

**NEGOTIATING INDIAN DIASPORIC CULTURE: A STUDY OF THE
SELECTED WORKS OF CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI,
JHUMPA LAHIRI, SUNETRA GUPTA AND MONICA ALI**

*A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
INDIAN DIASPORA
BY
SUBRATA KUMAR DAS**



**UGC-CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF INDIAN DIASPORA
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis, entitled “**Negotiating Indian Diasporic Culture: A Study of the Selected Works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali**” submitted by **Subrata Kumar Das**, bearing registration number **12SIPD03** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Doctor of Philosophy in the **UGC-Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora, School of Social Sciences** is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance. This thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for award of any degree or diploma.

Part of this thesis has been:

A. Research Papers Published in the Following Publications:

1. “Dialogic Voices” between Indian Diaspora and American is a Failed One: A Study from the Selected Novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.” *In: Mothe Prashant. (ed). Langlit: An International Peer-Reviewed Open Accessed Journal. Vol. 1, Issue 3. 2015. ISSN No: 2349-5189. pp. 732-39.*
2. “Bengali Diasporic Culture: A Study of the Film Adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*.” *In: Bite, Vishwanath & Madhuri Bite (eds.). The Criterion: An International Journal in English. Vol.-4, Issue-II, April 2013. ISSN No. 0976-8165. pp. 1-8.*

B. Presented Papers in the Following International Conferences:

1. Presented a paper on “*Trans-cultural Identity at ‘Diaspora Space’: A Study of Sunetra Gupta’s A Sin of Color*” in a two-day 2nd International Conference on Global

Diaspora, January 10-11, 2015, jointly organised by the World Association of Global Diaspora Studies (WADIS) & Nirma University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

2. Presented a paper on ““Dialogic Voices” between Indian Diaspora and American is a Failed One: A Study from the Selected Novels of Jhumpa Lahiri and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni” in a three-day International Conference on Changing Contours of Indo-US Relations: Perceptions, Continuity and Change, October 31st to November 2nd, 2014, organised by Birla Institute of Technology and Science, K K Birla Goa Campus, Goa.

Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfilment of coursework requirement for PhD and was exempted from doing coursework (recommended by the Doctoral Committee) on the basis of the following courses passed during his M.Phil. programme and the M.Phil. degree was awarded.

Course No.	Title of Course	Grade Awarded	Credits	Result
TS701	Research Methodology	B+	4.00	Pass
TS702	Practical Translation	B+	4.00	Pass
TS703	Advanced Topic in Translation Studies	B+	4.00	Pass
TS723	Current Approaches in Translation	A	4.00	Pass

Dr. Ajaya K. Sahoo Dr. Ajaya K. Sahoo
Supervisor **Head of the Centre**

Prof. Y. A. Sudhakar Reddy
Dean, School Social Sciences



DECLARATION

I, **Subrata Kumar Das**, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Negotiating Indian Diasporic Culture: A Study of the Selected Works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali**” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Professor/Dr. **Ajaya Kumar Sahoo**, is a bonafide research work which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Date:

Name: SUBRATA KUMAR DAS

Signature:

Reg. No.: 12SIPD03

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After finishing my B.A., I got admission to MANUU at Hyderabad and realized the different ideologies, lifestyles, cultural ethos etc. of different peoples of different states across India. Thus, I got interested to know new people, their cultures and other perspectives that were new to me during my stay in many hostels on the university campus. Finally, for the same reason, I got a fascination with diasporic people and their diasporic lives in new worlds. Though my interest has temporarily been fulfilled after completing this research on diasporic culture, my long-cherished dream will be completed if I get to experience the real diasporic milieu in a globalized and multicultural world in near future.

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Chapter I

Introduction

In the present scenario, 'diaspora' is an emerging field in socio-cultural and literary studies. Literature or documents written by diasporic writers explore the problems and available opportunities created by the experience of immigrant and diasporic life. The term 'diaspora' is derived from the Greek word *dia*, meaning "between, through, across", and *speiro*, meaning "to sow the seeds". "This suggests, on the one hand, the idea of dispersion and on the other that of stasis and stability sowing seed, suggesting new life and new roots" (Kumari, 2018, p. 47). This term was first used by the Greeks to refer to the dispersions of the Jews or Israelites away from their ancient homeland. So 'diaspora' traditionally referred to a very specific situation: the exile of the Jews from the 'Holy Land' (the modern State of Israel) and their dispersal around the world. Nowadays, the term is applied to all types of ethnic and racial groups living in foreign lands.

Diasporic people face adverse situations in foreign countries: racial bias, abuse and prejudice at workplaces, host governments' implied discriminatory policies for the immigrants etc. These junctures force them to remember their 'homeland' nostalgically. 'Homeland' comes to their minds as a "mythic place" (Brah, 2005, p. 188). To cope with the adverse situations in foreign countries and to keep the same milieu of their 'homeland', these people revive their 'home' culture-making "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) in foreign lands. But their cultural practices are not as same as their native cultural practices. They tend to adapt cultural practices from the host culture. These cultural practices are to some extent different from the 'host' cultural practices. Thus, such culture is a "hybrid" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 38) culture, one amalgamated from the diaspora's 'home' culture and that of the 'host' culture. Generally, there is a desire for assimilation or transculturation among the second-generation immigrants; but this is lacking among the members of first-generation

immigrants. The first generation nostalgically pines for their ‘mythic’ home culture. Sometimes this culture contains some features that seem to erase the native cultural traits of the diaspora.

The Indian diasporic people were/are scattered voluntarily or forcibly in different phases across almost all countries all over the world. As this thesis studies the postcolonial Indian diasporic literature based on the First World countries-the United States and the United Kingdom, we would focus on the dispersion of Indians in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the recent globalised, multicultural world, the Indian intellectuals and academicians are going to many multicultural metropolitan European and American countries like Britain, France, Germany, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and some other countries. Indian people have been going to America since the enactment of the “Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965”, legislation that repealed national origins quotas in the United States migration law. The British Government also showed flexible immigration laws, and thus many Indians shifted to the United Kingdom. Mainly young, educated, middle-class men and women seeking employment and education are going to these metropolitan world centres for better economic prospects. Thus, we find many intellectual academics like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Abha Dawesar and others living in the United States; Amitav Ghosh, Monica Ali, Sunetra Gupta and others in the United Kingdom; Rohinton Mistry, Ashish Gupta and others in Canada; and some other writers in different multicultural, metropolitan European countries.

While Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Jhumpa Lahiri are the Indian diasporic writers living in the United States, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali are the Indian and Bangladeshi, respectively, diasporic writers living in the United Kingdom. These four Bengali women writers live in foreign countries and their works depict the transcultural world in the 20th and

21st centuries. The fictional worlds of these novelists are based on two First World countries- the United States and United Kingdom's globalised and multicultural world and the Third World country India's native (Bengali) culture. Thus, we get both globalised, multicultural traits as well as diaspora's 'native' cultural traits through the representation of these novelists' fictional works.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is Indian American award-winning poet, children and young adults' fiction writer, book reviewer, columnist, teacher of creative writing and social activist. She was born in Calcutta (now in Kolkata), India. After receiving a B.A. degree from the University of Calcutta (India) in 1976, she left for the United States in the same year to attend Wright State University for an M.A. degree. She earned her PhD degree in English from the University of California, Berkeley (the United States) in 1985. She teaches in Texas. Divakaruni is the McDavid professor of Creative Writing at the University of Houston. Presently, she lives in Houston with her husband and two sons.

Some of her notable novels include *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Palace of Illusions: A Novel* (2008), *Oleander Girl* (2013), *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019), *The Last Queen* (2021) and others. The common themes in Divakaruni's novels include South Asian women, immigration, South Asian history, culture, myth, magic realism, an amalgamation of tradition and modernity and others. This thesis studied her *Queen of Dreams* (2004) and *Oleander Girl* (2013).

The background of Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* (2004) is in Berkeley, California (the United States), and Bihar and Kolkata (India). This novel depicts the first-generation expatriates and their second-generation immigrant children's negotiating culture in the United States. It "depicts American people's assumption about a Third World country like India that supposedly represents dark, unexplored, exotic, magic and witchcraft-laden land" (Das, 2015,

p. 735). This novel texturises the odyssey of the second-generation immigrant Rakhi's world-liberal, independent, little familial bond with her parents, a freedom enjoyer in multicultural American cultural ethos etc. Divakaruni, being an activist, documents the terrible outcomes of the 9/11 incident in the daily lives of the Indian immigrants in the United States.

Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl* (2013) sets in Kolkata (India) and the post-9/11 United States. The first section of it describes the protagonist Korobi's comfortable, protected childhood life with her grandparents in Kolkata, Indian after the demise of her mother. The second section of the novel depicts her daunting odyssey across the United States after the post-9/11 incident to find her father Rob Lacey and her true immigrant identity in the United States.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a US-based, second-generation diasporic writer of Indian origin. She was born in London, the United Kingdom to Bengali (Indian) immigrant parents. Her family moved to the United States when she was barely three years old. Lahiri obtained many degrees from Boston University-double M.A. in English and Comparative Literature, an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and a PhD in Renaissance Studies. In 2015, she joined as a professor of Creative Writing at the Lewis Center for the Arts, Princeton University, the United States. At present, she lives in Rome with her husband and their two children.

The novels of Lahiri so far include *The Namesake* (2003), *The Lowland* (2013), *Dove mi trovo* (in Italian, 2018) and *Whereabouts* (2021). The main themes of Lahiri's novels are the expatriate sensibility of the first-generation diaspora, and the immigrant and transcultural sensibilities of the children of the diaspora. Besides, human relationship in domestic space is a leitmotif in her novels. I have selected Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) and *The Lowland* (2013) for my study.

Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) deals with two main characters Ashima Ganguli and her son Gogol Ganguli's cultural negotiation in the United States. Though Ashima Ganguli tries to show her contra-acculturation in the United States, her son Gogol Ganguli attempts to acculturate himself with American cultural ethos, though his attempt finally gets failed. This novel is a full-fledged transcultural novel where the cultural encounter between the Eastern and Western people are shown dexterously.

Lahiri's second novel *The Lowland* (2013) depicts the transcultural practices of Indian immigrants. In the novel Subhash Mitra, a first-generation immigrant in the United States initially tries to look back on his 'homeland' nostalgically. Gradually, he starts to align himself with American culture and finally settles with American's cultural ethos. Gauri Mitra, his brother Udayan's wife in Kolkata (and later his wife in Rhode Island), rarely remembers her native culture and discards her native culture once she keeps her feet in the United States, and finally assimilates with the cosmopolitan cultural practices in California. Bela Mitra, the immigrant daughter of Gauri Mitra chooses a much-advanced nomad-like life in the United States. These immigrants adapt to Americanised culture: liberal dress code, free and unconventional sex orientation like lesbianism, little familial bonds and other traits. Thus, it seems that immigrants' native culture is being eroded by their transcultural practices in foreign countries.

Sunetra Gupta is a Calcutta-born novelist, currently living in the United Kingdom. She is a professor of Theoretical Epidemiology at the Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, the United Kingdom. She finished her B.Sc. degree in 1987 from Princeton University and earned her PhD degree in 1992 from the University of London. At present, she lives in Oxford with her husband and two daughters.

The five novels written by Gupta include *Memories of Rain* (1992), *A Sin of Color* (1999), *The Glassblower's Breath* (1993), *Moonlight into Marzipan* (1995) and *So Good in Black* (2009). She seems less concerned about immigrants' burning problems in the host countries. The common themes of her novels are confined to domestic affairs and less descriptive about cultural exposure of diaspora outside of domestic affairs. Besides, her novels are replete with lyrical tones. For my study in this thesis, I have selected her *Memories of Rain* (1992), a domestic fiction and *A Sin of Colour* (1999), an immigrant fiction.

Her novel *Memories of Rain* (1992) depicts the oscillating life of Moni/Monika/Monideepa Gupta, the protagonist of the novel. Moni, a Bengali girl went to England after her marriage to Antony, an English doctoral researcher. Before shifting to England after marriage, she took England as a "demi-paradise" (Gupta, 1992, p. 6) land and dreamt to live a happy life in the multicultural First World country, the United Kingdom. But after facing/encountering the British cultural practices, she got into a traumatic situation and finally left her earlier supposed 'demi-paradise' England. This novel depicts the cultural gaps between an Indian female and an English male in their conjugal lives. It also shows that it is never possible to yoke the two heterogeneous cultures through marriage or any other human bond.

The narrative of Gupta's *A Sin of Color* (1999) oscillates between the First World countries-the United Kingdom (Oxford) and the United States, and Third World country India (Calcutta). This novel describes the male protagonist Debendranath Roy's unfulfilled love for his brother's wife Reba in Kolkata (India), his consequent journey as an immigrant in the United Kingdom, and finally his wandering incognito during his last youth. The female

protagonist Nikarika also makes her odyssey across many First World countries' metropolises-Oxford, Princeton, New Jersey, New York City, Paris etc.

Monica Ali is a British novelist of Bangladeshi origin. She was born in Dhaka (Bangladesh) in 1967 to an English mother and a Bangladeshi father. When she was barely three, her family shifted to Greater Manchester, England. She received her early schooling from Bolton School in Greater Manchester. Then Ali studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Wadham College, Oxford. At present, Ali lives in South London with Simon Torrance, her husband and two children.

So far, Ali wrote *Brick Lane* (2003), *In the Kitchen* (2009), *Alentejo Blue* (2006), *Untold Story* (2011) and *Love Marriage* (2022). She is comparatively more focussed on the female voices of both the first-generation diasporic women and their second-generation female children. Besides, her novels include topical concerned themes of the 21st century like politics, racial slurs faced by immigrants in foreign countries, post 9/11 scenarios in the lives of immigrants, the plight of illegal immigrants etc. This thesis studied her first novel *Brick Lane* (2003) and her 2009 novel *In The Kitchen*.

Ali's novel *Brick Lane* (2003) records the Bangladeshi immigrants' struggle to settle at Brick Lane, London. This novel describes the life of a Bangladeshi woman, named Nazneen who at 18 married an older man Chanu, left Dhaka, Bangladesh and settled in London, the United Kingdom. The novel explores Nazneen's struggle to settle not only in a new culture in London but also to adapt to her Muslim Bangladeshi community at Tower Hamlets. It also records the struggle of Chanu who faces many adverse situations in London after the economic recession there.

Ali's *In The Kitchen* deals with the different countries' illegal immigrants' lives and their cultural clash in the Imperial Hotel in London. These illegal immigrants hail from Russia, the Philippines, India, Liberia, Ukraine and many African countries. This novel reflects the economic meltdown of Britain and the decadent economic stage of the British market. It deals from the point of view of a lower-middle-class 'Lightfoot' family. Gabriel Lightfoot is the protagonist of the novel.

Academic works have been done by scholars and writers on these novels. Academic works on Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* which are very helpful for this research include "Immigrant Desires: Narratives of the Indian Diaspora by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni" (2013) by Tutun Mukherjee, "Image of the Socio-Political Realities in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*" (2014) by M. Silviya and G. Baskaran, "Feminine Mysticism in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*" (2017) by H. Surya Prabha & K. M. Sumathi, "Depiction of Father-Daughter Relationship in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*" (2018) by C. Bharathi, "The intertwining of Food and Identity: An Interesting Aspect of the Male Protagonists in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*" (2019) by Sujatha Girish, "It Was a Bad Time for Muslims in America: Representation of Islamophobia in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* and *One Amazing Thing*" (2022) by Atreyee Gohain and other works.

Academic works on Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl* include "Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Art and Technique in *Oleander Girl*" (2014) by Seema Panjwani, "Emphasizing the Equipose of Duty and Desire through a Damsel in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*" (2020) by B. Shiyamala "Erosion of Tradition in Chitra Banerjee's *Oleander Girl*" (2019) by G. Kalpana, "Accentuating the Unflinching Mettle of a Damsel in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Novel *Oleander Girl*" (2019) by B. Shiyamala, "Traditional Values

and Identity Crisis: A Study of *Oleander Girl* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni” (2019) by Abida Begum and Dayananda Pathak, “Spicing It Up: Strategic Orientalism and Racial Interconnectedness as Social Curatives in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Oleander Girl*” (2022) by Pallavi Rastogi and other works.

Academics writings available so far on Lahiri’s works are mostly on based her first novel *The Namesake*. These include *The Namesake* (2003) include “The Children of 1965: Allegory, Postmodernism, and Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2007) by Min Hyoungh Song, "Individual-Family Interface in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2008) by Himadri Lahiri, “Indian Diasporic Aesthetics as a Form of Translation” (2008) by Giuseppe Balirano, “Identification, Readerly Desire, and Feminist Recuperation in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2008) by Tamara Ayesha Bhalla, “*The Namesake* in Persian: An on-line Translation Workshop” (2008) by Esmaeil Haddadian Moghaddam, “Portrayal of Femininity in Contemporary English-language Films by South Asian Diasporic Female Filmmakers” (2011) by Tanseem Farida, “Circumferencing New Dimensions in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2015) by Rohina Ratti & Gunjan Aggarwal, “Circulation of the Discourse of American Nationalism through Allegiance to Consumer Citizenship in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2017) by Moussa Pourya Asl & Nurul Farhana Low Abdullah, “Consumption and the Indian Diaspora: A Study of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2021) by Rashmi Das and other academic works.

I have found reviews and articles on her second novel *The Lowland*. Such review includes “The Self and the Political: A Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*” (2014) by Esha Shah, “Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*: A Narrative Pattern of a Broken Family” (2015-16) by Binod Mishra, “History Handcuffed: The Personal and the Political in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*” (2016) by Marshal R., “Ecocritical Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*”

(2016) by Ginni Rani, “Mourning and Melancholia in the Characters of *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri” (2017) by V. Shantha and B. Cauveri, “Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*: A Thematic Analysis” (2018) by R. Ramya and Dr Shibila, “A Psychosocial Study of Gauri’s Odyssey in *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri” (2021) by Manoj Kumar Rath and other works.

Previous works on Ali’s *Brick Lane* include “Double alienation in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*” (2010) by Seda Arıkan and F. Gül Koçsoy, “Rebellion: Second Generation Bangladeshi Immigrants in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali” (2013) by A. Nejat TÖNGÜR, “Shifting Mobilities: Diasporas in Flux in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*” (2014) by Stephanie Southmayd, “*Brick Lane*: Mirroring Nazneen’s Metamorphosis” (2014) by Dr Hossain Al Mamun, “Racism: A Study of Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*” (2017) by Fakhare Alam, “The Raising of Nazneen’s Independent Recognition in *Brick Lane*” (2019) by M.Thasneem Sulthana, “A Study of the Cross Cultural Language Issues in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*” (2020) by Ankita Choudhary and other works.

There are academic wrings about her novel *In the Kitchen* (2009). These include “The Hidden Face of the New Millennium: Migrant Exploitation and Reader Expectations in Monica Ali’s *In the Kitchen*” (2011) by Patricia Bastida-Rodríguez, “Transnational identities in the fiction of Monica Ali: *In the Kitchen* and *Alentejo Blue*” (2016) by Margarida Esteves Pereira, “Monica Ali’s *In the Kitchen*: Human Trafficking or “Modern Slavery” as a Human Rights Issue” (2016) by Saad Kassim Sagher and Siham Hattab Hamdan, “*In the Kitchen* with Monica Ali: Flavouring Gender and Diaspora” (2019) by Chitra Battisti and Sidia Fiorato, “Reconnoitring Transnational Identity and Hybridity in Monica Ali’s *In The Kitchen*” (2020) by V. Jagadeeswari and Dr. Suresh Ponnurangam and other essays.

Academic works about Gupta’s fiction *Memories of Rain* include “Revisions, Reroutings and Return: Reversing the Teleology of Diaspora in Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of*

Rain” (2009) by Bidisha Banerjee, “Diasporic Consciousness in Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of Rain*” (2012) by Jadhav Ganesh Vijaykumar & Dr. M. G. Kadam, “Text within Text: The Shaping of Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of Rain*” (2015) by ASM Maswood Akhter, “Memory as Tool for Identity Formation in Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of Rain*” (2019) by Dr. S. Devika, “Language and Style of Sunetra Gupta’s Fictional Narratives” (2021) by Maswood Akhter and other notable works.

Academic writings on Gupta’s *A Sin of Color* include “The Deadly House: Domestic Space and Socio-Cultural Roles in Sunetra Gupta’s *A Sin of Color*” (2010) by Amaya Fernández Menicucci, “Identity Crisis in Sunetra Gupta’s *A Sin of Color* and *Memories of Rain*” (2018) by B. R. Lakshmi, G. Hampamma and V. B. Chitra, “Feminism Perspective in the Novel *A Sin of Color* by Sunetra Gupta” (2018) by P. Lakshmilavanya, Bezawada Raju and B. Karuna, “Another Look at India’s Books: Sunetra Gupta’s “*A Sin of Colour*”” (2021) by Saikat Majumdar and others works.

Research Questions:

Based on Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s novels *Queen of Dreams* (2004) and *Oleander Girl* (2013), Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* (2003) and *The Lowland* (2013), Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of Rain* (1992) and *A Sin of Color* (1999) and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2004) and *In The Kitchen* (2009), although critical works have been done on different themes like arts and techniques, expatriate sensibilities, erasure of native culture of diasporic people in foreign countries, human bonds in familial space/affairs among diasporic people in foreign countries, immigrant sensibilities/transnationalism, politics/racial abuse, identity/food and identity of immigrants in host countries, gender/feminine sensibility/gendered identity, the different translated versions of these novels, the exploitation of Indian immigrants etc., very few works have been done on negotiating the Indian diasporic culture

based on these aforementioned novels. Therefore, this thesis attempted to raise many questions: How is the hybrid cultural identity of diaspora shown in these selected novels? How do immigrants' lived culture channelise "in-between" spaces (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45)/at "Thirdspace" (Soja, 1996, p. 3)/ "diaspora space" (Brah, 2005, p. 178/205). What types of roles do the native language of diasporic people play in foreign countries? How do the diasporic people, represented in these novels, make "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) and practise their 'home' culture in the United States and the United Kingdom? How are "nationality,...nationness, as well as nationalism" (Anderson, 2006, p. 4) shown among these diasporic people? How can we study the diaspora's cultural negotiation through the lens of Postcolonial and Cultural Studies? How is this diasporic culture being received by the diaspora's 'homeland' and the 'host' society' in which they live? How much do these diaspora's cultural practices seem different, if any, from their 'home' culture? How are these diasporic texts located in a literary "polysystem" (Even-Zohar, 1990, pp. 45-51) and how do native people receive/perceive these texts in their 'home' cultural ethos and how do host people respond to these texts in their dominant 'host' cultural ethos? This thesis tried to answer all the aforementioned questions.

Objectives of the Thesis:

The objectives of the thesis are manifolds. Firstly, how do diasporic people negotiate culture in foreign countries? How do these people show their continuity with 'home' culture and adaptation to new cultures in foreign countries? What types of roles do the native language of diasporic people play in foreign countries? Secondly, this thesis attempted to make a comparative discussion among the selected four Bengali diasporic novelists from the perspectives of their depiction of the female voice, racial/political undertones, familial and other domestic affairs and other such aspects. Thirdly, it looks into the globalised readers'

consumption/reception of the very culture, depicted in these novels. Are these cultural traits authentic or superficial/artificial/exaggerated to sell the novels or satisfy Western readers? Fourthly, which ‘space(s)’ do these novels ‘occupy’ in the literary ‘polysystem’, ‘centre’ or ‘periphery’ both in the ‘host’ and the ‘home’ countries’ literary ‘polysystem(s)’.

Research Methodology:

For this work, both qualitative research and explorative research methods are followed. Besides, I have used a comparative framework to study the documentation of the Indian diaspora’s cultural negotiation through these novels. To analyse diasporic people’s cultural negotiation, I have used the different theoretical frameworks from Cultural Studies, Diaspora Studies, Postcolonial Studies and Translation Studies.

The theoretical frameworks that I have applied from Postcolonial Studies and Cultural Studies are “In-between” space (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45), “Third Space” (Hall, 1990, p. 211), “Dialogism” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 275), Re-orientalism (Lau, Mendes and Khair), and others.

Bhabha (1994) argues that “in-between” spaces “initiate(s) new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, [...]. It is in the emergence of the interstices-the overlap and displacement of domains of difference-that the intersubjectivity and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (p. 2). Diasporic people attempt to negotiate host culture in this space. Regarding the “Third Space”, Stuart Hall (1990) argues that “[f]or me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘Third Space’, which enables other positions to emerge. The third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiative” (p. 211).

To study the articulation of diasporic people and the host people while negotiating culture, the concept “dialogism”/ “dialogic voices” by Michael Bakhtin is very pertinent here. Elsewhere I have argued that “[h]is dialogic theory is based on a perception of the inherent relationship between ideology and utterance, addresses the socio-political fact of literary performance and provides analytical tools relevant to the act of performing literature” (Das, 2015, p. 733). Bakhtin (1981) argues that the “novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice” (p. 261). I studied this ‘dialogic voice’ of diasporic people and host people at ‘Third Space’ in the thesis.

From Diaspora Studies, I have applied theoretical frameworks like “Diaspora Space” (Brah, 2005, p. 178/205), “Imagined Communities” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6), “Myths of Homeland and Return” (Safran, 1991, pp. 83-99) and others. Brah (2005) introduces the idea of “Diaspora space” as “the site of this immanence. Diaspora space is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes.” (p. 178). At such confluence in host societies, this thesis attempted to study the cultural negotiation of Indian diasporic people as represented by the selected novels of the selected Indian diasporic novelists.

I attempted to compare diasporic communities in foreign countries with ‘imagined’ and political ‘communities’, a concept I borrowed from Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1983). Anderson argues (2006) that (diasporic) communities are “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” (p. 6). He also argues that “nationality, ...nationness, as well as nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind” (Anderson, 2006, p. 4). I attempted to show how the Indian diaspora, making ‘imagined communities’ in foreign countries, live on their residual culture, show a

nationalistic voice of their country and participate and sometimes interfere/meddle in host countries' politics etc.

Safran (1991) opines that diaspora “believe that they are not-and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it” (p. 83). The people from the host society perceive the diaspora as ‘problem people’ and thus side-line these diasporas from normal societal ‘dialogic’ connections in the Western metropolises. Diasporic people are, therefore, victims of racial bias and hate crimes too. So, the diaspora generally lives in their native ghettos (‘imagined communities’) in alien lands. Besides, all these theoretical frameworks, there are some theorists and academics who argue that diasporic writers attempt to ‘re-orientalise’ the orient to sell their novels in the Western metropolis. So, they sometimes depict the seamy sides of their native countries. Such critics include Lisa Lau, Ana Christina Mendes, Tabish Khair and others. I have discussed this issue in the proceeding chapters in detail.

From Translation Studies, I have applied the “Polysystem” theory (Even-Zohar, 1990, pp. 45-51). As Gentzler (1993) argues that “Itamar Even-Zohar first introduced the term “polysystem” for the aggregate of literary systems, including everything from “high” or “canonized” forms (e.g., innovative verse) such as poetry to “low” or “non-canonized” forms (e.g., children’s literature or popular fiction) in a given culture. Even-Zohar recognised both the “primary” (creating new items and models) as well as “secondary” (reinforcing existing items and models) importance of translated literature in literary history” (p. 105). Even-Zohar was working for Israel-Hebrew literature early during the 1970s and developed this theory. Gentzler (1993) also argues that “He (Itamar Even Zohar) coins the term “polysystem” to refer to the entire network of correlated systems-literary and extraliterary-within society, and develops an approach called Polysystem theory to attempt to explain the function of all kinds

of writing within a given culture-from the central canonical texts to the most marginal non-canonical texts” (p. 114). I attempted to locate the selected diasporic texts in the literary ‘polysystem’ and observe how native people receive/perceive these texts in their home cultural ethos and how host people respond to these texts in their dominant cultural ethos.

The primary sources for this work are Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s novels *Queen of Dreams* (2004) and *Oleander Girl* (2013); Jhumpa Lahiri’s fiction *The Namesake* (2003) and *The Lowland* (2013); Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of Rain* (1992) and *A Sin of Color* (1999); and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2004) and *In The Kitchen* (2009). I looked into the other alternative primary resources like interviews with these novelists, chat/discussion with these novelists through different online resources and other means.

The secondary source-“*Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other within*” (2011), edited by Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes helps a lot in this study. Besides, other secondary sources in this study include several scholarly works, projects and research related to the proposed research area. I also attempted to visit different libraries to get other scholarly resources.

The selected novels in the study are set during the 21st century in the First World countries-the United Kingdom and the United States’ metropolises, like New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Washington, and London. These metropolises are interconnected with the boons of 21st-century global connectivity and inter-dependency. People across different countries involve, encompass or combine features of more than one culture in them. The characters, basically the children of diaspora as represented in the selected novels, get all such multi-/trans-cultural exposures while they locate/position themselves as globe trotters in these metropolises of the United States and the United Kingdom. Thus, this study would find in these characters globalised, multicultural and sometimes trans-cultural features too. As I

attempted to contextualise the Indian diaspora's cultural negotiation with globalisation, multiculturalism, trans-culturalism and other current social aspects/theories and to study how much this lived culture is authentic or not, I looked into the other alternative primary resources like interviews with these novelists, chat/discussion with these novelists through different online resources and other means.

Chapter Plan:

My dissertation includes six chapters. Following the “Introduction”, the second chapter “Ideas on ‘Diaspora’, Theorists on ‘Diaspora’, Reasons and Dispersal of the Indian to the United States and the United Kingdom” discusses the basic ideas about ‘diaspora’, concepts and different jargons related to ‘diaspora’ and theorists’ concepts/definitions of ‘diaspora’. It also describes the reasons, especially the historical and sociological backgrounds of the spatial and temporal emigrations of the Indian to foreign countries in general and the United States and the United Kingdom in particular through different phases. The third chapter “Basic Thematic Patterns of the Previous Academic Works on the Selected Novels in Study” discusses the basic thematic patterns of the previous academic works on the selected novels from the selected novelists of Indian origins-Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Monica Ali and Sunetra Gupta. The fourth chapter “Negotiating Indian Diasporic Culture in the Works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali ” explores the different transcultural traits practised by the characters in these novels. I have also made a comparative discussion among these writers and their diasporic narrative patterns in their works in this chapter. The fifth chapter “Consumption and Contextualisation of the Diasporic Culture in the Globalised, Multicultural and Transcultural World” studies the consumption and contextualisation of the diasporic culture in this 21st century Globalised, Multicultural and Transcultural World. The final and sixth chapter

“Conclusion” presented my research findings and attempted to give new areas to be further explored by new researchers in future.

Chapter II

Ideas on ‘Diaspora’, Theorists on ‘Diaspora’, Reasons and Dispersal of the Indian to the United States and the United Kingdom

“I have lived that moment of the scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of gathering. Gatherings of exiles and *emigres* and refugees; gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafes of city centres; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's language; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present. Also the gathering of people in the diaspora: indentured, migrant, interned; the gathering of incriminatory statistics, educational performance, legal statutes, immigration status - the genealogy of that lonely figure that John Berger named the seventh man.”

Homi K. Bhabha in “*The Location of Culture*”, 1994, p. 139)

This chapter discussed basic ideas about ‘diaspora’, concepts and different jargon(s) related to ‘diaspora’ and theorists’ concepts/definitions of/about ‘diaspora’. It also described the reasons, especially the historical and sociological backgrounds of the spatial and temporal emigrations of the Indian to foreign countries. As I attempted to examine the Postcolonial diaspora’s cultural negotiation, this chapter mainly focused on the Postcolonial Indian diaspora, basically, the Indian diaspora who immigrated to the two First World countries-the United States and the United Kingdom through different phases after the 1970s and 1980s.

In the 21st century globalised world, ‘diaspora’ is a very pertinent area in academic discourse and works. The term ‘diaspora’ as per the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* applies to “the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country” (Hornby, 2002, p. 347). In academic discourse, we use both ‘Diaspora’ with ‘D’ in the upper case and ‘diaspora’ in the lower case. While the ‘Diaspora’ stands for the dispersion of Jews (classical diaspora), the ‘diaspora’ stands for any kind of cross-cultural dislocation and settlement of peoples in different foreign nations.

The Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia defines ‘diaspora’ as “the dispersion of Jews among the Gentiles after the Babylonian Exile (586 B.C.) or the aggregate of Jews outside Palestine or present-day Israel. The term also carries religious, philosophical, political and eschatological connotations, in as much as the land of Israel and themselves” (Wolff, 2006, p. 542). *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia* (6th edition) also refers to it as a “term used today to denote the Jewish communities living outside the Holy Land. It was originally used to designate the dispersal of the Jews at the time of the destruction of the First Temple (586 B.C.) and forced exile to Babylonia. The diaspora became a permanent feature of Jewish life; [...]” (<<https://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/religion/judaism/info/diaspora>>).

The term ‘diaspora’ has been applied to large numbers of peoples living outside of their ancestral homelands/countries. It also refers to the dispersion of peoples sharing a mutual ethnic/cultural identity who were either involuntarily or voluntarily left their settled territories, and became residents in remote areas of the former. Sometimes people migrate to different religious places and enrich agricultural and industrial territories within the same country. Judith M. Brown, in connection with the South Asian migration, terms such type of migration within a country as “internal migration” (2006, p. 16).

Theorists' Concepts and Ideas on Diaspora:

Safran (1991) argues that 'diaspora' has a very specific meaning: "[T]he exile of the Jews from their historic homeland and their dispersion throughout many lands, signifying as well the oppression and moral degradation implied by that dispersion" (p. 83).

In the same essay, Safran (1991) again argues,

"Today, "diaspora" and, more specifically, "diaspora community" see increasingly to be used as metaphoric designations for several categories of people expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities *tout court*-[...]." (p. 83.)

Safran (1991) also argues that,

"the concept of diaspora be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) These are 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "centre" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland-its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not-and perhaps cannot be-fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return-when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship." (pp. 83-84)

Brah (2005) introduces the concept of “diaspora space” as “the site of this immanence. ‘Diaspora space’ is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural, and psychic processes” (p. 178). Brah continues, “This diaspora space is occupied not only by the migrants and their descendants but also by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous (2005, p. 178). She puts the example of a ‘diaspora space’ named ‘England’ where different types of diaspora like the Jewish, Asian, the Irish, African-Caribbean and others “intersect among themselves as well as with the entity constructed as ‘Englishness,’ thoroughly re-inscribing it in the process” (Brah, 2005, pp. 204-205). Brah also observes the presence of power relations in institutions, discourses and practices in the ‘diaspora space’ of foreign countries. Brah not only puts majority-minority relations in ‘diaspora space’, but also puts forth a “multiaxial fields of power relations. The similarities and differences across the different axes of differentiation-class, racism, gender, sexuality, and so on-articulate and disarticulate in the diaspora space, marking as well as being marked by the complex web of power” ((2005, p. 205).

Brah also argues, “*Diasporic identities are at once local and global. They are networks of transnational identifications encompassing ‘imagined’ and ‘encountered’ communities*” (2005, p. 192, original Italic). She also argues,

“[T]he concept of diaspora specifies a matrix of economic, political and cultural inter-relationships which construct the commonality between the various components of a dispersed group. The concept of diaspora delineates a field of identifications where ‘imagined communities’ are forged within and out of a confluence of narratives from annals of collective memory and re-memory.” (Brah, 2005, p. 193)

She believes that ‘diaspora space’ “is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural, and psychic processes. It

is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate; and where these syncretic forms may be disclaimed in the name of purity and tradition. Here, tradition is itself continually invented even as it may be hailed as originating from the mists of time. What is at stake is the infinite experimentalist, the myriad processes of cultural fissure and fusion that underwrite contemporary forms of transnational identities” (Brah, 2005, p. 205).

