

## Psychological Approach and Longings for Homeland

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### Abstract

This present study explores the psychological approach and longings for homeland. Globalization has opened a new path for the Diasporic literature. The enhanced processes of globalization cross-fertilization and transculturation make new diasporic literature. As a result the diasporic writers have got a permanent place in the history of English literature. Due to this, Language and cultures are transformed when they come in to contact with the others. These writers always write their writings relating with the culture of their homeland as well as they adopt and negotiate with the cultural space of the host land. However, looking at the diasporic literature in a broader perspective, it is seen that such literature helps in understanding various cultures, breaking the barriers between different countries, localizing the global and even spreading universal peace.

**KEYWORDS:** psychology, Longing, homeland, diaspora

The Indian diasporic literature has become quite popular creating an impression that it represents true India. This is where the gist of the problem lies. Diasporic literature is certainly a useful resource for studying the psychology of the migrants. It speaks of diasporic experiences that the diaspora undergoes resulting from geographical displacement, alien customs, the problems of adjustment, longing for the homeland, the burden of beliefs, myths and heritage. These writers have double obligations. They write about their homeland for the natives of the country they have adopted and also speak of their diasporic experiences to the readers of their homeland. Nostalgia, longing and desire for home have become the central preoccupation of the diasporic writers, especially after Indian independence, the Indian diasporic community has acquired a new identity due to the processes of self-fashioning and increasing acceptance by the West. Diasporic literature can well be studied from Socio-Cultural point of view.

Exile and cultural alienation has become a universal observable fact. The terms 'diaspora', 'exile', 'alienation', 'expatriation', are synonymous and possess an ambiguous status of being both a refugee and an ambassador. The two roles being different, the diasporic writers attempt at doing justice to both. As a refugee, he seeks security and protection and as an ambassador projects his own culture and helps enhance its comprehensibility. Diasporic writers attempt to give realistic picture of the exile and alienation of the uprooted individuals by understanding the minds of the immigrants and their suffering from alienation. Most of their characters in their novels become the victims of these feelings. Rushdie says;

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we

must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 10)

Exile appears both as a liberating experience as well as a shocking experience. It is a fact that these expressions just keep away the tension of the strings between the writer's place of origin and the place of exile. Whatever maybe the geographical location of the exiled writer, in the mental landscape the writer is always linked to the strings attached to poles that pull in opposite directions. Many writers face internal exile. It is a form of exile, possibly it is the most critical of all exiles. In fact, it was the colonial powers that made most people aliens in their own country - firstly through linguistic displacement. The writer tries to express it in the form of writing. There is relief only a temporary condition for no writer's work is so sharp a wedge that can snap the strings that history-makers have woven. Even if a writer consciously tries to justify one end, simultaneously, but unconsciously, there arises a longing for the other and leads toward exile literature.

It is in this colonial context that the native writers spawned the various sub-genres of English literature. Writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Raja Rao, who established Indian-English literature, were all subjects of the British rule in India. Even after the colonized countries got independence, writers of many of those countries still faced a state of exile—either because of dictatorship in their countries, or because of racial persecution, or because of ethnic cleansing, or because they chose to migrate.

Migration takes place due to various reasons and in the Indian context the migratory movements were governed by historical, political, economic reasons including higher education, better prospects and marriage. However, the Indian community has shown greater sense of adjustments, adaptability, mobility and accessibility. The sense of homelessness which every immigrant suffers is genuine and intense. Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, forcefully articulates the exclusions that were created in society by the formation of 'Third World' nation/states: It is one of the unhappiest characteristics of the age to have produced more refugees, migrants, displaced persons, and exiles than ever before in history, most of them as an accompaniment to and, ironically enough, as afterthoughts of great post-colonial and imperial conflicts. As the struggle for independence produced new states and new boundaries, it also produced homeless wanderers, nomads, vagrants, unassimilated to the emerging structures of institutional power, rejected by the established order... And in so far as these people exist between the old and the new, between the old empire and the new state, their condition articulates the tensions, irresolutions, and contradictions in the overlapping territories shown on the cultural map of imperialism.

Diasporic literature, quite like immigrant literature, mirrors a 'double vision', at once of 'yearning backward' and 'looking forward'. The following are the major issues in real life that are discussed by the diaspora writers. The children of the immigrants face "in-between-ness" about their own role in society. Identity is lost as they are treated as Indian on the foreign land and as foreigner on their motherland. Those who

return to India after some stay abroad have to face public criticism of leaving the land of opportunity without thinking about any adjustment on that land.

There have been four waves of Indian emigration. The first in pre-colonial times, included those who left as travellers, teachers and traders, the second group involves forced migration of Indian labourers, servants of the British Empire, the third was the tragic displacement of millions by the horrors of partition, and how we have contemporary phenomenon of skilled Indians seeking new challenges and opportunities in our globalized world. Diasporic communities face common problems with regard to identity. Identity is one of the most common themes in their literature, and in many cases the search for self-identity is portrayed as confusing, painful and only occasionally rewarding. Some write semiautobiographical novels, delving into personal pasts in order to either discover or re-examine their motivations and affinities. Others use fictional characters and situations to question traditional norms, testing, trying, and occasionally reinforcing notions of race and culture.

