

THE REALITY OF RELOCATION OF SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN CANADA

*A thesis submitted towards partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

M Phil in Women's Studies

Course affiliated to Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies,
Law and Management
Jadavpur University

Submitted by

SULAGNA SAHA

Registration Number: 114746

Class Roll Number: 101630101019

Examination Roll Number: MPHFW1903

Under the guidance of

PROF. SUCHORITA CHATTOPADHYAY

Professor

Department of Comparative Literature,
Jadavpur University

School of Women's Studies

Jadavpur University

Kolkata-700032

India

2019

M Phil in Women's Studies
Affiliated to the
Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Law & Management
Jadavpur University
Kolkata, India

CERTIFICATE OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**The Reality of Relocation of South Asian Women in Canada**” is bonafide work carried out by **SULAGNA SAHA** under our supervision and guidance for partial fulfillment of the requirement for M. Phil. in Women's Studies during the academic session 2019.

THESIS ADVISOR

Prof. Suchorita Chattopadhyay
Department of Comparative Literature
Jadavpur University, Kolkata- 700032

DIRECTOR

Professor Aishika Chakraborty
School of Women's Studies
Jadavpur University, Kolkata- 700032

DEAN

Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Law & Management
School of Water Resources Engineering
Jadavpur University, Kolkata- 700032

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL **

This foregoing thesis is hereby approved as a credible study of a social science/humanities subject carried out and presented in a manner satisfactorily to warranty its acceptance as a pre-requisite to the degree for which it has been submitted. It is understood that by this approval the undersigned do not endorse or approve any statement made or opinion expressed or conclusion drawn therein but approve the thesis only for purpose for which it has been submitted.

Committee

**Final Examination
for the evaluation
of the thesis**

** Only in case the thesis is approved.

Declaration of Originality and Compliance of Academic Ethics

I hereby declare that this thesis contains literature survey and original research work by the undersigned candidate, as a part of my M. Phil. in Women's Studies degree during academic session 2019.

All information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct.

I also declare that, as required by this rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referred all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name: SULAGNA SAHA

Roll Number: MPHFWWS1903

Thesis Title: The Reality of Relocation of South Asian Women in Canada

Signature:

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Date: May, 2019

Place: Jadavpur University, Kolkata

SULAGNA SAHA

(Roll No. – MPHFW1903)

I would like to thank, first and foremost my supervisor Prof. Suchorita Chattopadhyay for guiding me through this project. Without her supervision, suggestions and valuable inputs this work could not have been completed. The way she had always been there by me from the beginning till the end of this research work is something for which I can never thank her enough.

Secondly, I thank the Director and all the faculty members of the School of Women's studies, Jadavpur University for guiding and helping me whenever I approached them. The various ideas and suggestions that I received from them has helped me shape my thesis in a better way.

Lastly, I would acknowledge the help and support I have received from my family and friends. Without their constant encouragement and inspiration, I would not have been able to complete this research work.

Table of Contents

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter One | 8 |
| Chapter Two | 30 |
| Chapter Three | 57 |
| Conclusion | 83 |
| Bibliography | 86 |

Introduction

In the year 2015, towards the end of my Masters course in the department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University we were to choose a particular area of study for a paper. The time I had signed up for Canadian Literature as my “Area Studies”, I had no knowledge about the vast variety of literature that this country had. Until then Canada for me was only about a land of maple trees, Niagara Falls and vast areas of land covered with snow. However, what made the study interesting is that Canadian Literature is not always read employing the tools or methodologies of Comparative literature, such as Historiography, Thematology or Genology, but it is approached as a separate area of study, altogether. In the contemporary times, the Area Studies course in Universities are designed to study the Literature, cultural and social politics of a specific area or country, that had been through marginalization- socially, literally, or politically. The four areas of studies were namely African, Latin American, Bangladesh and Canadian Literature amongst the other three have been subjected to de-historicization and dislocations into other “hegemonic” fields. Hence the three areas apart from Canada tends to develop an alternative approach, what surprised and struck me at that moment was as to how Canada made it to the list. Little did I know then that Canada had a long history of marginalization and thus it also had an alternative approach.

Now the question arises that how can Canada be marginalized being a part of the North American mainland. Well, the marginalization in Canada comes from Literature. Being overshadowed by its neighbor, that is the USA, Canada is regarded inferior in terms of politics, culture and literature. We hardly get to see the names of Canadian writers in the list of writers acclaimed in the field of World Literature. So, Canada is essentially marginalized in the form of Literature. As the course progressed and I was getting deeper into Canadian studies, it didn't take me too long to discover what marginalization meant in terms of Canada. While Canadian literature as a whole was marginalized globally, it was the literature of native and diasporic communities that was marginalized within the literatures of Canada.

It was not an easy decision to make, wanting to work on a marginalized area, but somehow, I felt the marginalized area had enough potential in it to make me work on it. In the year 2017, I was a second year M.Phil. student at the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, severely confused as to what should be my area of research. I knew I want to work on Diasporic Studies but the question I often faced was which women writers should I choose; how many women writers of Indian Origin write in Canada? Though the question was tricky but the answer wasn't that difficult to find. Indeed, there are many women writers of Indian origin presently in Canada, sadly we in India have not heard of. These women form a significant part of the diasporic force which has been quite successful in making its mark in the mainstream Canadian Literature. The presence of a particular diasporic women in my life, my aunt, who had relocated to Canada with her husband some 35 years back and is a teacher in a school in Toronto, kept sharing her experiences each time she visited our house in India. I was too naïve to understand what she kept saying but it was not until 2015, I started understanding that the grass is not always greener on the other side, definitely not on the Diasporic Canadian.

What tempted me to work on it was when I found the same kind of reflections in the writings of the women writers. The questions that kept coming to my mind were whether diaspora was all about leading a comfortable and happy life in Canada and getting back home (India) once in a while with expensive gifts for friends and family? I wondered what goes on in the minds and lives of women who live in luxurious foreign "home" and come back "home" with expensive gifts making everyone envy them? These were some of the many factors that got me interested in working on women authors of Indian origin in Canada

Diaspora is a term used to refer to people of an ethnic group who though have migrated from their homeland yet carries in their heart a strong desire to return back. The diaspora never breaks the connection or link with the homeland. Related to the concept of diaspora, is the issue of forced migrated or displacement, but for the writers that will be discussed in the course of the thesis, the idea of moving away was a choice and not compulsion. Thus, critics argue whether to consider these writers as diasporic or not because most diasporic subjects have a tell- tale of forced migration. Needless to say, that the term diaspora is well known

in contemporary times and the writings of these writers that fall under the category of diaspora literature. Many critics have argued, for instance, Stuart Hall says that the psychological working of the immigrant is of prime importance than the social or personal reasons that have led to the migration. However, the diaspora [Indian diasporas] in our context remains misunderstood and thus 'othered'. Though there has been work pertaining to sociological relevance. Yet a trajectory that would start from Bharati Mukherjee and end at Shauna Singh Baldwin, keeping the two incidents, the Komagata Maru and Air India tragedy as backgrounds, is essentially absent and this is what this thesis aims to bring out. Novels, short stories, non-fictional writings of Bharati Mukherjee (1940-2017), Shauna Singh Baldwin (1962) and Anita Rau Badami (1961) would be analyzed keeping in accordance with the fact as to how women operate within traumatic situations.