She also argues, “The concept of diaspora space references the global condition of ‘culture as a site of travel’ (Clifford 1992) which seriously problematizes the subject position of the ‘native’. ‘Diaspora space’ is the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of ‘us’ and ‘them’, are contested” (Brah, 2005, pp. 205). Brah opines, “The diaspora space is the site where *the native is as much a diasporan as the diasporan is the native* (2005, p. 205).” She further argues,

“[I]t is the space of/for theoretical crossovers that foreground processes of power inscribing these inter-relationalities; a kind of theoretical creolisation. Such creolized envisioning is crucial, in my view, if we are to address fully the contradictions of modalities of enunciations, identities, positionalities and standpoints that are simultaneous ‘inside’ and ‘outside’” (Brah, 2005, p. 207).

As I have already argued in Chapter I that the first-generation expatriates incline to discard things that belong to their adopted host countries. Some diasporic writers of Indian origin like V.S. Naipaul, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, and a few others made their return journeys to their native country India in disillusionment. Naipaul’s return journey to India disillusioned him after discovering India as ‘an area of darkness’. Chaudhuri bears also a similar impression of his native Kolkata. He remarks that for him to live in Kolkata is similar to his death. Despite all these, the children of diaspora-the second and third-generation immigrants

generally accept the cultural ethos of the adopted countries and discard their ancestral native culture.

The term 'diaspora' is nowadays applied on a metaphoric level to refugees, exiles, expatriates and immigrants. Vijay Mishra, a prominent academic in Diaspora Study, considers Chinese, Arab and Korean communities, post-war South Asian settled in European countries, Australia, Canada, Britain and America as the diaspora. The 'diasporic' literature designates the creative and academic writings of these people who experience territorialization and dislocation at metaphorical, political, existential levels or other adverse social circumstances. Ironically, this body of (Indian) diasporic writings in English has been produced not in the native country-India, but in the Caribbean, South Africa, the South Pacific countries like New Zealand, Fiji etc., Mauritius, and the postcolonial Indian diasporas in the United States, Canada, European countries like the United Kingdom, and Australia. At present, Indian diasporic literature made its standard footprints not only in India but mainly also in the Western metropolises' consumer markets. The Indian diasporic writings are available both as creative writing like novels, poetry and other genres and as academic writing/documents.

Reasons for Immigration:

According to Ghosh (1989), "The modern Indian diaspora-the huge migration from the subcontinent that began in the mid-nineteenth century-is not merely one of the most important demographic dislocations of modern times: it now represents an important force in world culture" (p. 73). There were/are many possible reasons of such huge migration from Indian sub-continent. Kingsley Davis (1968) puts it in the Indian context that "...pressure to emigrate has always been great enough to provide a stream of emigrants much larger than the actual given opportunities" (p. 99). According to Hugh Tinker, "there is a combination of

push and pull: the push of inadequate opportunity in South Asia and the pull of the better prospects in the West" (1977, p. 10). Bill Ashcroft et al. (1998) define diaspora as "the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions ..." (p. 68). Ajaya Kumar Sahoo (2006) also argues that,

"The first was the poor condition that prevailed at that time in India because of the social oppression, shrinking of cottage industry, periodic famine resulting in extreme poverty and unemployment. The West, on the other hand, was getting affluent because of industrial development. Second, all colonial masters found Indians skilful, hard-working and useful, as a result of which the British, the French, the Dutch, and the Portuguese all took Indian skilled labour for the development of plantations and agricultural economics of their territories." (p. 5)

The Indian indentured labourers were shipped to British, French and Dutch Imperial colonies of Mediterranean, Pacific, Caribbean, and Indian Ocean countries from 1830 to 1920. These people were *Lascars* (employed in ships), *Coolie* (wage earners), convicts, *girmityas* (Jahajis, labourers on agreement), *Dhangars* (tribal, hill-man) and other labour section people. The reasons for joining an indentureship are many. On documents, they took the journey voluntarily. But in actuality, there are manifold reasons and circumstances. The labour people, tribal people like *Santals* and *Mundas* from Bihar favoured this indentureship. According to Tinker (1974),

"Indigo manufacture was a labour-intensive process, and the planters found great difficulty in persuading or compelling the peasant farmers living around their factories to work for them. By getting the peasants into their debt, and by employing bully-boys to round them up, they got together a labour force..." (p. 48).

In certain situations, low-cast folks faced many adverse situations in a landlord-dominated society, basically in Banaras Province and Bihar where *kemiuti*, a similar semi-slavery type system was there. According to Tinker (1974),

“The people at the bottom, both economically and socially inferior, felt the heaviest weight of landlordism. These low caste folk were almost all landless labourers; many had lost their little holdings to superior castes because of exactions placed upon them. In Bihar there was a kind of semi-slavery known as *kamiuti*, by which the poor people sold their services, and sometimes those of their children in years to come, in order to obtain resources to meet their pressing needs. Such people were easy prey for the recruiters for emigration overseas.” (p. 53)

He also argues, that in South India, basically in Tamil Nadu,

“[T]he main flow of recruits came from the overpopulated Tamil districts, where the landless labour had a hopeless struggle for survival. Among them, the Untouchables were prominent, for their condition was virtually one of slavery under the grip of upper castes, and any virtually one of slavery under the grip of the upper castes, and any release from their bondage was to be welcomed.” (Tinker, 1974, p. 54)

Also, “[i]n the receiving colonies it was frequently asserted that the immigrants were the lowest and least desirable elements in the Indian population (Tinker, 1974, p. 55). The 1931 census reported that,

“If immigration from Tamil districts had reached saturation point, the census writer was still prepared to support the movement of the Untouchables or Adi-Dravida, as they were now called by those who sought to uplift the Tamil masses. ***‘Emigration is a great teacher of self-respect’*** (my emphasis), recorded the census report: It is probably

the existence of the emigration current that has contributed most to the growth of consciousness among the depressed classes.” (Tinker, 1974, p. 60)

Again, after the Mutiny of 1857, the years 1858 and 1859 saw the peak of emigration. This was because of the ‘push’ factors in India and ‘pull’ factors in the sugar colony. As Tinker (1974) again puts it,

“The Mutiny, the great revolt of 1857, created turmoil throughout northern India, from Delhi to Patna. Many were uprooted, losing land and livelihood, and were glad to accept the change of a new life beyond the seas. Some were certainly directly involved in the revolt, as sepoys or other fighters, and as John Geoghegan tartly noted: ‘many of the emigrants crossed the Kala Pani [Black Water] to Mauritius to avoid a compulsory trip to Port Blair’. But the principal cause of the rise in numbers was the enormous, almost insatiable demand of the Mauritius planters.” (p. 97)

Thus, in such dire social situations, they voluntarily took liberty for themselves and took the indentureship.

Indians in the United States:

According to the 2020 ‘Indian American Attitudes Survey’, as Sumitra Badrinathan et. al, (2021) put in “Social Realities of Indian Americans: Results From the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey” that “Indian Americans are the second-largest immigrant group in the United States. As the number of Indian-origin residents in the United States has swelled north of 4 million, the community’s diversity too has grown” (p. 1). The essayists also argue that “According to data from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS)-which is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau-there are 4.2 million people of Indian origin residing in the United States” (Badrinathan, 2021, p. 6).

The Indian people migrated to the United States in different phases. Some phases of their dispersion are the children of the immigrants who migrated to the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries, the children of, and, the immigrants during the post-1965-era, the twice-migrants in the early 1970s from different African colonies, and all the PIO (Persons of Indian Origin) residing there in this 21st century. But the smooth flow of this migration was seen after the enactment of the “Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.”

“The first Indian in the United States is said to have been a man from Madras who visited Salem, Massachusetts, in 1970 with a sea captain,[...]” (Rangaswamy, 2000, p. 41). Americans showed their interest in Indian cultures, history, and religion after the mid-80s. When Swami Vivekananda visited the United States in 1893 and impressed the religious leaders and thinkers, Americans gave widely spread and enthusiastic welcome to him. We find many Punjabi farmers who landed in Vancouver in Canada. They moved further to Washington and then to northern California where they were employed to cut lumber, build railroads, and pick apricots, cherries and other fruits harvested in the land. A huge chunk of Punjabi farmers faces many adverse situations in America. They had to work 19 hours a day on the farm. They were the victim of anti-Indian riot, racial violence and their deportation to India again during the 1910s and 1920s.

American law of 1917 tried to restrict Asian women to come to the United States and reuniting with their husbands. So, several South Asian men from California married Mexican women. These people made their ethnic ghetto in California’s Central Valley. These people were engaged in cultivation. Though these early immigrants were skilled, hard-working farmers, they were denied citizenship, voting rights and family reunification. But the scenarios after World War II had changed American immigration policy. In 1946, the Americans passed and enacted the Luce-Celler Bill which allowed a quota of 100 immigrant visas per year to Filipinos and Indians. Again, we could see another positive step by America.

Earlier before World War I, Indian men in America were not allowed to bring their wives to America. Now, men were then allowed to reunite with their wives through the 'family reunion' policy. Again, Asians were naturalized as citizens and granted to cast their votes. Many Asian men who immigrated to the United States before the 1940s were allowed to bring their families there. Earlier, these people took shelter in California and some other west coast states of the United States. Thus, though few people got married to Mexican women, most of the men remained unmarried and now returned to Indian brides.

We could find the twice flow of Indian diaspora who had settled in America from the Caribbean and West Indian Countries and others from Africa. Some Indians, Gujaratis aspired to settle in America, but through wrong routes, they had reached Trinidad or Guyana. Later they had shifted to America. These people were artisans and uneducated. They worked in fields and factories in the United States during the first half of the 20th century. These Gujaratis were the pioneer of the motel industry in the United States. Kanjibhai Manchubhai Desai of Digas from South Gujarat was a pioneer of the motel industry. He also taught his trade to newcomer Gujaratis. His genuine desire to help them became a guiding light for new immigrants from India.

However, the main wave of Indians to America was seen when American Government passed and enacted the "Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965." In 1965, American Government's modifications to the 1952 'Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)' abolished the national origins quota system. Earlier through "The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952", the United States allowed only two per cent of a foreign nation's total population to enter there. But through "the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965", the United States, considering the nationality and ethnicity of a foreign country, granted the entry of immigrants based on familial reunification and skilled workers. Mainly young,

educated, middle-class men seeking employment and education are going to the metropolitan world centres for better economic prospects.

The Indian diasporas who were living in African Countries like Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and other countries were shifted to America for various reasons like recurrent drought. After the independence of some African countries during the early 1970s, these settlers were the victim of ruthless and brutal treatment in Uganda under Idi Amin, and in Kenya, as pursued under the political agenda of black ultra-nationalists. When many East African countries like Uganda, Zambia, Kenya and Tanzania started achieving independence, we have observed there that the Asian migrants faced very critical junctures and pathetic experiences during this decolonization process. These East African countries, mainly Uganda, adopted the ‘Africanisation’ policy and publicly displayed strong anti-Indian policies and circulars. Thus, these migrants were forced to leave those East African countries and as ‘twice migrants’ reached many North American countries like the United States and Canada; many European countries like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands; and some other advanced Pacific Island countries like Australia and New Zealand etc. As many East African countries were under British colonial rules for many years, the British took the responsibility to allow these Indian diasporas to settle mainly in Britain. Finally, they made their route to the United States.

At present Indian academics, doctors, and scientists are migrating to the United States with better economic prospects. Though certain incidents like the 9/11 attack temporarily try to reduce their flow, repeatedly they are allowed to moor in the United States. Thus, we find many intellectual academics like Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, and others; activists like Bhagat Singh Thind Mahzarin Banaji, Bhairavi Desai, Kartar Dhillon, Ghadar

Party, Mallika Dutt, Maya Harris, Girindra Mukerji, Kavita Ramdas, Inder Singh and others are living in the United States.

Indians in the United Kingdom:

There is no accurate academic data on the earliest recorded Indians in the British Islands. According to Rozina Visram (1986), the presence of Indians in the British Islands dated back to almost four hundred years, long pre-dates the formal beginning of the British Empire in pre-partitioned India. Visram (1986) argues,

“It is often forgotten that Britain had an Indian community long before the Second World War, and that the recent arrival of Asian people in Britain is part of the long history of contact between Britain and India. The arrival of Asians [post-1945] has taken place precisely because of these long-established connections.” (p. 1)

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Indians settled in Britain in two phases: 1. Colonial British Indians and 2. Postcolonial British Indians.

Colonial British Indians:

The East Indian Company came to Calcutta, India in the 17th century. The flow of people travelling between India and Britain began with the British imperial rule initially started in Calcutta. According to Visram (2002),

“[T]he founding of the East India Company (EIC) set in motion a chain of events leading to the movement of peoples in both directions. As trade expanded, the Company sent out a growing number of agents, both civil and military, to service its commercial enterprises, and its factories at Surat, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta consolidated, becoming little English enclaves on Indian soil” (p. 3).

During this period, the British Company recruited lascars to substitute vacancies in their English crews on East Indiamen and thus Indian people placed their footprints on the English

Islands. In the beginning, the Company selected men from the Indo-Portuguese or Luso-Asian communities of the Indian regions along with Indians from Madras, Cochin, Bombay, Goa and the Ganges river of Bengal. The company, then, in the latter phase recruited Bengali Muslims and men from Ratnagiri. Some of these lascars were declined to get back to India and thus settled, reluctantly, in London and some ports town in England. These lascars faced many adverse situations, like poor accommodation on ships and plagues, caused by inclement weather, both on ships during their voyage and after landing. Regarding this, Brij Lal et al. (2007) argue,

“They (Lascars) increasingly became an essential part of commercial shipping to and from and often ‘jumped ship’. The Marine Department Records contain many documents which detail the generally poor conditions endured by these sailors who, after a long time at sea, ended up in a place that to them was plagued by inclement weather.” (p. 336)

With the allurements of English education in Britain, some Indians began to move into the service of the British Raj and institutions. Some moved as imperial officials to the lower levels of civil government. Some Indian princes went to Britain this time. The rich British families kept Indian domestic servants, ayahs and nannies in their households during the British Raj in India. When India gained independence, these British families left India, and these labour class Indians also accompanied them to Great Britain. All these are well documented in Rosina Visram’s (1986) book *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: Indian in Britain (1700-1947)*.

Postcolonial Indian British:

After World War II, we notice the bleak times in Britain. The country's economic outlook was grim. But again, by the 1960s, the country's scenarios get a positive outlook. Brij Lal et al. (2007) suggests,

“[A]s the economy recovered and there was buoyancy both culturally and economically, the demand for both labours became acute in public industries such as the National Health Service (NHS), London Transport and other big company throughout the country. Industrial labour was also desperately needed in the mill towns of the north, the foundries of Midlands, the hosiery industry of the shires as well as the newer white goods industries of the south. These geographical references are crucial because they mark the terrain upon which Indian settlement took place and put down roots.” (p. 337)

This labour shortage was filled from Punjab's Jalandhar district. The people of this region migrated for housing, labour market and some other manual work there. “A stringent emigration laws were instituted in 1962 with the first “Commonwealth Immigration Act”, and the primary immigration of manual labour to the United Kingdom from India ended in 1967. A small stream of people continued migrating as part of ‘family reunification’ and ‘dependent elder’ schemes, or for marriage, but the era of mass migration from India was over” (Lal et al., 2007, p. 337). However, these manual labourers were restricted to those regions/sectors of the economy where locals didn't want to work. The enactment of the 1967's law brought the opposite result. As Brij Lal et al. (2007) suggest, “However, the legislation restricted the entry of young men over the age of 18 and thus gave incentive to the migration of women and children. In this way, family reunions took place in the 1960s which would eventually lay the foundation for the migration of extended families” (p. 337).

Another group who was migrated to Britain was Indian doctors. “The British established medical colleagues in India whose graduating doctors spoke impeccable English, so it was natural that they would be recruited for the National Health Service. Like the labours’ workplace locations, these doctors too were recruited by the NHS for those positions which were not considered prestigious and were thus unable to attract local candidates” (Lal et al., 2007, p. 337). Thus, in the class hierarchy, these Indian labourers and doctors were treated as coolie (Lal et al., 2007, p. 337). These doctors were either offered jobs in the area where there was a dense population of migrants or in a remote area of the country. Perhaps, thus, Indian doctors were the first to get into contact with many white Britons. But this encounter was negative. These Indian doctors have considerable got difficulty gaining recognition and promotions, a problem that still has resonance in the National Health Service. Besides, Indians except for Punjabi, elites arrived to take other professional jobs like teaching which is seen as a shortfall at that time.

The third wave of migrants began in 1967 and surged in 1972. These were the so-called ‘twice migrants’ or accurately ‘multiple migrants’, from many East African countries, like Uganda, Tanzania and a few others. In the early 1970s, led by Idi Amin in Uganda, through the Africanisation programme, these footsteps of decolonization were seen. This led to the exodus of Indians from East African countries to new homes all over the world. These Indians sought refuge in the United Kingdom. East African Gujaratis had maintained close links with India and had economic and social links with England long before the process of Africanisation began. Other communities like Punjabi and Khojas are too victims of this exodus. Britain became a natural port of call for these refugees since many of them had British passports. Their mass arrival in the early 1970s-estimated at around 50,000-caused a stir in Britain, leading to the passing of a new immigration law that prevented an automatic

right of entry for those from former British colonies and protectorates. While some have left Africa before the expulsion, those who departed during the exodus lost their homes, belongings and livelihoods. These Indians, basically Gujaratis were elite businessmen and after settling in Britain, they had re-established themselves in a rags-t-riches story that is repeated in almost all the parts of the world where they resettled. (Lal et al., 2007, p. 338). “Today, Indians comprise about 1.4 million people in the UK (United Kingdom), making them the single largest visible ethnic minority population in the country” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Indians#>).

Thus, this chapter discussed the word ‘diaspora’, different ideas, jargons and concepts of ‘diaspora’ according to many theorists like William Safran, Avtar Brah, Kingsley Davis, Hugh Tinker and others from Diaspora Studies. It also described the historical and sociological backgrounds for the dispersion of the Indian to the two First World countries-the United Kingdom and the United States. As this thesis studies the postcolonial Indian diaspora’s cultural negotiation, it looked into the Indian diaspora who immigrated to these two countries through different phases after the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter III

Basic Thematic Patterns of the Previous Academic Works on the Selected Novels in Study

This chapter discussed the basic thematic patterns of the previous academic works on the selected novels from the writers of Indian origins-Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali. The reviews are studied according to different themes, like arts and techniques of diasporic novels, expatriate sensibilities, erasure of diaspora's native culture, familial relationship at 'diasporic space', immigration, politics, identity crisis/formation of identity/food-identity of diasporic people, issue of gender/feminine voice, translation of these diasporic novels, exploitation of diasporic people and other themes. In the following sections, I discussed literary reviews according to these theses.

Literary reviews of arts and techniques from the selected novels include "Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Art and Technique in Oleander Girl*" (2014) by Seema Panjwani, "The Children of 1965: Allegory, Postmodernism, and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*" (2007) by Min Hyoung Song, "Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*: A Narrative Pattern of a Broken Family" (2015-16) by Binod Mishra, "Ecocritical Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*" (2016) by Ginni Rani, "Revisions, Reroutings and Return: Reversing the Teleology of Diaspora in Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain*" (2009) by Bidisha Banerjee, "Text within Text: The Shaping of Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain*" (2015) by ASM Maswood Akhter, "Spicing It Up: Strategic Orientalism and Racial Interconnectedness as Social Curatives in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*" (2022) by Pallavi Rastogi, "Language and Style of Sunetra Gupta's Fictional Narratives" (2021) by Maswood Akhter, "Another Look at India's Books: Sunetra Gupta's 'A Sin of Colour'" by Saikat Majumdar and others.

Seema Panjwani's paper "Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Art and Technique in *Oleander Girl*" finds many techniques and artistic qualities in the novel like symbolic title, allegory and various images, mysterious plot, artistic storytelling and other finest arts of storytelling. Divakaruni's narration also includes "a villain, a vamp, a mystery, a well-kept dark secret, love, vengeance, an art gallery, an old, traditional house with a temple, food and foliage, helplessness and resilience". All these qualities project her as a "gifted storyteller" by Abraham Varghese, as "A brilliant storyteller" by Junto Diaz and other attributions.

Min Hyung Song in her essay "The Children of 1965: Allegory, Post-modernism, and Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*" attempts to analyse the form of the fiction *The Namesake* by critically examining the allegorical and symbolic meanings by applying the parameters of postmodernism. The essayist argues that "national allegories are very much a fixture of postmodern/ethnic turn in contemporary American Literature" (p. 367) and such literary settings have been adopted while propagating the notion of 'nation' which again is linked to postmodern fiction. While interpreting the allegorical symbol in the novel, the essayist projects Gogol's odyssey as the ethnic bildungsroman.

Binod Mishra in "Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*: A Narrative Pattern of a Broken Family" (2015) examines the predicament of a Kolkata-based Bengali family that faces the trials and tribulations both in Calcutta and Rhode Island. While the younger brother Udayan, and his wife Gauri both faced plight in Kolkata, Subhash had a cultural dislocation in a foreign land and later faced a crisis in maintaining Gauri and nurturing Gauri's daughter Bella and her granddaughter Meghna. The writer argues that a deep study of the novel projects that mental breakdown is visible among all members of the Bengali family in the novel. The paper attempts to look into the broken psychological condition of Gauri and the reasons for her aloofness from any type of social and familial relationship both in Kolkata

and Rhode Island. In the last section of the essay, the writer attempts to discover the phenomenological reason for the second-generation immigrant child Bela's complete assimilation into American cultural ethos.

Ginni Rani in her "Ecocritical Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*" argues that though the novel is written against the backdrop of the Naxalite Movement with equally poignant diasporic reverberations and historical narratives, it still effectively manages to echo the environmental concerns. From the beginning to the end, this novel is replete with ecological consciousness. Lahiri raised many pertinent issues related to ecocriticism, like environmental degradation, immigrant birds 'darkened by the city's soot', illegal practice of turning water into land, delineation of exploitation of nature in name of modernisation, environmental injustice against poor created/polluted by the rich, deforestation around Calcutta city, eco fighter Bella and her father Subhash and other issues. The essayist thus argues that the novelist gave the serious and urgent need for sustainable development, the burning issue of the day in large-scale debates, by voicing her ecological consciousness.

In "Revisions, Reroutings and Return: Reversing the Teleology of Diaspora in Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain*" (2009), Bidisha Banerjee quotes Avtar Brah who opines that "'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return" (Brah, 2005, p. 188), and shows how the protagonist Monika in *Memories of Rain* still returned to the city of Calcutta she had left ten years ago. The writer examines the possible reasons for Monika's physical homecoming in Calcutta after she rejects the 'diaspora space' in England. The essayist argues that "this return and reversal of diaspora teleology as a move that unsettles and seriously disturbs dichotomies of colonialist and heterosexual desire that are firmly established earlier in the novel" (p. 2).

ASM Maswood Akhter in his “Text within Text: The Shaping of Sunetra Gupta’s *Memories of Rain*” examines the author’s intricate writing style/intertextuality in the novel. The author argues, “Gupta’s extremely literary-even canonical-sensibility is revealed in the centrality and profusion of allusions and references that range from Euripides to Tagore” (p. 17). The writer is conscious of several inter-connected and influential texts, such as from Euripides to Tagore, in their contextual connotation which again shapes the narration and characterisation in the novel. The writer engages with many issues: “sustained interior monologues, figurative language and sensuous poetic imagery, its warped chronology alternating flashbacks and fantasy with the present, or its linguistic experiments resulting in paragraph-stretched sentences conjoined by commas and overflowing grammatical halts (p. 17)”.

Pallavi Rastogi’s “Spicing It Up: Strategic Orientalism and Racial Interconnectedness as Social Curatives in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Oleander Girl*” investigates Divakaruni’s use of *Strategic Orientalism* (Wendy Chenas, 2013) a concept, idea, or motif with which literature can navigate the new century. According to the essayist, this strategy in diasporic texts offers a peaceful alternative to belligerent interaction with the Other in Western metropolises. The essayist agrees with Chen, “strategic orientalism is a form of strategic essentialism, in which those who cannot avoid being racialized as ‘oriental’ embrace rather than reject their stereotyping as model minorities, middlemen, inscrutable exotics, and so forth-and use their inevitable embodiment of these tropes in service of specific political goals” (p. 153). Divakaruni, being a south Asian diasporic writer, follows this strategy to suit herself in diasporic land and her creative outputs in Western academia/consumer markets.

Maswood Akhter in his “Language and Style of Sunetra Gupta’s Fictional Narratives” offers a deep study of specific stylistic and linguistic traits in the literary works of Gupta.

According to the essayist, in “her debut novel, ‘Memories of Rain’ as well as in her others, Gupta effortlessly intersperses prose with poetry; her writing is complex, fusing stream of sensuous poetic imagery with the stream of consciousness. A powerful delivery of interior monologue, figurative language, and continuous time shifts invites the novelist’s comparison with Virginia Woolf. Memory becomes a vital player in many of her novels, be it *Memories of Rain*, *Moonlight into Marzipan* or *So Good in Black*” (p. 58). For the essayist, Gupta’s experimental narrative technique, her stream-of-consciousness technique in her fictional works “transforms language and punctuation marks from normative linguistic symbols into poignant emotional tools” (p. 58), a true heir to Virginia Woolf. The essayist explores the limits of ambiguity in the language in her fictional works and argues that “Gupta has evolved a personal literary idiom in which prose is pushed into a territory formerly accessible only to poetry” (p. 58). The essayist raises the topic of intertextuality from Gupta’s *Memories of Rain* and opines that many influential and inter-connected texts provide Gupta contextual connotation which again shapes her narration and characterisation in her fictional works.

Saikat Majumdar in his column “Another Look at India’s Books: Sunetra Gupta’s ‘A Sin of Colour’” suggests academics for giving due attention to Gupta’s fiction *A Sin of Color* that it deserves. The columnist has lavished appreciation for Gupta’s novel- “[T]he unique rhythm of the vernacular Indian language melts into the subtle lyricism of high European culture, or when the checkered landscape of rural Bengal intersects with the waterscape of punting in Oxford. You never quite know if the welding happens in real-time experience or in memory. Memory is embedded in the syntax of the sentences as much as in the sensibilities of the characters -a feature of the pervasive modernist aesthetic that shapes all of Gupta’s fiction. [...] Memory is embedded in the syntax of the sentences as much as in the sensibilities of the characters-a feature of the pervasive modernist aesthetic that shapes all of

Gupta's fiction" (<<https://lareviewofbooks.org/short-takes/another-look-at-indias-books-sunetra-guptas-a-sin-of-colour/>>). The columnist has also a heap of praise for Gupta's languorous syntax, the meticulous management of time which also seems to be Woolfian, endless fracturing of narrative and lyrical cadences throughout the text.

Literary reviews on expatriate sensibilities include "Expatriate Sensibility in *Queen of Dreams* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni" (2015) by Pushpa D. Dixit, "Mourning and Melancholia in the Characters of *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri" (2017) by V. Shantha and B. Cauveri, "Double alienation in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*" (2010) by Seda Arıkan and F. Gül Koçsoy, "Diasporic Consciousness in Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain*" (2012) by Jadhav Ganesh Vijaykumar & Dr. M. G. Kadam, "Memory as Tool for Identity Formation in Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain*" (2019) by Dr. S. Devika and other notable works.

In "Expatriate Sensibility in *Queen of Dreams* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni" (2015), Pushpa D. Dixit points out some features of diasporic writing like the vulnerability of identity in the new land, nostalgia for the homeland, showing new adjustments in new surroundings and forming bi-cultural identities in the new country-the United States. These features are seen in the social and private lives of diasporic characters like Mrs Gupta, Mr Gupta, Rakhi and Sonny in the novel. This essay looks into the depiction of modern Bengali diasporic females who oscillate between traditional Bengali culture and modern American dominant culture, past lives in their native country and present situation in the host country, and also between desire as immigrants and reality for being immigrants in the foreign country. This novel also exemplifies Divakaruni's amalgamation of oriental traditional ethics with the occidental attitude through the portrayal of second-generation immigrant characters like Rakhi and Sonny.

V. Shantha and B. Cauveri's paper "Mourning and Melancholia in the Characters of *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri" studied the psychoanalytic study of 'mourning' in the novel. They applied Sigmund Freud's idea of 'mourning' which Freud conceptualised in his paper "Mourning and Melancholia" in 1915. It studied how the death of one character Udayan affects the lives of other characters, especially his wife Gauri, who initially showed her continued attachment to her lost husband and later searched for new relationships and new activities. This article also critically looks into how the novel's description is shifted from the characters' immigrant experience to their psychological landscape, and therefore, arrived at a deeper understanding of the characters' psyche and their behaviour, basically of Gauri.

Seda Arıkan and F. Gül Koçsoy in "Double alienation in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*" (2010) argue that the protagonist Nazneen is double alienated as a woman both in Bangladesh and London and as an immigrant in London. This alienation is related to her social psychological and philosophical dimensions mostly in London life.

Jadhav Ganesh Vijaykumar and M. G. Kadam in their paper "Diasporic Consciousness in Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain*" focus on diasporic consciousness in protagonist Moni's life in the novel. When she left her home in Calcutta and settled in London with Anthony, she felt alienated, displaced, sensed a loss of belonging and finally returned physically to her original homeland Calcutta. Along with her return/reverse journey, most of the traits diaspora experiences in a foreign land are visible in her.

In "Memory as Tool for Identity Formation in Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain*", Dr. S. Devika examines how memory restores the reality of the immigrant protagonist Moni's past life in Calcutta in its entirety and modifies her notions of belonging and self. The writer examines it through the tale of a cross-cultural marriage of an Indian girl Moni and

Englishman Anthony, and the subsequent clash of two cultures leading to infidelity, through a series of poignantly evocative memories.

Literary Reviews on the erasure of the native culture of diasporic people in foreign counties include “Erosion of Tradition in Chitra Banerjee’s *Oleander Girl*” (2019) by G. Kalpana, “Traditional Values and Identity Crisis: A Study of *Oleander Girl* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni” (2019) by Abida Begum and Dayananda Pathak, and other works.

G. Kalpana in her “Erosion of Tradition in Chitra Banerjee’s *Oleander Girl*” argues that the novel “vividly describes the erosion of tradition and the arrival of multi-culture and its impacts (p. 330)”. According to the essayist, it describes the importance of tradition and culture through the character of an old man Bimal Prasad Roy and multiculturalism through the character of protagonist Korobi. After her mother’s death, Korobi was nurtured in the hand of her grandparents in Kolkata. As a young generation, Korobi wears western clothes instead of the traditional dress and on seeing this, Bimal Roy tells his granddaughter that if she should go out in the same dress all will think of her as ‘a call girl’. Generally, the young generation tries to discard their ethnic culture to emulate with western dress code. Korobi to some extent tries to adopt the American culture at the beginning, though later she discards it. Bimal Roy also tries to impose Indian cultural traits on the life of her daughter Anu. But she discards it in America and starts living in a relationship with an African fellow there.

Abida Begum and Dayananda Pathak in their paper “Traditional Values and Identity Crisis: A Study of *Oleander Girl* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni” explores the traditional Bengali family which is controlled by patriarchy in the lives of female characters like Korobi, the protagonist of the novel, her mother Anu and her grandmother Sarojini, and to show the final victory of these women followed by reunion and acceptance by the same society. The writers also point out the meticulous mastery of Divakaruni in linking gender identity with

social identity in respect of all the above-mentioned three principal female characters in the novel.

Her grandmother Sarojini tried to keep the family bond intact and thus hesitated to expose the fact about the mixed marriage of her parents. We notice the internal conflict in her in connection with this secrecy. But she was not ready to damage further in the life of Korobi and therefore revealed all the facts to Korobi. Her mother Anu too proves to be conscious of her 'self' and so gives her daughter the name 'Korobi', after the name of a flower, that is beautiful and strong and can protect itself from predators. When Korobi enquires her father in the United States why her name is based on venomous flowers, he replies, "She did actually, because the Oleander was beautiful-but also tough. It knew how to protect itself from predators. Anu wanted that toughness for you because she didn't have enough of it herself" (Divakaruni, 2013. p. 253). Throughout the novel, we notice that Korobi faced many obstacles in her staying in the United States and on her way to reunite with the family of Rajat and Bengali society as a whole. Thus, she breaks all the bindings of traditional Bengali society in Calcutta and set a quite new identity of her own as wished by her mother and grandmother and then gets assimilated with the same society again. The writers finally conclude that Divakaruni's female characters prove to be strong and daring and can establish their own identity in societal affairs.

Literary reviews on human bonds in familial space/affairs among diasporic people in diasporic countries include "Depiction of Father-Daughter Relationship in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*" (2018) by C. Bharathi, "Emphasizing the Equipose of Duty and Desire through a Damsel in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*" (2020) by B. Shiyamala, "Accentuating the Unflinching Mettle of a Damsel in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Novel *Oleander Girl*" (2019) by B. Shiyamala, "Individual-Family Interface in

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*" (2008) by Himadri Lahiri, "The Deadly House: Domestic Space and Socio-Cultural Roles in Sunetra Gupta's *A Sin of Color*" (2010) by Amaya Fernández Menicucci,

In her "Depiction of Father-Daughter Relationship in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dream*" (2018), C. Bharathi argues that the novel gives intimate first-person narrations of the second-generation immigrants' lives in the alien land of the United States and her relationship with her father. Though Rakhi, the daughter of Mrs Gupta, who is always busy interpreting others' dreams, tried to gain her mother's attention, she doesn't get it. Her father without her mother's attention starts drinking and tries to draw Rakhi's attention. But at the start, she declines it. But after the demise of her mother, she didn't hesitate to get help from her father to interpret her dream journals and thus we can find the bond between daughter and father, and thus she reclaims her ethnic Bengali identity. Thus, the journal of Rakhi's mother helps to rebuild the father-daughter filial bond. Through her father's interpretation of the dream journals of her mother to her, Rakhi gradually gets to know about the implication of the demise of her mother and the unique and talented character of her father. After her mother's mysterious death in a car accident, Rakhi's father takes all managemental duty to help resuscitate the *Chai House* into "an Indian snack shop, a chaer dokan" and this bond is thus intensified.

"Emphasizing the Equipose of Duty and Desire through a Damsel in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl*" of B. Shiyamala attempts to establish dual roles of the protagonist Korobi in the novel-as a social being who maintains her social responsibility, identity and works according to the wills of her deceased mother, and as an individual who can maintain desire for her love life too. Korobi maintains these two feats even in her staying in an alien land.

B. Shiyamala in “Accentuating the Unflinching Mettle of a Damsel in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s Novel *Oleander Girl*” argues that literature changes its course and function overtimes. It extends its design from entertaining to simulation. Divakaruni’s *Oleander Girl* is a case in point. According to the author, Divakaruni “bestows the experiences of a damsel named Korobi who acquired self-actualization by means of her dauntless choices. The author likes to assign women in the prominent role but never attempts to project them as impeccable. The seventeen-year-old Korobi experiences metamorphic events which change her perception of life and society. In the middle of the novel, Korobi stands in a position to prefer one thing between love and identity. The author fetchingly presents the dilemma of a damsel and the fundamental change occurs in Korobi who unleashes her determination to find and accept her true being” (1428). The protagonist Korobi thinks “I’m Korobi, Oleander capable of surviving drought and frost and the loss of love” (*Oleander Girl* 275). This strong spirit in her is seen not only in her growing up years till marriageable age in Kolkata with her grandparents but also in her staying in the United States.

