

The Diasporising of Home: An Exploration of Space, Identity, and Domesticity in the Selected Works of Tanuja Desai Hidier and Chitra Banerjee

Mr. Sheikh Showkat Ahmad
Lecturer In English, Govt. Degree College For Women'S Anantinag
E. Mail: showkathamdani11@gmail.com

Abstract

Every human being is part of a particular society and societies are made up of different races, cultures and ethnicities. Society plays decisive role in the identity formation of a particular human being. Human being can't live life completely dependent on his own persona but needs others to continue the passage of life. So, for the continuation of the passage of life, socialization is important for the human being, and within this process of socialization an individual can never be isolated in a self-contained environment but must engage in interaction with the rest of the surroundings. Human being needs to have certain societal relations, which in turn will keep him confined within the norms and the established societal set up. But due to certain compulsions, by own will or by any other calamity the established set-up gets dispersed or scattered and then the human being needs some other geographical space to continue the passage of life. This dispersion or the scattering of the people, language, or culture that was formerly concentrated on one place is called Diaspora, (originated from the Greek word "Dia" meaning through or "Speria" means dispersion or sow).

Keywords: Socialization, self-contained environment, compulsions, social set up, scattering, calamity, Diaspora,

INTRODUCTION

This dispersion signifies the location of the fluid human autonomous space involving a complex set of negotiation and exchange between the nostalgia and the desire for the homeland. It also includes making of a new home while adapting to the power relationships between the majority and the minority and significantly transacting with a new sense of place, a new unknown geographical space. After establishing themselves in the new alien geographical space, human being needs some private space, a space of confidence where he can fully represent his subject, object his material body and the psychic being. This private space which human being needs can be termed as domestic space, a space which includes the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of the "Staying Put" where "Staying Put" encompasses communities linked to sites of arrivals as well as the origin (McLoughlin 81-82).

Domesticity is the devotion to or familiarity with 'home' life or it is the state of being domestic, domestic character, household life (Hawker).

David Seamon argues that home is an intimate place of rest where a person can withdraw from the hustle of the world outside and have some degree of control over what happens within a limited space. Home is where you can be yourself. In this sense home acts as a kind of metaphor for place in general (Cresswell 21).

The authors of Diasporic research like Jyani Bannergi, Alison Blunt, Cathy McIlwaine, and Clifford Pereira pointed out that a lot of study has been done on cultural differences in the public arena, but little has been done to study immigrants in their private spaces, homes. Peoples' idea of home differs and it can be in one, two or in many places. Immigrants may or may not feel at home in their native or host country. Homes are places where they feel comfortable and usually maintain their traditional cultural habits; outside their homes people intend to assimilate to their host culture but at home they can revert to their native culture (Thilakarathne).

Sometimes immigrants like to get incorporated with the culture of the host country, but when they are back to their homes they regress to the original culture, that is their intuitive culture, and this regression of people shows the vitality of the domesticity in the Diaspora. It is necessary, then for scholars of Diaspora to adapt and work with a multidimensional understanding of space and movement that does not restrict it to actual physical migration but makes room also for imagined, discursive, material, cultural, virtual and socially networked places and travels. This call explains in part why several scholars have drawn on Henry Lefebvres conception of space to devise new analytical strategies for examining Diasporic and postcolonial experiences and relations (McLoughlin 79-80).

Scholars of Diaspora should take certain initiatives to study domestic and the spatial notion related to immigrants. They should concentrate more within the premise of the home, instead of concentrating on the general disperse or the scattering. This study of domesticity and spatiality by these scholars will give us a glimpse related to the immigrants in their private or domestic spaces. As Avtar Brah says in particular that we inherit a host of spatial terms with potential for analysing Diasporas, including "cartographies of inter-sectionality", the homing of Diaspora, the Diasporising of home, and of course Diasporic space itself. Like a

number of other black British Asian and African-American scholars at this time, Avtar Brah uses spatial language to explore her Diasporic subjectivity (McLoughlin 80).