Bharati Mukherjee as we all know is a key figure when talking of Diaspora Women Writing. Surprisingly she does not want her works to be regarded and recognized as Canadian. No study on the women of Indian Diaspora would be complete without the mention and understanding of Bharati Mukherjee 's works. My primary aim was to study and analyze works of Indian women writers in Canada, but that would have been a very ambitious project not suitable for the time span provided for M.Phil. Therefore, after so much discussion and reading I decided to focus my thesis on a particular theme. The theme chosen was to study the life of immigrated women, their struggles both in the home and host land and how the occurrence of two tragedies further problematizes their being. The authors have been chosen according to the themes that would be explored in this particular thesis.

Issues like identity crisis, racial as well as gender discrimination, the feeling of othering, the working of memory and nostalgia will all be addressed in this thesis, chapter wise. The present study would be carried out reading and analyzing both fictional and non-fictional texts. The issues of displacement, the longing for the homeland, the feeling of othering would be discussed in reference to what critics' have argued upon. Works of different writers on the said themes will also be referred in order to understand the differences and similarities in experiences. It can be seen that I have included writers from different time frames into

my thesis. This was done purposefully because although they all migrated to the same land that is Canada, yet the time of their migration was different. Thus, each writer gets to experience a different Canada, thus their experiences are diverse and different. The question here is, are these experiences really different? Does Canada 's behavior towards these diaspora women change over time? Or, does the experience of these diasporic women get any better in the Canadian soil?

As mentioned earlier, the psychology of the immigrant women needs to be understood, to see how they react and portray themselves in the new 'Home' and also how they view the experience of the other immigrant women. The experience of these women in living as an immigrant, the constant pull and push between the two cultures, the struggle to hold on to their traditional values and at the same time trying to embrace the new further add to the dilemma of these women.

Through this introduction, I want to present to my readers an idea about the reality of relocation of the women writers of Indian origin in Canada and challenges they face while penning their Indo-Canadian experience. Immigration and Identity have always been inter- dependent on each other. Since its emergence as a nation, the issue of identity has been at the core of Canada. Therefore, in the writings of the women, this issue of identity is a dominant factor. As this thesis is aimed at focusing on the writings of women of Indian origin in Canada, therefore issues of immigration and identity have occupied a central part in the discussion.

After USA, Canada is the largest country to receive immigration, since we know Canada for long had been a barren land covered with snow, therefore immigration is prime to the land of Canada for the purpose of nation-building. Canada had immigrants as early as 1867 for agricultural settlement and industrialization. Immigrants were needed by Canada for its own identity formation practices. Being a part of USA, Canada had for long been over shadowed and stayed without an identity of its own. For long Asians and the non-whites were not allowed in the land of Canada, as it was a commonly held belief that they will not be able to assimilate into the mainstream Canadian society. In this context, it should also be remembered that the

first settlers of the Canadian soil were the Europeans. Hence Canada was looking to set up a society holding the 'white' identity that her European settlers had provided her with. The issues of racism, patriarchy and white supremacy have been dominant issues in Canada, since the beginning of its status as a nation.

As this thesis is wholly focused in studying of the lives of immigrant women, therefore when and how did South-Asian women immigration to Canada start should be discussed. For long, non-whites immigration was not welcomed in Canada, even after years when they were encouraged, women were restricted to dependent class category. Relocating to any place as a dependent would put women in a disadvantageous situation, in both economic and social terms. Similarly, women who migrated to Canada under the dependent category were at a disadvantage, this affected them deeply, both psychologically and emotionally. What further problematizes the situation is the fact that these Indian women migrated from a society that is largely patriarchal in nature. She comes from a society that expects her to uphold the traditional values inside the home and at the same time support her husband both emotionally and financially at times of crisis. More often than not she is made to face an unknown land, where she is exposed to attacks of racism and discrimination. The constant attack that she faces makes her confine herself within the walls of her house, where she only performs the duty of a good wife and mother like doing household chores and rearing children. Despite their efforts to assimilate, when they are alienated and constantly othered by the mainstream Canadian society, these women seek refuge in their own culture for fulfilling their emotional need. The urge of these women to hold on to their own culture often puts them to conflicts with their husbands and children, who desperately try to mix with people of mainstream Canadian society. Both husbands and children fail to understand the psychology of these women. Therefore, an immigrant woman in Canada is alienated both inside and outside her family.

Diasporic literature is largely read and discussed in India presently because it is a phenomenon one cannot ignore. However, it should also be clarified, the Diasporic writings of women in USA is largely read and that of Canada is still ignored in this regard. Though the writings of immigrant women form an important part of the reading circle yet the works of Shauna Singh Baldwin and Anita Rau Badami is not largely read

as that of Jhumpa Lahiri. It will not be much of surprise if people haven't even heard of the Indo-Canadian women writers, leave aside reading their works. So, we see it is not only Canada as a nation, which is ignored but so are the immigrant women writers. I feel, besides reading writers of USA, the works of women writers of Indian origin in Canada should also read at large as they also depict the issues of psychological struggle, their challenges of daily life and their difficulty to adjust in an alien land, equally well and with much precision. The process of migration, affect these women (creators and character) in a way different from men. They are a lot more sensitive to this whole process, because not only does the outer world change but also their comfort space, the domestic space changes to an alien one. Coming from patriarchal set up the domestic space is of prime importance for these women and they are often found emotionally fractured and distorted by this sudden change. They feel as if they are ripped off their identity. In the works of Mukherjee, Baldwin and Badami these issues would come up time and again. The stories skillfully portray the life stories of women of Indian origin as if they are living in an exile, constantly stuck in the pull and push of holding own to culture of the homeland left behind and at the same time trying to embrace the new that they face every day. Such writings serve as important documentations for Indians, where one gets to feel and experience the struggles of the immigrant women and their constant efforts to adjust in an alien land and hoe these women tend to cope up with failures and broken expectations on a daily basis.

As a part of my M. PHIL in Women's Studies, I preferred to focus from a feminist point of view in exploring the identity - as a women of India origin, as a writer and also as a representative of a particular ethnic group. Issues like how does it feels to be an ethnic writer, whom does she write for, who are represented through her writings and what constitutes the subject matter of her writing are focused upon. Since the Diasporic women are ignored and alienated for the most time of their lives therefore these writers serve as the spokesperson for these women. Through the writings of these women writers of Indian origin the oppression and struggles of immigrated women find a voice. It is highly alarming to note that an ethnic writer who focuses on her own community is often at a risk of being marginalized. Moreover, if her writings are focused

mainly on women issues then she is at an even greater danger to find herself caught in an ethnic feminine margin.

The research has begun with the history of the Indian diasporic women's origin in Canada. The first chapter deals with the connections of Diaspora with the homeland and the origin of the South Asian migration. The first chapter would also focus on the identity formation of these women, how the diaspora gets gendered and so on. The historical events that are central to the Indian diaspora in Canada and the female immigration. It also discusses the various diaspora theories that are relevant in understanding the female Diaspora.

The next chapter is on identity formation. It uses the theories of identity formation and what identity means in the Canadian context. Through various writings of the women authors, the struggle of identity formation will be explored and understood. How does the female identity take shape in the aftermath of the two tragedies, oppression of patriarchal society and attacks of Racism? Finally, how do these women deal with the burden of relocation will be the focus of this particular chapter?

The third chapter would deal with nostalgia and memory. Memory is one of the prominent markers of Diasporic literature. Beside theorizing nostalgia and its understanding through fictional characters this chapter would also focus on inter-generational conflicts, the concept of Motherhood, the mother-daughter relationship and how these affect the life and psyche of the Indian women Diaspora in Canada.

Lastly, the conclusion not only sums up the entire thesis, but also points out the dire need of a specific literary as well as feminist theory for the understanding and studying the life and works of the Indian diasporic women.

