving, aspiring and dynamic just like Prema the protagonist of the mentioned novel.

Transnational locations are especially formed by a large group of people with a similar heritage or homeland who has since moved out to places all over the world. Unlike in the past now people are moving and scattering here and there not by force but voluntarily. Such dispersed people with different causes cannot have constant culture and identity. They always modify and get modified in turn. Hence, they are dynamic in terms of identity and culture. ‘Transnationalism’ in all cases bears the sense of translocation, displacement or de-territorialization that makes a subject distinctly dynamic and dynamically distinct.

Transnational subject is often understood as a displaced deregulated practice. However, they are associated with metropolitan, migrant and multicultural. They are cosmopolitans and cosmopolitans belong to more than one world but to no one entirely. The

unbelongingly belonging subjects also add another species in the life of transnationalistic people. The sense of dislocation is not an impoverishment but an expansion of cultural and aesthetic experience.

The transnationalistic experience is defined not by purity, but by heterogeneity and diversity. Thapa also links the Nepali language, Hinduism and nationhood through her protagonist, Prema, who seeks to fit herself into hullabaloo of multiculturalism, which constantly denies her Nepaliness and her desire to retain her separate identity amidst multicultural people of the Los Angeles metropolis. Language and religion become the strongest markers of nationality and ethnic identity in the foreign land. Hindu rituals and practices largely shape Prema's cultural values. She seeks to find solace and comfort in an ammonite, a Hindu religious emblem, which she has acquired from her mother's shrine. Prema's story starts in a village near Kathmandu, a poor Maoist war-stricken village in the hills of Nepal. Her story moves quickly through the loss of her mother in childhood, and the commonplace hardships of poverty, to a college degree in forestry, resulting in a job an NGO in the hilly bazaar, and a romance with a fellow worker in NGO. Prema's younger sister runs off with Maoist rebels when they come calling despite her objections, and she resigned. Her undemanding father only wants her to be progressive in life.

One day Prema happens to sign up the US Green card Lottery. When she wins, she is more guided by the hope of opportunity for liberation from her present situation and decides to leave her country for good. Now, she is in a new location with new experiences and freedom. When she finds a lover in the US, an attractive Guatemalan, she responds an ardor of native to her own passionate nature and her culture. Prema accepts living with her boyfriend, Luis, but cannot enjoy the relationship with him for long. Her sexual encounters with other men are not only unexpected phenomena but also very distinct and dynamic.

Prema is in a hybrid position. Hybridity challenges the very idea of center and margin and challenges the established hierarchies. Thus, hybridity subverts the notion of identity as fixed and stable. It assumes it to be changing as we encounter different cultures. No language or culture can be presented in pure form but always the zones of shifting national boundaries and hybridization. The instability of meaning in language leads us to think of cultural identities and identifications as always a place of borders and hybridity rather than stable entities. The protagonist of the novel keeps visiting different people and places in America. She has a kind of attachment with other Nepali immigrants there. She also visits Nepal time to time. Even if she is there in America, she realizes that she is in Nepali community as she finds different localities established by Nepali in America.

Prema keeps visiting different places of America with her friends from different caste, creed and custom. Despite being so far from her country of origin, she has virtual attachment with her relatives and near ones here in Nepal. She also maintains her good relationship with other Nepali immigrants in the United States of America. She has maintained a good and brilliant connection between individuals, communities and societies across borders, bringing about changes in the social, cultural, economic and political landscapes of societies of origin and destination. Cross-border connections between societies resulting from migration make one's life distinctly dynamic and dynamically distinct. She visits Kathmandu Kitchen and enjoys Mo: Mo and other Nepali food items like *daalbhat* and *tarkari*. She keeps remembering other markers of nationalism such as Mt. Everest, Pashupatinath Temple. She even has established Mini Pashupatinath Temple in her apartment. She forgets her sense of loneliness and dislocatedness whenever she is among other Nepali immigrants enjoying each and every feast and festival of Nepal. Whenever she wants she comes to Nepal and as per her wish she leaves Nepal. Her frequent mobility from one place another has made her a transnational subject.