The essay "Individual-Family Interface in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*" by Himadri Lahiri explores how the main characters-Ashima Ganguli, Gogol Ganguli and Moushumi Mazoomdar in the fiction “live inside a set of relations” (Foucault, 1967, p. 3) and interrelate in a dynamic space, and create a uniform cultural ethos in the Ganguli family in Boston, the United States which later produces a diverse cultural ethos, that reproduces multiple opinions and perspectives, and an intricate shape of human relationship. The author also demonstrated how the American-born children of the Indian diaspora like Gogol Ganguli, Moushumi Mazoomdar and others live, become unavoidably mixed up and messed up with their first-generation expatriate parents and in extension to the ethnic community in diverse locations which bring nearness to each other and help to construct their identities.

Amaya Fernández Menicucci in “The Deadly House: Domestic Space and Socio-Cultural Roles in Sunetra Gupta’s *A Sin of Color*” attempts to “prove that literary texts constitute an invaluable field of study for cultural anthropology that is not exclusively inscribed in parochial and time-bound ethnic identities. On the contrary, it offers an insight into universal mechanisms of cultural configuration” (p. 21). The writer argues, “Gupta uses the conventions and symbolisms of the Gothic genre to represent her characters’ perception of domestic space to signify their experience of the patriarchal family structure as that of an alienating dimension of imposition, oppression and repression” (p. 21). The essayist also argues, in the novel “the main first and second-generation subaltern characters shows, institutionalised hierarchical family structures are represented and hence experienced and perceived as spaces of perpetual unbelongingness and exclusion/reclusion for the individual self, and thus radically opposite to the concept of home as a place of inclusion where the process of self-identity construction can actually take place” (p. 52).

Literary reviews on immigrant sensibilities/transnationalism from the selected novels include “Rebellion: Second Generation Bangladeshi Immigrants in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali” (2013) by A. Nejat TÖNGÜR, “Immigrant Desires: Narratives of the Indian Diaspora by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni” (2013) by Tutun Mukherjee, “Shifting Mobilities: Diasporas in Flux in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*” (2014) by Stephanie Southmayd, “*Brick Lane*: Mirroring Nazneen’s Metamorphosis” (2014) by Dr Hossain Al Mamun, “Transnational identities in the fiction of Monica Ali: *In the Kitchen* and *Alentejo Blue*” (2016) by Margarida Esteves Pereira, “Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*: A Thematic Analysis” (2018) by R. Ramya and Dr Shibila, “A Study of the Cross Cultural Language Issues in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*” (2020) by Ankita Choudhary, “A Psychosocial Study of Gauri’s Odyssey in *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri” (2021) by Manoj Kumar Rath and few other works.

A Nejat Tongur's "Rebellion: Second Generation Bangladeshi Immigrants in *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali" (2013) argues, "the second-generation young Bangladeshis are distinct with their frequent clashes with their parents, their community or the British society. Some of them seek solace and solution in alcohol, drugs and gangs or they unite in religious communities to endure, oppose and revolt against these grievances" (p. 561). Tongur also argues that "Ali portrays teenagers who refuse to conform to traditional, familial and cultural patterns and young people who voice their rejection of racist practices, and revolt against the system, morality and conventions either in illegal trades and gangs or in Islam" (p. 567).

Tutun Mukherjee's "Immigrant Desires: Narratives of the Indian Diaspora by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni" (2013) selected two fictions-*The Mistress of Spices* (1997) and *Queen of Dreams* (2004) to "highlight some persisting thematic interests of the writer as well as the creative journey undertaken by her from the 1990s into the twenty-first century, motivated by her motto: 'The art of dissolving boundaries is what living is all about'" (p. 187). The essayist argues that two protagonists Tilo and Mrs Gupta "work in Divakaruni's oeuvre as metaphors of immigrant desires: one, the desire to bridge dualities-of the inexplicable pulls of old cultural roots against that of the new, of the past and the present; two, the desire to confidently handle anxieties, which in the case of a diasporan is the capacity to deal with the complexities of assimilation, acculturation and adaptation and overcome feelings of uncertainty and ambivalence towards the host society, especially in the face of growing xenophobia; three, the desire to retain ethnic identity yet not appear alienated; and finally, the desire to contribute to the host society in a meaningful and humanitarian way by bringing forth the precious healing knowledge of other ancient traditions and cultures" (p. 190).

The essayist argues that the diasporic narratives of Divakaruni and other such writers attempt to eroticise and fetishize the very notion of immigration to "perpetuate easy

translation and dubious interpretation, processes that uncannily resemble Orientalist and imperial projects of literary and critical representation” (p. 191). Thus, such narratives lack social contradictions that constitute the conditions of immigration and citizenship and resolve formally and consciously within the cosy embrace of the domestic romance. Still, Divakaruni’s narratives present the complex play of pain, pleasure and desire interwoven with the politics of the diaspora. Divakaruni is a gifted storyteller; her narratives entice and captivate, transcend the dictates of the “here and now to focus on everlasting issues of human relationships, disappointments and hopes, as well as pride associated with one’s heritage and how confidence in it can shape individual identity in times of transition” (p. 192).

In “Shifting Mobilities: Diasporas in Flux in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*”, the essayist Stephanie Southmayd argues that the protagonist Nazneen was initially very much afraid of the foreign environments of her confined Brick Lane flat. The fiction portrays the gradual rising of her physical and societal transformation after she adjusts to her new home and works culture around Bangladeshi ghettos at Brick Lane. The essayist also opines that it would be studied as an allegory of an immigrant’s journey to attaining power, achievement and social metamorphosis in the host country. The writer also takes Nazneen’s metamorphosis as a physical, social and spatial one and concludes that it is the most important theme of the fiction *Brick Lane*.

Dr Hossain Al Mamun in “*Brick Lane: Mirroring Nazneen’s Metamorphosis*” compares protagonist Nazneen’s transformation in Britain to a butterfly’s transformation, from a mere moth to a full-fledged butterfly who is ready to fly on its own. In the beginning protagonist, Nazneen faces numerous obstacles in Bangladesh and Britain. However, she overcomes all obstacles and gets her final full freedom, like a mature butterfly who is ready to fly, finally. He argues, “[t]he novel ends with an image: a sari-wearing ice-skating woman

Nazneen, firmly on her feet but preparing to launch out onto the precarious ice of experience. She discovers her choice and her new world” (pp. 516-517).

Margarida Esteves Pereira in “Transnational identities in the fiction of Monica Ali: *In the Kitchen* and *Alentejo Blue*” argues that Ali’s fiction *In the Kitchen* presents “London as a cosmopolitan and postmodern city, a locus of transnational identities” (p. 77). She portrays “migration from the point of view of the exiled citizen, whose situation is part of globalization processes outside of the normal push/pull (centre/periphery, east/west, north/south) conceptions of migration” (p. 77). Drawing a parallel view with Zygmunt Bauman’s book *Culture in a Liquid Modern World* (2011), he wants to portray the postmodern cosmopolitan migration process as an unstable process: “cosmopolitanism as no longer an ideal or a Utopia” (p. 89). The writer points out many things related to this process like the exploitation of migrants, blurring of their ethnic, migrant, and racial identities and even their identity even as human beings. The writer also points out many instances of Eurocentric white people’s exploitative nature towards illegal migrants, women etc.

H. Ramya and Dr. Shibila in their paper “Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*: A Thematic Analysis” (2018) record lavish appreciation for different pertinent themes of postcolonial literature, the art of characterisation and techniques of storytelling and narration in Lahiri’s novel *The Lowland*. Themes related to immigrant fiction like nostalgia, feeling of lowliness/alienation, dislocation and others are replete in this novel. The authors express appreciation of Lahiri’s art of characterisation, “Lahiri really creates a picture about who her characters are, their faults on display, making them all the more real and relatable. At times the novel is sombre, making you root for the characters, wanting everything to turn out all right. The novel focuses on the characters, but Lahiri carefully weaves in historic, cultural and political context that helps shape the time in which the characters lived” (p. 718). Lahiri’s

simple passage, lucid description, human touch in her description and catchy dictions bring to the authors' attention. About her narrative technique, the authors acknowledge, "Lahiri divides the book into sections where she writes from dissimilar characters perspectives, keeping the pace of the book interesting and weaving time back and forth, overlapping and giving insights into each character" (p. 718).

Ankita Choudhary's "A Study of the Cross Cultural Language Issues in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*" looks into "the perceptible shift from South Asian immigrants in Britain, in the context of language maintenance, and possible reasons for this shift by tracing the issues of culture and identity, in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*" (p. 1). According to the essayist, language serves as one of the essential tools for the successful assimilation of migrants into the host society. The essayist has heap praise for Ali's depiction of the language issue in *Brick Lane*. According to her, Ali "tactfully portrays Nazneen's character, [...], to represent and differentiate between the native and the host culture. Through the character of Nazneen, the writer attempts to target the issues of language and identity that created conflict and dilemma within these characters. Nazneen's transformation is the projection of Britain as a life-changing space where she stands confident as an individual who chooses to live in London independently" (p. 8).

Manoj Kumar Rath in "A Psychosocial Study of Gauri's Odyssey in *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri" argues that to understand the characters' struggle for settlement in diasporic land readers have to take into account their cognition, emotion and perception of their native society and the society they have landed into. The essayist details here the psychological changes that take place in shaping the character Gauri in the novel due to the sociological influences. Lahiri has described Gauri as a powerful character, who struggles to establish her self-identity, ignoring the stereotypical values in a conventional social setup. According to

the essayist, she has suffered from three types of disorders-1. Attachment disorder 2. Post-traumatic disorder and 3. Depression and personality disorder. With such mental disorders, she took some toughest decisions in her life that lands her in losing her social relationships. She thus identifies herself neither with her native Bengali culture nor with the host American culture. She, finally, seems to be a confusing personality who ends up losing all her family ties in the end.

Literary reviews on politics/racial abuse presented in the selected novels include “Image of the Socio-Political Realities in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Queen of Dreams*” (2014) by M. Silviya and G. Baskaran, “The Self and the Political: A Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*” (2014) by Esha Shah, “History Handcuffed: The Personal and the Political in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*” (2016) by Marshal R., “Circulation of the Discourse of American Nationalism through Allegiance to Consumer Citizenship in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2017) by Moussa Pourya Asl and Nurul Farhana Low Bt. Abdullah, “Racism: A Study of Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*” (2017) by Fakhare Alam, “It Was a Bad Time for Muslims in America: Representation of Islamophobia in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Queen of Dreams* and *One Amazing Thing*” (2022) by Atreyee Gohain

In “Image of the Socio-Political Realities in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Queen of Dreams*”, M. Silviya and G. Baskaran attempt to look into the socio-political aspects of texts from the vantage point of ‘cultural materialism.’ It studies the politicised ancient moment in *Queen of Dreams*. Authors argue that this novel “throws light on the glitches that faced by Indian immigrants after the incident (9/11) which made every Indian panic about their lives. The novel perceptibly presents the power plays and political corruption within the systems of government and enormously represents terrorism, the glitches faced by Indian immigrants and especially the women immigrants” (p. 49). These politicised, social realities are faced by

second-generation immigrants like Rakhi and her husband sunny after the 9/11 incidents. According to authors, the novel “totally represents the motifs and the influence of the author behind the novel as Cultural materialists give importance to motifs behind the text’s creation and the possible influence of the author. All these historical moments and the glitches after the attacks were personally ‘lived and felt’ by the author” (p. 51).

In “The Self and the Political: A Reading of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*,” Esha Shah argues that “the novel is only suggestively about Naxalism” (p. 30). She further argues that it can be read as “a narrative about what life could be in the absence of the ideological movements of the 1960s and the 1970s shaping the personal (and the political). I particularly aim to read it as a comment on the psychology of the hyper-individualistic self-emerging in the post-ideological era and its likely implications for the democratic politics” (p. 30). According to the author, the main story of the novel is a tale of what Marcel Gauchet calls the ‘pacification of conflicts’ in the lives of Subhash and Gauri (Gauchet, 2000). This pacification (or reduction) of conflicts is reflected in the depressed and muted emotional shelves in Subhash and Gauri’s life in the United States. These hyper-individualistic shelves are disconnected, disengaged and isolated from societal affairs. According to the author, Lahiri “does not even grant Subhash membership in the societal whole through the experience of a structural form of power and hence collectively, i. e, class, gender, race, nationality, or ethnicity” (p. 31). In Subhash’s hyper-atomised passivity, the author finds a deeply democratic outlook. This hyper-contemporary individual shelf and its deeply democratic respect for self-determination have serious ramifications for the political too. We can observe this in Subhash who is “neither anguished nor pained, he refuses to go after her, and also steadfastly respects her wish not to be contacted, never writes to her, except until he

desires a divorce much later in his life. In a way, he deeply respects Gauri's right to self-determination and her assertion of freedom and autonomy" (p. 32).

Marshal R. in his paper "History Handcuffed: The Personal and the Political in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*" argues that Lahiri blended personal notes with political milieus of Bengal in her novel *The Lowland*. The first section of the paper details the Naxalbari Movement, the turbulent historical period in Bengali during the 1960s and 1970s on which the novel is based. The active political character Udayan in the novel involved himself in this movement and saw his end. The essayist, calling Lahiri's novel a political novel, considers Lahiri as a political novelist along with E.M. Forester, Khushwat Singh and Salman Rushdie. Lahiri, like her other novel *The Namesake* (2003), minutely detailed the familial feelings between siblings in the *Mitra* family in Calcutta and immigrants' feelings in a foreign land like anxieties, belonging, displacement, nostalgia, cultural dilemma, double consciousness in first-generation immigrant Subhash's life during an early stage in the United States and cultural hybridity, assimilation, and amalgamation in nomadic life in second-generation immigrant Subhash's daughter Bella in American cultural ethos. According to the essayist, Lahiri "highlights the growing political corruption and social degradation that has begun to corrode the Indian society. The hope for social equality and political freedom in India becomes a mere dream. Numerous characters lucidly sketched and hung upon a family tree helps in recreating and connecting past to the present" (p. 74).

Fakhare Alam in his paper "Racism: A Study of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*" argues that the novel is texturized with the issues related to racism like hatred, prejudice, exploitation, oppression, suppression, dislike, intolerance, discrimination, and so forth in this multicultural and globalised world. According to the essayist, the novel also depicts the consequent effect of racism on the lives of Bangladeshi people like Chanu, his wife Nazneen and other

immigrants like Karim around Tower Hamlet at Brick Lane in the United Kingdom. After the essayist, the novel attempts to illustrate the colonial aftermath through the knowledge of the history of the characters. Chanu has thorough knowledge about the racial slurring of white people during the colonial period of Britishers in Bangladesh and at present in London during the postcolonial era.

Moussa Pourya Asl et. al. in “Circulation of the Discourse of American Nationalism through Allegiance to Consumer Citizenship in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” look into “Lahiri’s literary engagement with re-Orientalization and sexualization of a collective subject, described as Indian diasporic people pertinent to the contemporary consumer culture” (p. 54). It examines a comparative study between Lahiri’s fiction and the prevailing societal aspects in which the fiction is written, projecting diasporic literary writing as “an example of a Foucauldian social apparatus-a new form of governmentality-that was used for the production of American nationalism after the events of 9/11” (p. 54). According to the essayists, the Indian immigrants are projected as “powerless consumers in the context of the post-cold war period” (p. 54) in the capitalist society in the United States. For the essayists, the bodies of Indian female immigrants of any generation in the novel are portrayed as “a deliberate site of economic and erotic excess that fundamentally complies with the contemporary heteronormative ideology of patriarchal capitalism, wherein the woman is essentially treated as the archetypal consumer” (p. 54) in Western marketing demands of production and consumption. Writers conclude it arguing that Lahiri’s novel functions as “both an artistic genre and a socio-politico-economic institution-specifically, as an integral part of a form of governmentality that is both regulative and productive of American nationalism through its allegiance to consumer citizenship” (p. 65).

Atreyee Gohain in her essay “It Was as a Bad Time for Muslims in America: Representation of Islamophobia in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Queen of Dreams* and *One Amazing Thing*” argues that “Divakaruni articulates possibly the most enduring consequence of the 9/11 attacks-the polarization of the American people into those who belonged and those who did not” (p. 139). The sudden horrid Islamophobia among Americans reduces Arab Muslims into *strangers*. According to the essayist, this reduction of human beings to just their corporeality can be better explained through the theory of *racialization* by Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2014). Thus, this essay looks at the representation of post-9/11 Islamophobia in the above-mentioned two novels of Divakaruni. For the essayist, these “two novels highlight the role of state-driven discourses in generating and sustaining the paranoia regarding Muslim bodies in the aftermath of the Twin Towers collapse, even as they portray the affective response of many first-generation Americans to 9/11-their confrontation with complex questions of citizenship and national identity” (p. 140).

This case, according to the essayist, is strongly visible in Divakaruni’s novel *Oleander Girl*. The essayist argues that “Divakaruni employs Strategic Orientalism to position her Hindu narrator within the Muslim-Christian dichotomy and to use the stereotypes associated with Hinduism and South Asia to counter the charges of barbarity against the religious Other. She promotes a gentle, benign, passive way of being in the world, almost Gandhian in its tendency toward nonviolence, even as this passive ontology also advocates courage, truth-to-self, and resilience in the face of adversity” (p. 125). Divakaruni in *Oleander Girl* also tries to establish strategic orientalism through mysticism, spirituality and otherworldliness. Korobi, the protagonist in the novel, often “sees her dead mother’s ghost in Calcutta, instantly establishing India as a land of spirituality and supernatural mysticism where the dead roam free to afflict the living with their unfinished business” (p. 128). The

novel showcases love, tolerance, and acceptance, human qualities after the 9/11 incidents in the United States that can be examined through the mobilization of Strategic Orientalism. The word ‘Oleander’ in the title of the novel and the name of the protagonist ‘Korobi’ intensify this idea in the text.

Academic reviews related to identity/ food and identity of immigrants in host countries are “The intertwining of Food and Identity: An Interesting Aspect of the Male Protagonists in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*” (2019) by Sujatha Girish, “Identity Crisis in Sunetra Gupta’s *A Sin of Color* and *Memories of Rain*” (2018) by B. R. Lakshmi, G. Hampamma and V. B. Chitra, “Reconnoitring Transnational Identity and Hybridity in Monica Ali’s *In The Kitchen*” (2020) by V. Jagadeeswari and Dr. Suresh Ponnurangam, “Consumption and the Indian Diaspora: A Study of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2021) by Rashmi Das and others.

The essay “The intertwining of Food and Identity: An Interesting Aspect of the Male Protagonists in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*” (2021) by Sujatha Girish et. al. attempts to explore the correlation of food and identity concerning male characters like Mr Gupta and his son-in-law Sunny of the novel. The novelist diligently delineates the culinary skill of Mr Gupta, basically his skill in ‘Chai house’/ ‘Kurma House’ and its significance on his identity in the diasporic context. Mr Gupta prepares exotic Indian dishes in *Kurma House* and presents them to the customers along with relevant stories which fascinate the customers. The novelist also narrates Sonny's (Rakhi’s husband) interest in cooking which is indicative of his multiple identities in the United States. Sonny's culinary interests assist him in acculturation and enable him to sustain his ethnic identity. This paper also “debunks the stereotypical idea that preparation of food is a natural skill of female domain and brings to the foreground the fact that culinary skills are neutral to gender identity” (p. 142).

B. R. Lakshmi et. al. in their “Identity Crisis in Sunetra Gupta’s *A Sin of Color* and *Memories of Rain*” argue that in a foreign land, diaspora resides in an irresolute position with his/her hyphenated one, which cannot possess a uniquely elite meaning of self. Diaspora is accepted both as local and as an outsider in a foreign land. These fluctuating spaces bring a restless mentality to the lives of diasporic people. This paper also investigates not only how the vagrant of the West is progressively acknowledging diasporic Indians but also how they adapt to recognise the everlasting process of identity formation of the Indian diaspora.

V. Jagadeeswari and Dr. Suresh Ponnuram in “Reconnoitring Transnational Identity and Hybridity in Monica Ali’s *In The Kitchen*” look into the struggle for creating identity by the people of multiple ethnicities while endeavouring to assimilate into host society in general and in the United Kingdom in particular. The essayists argue that Monica Ali’s novel mainly points attention to matters such as social assimilation of immigrants of multi-ethnic origins in London, identity crisis, discrimination, predestination, or racism in London, in the United Kingdom. The paper also argues that Ali, being an individual of hybrid origin and a descendant of immigrants in London, points out all these meticulously as she experiences all these factual things.

Rashmi Das in “Consumption and the Indian Diaspora: A Study of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” opines that among diasporic people eating habits or consumption acts both as an attempt to emulate the host country and as an agency of assimilation and categorisation in the host country. She also argues that eating simultaneously entails regeneration and violence too. The essayist shows “how the locus of consumption is multifaceted, being not only physical, but also metaphorical, and at times hyperreal, [...]” (p. 1). In a foreign land, diasporic people, as the essayist argues, exist both as consumers and as a piece of consumption by the host people. The essayist analyses Lahiri’s novel through the

methodology of close reading and of summarising the progress of Food Studies as a genre. Her theoretical analysis is based on “Mikhail Bakhtin’s discourse of food and eating as presented in his *Rabelais and His World* (1965)” (p. 1).

Literary reviews on gender/feminine sensibility/gendered identity written in these novels are “Feminine Mysticism in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Queen of Dreams*” (2017) by H. Surya Prabha & K. M. Sumathi, “Identification, Readerly Desire, and Feminist Recuperation in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2008) by Tamara Ayesha Bhalla, “Portrayal of Femininity in Contemporary English-language Films by South Asian Diasporic Female Filmmakers” (2011) by Tanseem Farida, “*In the Kitchen* with Monica Ali: Flavouring Gender and Diaspora” (2019) by Chitra Battisti and Sidia Fiorato, “Feminism Perspective in the Novel *A Sin of Color* by Sunetra Gupta” (2019) by P. Lakshmilavanya, Bezawada Raju and B. Karuna, “Circumferencing New Dimensions in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” (2015) by Rohina Ratti and Dr. Gunjan Aggarwal, “The Raising of Nazneen’s Independent Recognition in *Brick Lane*” (2019) by M. Thasneem Sulthana and others works.

In “Feminine Mysticism in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *Queen of Dreams*” (2017), H. Surya Prabha and K. M. Sumathi argue that “the mystic experiences of Mrs Gupta, the dream teller and her hurdles to become successful as a foreseer of the fortunes and misfortunes of others. This research on mysticism in *Queen of Dreams* centres on goddesses and their lexicon that cultivate a radically different culture from the empirical and materialist one that reigns today.” Mrs Gupta, queen of dreams in the novel, does not consider heterosexualism as an obligatory practice and thus stops sexuality with Mr Gupta. Thus, her refusal of it is for retrieving her influence as a dream teller of others. This also shows her self-sufficiency and her creativity as an interpreter of dreams. The writers also argue that “.... the snake is referred to as masculine, its description as ‘green’, shining like ‘rain water’, and

‘a raindrop on an ear of maize’, evokes the feminine imagery of regeneration and Earth itself. Divakaruni writing from the Hindu culture that has preserved certain vestiges of the Hindu religion manages to recuperate the feminine and oracular powers of the snake by making the snake a messenger of Mother Goddess.”

Tamara Ayesha Bhalla in the chapter “Identification, Readerly Desire, and Feminist Recuperation in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” studies the complexity of identification of the novel by lay readers and academic readers and “gendered interpretation in South Asian diasporic literature in both academic and lay sites of readership” (p 183). The author attempts to trace the specific, effective uses of the novel among different categories of readers and observe “what it represents for different reading publics, and think about how the interpretations produced in overlapping sites of readership can inform and enhance one another” (p. 190). This paper thus critically accesses lay and academic readers’ interpretation of the text’s different critical plots like a realist, romantic etc. in it, and their strongly-felt identification with the novel. One of the main concerns of the author is that the novel texturises “female characters as foils to Gogol’s development, contributing to rigid notions identified by sociologists and cultural critics across several disciplines of what constitutes “authentic” South Asian female diasporic subjectivities” (p. 192). The author also considers Jhumpa Lahiri “as the quintessential “new cosmopolitan,” purveyor of an “ethno-global vision,” interpreter of “immigrant angst,” and creator of a “different type of expatriate writing” (p. 181).

Tasneem Farida’s paper “Portrayal of Femininity in Contemporary English-language Films by South Asian Diasporic Female Filmmakers” investigates the portrayal of South Asian femininity in three contemporary English-language films, produced from Indian art-house or parallel cinema, i.e., South Asian counter-cinema. The author aims to establish the

need for more South Asian female filmmakers to portray subjective and desexualized femininity, contrary to the more common ‘scopophilic’ (‘pleasure in looking’) image, serving the purpose of satisfying the male gaze, thus ultimately bringing a change in the audiences’ preferences for hyper-sexualized femininity in contemporary Indian films. In this paper, Tasneem Farida takes Jhumpa Lahiri’s novel *The Namesake* as reference text and highlights on feminine qualities of the major female character Ashima Ganguli, projected in Mira Nair’s film version. She shows how Ashima who was once “an innocent and all-sacrificing young bride” (p. 13), transforms herself into a self-reliant one and aims to adapt to the environment and lifestyle of New York City.

“*In the Kitchen* with Monica Ali: Flavouring Gender and Diaspora”, Chitra Battisti and Sidia Fiorato argue that the location of the incident is a kitchen, a liminal space or an “in-between” space (Bhabha). In this transient space, food represents a source of energy and memory, identity and encounter and offers an innovative way of dealing with issues related to diasporas’ contemporary cultural identity in the globalised world. It proceeds through the representation of other gendered kitchens that the protagonist Gabriel experiences in his life. The kitchen thus becomes a metaphor for Bhabha’s ‘third space’.

P. Lakshmilavanya, Bezawada Raju and B. Karuna in “Feminism Perspective in the Novel *A Sin of Color* by Sunetra Gupta” argue that “[t]he importance of gender justice and equality, known as feminism, is one amongst the existing phenomena in Indian diasporic literary works. This paper aims to find out socio-cultural background of Sunetra Gupta and gender perspective in her novel *A Sin of Color*” (p. 793). This paper also heaps praise for Gupta’s dexterous depiction of a female’s mind in diverse cultures and situations.

Rohina Ratti and Dr. Gunjan Aggarwal in their essay “Circumferencing New Dimensions in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*” discuss the emancipatory voice of all the

women characters in the novel *The Namesake*. Women like Ashima Ganguli and Moushumi Mazoomdar are at times “fiercely strong, assertive, fiery and individualistic” (p. 549). These women characters, basically Moushumi have bedimmed the men counterparts and have at times tried to defy the native dogmas and the standards of the native Bengali society. According to the essayists, the protagonist Ashima Ganguli shows a sort of stubborn resistance to the world’s outrage that could be found in any strata of society. The essayists also argue that Lahiri has given the freedom to female characters to develop themselves from time to time, being independent and choosing their freedom, thereby taking their own decisions in societal and familial aspects like the New Women. According to essayists, this outlook of female characters outlines the diasporic strategy as well as the resistance of the female in a foreign country. The essayists consider these feminine qualities as *Shakti*, a concept in Hinduism, considered as the re-emergence of the feminine.

M. Thasneem Sulthana’s “The Raising of Nazneen's Independent Recognition in *Brick Lane*” considers Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* a diasporic fiction as it is replete with immigrant sensibilities such as the sense of displacement, alienation and feeling of nostalgia in it. According to the essayist, this paper also attempts to show how the Bangladeshi diasporic people constitute their identity in a diasporic country in the United Kingdom through the independent recognition of the characters like Nazneen in the novel. Although Nazneen, the protagonist of the novel, initially feels isolated and unreceptive, she feels confident and independent at the end of the novel. The essayist argues that “for Nazneen, *Brick Lane* stands for possibilities which she could not have obtained in Bangladesh” (p. 876). Thus, in the end, when Nazneen gets an option to leave the diasporic land, she chooses to stay back at her diasporic location with full new possibilities and thus takes her destiny into her own hands.

Academic writings on the different translated versions of these novels are “Indian Diasporic Aesthetics as a Form of Translation” (2008) by Giuseppe Balirano, “*The Namesake* in Persian: An on-line Translation Workshop” (2008) by Esmaeil Haddadian Moghaddam and others.

Giuseppe Balirano’s essay “Indian Diasporic Aesthetics as a Form of Translation” demonstrates how the film version of Lahiri’s novel *The Namesake*, adopted by Mira Nair with the same title (2007), through inter-semiotic translation looks into the issues of “centre and margins through translation, using it as the metaphor of diasporic aesthetics” (p. 88). The author looks into “a multimodal examination based on a contrastive study of Jhumpa Lahiri’s first novel, *The Namesake* (2003), and its filmic trans-lation by Mira Nair (2007) with the purpose of decoding typical Desi media practices and discourse(s) as new forms of narration in diasporic representations of ‘Indianness’ in the US” (p. 88). Drawing a contrasting view, the author contents that “Lahiri and Nair’s diasporic aesthetics builds a diasporic world from its very centre, using symbolism based on duality of representation, to investigate identity, disseminate hybridity and occupy a central position in Western culture. Their artistic form is an act of liberation since it gives voice to alterity, and destabilises the old dichotomy between the margins and centre(s) of the world” (p. 96).

Esmaeil Haddadian Moghaddam in his essay “*The Namesake* in Persian: An on-line Translation Workshop,” records how a weblog in the cyber world is applied by an Iranian translator in Persian literary translation of the Lahiri’s fiction. According to the essayist, the art of translation, particularly literary translation cannot be taken as a static process anymore. The essayist argues that nowadays, translators are applying new communicative technologies, like the Internet and other such while translating. The essayist again opines that “it has been overlooked in translation studies, partly, in author’s opinion, because of its novelty but to

large extent, because of its popularity as a platform or a personal diary for the novice bloggers, the authors of the web logs.” The essayist still attempts to convince the benefits of weblog during the translation process. He then demonstrates some advantages of such a type of literary translation. Thus, the essayist acknowledges the growth and effective use of new translation technologies.

Literary reviews on the exploitation of Indian immigrants in the United States and the United Kingdom, based on these selected novels, are “The Hidden Face of the New Millennium: Migrant Exploitation and Reader Expectations in Monica Ali’s *In the Kitchen*” (2011) by Patricia Bastida-Rodríguez, “Monica Ali’s *In the Kitchen*: Human Trafficking or “Modern Slavery” as a Human Rights Issue” (2016) by Prof. Saad Kassim Sagher and Siham Hattab Hamdan and other essays.

Patricia Bastida-Rodríguez in “The Hidden Face of the New Millennium: Migrant Exploitation and Reader Expectations in Monica Ali’s *In the Kitchen*” argues that this fiction “challenges reader expectations by focusing on migrant experience from an unconventional perspective: male focalisation, the use of genre fiction and the depiction of immigrant communities different from Ali’s in terms of cultural background and time of arrival” (p. 49). According to the author, this novel is a sort of crime fiction- it includes violent death/murder at the beginning that creates a sordid, hostile atmosphere in the plot; a detective agent, performed by Gabriel Oak at the end of the novel; prostitution, human trafficking, enslavement and other themes related to crime fiction. This novel thus resembles “the crime fiction genre is very rarely cultivated by women from ethnic minorities” (p. 51). This essay also looks into migrant exploitation in twenty-first century Britain in in-depth ways, including the exploitation of women by Eurocentric people like Oak.

In their article “Monica Ali's *In the Kitchen*: Human Trafficking or "Modern Slavery" as a Human Rights Issue”, Prof. Saad Kassim Sagher and Siham Hattab Hamdan argue that novelist investigates one of the pressing socio-political issues of globalisation like human trafficking and modern slavery. These writers argue that these urgent issues come because of international politics. They also quote from Ali’s novel, "Ivan, like, introduces them to the club, the bar, the whatever, that's the line. He takes them, he sells them [women] like meat, man, two dollars a kilo"(Ali, 2010, p. 469). Though she did not give any solution, she wanted to draw the readers' attention and direct them to take a stand on this contagious disease like human trafficking.

Chapter IV

Negotiating Indian Diasporic Culture in the Selected Works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali

This chapter explored the cultural negotiation of Indian diasporic people portrayed in the selected novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali. There are certain symmetric patterns among these novels of these writers: narrative patterns/location of narration, themes etc. As I have already argued in chapter I of this thesis that while the first two Indian novelists Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Jhumpa Lahiri-are based in the United States, the latter two Monica Ali and Sunetra Gupta are based in the United Kingdom. In the selected novels that I have mentioned in Chapter I, while the first-generation Indian immigrant characters attempt to preserve their native cultural ethos in the overseas countries, the offsprings of these immigrants attempt to shed whatever *deshiness* (nativity) are there in their parents' made home (s) in foreign countries. In the first section of this chapter, I explored this issue in each novel of these novelists. In the second section, I made a comparative discussion among these novelists and their diasporic narrative patterns in their selected novels. In the final section, I have summed up the chapter.

Diasporic people immigrate to the First World countries with better economic prospects, new hope and other social circumstances. Once they start living in host countries, they not only have to shed many social and cultural aspects of their homeland, but also have to adapt several cultural aspects of the host counties. These people live creating "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) in host countries. These communities are transnational. Linda Basch et al. (1994) define transnationalism as the process by which "...immigrants forge and sustain multistranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (p. 4). These transnational communities' cultures are quite different from the (almost) homogenous practices of the native cultures of immigrants. These people are forced

or sometimes shed their home cultural practices. Generally, they try to shed their few home cultures to adapt themselves to the foreign culture. Besides, they live neither in their home culture, nor in the host culture, but in a different culture. Anything can emerge from this ‘space’ of foreign countries. Avtar Brah (2005) terms this ‘space’ as “Diaspora space” (p. 178) and defines it in the following ways:

“Diaspora space is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as **a point of confluence of economy, political, cultural, and psychic processes**. It is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; [...] What is at stake is the infinite experimentalist, the myriad processes of cultural fissure and fusion that underwrite contemporary forms of transnational identities.” (Brah, 2005, p. 178, **my emphasis**)

This ‘space’ is heterogeneous. In this ‘space’ diaspora attempt to make cultural negotiation with people from the dominant host country they settle in. Thus, we would observe ‘dialogic’ voices between the diaspora and the host people. This study later explored how the diaspora, represented by the selected fictions in this study, tries to create ‘dialogic’ strategies with the people from the host nation.

The concept “dialogism”/“dialogic voices” was given by Michael Bakhtin. Elsewhere I have argued that “[h]is dialogic theory is based on a perception of the inherent relationship between ideology and utterance, addresses the socio-political fact of literary performance and provides analytical tools relevant to the act of performing literature” (Das, 2015, p. 733). Bakhtin (1990) argues that “novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice” (p. 261). Bakhtin (1990) further argues that:

“The novel can be defined as **a diversity of social speech types and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized.** [...] The novel orchestrates all its entire theme, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of **the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices** that flourish under such conditions.” (p. 263) [**my emphasis**]

I have elsewhere argued that “[i]n novels, we find many styles, languages and voices. Sometimes, we find dialectic, even idiolectic expression too. According to Bakhtin’s ‘dialogic’ theory, language is construed as social activities. These cases are prominent in novels written on diaspora’s lives experience too. If the writer is Bengali or Punjabi, we can find the sociological aspects of Bengali or Punjabi people. The characters represent the social, ideological and political issues related to the writers’ ethnic backgrounds. Sometimes if the writer is female, she tries to raise female’s voices to give them ‘space’ in mainstream social scenarios through ‘dialogic’ engagement. If the novel contains diasporic themes, we can notice ‘polyphonic’ voices in it, where the variegated voices try to make ‘dialogic’ engagement with host societies” (Das, 2015, p. 733).