Chapter One

Do I belong here? Who am I? What is my own? these are questions that are debatable for centuries now. These questions to some extent present to us the position of the diaspora who are caught not just spatially between geographical locations but those who are caught between two worlds. This uniqueness of the diaspora is what shapes the hybrid diasporic identities. The term 'Diaspora' comes from two words 'dia' meaning through and 'speirin' meaning to scatter. As Avtar Brah notes,

the word embodies a notion of a centre, a locus, a 'home' from where the dispersion happens. Though often confused as 'migration' or 'travel' the idea of 'home' or finding a home is the sole concept of the diaspora. It is like shifting to a new abode, setting up a new home or setting one's roots to a whole new place.¹

The struggle of setting up a new 'home' and yet keeping the connections with the original homeland intact is the struggle the diaspora faces throughout their lives. It is extremely important in this context to discuss the connection between diaspora and the homelands.

'Homeland' is a place of one's birth, the place where the person belonging to the diaspora was born. This was the place they called 'home' before migrating to a foreign land. The place that the diasporic subject calls 'home' may not necessarily be same as the geographical location they use to reside in before relocating. It is precisely for this reason that critics have argued that diasporas and homelands are often 'imagined' and are constructed through narratives. The diasporic subject tends to live between two worlds, the imaginary world and the real world and also constantly oscillates between the past and the present. It was perhaps their inability to withstand the diasporic conflict and the constant pressure to cope up with the sentimental attachment that one has with his/her homeland which prompts the diaspora to form an

¹ Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 2002. P.178

imaginary notion of 'home'. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie tries to address the uncertainty of the immigrant when he says:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages; but invisible ones, imaginary homeland, India's of the mind.²

The concept of 'home' for the diaspora is often understood through the material practices and also the cultural discourses which are specific to the diasporic imagination. The sense of displacement that the diaspora experiences as a result of migrating to a new 'home' is what prompts them to form a concept of 'home', the thought of which didn't come to them when they were actually residing in that 'home'. It is not uncommon for the diaspora to grow conscious of their heritage and culture once they set their foot on the foreign land. Hence Van Der Veer rightly says, those who don't consider themselves to be Indian in the homeland, tend to become more Indian after migration.³ In the process of understanding the relationship between the diaspora and the homelands, we get to learn how homelands come to be created and defined. The place of one's origin or the concept of 'homeland' basically is of a territory with which a particular ethnic group has a long history of cultural association.

It is needless to say that diaspora and homelands are inter-dependent, because one cannot exist without the other. Just like without a homeland a diaspora cannot exist, similarly a homeland more often than not needs its diasporic element to establish and ensure its own sense of rootedness. Now, it is not necessary that the homeland has to be a nation or for that matter essentially a geographical location, it can be a linguistic area or even a religious group. The place where the diaspora feels most comfortable or feels at home, they regard

²Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991*. London: Granta, 1991. P.10

³ Van der Veer, Peter. *Nation and Migration: The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995. P.12

that or consider that as their homeland. It is essentially for this very reason that Rushdie refers to it as the ‘imaginary homeland’, because such a homeland exists primarily in the minds of the diaspora. According to Appadurai,

the process of deterritorialization among diasporic groups sometimes creates exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics in the home state—Deterritorialization, whether of Hindus, Sikhs, Palestinians or Ukrainians, is now at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms... One of such glaring instances of the politics of homeland conflicting with the peace and security of the diasporas current place of residence was witnessed in the Kanishka bombing case of 1985. It is now even assumed that global terrorism based on religious fanaticism is often supported and sponsored by particular diasporas settled in the countries of the First World, namely, the United States of America and the United Kingdom.⁴

Another essential characteristic of the diaspora is the myth of ‘returning to the homeland’⁵. Throughout the 1990’s many scholars have studied and identified different diasporic groups. In all those groups, this myth of returning has remained as a common element. The pioneer in this field of studies, William Safran, had defined diasporas as communities that,

to maintain a memory or myth about their original homeland; they believe they are not, and perhaps cannot, be fully accepted by their host country; and they see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return.⁶

Based on these definitions it can be said that to be a part of diaspora one has to have the urge to return. This is a kind of pre-requisite. So, the groups that don’t show signs of or wish to return, cease to remain a diaspora. Another important point is that no critic is saying it definitely that the diaspora will or has to

⁴Morley, David G.” Decoding, *diaspora and disjuncture*”- Arjun Appadurai in dialogue with David Morley. New Formations,73. ISSN 0950-2378. 2011. P. 50

⁵Safran, William. “*Diaspora in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return*”. Volume 1. University of Toronto Press. 1991.P.83-99

⁶Safran, William. “*Diaspora in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return*”. Volume 1. University of Toronto Press. 1991.P.83-99

return, but in order to be a diaspora the wish or dream to return is of prime importance. As soon as one becomes a part of the diaspora, they have to possess the wish to return even if they never actually return to their homeland. Just like the concept of 'homeland' for the diaspora is an imaginary one similarly this very wish to return occupies a large part of their imagination. It is primarily for this reason that the diaspora tries to preserve their cultural identity and makes almost little or no attempt to assimilate within the culture of the host land. The diasporic subjects are extremely possessive about retaining their cultural identity, such behavior can be born out of their desire to return. The thought that once they return to their homeland, they no longer will remain a diaspora, perhaps works as a catalyst to their association to the technical term 'diaspora'.

Critics like Stuart Hall and James Clifford are of the view that the diaspora is more than just a group. Rather it is a 'condition'. It is such a condition that arises from the experiences of moving from one place to the other and from sentiments attached to the homeland, while being in the place of migration. The constant effort to hold on to their cultural identity and a strong desire to return shows the diasporas' affinity towards its homeland. Clifford, however differs from the claim that diasporas are solely constructed by homelands. Rather it is also their inability to assimilate in the new land that adds to its construction. The unwillingness of the diaspora to assimilate is what places them into the "third space" which can also be referred to as the "diasporic space." The diasporic space can be referred to the place occupied by the members of the diaspora both emotionally and psychologically besides physically, as they are unable to fit into the other two spaces that is the original homeland which is far away geographically and the acquired homeland that is emotionally distant. The diaspora is that abstruse space where the members of the diasporic community are neither acknowledged as members of state nor regarded as complete strangers. The feeling of not belonging and the myth of returning are interconnected to each other and is the main problem that affects the psyche of the diaspora. However, it is still not known whether the feeling of non-belongingness is a result of the

constant urge to return or whether the urge to return gives rise to the feeling of non-belongingness of the diaspora in the host land.

Many critics while discussing the Indo-Canadian diaspora writes that these diasporic subjects are materially better in the host land than they were in the countries of their origin. They are more like free souls and can move from one location to the other without any restriction from the home or the host land. These critics view the concept of diaspora as an ethnic group who are enjoying the best of both worlds i.e. the ‘home’ they have left behind and the place they are trying to embrace as their new ‘home’. I feel it is this constant pull and push between the two “homes” that gives rise to the identity crisis and the fractured existence that the diasporas are subjected to. This constant battle of existence that the diaspora faces results in the hybridity that is manifested in their lives and works.