For Diasporic homemaking, lot of stuff is required. Let's take the example of things which we use in our day to day life. They play a vital role in the process of Diaspora domesticity or home-making. Studies of material culture have also paid particular attention to food and other domestic objects, considering in particular the role of 'belongings in belonging'. This has included an interest in the differential mobility's of objects and their potential to construct trans-local domestic location to another. Focussing on the collections of objects that make up domestic *mandirs* (places of worship), Tolia Kelly's research with Hindu South Asian women in North London argues that they activate a connection biographically and spiritually triggering re-memories of sites of spiritual well being.

The gap between 'home' that is the culture of origin and 'world' that is the culture of adoption remains un-bridged and the boundaries are often in conflict. A person is believed to be born in a particular home with a specific culture of that home, and the culture within which he is brought up is considered the original culture of the person. When that person grows up and progressively he becomes accustomed with new forms of different cultures in the world and this becomes his adapted culture. At a particular point a conflict arouses between the original and the adapted culture, which then remains un-resolved and results in chaos and confusion and then the migrant existentiality that determines a specific aesthetics is faced with two centres, the external colonial and the modernist centre filtering into a personal identity.

When people migrate from one place to another place either forcefully or by their own will, they own relations of different systems of cultural passages, then home plays a significant role in fragmented space, where people see different cultural and historical elements when they are put out of their own place. In other words, cultural re-homing suitably recognises the fragmentation associated with the difference in the articulation of Diasporic identity and includes otherness in the discourse of the self.

In a warning to those employing spatial metaphors to theorise the politics of location, the geographers Smith and Katz noted that 'the spaces and spatial practices that serve current metaphors in social, cultural and political theory are neither fixed nor so unproblematic as their employment and metaphor would suggest. A disciplinary awareness of the complex spaces from which such metaphors derived led them to sound a note of caution. This loss of geographical mooring in which terms float free from their physical and social context, may also have led several years later to call for the re-grounding, re-materialization, and re-embodiment of theory. Such calls had relevance for the areas of Diaspora, race and identity as well as gender and body (McLoughlin 81-82).

Avtar Brah referred to Diasporic space as: "The inter-sectionality of Diaspora border and dis/ location as a point of confluence or meeting of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes". Diasporic space as a conceptual category is "inhabited" not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. Attaining little bit information about the domestic spaces in Diaspora and also looking upon certain issues which create conflicts in immigrant's ideology when they start living in other countries rather than their own ones conflicts such as cultural, racial and the generational arouses and to deal with that, we will like to look in Tanuja Desai Hidier's debut novel *Born Confused* and Chitra Banerjee's *Queen of Dreams* in which almost all issues are decisively discussed.

Review of Literature:

Benzi Zhang in (*The Politics of Re-Homing*) depicts that the inherited otherness may give rise to a process of re-homing in which the language of "origin" and elsewhere is connected to the politics of belonging that is negotiated in the luminal spaces of cultural passages. She illustrates that home becomes a meeting point of different cultures, languages, traditions and happens to turn into a metaphoric marriage bed of these different traditions, cultures, and languages. Home becomes a paradox of the constant separation and reunion. Home in fragmentation with its multiple localities implicates the passage of cultures that both legitimizes its production and undercuts its construction.

Beatriz Colomina (*Domesticity at War*) decides that we are always on the edge of war. On the threshold, a line has been drawn. Literally, in crossing that line we go to war. We go outside. We leave the homeland and do battle on the outside. But there are always lines in the interior, within the apparent safe confines of the house. Even before we step outside we are engaged in battle. As we all know but rarely publicize, the house is a scene of conflict. The domestic has always been at war. The battle of the family, the battle of sexuality, the battle for cleanliness, and for hygiene...