Bakhtin didn’t apply this phrase to the literature on diaspora’s sensibilities. But if we critically observe any writing about diaspora’s sensibilities, “we can notice two types of voices: the voice from the diasporic people which is compromising and submissive and which is articulated from/at periphery, and voice from the host people which is hegemonic and shows racial abuse and prejudices” (Das, 2015, p. 733). In the proceeding parts of this chapter, I examined how the major diasporic characters in the novels in this study try to initiate negotiation with both the United States and the United Kingdom’s dominant cultural ethos, and thus initiate ‘dialogic’ engagements.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni:

In Chapter I, I have already discussed the biographical information of Divakaruni and common themes in her novels. Her novels are mostly based in India and the United States and generally depict the immigrant experiences from South Asia. For my study, I have taken Divakaruni's two fictions: *Queen of Dreams* (2004) and *Oleander Girl* (2013). In the next section, I explored the cultural negotiation of the Indian diaspora, represented in these two novels.

Queen of Dreams

Set both in the United States and India, Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* deals with the first-generation diaspora's nostalgic feelings for her homeland by interpreting the dreams of Indian immigrants living in California and this diaspora's children's trans-cultural engagements. I have already told in chapter I that Divakaruni records "American people's assumption about a Third World country like India that supposedly represents dark, unexplored, exotic, magic and witchcrafts-laden land" (Das, 2015, p. 735). This novel also texturises immigrant children like Rakhi's little bond with her parents and her liberal and independent life in the United States.

The novel centres on two female main characters-Rakhi, a second-generation Indian diasporic woman and her mother Mrs. Gupta-queen of dreams. While her mother lives in her dream-world-vision and Indian culture-lives in a secluded life, even if she is aloof from her husband, Rakhi lives an American lifestyle. Rakhi says that her mother always kept Indian culture through culinary things: "At home we rarely are anything but Indian; that was the one way in which my mother kept her culture" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 7). Rakhi's parents don't socialize much in the American milieu. Rakhi argues: "[...] my parents didn't have much of social life. If there were relatives, I didn't know of them. The priest from the Indian temple

gave a brief speech about how my mother had been a virtuous wife, mother and homemaker, as an asset to the community” (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 113).

Her father was also Indian at heart instead of living in America for many years. He has a nice taste for Indian food. When Rakhi’s business in *Chai House* (tea shop) is about to collapse, he tries to keep her business intact anyhow. He changes the shop’s name from *Chai House* to *Chaer dokan*. There he starts preparing Indian snacks: “Pakora, singara, sandesh, jilebi, beguni, nimki, mihidana” (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 165). But after all, her parents were not social with the American people.

I noticed elsewhere that “[h]er parents always nurture Bengali ‘home’ culture in their house. They follow Hindi old songs, cook Indian culinary items etc. Rakhi is painter. She imagines India from the United States, cherishes to visit India and her painting is almost based on India” (Das, 2015, p. 735). Even Divakaruni argues it in the novel nicely: “[M]ost of her paintings had been about India-an imagined India, an India researched from photographs, because she’d never traveled there. She’d painted temples and city spaces and women in a marketplace and bus drivers at lunch” (2005, p. 10).

Rakhi’s “Indian classmates wore tank tops and tight-fitting jeans. They smoked and wanted to go to Madonna concerts. They hated anything to do with their culture-or their parents” (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 49). As “her parents are not social and she also follows the same trend. But it comes from her fascination in her mother’s job-interpreting dream because she takes interpreting dream a glorious job. Her mother didn’t encourage her to know her art” (Das, 2015, p. 735). If Rakhi enquired about it, she deflected the questions. Her mom, Mrs Gupta always “tried to turn her attention from the long ago and far away, to get her to focus on her American life” (Divakaruni, 2005, pp. 49-50). Elsewhere I argued that “[t]hough she in her grown-up years adjusted with American culture and negotiated with it very well, she is

unable to adjust with globalisation's aftermath. She can't compete with Java restaurant which was in competition with her *Chai House*, since she feels there are different human bonding between Indians and Americans. While Java restaurant represents the Western materialistic approaches, the *Chai House* represents the Eastern values and human bonding" (Das, 2015, p. 735). Divakaruni puts it nicely, "Java demands nothing from them except their money. It allows them to remain unknown. No conversation, no contact, nothing to look at or discuss, nothing to themselves exchanged or exhaled" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 85).

Rakhi is "an American born second-generation diasporic child. Her all get up is American. She never felt her original Indian belonging and thought that she belonged to America" (Das, 2015, p. 735). After the 9/11 incident, her belongingness gets questioned. She got disillusioned about her whole notion of being an American-born child. "After that 9/11 incident, when she is suggested to hoist American flag on her shop, she refuses it" (Das, 2015, p. 736) and argues, "I don't have to put up a flag to prove that I'm American! I'm American already. I love this country-hell, it's the only country I know. But I'm not going to be pressured into putting up a sign to announce that love to every passerby" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 264).

Rakhi sometimes tries to link her ethnic origin. She stands in front of a mirror and observes her reflection: "I look at my reflection in the glass-the brown skin, the Indian features, the dark eyes with darker circles under them, the black crinkles of my hair. It's familiar and yet, suddenly, alien" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 271). Therefore, as I also argued elsewhere, "a sense of belonging-ness arises in her and she realises that 'dialogic' strategies with American is not possible. She is inherently Indian, thought she is an American born child" (Das, 2015, p. 736). Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* terms these second-generation

diasporic children in the United States as ABCD ('American-born-confused-deshi') [Lahiri, 2008, p. 118].

Rakhi's close friend and "partner in *Chai House* (Belle/Balwant Kaur) leads an Americanised life. At the beginning, she also tries to assimilate and make 'dialogic' voice with Americans" (Das, 2015, p. 736). When Belle's guardians attempt to "pull her back into their safe Sikh nest" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 16), she attempts to "shed the last vestiges of her desi-ness" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 15) and senses that she is also American child. Her parents fix an 'arranged marriage' for her. She rejects it. She argues: "I can just see myself ten years from now, shrouded in fat and a polyester salwar kameez, a passel of snot-nosed brats hanging onto my dupatta, rolling out makkhi ki rotis for all my in-laws [...]" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 27).

Belle drops the plan to marry Jespal who is "so traditional. Like with his turban" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 219) and who leads "[s]uccessful career. Keeps in close touch with his family. Plus a devout Sikh" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 160). Regarding this issue, Belle confronts her friend, "Do you see me covering my head and following him to the gurdwara every weekend? And he'd probably faint from shock if I took him to my favourite club" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 160).

Jespal, a second-generation Indian immigrant child, initially attempts to shed his native cultural ethos. He accepts, "Rules my parents pushed down my throat every day of my life until I escaped to college" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 218)! He is also not successful in negotiating the host cultural ethos, and at last he "believes in living according to the Granth Sahib: physical purity, discipline, putting the family first, being a respectable gurdwara-going member of the community" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 219). Jespal was born in the United States and always thinks he is American. But the scenarios in these Indian diaspora's lives in the

United States get changed after the 9/11 attacks. When he confronts the white Americans, they manhandle him saying, “You ain’t no American” (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 267)! Elsewhere I argued that “[a]fter this attack, different Indian community-organizations also try not to put on their Indian dress code; they start following American dress code to sustain their lives in the United States” (Das, 2015, p. 736).

Oleander Girl

The setting of Divakaruni's fiction *Oleander Girl* is in Kolkata, India, and the United States after the post-9/11 incident. I have already argued in Chapter I that while the first part of the fiction deals with protagonist Korobi’s comfortable, childhood life with her grandparents in Kolkata, the second one depicts her courageous journey across the post-9/11 United States which also projects her identity construction as an immigrant.

After finishing her college education, Anuradha, Korobi’s mother, got a scholarship and left for the University of California in Berkley, the United States to study international relations. Anuradha’s father was a patriarchal figure in the house and thus, she was traditional in Kolkata. When she was going to depart for California, her father made her keep a promise “never to marry without his approval” (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 57). “In America, she maintained her Indianness for certain period of time--she kept long hair and her newly found boyfriend Rob loved it very much. But shortly she grew adventurous and in six months, she telephoned her parents and confessed that she fell in love. When she returned to Kolkata to get approval of her parents, she was forced, obliquely, not to go back to California. She died after giving birth to baby girl Kobori at hospital” (Das, 2015, pp. 736/37). Anuradha’s father declined to give the baby to her American father arguing, “We’ll grow old in an empty house while she is brought up in another country *without culture or values*” (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 62) [*my italic*]. The baby girl is named Korobi Roy, the protagonist of *Oleander Girl*.

Korobi thus “orphaned at birth has enjoyed a privileged childhood with her adoring grandparents in Kolkata. She was not informed that her father is alive. But after the death of her grandparent Bimal Prasad Roy, she got to know that her father was still alive. So, she decided to find her father and took the journey to America, a country that she found at once dangerous, unwelcoming yet alluring” (Das, 2015, p. 737). When her grandfather was alive, he once told a story about living on American soil: “When people went there, they forget the loved ones they left behind. They forgot themselves, too. No one returned from that country, although they weren’t unhappy there in their bewitchment” (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 92). Therefore, Korobi always considers America as “an enchanted land” (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 92). Thus, when she started her flight journey to America, she assumed that she would have “A great adventure” (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 89). But in America, she faces many adverse situations while searching for her father. But within a short period, she gradually started loving America: “there’s so much more, unbounded and bristling with possibility. Here I could become a new Korobi” (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 218).

In America, she sometimes feels alienated and remembers nostalgically her native Kolkata home. Though “she is the granddaughter of Kolkata’s famous lawyer, after landing in America, she feels she loses her Indian courtesies and starts thinking herself in terms of survival, like an immigrant in America. Times and again she feels homesickness and remembers her grandmother. She tries her best to maintain her native culture and tradition in spite of her fascination in American cultural ethos” (Das, 2015, p. 737). In America, she is introduced to Vic, the nephew of her secret detective Desai. She gets infatuated temporally with Vic. “When they are trapped in a snowstorm on the way returning to New York from Boston after searching her father, Vic suggests her to stay in nearest motel” (Das, 2015, p. 737). Korobi doesn't agree with him and opines: “You don’t know how people think back in

India! I can't spend the night alone with you. Well, not *with* you-ah, you know what I mean. Engagements have been broken for far less" (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 154).

Over time, Korobi also accepts several lifestyles like an American. "After her temporary adjustment in New York City, she addresses her would-be husband Rajat Gupta as 'Baby'. This American endearment comes from her so shortly that it makes him quite surprised" (Das, 2015, p. 737). Vic has a rawness, smartness and humour in his approach to her and thus, she is swayed away by him temporarily. "When she is going to search her father with Vic to Boston, she is acting as Vic's wife and Vic is about to build her the house of her dreams. This shows her tendency to dissolve in America" (Das, 2015, p. 737).

Korobi tells her grandmother all about her acquaintances with Vic. Her grandmother feels that Korobi is about to drop her original plan and would do the same thing her mother did in the United States. Therefore, she cautions Korobi not to dissolve herself in Americanised lifestyles: "*Remember the world that waits for you here, its privileges and obligations. What happens in America isn't your life; it's only interlude*" (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 139, *original italic*). Gradually, the rapport between them grows. When Vic wants her to make a comparison between Kolkata and New York, "[s]he notices both positive and negative sides of Kolkata. Once she returns to Kolkata, she chooses Kolkata over the cities of America. Still, she can't forget America quickly. Though she returns to Kolkata over her own choice, she still can't deny that American siren song had pulled at her" (Das, 2015, p. 737).

Korobi attempts to "negotiate with American people while searching her father. But she fails to do it. She believes Rob Mariner as her father and goes to meet him. But he attempts to make sex with her" (Das, 2015, p. 737). Korobi protests his advance. But the man projects his unexpected hateful approach to her. Divakaruni says in the text: "When he lets go, it's so unexpected, I lose my balance and fall back on the sofa. I steel myself for another

attack, but surprisingly, he only watches me. His mouth is twisted-is it with contempt...” (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 204). Korobi confesses this account to Vic, “Oh, Vic, I feel so dirty, inside and out. I don’t want to do this anymore. I’ve never come across anyone who hated me so much. What I did wasn’t honest, I admit it, but did it deserve that kind of hate?” (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 205). Elsewhere I have found the possible reasons for his abhorrence to Korobi: “Lots of possibilities are there with Rob Mariner’s showing abhorrence for her. Perhaps her negative approaches towards him arouse in him the awareness of her dark colour, her racial origin. Thus, he hates her and shows his abhorrence for her. This happens when Western and Eastern people encounter each other. Perhaps the novelist tries to show that the cross-cultural encounter brings little result regarding the dialogic engagement” (Das, 2015, p. 738).

Vic is practical, adjustable and trendy in the American cultural ethos. Elsewhere I argued the following traits of Vic’s character.

“Vic is second-generation Indian-American. He adopts Americanised life and feels proud of its cosmopolitanness. He pursues Korobi to marry him and follows her. Though he wants to know more about Kolkata, he doesn’t consider to go back to his ancestral home. He doesn’t consider himself Indian. He feels more comfortable in America, though he confesses that the 9/11 incident changes their lives drastically in America. He is practical too and doesn’t give value to Indian social taboo on women. When Korobi says she can’t spend a night with him in a single room as she is already engaged with Rajat, he opines that life’s value is much greater than Indian foolish social conventions.” (Das, 2015, p. 738)

We would draw parallel outlooks here between Bela in Lahiri’s *The Lowland* and Vic in *Oleander Girl* for their always positive approaches to alien lands.

With a small canvas, Divakaruni in *Oleander Girl* records parallelly another immigrant 'Mitra' couple of Bengali origin, living in the United States. Das (2015) argues that

"The Mitra couple was once fascinated in American life and settled in America after their job promotion. Initially, they settled at Upper West Side and tried to assimilate with American cultures, and avoided their Indian counterparts. Though Seema agreed to her husband's suggestion, she missed Indians in America. In their early days, they never considered America as dangerous place." (p. 738)

But we have seen in this novel the parallel pictures of Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* when, after the 9/11 attacks, the lives of these Indian immigrants are utterly changed. "They have to shift their accommodation to 'Mumtaz', an ethnic enclave of Indian people" (Das, 2015, p. 738), where this couple would hear "Bollywood songs, nostalgic old favourites, the immigrant's longing to capture home" (Divakaruni, 2013, p. 97). They, thus, make their comparatively safe and secured 'space' from vandalism and manhandling by the white Americans after the 9/11 incidents. To survive and sustain lives in foreign counties, the diaspora creates "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2006, p. 6).

In multicultural texts like *Oleander Girl*, race and colour play an important role during the negotiation of diverse cultural ethos in 'diaspora space'. Elsewhere I argued that "[w]hen Korobi learns that her father is not white American, but African-American, she feels shocked to inform her grandmother. Her parents didn't get married and so she is an illegitimate child of it. Her would-be in-laws take it as a scandal and refuse to agree with their son Rajat's marriage to Korobi" (Das, 2015, p. 738). Thus, during the cross-cultural encounter, race/ethnicity plays a vital role. This prominent feature is texturised in *Oleander Girl*.

Jhumpa Lahiri:

Jhumpa Lahiri is a second-generation Bengali (Indian) immigrant author based in the United States. Like characters in her writings, she shared a divided identity as pointed out by Indira Nityanandam: “She has a divided identity-having to please her parents by being Indian enough and her peer group by being American enough” (2005, p. 12). For her, the Bengali language is more than any other language. She considers the Bengali language as “the language of my heart; the language I was raised and loved with” (qtd. in Minzesheimer, 2003, n. pag.). Most of her works are written from the male point of view and project the human relationship in familial spaces.

The Namesake

Lahiri’s fiction *The Namesake* (2003) records the first-generation expatriate parents (Bengali couple Ashima Ganguli and Ashoke Ganguli) and their second-generation immigrant children’s (Gogol Ganguli and Sonali Ganguli) cultural negotiation in Boston and New York City in the United States. After marriage, this Ganguli couple leaves Calcutta and settles in Boston. Ashoke is “a doctoral candidate in electrical engineering at MIT” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 2) in the United States. In the new country, Ashima struggles to adapt a new language and cultural ethos. When her husband leaves home, she feels lonely. After the delivery of their first baby boy, they get a lot of problems regarding the nomenclature of the baby. Ashoke suggests the baby’s name, Gogol, after the name of the famous Russian writer Nikolai Gogol as a pet name for using by themselves in their home. This couple adopts the name Gogol on the baby’s birth certificate and got discharged from the hospital. They decided to keep his good name ‘Nikhil’ in a public place and on documents.

At grown-up age, Gogol feels confused about his name. After taking admission in kindergarten, when Gogol complains about his name, the school administrators change his name to Nikhil Ganguli. When Gogol expresses his desire to his father to change his name again for its oddities, his father reluctantly agrees. Thus, before getting admitted to college, he officially changes his name to Nikhil Ganguli. With his new name 'Nikhil' and a new identity, he starts his odyssey to socialise in America, avoids going home, meets many white US girls and gets annoyed if someone addresses him as Gogol. He starts smoking, pays visits to many parties, and loses his virginity to a white teen he can't imagine anything about her and other secret activities.

When Gogol is coming back to his home for vacation on a train, it is abruptly stopped as someone jumped before the train. Ashoke goes to receive him from the station. As the train is late, Ashoke feels worried and remembers the train derailment he faced at a young age. At this stage, he details Gogol the reason for choosing his name 'Gogol'. Gogol is intensely stunned by this revelation. After completing his education at university, he gets a job in an architectural office in New York. He settles in a different city and thus distances himself from his parents. Later he starts to do a 'live-in' relationship with another white girl Maxine. At this stage, he starts to ignore his parents and stays with Maxine's parents and their house.

Gogol brings Maxine to his Boston home for introducing her to his parents. His mother Ashima tries to avoid her and hints to Gogol that he needs to get over Maxine too. After his father's death, he gradually starts breaking up with Maxine. He starts to give his time to his mother and sister in his Boston home. Later with the suggestion of his mother, he met Moushumi and eventually got married to her. But, just when their marriage is about to be one year, Moushumi feels restricted by married life and starts to remorse for it. So, she again

begins having a relationship with her past acquaintance Dimitri, which brings the end of their marriage.

At such a critical juncture, Gogol's mother Ashima is about to leave Boston and arranges a thanksgiving party; his sister Sonia is about to marry a Chinese American. Thus, he is alone and gets nostalgic about his father. Gogol then starts reading the anthology of short stories by the Russian author that his father gifted him on his fourteenth birthday. The novel moves around such incidents.

The diasporic features in *The Namesake* include displaced, dislocated and deterritorialized feelings; nostalgic feelings for the native country India; practising 'ethnic' culture in the new country; the community feeling ('imagined communities') among the diasporic people; an assimilated, translational and transcultural tendency; communication gaps between/among different generations of immigrants other traits.

At the start of the novel, we see Ashima Ganguli in her Boston home. She is pregnant. She feels disappointed, homesick and lonely in her Boston house. Ashima gets disoriented and dejected when she thinks of her life in Calcutta with her so many loving ones and longs for going back. During her pregnancy, she has the most terrifying feeling of

"motherhood in a foreign land. [...] happening so far from home, unmonitored and unobserved by those she loved, [...] But she is terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare." (Lahiri, 2008, p. 6)

The novel thus starts with displaced, dislocated and deterritorialized feelings in Ashima Ganguli's life.

As elsewhere I argued that “[t]he study of the diaspora reveals that the elements of nostalgia and memory across time and space propel the expatriates to invent the image of the ‘homeland’, which is fragmentary, fissured and is irretrievably lost” (Das, 2015, pp. 127). Ashima remembers nostalgically and reminiscently her Calcutta home as “a mythic place of desire” (Brah, 2005, p. 188). When she journeys to her foreign home, she is reading the *Desh* magazine and other Bengali books. She frequently returns to these books, the ones which reconnect her with her ethnic and cultural ethos. She goes to Hospital to give birth to her first baby Gogol with the *Desh* magazine to pass her time there. When her brother telephones her, she nostalgically thinks that her father must be busy working at the *Desh* magazine office, her brother, Rana, is studying physics for examination, and other things happening in Calcutta. “Ashoke subscribes to newspapers like the Indian Abroad, the *Sangbad Bichitra* that the Bengali diaspora in the US read” (Das, 2015, p. 127) and connect themselves to their native land.

While sustaining their life in a foreign land, the diasporic people nurture their ethnic cultural practices in a foreign land. Jhumpa Lahiri meticulously portrays such cultural practices in her novel. Calcutta (Bengal) is the hub of different *sangeets* (songs) like Rabindra *sangeet*, Nazrul *sangeet*, classical Indian music, and also *shenai* music played at wedding ceremonies. Bengali children learn to recite Tagore’s and other poets’ poems and sing songs. During Gogol’s growing up years, the Bengali families living around Cambridge visited the Ganguli family and enjoy Rabindra and Nazrul *sangeets*. They also discuss Bengal’s two legendary filmmakers-Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak. Lahiri describes this in the following way: “They sit in the circles on the floor, singing songs by Nazrul and Tagore, passing a thick yellow clothbound book of lyrics among them as Dilip Nandi plays the harmonium. They argue riotously over the films of Ritwik Ghatak versus those of Satyajit

Ray” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 38). Like other Bengali housewives, Ashima teaches Gogol nursery rhymes and some names of Hindu gods and goddesses. Ashima always tries to maintain a Bengali cultural ethos in her diasporic home in Boston. She plays Bengali songs on the stereo. When Gogol and Moushumi marry in the traditional Bengali manner, soothing *shenai* music is played during the ceremony.

Though Ashima settles in Boston, she still retains her traditional, ethnic, tabooed cultural practices as a housewife. Like a faithful Bengali housewife, she doesn’t utter her husband’s name in front of him, even in times of emergency in the new country. Lahiri records:

“It’s not the type of thing Bengali wives do. Like a kiss or caress in a Hindi movie, a husband’s name is something intimate and therefore unspoken, cleverly patched over. And so, instead of saying Ashoke’s name, she utters the interrogative that has come to replace it, which translates roughly as Are you listening to me? ” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 2).

Lahiri mentions this factual thing as Ashima writes her husband’s name on the Christmas cards. We have seen that Ashima even refuses to utter her husband’s name even after his death. In a traditional Indian family in general and a Bengali family in particular, a girl is not asked for consent about her marriage and whatever her parents decide she must accept. Sometimes she may not be informed even of the prospective groom’s name. Lahiri portrays Ashima as an ideal daughter of Bhaduri Bengali family, so “[i]t was after the betrothal that she’d learned his name” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 9). A Bengali mother mustn’t watch her baby eating rice for the first time during the baby’s *annaprashan* (Rice ceremony). Ashima follows this tradition during Gogol’s and Sonali’s rice ceremonies: “Ashima’s eyes fill with tears as Gogol’s mouth eagerly invites the spoon. She can’t help wishing her brother were here to

feed him, her parents to bless him with their hands on his head” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 40). Lahiri inserts such small details of Bengali cultural practices in her diasporic novel.

In a foreign land during cultural mooring, maintaining the ethnic dressing codes may be difficult. Ashima, being a first-generation traditional Bengali housewife, “wears silk sari, vermilion on her forehead, flower-garlands in her hair. She wears *sankhas* and covers hair with sari’s *anchal* in front of elders in India and the older Bengali acquaint in the US” (Das, 2015, p. 126). When Ashima goes to Hospital for the delivery of the baby Gogol, she wears a silk *sari* and feels “mild embarrassment” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 2) when the nurse replaces that with a small-flowered cotton gown that comes only up to her knees.

The Bengali couple faces a lot of troubles with the nomenclature of their newly born baby in an American hospital. The naming of a newborn Bengali baby is complicated. “Within Bengali families, individual names are sacred, inviolable. They are not meant to be inherited or shared” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 28), like American or European babies. In the Bengali tradition, a respected elder like a maternal or paternal grandfather or grandmother chooses the name of a baby. Generally, an Indian baby has two names-a ‘calling name’/*daknam* (a pet name is used in the novel by Lahiri) and a *bhalonam* (a good name in the novel). The *daknam* is used by family members and siblings in a private ‘space’. This *daknam* is, after Lahiri, “a persistent remnant of childhood, [...] these are the names by which they are known in their respective families, the names by which they are adored and scolded and missed and loved” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 26). Each *daknam* is linked with a *bhalonam* for identity construction outside of the house. This *bhalonam* appears “on envelops, on diplomas, in telephone directories, and all other public places...Good names tend to represent dignified and enlightened qualities. [...]” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 26) A *daknam* has no such aspirations and dignities but may have full of associations. Bengali parents don’t use the *bhalonam* for their

children. When Ashima makes Christmas greeting cards, she doesn't write the *bhalanam(s)* of her husband, son and daughter. Lahiri's novel is replete with the leitmotif of the nomenclature of Gogol.

Bengali couple's ethnic-cultural practices are seen prominently at the time of rice ceremonies of both Gogol and Sonali, the funeral-goer's ritual after Ashoke's death, and the wedding ceremony of Gogol and Moushumi. Ashoke's and Ashima's friends from the Bengali community around Cambridge, Boston attend Gogol's rice ceremony. The body of Gogol is dressed in a typical Bengali style during the rice ceremony of Gogol. Both Ashoke and Ashima, too, wear typical Bengali dresses during the ceremony. As I have argued elsewhere that while "Ashima wears a silvery *sari* and the sleeve of her blouse reaches the crook of her elbow, Ashoke wears a transparent white Punjabi top over bell-bottom trousers" (Das, 2015, p. 204. The food served during the rice ceremony includes *payesh* (sweet dish of rice), fish in yoghurt sauce, *dal*, six types of vegetables-quite typical Bengali food of rice ceremony.

Ashima Ganguli always maintains her ethnic cultural practices in Boston. After the sudden death of Ashoke, she erases her vermilion, discards bracelets, eats mourner's diet, and foregoes meat and fish for ten evenings. As a widow, she also wears a white *sari* and a white *tilak*. During Mourner's ceremony, as I have argued somewhere the "priest's chanting of the Sanskrit verses for the purification of Ashoke's soul is like man's quest for salvation in this immigrant home" (Das, 2015, p. 204). This minute Indian Bengali cultural practice in the novel makes Ganguli's Boston home a little India. The marriage ceremony of Gogol with Moushumi is held in New Jersey in a typical Bengali tradition. All the 300 Bengali guests wear Bengali dresses and the food served is typical Indian.

Bengal has a rich cultural heritage consisting of different festivals and other social gatherings. The *Durga pujo* (festival) is one of the famous among them. Ashima's life in Boston does not escape from this celestial memory of the Goddess *Durga*. Once Gogol comes to Calcutta with his family and enjoys this *Durga* festival. As Gogol starts reading and is in the third standard, Ashima sends Gogol to "[b]engali language and culture lessons every other Saturday, held in the home of one of their friends" (Lahiri, 2008, p. 65). She teaches Gogol to memorise the names of the deities, the Bengali people would worship.

Elsewhere I argued that "[t]he use of ethnic cuisine can be taken as a mode of resistance to the mainstream foreign culture as the ethnic minority culture. Diasporic communities generally endeavour to cling to the native land through ethnic culinary practices. Food as a metaphor employed by the Indian diasporic writers usually is posited as a counter-culture within the framework of identity formation in diasporic land" (Das, 2015, pp. 205/06). In *The Namesake*, food is texturised as a motif both for constructing the native identity formation and for highlighting the notes of nostalgia, memory, alienation, belongingness, hyphenated position, displacement or dispossession of the Bengali diasporic family.

When Ashima Ganguli is pregnant, she pines the "Rice Krispies and Planters peanuts and chopped red onion in a bowl. She adds salt, lemon juice, thin slice of green chilli pepper, wishing there was mustard oil to pour into the mix" (Lahiri, 2008, p. 1). As also I argued somewhere that "[t]his concoction not only appeases Ashima's craving but transports her to Calcutta where such food stuff is sold even on the railway platforms. Food facilitates the movement between home and the world and the past and the present in the immigrated and diasporic circumstances" (Das, 2015, p. 206). In this context, Valeri Loichot (2004) agrees with the opinion of Edwidge Danticat that food is "an unavoidable and complex form of

language necessary to remember the past and to heal the self and communities in the aftermath of diaspora, immigration and exile” (p. 92). These culinary practices are also seen in the novel during Gogol’s rice ceremony, the marriage ceremony between Gogol and Moushumi, and on other special occasions in Ganguli’s Pemberton home.

Anderson (2006) studies that “nationality, ...nationness, as well as nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind” (p. 4). Thus, practising one’s own ethnic culture in a foreign country is also a way of showing the spirit of nationalism manifested among the diasporic people. They form a native community in the diasporic world and revive ancestral cultures, practices and beliefs. This community feeling is a necessity to sustain the lives of diasporic people in the new country’s dominant cultural ethos. In *The Namesake*, Gogol’s family and several other Bengalee families staying around the Boston area form an ethnic community and have got together on different occasions through ethnic-cultural practices.

Diasporic writings being written from margin contain the tone of (cultural)resistance. This cultural stance is for sustaining their ethnic cultures in/among the hegemonic cultures of the host country and for showing the spirit of individuality and identity, because according to Edward Said, practising one’s own “Culture...is a source of identity, and a rather combative one...” (1994, p. xiii). This resistance is mainly manifested among the first-generation expatriate characters. But the second-generation immigrants show their spirit of resistance in two forms-resistances for not following the native cultures and ethos, and sometimes resistance for preserving native cultural ethos to some extent.

Ashima shows such a type of cultural resistance in America. We have earlier seen that her clothing is always Indian. She always disapproves of her children Gogol and Sonali’s Americanised lifestyle there. We have already discussed Gogol’s nuances regarding his attempts to change his name many times. Even from his childhood he “doesn’t want to wear

the new clothes his mother has brought for him from Sears” (Lahiri, 2008, p 56). Elsewhere I argued that “Ashima’s two second generation immigrant children Gogol and Sonali prefer Christmas to the *Durga pujo*. Gogol doesn’t find any interest in Bengali lesson where his parents send him to learn native Bengali language, culture and other cultural ethos” (Das, 2015, p. 208). Gogol in his sixth-grade finishes fieldwork from a location “of some historical intent” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 68) and he accomplishes it from “a graveyard” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 68). Ashima gets shocked because “[i]n Calcutta, the burning ghats are the most forbidden of places” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 70). But Gogol is interested and examined the old gravestones.

Gogol doesn’t like Indian cuisine too. During his fourteen-birthday ceremony, he asks his parents not to give him ice cream and other Indian dishes. I argued somewhere that “Ashima is dissatisfied when he gets involved with white women like Ruth and Maxine, and is upset when her teenage daughter Sonali wants an Americanized look by colouring her hair or additional ear piercings” (Das, 2015, p. 208). When Gogol tries to conform himself to the mainstream cultural ethos in the United States, Ashima cautions him: “You’re too young to get involved these ways, [...] point(s) out an example of Bengali men they know who have married American’s marriages that have ended in divorce” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 117). In Indian culture, as I argued, “guests are generally served *lassi* instead of alcohol as Ashima does to Maxine. Bengali expatriates like Ashoke and Ashima prefer Indian culinary item *samosas* to any foreign cuisine like pates, cornichons and *chutney* as gifted by Maxine” (Das, 2015, p. 206).

When Ashoke has died, Gogol’s household follows the mourner’s ritual in a similar way to the original Bengalese traditions. Gogol, being a second-generation diaspora, seems to be least interested in the ritual. Elsewhere I argued that,

“The dichotomization of the two cultures as well as of the second generation Bengali immigrants is repetitively focused by the author. Gogol and Sonia are more attached with Italian, French and American and Chinese culinary items. On the other hand, in spite of prolonged staying in America Ashoke and Ashima tie to the native India by the sustenance of the ethnic Bengali and other Indian cuisines.” (Das, 2015, p. 207)

Though Gogol tries to avoid his mother’s fascination with native cultures and her imposition of those cultures on him, he also shows his flexibility on some occasions. He agrees to marry Moushumi in a traditional Bengali style. He follows the entire mourner’s rituals after his father’s death. After his father died, when he clings to his own Bengali family and tradition, his girlfriend Maxine asks him “to get away all these [Gogol’s family situations]” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 182), and he all at once replies: “I don’t want to get away” (Lahiri, 2008, p. 182.). Even Ashima’s daughter Sonali tries to follow her mother’s Bengali culture to some extent. Moushumi, Gogol’s frail wife lives not in Indian or American cultural ethos, but in the ‘third space’. Still, she shows her cultural resistance to Graham’s racial verbal abuse of the Indian people.

Though Ashima is an expatriate and always tries to restore her ethnic culture in her Boston home, she shows some of her flexibility to survive in a foreign diasporic land. For satisfying her children, “Ashima sometimes prepares Italian dishes like sandwiches with bologna or roasted beef which are seldom consumed in the Indian Hindu culture. Nevertheless Ashima is compelled to cook American dinner” (Das, 2015, p. 207).

The Lowland

The Lowland (2013) sets in two countries-Calcutta (India) and Rhode Island, California (the United States). It focuses on the lives of major characters like Udayan Mitra,

Subhash Mitra of a “modest middle-class” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 3) Bengali family, Gauri and Bela. Both Udayan and Subhash are two brothers born and raised in Tollygunge, Calcutta. Though both brothers were inseparable at an early age, they become distant when they get admitted to college. Younger brother Udayan becomes radical and joins the Naxalite movement. On the other hand, elder brother Subhash does not involve himself with politics, is more interested in higher education and career, and leaves for PhD programme in Rhode Island, the United States.

Two brothers were in contact with an exchange of letters. Thus, when Udayan informs his elder brother about his marriage with Gauri, Subhash feels cheated and beaten by his young brother. In America, Subhash too starts dating a single mother Holly, a Massachusetts-born French-Canadian nurse, who is separated from her husband. The relationship does not last for long. When Subhash starts his third year in the United States, he receives a letter from his home that informs him about the death of his brother. In an encounter, the Indian police kill Udayan for his radical stand with the Naxalite activities. Subhash returns to Calcutta to attend his brother’s funeral. He hears all incidents of how his brother is killed in the encounter on the lowland. He finds his parents devastated by his brother’s death. He also discovers that his parents don’t like Gauri, his brother’s wife and mistreat her after she became a widow. Therefore, he suggests Gauri get married to him and come and live with him in the United States. With initial reluctance, she agrees to travel with him to the United States.

In the United States, she was still distracted by the sudden death of her husband. She frequently spends time in the philosophy class of an adjacent university there. Shortly, she delivers a baby girl named Bela. Subhash became a nice father to Bela which Gauri can’t digest properly; she feels uneasy as he is not her biological father. She can’t forget the

horrific killing of her husband and always keeps herself alone and distracts herself from Subhash. She shows her negligence to nurture Bela. Once Subhash gives her silent treatment for it. Thus, the differences and communication gaps widen between Gauri and Subhash. Gauri concentrates on studying philosophy which again deteriorates the relationship between them. After receiving a report about his father's death, Subhash travels to Calcutta with Bela leaving behind Gauri. After finishing the burial ceremony, when Subhash and Bela return to the United States, they discover that Gauri leaves them and relocates herself to California, a separate state in the United States.