Within the diaspora, gendered spaces are of prime importance as they serve as the key to the study of migration in a global context. It helps in voicing various issues concerning the position of the diaspora. While the concept of marginalization, identity and race have been subjects of feminists’ concerns, literary critics on the other hand give more importance to narratives of travel. They feel that provides women an agency to make their voices heard beyond the structure of gender studies. In this context it needs to be discussed the ways in which women use the language of patriarchy to write their narratives which is no less than a work of art. The language of patriarchy here refers to the way in which these women have articulated their oppression through the use of specific language in their writing. In “*Diaspora and Cultural Memory*”,

Anh Hua links writing with the art of quilting, both of which are gradual processes, achieved over a long period of reflection:

Quilting is an activity that has conventionally been done by women, and which has been devalued by masculinist art theorists as ‘craft’ and not ‘high’. Both quilting and writing require time, patience and imagination, and creativity.⁷

⁷ Hua, Anh. Homing Desire, Cultural Citizenship and diasporic Imaginings. *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, 12(4),2011. P-45-56

She further adds how the act of collecting and remembering past stories provide women an agency to negotiate with patriarchy and racism. The narration of lived experiences within the specific forms of diasporic experience provides to the narratives of women, ways in which they should move beyond the identities that are socially and culturally constructed. In this thesis, there are women of different generations who will be discussed, in the course of the work we will see how the women of one generation are taking lesson from the women of the earlier generation to shape their lives. For instance, in the third chapter of the thesis while discussing inter-generational conflict amongst the women of the diaspora we will see how the daughter, Kamini, a character in Anita Rau Badami's *Tamarind Mem* learns from the oppression her mother has been subjected to. The patriarchal society's constant cruelty towards her mother occupies a large part of her memory as a child. It is primarily for this reason we see how Kamini chooses to stay in the host land irrespective of the constant othering she faces on a daily basis. So, we see how lived experiences of women have an impact on other women within the diasporic space.

The narratives that explore the gendered spaces view gender as a performance as seen in the feminist work of Judith Butler. Simon de Beauvoir's famous statement that 'one is not born a woman but made one'⁸ is used by Butler in explaining the connection between gender and identity:

In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts.⁹

The performative aspect of gender, when linked to identities within the diaspora, allows for a negotiation which the gendered subject projects into new contexts. Often, such negotiations take the form of tropes

⁸Beauvoir, Simon de. *The Second Sex*. New York: Knopf, 1989.

⁹Butler Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40.4. John Hopkins University Press.1988. P.523

such as clothing and food which are conventionally tied to feminine experiences, re-locating them in contexts which allow for new ways of exploring diasporic identity¹⁰. This aspect of the diaspora forming identity through feminine experiences will be explored or seen in the stories of women discussed in the course of the thesis. It will be seen how women use the trope of cooking and even washing of culture specific clothing like the turban to hold on to their specific cultural identity. This attempt of the women (diasporic subject) to hold on to cultural identity of the homeland while negotiating to form an identity in the host land reduces them to nothing more than a hybrid subject. A hybrid subject torn between the memories of the homeland and battling the constant othering in the host land.

Since diasporic women are victims of patriarchies, constantly found opposing the cruelty they are subjected to, in the process they develop a fractured identity. South Asian women, irrespective of their hybrid identities and a life full of struggles and negotiations, have stereotypical representation when it comes to global literature. They are portrayed as timid, soft spoken, dependent wives and most importantly as victims who have suffered the cultural and racial oppression. This representation is highly stereotypical in nature and lacks an in depth understanding of the complexities and subtleties of culture of South Asian diaspora. They are depicted as passive, dependent spouses, or as victims of familial and cultural oppression because the mainstream literature is largely unfamiliar with the subtleties and complexities of South Asian cultures. Specifically, for this reason, I want to critically examine in this thesis the literary representations of South Asian women in general and Indian women particularly in contemporary literature of Canada that depict the struggles, the challenges that the diasporic or immigrant women have to face as they attempt to build lives and form an identity in Canada.

These diasporic women though face issues like a dual world-view and suffer the constant pull and push between the cultures, yet they try to retain their traditional ways of life, the ways they have carried with them from their homeland. This holding on to the traditional ways of life along with elements of new

¹⁰Butler Judith. "*Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.*" Theatre Journal 40.4. John Hopkins University Press 1988 P.527

cultures that they have learnt from the host land help these diasporic subjects to form a separate identity of their own. Besides being committed to their role of a dutiful wife, mother and a daughter they also start forming an identity beyond the specific cultural ones, which can be said to be their attempt to assimilate in the new land. No sooner do these women try to assimilate in the host culture that they are made to realize that no matter how much they try to embrace this new land, they will also be 'othered'. The feeling of not quite belonging anywhere makes the diasporic subject acquire a space of their own, the space that Homi Bhaba refers to as the "third space".¹¹

The "third space" according to Bhaba is representative of a safe and comfortable environment that makes the diasporic subject feels gratified to belong to his or her specific ethnic group and amalgamate it to them identity formation. Bhaba's notion of "third space" is extremely crucial in the understanding of the identity formation of the diasporic subjects discussed in this thesis. In the course of my work I will explain in detail how various critics have examined this very concept of the "third space" to produce their understanding of the diaspora. Bhaba defines the "third space" as,

A place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics. The challenge lies in conceiving of the time of political action and understanding as opening up a space that can accept and regulate the differential structure of the moment of intervention without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonist or contradiction.¹²

The in-between space that the diasporic subject acquires is seen by Bhaba as a space of possibilities. Besides Bhaba's concept of the "third space" I found Stuart Hall's work on cultural identity extremely essential for the understanding of the politics that underline the identity formation of the immigrated women. Stuart Hall is of the idea that the identities are constantly changing and are subjected to transformation. Though identities are often regarded as something one possesses since they are born but it is not so because identity

¹¹Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. P. 46-58

¹²Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.P. 56

formation is more about what they will become in the future more than what they were in the past. It is in this context that the concept of the theory of “third space” holds meaning for these women who find an agency to form their own identity in the “in-between” space that they acquire. The whole purpose of this research for me was to explore the ways in which the women use this “third space” to form an identity of their own. I further want to explore whether they are successful in forming the identity they desire for or do they continue to remain the fractured subjects throughout their lives?

Women relocating to Canada face different challenges. They relocate for a lot of reasons which range marriage, higher education or accompanying their parents. These women view both India and Canada from outside and inside and consequently their interactions are also done from both spheres. Through a close textual and discourse analysis of the literary works by various authors and the concept of “third space” by

Home Bhaba I would explore the lives of these women in their journey of identity formation. As both men and women acquire the diasporic space which can also be called the “third space” as discussed earlier, it provides us with an account of the complexities they face in their day to day life. Stuart Hall, however, argues that identity does not

signal that stable core of self, unfolding from beginning to end which remains always-already ‘the same’ identical to itself across time.¹³

He goes on to observe that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, are increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiple and constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourse, practices, and positions. Hall further brings to us that identities are constituted within, not outside discourse. They are constantly in the process of becoming rather than being. This is

¹³. Stuart Hall. *Cultural Identity and Diaspora Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Eds. Jana Evans Braziel, and Anita Mannur. Wisely 2003. P.224

especially important when we think of diasporic identities.¹⁴ If we look into the lives of the diasporic women, we will find out that their identities are always in the process of making, thus Stuart Hall says that it is becoming rather than being. An immigrated woman deals with multiple identities which change over time. For instance, once she relocates, she is automatically possessing two identities – the one she had since birth and also the newly acquired identity of an immigrant woman. However, with the passage of time these women negotiate the identities and change roles, often fractured and broken in the process but fighting back with greater zeal the next time.