Gillan Rose (*Family photographs and Domestic Spaces*) focuses on the one common domestic object family-photographs and states that these photographs play an important role in the formation of the identities of the immigrants when they migrate from one place to another place either forcefully or by their own will. She has highlighted that domestic space should be considered as the product of relations that extend beyond the home. The stretched space co-produced by these photographs is also a form of stretched time, and it is integrative in

complex ways; it contains different kinds of absences which disturb but do not break its cohesion. The paper also discusses why the display of family photographs is done almost exclusively by women.

Tim Creswell (*Place: A Short Introduction*) explores some of the many ways in which conceptions of place are used in research. Being informed by place involves far more than simply writing about this place or that place. It involves thinking about the implications of the idea of place for whatever it is that is being researched—the construction of memory or the world of the homeless for instance. By looking at research on the creation of place in a mobile world, places of memory and the places to live it becomes clear that place itself has a unique and pervasive power.

There is no doubt that this act of place creation is political and contested and researching this “politics of place” is an important strand of geographical enquiry. But the very fact that the place is such a crucial site of contestation points towards its fundamental role in human life—in fact that we are placed beings. The basic unavoidability of place in human life makes it a very important object of politics. Places may be socially constructed but they are necessary social constructions. The homeless are not simply people without a roof over the head but people who are evaluated as being in the wrong place.

Kim Knott and Sean McLoughlin (*Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, and Identities*) determines, that, this volume offers authoritative, inclusive, yet blessedly focused articles on the terms, concepts, and perspectives that collectively define the field of Diaspora studies. As scholarly approaches to Diasporas develop a global profile and span a variety of disciplines, this book provides an incisive account of the state of the art. Its illuminating emphasis on the evolution of theme and concept is enriched by an attention to specific historical events and cultural conditions.

The author of this book tried to figure out those certain realities related to the Diasporic domestic space which in the past has been concealed. He provides us with the glimpse to understand the complex evolution of concepts of migration and identity and their vital impact on shaping the direction of public and academic debate today.

Born Confused

Born Confused (written by Tanuja Desai Hidier, born in Boston and grew up in Wilbraham Massachusetts US,) is an enlightening novel which offer readers an engrossing personal account of the Indian-American experience through the eyes of an insightful narrator Dimple Lala, a New Jersey teen interested in photography, who has been confused about her identity ever since she entered the world the wrong way causing her mother "twelve treacherous hours of painful labor." Her fascination with photography reveals Dimple's keen sense of perception as well as her role as an observer rather than a participant. "Not quite Indian, and not quite American," Dimple unsuccessfully tries to blend in, riding on the coattails of her blue-eyed, blonde best friend, Gwyn. The author nimbly describes the shared outsider status that drew together the two, "the rich little girl who lived like an orphan and the brown little girl who existed as if she were still umbilically attached to her parents."

During Dimple's 17th year, it was the summer when her life fell apart. In that summer she learned about family strengths and family secrets and it was the summer she began to see herself, her family, her world through different eyes, and finally she discovered herself in that summer.

Till that time she did not know who she was. In America, she was too Indian; in India she was too American. She does not fit in any world completely and felt like she was been born confused and things had gone from bad to worse. The only time she felt real and genuine was when, she was taking pictures, looking at the world through the eye of her camera, capturing moments in time.

Her best friend Gwyn was always positive to her negative, the cool one contrasting to her geekiness, the confident one contrasting to her shyness. It was her friend Gwyn who helped her to define life. She has always been there for her and she was in most of the pictures she took. She shared every secret with Gwyn.

Her parents wanted her to meet Karsh son of a friend of her mother's the kind of the nice Indian boy her parents wanted her to marry. Dimple becomes furious at the decision of her parent, did not notice how attractive Karsh was and finally kept herself away from this. She shared this secret with her friend Gwyn. By the end of the evening Karsh and Gwyn were items and Dimple had been left in the dust. In the process, the heroine embarks on a journey of self-discovery. On one level, the book explores the growing pains, rebellious phases, peer pressures and first love experienced universally by teens. On a deeper level, it celebrates a harmonious blending of cultures as it traces one adolescent's bumpy trek towards self-actualization. If a few subplots take the main action on a slight detour (e.g. Gwyn's relationship with her high school college boyfriend etc) the sparkling prose will carry readers along. The author seamlessly integrates descriptions of Indian food, dress and customs, often spiced with Dimple's sarcastic commentary. But even as Dimple distances herself from her family's traditions, her sense of respect and genuine affection for her accomplished parents (both doctors) are never far from the surface. The author poetically captures the essence of her characters and the richness of seemingly insignificant moments. Absorbing and intoxicating, this novel surely leaves the lasting impression.