Anita Desai is a remarkable novelist and supporter of a feminine sensibility who experienced a mixed cultural upbringing. Her father is an Indian and mother is a German, who provided a multicultural atmosphere at home. Exile and cultural alienation is the most dominating theme in Desai's novels. As an expert, Desai portrays the insecurity and distress of uprooted individuals in most of her novels. She remarks her conditions as: "This has brought two separate stands into my life. My roots are divided because of the Indian soil on which I grew and European culture which I inherited from my mother." (Desai, Anita. *The Book I Enjoyed writing most*. Contemporary Indian Literature, XIII, 1973, 24).

Each of her novels presents one or two memorable characters. In portraying the characters she always does something unique by portraying each of her individuals as an unsolved mystery. In *Custody*, Anita Desai explores the problem of alienation of an educated college teacher from his roots and culture. Baumgartner's *Bombay* (1988) is about India from foreign perspective. *Journey to Ithaca* (1995) describes the pilgrimage of three Europeans to India. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* she moves to a more radical revolt of the middle-aged woman Sita. *Fire on the Mountain* examines the protest of two generations of women. *Clear Light of the Day* shows the importance of home and family. In *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1985) an authentic study of human relationship that deals with the migration of the Indians to England and disappointment they often experience there. Anita Desai is also concerned with larger diasporic issues like inner alienation and uprootedness - rather than mere geographical displacement.

Bharati Mukherjee writes about a minority community which frees itself from ghetto and adapts to the mainstream American culture and lifestyle. She advocates that through adaptation, adjustment, assimilation and acculturation, the immigrants can overcome the trauma of displacement and alienation. Mukherjee confesses in one of her interviews: "I have been murdered and reborn at least three times, the very correct young woman I was trained to be, and was very happy being, is very different from the politicized, shrill, civil rights activist I was in Canada, and from the urgent writer that I have become in the last few years in the United States." (Connel, Grearson, and Grimes 18)

Her novels deal with a cross-cultural perspectives. Her first novel *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971) has strong autobiographical overtones. It narrates the story of Tara who gets married to an American and returns to India, her motherland. But she finds hard to adjust with the things that loved and admired in the past, she feels like an alien in her own city. At last she returns to the USA the land of her adoption. The stories of *Darkness* (1985) present the experiences of Indian immigrants in the USA. *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988) focuses on immigrants from various countries that form the American Salad Bowl. Though they are minority voice, they are vital part of the American mainstream as they contribute in the making of the American culture.

V. S. Naipaul is one of the most controversial writers. Even though he was born in a Hindu Brahmin family he condemned orthodox Indian traditions and became agnostic and non-believer. He also regretted the lack of native traditions in Trinidad. He felt that the Indian immigrants in Trinidad lived in double exile. In his works, one finds, recurrent themes of homelessness, spiritual isolation and perpetual exile. His creative talent has been shaped by continuous perception of rootlessness, deracination and displacement. His consciousness of homelessness is at the root of his whole work, and he is always one of the first writers mentioned in any general discussion of the Indian diaspora. Leon Gottfried writes,

In a century marked by political upheaval, mass migration (forced and otherwise), colonization, revolution ... it is inevitable that much modern literature should be a literature of exile. Most poignant within this category is the literature of exile pur sang, of the displaced or dispossessed who do not have, never have had, and, by the nature of things, never could have a home against which their condition of exile can be assessed. ... [T]he writings of V.S. Naipaul draw upon an experience so totally based on layered levels of alienation and exile that his works become paradigmatic of the whole genre, and hence of a major current in twentieth-century life, thought, and art.

V. S. Naipaul's characters, like Mohun Biswas from *A House for Mr. Biswas* or Ganesh Ramsumair from *The Mystic Masseur*, are examples of individuals who are generations away from their original homeland, India, but their heritage gives them a consciousness of their past. Naipaul's characters are not governed by actual dislocation but by an inherited memory of dislocation. In *Area of Darkness* (1964), Naipaul attacks India, particularly its poverty, the caste system, lack of sanitation and segregation of society. *The Mimic Men* (1967) focuses on the theme of colonial mimicry. *A Bend in the River* (1979) dwells on the harmful impact of colonialism and growing sense of nationalism in the Third World. Naipaul returns to India again and again in works like *India a wounded civilization* (1977), *India: A million mutinies Now* (1990). His novels *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) and *Away in the world* (1994) are autobiographical. His novel *Half a Life* (2001) portrays the ironic existence of diaspora through the story of Wily Somerset Chandran. The exile sensibility manifests in almost all major works of V.S. Naipaul making him a great diasporic writer.

Shashi Tharoor, is a diplomatic and diasporic writer. He, though born and brought up in England, tries to rewrite about the homeland (India). "The Great Indian Novel" (1989) he projects the new identity of the characters in the Hindu epic Mahabharata and brings out the heterogeneous cultures without diverting from the Indian literary tradition. In his both fictional and non-fictional works he traces out the India's past

and its relevance to its future with an unfold theme. Tharoor foresees the future of India encountering the mythological, fictive realm by different characters of Mahabharatha. He has intervened skillfully on the elements of traditional Eastern and Western literature.

The diasporic writers are the teachers who wish to educate their fellow natives about the actual nature of colonialism. They wish to inculcate in them, respect for their native values and its system. They are the spokesmen who try to expose their natives about the glorified race at the same time suggest to adopt what is best in them like discipline, cleanliness etc. Dr. M.F. Salat rightly says: "The diaspora as belonging to everywhere and nowhere at the same time, just like an "unanchored Soul" (pal, 2004).

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