Furthermore, the theorists are of the view that the workings of the ethnicity and identity of the diaspora should be understood without confining them to the frame of authentic culture. Bhabha believes that culture is not a regimented, cohesive, and monumental force that has its origin in history and its citizens safeguarding or preserving the cultural and traditional history of the nation. Instead, he says that a nations citizen is

free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference.”¹⁵

Bhabha further articulates that the individuals of the nation form the code of ‘dialectic reorganization’ and they construct their culture from the religious and national text translated into modern Western forms of information technology, language, and dress. The changed political and historical site of enunciation transforms the meanings of the colonial inheritance into the liberatory signs of the future”.¹⁶

Bhabha is of the view that “hybridity” as a concept is very different from the concept of “third space” because he views hybridity not as a concept that should be used to look for the two original moments and

¹⁴Stuart Hall. Cultural Identity and Diaspora. *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Eds. Jana Evans Braziel, and Anita Mannur. Wiley, 2003. P.225

¹⁵ Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. P.48

¹⁶Stuart Hall. Cultural Identity and Diaspora. *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Eds. Jana Evans Braziel, and Anita Mannur. Wiley, 2003. P.226

to see how the third emerges. It should be used to understand the third position that has emerged. So, it can be said that the “third space” is such a space that sees a lot of interactions as well as contradictions. This can be justified by the constant negotiations, contradictions as well as interactions of the diasporic subject with the agents of the host land which help them to form an identity in the third space.

Most theorists and feminist scholars are of the view that the third space as a concept is related to the formation of identity. Marie Lugones in her essay “*On Complex Communications*” suggests that if we place ourselves in the threshold, we formulate of ourselves as subjects who are not worn out by domination. She says that the key that opens the door to the threshold is not resistant to oppression as a whole but to particular forms of oppression at particular period of time. Lugones suggest that it is the oppressed that acquire a place in the threshold and stand at the periphery. It is there attempt to negotiate and resist the oppressing culture. By being, a part of the threshold one is moving outside the structure and has found ways to live in disruption. The individuals who occupy the liminal space develop necessary knowledge to resist oppression that they have been put through. By resisting the modes of oppression these individuals deconstruct the reality of oppression. Through the argument of Lugones we see how individuals for resisting the oppression done to them are acquiring places in the periphery. It is therefore the continuous oppression of the Diasporic women in Canada that the women are often found along the periphery. It is their resistance from being subjected to more othering and oppression.

I use Bhabha’s theory of third space as I find that it applies perfectly to the realities of South Asian women or Indian women based (as discussed in the thesis) in Canada. In his opinion this place is neither one nor the other but is just “something else”. It is an in between space. This in between space that Bhaba talks about helps us to understand the complexities and the struggles that surround the lives of the diasporic women. As these women occupy the third, their identities are formed in that in between space and help them to empower themselves. Firstly, by occupying this third space the women deal with the constant pull

and push from both the home land and host land, through this third space they hold on to the values of the traditional society left behind and at the same time deal with new challenges of the host land. Secondly, as diasporic women, they are continuously in the process of being and becoming. The third space allows these individuals to possess multiple identities both here and there referring to the life in both the lands. Since they occupy the third space, they can take necessary decisions in their life and make themselves empowered and liberated.

For a thorough analysis of each character present in the works discussed, I will be asking certain questions that would help me enhance my understanding of these women characters. This thesis would explore the challenges faced by these women as they go through various hardships in order to shape their identities in Canada. How do they operate by being agents of the third space? How do these women continue to maintain healthy familial relationships, especially with their mothers? Lastly, how do these women choose an agency for themselves being within the institution of marriage? These are few questions that will come up time and again in the course of the thesis.

Talking of the south Asian diaspora in Canada rather the diasporic women as I have discussed earlier it is extremely important to discuss of two events that shapes the history of the South Asian community in Canada.

“Two historical events that need to become the cornerstones of the Indo-Canadian ethos are the Komagata Maru incident of 1914, and the Air India Tragedy of June 1985, we have to write about these events, talk about them cross reference them at every turn until they become literary and cultural archetypes of the history of Canada.”¹⁷

In 1914, a ship named Komagata Maru arrived off the coast of British Columbia carrying 376 potential immigrants, comprising of Sikh men from India, who desired to settle permanently in the flourishing

¹⁷Parameswaran, Uma. *Dispelling the Spells of Memory: Another Approach to reading our Yesterdays*. *Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments*. Ed. Monika Fludemik. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2003. P.ixv

colony of Canada. A public concern about “Hindoo Invaders” and an immigration policy highly racial in nature resulted in the ships to be held back for two months in the Vancouver harbor, where the passengers were treated as prisoners and had a tough time trying to access food and water. Post that the ship was forced to get back to sea on receiving several threats from the Canadian Navy. As soon as the ship returned to India, the British got very concerned that the displeased and angry, Sikhs might get influenced and convinced to join the ongoing movement for the Independence of India and as a safety measure the ship was detained further. Several people were injured, a lot of them were killed and a large number of them were imprisoned or disappeared (of which no explanation has been found).

At first glance, this event seems to have little in common with the 1985 bombing of Air India Flight 182, terrorist act widely believed to have been committed by Sikh separatists fighting for an independent Khalistan or Sikh homeland, in India. Though there has been a state sponsored effort to memorialize and offer reconciliation for the two tragedies which were largely Canadian, it was just an attempt to cover up the racism that was prevalent in the Canadian society. The attempts to provide reconciliation was done in the interest to maintain the image of Canada, globally as a nation practicing racial diversity and tolerance. It is indeed contrasting how the public memories for Komagata Maru was made in such a way that there one could find links with other massacres that took place, it was also done in a way that the gushing out pouring of violence that affected lives in India and Canada led to the events that finally resulted in the bombing of the flight 182 and thus it also delayed in acknowledging the bombing as a “Canadian” tragedy. It was a strategic move on the part of the state as said by Roger Smith, that remembrance as a part of strategic practice involves in it an effort to activate attachments and sources of knowledge that serve certain social and political purposes within a specific time and space. Remembrance as a difficult return is often disconcerted and is found questioning the terms of emancipation of a strategic remembrance and the promise that the future would be a better one. The sudden effort on the part of the state to memorialize and remember the tragedies could be hinting to the fact that it wants to readdress an injustice caused. The remembrance could be an attempt to take action

in favor of the bereaved community so that the incidents that had been termed as historical and massacres do not get repeated in the future.

It is interesting to note how the Canadian Government chose to memorialize the Komagata Maru and the Air India tragedy separately. Ideally the two incidents should have been memorialized together as they both were tragedies of great stature. Yet the state chose to separately memorialize the events and especially separate the monuments dedicated to their memories. This is undoubtedly an attempt on the part of the Government to represent Canada as a non-racist country. As the agents of the state very well know memorializing these two incidents together would bring out the fact that Canada has been particularly racist in the treatment of South Asian Diaspora in Canada. Hence their claim of being a nation that has for long served as a model of prosperous, peaceful, pluralistic society would be falsified.

President Harper said in the twenty fifth anniversary that the whole act of remembering was not to build bridges to a hopeful and happy future but only another chance to travel the old roads of the past. An attempt to revisit the past. He further adds that it was the responsibility of the white or mainstream Canadians to bring in “others” to their country. Here he is clearly hinting to the continuous journey policy through his emphasis on the right to invitation and also by the distinction he makes between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ immigrants. These comments of the president are proof to the fact that no matter how much effort the state puts into memorializing and remembering the tragedies, there has been no change in the attitude of white Canada towards the diaspora. Mainstream Canada still treats its diaspora as the racialized Other.