Bela is affected by her mother's absence. During her adolescence age, she becomes psychologically unstable and needs the medication of a psychologist. Bela gradually improves her mental health and engages herself actively in clubs. Overtimes, Gauri gets a steady teaching position at college. Gauri afterwards leads a mostly solitary life. As a teacher, she becomes a notable name in academia. Over years, she develops an ephemeral, lesbian sexual orientation with Lorna, "a graduate student at UGLA" (Lahiri, 2013, p. 237).

During his sixties, Subhash meets Elise Silva, Bela's high school teacher of History. He begins a relationship with her too. She didn't like it but intermittently visits Subhash. After finishing her college education, she starts working on farms as an agricultural apprentice in the field. Then "She worked part-time at the local historical society" (Lahiri, 2013, p. 248). She then leads a life-like "a nomad" (Lahiri, 2013, p. 248). She chooses a "rootless path" (Lahiri, 2013, p. 225). Lahiri puts in text: "She's used to making friends wherever she goes, then moving on, never seeing them again. She can't imagine being part of a couple, or of any other family. She's never had a romantic relationship that's endured for any length of time" (Lahiri, 2013, p. 257). As an advocator for a conserving suitable environment, she travels across the different states in the United States

When Bela turns 34, she pays a visit to her father Subhash and confesses, “I’m pregnant” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 263). She also confesses that her future baby would be “a fatherless child” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 264). This news drives Subhash into turmoil. At this juncture, Subhash is forced to disclose Udayan's linkage to Bela. On hearing that it is not Subhash but Udayan who is her biological father, she feels distressed and humiliated, and leaves him again. Bela becomes reflective and muses about whatever happened to her so far in her life. She thus passes a hard time over the incident. Later she pardons Subhash and decides to stay with him again in Rhode Island. Subhash agrees. Shortly, she begets a baby girl who is later named Meghna.

At this stage, Gauri returns finally to Calcutta to let go of the past. When she returns to California, she gets a letter from Bela that informs her that Meghna enquires about her. Bela has concluded to reveal the real identity of her mother Gauri to Meghna in future, and thus they three would have a meeting again. On the other hand, Subhash and Elise get married and are on having honeymoon trip to Ireland. During this trip, Subhash observes particular pillar-type construction which reminds him of his younger brother. At the end of the novel, Lahiri takes us on that day when Udayan was killed in an encounter by the police force.

Some traits of immigrant fiction in *The Lowland* include initial (mental) resistance to assimilation by the first-generation expatriate character; attempt for assimilation and hurdles ‘in-between’ space; residing in ‘Third Space’, ‘Diaspora Space’, by some immigrants; aimless nomads like lifestyles by the children of the diaspora, bred and brought up in foreign land, and few other features. In the below sections, I discussed such features of the novel in detail.

I have earlier discussed that Subhash is in the United States for pursuing PhD programme. The two brothers feel the same brotherly attachment in Calcutta. But when he starts staying in Rhode Island, his filial attachment for his brother, parents and ‘men, milieus and moments’ of Calcutta starts getting eroded. We observe that at the beginning of his staying in Rhode Island, he mentally decides not to lead his life in Americanised ways. Subhash wonders when “[h]e met an economics professor named Narasimhan, from Madras. He had an American wife and two tanned, light-eyed sons who looked like neither of their parents” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 36). He is still residing in ethnic, traditional culture on the American university campus. With such outlooks, “he wonders what woman his parents would choose for him. He mentally opposes his brother Udayan’s act of marrying before his elder brother and choosing a girl of his choice, not of their parents” (Das, 2013, p. 279).

I have already discussed concepts like Bhabha’s “in-between” space and Hall’s “Third Space” in the Chapter I. Homi K. Bhabha designates the “in-between” space as “terrain[s] for elaborating strategies of selfhood-singular or communal-that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself....It is in the emergence of the interstices-the overlap and displacement of domains of difference-that the intersubjectivity and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (1994, p. 2). According to Stuart Hall, the hybridity to him is “the ‘Third Space’, which enables other positions to emerge. The third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiative” (1990, p. 211). The ‘in-between’ space or the ‘third space’ thus, is a space of liberation, emancipation and enunciation. Anything can emerge from this space. I also talked about diasporic people living in this ‘space’ without concerning their traditional taboo(ed) ‘home’ culture.

Elsewhere I argued that “[a]s diasporic people settle and start their lives in foreign countries, their ‘home’ culture tends to get changed. The host culture is hegemonic and dominated one. Therefore, diasporic people normally start discarding their ethnic culture and assimilate with the host society’s hegemonic culture ‘in-between’ spaces” (Das, 2013, p. 278). So, the diaspora’s lived culture is, to some extent, different from the traditional practices of ‘home’ culture. In *The Lowland*, an attempt is made for cultural assimilation ‘in-between’ spaces by Subhash Mitra.

As time goes by, Subhash’s outlook on the American culture starts getting change. When he meets Holly, his ‘home’ cultural baggage starts getting eroded and he launches himself into mainstream American cultural ethos. Elsewhere I argued that,

“At the beginning, he hesitates to mix with Holly. There is 10 years gap between their ages, and he can’t imagine a married life with her. But over times, he comes close to her and makes sexual relationship with her. When Holly asks him if he returns back to Calcutta after finishing his degree, he replies in positive. But her proximity forwards him to the mainstream American culture. With her company, he feels that it would be very difficult for him to return to Calcutta.” (Das, 2013, p. 279)

With his assimilative, positive mindset, he ruminates that his integration with mainstream white culture would be in a full circle if he would have possessed his fellow countryman Narasimhan-like an American life partner and children. Thus, Subhash decides to continue his infidelity with her. “He even thinks of completing his relationship by getting married to her. But within short periods, Holly stops this relationship. Therefore, he complains her for stopping it” (Das, 2013, p. 279).

After Udayan’s murder, his wife Gauri is compelled to sustain her ascetic like-life like a Bengali widow has to follow in Calcutta. Subhash was quite liberal and such of his outlook

widens more while residing in the United States. When Gauri is being ill-treated after becoming a widow in Kolkata, Subhash acts like an angelic figure for her. I somewhere detailed Subhash's benevolent activities for Gauri in the following ways:

“To give her new life, he gets married to her and brings her to the US. There he gives her complete freedom and allows her to enjoy independent life in the US. In a traditional Indian family, a wife is supposed to have meal after her husband finishes it. But Gauri has not to wait to have her dinner before Subhash. She roams about university campus independently. Once she pursues a professor and masturbates after it in a stall.” (Das, 2013, p. 279)

In the ‘third space’, Subhash too lives with total freedom. He makes several physical encounters with many white American ladies in the United States. Lahiri's novel informs us that once Gauri notices “woman's hair elastic, a malleable red ring flecked with gold. One that she did not recognize as her own” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 135) in his car. Diasporic people frequently try to nurture their ‘home’ culture, making “Imagined Communities” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) in foreign countries. Subhash tries to pursue a similar suit. But he keeps a rare penchant for such kinds of sensibilities for his Bengali culture. He does all these for “craving company, he had spent a few nights in a woman's bed. But he had no interest in a relationship” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 223). We have earlier discussed that during his sixties, he falls in love with Elise, an American. Despite his annual visit to Calcutta's home, he feels he “had walked away from Calcutta just as Gauri had walked away from Bela” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 220).

Elsewhere I observed that “Like Moushumi Mazoomdar in Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) and Kaushik in *Unaccustomed Earth* (2006), Gauri Mitra in *The Lowland* discards her ‘home’ culture and assimilates with American culture. She takes such type of independent life in California, leaving her just eleven-year-old daughter Bela and her second husband

Subhash at Rhode Island” (Das, 2013, p. 279). We have seen that after her husband’s death, Subhash acted like an angelic figure for saving her pathetic life from the widow phase in Kolkata and granting her a new, total self-determining life in the United States. But like an insensible human being, Gauri devalues all benevolent activities of Subhash to fulfilling her desire. “She had California to swallow her; she had wanted to disappear” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 233) from all her ‘ethnic’ memory of Kolkata.

The ‘third space’, the emancipatory cultural ethos of California fulfils her cherished ‘space’-a refuge. People keep a normal notion that in the United States, the married couple leads carefree lives with total freedom. Gauri adapts the same tracks. Elsewhere I observed,

“[S]he (Gauri) doesn’t acknowledge Bela’s as her daughter. When any acquaint asks her if she has any children or not, she replies in negative. She also learns to speak in German. Though she can’t change her Indian accentual patterns, she adapts Western dress codes, her Western academic interests etc. She also shows her unconventional sex orientation. She commits lesbian relationship with Lorna, a graduate student from University of California, Los Angeles.” (Das, 2013, p. 279)

Gauri’s daughter Bela is a US-born second-generation immigrant child. I observe elsewhere that “[s]he has totally been bred up on foreign language, foreign learning, and foreign cultural ethos. She has never asked or forced to follow her native cultural ethos, as we found Ashima Ganguli in Lahiri’s *The Namesake* who always tries to convince her children Gogol Ganguli and Sonali Ganguli to follow their ‘home’ culture” (Das, 2013, p. 279). She learns Spanish. During her teenage, Bela creates her world: “She lived without insurance, without heed for her future. Without a fixed address” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 222). Even Subhash, her mother like a figure from her upbringing hesitates to intrude in her private space.

Bela never follows her ethnic Bengali culture. She adapts her Americanised costumes: “A tattoo that was like an open cuff above her ankle. A bleached section of her hair. A silver hoop in her nose” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 222). At 21, she joins a job on a farmhouse. Bela pays trips to her father only during particular festivals like Christmas or in case of urgency. She never informs her father about her whereabouts. According to Lahiri, Bela’s adopted path is a “rootless path” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 225). Subhash, who already launched himself into American cultural ethos, also starts accepting these kinds of eccentric and self-determining lifestyles of Bela. Though Subhash allows Bela total liberty and never faces to face intervenes in her Americanised life, Subhash is internally concerned for Bela’s wellbeing and probable matrimonial aspects in the coming years. But unfortunately, her carefree life brings “a fatherless child” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 264) at last.

Over time, Subhash details of her factual paternity. Then, “she refers her father by his name Udayan, like other American children who address their parents with names only. She doesn’t acknowledge her mother’s existence. She used to say to her friends that her mother had already died” (Das, 2013, p. 280). Bela chooses a vegetable vendor, named Drew as her life partner who has also not fixed roots in the United States. We notice Bela continually adapts “rootless path” (Lahiri, 2013, p. 225) in her life.

Safran in “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return” (1991) observes that diaspora “believe that they are not-and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it” (p. 83). The people from the host society perceive the diaspora as ‘problem people’ and thus side-line these diasporas from normal societal ‘dialogic’ connections in the Western metropolises. They are, therefore, victims of racial bias and hate crimes too. So, the diaspora generally lives in their native ghettos (‘imagined communities’) in alien lands.

Elsewhere I argued that “Not only in Divakaruni’s works, other writers living in the United States like Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri’s works also have such type of Indian diasporic people’s ghettoization in the United States. We can find also in reality that many Indian academics and other intellectuals living in America are /are being sidelined from mainstream social scenarios. They are not given/not being given the ‘space’ the ways their host counterparts are getting” (Das, 2015, p. 738). Salman Rushdie, an erudite critic of post-colonial writing, also accepts, “I, too, am a translated man” (2000, p. 23). I again argued, “From these writers’ lives in the United States and from their personal confession through interviews, it is noticed that the lacking of ‘dialogic’ voices between the Indian diasporas and the Americans is seen practically” (Das, 2015, p. 739). After the 9/11 incidents, this is prominently visible in the United States. Divakaruni’s two selected novels capture it.

Sunetra Gupta:

Sunetra Gupta is a United Kingdom-based first-generation Bengali (Indian) diasporic novelist living in Oxford. For my research, I have chosen her two fictions: *Memories of Rain* and *A Sin of Color*. Though these two novels are thematically different, as diasporic novels, I found the cultural negotiation of the Indian diaspora in the United Kingdom, represented in the novels. I explored this theme in these novels in the proceeding sections.

Memories of Rain

In the beginning, I want to put Kipling’s (1889) lines from his poem “*The Ballad of East and West*”:

“Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,

When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!"

(Rudyard Kipling, 1889, L. 1-4)

Gupta's fiction *Memories of Rain* (1992) depicts the oscillating life of Monika Gupta, the protagonist of the novel. Moni always tries to escape from the Bengali middle-class patriarchal family and its arranged marriage system. She considers Calcutta a "bizarre and wonderful land" (Gupta, 1992, p. 6) and settles in "demi-paradise" (Gupta, 1992, p. 6). London after marrying Anthony, an English man. I explored encountering cultures and re-configuring 'homeland' at/from "Third Space" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37/38)/"diaspora Space" (Brah, 2005, p. 205/208) from Gupta's *Memories of Rain*.

Avtar Brah (2005) argues that,

"The word diaspora often invokes the imagery of traumas of separation and dislocation, and this is certainly a very important aspect of the migratory experience. **But diasporas are also potentially the sites of hope and new beginnings. They are contested cultural and political terrains where individual and collective memories collide, reassemble and reconfigure.**" (p. 190) [My emphasis]

Sometimes diasporic people try to inhibit their lives in 'diasporic space' in such a way that is against their 'home' culture. Thus, the culture in which these people live appears to their native people as counter-culture/punk culture. Thus, they sometimes abuse their 'home' culture and religion, and lead carefree life in "Third Space" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37/38). Again, diasporic people re-configure their once left 'homeland' and return there. Anything can emerge or configure as a new form from this 'site of emancipation'.

Gupta's *Memories of Rain* starts in *media res* with a nostalgic note of Moni (Monika Gupta/Monideepa), the protagonist of the novel who watches, on Oxford Street an afternoon, "a woman crushing ice cream cones with her heels to feed the pigeons" (Gupta, 1992, p. 3). She feels a devastating longing for returning to her that world to which she belonged. Before starting the detail, we need to find the reason why Moni left her Calcutta home 10 years ago for London with an English man Anthony.

Moni belongs to an affluent middle-class Bengali family in Calcutta. The novelist informs us her brother visited her in London. Her brother had been touring in Germany. Her aunt lives in Canada. For Moni, her parents keep a music tutor at their home. "[S]he and her group of close friends preferred English films anyway, he (her brother) would drag her off to the film societies to see French and German films, Russian Films..." (Gupta, 1992, p. 13). Her brother is engaged with an experimental theatre group near Ballygunge. Her friends like Sharmila lead a westernised lifestyle. She is B.A. second-year student in English. From this novelist's description, we can assume that she belongs to an anglophile Bengali family in Calcutta.

Still, Moni has a different choice of life and society. As the novelist shows us, she doesn't like the Bengali traditional arranged marriage and dowry system. She doesn't like the Indian dirty road, society and other social scenarios. She hates the Indian caste system, filthy surroundings etc. Thus, she always cherishes an escape from this land to overseas. One day during '78's flood and rainy days in Bengal, her brother brought with him an English doctoral researcher who came to India to collect materials from Bengal's experimental theatre. She was fascinated by his broad shoulder and physics. She falls in love with him. Within a few months, he used to visit their home as her brother is his friend and work together in a theatre group.

Thus, they fell in love, got married, and Moni came to London with her English husband Anthony. As earlier I have argued she doesn't like Indian scenarios, like an arranged marriage, or dowry system etc., she thought that Anthony rescued her from Third World Calcutta's home. She considers Calcutta as a "bizarre and wonderful land" (Gupta, 1992, p. 6) and so settles in "demi-paradise" (Gupta, 1992, p. 6) London after marrying Anthony, an English man.

But after settling with Antony in London she is disillusioned about her 'demi-paradise'-London's cultural milieu, her conception of her Antony, the human, especially the marital bond between Antony and herself. Before marriage in Calcutta, Anthony promises to return to Calcutta with her every year. But it was not in reality. She has returned only once in 10 years to Calcutta, and she returned alone. Anthony didn't accompany her. Instead of all her commitment to him, he shows his infidelity to her. He again falls in love with his friend's girlfriend Anna. He makes sex with Anna in presence of her in the same house. It is an open relationship. He performs all these indicating to her that it is normal in the British culture and she should accept it voluntarily. It may be of Britons' approaches to their marital bond, but accepting it by an Indian bride like Moni was a difficult one. So, after 10 years of such humdrum marital life, she is unable to settle her mind in London any longer and thinking to return her once-neglected Calcutta home. This is the starting point of the novel. She is ruminating and nostalgically thinking of all her memories since the rainy days during '78's flood afternoon when Anthony first gazed at her in her maternal Calcutta home.

But when Moni settles with Anthony in London, Anthony doesn't adjust to her properly. It may be because of cultural gaps between them. But after coming to Anna into Anthony's life, Moni feels that Anthony again comes into his real English life: "He is overcome, once again, by the intellectual comfort of their existence, the symmetry of their

being...” (Gupta, 1992, p. 37). On the other hand, she becomes gradually inactive, lifeless in London: “...there seems to be a strange sadness upon her face, one that is devoid of the beauty of her loneliness, of the silent nights she waits for him to come back from reckless love-making...” (Gupta, 1992, p. 43).

Antony can't understand her feeling. For him, keeping a girlfriend and making love in front of his wife with his girlfriend is a general thing. But for the Orient, it is a disastrous thing. Instead of feeling her feeling, he suggests that she should go back to Calcutta. He agrees to take care of her child and Anna would help him. It may be possible that “if she doesn't fit into his scheme, she may as well be gone” (Gupta, 1992, p. 44). “She has a job, translating the complaints of Bangladeshi patients to physicians, she has a life, she has a daughter...” (Gupta, 1992, p. 44).

Before her marriage when she was in Calcutta, he hated the Indian arranged marriage system. The novelist rightly sums up her idea of arranged marriage in the following words:

“...She has resisted marriage, surrounding finally to some prearranged match out of sheer loneliness, some unknown customer of her body, she would remain, a timid teacher of English in some girls' school, mother of two, on humid holiday after-noons she would dust her brass knickknacks, her framed portrait of Tagore, teach her children how to sing, and on some unpleasant evening....” (Gupta, 1992, p. 44)

That is why after getting married to Anthony, she assumed that “he had saved her from such a sterile existence, from the disaster of a secure and meaningless life...” (Gupta, 1992, p. 45). But the situation of whatever she got after her marriage is the opposite.

Thus, finally, she returns to her Calcutta home again after getting disillusioned with British culture. She thought she could lead her life by taking a temporary job in primary

school or giving tuition to children. Thus, I observed a reverse journey of the Indian diaspora which proves Kipling's famous quotation that "Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,..." (1889, L. 1) as true.

There is a similarity between Lahiri's *The Namesake* and Gupta's *Memories of Rain*. While at the end of *The Namesake*, the male protagonist Gogol who initially attempts to acculturate himself and launches into American society gets failed in his endeavour, and finally returns to his mother-made Bengali home in Boston. Again, his mother, who is also a female protagonist in the novel and who always tries to preserve her Bengali culture in the American home returns back to her Calcutta home. Though the context and circumstances are quite different, the amalgamation between First World's culture and the Third World's is an impossibility. Safran in "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" (1991) observes that "they (diaspora) believe that they are not-and perhaps cannot be-fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it (p. 83)." Therefore, this also proves to be true and the protagonists, after feeling alienated from the host culture and being insulted while acculturating themselves with host cultures return to their 'home' country India.

A Sin of Color

The story of her *A Sin of Colour* (1999) centres on Debendranath Roy, son of Indrajit Roy who, after being frustrated by his one-sided life with his elder brother's wife Reba, leaves his Kolkata home Mandalay to pursue his doctoral programme in Philosophy from Oxford, Britain. While he is in Britain, he marries his landlady Mabel's niece Jennifer and returns to his Kolkata home. But his father was not happy with his English wife's social background and her little education. And so, he leaves his father's home with his wife again for Britain. But his unfulfilled love didn't allow him to be united with his English wife. Once,

while he is laying a longboat upon the Cherwell, he decides not to return. Thus, the punt came back without him, and the world is given that he is drowned. Thus, he leaves her for 20 years in a certain Himalayan valley incognito. The other people of his family members are also informed that he is drowned.

While he leaves his Kolkata home for the first time for a doctoral programme, he has seen his niece baby Nikarika. After growing up at 23, Niharika also comes to pursue his doctoral programme like his uncle in Britain. But her life goes to New Jersey and New York City too from Britain.

In this novel, other characters like Debendranath's parents and his elder brother also travel to Britain and other European countries. But we can notice the elaborate transcultural features through Debendranath and his niece Nikarika's negotiation with foreign cultures. In the first section, I described the transcultural identity of Debendranath Roy in Britain and then I tried to project Nikarika as a globetrotter in Britain and the United States.

The novel is set in Oxford where he just settles in a boarding house of landlady Mabel. In the beginning, he feels uneasiness to settle himself with Mabel and Jennifer, Mabel's niece at the boarding house. Though he leaves his Kolkata's Mandalay home only to avoid his distressful situation of one-sided love from his brother's wife, he can't get rid of it; he remembers from his oxford boarding house his brother's wife Reba, her ambiguous feeling for him. He desires to touch her hands and strokes her fingers etc. All these nostalgic feelings engulf him in his new boarding house.

He does little socialisation with Britons there. He makes good friends with the landlady, her niece and another couple named Prof. Rosemary Faraday and his wife Nicholas Faraday. In the end, we learn from Daniel about their friendship in the following ways:

“...he and my father can still discuss the geometry of the universe besides the fire each with a warm tumbler of brandy in his hands, perhaps he even sees it better now, the intricate topology of the surface of a dying star, in his blindness, your uncle.” (Gupta, 2001, p. 267)

While he is in university, he falls in love with an Israeli girl Amira. But he gets humiliation by her a lot. So, instead of negotiating with Britons, he lives to concentrate on his far one-sided unfulfilled love for his brother's wife. So, he always tries to consume himself with his study. On certain social occasions, he joins with his fellow Indians for an evening of spiced food and sitar music. But instead of all these, he doesn't allow himself the liberty to forget his lady love, Reba.

But he doesn't finish his thesis. Instead, he gets married to Jennifer and returns to his Kolkata home. Jennifer is not pretty; she has little education. Besides, her social background doesn't impress his father. He also doesn't get any positive signal from Reba and fights with his father regarding his wife. So, after staying one year in Kolkata, he again returns to Oxford.

In Oxford, he could not adjust himself. He doesn't love his wife Jennifer, instead, he still cherishes Reba who doesn't keep a congenial relationship not only with him but also with his wife in Kolkata. He becomes too disheartened to contain his love for her anymore. Thus, he neither concentrates on the study nor Jennifer. So, finally, he decided to live incognito.

When he leaves Mandalay for a doctoral programme, Niharika was just a baby. She is also a good student in an arts subject. She is creative and imaginative too. At the age of twenty-three, she arrives, like his uncle, at Oxford to study at university “to research the life of a pygmy who had been kept in the same cage as an orangutan in the Bronx Zoo in 1905,

who has eventually been released but had committed suicide in Virginia” (Gupta, 2001, p. 89).

After coming to Oxford, she starts staying with her aunt Jennifer. She is introduced to Rosemary Faraday’s family. She is also introduced to Daniel, Faradays’ only son. Daniel is married. When she gets to know that Daniel’s wife is staying in Los Angeles and his small boy with him, she feels strange. She feels it is unconventional that “a woman might leave a child in the care of her husband and go away on business” (Gupta, 2001, p. 89).

Gradually she gets attachment to Daniel. It may be because while her uncle had drowned, Daniel had last seen him. She is imaginative and creative, and she likes to invent many stories regarding her uncle’s drowning. And with the company of Daniel, perhaps her imaginative faculties get stimulated. She takes it as one of her fantasies. Thus, in a foreign country, everything seems to her unreal except Daniel.

In 1990, she moves to Princeton, New Jersey to work on her thesis for a year. Daniel calls her and tells her he is coming the next day morning. She desires to dissolve into American culture. She desires to celebrate and enjoy New Year's Eve with Daniel. She cherishes “spend(ing) the evening with him in Times Square or whatever he planned to be, to be dancing in his arms at midnight, or simply to be holding his hand as the clock struck twelve” (Gupta, 2001, p. 96). When Daniel decides to come the next day morning, she feels disappointed and plays her mother’s song from the tape to get out of the boredom.

Many cultural practices shock her and make her strange there in the United Kingdom. Once Daniel offers her dinner party from outside the restaurant. It makes her embarrassed in front of her aunty and Faraday family. She is not an alleged girlfriend of Daniel and she meets him just a few times only. She compares the Indian culture with Britons’ culture in the following ways:

“She thought how strange it would be in Calcutta for him to ask her without asking his parents and her aunt. In their house, if anyone announced that they were planning to eat at a restaurant it would be assumed that anyone who wished to might accompany them, even the children, as long they were willing to stay up and had finished their homework. So, often she had wished to be alone with her parents and her brothers, but some visiting relatives or friends would invariably tag along.” (Gupta, 2001, p. 106)

So, when she gets such an offer from Daniel, she feels helpless and puzzled.

Though she has already launched herself in foreign cultures with Daniel, she doesn't forget to remember her mother. While she is visiting Daniel someplace with musical instruments, “she had suddenly, for the first time since she had arrived in Oxford, specially longs for her mother” (Gupta, 2001, p. 108). She feels homesick. When she sees a room of violins and mandolins, the desire to see her mother grips her like nausea.

Other things also surprise her a lot. Daniel asks her to meet his friend Morgan. This name surprises her. Morgan stays in New York City. When she thinks about searching for him, she gets puzzled. How can she call him through only one name? There is no surname, no title etc. with this single name. She is thinking of the nomenclature of India where each person has at least two names-first and last names.

Niharika is very adaptive in a foreign land. She has adapted Morgan in New York very quickly. He is gay and leads a secluded and peculiar life. But she doesn't feel any awkwardness with him. She builds a platonic friendship with Morgan. She feels she could live with him forever. With him, she is totally in control of her words and actions. She visits church too.

Diasporic people have lots of liberty in a foreign land. Avtar Brah (2005) terms this space ‘Diaspora Space’ and argues:

“The word diaspora often invokes the imagery of traumas of separation and dislocation, and this is certainly a very important aspect of the migratory experience. **But diasporas are also potentially the sites of hope and new beginnings. They are contested cultural and political terrains where individual and collective memories collide, reassemble and reconfigure.**” (p. 190) [My emphasis]

This place is the place of emancipation. Anything can emerge from this space. This space also appears to Niharika as an escape. “There was in her a particular sense of satisfaction with life that Niharika had never found in either her mother or in Jennifer, ...” (Gupta, 2001, p. 132). She feels free with Morgan in New York City. From her childhood, she had never learned to laugh with her mother. Her mother didn’t make any jokes with her.

Thus, in Oxford, basically in New York with Morgan, she gets a new life for the first time in her life: “With Morgan, she had laughed as she had never laughed before in her life, or since. She had found it easy to throw back her head and simply roar with laughter, something she had never done before” (Gupta, 2001, p. 126).

After the temporary departure of Daniel, she is stoic. But after meeting and spending time with Morgan, she regains her fresh self. She decides to move to New York City “to be with him again, to find ease for her soul in his unremitting wit, to drench her faculties with their shared sense of the absurd, to cultivate irony as an escape from love” (Gupta, 2001, p. 127). She even thinks of marrying Morgan and adopting a child and settling with him permanently.

She is a globetrotter too to some extent. In the novel, we can find her life like a nomad. At 23 she comes to Oxfords. From there she travels to Europe for a few weeks. For

her research purpose, she visits Princeton, New Jersey. After that, she visits New York City. She tours many European countries for conferences, seminars etc. To promote her book, she has visited many places too. She visits Paris too. All these voyages project her as a globe trotter.

Niharika is a complex girl. We can draw a parallel to Gauri Mitra, a woman in Lahiri's *The Lowland* (2013). Gauri Mitra leaves her family; she starts staying alone in Los Angeles. She starts perusing her academic life in the United States. She is engaged in an unconventional sexual relationship. Such features are also found in Niharika. Niharika is preoccupied with her research work and other academic activities. She makes her life structure in Britain and America. She decides to permanently settle with a gay man Morgan. This tendency of these two female characters is a very puzzling thing to describe. Niharika lives in the imagination of her uncle's drowning.

As the writer is Bengali and fish is one of the main culinary in Bengal, it is time and again mentioned throughout the novel. After marriage in Oxford Debendranath enjoys fish curry with Jenifer (Gupta, 2001, p. 153). He has a low opinion of British food. When he asks Niharika, "Does English food still taste as atrocious as it did twenty years ago" (Gupta, 2001, p. 175)? She defends British meals. She is adapted to foreign lands.

Language plays a vital role in the 'diaspora space'. In 'diaspora space' language makes the diasporas and host people differently. We can find many dichotomies which come out of language differences. Elsewhere I observed that "language not only makes difference but perhaps it also works as a 'refuge'" (Das, 2013, p. 5) for the diasporic people. Though Niharika projects herself as a globetrotter, she cherishes speaking in Bengali, her mother tongue in Oxford with her uncle:

“She has felt...things would have been vastly different if her uncle had still been alive, that they would have much to talk about, and it would be a relief to Niharika anyway to be able to speak in Bengali, for Jennifer would quietly remove herself, as she does now, to give them this freedom. There is nothing so sweet to her now as the sound of them talking to each other in their own language...” (Gupta, 2001, p. 252)

In this novel, we observe less cultural negotiation. I have already argued that Debendranath Roy, though settled in Britain, didn't well try to socialise there. He still remembered and concentrated on his brother's wife Reba. The allurements of English girl Jennifer and other foreign things could not distract his focus from his brother's wife. He only kept congenial and clement relations with a British couple-Prof. Faraday and his wife. In another instance, he tried to pursue an Israeli girl Amira during his college days.

But in the case of his niece Niharika, I noticed different and forward-looking approaches. She has seen her aunty Jennifer during her beginning of childhood, still, after twenty years, she doesn't hesitate to mix with her so frankly that we can't observe such frankness even with her mother. She easily adapts to the Rosemary family's hospitality, though certain things such as accepting the offer of their son Daniel to her for a dinner party surprised her. She even compared such an offer with Calcutta's and established that many things which were prevalent in Britain were not allowed in Calcutta. She easily fell in love with Daniel and had nice and quality times with Morgan, Daniel's friend. She got a little cultural shock in Oxford, New Jersey, New York, Paris and other First World metropolitan cities.

Monica Ali:

Monica Ali is a Bangladeshi diasporic novelist living in the United Kingdom. While *Brick Lane* (2003) texturises the Bangladeshi immigrants' lives at Brick Lane, London, *In the Kitchen* (2009) depicts the plight of illegal immigrants in London, the United Kingdom. In the next sections, I explored the cultural negotiation of diasporic people living in the United Kingdom, represented in her *Brick Lane* and *In The Kitchen* respectively.

Brick Lane

Her *Brick Lane* depicts the immigrants' lives at the London Tower Hamlets from the perspectives of both the first and second-generation immigrants. This novel portrays the lives of a Bangladeshi couple-Chanu and Nazneen and their two daughters-Shahana and Bibi. Other sub portrayal includes Nazneen's friend Razi's almost lonely life after the demise of her husband and tormented life with son Tariq and daughter Shefali. Few other characters include Mrs Islam, a crooked moneylender, Karim, a young radical and others. All live in the Tower Hamlets.

As a diasporic text, we would find some general traits of diasporic literature. Such features include nostalgic feeling for 'home', preserving 'home' culture in diaspora home by the first-generation immigrants and discard of 'home' culture by the second-generation immigrants, ethnic cultural practices, attempting for cultural assimilation, cultural clash, racial notes, assimilation etc.

As the novelist is a female, the novel is described from the female perspective. The protagonist of the novel Nazneen got married to her 20 years old Chanu when she was just 18 years old. After marriage, she came to Tower Hamlet with her husband Chanu. She was a village girl. She had a sister named Hasina with whom she was very close. As she was not

much educated, she can't communicate with her husband in English. She can't utter any English words except 'thank' and 'sorry'. So, in the beginning, she kept herself confined to her London home. Her husband who has a degree in English literature from Dhaka University and Open University never tries to encourage her to learn English.

So, she has engaged herself in cooking and other domestic works, same as Ashima Ganguli in *The Namesake* of Jhumpa Lahiri. Though she starts staying in a London home, she can't forget the very surrounding of her Bangladesh village life. She feels very nostalgic for her village, her sister Hasina, her mother and other things around her village. Her sister who stays in Bangladesh shows the same feeling. She frequently sends her letters to know how she has settled there, how are her children and her husband, her misadventures yet pathetic life with multiple men and other things. In her London home, she reads Koran when she feels disturbed, sings Bengali songs and thinks about Bengali things in her home. In her home, she prepares Bengali foods-fish and another dish. They invite another Bengali Dr. Aziz for a fish dinner party.

Her husband Chanu is a quite educated man. He is comfortable in English. But he makes a rule that all have to speak Bengali in their home. He many times sings Rabindra *Sangeet* (song), Nazrul *Sangeet* and sometimes *Baul* (folk song of Bengal) songs too to his two daughters. He also gives references to many Bengali poems and poets to them. These things help create the Bengali atmosphere in their London home. He has a Bengali friend Dr. Azad whom he invites many times to his home for some Bengali food, notably fish. He tries to socialise with Bengali people though he has just a few friends there.

Chanu is a quite philosophical and talkative person. He has "a degree from Dhaka University in English Literature" (Ali, 2004, p. 38) and another "from a British university. Bachelor of Arts degree" (Ali, 2004, p. 33). Chanu perhaps talks about the "Open University

degree” (Ali, 2004, p. 38) from London. He has a huge belly and when Nazneen married him is 20 years senior to her. So Nazneen has no love type feeling for Chanu. Her father fixed arranged marriage to him at her 18 years. He follows the traditional life in the United Kingdom except for his high ambition. He tries to pursue Nazneen not to attend English spoken classes and opines that a woman is for nurturing babies and domestic work. He tries to preserve the Bangladeshi traditional home culture in his Brick Lane home. He tries to restrain his elder daughter from wearing jeans, short dresses or even tight jeans.

He is also quite liberal rather than other orthodox Muslim families staying in the Tower Hamlets at Brick Lane. He likes to get rid of all religious rituals related to the Islam religion. He doesn’t practise namaz or read Koran which is daily practised by his wife Nazneen. Some Muslim families who are staying in the place are practising all these; they have made their Bangladeshi homely culture in their United Kingdom home. In the text he says, “They don’t ever really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts are back there. And anyway, look how they live; just recreating the villages here” (Ali, 2004, p. 32). He loves to keep bonding with other Bengali families; he makes a good bond with Dr. Azad though both have some needs from each other and thus become friends.

According to Nazneen, he is a nice husband. Though he is talkative, philosophical, and can’t give others chances in the discussion, he is soft-minded too. Though she doesn’t like him, she loves him and keeps cool during their conjugal moment. She appreciates his fatherhood, and his being a good husband.

