

A SENSE OF SWAYING BETWEEN TWO GEOGRAPHICAL TERRITORIES IN SELECT INDIAN NARRATIVES

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Abstract

The word 'diaspora' derives from the Greek word 'diaspeiro' which means scatter. In general is a term for those who leave their birth place and migrate to other regions. This migration may be willing or forced. In both the cases, it is not an easy task for a human being to adjust in the new circumstances. Therefore they are always in the quest for 'Utopia,' a dream land where everything is well arranged for better tomorrow. Due to this they often wander here and there-landing ultimately nowhere. So they always keep swaying by their psychological traumas between the two geographical territories- the native or the ancestral land and an unknown foreign land. This present paper attempts an analyzing how a sense of swaying reflected in select Indian narrative.

Keywords: Diaspora, Migration, Utopia, Swaying, Traumas

Swaying is a psychological state of mind which almost every human being experiences. In this context, it is a human condition which not only changes geographic location but also creates a lack of emotional bonding which is necessary for existence. It is the central point in diaspora literature. The journey of it is a life - long tale of adjustment with new and alien living conditions. At some point of their adjustment, they begin to evaluate the price they have paid. This price can never be measured by any amount of money because what they have lost a great value which is equal to life itself.

In the era of globalization this sense of swaying and displacement are not uncommon. Various examples can be seen both in literature and cinema. The literature of the diaspora is like the 'Weary Blues' of Afro-Americans, wherein the after effects of this

condition get reflected. It also throws light in the life of authors and their characters in Indian diaspora literature. It will undertake to fathom out their place in a new environment which is twice removed from their roots. Their sensibility gets entangled in an aporia or a final impasse, where the signified concepts of existence and belongingness can no longer be resolved because of the free play of signifier - life itself.

A large number of people have migrated from India to various alien lands under forced exiles or self-imposed exiles. Some of them have made a mark in the field of writing like Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Desai, Monica Ali and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. These immigrant writers reflect, on the one hand, their attachment to the motherland and on the other, their feeling of alienation and rootlessness. The diasporic writings which are also known as expatriate writings or immigrant writings give voice to the traumatic experiences of the writers when they are on the rack owing to the clash of two cultures or the racial discrimination they undergo. Immigration proves a pleasant experience only to a few immigrants who succeed in assimilating themselves with new geographical, cultural, social and psychological environment. But most of the diasporic writers do not find a delectable experience. They often find themselves sandwiched between two cultures. Their nostalgic feeling, a sense of loss and anxiety to reinvent home obsess them which find expression, consciously or unconsciously, in their writings.

If we carefully scrutinize Indian women writers' narrative like Kiran Desai, Anita Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kamla Markandaya and Bharati Mukherjee we find that they through their writings discover the new world with new experiences they opened up. They try to trace out the attitude towards the entire issue of cross-cultural conflict. Their purpose is to unfold the new world of immigrants and new perspective on their treatment of nostalgia, rootlessness, pain and loss before the readers. These aspects are seen in different degrees and from different perspectives by these writers.

Malti Agarwal's writing *English Literature, Voice of Indian Diaspora* is a collection of twenty-two research papers on the works of eminent diasporic writers like: A.K. Ramanujan, Uma Parameswaran, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Desai and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The articles

address issues related to the after-effects of migration. Immigrants have to undergo agonizing experience of being discriminated on grounds of race, color, and creed. A few articles address issues related to female experience.

These articles address two connected topics: The first portion discusses the background, development and present state of Indian diasporic writing, its reception and the controversy around it. The next part of these articles focus on the complexities diasporic Indian women writers face as representatives of their country of origin. The swaying between two geographical territories faces by diasporic Indian women writers is discussed at length. A thorough study of different types of feminism is done in this second part to show how the women writers can arrive at an assimilated approach to accommodate the various issues concerning diasporic female characters that reflects in their works. Therefore, this article starts with a panoramic view of Indian diasporic writing; then the theme narrows down to the problematization of diasporic women writers' works. Finally, a suggested approach is put forward as to how diasporic Indian women writers may accommodate both first and third world feminist issues on a greater level in their works.

Besides the gender issue the female writers attempt to uncover the lives of female immigrants through the eyes of female writers of India. They all voice the agony of the females, living far away from their native land and suffering on the grounds of gender, colour, language and culture. The works and writers included in the list are *The Namesake* by JhumpaLahiri, *Jasmine* by Bharti Mukherjee, *The Immigrants* by Manju Kapur and *Manhattan Music* by Meena Alexander. Indeed the females suffer more under such conditions. For example In *The Namesake* by JhumpaLahiri we find Ashima struggles through language and cultural barriers as well as her own fears as she delivers her first child alone. Had the delivery taken place in Calcutta, she would have had the baby at home, surrounded by family. The delivery is successful, but the new parents learn they cannot leave the hospital before giving their son a legal name. But now she is a resident both of the US, which she considers home, and of Calcutta, where she will be spending six months a year. Ashima realizes just how familiar, how important to her, her life in America has become. In this context Lahiri tries to interpret and portrays the double consciousness of female sensibility through her character as it has been shaped because of displacement.

Two forms of displacement and cultural gap are reflected in Amit Chaudhuri's novels. In an interview he himself says:

"My writing has always been trying to unshackle itself from the pretence of fictionality. I've been trying to free myself of this dichotomy between fictionality and fact, between fictionality and life, creative writing and non-fiction. I'm only interested in creativity. All the Malreddy & Chaudhuri Creative Lives South Asian Diaspora International Researchers' Network rest of the terms are not relevant to me. And I've been writing from the beginning in a way that ignores those kind of set parameters according to which you represent reality within a novel. I tried to do that in *A Strange and the Sublime Address*—to throw those dichotomies out of the window. In *Friend of My Youth*, I address head-on the question as to whether there is a difference between living and writing, or whether writing is also in some ways continuous with living. I don't want to say it is continuous with life, because that's a noun, but writing is both a noun and a gerund; something in the process of happening".

The similar cultural gap is presented in the novels and short story collections: *The Tiger's Daughter* and *The Middleman and Other Stories* by Bharati Mukherjee; *The Namesake* and *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri; and *The Tiger Claw* and *English Lessons and Other Stories* by Shauna Singh Baldwin.

Wherever one may go, one stretches memories belonging to home, family, culture and identity. W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of 'Double Consciousness' is a comprehensive one to portray the dilemma of immigrants across the globe. Living between two worlds, struggling between two identities that at times seem to be mutually exclusive, are also ways in which immigrants describe how they feel about their experiences and their different personal and social identities. Their life becomes totally different after the migration. Under such circumstances how do they feel is very moving and thought provoking. The criteria to measure their journey reflect a sense of lack and loss. The notion of Double consciousness is related to the multiplicity of personal and social selves. These are extremely important concepts that should be part of the psychological study of the identities of immigrants. Their 'Double Consciousness' poses many psychological, social, cultural, and religious issues for consideration. This leads them to wilderness where their questions related to belonging remain unanswered.

After the above discussion it is quite clear to us that their novels present a sense of swaying between the two geographical territories in the psychology of their characters. It also reviews of the chronological legacy of the concept of double consciousness within the psychological literature, touching on issues of identity important to the understanding of the psychology of migration. The notion of multiplicity of personal and social selves, and the understanding of personal and social identities as interconnected processes rather than as separate modes of operating, becomes a thread that unites the articles examined in this paper.

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