Though the Government took over twenty years to memorialize and recognize the two incidents as a Canadian tragedy, the families and friends of the bereaved tried their heart and soul for a more widespread acknowledgement of their grief and loss. If one goes through the Phase I report also known as the Families Remember, which is basically a commission of Inquiry into the Investigation of the Bombing of Air India Flight 182, one would know the trauma, the excruciating pain and the sense of loss that the people had to go through post the bombing. The report not only gives account of the pain but also the way the families

especially the women have faced and handled the situation overcoming the great loss. Among the victims were individuals and families embarking upon new experiences in their lives. Some were off for attending a marriage or a business conference, meeting families after long etc. The flight had kids who were learning new languages to get enrolled in schools in India. Their hopes and aspirations got crushed in the crash of Air India flight 182. The grief created a void that could not be filled till date.¹⁸

Among the many accounts of the victim families I would like to mention Lata Pada, who lost her husband Vishnu Pada and daughters Arti and Brinda in the bombing of June 23 1985. Lata says that on hearing the news an inexplicable darkness surrounded her. Lata Pada, a classical dancer by profession, had gone to India two weeks earlier than her husband and children to rehearse for a summer performance. In an interview with the commission she told that her loneliness will never go away and the thought that she would never be able to hear her husband's voice or that her wish to hold her grandchildren in her arms are gone with the going away of her loved ones. But why I chose to mention her is because she did not let the void take over her life but she had taken control over life by immersing into dance, she says in her interview that the bombing of 1985 that claimed her whole family was also a year which marked her journey of personal and spiritual transformation. A journey that would center around dance. She said that dance would be the driving force in her life that would bring her back to wholeness. Through dance she voices her grief, pain and sense of loss and it is in dance she finds solace. She further adds as she performed on various poems of Indian saints and made an attempt to understand the holy Bhagavad Gita, she could comprehend the whole purpose of human existence. Lata chose dance as her way of life and got a Master's Degree in

Dance in the year 1996 from York University.¹⁹

Building self-confidence through dance, Lata Pada became a public figure and a voice of the bereaved families. She would work with politicians, journalists and discuss about the impact the Air India crash had

¹⁸Chakraborty Chandrima. Dean, Amber. Failler, Angela. *Remembering Air India: The art of Public Mourning*. University of Alberta Press. 2017

¹⁹The families Remember/ *Issued by the Commission of Inquiry into the Investigation of the Bombing of Air India Flight 182*. Ottawa: Privy Council. 2007

left behind in the lives of the victims. Discussions were held for about finding remedies that should be put to work in order to prevent reoccurrence of the same. She further adds that the South Asian Diaspora had been very patient and dignified in the process of coming to terms with the grief which the rest of Canada had forgotten two decades back. An unimaginable tragedy had shattered their lives and the only hope they held was the sentence of the two accused. But the long and never- ending trial showed yet again the callousness of the mainstream Canadian society. Even after series of setbacks and continuous disappointments, Lata Pada continues to be the voice of the families. In articulating her pain, she talks about imagining a life over filled with sadness. Living a life with the truth that she will never get to see her loved ones ever gain. Living with a void in her heart forever.

Besides a sense of loss arising out of losing her whole family, although Lata Pada could rise up from the grief that had pulled her down, more often than not women succumbed to that loss, grief and continued to live the life of a torn individual who has been doubly displaced and oppressed. Thus, the South Asian women relocating to Canada, in our case Indian women, suffer from ‘double colonization’, because they are discriminated both in terms of gender and ethnicity. First, in their homeland they fall prey to patriarchal dominance and second, they are again discriminated against by the host land because of their skin color. All women relocating to Canada have high aspirations of building a home, having a stable career and above all getting accepted in their host land. No sooner do they land in the host topos that they get to experience that the host topos is far from being the utopia that they imagined it to be. They start getting lashes of racist comments every now and then. Most women get into a mental exile where they shut themselves up from the world outside. It is at that point of time that inspirational stories such as that of Lata Pada’s come as a motivation. Not all women succumb, there are exceptions among those women who rise up and form an identity of their own. This is precisely why Lata Pada’s story needed a special mention.

These two incidents would be erased from the memory of the people if certain women of the South Asian origin had not come forward to write poems, memoirs and non-fictional accounts, narrating their experiences and loss that these two incidents have created in their lives. The first one to be mentioned has to be Uma Parameswaran. She is a South Asian Canadian writer, and her poem “On the shores of Irish Sea” brings to these two incidents to the public memory. Her poem is written in the year 2000, the year that marks the 15th anniversary of the bombing of Air India Flight 182. The year is also important because that very year the two prime suspects Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagui were arrested. This very year Lata Pada, narrated her experience of traumatic memory in a dance drama called “Revealed by Fire”. Though both Lata Pada and Parameswaran are trying to memorialize the events yet Lata’s approach is more autobiographical while Parameswaran is trying to build a record of commercial and political significance.

The question here remains that how might the remembrance of Komagata Maru reframe memories of the bombing of Flight 182 and its aftermath? When we look into the opening lines of the poem, it is written in the voice of first person speaker, who is engrossed in her own recollection of the past, immersed in her own memory, only to come to terms with reality that she has lost her children and her husband forever in the crash. The way she tells that she reaches out to feel the little fingers of her daughters that once encircled hers, only to find herself floating on foam in the open sea with realization she would never get to see them. She even curved her legs to feel the warmth of her husband but could only feel the emptiness that had overshadowed her life. The Air India bombing should be remembered as a black day in the history of Canada, because the bombing did not just claim lives and finish families but brought to light the sheer negligence of the Canadian government which refused to recognize the victims as Canadian citizens and deliberately tried to erase the memory of this incident. This makes the attempt at the exclusion of South Asian Canadians from national imaginary quite evident. The victims were victimized in this incident twice, once when they lost their loved ones to the crash, the second one was when the Prime Minister of Canada Brian Mulroney called Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to show his concern and sympathize for the

Indian lives that were lost in the crash. This pushed the bereaved, the victims and whole trauma related to the same to the periphery, creating a sense of otherness rather than including them as a part of the mainstream.²⁰

Parameswaran time and again through her imageries in the poem using the first-person speaker makes the feeling of loss even more real and memorable, to make it a point of remembrance in the mind of the reader. Thus, by remembering them in detail, she makes the reader feel how one should remember their loved ones, how the bereaved must have felt. The Air India bombing is the second incident in the collection of poems by Parameswaran, the first being the 1914 Komagata Maru incident. When the Komagata Maru was driven in the open sea, people and newspapers screamed to keep Canada white. The whole fact that the ship was driven and the white Canadians' screams to keep Canada clean only hints to the violence that reinforced the incident. The Komagata Maru incident of 1914 is linked to the incident of the bombing of Air India flight in the year 1985. The way the literary work of Parameswaran provides us an imaginative, fictional details of the trauma is precisely the reason why literary creations play a pivotal role in memorializing trauma. The poem is important because besides giving us a detailed account of the bereaved families it also brings in memories from June 2000, when the accused who had drowned families into the Irish sea were yet to be convicted due to an inquiry which seemed never ending. While discussing about the inquiry

Parameswaran uses the phrase "brought to book". The phrase "brought to book" could be understood and read in two ways; one could be that the incident does not talk of any official inquiry and for that matter no legal action was taken at the time Parameswaran was writing. No measure was taken until the year 2005. After twenty years the Canadian government felt the need to pay some heed to the demands of the victim

²⁰ Chakraborty Chandrima. Dean, Amber. Failler, Angela. *Remembering Air India: The art of Public Mourning*. University of Alberta Press. 2017

families asking for an investigation into the Air India Bombing. Secondly, referring to the mention of such a massacre in the books of the writers of the diasporic community.