Community feeling among Sylhetis Bangladeshi in Tower Hamlets is seen to some extent. Chanu observes it and argues that they are living in a Bangladeshi village even in the Tower Hamlets there. Their bodies are transferred there, but mentally they are still living in Bangladeshi villages. Nazneen has very little socialisation there. She gets introduced to

Razia. Razia introduces her to other Bengali females in Tower Hamlets. There are some rumours about Mrs Islam's and Jorina's illicit relationship circulated among them. Nazneen is very much conscious about all there. Though Razia is quite manageable about all these and says that their community would not feed them by following the traditional rules. Thus, she assures and supplies confidence in Nazneen. Thus, Nazneen once or twice attempts to smoke with Razia. Basically, in the novels of other diasporic writers like Lahiri, Divakaruni and Gupta, we can find that Hindu people are gathering each other for celebrating a festival, religious ceremonies etc. But here Muslims are gathering, led by Karim, a radical young fellow from Bangladesh, only to carry wages against British people and for preaching Islam. Perhaps there is a veiled attack on Muslim religiosity by the novelist. Through the character Chanu, the novelist tries to negate the religious hypocrisy.

Though the main characters in the novel try to preserve their home culture in their home in the United Kingdom, they face many problems with this. Their second-generation children show their abhorrence for following their 'home' culture. Chanu always perceives the white Britons as racist, as he didn't get a promotion in the job place. Therefore, he forbids her not to make friends with the Britons. Once he forbids Nazneen to go outside of home as he feels that if she does it, people would feel her husband is a fool. He defends himself by saying that in Bangladesh she could not go out of home. And he is bringing everything she needs for her. He once argues with Nazneen and opines that he doesn't want to nurture their first baby boy Ruku in the United Kingdom. This Bengali couple socialises with another Bengali couple, Dr. Azad and his Westernized wife. Dr. Azad's wife has transformed herself with British culture and so also her daughter. When Nazneen and her husband go to meet Dr. Azad, they notice the Westernized lifestyle of the wife of Dr. Azad. Dr. Azad's wife calls him out with his name 'Azad'. The novelist portrays her all costumes in the following ways:

“A woman in a short purple skirt leaned against the doorpost. Her thighs tested the fabric, and beneath the hemline was a pair of dimpled knees. Her arms folded beneath her breasts. A cigarette burned between purple lacquered nails. She had a fat nose and eyes that were looking for a fight. Her hair was cropped close like a man’s, and it was streaked with some kind of rust-coloured paint.” (Ali, 2004, p. 107).

Thus, both Nazneen and her husband think that they come to the wrong address to meet Dr Azad. Dr Azad’s wife kisses Azad in front of them. Dr Azad’s teen daughter came and asked for money for going to the pub which was quite surprised to them. Unlike their daughters, Dr Azad’s daughter speaks in English. Even Nazneen too desires to speak in English. “Her hair was discoloured like by the same rusty substance that streaked her mother’s head” (Ali, 2004, p. 111). She doesn’t agree with Chanu’s idea that “To be an immigrant is to live out a tragedy” (Ali, 2004, p. 112). According to Chanu, this tragedy is as follows:

“‘I’m talking about the clash between Western values and our own. I’m talking about the struggle to assimilate and the need to preserve one’s identity and heritage. I’m talking about children who don’t know what their identity is. I’m talking about the feelings of alienation engendered by a society where racism is prevalent. I’m talking about the terrific struggle to preserve one’s sanity while striving to achieve the best for one’s family. I’m talking-’” (Ali, 2004, p. 113)

But Dr Azad’s wife refutes all his allegations. She argues that they live in Western society. Their children would act more and more like Westerners. Her daughter is free to come and go. Had she been the child of Western parents, she might have got such opportunities. She feels there is no wrong with all such lifestyles (Ali, 2004, p. 113). She argues by saying that Muslims like Chanu think “Everything should change for them. They don’t have to change one thing” (Ali, 2004, p. 114). Thus, she is totally in favour of assimilation rather than

retrieving her Bangladeshi home culture in which Chanu forces her wife and daughters to live in.

With Razia's company, Nazneen got some independent spirit. Razia instigates her to smoke with a free-minded spirit. When she also thinks about the negative idea of living in a foreign country, she makes her positive. She told her that if she has no job here, people will give her money; she can live here somewhere even if she doesn't have any rent. These are not possible in Bangladesh. She instigates her to learn spoken English to interact with British people and to be communicative with others even in Tower Hamlet. Nazneen herself becomes reflective about the difference between Eastern and Western cultures:

“When she thought about Gouripur now, she thought about the inconvenience. To live without a flushing toilet, to abandon her two sinks (kitchen and bathroom), to make a fire for the oven instead of turning a knob-would these be trades worth making? She tried to imagine Chanu, marching off to the latrine with a heavy book in his hand. He liked to read, sometimes for half an hour or more, while sitting on the toilet. The flies would see him off the latrine.” (Ali, 2004, pp. 77-78)

Razia also draws a comparison between Bangladeshi people and British people in the United Kingdom. She tells Nazneen that “if you go out to shop, [...] English people don't look at you twice. But if you go to our shops, the Bengali men will make things up about you” (Ali, 2004, p. 59). Once she saw a scene on TV where a couple was ice-skating. The wife was holding the hand of her husband. She too desires it, to be free from all bonds. Finally, at the end of the novel, it is seen that when Nazneen was hesitating to skate in a sari, she encouraged her saying, ““This is England, [...] You can do whatever you like”” (Ali, 2004, p. 492). Therefore, the novel ends with her gaining in and coming to the Westernized spirit.

The cultural encounter between East and West is shown after the latter half of the novel. When some white men secretly circulated leaflets to the houses of Tower Hamlet's villages, the white people's idea about the Third world Countries' people is visible openly. Shahana reads out the leaflet:

“Do you know what they are teaching your children today? In domestic science, your daughter will learn how to make a kebab, or fry a bhaji. For his history lesson, your son will be studying Africa or India or some other dark and distant land. [...] ‘Christianity is being gently slaughtered. It is “only one” of the world’s “great religions”. Indeed, in our local schools, you could be forgiven for thinking that Islam is the official religion.” (Ali, 2004, p. 251) [original Italic]

Chanu after getting angry grabbing the leaflet himself reads out: “[...] the truth is that it **(Islam) is a religion of hate and intolerance**. When **Muslim extremists are planning to turn Britain into an Islamic Republic, using a combination of immigration, high birth rates and conversion**. On and on, this rubbish” (Ali, 2004, p. 251). **[my emphasis]**

Chanu thinks that the British are ‘threatened’, ““Because our own culture is so strong. And what is their culture? Television, pub, throwing darts, kicking a ball. That is the white working-class culture”” (Ali, 2004, p. 254). While Chanu was philosophizing all these, Nazneen was following him covering her head with a headscarf. These few scenarios reflect the Eastern and Western people's assessment of each culture.

In The Kitchen

Like her debut novel *Brick Lane*, *In The Kitchen* (2009) is also about the diasporic theme: Postcolonial diaspora's cultural negotiation. As I have already argued in Chapter I that while the first novel deals exclusively with Bangladeshi diasporic people's lives in The

United Kingdom, the second one deals with the different countries' illegal immigrants' lives and cultural clashes in the Imperial Hotel in London.

The illegal immigrants in this novel hail from Russia, the Philippines, India, Liberia, Ukraine, and many African countries. Ali in the novel records, "Every corner of the earth was represented here. Hispanic, Asian, African, Baltic and most places in between" (Ali, 2010, p. 129). This novel is about the diaspora's lives in postcolonial London. The dominant themes of the novel are cultural clashes among different nationals, the plight of illegal immigrants in postcolonial Britain, the secret nexus of human trafficking by British bureaucratic people, the decadent economic stage of the British society and others.

This fiction is described from the perspectives of a lower-middle-class 'Lightfoot' family. Gabriel Lightfoot (Gab in short in the novel) is the protagonist of the novel. The novel revolves around his life as a chef in London's Imperial Hotel; his facing problem regarding the death of a porter named Yuri in the hotel; and his plan for opening his restaurant with his friend Fairweather, an MP from the Labour Party and another businessman; his plan for marrying girlfriend Charlie and making live in relation with a prostitute named Lena; and his breaking up with his girlfriend Charlie and finally his marriage with Charlie.

As our concern is about the condition of the Indian/South Asian diaspora in Britain, I explored the three characters-Suleiman, Ali and Dr. Patel. Ali is from Pakistan, Dr. Patel is from India and Suleiman is from Chennai, Tamil Nadu (India). Though we can't get a complete representation of the cultural negotiation of these diasporic characters in Britain, the slight and subtle description by Monica Ali about them projects many things about their lives and cultural encounter in British society.

Among the three South Asian Characters, Ali and Dr Patel are just mentioned in the novel. I observed some cross-cultural encounters through the character of Suleiman. According to Ali, “Suleiman was from India. He had spent less than three years in England but already his English was better than Oona’s. He was the only person in the kitchen who showed any interest in food” (Ali, 2010, p. 27). According to Gab, he is focused on work. Gab is very much impressed with Suleiman and therefore he decided to keep him in a position that would be like a promotion for him in his hotel which he is planning to establish soon. Once we find him practising religiosity in the hotel. Beneath a little shrine, he erects to Ganesh and toils devotedly. He reveals to Gab his family background and his purpose for spending time in different countries. His father has teashops and is a very future-thinking man regarding tourism in Tamil Nadu. After finishing three years for a BSc degree, he describes his plan to Gab:

“Afterwards, one year spent in Switzerland for purpose of gaining international experience and also first-rate cooking skills. Eighteen months to two years to be spent in UK for gaining first-hand knowledge of large-scale operation, banqueting function, and also improving English. On return to Chennai these skills to be put to application in the first instance through senior employment opportunity in major hotel chain. Therefore my father his associates will make significant investments for new resort and complex, will eye to the western tourist market, in location to be later decided but most likely in ...Coimbatore.” (Ali, 2010, p. 344)

This novel describes the clashes of different cultures in the Imperial Hotel, London. We find only two British characters in the novel. They are Gabriel Lightfoot and his assistant of 17 years old Damian. Through the conversation between Gabriel and Suleiman, I noticed clashes between British and Indian cultures. Suleiman shows some Indian traditions to Gab

regarding marriage, horoscope prediction before marriage, fidelity etc. Gabriel's views on it show English people's outlook on Indian Culture. Gabriel wants to know his marriage plan. On this, he says that his parents "are presently selecting a number of girls...from good families,..." (Ali, 2010, p. 447). This is like a "compatibility screen" according to Indian tradition which he has mouthed here. Unlike Indian people, English people check compatibility by spending quality time with girls before marriage or making live-in relationships before marriage. Thus, on hearing Suleiman's idea about Indian compatibility checking, he opines, "But you can't know if you're compatible unless you spend some time together. Your presence will be required" (Ali, 2010, p. 447). Suleiman opines that in the first phases 'Astrological charts' must be matched. He gave him the details of Indian horoscope matching checking:

"Based on birth stars of the boy and the girl. It is an ancient science, very complex, and it reveals much details. For instance, the presence of a certain alignment, the Dina Koota agreement, ensures that the husband and wife will remain healthy and free from disease, The Ganam and also the Yoni Kootas will determine sexual compatibility, and if Rajju is in present alignment it bestows the girl living happily with the husband for a long time." (Ali, 2010, p. 448)

On hearing all these details, Gab is about to laugh. He lits another cigarette, coughs and runs his eyes. He asks Suleiman if he believes all these. Suleiman gives a positive reply saying, "No one in my family...has ever got divorced. Maybe as modern men, we should not believe what is written in the stars. But as a way of making bride selection, it does appear to work as well as any system you have here" (Ali, 2010, p. 448). Thus, the main social institution's pillars-marriage, fidelity, family, and divorce-all are discussed between Indian people represented by Suleiman and Britons represented by Gabriel.

There is little commentary on religiosity in the novel. At one point Jennifer Lightfoot, Gab's sister wants to know from her mother Nana if she can come back and has another life after death. Nana opines that a Hindu thinks so. Akbar, the third Mughal emperor, who reigned from 1556 to 1605 in India, was assumed as soft on the Hindus. When Jennifer asks her mother in a discussion if Akbar was Hindu (70), her mom replies saying, “I expect so, love,...” (Ali, 2010, p. 448).

The characters in the novels are illegal and undocumented immigrants. The restaurant's manager, Gleeson is involved in such illegal business. He recruits illegal immigrants into the restaurant. Therefore, after the mysterious death of Russian porter Yuri, when the police came for inquiry, Gleeson doesn't appear in front of the police. Mr. Gleeson and his aide like Evan are involved in human trafficking, especially female human trafficking. These workers join hotels through an agency as Gleeson suggests while Gabriel advises him to stop such illegal enterprise. There are two instances where the seamy side of life is visible for this type of illegal business. At the end of the novel, when Gab lands in the Norfolk farmhouse of Gleeson's brother, such kind of a bonded labour boy whose passport is taken by the farm's owner Gleeson's brother faces miserable conditions. We can observe the illegal prostitute and human trafficking racket in which Lena gets herself caught. Gab rescues her and she describes all these to Gab. According to Gab, as he warns Gleeson to stop this illegal business, this enterprise “amounts to forced labour, a kind of slavery. Your brother could up in jail” (Ali, 2010, p. 528).

‘Home’ is an archetypal theme in diasporic literature. Diasporic writers themselves pine for their homelands/motherland which gets reflected in the characters' nostalgic feelings for homelands in their novels. Monica Ali's *In The Kitchen* is not an exception here. As we have already seen that most of the cooks/characters who work in the restaurant are illegal

workers, they have such a 'home'/returning to 'home' feeling. Whenever they are asked about their whereabouts, they don't reply or try to avoid the question fearing that they might be caught by the police and would be either deported to their home countries or jailed. As Gabriel is an executive chef in the restaurant when he asks some of his cooks' addresses, they avoid it anyhow, notable being Nikolai. When Gab gives shelter to Lena in his lodging, he enquires about her home and address. She makes a lengthy digression only to avoid this question and finally, she replies to his question. In certain exact cases in the novel, while Gab was chatting with Benny, he asks about his family members and 'home'. Benny tries to avoid his question. Gabriel again asks him the definition of 'home': "...What do you call home, then? You tell me" (Ali, 2010, p. 151). When Gab gets to know how Lena was caught in a prostitute racket and gives shelter to her, he asks her to return to her 'home in her native place. She gestures in such a way that this question is unexpected to her. Immediately she replies, " 'Home'...' people like me, no, we don't have" (Ali, 2010, p. 303). Monica Ali, a diasporic writer, consciously puts this 'Home' searching theme in the novel.

Gabriel Lightfoot represents a middle-class British man. During the course/incidents of the novel, Britain faces a financial recession. He is very much tense as this financial recession would collapse the restaurant business. So, his future project of opening a restaurant is vague. As he is British, he and his friend Fairweather's mouth for British culture, ideologies to some extent, and his father to a great extent throughout the texture of the novel. Gab stays alone in his lodging. When he gives shelter to Lena, she starts staying at his place as his wife or live-in partner. She stays there in such a way as it is her home. In need, she goes outside, to the grocery shop too. But in this context, Gabriel introspects that the great thing about London is that here nobody interferes with other people. Gabriel has his future restaurant business partner Fairweather, an MP from Labour Party. In discussion Gab

enquiries from Fairweather if 'Being open-minded' is very much British (Ali, 2010, p. 363). Upon this, the latter agrees upon it and says, "'A core British value. Freedom, fairness, tolerance, plurality'" (Ali, 2010, p. 363). Nikolai is an illegal immigrant in the Imperial Hotel. When both are having leisure time. Nikolai indirectly has huge praise and acknowledgement for the British cultural value. As he is an undocumented illegal immigrant, he can't do anything according to his wish. He asks Gab many things:

"And what of the present-our day-to-day conduct? Do we control even the basic functions? Can you wake when you want to? Sleep when you want to? Can you forget your dreams? Can you decide when to think, what to think about, when not to think at all?" (Ali, 2010, p. 373)

These are the rhetorical questions whose answers are negative. He thinks that "'To be born in the West in the twentieth century is the most enormous stroke of luck'" (Ali, 2010, p. 373). Perhaps, Ali suggests that in Indian or Bangladeshi cultures, she would not find the British cultural values, like freedom, fairness, tolerance, plurality and other such.

'Racism' is another feature in the diasporic novel. As this novel contains nationals of many countries, the note of 'racism' is quite visible here. Here Gabriel's parents show their racial bias against immigrants. As the novelist is from South Asia and a Muslim, she records British people's racial comments about South Asian people or basically against Muslim cultural practices and attitudes in Britain. The Asian people, mainly Pakistani people live in Blantwistle. Once, when Gab is travelling with his father, he comments on Asian people saying, "People said things about the Asians. They never scrubbed their doorsteps, the children pissed on the flagstones, they made curry with Pal dog meat (Ali, 2010, p. 130)." Once Gab did a coach journey with his family. In the coach, there was a Pakistani kid on the couch. As the novelist argues from the point of view of British people, she opines about

Pakistani people, “They didn’t come to the socials, the football, the Christmas parties, though they’d come to the cricket and bring their own food (Ali, 2010, p. 201).” Though these are quite visible among Muslim people, the novelist, from the British point of view, pinpoints these nicely.

Many times, Gab’s mother Nana shows her indignation toward Pakistanis. There is a lengthy discussion among the members of the Lightfoot family about Pakistani Muslim people. As all times Gab’s mother shows her prejudices against Muslim people, he teases her too about it. They talk about the community feeling too which existed long ago among British people. The British people face many problems in this post-colonial age: probable recession, loss of community feeling, losing the power grip all over the world and others. They are discussing it. Ted, his father, points it that immigrants around here care about each other, they know each other in the streets which is not there among British people.

This community feeling has been lost overtimes among Britons. Gabriel assumes that his father is hinting that foreigners are responsible for such community breakdown. Even he blames British people as racists and mentions his mother too on racial grounds. Her mother defends herself by saying she had never been racist. His parents resemble the protagonists of the ‘Angry Young Men’ drama of the 1950s. They remember the lost glory of British culture, identity and their all-power grip all over the globe. British society is in decadence now. So, they show frustration about it. They assume that foreign people are responsible for the present decadent condition of British society. Gab tells her mother that the foreigners come there for searching only for work. She gives a lengthy speech about the fuss these immigrants the Muslims create in British society:

“What I don’t understand is [...] why do they make such fuss? The Pakistans, the Asians, or what have you-always on about something, aren’t they, complaining about

this and that. There was this lass in the paper, Gabriel, only t'other day, she wants to wear the veil to school. Well, I mean. This is England. If they want things exactly like home they can bloomin' well go there, can't they? There's no use trying to make it like home, is there, because they didn't like it at home and that's why they're left and come here." (Ali, 2010, p. 219)

Again, she continues, "There's this girl in the paper, only t'other day, she wants to wear the veil to school. Well, I mean. She's forgot what country she's in" (Ali, 2010, p. 221).

Gab's father blames the present Government for the decadent situation of British culture, and the immigrants who capture their society and ruin their identity. He puts it,

"But it's not their fault, the way I see it. Can't blame them for asking. Human nature to ask for what you want. It's the council, that's what it is. Bunch of right rollickin' idiots, and I only put it that way due to the lady present. So far up their own back-sides with this-what's that word?-"*multiculturalism*", they've got no common sense." (Ali, 2010, p. 221) [*my emphasis*]

I found Gab remembering his old days' life with his parents. Once he went to church with her mother. On the way near Park Street, they had found "a group of young Asian men, some in skullcaps, some in hoodies, were engaged in kicking a portable television to piece" (Ali, 2010, p. 245). When they were on Ashley Street, they found people spelt out **Happy Eid**. (*My emphasis*) Though his mother didn't react to all these as she was engrossed in childhood memories, "Gabriel was expecting Nana to comment-on how the Asians had depressed the house prices, - how they never scrubbed their doorsteps, how they butchered goats in the backward" (Ali, 2010, p. 246). During the Iraq war, London has seen an anti-war demonstration. "BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW read one banner, UK OUT OF IRAQ SAID ANOTHER" (Ali, 2010, p. 390). They have blocked the road for such anti-war

demonstrations. On finding these, Gab's mother concluded that they gave them home, and shelter and they (the Muslims) did all these fusses. All times she has shown her indignation and racial bias against the Muslims. During the Christmas festival, Gab had seen a man wishing a Muslim woman 'Merry Christmas'. She was "almost entirely blotted out by large black sheet, a black veil over her head" (Ali, 2010, p. 392). When she got the wish, she "turned her face to the ground and quickened her step" (Ali, 2010, p. 392). After that the man again amiably wished her "And a happy New Year to you" (Ali, 2010, p. 392), but the woman didn't acknowledge him. "She turned down a side street. Gabe paused to watch her beetle away, a black shell, a solid casing, broken only by the flick-flack of her heels" (Ali, 2010, p. 392).

There is the possibility that the author Monica Ali is Muslim and so she tries to show either the Western gaze on Muslim people as backwards or the stereotyped, unchanged Muslim cultural practices of Muslims even in foreign countries like the United Kingdom.

This is a less-read novel by Monica Ali. As this fiction is described from the perspective of a lower-middle-class family, the British people did not take it as the total representative of London life. Besides, this description is given by a Third World country's author. So perhaps the British people are not ready to get acquainted with their country from a Third World country's author. I think for the same reason Naipaul's *Mr Stone and the Knights Companion* (1963) is less read among his works.

A Comparative Discussion among Divakaruni, Lahiri, Gupta and Ali

I have observed in chapter I that themes in Divakaruni's novels include South Asian women; immigration; South Asian history, culture and myth; an amalgamation of tradition and modernity and others. Many of her writings are influenced by 'magic realism' and Salman Rushdie, notable being her *Queen of Dreams*. In the case of Jhumpa Lahiri, as

elsewhere I observed that “[t]hough the main theme of Lahiri’s novels is diasporic sensibility, specifically expatriate sensibility, the man-woman relationship in a familial space is a recurrent motif in almost all her writings” (Das, 2016, p. 29).

Lahiri is not strongly preoccupied with gender discrimination in her selected novels. Lahiri writes about human predicament and identity crisis in ‘diaspora space’ in the United States; though marginality, alienation and nostalgia are the three ‘leitmotifs’ (leading motif/themes) in her novels. She gives emphasis not on her artistic characters’ feminine sensibility, but on the dilemma of choice and commitment to cultural moorings in familial spaces. Both Divakaruni and Lahiri’s gender portrayals generally have their source from the US-based second-generation children of the Indian diaspora.

The younger, second-generation diasporic women characters like Moushumi in *The Namesake*, Bela in *The Lowland*, Rakhi in *Queen of Dreams*, Korobi in *Oleander Girl* are independent, educated women who know what they should do and what they should want to do. These diasporic children represent the new women of the new generation in the New World. These assertive gender portrayals show an inclination toward assimilation and acceptance of their existence in the foreign lands in general and the United States in particular.

Monica Ali is comparatively more focussed on the female voices of both the first-generation diasporic women and the second-generation female children of immigrant parents. As I have seen in her novel *Brick Lane*, the first-generation mother Nazneen in *Brick Lane* always tries to listen to her two daughters, while her husband tries to control their freedom. Perhaps she attempts this realising she had not gotten such emancipation not only in her native home Bangladesh under her parents but also in her Tower Hamlets home in the United Kingdom. Time and again, her two daughters confront their father’s imposition upon them

regarding speaking in English and other familial affairs in their Tower Hamlets home. Nazneen describes her sister's lifestyle who leads a carefree life, elopes with a stranger and her other sexual laxity in life. Perhaps Nazneen also cherishes such suppressed desires in her humdrum(ed) life in the United Kingdom.

In the letters written for her sister, I have seen her desires get fulfilled with the opportunist, unmarried guy named Karim. At the end of the novel, I have seen a metaphorical expression through the ice-skating scene. From the beginning, she had a desire to participate in the game. She had seen it on TV, informed her husband Chanu too, and finally, this scene appears again on the last pages of the novel. Through ice-skating, one can glide to and fro as one pleases. Hasina always wanted to have such freedom and carefree life in the United Kingdom. In the open-ended narration, perhaps she cancels the idea of returning to her home country Bangladesh with her husband, and stays with two daughters at Tower Hamlets home and would participate in the game in the future course of her life in the host country.

In Ali's *In the Kitchen*, a young immigrant Lena leads a directionless and pathetic life in London. Like other male counterparts, Lena was undocumented and thus illegal in London which forces her to be a prostitute to survive in London. Ali's novel is politically over toned. Perhaps the novelist wanted to give a voice to the undocumented female immigrant too for her pathetic life as an immigrant which may lead one woman to choose the profession of a prostitute for survival.

From the Indian subcontinent, novelists touch on the themes related to the 9/11 incidents in the United States. After the 9/11 incidents, the lives of immigrants from all over the world in general and of South Asia in particular in the United States got drastically changed. The prominent rise of islamophobia is visible in almost all strata of society in America. Such writers include British-Pakistani novelists Mohsin Hamid (in *The Reluctant*

Fundamentalist, 2007), H.M. Naqvi (in *Home Boy*, 2009), British Bangladeshi novelist Monica Ali (in *Brick Lane*, 2003), Indian American novelist Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (in *Queen of Dream*, 2004, *Oleander Girl: A Novel*, 2012) and few such other novelists.

Ali's *Brick Lane* analyses the experiences of the Bangladeshi Muslim diasporic family (Nazneen and Chanu's family) and other Muslim people living in Brick Lane, London and records the rise of Islamophobia after the 9/11 incidents. It mirrors the terrible cultural encounter of a humble Bangladeshi diasporic family, who always strives for stable identity formation in a multi-ethnic metropolis in London, and who faces utter racial abuses for being Muslim immigrants after the 9/11 incidents.

Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams* records the terrible consequences of the 9/11 incidents in Indian immigrants' lives in the novel. After the horrid incidents, these Indian immigrants like Rakhi, Jespal and others are forced to follow American cultural ethos. Rakhi is proposed by her friend Belle to "put up an (American) flag (on her *Chai* shop), [...] To show solidarity,..." (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 264); Jaspal, a traditional, turban-headed Sikh man, argues, "We're Americans, just the way you are. We all feel terrible about what happened" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 267). But the American young men punched him saying, "You ain't no American!" (Divakaruni, 2005, p. 267). These immigrants never felt such humiliation, racial abuse and other crisis before the 9/11 incidents. But after the incident, their lives get changed overnight in America. Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl* too sets in the United States after the terrible 9/11 incidents. Protagonist Korobi's would-be husband Rajat Gupta's family's art gallery in the United States got vandalised after the 9/11 incidents. Considering the politics, intricacies related to familial affairs, exploitation of immigrants in host societies and other real and human touches make Ali and Divakaruni realistic novelists.

Sunetra Gupta is, perhaps, less concerned about immigrants' burning problems of their lives in the diasporic country. Her novels are confined to domestic affairs and less descriptive about cultural exposure of diaspora outside of domestic affairs. This trait is visible in her two selected fictions-*Memories of Rain* and *A Sin of Color*. Her *Memories of Rain* textures the lives of protagonist Moni both in Calcutta, India and Oxford, the United Kingdom. The novel describes how Moni got infatuated with her brother's English friend Anthony and her subsequent marriage to him and her coming to Oxford, the United Kingdom. Her life in Oxford with Anthony and his live-in relationship with another English lady is mostly filled in the novel.

Her *A Sin of Color* is also in a similar vein. This novel describes the Roy family of Calcutta and its two members' cultural moorings in England. It describes Debendranath Roy's hidden passion for his own brother's wife Reba, his familial relationship with other members, his relationship with English friends and his English wife in England and other such domestic affairs in his life. Niharika, his niece too got interested in such familial affairs and engaged herself to discover her uncle's sudden presumed death. Thus, Gupta's novel is less concerned about the Indian diaspora's cultural exposure to 'diaspora space' with host people which I found in the novels of Lahiri, Divakaruni and Ali.

Unlike Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri and Monica Ali who gave emancipatory voice to their females in novels, Sunetra Gupta's female characters are portrayed as the victim in the hands of male ones of the Indian and the English. This is prominently visible in her novel *Memories of Rain*, where Moni is confined to a Bengali traditional family under her parent in Calcutta and tormented and mentally abused by her English husband Anthony in Oxford. The novel is described from the agonised psychic self of Moni under her English husband from the host country. In such victimised and abused

condition, she time and again relooked her Calcutta home and finally left her once ‘demi-paradise’ land-England. Her other novel *A Sin of Color* is also replete with such a theme. Debendranath’s passion for his brother's wife Reba didn’t get air as she is perhaps confined to the male domestic cycle in the Calcutta home. His English ailing wife is neglected by him as he was concerned with his unrequited love for Reba. Finally, he left her ailing wife and disappeared like an escapist.

After the 1960s and 1970s, Indian academics immigrated to the First World Countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada etc. for better economic prospects. These academics write novels and other creative arts through which they give emancipatory voices to the characters in their works. They put the female character in the mainstream culture of the host society. It may be deliberate and artificial, and for feeding Western media and for appeasing award organisations, affiliated with Western countries. In my studies, unlike Divakaruni, Lahiri and Ali, Gupta is an exceptional one. While her protagonist Moni in *Memories of Rain* returns to her Calcutta home after being unable to digest her husband’s extramarital affairs in England, Niharika in *A Sin of Color* is engaged in familial problems for searching for her uncle, both in England and India. England can’t confine her in its territories. For the pursuit of her uncle, she forgot about her academic world and life in Oxford and finally returned to her Calcutta home. This return narrative is unusual for academics, basically among academics who immigrated to Western countries after the 1970s.

Unlike Ali, Divakaruni and Lahiri whose novels are replete with political undertones-like racial bias, abuse, physical violence and other humiliation by host people, basically after 9/11 incidents, concomitant to host societies’ cultural milieu, Gupta’s writing is void of these

themes. She is less concerned about the cultural negotiation of Indian immigrants in ‘diaspora space’ and more confined to the domestic world of such immigrants in the host society.

This chapter at first looked into the Bengali diaspora’s cultural negotiation, represented by the selected novels of the four Bengali novelists. To explore this, I have applied the theoretical frameworks/concepts of Bhabha’s ‘in-between’ space/‘third space’, Brah’s ‘diaspora space’, Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’, Safran’s “Myths of Homeland and Returns” and other concepts. The second section of the chapter made a comparative study among the four selected novelists in this study. This comparative study is based on feminine voices, familial and relational voices in domestic affairs, politics, an amalgamation of tradition and modernity and a few other issues, represented in the eight selected novels.

Chapter V

Consumption and Contextualisation of the Diasporic Culture in the Globalised, Multicultural and Transcultural World

This chapter studied the consumption and contextualisation of the diasporic culture in this 21st century globalised, multicultural and transcultural world. Many international academics and creative writers denounce these writers and their works. They argue that the depiction in these novels is not authentic. They also argue that these novelists portray their 'home' country India in a negative light for selling their novels among the first world cosmopolitan readers. These academics include Lisa Lau, Samrat Upadhaya, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Tabish Khair and others. I studied these cases in detail in this chapter. The proceeding sections studied the authenticity of the depiction of literature/art, postcolonial critics' views on the depiction of these novels and their accusation of these novels and novelists, and finally, the 'space' these novels 'occupy' in the literary 'polysystem' of both the 'home' and the 'host' countries' cultural ethos.

Since Plato's time, the authenticity of literature had been questioned. In this connection, I attempted to apply the imitation theory of literature. I look into the idea of imitation or 'mimesis' and its proponents like Plato, Aristotle and others. During Plato's time, there was no bifurcation of the literary genre like a novel and other genres. What we assume literature today was recognised at that time as poetry since Socrates' times. In the creation of art/poetry, Plato introduced the concept of 'Mimesis'. "In ancient Greece, mimesis was an idea that governed the creation of works of art, in particular, with correspondence to the physical world understood as a model for beauty, truth, and the good" (<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mimesis>>).

Plato expressed his systematic observations on poetry/art mainly in his *Ion* and *The Republic* (Books II, III, and X). Plato in *Ion* observed that poetry is created by a poet, who in “divine possession” speaks the divine truth in words. So, this creation is divine, inspirational, impulsive, irrational and frenzy in nature. Therefore, Plato observed that the poet doesn’t deliver the truth. He argued that Philosophers only deliver the truth. During Plato’s times, there was a culture of not only the close interpretation of books but also of hearing performative arts or recitation of orators/poets. Plato also ascertained that it is not the performative art like theatre, it is the very rhetoricity of orators/poets that delivers the truth.

We get Plato’s sustained commentary on poetry in *Book II* of *The Republic*. Here he talked of Socrates’ “dialogue” with his students. Socrates cautioned that as poetry contains seductive elements which again provide sensuality, people should not take it in a serious way for seeking the truth; instead, they should be cautious of its seductive elements. In Plato’s Book X of his *The Republic*, we get his elaborate commentary on ‘imitation’. Plato argued that this ‘physical’ world’ is nothing but an objectification of the ‘ideal’ world. The ‘ideal’ world is real; the ‘physical’ world is just a shadow of the ‘ideal’ world. Thus, it is unreal. Thus, a poet who imitates any object of this ‘physical’ world is also imitating an already ‘imitation’, and therefore is producing poetry/art which is further removed from the ‘ideal’ world.

In elaborating this idea, Plato adopted Socrates ‘example of three beds: one bed which exists in heaven as an ‘ideal’ world; one as an object of craftsmanship in the ‘physical’ world; and the final one as an object of representation in art. Therefore, the originality/authenticity or the ‘truth’ in representational arts like ‘poetry’ in Plato’s times and ‘novel’ in this study’s context, is twice removed from the ‘ideal’ world.

But we would also observe many literary experts who attempt to defend poetry or any other representational art. This ‘defence’ for ‘poetry’/art had been there since Aristotelian times. In “*Poetics*”, Aristotle defined ‘poetry’ as “an imitation of human actions. By ‘imitation’ he means something like ‘representation’, in its root sense: the poem imitates by taking an instance of human action and re-presenting it in a new ‘medium’-that of words.” (qtd. in Abrams and Harpham, 2015, p. 174). Like Plato, Aristotle also observed that “poetry is essentially a mode of imitation” (qtd. in Habib, 2011, p. 18). But Aristotle also added positive significance to ‘imitation’. Unlike Plato who maintained that ‘imitation’ is just a servile copy of ‘nature’, Aristotle observed that it is a creative process. He defended poetry/art saying (good) poetry/art was neither useless nor dangerous, but rather natural and beneficial.

Aristotle’s ‘mimesis’ is different from Plato’s one in other aspects too. Here mimesis is not equal to imitation; it is more like rendering, depicting, constructing, idealising, representing and others such. While Plato took art for a moral purpose, Aristotle took it for an aesthetic purpose. At present time, we find many genre divisions: poem, essay, novel, drama and others. During ancient Plato’s time through Aristotle, there were not such so many classifications of literary art; at that time, we found the rivalry between philosophy and literary art. At present in this study’s context, we can assume the ‘novel’ as art/poetry of that time.

Literary experts like Aristotle, Philip Sidney and others tried and a few more at present are trying to defend literature (poem/novel etc.) on many grounds, notable being authenticity in its depiction. On the other hand, experts from different domains always attempt to question the authenticity of the literary representation. Besides, Plato also observed in his writing that art/poetry is politically motivated and thus, dangerous. This aspect of

art/poetry is a threat to common people. Some recent critics pinpoint the political undertones in postcolonial literature in general and diasporic literature in particular. In the proceeding sections, this chapter studied these issues.

Perhaps Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes are the best two critics who have negated the selected writers and their novels in my study vehemently in their academic book “*Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other within*” (2011). This book discusses many issues, related to postcolonial literature and identity construction. As my concerned areas in this chapter are consumption and contextualisation of the diasporic culture, politics of “re-Orientalism”, negative portrayal of the native country India by the Indian diasporic writers etc., I attempted to extract the arguments about the afore-mentioned areas from this edited volume of Lasa Lau and Ana Chistina Mendes.