Prema desires to stay with a Nepali family where she could have some sense of belongingness and a chance to learn about the new ways of life in America. She seeks her community and language in order to retain her selfhood and belonging because members of the expatriate community, according to Robin Cohen, “believe they are not and perhaps can never be –fully accepted in their host societies and so remain partly separate” (6).

Staying with a Nepali family and working together with many Nepalis, Prema feels some possibilities of realizing her dream for freedom:

That was Prema’s life in Nepal. There was nothing really wrong with it. Though the country was at war, she was safe. Had it been in her power, she would have changed a few things, of course. She might have lived in a town rather than in a bazaar, a town large enough to have a cinema, and shops, and restaurants of the kind she and her boy friend used to go to in college. She might have had more like-minded friends for company, she might have been free. (10)

Prema cherishes a dream to reach America but repeatedly fails and is pushed down by the differences she has with the modern metropolitan culture. Even though she encounters many hurdles in the confusions of getting a truer America and embracing its values, Prema gets a sense of comfort and narrows down her estrangement from her birthplace and family when she meets with a Nepali community in Little Nepal in Los Angeles.

Due to cross flow of migration caused by globalization and exchange of science and technology, people tend to produce multiple locations with other members of the country of origin. When they meet and exchange their feeling in the locations of the host countries, they simply enjoy psychological, emotional and spiritual advantages. These ultimately help them feeling of nationalism without nation.

Manjushree Thapa's novel, *Seasons of Flight* hence, puts the greatest premium on the sense of transnationalism in South Asian diaspora, but also positions it in an interstitial space moving between homeward. The identity of Thapa's protagonist, Prema, is constantly conflated with Indianness as she encounters different social activities and conversations. Thapa, by presenting a woman-centered story, challenges the assumptions of the American dream of freedom, affluence and multiculturalism, and interjects the undercurrents of the aspirations of immigrants. Prema, a woman from Nepal living in Los Angeles, seeks to find freedom in a modern metropolis amidst the dynamic locus of reinventing herself in a new world, and her connections to her homeland, her language and her culture. However, Prema's identity is constantly criss-crossed within a network of multicultural and diversified society. Even if she remains far from her own nation, she enjoys her transnationalistic position in localities produced by Nepali immigrants in America. When she finds mini Nepal in America, she simply forgets the pain of being uprooted from her own nationality.

For the transnationalistic subject the construction of the national and cultural identities is possible by relocating and regrouping them in a new point and scenario that can be more potential to evoke the sense of excitement than the kind of despair evoked within the limited territory of national boundaries artificially drawn by the state.

III. Prema as a Dynamic Subject in Transnationalistic Location

In the novel, Prema is in a constant state of alienation from her feelings while staying in transnational locations of the United States of America. She keeps finding her real identity in the foreign locations but cannot, yet she takes the experiences of new and dynamic life assimilating the multitudes of identities and cultural values.

Manjushree Thapa presents her protagonist, Prema, who is undergoing with cultural mix and hybridity struggling to find her identity in the multi-cultural society she lives in. Since she knows that her identity cannot be fixed as it is the fruits of multiple cultures, she attempts to locate herself fully in globalized social set ups. All through the novel, Prema is drifting without a solid and fixed identity. Her identity is multiple, unfixed, and ever changing. She has undergone with various forms of dislocation, such as exile, diaspora, and transnational subject, which are subjects of inquiry in diaspora and transnationalism.

Transnationalistic communities are characterized by their movement. Their movement is not only from a place to many places but continues, if not within a single generation then by its successor generation. They actually are the marginalized people who used modes of cultural production to resist. They try to manage their ethnic and national identities in relationship to the homeland as well as the place of settlement. They use the means of dynamic cultural production to represent themselves in the public sphere.

Fragmentation, alienation, homelessness and exile are the common experiences of transnationalistic people yet they try to find new and distinct meanings on their situations. The condition of the dislocated and dispossessed is especially poignant and complicated because they cannot find a “home” of their own. The feeling of not belonging to a place yet trying to relate while being torn apart with a longing for home is a typical lot of such people. In the mentioned novel, the protagonist undergoes with the same plight and predicament.