The Komagata Maru incident and the Air India bombing serve as important points at which the histories of India and Canada coincide thus pointing to the South Asian Canadian Diasporic identity which is fractured and fragmented and is always trying to balance between India and Canada. Parameswaran further brings in the comparison between the rivers of Canada and India, says how she could feel the similarity between Assiniboine (river of western Canada) with the Ganges. This particular imagery is used to show the Metaphorical life of South Asian Canadian experience. As it has been discussed by critics that every immigrant incorporates a part of his old country into the new one and this incorporation can be called successful when he can see his native river in the river that runs through his adopted homeland. The diasporic individuals' split and fragmented identity, her continuous attempt to balance between India and Canada might be found in the Komagata Maru and Air India bombing, both of these incidents bring the

“here and there together” and makes the immigrant community show that they are nothing more than fragmented individuals. If we consider that the Komagata Maru and Air India bombing represent the constant pull and push between India and Canada and the subtle racial exclusion, then we can conclude that it is representing the dual vision of the diasporic community and the constant fear that they might be rejected by both the host and the homeland.²¹

As Homi Bhaba terms it that traumas lend to make up images of in betweenness, of a third space, thus the Komagata Maru incident and the Air India bombing seem to bring to light the constant pull and push of the South Asian Canadian Diasporic community, who are not just subjects born out of the pull and push of the homeland and host land but also living with the fear of exclusion by both the ends. Thus, these incidents

²¹ Chakraborty Chandrima. Dean, Amber. Failler, Angela. *Remembering Air India: The art of Public Mourning*. University of Alberta Press. 2017

should be read as broken passages and broken promises on the part of South Asian diaspora because firstly, neither the Komagata Maru nor the Air India flight could complete their passage, as none of them could reach their destination and secondly, the promises of the nation about the place of the immigrants' in the national imaginary was a false promise, as they would always be referred to be as the racialized other. These two incidents are complex because they question the position of the diasporic and racialized individuals and their identity as citizens into the workings of the nation. To discuss the literary works based on the Air India bombing it is extremely important to mention in detail the journalistic account of the same written by Clark Blaise and Bharati Mukherjee in the 1987 and the second edition in 1988. *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* is an account of a full – length response to the Air India bombing and the subsequent trauma it created. The salient trait of the book is not only that it focusses on memorializing the trauma of the bereaved as a Canadian event but also claiming the fact that the Air India

Bombing was not a result of a single event but series of failures on Canada's part, thus putting the Canadian democracy to question. They further add that besides being a Canadian tragedy as both the victims and the accused were Canadians the trauma caused by such an event was also Canadian as it was result of the problematic Multiculturalism policy of Canada. The tragedy was essentially Canadian given the nation strong faith in the cultural diversity and its disregard for an integrated national identity.

Though the text of Blaise and Mukherjee provide a detailed account of the bombing, claiming it to be a Canadian event, it also argues that the multiculturalism is a potential trope for diasporic alienation. Using the trope of multiculturalism, the state designs to forget the event of the past. Blaise and Mukherjee further add as to how the Canadian nation is responsible for spread of religious and ethnic fundamentalist movement such as the Khalistan movement which was responsible for the bombing of 1985. In this regard it has to be noted that when the Sikhs first arrived on the Canadian soil in the year 1970 there were no divide in Punjab and these political divisions started in Canada. The diasporic subject's engagement in beholding what is his own, like the culture of homeland is a result of the constant othering that one faces in the host land. Besides being an act of preserving memories, nostalgia could also be viewed as a potential

threat of maintaining racial and ethnic purity within the host land. Theorists like Gayatri Gopinath argues that nostalgia and an act of retaining memory of the homeland by the diasporic subject is directly related to the myths of purity that led to an extraordinary national project. However, Blaise and Mukherjee view Multiculturalism as a discourse but multiculturalism in its complex form may seem like a discourse but it is not so in the long run. Rather it is about forgetting. Thus, it promotes assimilation and not racial diversity.²²

Like any other diasporic group, the Indo-Canadian diasporic women also have their own history. The stories and narratives that emerge from the diaspora are results of particular experiences. The writers chosen to narrate these experiences belong to different time periods and hence their experiences are also diverse. But since the attitude of Canadian nation has not changed much in all these years, so will the experiences be really different? Have Canada finally changed its attitude towards the diasporic women? Women who share a common origin (class, caste and religion) and also hold onto their “origin” may react differently to the concept of migration and to the place they are migrating to. The way they portray the society of their new “home” depends largely on their experiences and their observation of others. What these writers choose to keep and what they choose to omit in a way echo how these writers would deal with issues of identity formation. How does living a life of an immigrant affect them psychologically and at the same time trying to be a part of the Indian community are issues that shall be dealt in the consecutive chapters.

The following chapter would deal with the fictional representation of women in the works of Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Rau Badami and Shauna Singh Baldwin. The two historic events already discussed, namely the Air India Bombing of 1985 and the Komagata Maru incident will serve as the background to the issues that will be addressed in this particular chapter. In the aftermath of these tragedies how the female identity formation is problematized, how women deal with trauma to form an identity of their own, how

²² Blaise, Clark, and Bharati Mukherjee. *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting legacy of the Air India Tragedy*. Markham: Viking Penguin: 1987.

does patriarchy operate the home and in the host, land as well will form the core of discussion of the following chapter. “The Management of Grief” by Bharati Mukherjee, *Tamarind Mem and Can You Hear the Nightbird call?* by Anita Rau Badami and *English Lessons and Other Short Stories* by Shauna Singh Baldwin are the literary works that will be addressed further into the discussion. Certain feminist and diasporic theories will be incorporated to understand the female characters in a better way.

Chapter Two

This chapter would deal with the fictional representation of women in the works of Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Rau Badami and Shauna Singh Baldwin. The two historic events namely the Air India Bombing of 1985 and the Komagata Maru incident will serve as the background to the issues that will be addressed in this particular chapter. In the aftermath of these tragedies how the female identity formation has been problematized, how women deal with trauma to form an identity of their own, how patriarchy operate in the home and as well in the host land will form the core of discussion of the following chapter. Management of Grief’ by Bharati Mukherjee, *Tamarind Mem* and *Can You Hear the Nightbird call?* by Anita Rau Badami and *English Lessons and Other Short Stories* by Shauna Singh Baldwin are the literary works that will be addressed and analyzed further into the discussion. Certain feminist and diasporic theories will be employed to understand the female would form certain specific angles.

The south Asians in Canada more often than not find the extremely cold climate of Canada in a way echoes to the harsh social environment that one has to deal with. Within this social environment the immigrants feel doubly marginalized. Firstly, because they have immigrated and secondly because they belong to the minorities. Mainstream Canadians often judge the South Asians as the wrong kinds of immigrants or at times they pass subtle racial comments. The immigrants are made to feel alienated with the subtle pinch of racism, these are however the everyday realities of the South Asian Canadian writers which shape their lives. In the year 1988, Bharati Mukherjee wrote the “Management of Grief,” it is a short story that deals with problems of multiculturalism, responses by the nation and the bereaved families (South Asian diasporic families) post the Air India Bombing. In the 2006, Anita Rao Badami wrote *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* a novel that narrates the lives of three generation of women in the aftermath of the

Komagata Maru and the Air India Tragedy. It narrates the histories of these incidents that the state vehemently tries to forget in order to construct itself as homogeneous. The power of these imaginative texts lies in the fact that they offer us ordinary characters with whom we can connect. Thus, these texts encourage us to feel for those characters who are oppressed and marginalized and to experience the trauma, even though we never actually lived through it. Besides the two texts based on the incidents that are central in understanding the south Asian diaspora there are other factors at play such as patriarchal dominance, identity crisis and an attempt to break away from what is holding these diasporic subjects back. How do women try to escape the same fate that had befallen the women of their earlier generation? Along with the works of Badami and Mukherjee who are primarily dealing with the Komagata Maru Incident and the Air

India Bombing, another work by Badami titled the *Tamarind Mem* (1996) and a story from Shauna Singh Baldwin's "*English Lessons and other stories*" (1996) will be discussed to show that patriarchal dominance and subjugation of women both at home and host land has been an ongoing process all along. The diasporic women faced oppression throughout their lives in the host land. Within the shackles of oppression how do these women form their identity is the central focus of this chapter.