The agenda of the edited volume “*Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other Within*” is “to observe how re-Orientalism is deployed, made to circulate and perceived by cultural producers and consumers within the specific context of South Asian identity politics” (Lau et. al., 2011, p. 1). The essayists in the volume attempt to trace the theme “re-Orientalism”, represented in contemporary writing from India, Singapore and the United Kingdom; on television and films focusing on ‘identity’ construction in South Asia. This volume, as the editors argue, negates the practitioners/artists/writers of “postcolonial cultural production” (Lau et. al., 2011, p. 3) from South Asia as contributors to a “resurfacing of new manifestations of Orientalism” (Lau et. al., 2011, p. 3).

In the introductory chapter, titled “Introducing re-Orientalism: A new manifestation of Orientalism”, the editors Lisa Lau and Ana Christina Mendes (2011) argue that the idea of “re-Orientalism” gets pioneered by Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) and is generated not by Europeans, but by “the Orient(s)” themselves. According to the editors, “re-Orientalism” is

“based on how cultural producers with eastern affiliations come to terms with an Orientalized East, whether by complying with perceived expectations of western readers, by playing (along) with them or by discarding them altogether” (Lau et. al., 2011, p. 1). This book thus “expose(s) the power of Orientalist discourse while underscoring its instability and mutability” (Lau et. al., 2011, p. 1).

The second chapter, titled “Re-Orientalism in Contemporary Indian Writing in English” by Lisa Lau (2011) raises a question regarding authentic and realistic depictions and commodification of “Indian Writing in English.” Lau (2011) argues that “Indian Writing in English” since “the last three decades, has been scrutinized closely for, suspected and roundly accused of a variety of sins of representation. Authors writing about India but living outside India have been particularly vulnerable to accusations of having lost touch, not knowing how things work on the ground, being fossilized in their diasporically transported culture, being victims of fragmented cultural visions and personal and/or collective nostalgia;[...]” (p. 18). There are several accusations that the authors of “Indian Writing in English” daily face. According to Lau (2011), “These accusations have ranged from exaggeration, typecasting, stereotyping, exoticizing, pandering to western tastes, demands and expectations, selling out, having mercenary motives, playing to the gallery, to more sophisticated misrepresentations of totalizing, essentializing, subalternism, marginalizing and, most recently of all, re-Orientalizing” (p. 18).

While authors of “Indian Writing in English” earn critical acclaim from the Western world, many postcolonial academicians blame them (plus “hypervisible diasporic authors” like Rushdie, Lahiri, and Adiga) for “having cowardly, mercenary, western-approval-seeking motives” (Lau, 2011, pp. 16-17). After accepting this fact, Lau (2011) raises doubts about recording “real India” in “Indian Writing in English.”

Sarah Brouillette in her chapter “On the entrepreneurial ethos in Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger*” accuses “Indian Writing in English” author Adiga of “serve(ing) up the East as spectacle” (Lau et al., 2011, p. 5) in Lau and Mendes’ words, in “a strategic re-Orientalist technique” (Lau et al., 2011, p. 5) for promoting his “*The White Tiger*” in the European markets. She proposes academics to use the phrase “meta-Orientalism,” for Adiga’s “self-conscious” picturisation of “re-Orientalism”, which “shapes and feeds increasingly globalized cultural markets” (Brouillette, 2011, p. 54)

Aligning herself with Brouillette’s idea of “meta-Orientalism,” Mendes in her “Re-Orientalism is on TV: from Salman Rushdie’s *The Aliens Show* to *The Kumars at No. 42*” (2011) recognises a “metatextual awareness” amongst the Postcolonial academics that instigates the “self-conscious” picturisation by many Postcolonial authors. While analysing Rushdie’s “*The Aliens Show*” and “*The Kumars at No. 42*”, Mendes (2011) observes that “re-Orientalism” permits such sarcastic activities by “manag[ing] to mirror the global spectacularization of cultural difference back at itself [while] exposing and exploring the spectacle’s flaws and contradictions, turning it on its head by working from within it” (p. 98).

Mendes (2011) gives positive and optimistic views saying that the “re-Orientalism” strategy supplies authors of “Indian Writing in English” and Indian diasporic writing, ‘spaces’ to recognise manifold identities outside of East-West literary canon. In this way, academic discourse about “Asian values” is similarly suitable for “us[ing] the other to essentialize the Self” in order “to suppress heterogeneous voices within” (p. 69).

Tabish Khair (2011) in his chapter “Re-Orientalisms: meditations on exoticism and transcendence, Otherness and the Self” observes that the term “re-Orientalism” generates grave difficulties-“even as it remedie[s] some of the imbalances and problems of colonial discourse . . .” (p. 149). He expresses his disappointment after observing that Postcolonial

writings “take for granted the need to narrate, defend, [and] justify the colonized and the subaltern” (2011, p. 150). Through this process, as he observes, Postcolonial writing is capturing the similar ‘space’ in which the mainstream discourse was originally modelled. “Re-Orientalism” therefore, as Khair (2011) argues, permits for (re)producing “soft fiction” (p. 156) by recapturing the dominant discourse of “Orientalism”. He regrets that it is incapable to stop “the trend towards a definitive simplification and the [centring] of perception and experience around a post/imperial West” (2011, pp. 155-6). Khair (2011) finally laments for its incapability to allow the “subaltern (to) speak” (p. 150) and to deliver the subaltern's “original story” (p. 154).

According to literary critics, these south Asian diasporic writers try to portray their home country in a negative light. In this connection Samrat Upadhyay, for example, in his essay “Arranged Marriage: Between Third World & First” (1997) argues regarding Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s writing that Divakaruni in *Arranged Marriage* “feeds the exoticized fantasies of Westerners” and “fails to explore the women’s complex psychologies in their journeys from a ‘Third World’ to a ‘First World’” (n. pag.)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a literary theorist, also has some negative opinions about these immigrant writers. In an interview given to Nazish Brohi, she (2014) argued, “I’m completely uninterested in this theme of (diasporic literature) writing. Not only uninterested but I am also contemptuous that this has such currency. It’s boring... The complete[ly] narcissistic focus on My Immigrant Problem is parochial” (<<http://www.dawn.com/news/1152482>>).

Even these diasporic writers also sometimes agree to this charge that their idea of their homeland ‘India’ is not an authentic one. Regarding it, I can mention Jhumpa Lahiri. In her works, I find the description of Kolkata’s Bengali culture. But the culture depicted in her

novel is not fully authentic. Even Lahiri also confesses, “I am the first person to admit that my knowledge of India is limited, how all translations are” (Lahiri, 2000, p. 118). She also confesses that her representation of India is her “translation of India” (Lahiri, 2000, p. 118). Thus, perhaps I may say that these cultures are, in Jean Baudrillard’s term, ‘simulated’ cultures or very roughly say, translated cultures. Thus, these authors sometimes don’t get well reception either in India or in foreign countries. The famous diasporic writer Salman Rushdie (1991) also confessed:

“The word 'translation' comes, etymologically, from the Latin for 'bearing across'. Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately to the notion that something can also be gained.” (p. 17)

As these writers and their writings are questioned on the authentic ground, they also confess the same and their idea about India is not authentic. Critics argue that these writers take a deliberate attempt to satisfy the Western readers by portraying the seamy sides of Indian caste and class hierarchies during the fascist regime of the then Prime Minister. Talking to Veona Gokhale in an interview, Rohinton Mistry, an Indian diasporic novelist living in Canada, agrees (1996) and states:

“My novels are not ‘researched’ in the formal sense of the word. Newspaper, magazines, chats with visitors from India-these are things I rely on. Having said that, I will add that all these would be worthless without the two main ingredients: **Memory and Imagination.**” (p. 3) [My emphasis]

But whatever these academics are saying, and these novels and the novelists are portraying-I assume all are realistic and supportable. If we look into the account of their

novels, there is no falsity: all the darker and darkest sides depicted in these writings are in reality in India. We can't deny it. And again, whatever the critics of these writers and novels are assuming is also to an extent justifiable.

The idea of 're-orientalising the orient' is also quite striking. If some readers are not agreeing with this idea, how can they prove it wrong? These diasporic novelists are always portraying the seamy sides of India: does that mean India is always full of such seamy aspects and we can assume India, in the words of V. S. Naipaul, as 'An Area of Darkness'? Though they are doing all these for selling their works in the Western Markets, and for securing International awards and recognition, they should also portray the other bright sides of India- their 'homelands'.

I now attempted to locate these diasporic texts in a literary "polysystem" and observe how native people receive/perceive these texts in their home cultural ethos and how host people respond to these texts in their dominant host cultural ethos. Itamar Even-Zohar, an Israeli culture researcher, first coined the term "polysystem". According to him, the term "polysystem" refers to "the entire network of correlated systems-literary and extraliterary-within society" (qtd. in Gentzler, 1993, p. 114). I have already discussed this in Chapter I in detail.

With this theory, Even-Zohar "attempt(ed) to explain the function of all kinds of writing within a given culture-from the central canonical texts to the most marginal non-canonical texts" (qtd. in Gentzler, 1993, p. 114). Though Even-Zohar introduced this theory to apply mainly to translated text, I attempted to contextualise these texts as translated texts both in the host and home cultural literary canons. These novels on diasporic people's lived experiences are generally perceived as outside products to Americans or Britons by foreign writers. The very cultural ethos and other inputs in the novels sometimes seem to host people

obscure, not contextual and thus the novelists sometimes put endnotes/footnotes, or epilogue (notable in the case of Lahiri in her creative art *The Lowland*). So, the host people frequently need to discuss native sources to comprehend these texts. So, we would say that they get the meaning of these texts via a kind of translation. The same cases would be applied to native people of the novelists too as many issues in the texts are not contextual to the native people of the writers and thus, they need wide sources from the host cultural canon to comprehend the texts. For them too, these texts are received by a kind of translation. Therefore, we would here apply the “polysystem” theory of Even-Zohar to these diasporic texts. Even-Zohar (1990) suggests that “Whether translated literature becomes central or peripheral, and whether this position is connected with innovatory (“primary”) or conservatory (“secondary”) repertoires, depends on the specific constellation of the polysystem under study” (p. 46).

Even-Zohar (1990) argues that translated literature (here diasporic literature) can occupy the ‘central’ position in any literary ‘polysystem’ in three social and historical surroundings: “(a) when a polysystem has not yet been crystallized, that is to say, when a literature is “young,” in the process of being established; (b) when a literature is either “peripheral” (within a large group of correlated literatures) or “weak,” or both; and (c) when there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuums in a literature” (p. 47). He (1990) also argues that “[w]hen it (translated literature) takes a central position, the borderlines (between a translated work and an original work) are *diffuse*, so that the very category of “translated works” must be extended to semi- and quasi-translations as well” (p. 50). Elsewhere I too have argued that “to occupy the central position of a literary canon, a translated text should be innovative, inventive and contextual to the historical settings of the occupied literary canon” (Das, 2013, p. 5).

Both Divakaruni and Lahiri are very creative and crafted in story-telling. Their novels texturise the pertinent issues of American cultural ethos-multiculturalism, diversity, globalisation and other such topical world affairs. This is why the novels of these two authors are very pertinent to the social and historical surroundings of the occupied American literary 'polysystem' of this 21st century. Therefore, these two novelists' works reside in a 'central' location in the literary arena of the United States. These novelists also won many literary awards, sponsored by many American literary organisations. Divakaruni is awarded the Women's Prize/Orange Prize, O'Henry Prize, the American Book Award and others. Jhumpa Lahiri, too, is awarded the Pulitzer Prize, Pen/Hemingway Award, O'Henry Award, Pen/Malamud Award and others.

Ali is a creative, craft, subjective and political writer. Her novels are based in Metropolis London, the United Kingdom. Some of the themes in her novels include seamy sides of (illegal) immigrants, politics, multiculturalism, diversity, globalisation and such up-to-date globalised issues. These themes are very pertinent to the social and historical surroundings of the occupied British literary 'polysystem' of the 21st century. Thus, I would assume that her novels occupy also a 'central' location in the literary canon of Britain. Ali received a lot of critics' accolades and awards affiliated with British organisations and other countries, notable being the United States. After publishing *Brick Lane* (2003), Ali was declared as *Granta's* Best Young British Novelist in the same year, and the fiction was selected as one of the *New York Times'* best book of 2003 and was nominated for the George Orwell Prize for political writing and the prestigious Commonwealth Writers' Prize.

Sunetra Gupta is very much artistic, lyrical and creative in adapting literary techniques like the 'stream of consciousness technique'. Her novel *Memories of Rain* doesn't celebrate multiculturalism, diversity, or polyphonic voice (Bakhtin) of the 'diaspora space' of

Metropolis London. Though her *A Sin of Colour* attempts to texturise the globalised issues, pertinent to British cultural ethos, she is not so successful in the ways Divakaruni, Lahiri and Ali do. Gupta's novels address the domestic and familial issues in narrowed ways both in India and England, and generally don't address the historical settings of the British literary canon. Therefore, her novels occupy a 'peripheral' location in the literary 'polysystem' of Britain.

Bengali (both in India and Bangladesh) is not only enriched with its distinct cultural ethos, but also with its literary canon, both in Bangla and English. For a Bengali reader who has not visited the United Kingdom or the United States, the diasporic cultures/themes of the selected novels are not very much contextualized to him/her. Therefore, these writers' novels are not as popular as the ways they are in 'diaspora space' in foreign countries. These cultural traits in a foreign land, portrayed in these diasporic novels, can be considered as 'eminent' cultures which are defined by Raymond Williams as an alternative or oppositional to 'residual' cultures that encompass "new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship [which] are constantly being created" (Williams, 1985, p. 123). These 'eminent' cultures of the selected novels in the study are not also relevant to the historical background of Bengal's intelligentsia. Therefore, these diasporic authors and their novels generally occupy a 'peripheral' position in the Bengali literary canon.

Only Gupta's writings bear themes like familial issues in domestic circles, male-dominated society and intrigued love affairs in a traditional Indian family and others. These are almost similar and contextual to the Bengali (Indian) cultural ethos. Thus, she got Indian critics accolades and appreciation and India's National Academy of Letters award in 1996 for her fiction *Memories of Rain*.

In this chapter, I attempted to contextualise the diasporic culture, represented in the selected novels. At first, I attempted to apply Plato's theory of mimesis and Aristotle's theory of imitation to find out whether literature provides an authentic description or not. I then attempted to argue that these novelists attempt to re-orientalise the Orient for selling the novels in the Western metropolises. To validate my point, I put arguments of notable critics like Lasa Lau, Ana Christina Mendes, Tabish Khair and others. The last section of the chapter attempted to locate these novels in the literary 'Polysystem' of both the 'home' and 'host' societies.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

“[...] **Liberation** as an intellectual mission, born in the resistance and opposition to the confinements and ravages of imperialism, has now shifted from the settled, established, and domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentred, and **exilic energies**, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant, and whose consciousness is that of **the intellectual and artist in exile**, the political figure between domains, between forms, between homes, and between languages. From this perspective then all things are indeed **counter**, original, spare, **strange**. From this perspective also, one can see 'the complete consort dancing together' **contrapuntally**.” (My emphasis)

Edward W. Said in “*Culture and Imperialism*”: 1994, pp. 428

In this 21st-century globalised world scenario, immigrant artists are very pertinent to different social exposures-authenticity, performativity, ‘locatedness’ (Edward W. Said), topical/consumer cultural scenarios, counter narration and others. Our selected four Bengali immigrant-novelists-Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali from Indian origins are very much contextual in such global affairs.

These immigrant novelists are conscious, subjective and self-involved in their works. I noticed performative aspects both in their personal lives and writings. They are located in ‘diaspora space’ and thus involve themselves in their works. I therefore may assume their works as their autobiographies or writings out of their own experiences. Therefore ‘performance’ or commitment to the aspects of whatever they write is a very vital thing that I as an observer need to look into.

If I notice Divakaruni's academic life, activities and works, I would find a poised concomitant between her personal life, activities and reflection of such aspects in her writings. She is a staunch feminist, and activist for the welfare of immigrant women in the United States. Much of Divakaruni's writing centres on the lives of immigrant women. She is one of the founding members of such NGO named Maitri. Monical Ali too seems subjective and gives real-life experiences in her novels. Her novel *Brick Lane* texturises the topical concerning things like racial attacks, islamophobia, and other similar exploitation in the lives of Muslims around Tower Hamlets, Brick Lane, the United Kingdom after the 9/11 incidents. Ali's *In the Kitchen* seems both a novel and documentary work written from first-hand experiences about undocumented and illegal immigrants in the 21st century in London. Such seamy sides of immigrants' lives sometimes are reported in newspapers and documents of Diaspora Studies.

Lahiri's writings seem less committed to reality and are replete with superficiality. She is not an activist in real life, confines herself to reports about knowing about immigrants' lives, and whatever she delivers in novels comes from her imagination, a frank acceptance she did in an interview. Calcutta plays a significant role in Lahiri's imagination. To Vibhuti Patel's question on what role Calcutta plays in her imagination, Lahiri says:

“...A significant yet marginal role. I spent much time in Calcutta as a child-idle but rich time-often at home with my grandmother. I read books; I began to write and to record things. It enabled me to experience solitude-ironically, because there were so many people, I could seal myself off psychologically. **It was a place where I began to think imaginatively. Calcutta nourished my mind, my eye as a writer, my interest in seeing things from different points of view.** There's a legacy and tradition there that we just don't have here. The ink hasn't dried yet on our lives here

(http://www.sawnet.org/books/writing/patel_lahiri.html).” (Lahiri, 1999, n. pag.)

[My emphasis]

Sunetra Gupta seems to be on a similar line to Lahiri. I observed the literary aesthetic in her writing through the ‘stream of consciousness technique, lyrical prose passages and other traditional narrative patterns in her novel *Memories of Rain*. These aspects seem authentic for recording the psychological function of the female brain during agonised phases of her life. But topical issues of whatever happens in ‘diaspora space’ lacks in the novel. Her *A Sin of Color* is also confined to a domestic circle for searching for a missing person and is not contextual to ‘diaspora space’ in a major way. The characters get less exposure as immigrants in a foreign land. Gupta is a full-time Zoologist at the University of Oxford, the United Kingdom, and takes creative writing as a part-time hobby in her spare time. Thus, anyone would accept her writing for aesthetic purposes, not for topical records and commitment to immigrants’ lived experiences in her writings.

These novelists reside in the First World countries’ global cities-London, New York, California and other cities. In real life, being Indian they experience exploitations in host societies-like marginalisation for being outsiders, identity crisis, fewer acceptances in host cultural ethos and academia, physically, mentally and racially victimised, and subject to all harsh rules and regulations sanctioned by host governments on regular basis. In the case of Divakaruni and Ali, these negative aspects/policies of host societies for immigrants are very topical and realistic. Divakaruni’s novel *Queen of Dreams* texturises the effect of globalisation. The protagonist Rakhi’s *chai* house is almost wiped out with the arrival of Java restaurant, an embodiment of globalisation and topical aspect. Ali’s *Brick Lane* records Chanu’s losing job for the effect of the economic recession in England, the United Kingdom. Ali’s *In the Kitchen* documents the darker sides of immigrant lives-being an illegal immigrant

and living like a rat especially if one is female-like Lona in the novel. Though I noticed fewer such real aspects of globalisation in Lahiri's novels, I found very less documentation about such topical aspects in her novels as she mainly records the domestic experience of familial things.

These diasporic writers are erudite academics, and economically elites and already established in the literary canon of host countries. I noticed that except Ali, the other three writers document the lives of Indian immigrants who are either from the elite class or at least from the middle class. I found 'essential discourse' in their writings, perhaps for the marketing strategies of their novels. For such cases, I noticed deliberate, artificial and superficial descriptions in such novels, notable being Divakaruni, Lahiri and Gupta. Monica Ali is quite different from them. Her writing describes the working-class Bengali family around Tower Hamlets in her *Brick Lane* and Illegal and undocumented working-class migrants of several countries in the Imperial Hotel in London, the United Kingdom in *In the Kitchen*. In very few cases, I observed the portrayal of 'masses' in the body of post-colonial diaspora writings.

As earlier, I observed the effects of globalisation both on the immigrant lives depicted in their novels and on the lives of novelists themselves, a recent trend like consumer culture in the texture of the novels or marketing strategies by novelists need to be explored. In the fifth chapter, I have already seen that these post-colonial novelists sometimes attempt to portray the darker sides of their native countries India and Bangladesh to appease the Western audiences, to capture markets for selling their books and for winning awards from Western media outlets and organisations. A prominent reason for this strategy is also to suit these diasporic novels to the consumer culture of the globalised world. These novelists globetrot in the Western Metropolises, always try to align themselves with the First World's

Metropolises' cultural ethos and thus pick the elite patterns in their novels. Such records in their novels are well suited to consumer market cultures in this 21st century.

All the Bengali novelists follow this pattern. I observed that Gupta's novel *Memories of Rain* was written in 1992, a year which had seen the early stage of globalisation. In this novel, I found the only lyrical tone, passages and the 'stream of consciousness' narrative patterns for depicting the trauma in the protagonist Moni's life. The effect of globalisation and consumer cultural aspects are very less in this novel. But her other novel *A Sin of Colour* is written in 1999, a year which had seen a lot of exposure to globalised consumer culture. Thus, like her first novel where she confines her female protagonist into only one room, Sunetra Gupta doesn't confine her characters into one room; they get exposed to white people too in *A Sin of Color*. The male protagonist Debendranath Roy tries to negotiate with Israeli national Amrira and mixes and later marries Jennifer, a white Briton. Perhaps Gupta attempts to suit the global atmosphere of acculturation in this novel. I noticed a similar case for Lahiri. Lahiri's first novel *The Namesake*, written in 2003, describes the effects of globalisation, and thus the second generation diaspora in the novel almost acculturate themselves with American cultural ethos. But the first generation Ashima doesn't do so much and finally, leaves America. Her second novel *The Lowland*, written in 2013, records the effects of consumer culture of globalisation, and the characters, both the first generation and the second one in it, are portrayed as globetrotters.

From the introductory quotation of Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, I found a few traits of diasporic novelists and their novels. Such traits include 'diaspora space' or 'in-between' space as a place of liberation, emancipation and enunciation; 'diaspora space' is used by novelists to subvert the native cultural ethos of the novelists; 'diaspora space' is a

place where exilic energies are used for political purposes, to subvert and disrupt host societies too.

‘Diaspora space’ is a place of enunciation and emancipation, a place of liberation for “the intellectual artist in exile” (Said, 1994, p. 428). This space is similar to Michel Foucault’s idea of “crisis heterotopia” (Foucault, 1967, p. 4) where anything/everything is possible. It is a private ‘space’ for personal development by a human being (<<http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>>). Diasporic novelists take full liberty in their novels to give such voices to their characters in the novels. Among our selected novelists, Divakaruni’s novel *Oleander Girl* includes a character named Niharika who is ready to get married to a gay man named Morgan and decides to settle with him. This is unconventional and ‘strange’ in traditional Indian Bengali culture. In Lahiri’s *The Namesake*, Moushumi Ganguli leads a carefree life, gives blind dates to multiple men and leads her bohemian-type life in the United States. Gogol Ganguli too in the same novel gives blind dates to many white American girls. Though he gets married to Moushumi Mazoomdar, it is broken and they got separated. Lahiri’s *The Lowland* texturises Gauri Mitra who involves in a lesbian relationship with one of her female students which seems totally ‘strange’ and unconventional in Bengali culture. Divakaruni is an activist in the United States. She is one of the founding figures of an NGO, named Maitri which helps the helpless and needy South Asian immigrant women in America. Perhaps the ways Divakaruni engages herself for the welfare of females and for giving voice to females seem impossible in her native country India.

This ‘diaspora space’ is a very counterproductive, disruptive one where culture is, according to Edward Said in his *Culture and Imperialism*, ‘a rather combative one...’ (1994, p. xiii) not only for the native culture of the immigrants but also for the host culture. These

“intellectual ‘artists (s) in exile” (Williams, 1994, p. 428) take total liberty and attempt to subvert their native cultural ethos. These novelists from exilic space attempt to rewrite their traditional native culture, mythology and other archetypal images and disrupt their native culture. Divakaruni and Lahiri are good examples in this context. Divakaruni’s novels mostly are written from the female’s perspective. This is visible in her novels, notable being *Palace of Illusions* (2008) where she rewrites the Hindu epic the *Mahabharata* from the female Draupadi’s perspective and *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019), where she describes the Hindu epic the *Ramayana* from the female Sita’s perspectives. In an earlier paragraph, I have said that Lahiri’s male and female characters and Gupta’s female characters show unnatural sexual orientation like lesbianism and marrying a gay man, these traits also may be disruptive and thus subversive to the artist’s native cultural ethos.

The ‘diaspora space’ is also politically charged by vocal figures from the characters of the selected novels or sometimes the novelists themselves. They sometimes engage to subvert the host social scenarios by practising their own native culture and sometimes creating a ‘strange’ atmosphere or different political agendas which are very disruptive to the host society’s very cultural ethos. Diasporic people reside among their native people in foreign countries, making an “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). Sometimes, they try to preach their religion and attempt to impose it upon other host people. Again, they try to win elections in the host countries and then give voices to/against the host government. Thus, the ‘ethnic’ ghettos or immigrants’ ‘imagined communities’ perform like political ghettos with disruptive, combative and conflicting agendas. I observed in Ali’s *Brick Lane* that an orthodox teen Muslim boy Karim engages with Hasina in a sexual relationship. At the same time in Muslim ghettos, he talks about Islamophobia and tries to form a Muslim brotherhood to counter the host English society.

Literary art contains both aesthetic aura and moral lessons. Over time during the postcolonial age, powerful countries are following expansionist ideologies and talking about national boundaries. Thus, now-a-day, artists are aware of these pertinent issues. Diasporic novelists are sometimes activists in their personal lives, aware of their native countries' national policies, and fully conscious of their agendas in writing literary texts. They are subjective and thus put political agendas, consciously or unconsciously in their novels. Thus, this body of diasporic literature is sometimes charged with the political atmosphere that I have discussed in the just above paragraph. As a result, literary art nowadays includes different political forms, which would disrupt not only the native culture of the immigrants but also the host society where they reside. But it reduces the aesthetic value of such a body of literature.

As Gupta is not engaged in political agenda in her personal life, I found aesthetic aura and lyrical cadence along with the 'stream of consciousness' technique in her novel; notable being her *Memories of Rain*, Lahiri follows the same suit in her novels, both in *The Namesake* and *The Lowland* while depicting the familial relationship of Bengali family. As Divakaruni is an activist in real life and her novels are based on the backdrop of the 9/11 incidents, political notes and traits of non-fictional prose are visible in her two selected novels. Ali's novels are politically undertoned. These features are perhaps either consciously put to authenticate her writings or to show commitment to her views, or unconsciously included from her normal inner day-to-day self-experiences from the 'diaspora space' of London, the United Kingdom.

As earlier in this chapter I observed the disruptive, combative, counter-culture in the 'in-between' space of immigrants' lives, these aspects, most visible and practising by the young children of immigrants need to be put in the domain of Cultural Studies. This is a

subcategory, similar to ‘punk culture’, a subculture inhabited by postmodern youth with anti-establishment outlooks, the advancement of individual freedom, principles such as non-conformity, anti-consumerism, anti-authoritarianism, direct action and other types of subversive traits. This form of subculture is visible in performative arts like dance, film and theatre; print forms like literature and documents; and in the forms of expression, visual art etc.

The very culture practising by the children of immigrants is similar to this punk subculture. Earlier I have observed that diaspora’s young children practise lesbianism, gayism, blind dating, lead a bohemian lifestyle, beget children with unknown parents, revolt with political agendas against host society, rewrite and recreate native history and myths etc. All these features are quite visible in the selected novels in this study. But these traits have entered not a prominent way in literary genres. Along with other conscious subjective matters, these features need to be prominent in novels too. I would suggest here the name of Abha Dawesar who is also an Indian-born novelist living in New York City, the United States. Her *Miniplanner* (2000), *Babyji* (2005), *Family Values* (2011) and others include such types of disruptive traits of punk culture, detrimental to both native and host countries. I observed a few such bands and visual artists of Indian immigrants in the United States and the United Kingdom. I attempted to look into this area through academic and creative works. But this area is rarely studied in research works. Future researchers may fill the gap by exploring this area.

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Negotiating Indian Diasporic Culture: A Study of the Selected Works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sunetra Gupta and Monica Ali

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DIALOGIC VOICES BETWEEN INDIAN DIASPORAS AND AMERICANS IS A FAILED ONE: A STUDY FROM THE SELECTED NOVELS OF CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI

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ABSTRACT

Indian Americans numbering 3.2 million is the third largest Asian American community in the United States after Chinese Americans (3.8 million) and Filipinos (3.4 million) according to 'American Community Survey' of 2010 data. Some of these diasporic people initially attempt to lead their lives interacting with mainstream American society. But their attempts usually get failed. Others from the beginning attempt to live their lives making ethnic enclave / 'Imagined Communities' there, and thus, generally they live in different Indian enclaves and their life-interaction in the United States centres on these enclaves. The reasons of this confinement may be of their similar 'ethnic' and racial belonging. Some questions may be raised here: How much are diasporas confined in community enclave for their similar 'ethnic' belonging? Does the racial victimization force them to confine themselves in community enclave? How is their cultural negotiation with mainstream society getting reduced? What are the recent phenomena that force them to get less access to the host society? How much the host society shows 'dialogic' engagement with these diasporic people? Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian diasporic writer living in the United States. In most of her novels, mainly the protagonists attempt to assimilate with the host American society. But their attempts fail to make 'Dialogic Voices' in mainstream American society. Therefore, they usually moor in their ethnic enclaves in the host society. This paper will try to find the answers of the aforementioned questions from Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's documentations in her selected novels.

Key Words: Ethnic Enclave/"Imagined Communities", "Dialogic Voices", Cultural Encounter, Topical Circumstances.

This paper contains three sections. The first section describes certain terms/phrases related to the paper. These are "Dialogism", "Imagined Communities", "In-Between" Spaces and "Diaspora Space". The second section attempts to apply/contextualise these terms/phrases to the selected novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. We attempt to show how the characters in her novels attempt to make 'dialogic' engagement with host society. We also observe why

their attempts for making “dialogic” voices are not successful. Finally we draw the conclusion.

“Dialogism”:

The concept “dialogism”/“dialogic” voices was given by Michael Bakhtin in his essay “Discourse in the Novel” (1981). His dialogic theory is based on a perception of the inherent relationship between ideology and utterance, addresses the socio-political fact of literary performance and provides analytical tools relevant to the act of performing literature. He argues that “novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice” (261). He further argues that:

The novel can be defined as **a diversity of social speech types and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized**. [...] The novel orchestrates all its theme, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of **the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices** that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with those help **heteroglossia** can enter the novel, each of them permits **a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships**. (263), [my emphasis]

In novels, we find many styles, many languages, and many voices. Sometimes, we find dialectic, even idiolectic expression too. According to Bakhtin’s ‘dialogic’ theory, language is construed as social activities. These cases are prominent in novels written on diaspora’s lives experience too. If the writer is, for example, Bengali or Punjabi, then we can find the sociological aspects of Bengali or Punjabi people. The characters represent the social, ideological and political issues related to the writers’ ethnic backgrounds. Sometimes if the writer is female, then she tries to raise female’s voices to give them ‘space’ in mainstream social scenarios through ‘dialogic’ engagement. If the novel contains diasporic themes, we can notice ‘polyphonic’ voices in it, where the variegated voices try to make ‘dialogic’ engagement with host societies.

Bakhtin didn’t contextualise the term to diasporic literature that time. But if we study any novel written on diasporic people’s lives experience in foreign countries, we can notice two types of voices: voice from the diasporic people which is compromising and submissive and which is articulated from / at periphery, and voice from the host people which is hegemonic and shows racial abuse and prejudices. In the later section, we describe how the main characters in the novels attempt to negotiate American culture, and thus try to make ‘dialogic’ voices at ‘diasporic space’.

“Imagined Communities”:

Benedict Anderson argues in his book *Imagined Communities* (1982) that ‘nation’ is “an imagined political community” (6). According to him, it is *imagined* because “the members of even 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” (ibid.). It is imagined as a *community* because, “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (7).

We observe such tendency among them as they attempt to make their political / national identity.

In foreign countries diasporic people realise deep, horizontal comradeship among themselves. In critical juncture, they help and cooperate with each other. In many social and festive gatherings, they assemble together and share their life experience. If necessary, they make strikes, held seminars, conferences etc. to make their demand in public in host countries. Such ethnic community organisations are quite similar to Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities". Thus, to make their demands fruitful and to create identity, they all do these, and these activities appear as political activities. They revive their 'home' culture and thus indirectly show and make national awareness among themselves in foreign countries, because, according to Anderson, "nationality...nationness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts" (4).

"In-Between" Spaces/ "Diaspora Space":

When diasporic people settle and start their lives in foreign countries, their 'home' culture tends to get changed. The host culture is hegemonic and dominated one. Therefore, diasporic people normally start discarding their ethnic culture and assimilate with the host society's hegemonic culture "in-between" space (Homi K. Bhabha, 1994). Bhabhi defines this "in-between" space as:

[T]errain[s] for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and **contestation**, in the act of defining the idea of society itself....It is in the **emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjectivity and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated**. (2), [my emphasis]

Avtar Brah in her book *Cartography of Diaspora* (1996) terms this location as "diaspora space". According to her, this "diaspora space" is "a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes" (208). She also argues, [T]he concept of diaspora specifies a matrix of economic, political and cultural inter-relationships which construct the commonality between the various components of a dispersed group. The concept of diaspora delineates a field of identifications where 'imagined communities' are forged within and out of a confluence of narratives from annals of collective memory and re-memory. (196) In this 'diaspora space' the diasporic people try to negotiate with host people. We can find here 'dialogic voices' where the voices of Third World's people and that of First World's people are heard and make dialogic strategies. We discuss later how diasporic characters from Divakaruni's novels attempt to make 'dialogic' strategies with host people.

In this 21st century transnational world, mass migration is a dynamic phenomenon. Better economic prospect is the main reason for this huge migration of Indian people towards overseas. Generally the first generation diasporic people try to follow their 'home' culture. But the children of diasporic people try to discard their parents' 'home' culture and try to assimilate with mainstream host culture society. These children try to make 'dialogic' voices with their counterparts from host country. But they have to face many adverse situation there. Most of the time their attempts get failed, and it brings, instead, racial bias, abuse and sometimes physical violence over them. There are several reasons behind this. In the host

people's eyes, they are 'ethnic' people, people of "lesser bread" (Raymond Williams, 1985: 119); they are inferior in terms of race, culture, religion etc. to the host people. Thus, they are sidelined in workplaces, government job etc. They are seen as 'problem people' by the host people. They are sometimes verbally abused and physically attacked because of their skin colour, dressing style etc. Thus, racial bias is also a common feature in diaspora discourse. Therefore, in most of the cases, the 'dialogic' voices between the diasporic people and host people get failed.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's works depict the transcultural world in the 20th and 21st centuries. Her fictional worlds are based on two worlds-the First World United States' globalised, multicultural world and their Third World 'homeland' India's milieu. Thus, we can find both globalised, multicultural features as well as diasporic people's 'home' cultural features in their fictional worlds. For this paper I have selected her two novels *Queen of Dreams* (2004) and *Oleander Girl* (2013). Her *Queen of Dreams* is set against the background of Berkeley, California, United States, and Bihar and Calcutta, India. This novel is about the first generation diaspora and their second generation diasporic children's transcultural world views. The novel depicts American people's assumption about a Third World country like India that supposedly represents dark, unexplored, exotic, magic and witchcrafts-laden land. It also features the second generation diasporic children like Rakhi and her friend Belle's world-liberal, independent life, their little bond with parents, Americanised freedom enjoyer etc. The horrid experience and the aftermath of the 9/11 incident in the lives of Indian diaspora in the United States is also documented in this novel.