However, she affirms her unique transnationalistic identity and renews her life in different locations with diasporic sensibility. Dislocation is not an impoverishment but an expansion of cultural and aesthetic experience distinctly and dynamically.

The novel revolves around the transnational subject, Prema, its protagonist, a woman who immigrated to America from a misty hilly region of Nepal, and lives in Los Angeles. Thapa, through Prema interrogates the issue of Nepali identity, belonging, sense of home connection, and Nepaliness conflated with Indianness in modern metropolitan city. Prema's quest for fulfillment and desire to reinvent herself gets shattered in America where she lands after winning Green Card Lottery from her birth place in Nepal.

Moreover, her Nepaliness and her identity constantly conflated with Indianness, as she encounters challenging situation. Prema is not able to say she is a Nepali but, instead, she claims to be an Indian in her journey to find completeness in life. Prema has to undergo a cultural transformation to embrace American culture, and assert her identity.

Prema obtains broader and more multiple perspectives to examine her life. Her identity making will continually moves in process. The life of culture exists in the continuous boundary crossing and represents the self-identity through the way of multiplicity. Only through multiplicity and plurality, can Prema find her own dislocated life a whole new and vibrating. Finally, she attempts to recreate a new sense of place, and thus of self, through a profound acceptance of her own position as a permanent transnational subject. Transnational experience itself is very dynamic and distinct wherein people make attempt to find pleasure. And the very pleasure is possible through hybridity, mimicry, multiculturalism and of course with transnationalism. These all are the productive platforms that make a person striving, aspiring and dynamic just like Prema, the protagonist of the mentioned novel. The sense of nationalism without nation has increasing relevance with the

rapid growth of globalization. It links transnational boundaries with migratory workforces, globalized corporations, global money flow, global information flow, and global scientific cooperation to other specific nation-state boundaries. As Prema has undergone with these situations in the mentioned novel, she is one of the brilliant examples of transnational subjects.

As a transnational subject, Prema has maintained multiple links and interactions with people and institutions across the borders of the nation. She has created a greater degree of connection between individuals, communities and societies across borders, bringing about changes in the social, cultural, economic and political landscapes of societies of origin and destination. A Cross-border connection between societies resulting from transnational migration has made her life quite dynamic, productive and creative.

The mentioned novel is an expression of the exile experience that a non-native individual experiences after living in a foreign land. The reflections of every individual who lives in a different cultural country, is similar to the case of Prema and other characters of *Seasons of Flight*. The characters are the metaphors to represent all the migrants living in around the world either to earn money or to earn a further degree. It also examines the sensitive experiences of Manjushree Thapa herself living in America.

Thapa, in this novel critiques the false consciousness of nationalism rigorously and monolithically defined by the state on the basis of geographical boundary. In the era of globalization, the sense of nationalism can transcend the territorial boundaries of the nation, thus bringing a vibrant transnationalism to the fore. In the novel, the female protagonist, Prema obtains broader and more multiple perspectives to examine her life. Her identity making will continually moves in process. The life of culture exists in the continuous boundary crossing and represents the self-identity through the way of multiplicity. Only

through multiplicity and plurality, can Prema find her own dislocated life a whole new and vibrating. Finally, she attempts to recreate a new sense of place, and thus of self, through a profound acceptance of her own position as a permanent transnational subject. Transnational experience itself is very dynamic and distinct wherein people make attempt to find pleasure. And the very pleasure is possible through hybridity, mimicry, multiculturalism and of course with transnationalism. These all are the productive platforms that make Prema striving, aspiring and dynamic.

Seasons of Flight, hence craftily unpacks the national imagination of the subject beyond the stately-demarcated national boundaries. By putting the greatest premium on the constant migration and mobility of people in the era of globalization, Thapa attempts to counterblast the so-called nationalism which simply blocks people from being striving and aspiring through mobility. In fact, it is the mobility and migration that provide one a lucrative platform to transform oneself from ignominious nationalistic attitude to glorious transnationalistic sensibilities and attitude.

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