Bombay Blues

As *Born Confused* gave voice to new multicultural generation. Now *Bombay Blues* explores everything this generation faces today, with a heady mix of uncertainty and determination, despair and inspiration, haunting loss and revelatory love.

Queen of Dreams

Queen of Dreams written by Chitra Banerjee, (born in Kolkata) belongs to the group of young Indian writers that emerged on the literary scene with a postcolonial Diasporic identity. Her position as a South Asian writer in English is distinct and well established. As someone who has spent more time outside India than in it, she has been accepted as an Asian American writer, living with a hybrid identity and writing partially autobiographical work. Most of her stories, set in the Bay Area of California, deal with the experience of immigrants to the United States, whose voice is rarely heard in other writings of Indian writers in English. It may be suggested that the personal odyssey of Chitra Banerjee from the position of an immigrant is reflected in her writings at the thematic level.

Divakaruni's novel, *Queen of Dreams*, utilizes the magic realist mode. She takes up the life of the Indian immigrants in the USA as the subject matter of her novel. There she tries to vivify the image of women who have tried to assimilate the alien culture and have tried to accept the changed identity, overthrowing the Indian cultural heritage in which they took their first breath. What is most important is Mrs. Gupta's spirit of solving others' problems by not overthrowing her old culture and adjust herself with the surroundings of USA and her relationship with family members.

This gift of vision and ability to foresee and guide people through their fates fascinates her daughter, Rakhi, who as a young artist and divorced mother living in Berkeley, California, is struggling to keep her footing with her family and with a world in alarming transition. Rakhi also feels isolated from her mother's past in India and the dream world she inhabits, and she longs for something to bring them closer. Burdened by her own painful secret, Rakhi finds solace in the discovery, after her mother's death, of her dream journals. "A dream is a telegram from the hidden world" (34), Rakhi's mother writes in her journals, which open the long-closed door to Rakhi's past.

As Rakhi attempts to find her identity, knowing little of India but drawn inexorably into a sometimes painful history she is only just discovering, her life is shaken by new horrors. In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 she and her friends must deal with dark new complexities about their acculturation. The ugly violence visited upon them forces the reader to view those terrible days from the point of view of immigrants and Indian Americans whose only crime was the colour of their skin or the fact that they wore a turban. As their notions of citizenship are questioned, Rakhi's search for identity intensifies. Haunted by her experiences of racism, she nevertheless finds unexpected blessings: the possibility of new love and understanding for her family.

The novel *Queen of Dreams* reveals independent, introspective women who have accepted their life as immigrants and observe the host country with sensitivity and objectivity. The novel gives intimate first person accounts of first and second generation immigrant existence.

Oleander Girl

Oleander Girl (2013), is Divakaruni's latest but heart warming story of a child, Korobi Roy, which is in search of her identity and roots, who only knows that her father was died few months before her birth and her mother died when she was born.

Objectives:-

1. Understanding the terms Spatiality and Domesticity within the sphere of Diaspora.
2. Transformation of space into place amid Diaspora.
3. Cultural conflict within the domestic space and outside domestic space
4. Nostalgia or trauma related to the culture, language and other belongings.