Rakhi is a daughter of Indian couple living in California. Her parents always nurture Bengali 'home' culture in their house. They follow Hindi old songs, cook Indian culinary items etc. Rakhi is painter. She imagines India from the United States, cherishes to visit India and her painting is almost based on India: [M]ost of her paintings had been about India-an imagined India, an India researched from photographs, because she'd never traveled there. She'd painted temples and city spaces and women in a marketplace and bus drivers at lunch. (10)

"Her Indian classmates wore tank tops and tight-fitting jeans. They smoked and wanted to go to Madonna concerts. They hated anything to do with their culture-or their parents" (49). But her parents are not social, and she also follows the same trend. But it comes from her fascination in her mother's job-interpreting dream, because she takes interpreting dream a glorious job. Her mother didn't encourage her to know her art. Whenever she enquires about her job, her mother deflects her questions. Her mother always "tried to turn her attention from the long ago and far away, to get her to focus on her American life" (49-50). Though she in her grown up years adjusted with American culture and negotiated with it very well, she is unable to adjust with globalisation's aftermath. She can't compete with Java restaurant which was in competition with her *Chai House*, since she feels there are different human bonding between Indians and Americans. While Java restaurant represents the Western materialistic approaches, the *Chai House* represents the Eastern values and human bonding. Java demands nothing from them except their money. It allows them to remain unknown. No conversation, no contact, nothing to look at or discuss, nothing to themselves exchanged or exhales. (85)

She is American born second generation diasporic child. Her all get up is American. She never felt her original Indian belonging, and thought that she belonged to America. But after

the 9/11 incident, her all belongingness gets questioned. After that 9/11 incident, when she is suggested to hoist American flag on her shop, she refuses it and argues, I don't have to put up a flag to prove that I'm American! I'm American already. I love this country-hell, it's the only country I know. But I'm not going to be pressured into putting up a sign to announce that love to every passerby. (264) When she feels her Indian belonging, she tries to watch herself into mirror: "I look at my reflection in the glass-the brown skin, the Indian features, the dark eyes with darker circles under them, the black crinkles of my hair. It's familiar and yet, suddenly, alien" (271). Thus a sense of belonging-ness arises in her and she realises that 'dialogic' strategies with American is not possible. She is inherently Indian, thought she is American born child. Belle (Balwant Kaur), her close friend and partner in *Chai House* leads an Americanised life. At the beginning, she also tries to assimilate and make "dialogic" voice with Americans. While her parents try to "pull her back into their safe Sikh nest" (16), she totally tries to "shed the last vestiges of her desi-ness" (15) and feels too American. She declines her parents' plan to settle through 'arranged marriage'. She argues: I can just see myself ten years from now, shrouded in fat and a polyester salwar kameez, a passel of snot-nosed brats hanging onto my dupatta, rolling out makkhi ki rotis for all my in-laws---. (27)

She declines to marry Jespal, a traditional, turban-headed Sikh man who has "[s]uccessful career. Keeps in close touch with his family. Plus a devout Sikh" (160). In this regard she argues with Rakhi, "Do you see me covering my head and following him to the gurdwara every weekend? And he'd probably faint from shock if I took him to my favorite club" (160). Initially, Jespal also tries to avoid his 'home' culture. He confesses, "Rules my parents pushed down my throat every day of my life until I escaped to college" (218)! But he fails to negotiate with American culture, and finally he "believes in living according to the Granth Sahib: physical purity, discipline, putting the family first, being respectable gurdwara-going member of the community" (219). But as an American born child, he always considers himself as American. But after the 9/11 incident, when he claims that he is American, the native Americans hit him saying, "You ain't no American" (267)! After this attack, different Indian community-organisations also try not to put on their Indian dress code; they start following American dress code to sustain their lives in the United States.

The heart of Divakaruni's cross-cultural novel *Oleander Girl* lies in contemporary Kolkata, India, and the post 9/11 United States where the terrible events of the 9/11 have erected new barriers of prejudice against dark-skinned foreigners in general and against the Indian in particular. While the first section of the novel deals with protagonist Korobi's privileged, sheltered childhood life with her grandparents after the death of her parents in India, the later part deals with her courageous search across the post 9/11 United States to find her father Rob and her true diasporic identity in the United States. After completing her college course, Anuradha, Korobi's mother, received scholarship and went to study international relations at the University of California in Berkley. In her Kolkata home, she was traditional, may be that is for her obligation to her parents. Before leaving her Kolkata home, she has promised her father "never to marry without his approval" (57). In America, she maintained her Indianness for certain period of time--she kept long hair and her newly found boyfriend Rob loved it very much. But shortly she grew adventurous and in six months, she telephoned her parents and confessed that she fell in love. When she returned to Kolkata to get approval of her parents, she was forced, obliquely, not to go back to California. She died after giving birth to

baby girl Kobori at hospital. Her father Bimal Prasad Roy didn't agree to hand over the child to her American father claiming, "We'll grow old in empty house while she is brought up in another country *without culture or values*" (62) [*my italic*].

Korobi Roy, thus orphaned at birth has enjoyed a privileged childhood with her adoring grandparents in Kolkata. She was not informed that her father is alive. But after the death of her grandparent Bimal Prasad Roy, she got to know that her father was still alive. So, she decided to find her father and took the journey to America, a country that she found at once dangerous, unwelcoming and alluring. When she took flight to America, she found that that it would be "A great adventure" (89). She takes America as "an enchanted land" (92) and remembers her grandmother's once story about it, When people went there, they forget the loved ones they left behind. They forgot themselves, too. No one returned from that country, although they weren't unhappy there in their bewitchment. (92) Though later she gets lots of hurdles to search her father, she loves whatever she has seen in America: "there's so much more, unbounded and bristling with possibility. Here I could become a new Korobi" (218).

But nostalgia and feeling of alienation don't leave her during her fascinating time in America. She is the granddaughter of Kolkata's famous lawyer. But after landing in America, she feels she loses her Indian courtesies and starts thinking herself in terms of survival, like an immigrant in America. Times and again she feels homesickness and remembers her grandmother. She tries her best to maintain her native culture and tradition in spite of her fascination in American cultural ethos. She gets infatuated temporally with Vic, another second generation diasporic child in New York City. When they are trapped in snowstorm on the way returning to New York from Boston after searching her father, Vic suggests her to stay in nearest motel. But she disagrees and opines: "You don't know how people think back in India! I can't spend the night alone with you. Well, not *with* you-ah, you know what I mean. Engagements have been broken for far less" (154). But she also adopts some Americanised life styles. After her temporary adjustment in New York City, she addresses her would be husband Rajat Gupta as 'Baby'. This American endearment comes from her so shortly that it makes him quite surprised. She gets introduced with Vic, nephew of her secret detective Desai. He is young, funny and humorous and his rawness fascinates Korobi. When she is going to search her father with Vic to Boston, she is acting as Vic's wife and Vic is about to build her the house of her dreams. This shows her tendency to dissolve in America.

As she tells all these about Vic to her grandmother, her grandmother thinks that she is about to deviate from her mission and would do the same thing which her mother once had done. She warns her not to assimilate with American carefree enchanted live style: "*Remember the world that waits for you here, its privileges and obligations. What happens in America isn't your life; it's only interlude*" (139, *original italic*). Once Vic asks her how she can compare Kolkata to New York. She notices both positive and negative sides of Kolkata. Once she returns to Kolkata, she chooses Kolkata over the cities of America. Still she can't forget America quickly. Though she returns back to Kolkata on her own choice, she still can't deny that American siren song had pulled at her.

She tries to negotiate with American people while searching her father. But she fails to do it. She believes Rob Mariner as her father and goes to meet him. But he attempts to make sex with her. When she protests his advance, he shows his such approach which is unexpected to

her: “When he lets go, it’s so unexpected, I lose my balance and fall back on the sofa. I steel myself for another attack, but surprisingly, he only watches me. His mouth is twisted –is it with contempt...” (204). When she describes this incident to Vic, she confesses: “Oh, Vic, I feel so dirty, inside and out. I don’t want to do this anymore. I’ve never come across anyone who hated me so much. What I did wasn’t totally honest, I admit it, but did it deserve that kind of hate?” (205). Lots of possibilities are there with Rob Mariner’s showing abhorrence for her. Perhaps her negative approaches towards him arouse in him the awareness of her dark colour, her racial origin. Thus, he hates her and shows his abhorrence for her. This happens when Western and Western people encounter each other. Perhaps the novelist tries to show that the cross-cultural encounter brings little result regarding the dialogic engagement.

Vic is second generation Indian-American. He adopts Americanised life and feels proud of its cosmopolitanness. He pursues Korobi to marry him and follows her. Though he wants to know more about Kolkata, he doesn’t consider to go back his ancestral home. He doesn’t consider himself as Indian. He feels more comfortable in America, though he confesses that the 9/11 incident changes their lives drastically in America. He is practical too and doesn’t give value to Indian social taboo on women. When Korobi says she can’t spend night with him in single room as she is already engaged with Rajat, he opines that life’s value is much greater than Indian foolish social conventions. The novelist describes another Bengali Mitra couple’s lives in America. The Mitra couple was once fascinated in American life and settled in America after their job promotion. Initially they settled at Upper West Side and tried to assimilate with American cultures, and avoided their Indian counterparts. Though Seema agreed to her husband’s suggestion, she missed Indians in America. In their early days, they never considered America as dangerous place. But after the 9/11 incident everything has changed drastically. They have to shift their accommodation to ‘Mumtaz’, an ethnic enclave of Indian people where they can listen “Bollywood songs, nostalgic old favourites, the immigrant’s longing to capture home” (97), and thus feel to some extent secure from vandalism after the Twin Towers fell. Thus, the diasporic people tries to make ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson) to survive in foreign lands.

The race, colour play a vital role while negotiating different cultures. When Korobi learns that her father is not white American, but African-American, she feels shocked to inform it to her grandmother. Her parents didn’t get married and so she is illegitimate child out of it. Her would-be in-laws take it as scandal and refuse to agree with their son Rajat’s marriage with Korobi. Thus, during cross cultural encounter, race/ethnicity plays a vital role.

William Safran in his essay “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return” (1991) argues that diasporic people “believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it” (83). Thus, they are usually considered as ‘problem people’ for the host society and are side-lined from mainstream ‘dialogic’ engagement. So they used to live creating their ethnic community ghettos in foreign countries. Not only in Divakaruni’s works, other writers living in the United States like Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri’s works also have such type of Indian diasporic people’s ghettoization in the United States. We can find also in reality that many Indian academics, and other intellectuals living in America are /are being sidelined from mainstream social scenarios. They are not given/not being given the ‘space’ the ways their host counterparts are getting. Even post-colonial towering figure like Salman Rushdie

confesses in his novel *Shame* that "I too am a translated man". From these writers' lives in the United States and from their personal confession through interviews, it is noticed that the lacking of 'dialogic' voices between the Indian diasporas and the Americans is seen practically.

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Bengali Diasporic Culture: A Study of the Film Adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003)

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Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* (2003) is a culture-oriented, more precisely, a Bengali diasporic culture-oriented novel. As a diasporic novel it represents the diasporic themes like displaced, dislocated and deterritorised feelings of the first generation expatriates like Ashima Ganguli, the female protagonist of the novel; assimilated, translational and transcultural tendency among the diasporic people, especially among the second generation immigrants in the novel like Gogol Ganguli, Sonali Ganguli and Moushumi Mazoomdar; a feeling of nostalgia towards the natal/imaginary homeland by the first generation expatriates like Ashima Ganguli; the community feeling among the diasporic people; the familial, human relationships within a diasporic family in a diasporic land and other traits. Ashima Ganguli is moored in diasporic land with her feelings of rootlessness/uprooting/re-rooting/tracking root and also finds routes to discover her at home in many homes in the world. The Bengali diasporic cultures are amalgamated dexterously in the texture of the novel.

Lahiri's *The Namesake* was adapted as a film in 2006, released on March 9, 2007, following screenings at film festivals in Toronto and New York City. The film is directed by an Indian born filmmaker Mira Nair, living in the US. Sooni Taraporevala adapted the novel into a screenplay. The film received positive reviews/acclaims from American critics and won 'Love is Folly International Film Festival' (Bulgaria)-"Golden Aphrodite"-Mira Nair.' It was also nominated for many countries' film festivals.

In his seminal paper "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation", Roman Jakobson describes inter-semiotic translation as one of the three possible types of translation. According to his explanation unlike intra-lingual translation which is related to the signs of one language only and inter-lingual translation which occurs between two different languages, inter-semiotic translation involves translation between two different media, as for example, verbal medium into musical medium or verbal medium into cinematographic medium, and so on (114). Mira Nair's *The Namesake* (2007) uses immigrants' experiences to explore the meaning of identity. The film follows the Ganguli couple from India into the American family they create. Mira Nair herself a diasporic Indian has dealt with similar themes in earlier films, notably 1991's *Mississippi Masala*, an interracial romance set in the Deep South.

About adaptation of a novel/text into a film version, P. Torop writes: "The main difference between film and literary work lies in the fact that literature is fixed in a written form, while in a film the image (representation) is supported by the sound, in form of music or words" (300). Torop's concern here is the transfer of the word into the image. In film adaptation, the former is used rarely and dialogue is given much space. A film version is composed of different elements, such as dialogue, setting, possible voice-overs, musical score, editing, framing, lighting, coloration, close-up (or not), perspective, and in the case of human voice, also the timbre and the intonation patterns. For this film translation of a verbal text through inter-semiotic translation, a rational subdivision of the original is inevitable for deciding to what elements of the film composition to entrust the translation of given stylistic or narratological elements of the prototext.

The cultural elements present in Lahiri's *The Namesake* are different Bengali *sangeet(s)*/songs, some taboos imposed on Bengali Hindu house-wife, maintaining Bengali

dressings style in the diasporic world, selection of a Bengali baby's name, celebration of a Bengali baby's rice ceremony, practices of different Bengali Hindu rituals, the use of Bengali literature magazines to remember Bengali 'men, milieu and moment', nationalism among the Bengali "imagined community" (Benedict Anderson's term) in Boston and Cambridge areas, different Bengali deities and festivals, the use of Bengali culinary items in Ashima's Pemberton's home and some other cultural traits. These elements are also found in Mira Nair's film version. But there is a difference between the narrative pattern of the printed text and the visual medium of the film. In the text, the Bengali diasporic cultures are presented in a third person point of view, sometimes also from third person omniscient point of view. As there are many unexplained sections in the novel urging the reader's creatively interpretation, the film version doesn't present such ambiguities. Nair presents Bengali cultures clearly through audio-visual modes and relies on "chronotopic" (Bakhtin's term) motifs or, sequences of time and spaces in narrative pattern that unify multiple temporalities and histories. The narrative of the text starts with Ashoke's and Ashima's travel to the US in the 1960s. The film advances the timeframe by ten years, restaging Ashoke's accident and marriage to Ashima in the 1970s. Whereas the novel starts with Ashima's delivery, the film starts with the train journey of Ashoke Ganguli, a young Bengali graduate from Calcutta to Jamshedpur in the mid-1970s. Mira Nair modifies the progressive, singular, and linear representation of time that emerges from the space of the hospital with multiple and fractured temporalities that unfold in the chaos of the train crash that Ashoke faces.

After the train derailment, Ashoke is confined to bed. Immediately follows the montage of *Saraswati*, the Goddess of Learning being carried with fanfare. The film starts as Ashima is seen attending a classical music class. After arriving home, her mother asks her to come to drawing room as a man is waiting to 'see' her for marriage as per tradition of 'arranged marriage.' The next scene gives a kaleidoscopic picture of a Bengali marriage ceremony. The printed text carries only a small paragraph on it. Though these cultures are not diasporic, the visuals show Nair's ingenuity as a good translator. A text can depict all these, but within a limited period of show-time it is not easy to depict all aspects in a film.

When the Ganguli couple settles in the US, Ashoke explains to Ashima the way to the Fulton Fish Market. Fish is an important motif in the novel, but in the film 'samosa' takes the place of fish. When Ashoke comes to see Ashima with his parents with the prospect of marriage, the guests are provided samosas. When Gogol and Maxine are leaving for Maxine's parents' New Hampshire home, Ashima gives them a lunch parcel of samosas. After Moushumi's marriage with Gogol when she visits her in law's home before the Christmas party, Ashima is frying big samosas for the party. When Ashima gives her last farewell party to her Bengali friends at her Pemberton home before her departure to India, she gives a party with piles of samosas in plates.

The Bengali practice of keeping of 'calling name' (pet name) and *bhalonam* (good name) is also used by Nair. Though Gogol's rice ceremony is elaborately described in the novel, it is not shown in the film. Nair shows only Sonali's rice ceremony. The reason may be the limited time for two rice ceremonies to be included. Perhaps Nair's intention is not to depict the entire novel but the Bengali diasporic cultures.

The behaviour of a second generation diaspora to the first generation is complex. Gogol is extremely ashamed of his name and angry with his father for his odd name. When he makes harsh comments to his father about his odd name, Ashima rebukes him severely.

The *baul* song is popular in Bengal. The themes are philosophical and allegorical focusing on the state of disconnect between the earthly soul and the spiritual world. Often they philosophise on love and the many-splendored bonds of the heart, subtly revealing the mystery of life, the laws of nature, the decree of destiny and the ultimate union with the divine. The famous Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore was greatly influenced and inspired by

the *baul* songs. Tagore's songs are heavily influenced by *baul* themes. Other Bengali poets such as Kazi Nazrul Islam have also been influenced by the *baul* songs and their message of non-sectarian devotion through love. The *Bhatiali* is another kind of folk song. This song is associated with particular groups such as fishermen, cart-drivers and hermits. It's hard to think of Bengali cultures, more precisely Bengali rural cultures without the *baul* and *bhatiali* songs. They are not only intrinsic to Bengal's music cultures but are also in the earth and air of the land and pervade the mind of the people.

There are many *baul* and *bhatiali* songs in film, heard when Gogol and Sonali visit India with their parents. Gogol notices a *baul* singing outside from his maternal grandfather's home and another one while returning after practicing yoga. Sometimes *baul* and *bhatiali* songs portray the sorry/unhappy picture of a person. When Gogol performs the mourner's ceremony for his father and Maxine comes to meet him, she is unable to understand this emotion. She fails to convince Gogol to come out of his family bond and starts weeping after being rejected by Gogol. In this scene, a background *bhatiali* song "*Oh majhi re, mon kasther nokar majhi...*" (Nair, 2007) is used. When Ashima and her family are busy with the last part of the mourner's ceremony on the bank of the Ganges, that song is heard again from a boatman. Besides, there are also classical songs sung by Ashima at the beginning and ending of the film as well as other background songs and ethnic music.

The different attitudes of the first generation and the second generation diasporic people are beautifully shown in the film. After Gogol gets Maxine as his girlfriend, he starts avoiding his parental home. He does not even pick up his mother's call. When his father is about to leave his Pemberton home for Cleveland, Ashima calls Gogol who says he can't come as he wants to visit his girlfriend's parents' lake-view house in New Hampshire. When Gogol and Maxine come to meet Ashoke for few minutes on their way to that house, Maxine is very American. Maxine addresses Ashima by her name and says, "I'll get a drink" (Nair, 2007). Ashima offers *lassi* instead of alcohol. Gogol warns Maxine not to hold hands in front of his parents, but Maxine forgets and holds Gogol's hands at the dining table. She addresses Ashoke also by his name and kisses his cheek. These create awkwardness in Gogol's family. When they are about to leave, Ashoke tells Gogol to check up on his mother time to time during his absence. But Maxine remarks that "[n]ever guess the parents and of their subject matters" (Nair, 2007). Ashima gets a temporary job in the library and develops close friendship with one of her colleagues. She shares her anxieties about the behaviour of her children who avoid them. When Ashoke is dying from a 'massive heart attack', Gogol is busy with Maxine's writer friend's party in New Hampshire. These behavioral and cultural differences are documented nicely in the film.

Before his father death Gogol is seen as assimilationist, transculturist and transnationalist in the US. But after her father's death he returns to his Bengali Pemberton 'home', shaving his head before leaving Ohio. Ashima is astonished to see him. She embraces him and placing her right hand on his shaved head says, "You didn't have to do this" (Nair, 2007). But like a son of a Bengali family Gogol for the first time says in Bengali to his mother, "I wanted it" (Nair, 2007). Gogol's change shows that the second generation's desire for acculturation in a foreign land is not total yet.

The mourner's ceremony of Ashoke is, perhaps, the clearest hallmark of Bengali culture in the movie and the text in a diasporic world. The telescopic Indian cultural practices are seen by Gogol as he returns to his 'little India' the Pemberton 'home,' and changes from an Americanized Indian immigrant into a faithful Indo-American expatriate.

The Film Version: Addition and Deduction

A text may be lengthy, but when a film-maker makes a movie out of that text, cuts are necessary to fit the stipulated time. Mira Nair is faithful to the original text, but some portions are not represented in the film version. The important scenes which are included are:

Ashima's time with the Montgomery family, Gogol's rice-ceremony, Gogol's Bengali lessons and visit to Calcutta during *Durga Puja*, his first adolescent encounters with Kim and Ruth and the extra-marital relationship with Bridget, a panel discussion about Indian English novels when the second generation Indian diaspora in the US are addressed as ABCD ('American-born-confused-deshi'), Moushumi's sexual relations, Graham's racial abuse of Indians etc.

Mira Nair not only cuts scenes, but adds also a few which seem necessary for depicting Bengali cultures, as Bengali folk music which in Lahiri's novel does not have. The movie uses Bengali songs like Rabindra *Sangeet*, Nazrul *geeti*, traditional Bengali lullabies beside *baul* and *bhatiali*.

Internationalisation of *The Namesake*:

This movie is mainly made for Anglophone audiences as is the novel. Certain scenes like picturing the poor people in Calcutta and their cooking food by roadside etc. are shown as Indian poverty that satisfies the Western assumptions about the Third World. In a panel discussion on Indian English novels the immigrant Indians are called "American born confused deshi" ((118). Graham, an American, abuses the Bengali people openly. These scenes are not there in the movie. Thus, there is a kind of invisible manipulation by filmmaker during translation.

Lawrence Venuti's idea of "foreignization" is also seen in the translation process by Nair. Venuti points out that the strategy "foreignization" happens when a target text "deliberately breaks target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original" (5). Though Nair's film cannot break the US's societal conventions, it retains the 'foreign milieu', or Bengali milieu which is totally foreign to the US citizens. Thus, "foreignization" is adopted in Nair's translation strategy.

Drawbacks of the Film:

These are many scenes in the film which are not appropriate or probable. The film starts with Ashoke going by train to Jamshedpur to meet his grandfather. Ghosh, a middle aged businessman, is a fellow traveler who drinks alcohol in train. Lahiri's novel describes Ghosh smoking. Drinking alcohol and smoking are not allowed in Indian trains, but of course there can be exceptions. After their marriage, when Ashoke and Ashima are leaving Calcutta, they carry two small bags that may appear to an audience as going for shopping. Nair could have shown bigger luggage for the newly married couple going abroad to settle there. They wear long flower garlands as though they come out of a marriage ceremony. When Ashima's father dies and Ashima and Ashoke are going to catch flight to return to India, Sonali, their newly born baby girl is not seen with them. But after few minutes we see the baby girl on Ashima's shoulder. In a Bengali family after a death in the family generally after 10 days or 15 days male relatives of the dead person shave their head. But Nair's film shows that Gogol comes to her mother from Ohio with his shaved head though his father has died before one day. Perhaps Gogol may not know the norm.

***The Namesake* Film in Literary Polysystem:**

Itamar Even-Zohar first introduced the term "polysystem" as the aggregate of literary systems such as poetry to "low" or "non-canonized" forms in a given culture. He recognised both the "primary" (creating new items and models) as well as "secondary" (reinforcing existing items and models) importance of translated literature in literary history (21-22). He developed the "polysystem" theory early in the 1970s as a working for Israel-Hebrew literature. According to him, the term "polysystem" refers to "the entire network of correlated systems-literary and extraliterary-within society" (114). Through this theory he wanted to explain the function of all kinds of writing within a given culture-from the central canonical texts to the most marginal non-canonical texts.

The relation between the translated works and the literary polysystem, as Zohar suggests in his essay “The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polysystem”, cannot be categorised as either primary or secondary, but as variable depending upon the specific circumstance operating within the literary system. Even-Zohar opines that a translated literature can occupy a central position in any literary canon in three social circumstances: when a literature is “young” or in the process of being established; when a literature is “peripheral” or “weak” or both; and when a literature is experiencing a “crisis” or “turning point” (46-47). He also says that if a translated literature occupies a central position, the border between translated texts and original texts “diffuses” and the definitions of translation become liberalized, expanding to include version, imitations, and adaptations as well. But to occupy the central position of a literary canon, a translated text should be innovative, inventive and contextual to the historical settings of the occupied literary canon. Gideon Toury, a younger colleague of Zohar, adopted his polysystem concept and participated in various field studies for “testing” Zohar’s hypothesis.

Mira Nair’s film *The Namesake* is in English. Though we can find some Bengali conversations between Ashima and Ashoke, this is done to show the diasporic people’s ethnic continuity in familial spaces. This film is not comparable to the Hollywood’s mainstream films that are marked by huge investment, innovative and inventive camera settings, use of light contrasts, enriched and ultra-modern sound tracts, varieties of symbolism and others post-modern techniques. Such productions are not easy for independent directions. Mira Nair makes her film with techniques which are used by traditional commercial Bollywood filmmakers. Though this film won awards in film festivals and was nominated in different films award categories, it occupies the ‘peripheral’ position in the dominant Hollywood Films’ canon. The critical acclaim was won for its handling of debatable issues and diasporic themes which are topical in a multicultural globalized world.

Ingenuity of Mira Nair as a Filmmaker:

If much is lost in adaptation, much more can also be found in the hands of a good filmmaker as is the case of Nair’s *The Namesake*. In the film the use of Bengali language is used to mark the moments of intimacy, difference, and comfort and some serious moments. After a temporary settlement in the US when Ashoke is explaining to Ashima how to reach Fulton Fish Market, Ashima replies in Bengali that if she gets lost then what will happen? Ashoke also answers in Bengali that he will not let her get lost. Ashima does not know the process of washing system in her new house. When she washes Ashoke’s clothes which shrink, Ashoke gets angry and rebukes her. Ashima enters in her room and closes door. Then Ashoke tries to cajole Ashima and speaks in Bengali: “my Ashima, dear Ashima, open the door” and “crazy girl” (Nair, 227). As time goes by, Ashoke and Ashima speak more in English, but their last phone exchange just before Ashoke’s death is in Bengali. When Gogol returns from Cleveland with shaved head, his mother is astonished and tells him that it was not necessary. He unexpectedly speaks in Bengali to tell his mother he wanted to do this. When Ashoke and Ashima are walking in a beautiful place near a school, Ashoke wants to hear from Ashima’s mouth the line ‘I love you’. In this intimate scene Ashima says “yes” in Bengali. Perhaps what Nair wants to convey is that language not only makes difference but perhaps it also works as a ‘refuge’. Anyone can say that translation is more faithful to the diasporic world than the original text. Nair’s film always tries to remind us that language plays both roles-as a bridge and as a barrier for communication.

Voyaging in a diasporic world will not be complete without the mention of suitcase and airport, and more importantly, crossing bridges. These three things in the film occur like ‘leitmotif’. At the beginning Ashoke is carrying a suitcase to visit his grandfather in Jamshedpur. Later Ashoke does the same when the whole family visits India and travels to see Agra’s the Taj Mahal. Though this journey is not to the diasporic world, but carrying

suitcase is a universal symbol of mobility and odyssey of dislocation and displacements of the diasporic milieu. The other recurrent image in the movie is the airport. The airport is the symbol of meeting point of characters who journey into another place leaving their natal/imaginary home. The showcasing of airport is a journey of sorrow for Ashima when she is seen at airport to come to India after her father's death. Gogol is also seen at airport before returning to Pemberton 'home' after his father's death with his shaved head. In an interview with Cynthia Fuchs, Nair says that the "[a]irports are like the temple for an immigrant. We're always in these neutral spaces, you live your most crucial hours in them, as you're on your way from one home to another, or your father's funeral" (<http://www.popmatters.com/pm/feature/unbridled-with-life-interview-with-mira-nair/>).

But the most ingenious feature in Nair's film's diasporic world is the use of two bridges in the film: one is the Howrah Bridge, the busiest cantilever bridge in the world which connects Calcutta; and the other is the 59th Street Bridge in Manhattan which connects the New York City. What Nair perhaps wants to convey is that journey with suitcase is about to moor in a place, i.e., the bridge to cross over. These two bridges of two countries stand for the diasporic people's mobility and connection with the past and journey into the future. As described by Giuseppe Balirano: "[t]he numerous shots of the bridges ...introduce the metaphor of division and re-union, calling for a reconciliation between the cities, between the East and the West and between the first and second generation Ganguli(s). The American Bridge is seen by the author as a place where the ghost of Howrah could be glimpsed as a reflection of the migrant's dislocation" (96).

Another relevant point to be pointed out here is that Mira Nair is a feminist auteur, like some other South Asian diasporic filmmakers-Deepa Mehta, the Indo-Canadian filmmaker and Gurinder Chandha, the British Indian filmmaker. These auteurs try to deconstruct the image of 'scopophilia' (pleasure in looking) from the traditional Hollywood and Bollywood films for male gaze. Laura Mulvey in her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" defined "scopophilia" as an act of pleasure in looking at the female characters portrayed as an erotic object mainly for the male observers (835). These diasporic films by Indian diasporic filmmakers like Deepa Mehta, Mira Nair and others are termed by Hamid Naficy in his book *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (2001) as "Accented cinema" which emerges as Naficy argues, not from "the accented speech of the diegetic characters" within these films but from the "displacement of the filmmakers"(4). These "accented" films negotiate the interstitial dialogues between the home and host societies of the filmmakers. Thus, these films give the two sites for marginalised women-a site of resistance from the part of films' characters and other being the site for the expression of that resistance for the filmmakers. I think this is also the expression of postcolonial feminism through these "accented" films.

Thus, through these films the diasporic filmmakers try to eradicate the subaltern status of women and allow them a 'space' to be heard. In traditional Bollywood films we cannot get any female voices. Like in a socio-cultural scenario in reality women in these films are also marginalised. The film critic, Katey Rich in her article "Women On Film-Will Bollywood Best Hollywood In Opportunities For Women" argues that "[b]ollywood is as well-known as its Los Angeles counterpart for giving women small space both in front of and behind the camera. But what makes Hollywood better than the Bollywood is that American media reports like the 2009 edition of Dr. Martha Lauzen's Celluloid Ceiling Study reveal that just 9% of Hollywood directors are women. However, there is no study comparable to Dr. Lauzen's that Bollywood is confident to highlight the number of their female filmmakers" (<http://awfj.org/2009/03/04/women-on-film-will-bollywood-surpass-hollywood-in-opportunities-for-women-katey-rich-comments/>). In traditional Bollywood and even in Hollywood films we find the traditional virtues of womanhood like that of the sacrificing,

virginal, passive, and servile women. But in feminist auteur films there are strong-willed and sexually-assertive women. Deepa Mehta's films like *Fire* (1996) and *Water* (2005), Gurinder Chandha's *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002), Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991), *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and *The Namesake* (2007) are examples of these kinds of films.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* though we can find some 'spaces' in Ashima's life, but in familial spaces she is totally a passive, submissive and faithful Bengali house wife. In the Mira Nair deconstructs, to some extent, this image of Ashima. Though Ashima at the first phase of her life in the US shows her passivity to the outside world around her Boston home, but gradually she starts adapting the environment and lifestyle of New York City. She starts going out for laundry and buying fish from Fulton Fish Market. Ashoke recalls his adolescent experience of train accident. In the film Ashoke has a nightmare about the accident and starts sweating even in a cold winter night. Immediately Ashima tries to make comfortable Ashoke by keeping his head on her lap and singing a song. It is like a mother's lullaby. When her husband goes to Cleveland for nine months, she takes a part-time job in library to pass her time. Tasneem Farida argues in her article "Portrayal of Femininity in Contemporary English-language Films by South Asian Diasporic Female Filmmakers" that the film "depicts how she struggles and transforms from an all-accepting wife to a self-reliant widow and a lonely mother of two, who finally seeks solace after being back home" (13). In the novel Moushumi has many sexual relationships before marrying Gogol and shows her sexual laxities. Mira Nair also shows this in her characterisation of Moushumi. Thus, this film adaptation becomes a site of resistance for multiple purposes. Roger Bromley explains it aptly:

The transcultural and transnational narratives, texts of cultural translation, do not so much restore geography and the arbitrary, but, rather, open up again their conditions of possibility, a release, especially through women's writing, from the 'locked within boundaries' of patriarchal hegemony- not by simple reversals, but through emergence texts of the third scenario: the indeterminacy of diasporic identities, the production of difference as the political and social definition of the historical present, the contemporary. (73)

Conclusion:

Lahiri's *The Namesake* deals with the theme of diasporic sensibilities/culture of a Bengali family living in US. She hardly uses Bengali cultural words/phrases/slangs in the text. It may be because the text is primarily targeted towards the international readers. Thus, perhaps she tries to internationalise the Bengali diasporic sensibilities/culture through her text, particularly for Anglophone World. Nair also tries to internationalise the Bengali diasporic culture in film version. It is very difficult to recreate the same thing through a visual media, i.e. film as it presents something within a limited and fixed time. Thus, though one can get the main cultural transmission of the source text like a living picture in the film, but it lacks the diasporic sensibilities presented in the novel. The text depicts the Bengali diasporic sensibilities/culture, but it doesn't enter into the milieu of Bengali culture in its fullest sense. Mira Nair removes many diasporic elements in the film version, but it shows the Bengali cultures in a much better way even than the source text.

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**International
Conference on Global
Diaspora**



CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This is to certify that Ms./Mr. SUBRATA KUMAR DAS of UNIVERSITY OF
HYDERABAD presented a paper on TRANS-CULTURAL IDENTITY AT 'DIASPORA
SPACE': A STUDY OF SUNETRA GUPTA'S in the 2nd International Conference on Global Diaspora,
A SIN OF COLOR
hosted by Institute of Management, Nirma University, Ahmedabad on January 10-11, 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "m. Chatterjee".

Prof. Manas Chatterjee

State University of New York at Binghamton
(Conference Coordinator)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RJ Modu".

Prof. RJ Modu

Institute of Management, Nirma University
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This is to certify that

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participated in and presented a paper

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Failed One: A Study from the Selected Novels of Jhumpa Lahiri and
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni*

*at the International Conference on Changing Contours of Indo-US Relations:
Perceptions, Continuity and Change*

at BITS Pilani K. K. Birla Goa Campus, Goa, India on 31st October – 2nd November, 2014

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