Comparative Analysis of the two novels:-

Born Confused and *Queen of Dreams* are equally diasporic novels which portray the American reality: the souring of American Dream, fears and anxieties that the Americans are vulnerable to, and the immigrant Indian's response to the emptiness and loneliness that haunts the inhabitants of this modern wasteland. Both the novelists have dramatised the protagonists search for identity in a strange country. These novels manifest when the migrants are placed alongside the Americans who have already undergone the first stage of settlement and transformation. If one were to thread the stories by underlining an aspect common to them, then it might be possible to suggest that it is the theme of immigration and transformation which is at their centre. The immigrants dream of wedding themselves to the American soil and becoming Americans, the troubles and

tribulations they have to go through for achieving this goal notwithstanding. The novelist depicts the problems of the people emigrating to America and the dream of new life which tempts them to go there. America holds out to them the promise of a bright future, a world free from inhibitions, racial differences based on multinational customs, religions, traditions, languages, etc.

Both the novelists have portrayed characters with close resemblances who socially and culturally position themselves as an immigrant Indian neither acculturates nor assimilates but just adapts or adjusts life around them without changing or transforming themselves. Their adaptation and their will to be an authentic Indian is portrayed thoroughly in both the novels. The novelists have chosen the same landscape i.e. California for depiction of novels and a lot of Domestic and spatial elements are portrayed by them with great keenness. They have tried to deal with the problems which lie within the spheres of domesticity amid Diaspora, and had tried their utmost to deal with cultural, linguistic and certain other important aspects “within “and “outside” the domestic space. These novelists have made an effort to show how both the families in the new alien country have seek to transform space into the place. Nostalgia, trauma, ordeal, suffering related to culture and other personal belongings are shown in a very startling manner by both the novelists.

Reference

- Benzi, Zhang. *Asian Diaspora Poetry in North America*. New York: Routedledge, 2008. Print.
Crang, Philip. *Diaspora And Material Culture*. New Delhi: Chaman Enterprises, 23 Nov 2010. Print.
Cresswell, Tim. *Place:A Short Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell, 2004. Print.
Dodiya, Jaydipsinh, ed. *The Fiction of Rohinton Mistry*. London:Sangam Books,1998. Print.
During, Simon, ed. *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London: Routedledge, 1993. Print.
Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1968. Print.
Hawker, Sara. *Oxford English Dictionary*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print.
Mcloughlin, Kim Knott And Sean. *Diaspora:Concepts, Intersections, Identities*. New Delhi: Chaman Enterprises, Nov 23 2010. Print.
Mehta, Reena. *Region And Domestic Space*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1997-2013. Print.
Thilakarhne, Indeewara. *Diaspora And Diasporic Literature*. Colombo: Sunday Observer, 15 May 2011. Print.
Zhang, Benzi. *The Politics Of Re-Homing*. New York: Routedledge, 2008. Print.

Proposed Bibliography

- Barth, Fredrik. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. London: George Allen and Unwin Press, 1969. Print.
Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. trans. by Maria Jolas. New York: Orion Press, 1957. Print.
Bassnett, Susan. and Harish Trivedi. eds, *Post-colonial Translation-Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
Beethem, David. *Transport and Turbans: A Comparative Study in Local Politics*. London: oxford University Press, 1970. Print.
Cesaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972. Print
Cohen Robin. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: UC L Press, 1997. Print.
Chambers, Iain. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
Chatterjee, Parth. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World-A Derivative Discourse*. London, Zed Books,1986. Print.
Eagleton, Terry, Jameson, Fredric, and Said, Edward. *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990. Print.
Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide*. Delhi: Ravi Dayal Pub, 2004. Print.
Gikandi, Simon. *Maps of Englishness: Writing identity in the Culture of Colonialism*. New York: Colombia Press, 1996. Print.
Giller, Ernest. *Nation and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983. Print.
Gurr, Andrew. *Writers in Exile: The Identity of Home in Modern Literature*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981. Print.
Mehta, Sekutu. *Maximum City Viking*. Pengiun, 2004. Print.
Naipaul.V.S. *A House For Mr. Biswas*. Pengiun. 1969. Print

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

Academic conference: <http://www.iiste.org/conference/upcoming-conferences-call-for-paper/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