The texts mentioned ask the readers to remember the trauma in the process of Working through loss.

"Working through" is term found in psychoanalysis and Trauma Studies which talks about a multi -step procedure of going back to the place of wound, realizing or coming to terms with what actually happened and finally accept it and let go. Freud and historian Dominique La Capra are of the view that "working through" is a healthy process as the subject visits the past not to hold on to it but to let it go. The subject is reminded of the trauma by visiting the site of its occurrence only to forget it forever. Therefore, the aim of

"working through" is to build a binary between the traumatic past and the healthy present so that they do not overlap with each other. In "working through" says La Capra one has a clear distinction between the past and the present, thus individuals in the process remember incidents that had happened to them in the

past and which can bear resemblance with situations in the presence but aren't identical. Thus, in order to heal from the trauma, one has to go through this complicated process of remembering and forgetting.²³

While Mukherjee's short story emphasizes on the working through process of Hindu-Sikh tensions only to forget them, Badami's text asks its characters to work through the traumatic experiences of the homeland in order to adjust to the life in the host land. Thus, it is a complicated form of remembering and forgetting that is necessary for healing. However, what makes the study and the eventual analysis of these texts interesting is that all the issues pertaining to the diaspora are understood through the trauma, grief, battle of women. It is also necessary to add that besides being texts of Hindu-Sikh tension and the diasporic subjects' struggle to cope with the new nation these texts are essentially about the women diasporic subjects struggle of identity formation. The women characters who will be discussed are primarily immigrant women who followed their husbands or relocated to the new land in the hope of forming a "home" and identity through education and work. While characters like Shaila, Bibiji followed their husbands to the new land, characters like Kamini migrated for forming an identity through education and job. But, needless to say, all these women were subjected to the same fate of constant othering. This chapter would focus on explaining how these women through their constant negotiations create a space of their own, a space that Homi K Bhaba describes as the third space, a hybrid existence. The wives in the tales are seen in the constant effort to build a "home" that would be "modern" and "new" as should be in the host land yet should echo the comfort of the homeland left far behind. It is here that the women are expected to take the most challenging role of upholding the best of both worlds in the four walls of the concrete building. In the words of Sandhya Rao, the image of knitting and cooking which serve as a metaphor for experiences of these women links all these experiences to the narration of diasporic sensibilities of remembering and recollecting the past. Though the choice of relocating from one place to the other is primarily a male one

²³LaCapra, Dominique. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. John Hopkins University Press. 2001

however, the duty of retaining values, traditions and memories of the old home left behind is still a feminine duty.

If we consider the diaspora as a historical condition then the ways in which issues of hybridity and multiculturalism has impacted gender and diaspora is an area that is less explored. We know that there is a direct connection between stories of women and the ways in which patriarchal society has put them through oppression. However, what my concern in this context is whether the narratives of women who emerge from the patriarchal society and form a part of the nationalist discourse are given agency in the global context. For a long time, women have been given the responsibility of safeguarding the cultural heritage of a nation, therefore the ways in which these women glorify themselves still remains an unexplored area of investigation. As the primary responsibility of building up a new home and retaining memories from the old homeland are put on the shoulder of women, then the silences arising from these added burdens besides dealing with racism and oppression also needs to be explored. In this context it should also be mentioned that gender plays a pivotal role as women are not just expected to be retaining the cultural identities of the old homeland but are also responsible for physical reproduction in the original as well as the adapted homeland.

Two incidents have been discussed in the previous chapter that would be understood in depth by the fictional representation of women in the works of Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Rau Badami and Shauna Singh Baldwin talking of the South Asian women's diasporic experiences in Canada. The first incident is the Komagata Maru incident of 1914 in which a Japanese steamship sailing with 376 British subjects of Indian origin was refused entry and detained for two months. In these two months many of the subjects lost their lives and were killed or imprisoned. The second incident was the 1985 bombing of Air India Flight 182 in which 329 people lost their lives of whom most were Canadian citizens of South Asian origin. Though these incidents occurred temporally different yet they have been understood by the South Asian diaspora in similar ways. Both these cases are said to be representing South Asian exclusion from mainstream Canada and unfulfilled promise of the Canadian government to include the racialized others into them

mainstream. As a result of the experiences faced by the women, they acquire an in-between space or the third space as pointed out by Homi Bhabha.²⁴ The two tragedies present to the readers a diasporic individual who is not only a hybrid subject caught between the othering of the two nations but also the one who has been dejected and excluded by both the home and the host land. Thus, they acquire an in-between space, with no land to call its own. Caught between the two tragedies these individuals form an identity that is often fragmented and distorted. This in a way also hints to the place these individuals occupy in the national imagery and also the incapability of the Canadian nation to include these South Asian diasporic subjects into the mainstream Canadian society. Since the time of their arrival the immigrants are made to feel alienated and othered. The constant feeling of not belonging and of being rejected affects them psychologically. As a result, they create an imaginary homeland for themselves. They keep going back to this imaginary space for feeling a sense of belonging and mental peace. Since the othering of the Diasporic subject is so prevalent across the world therefore the wish to return back to the original homeland and the creation of the imaginary homeland is almost synonymous to the diasporic subjects' identity formation.

While Diaspora theorists like Sara Ahmed, Brian Keith Axel and Stuart Hall are strongly of the view that the distinction made by the subject between the "old homeland" (India) and "new homeland" (Canada) is basically an imaginary homeland or the third space or an escape point for the subject to deal with the continuous feeling of alienation majorly caused by racism.²⁵ Sara Ahmed further explains that the loss of the old homeland is basically an imagined loss, the kind of loss the subject is unable to name, the inability to come to terms with the obstacles of the new homeland makes the subject create that imaginary space which it refers to as the "old homeland" to "preserve the loss". This "loss" can be the loss of a beloved, of a place, a thing or simply the geographical boundary that this subject could call his or her own.²⁶ Now the question arises how are women placed within this diasporic subjectivity and its complex working? To explain the condition of the women relocating to Canada or the women diasporic subjects and their sense

²⁴ Rutherford, Jonathan, ed. " *The Third Space: Interview with Homi. K.Bhabha*". Lawrence and Wishart.1990

²⁵ Axel, Brian Keith. " *The Diasporic Imaginary.*" Public Culture, Vol.14. (2).2002

²⁶ Ahmed, Sara. Home and away: Narratives of Migration and estrangement. International Journal of Cultural Studies. 1999

of alienation one could refer to Edward Said's theory of metaphorical exile. According to theorists like Sara Ahmed and Gayatri Gopinath, women often experience a sense of displacement in the homeland because of essentially patriarchal setup of our society. In a place like India where patriarchal society has been putting women through the critical lens at all times the metaphorical exile of these Indian women can be explained through double displacement. Since a woman is metaphorically displaced in the Indian society because of its patriarchal set up, therefore adding up to her already torn identity is the physical displacement. As discussed earlier that the onus of holding on, remembering and recreating an old homeland within the new homeland is primarily a feminine thing, hence the challenges and fear of this added burden is what doubles this sense of exile of these women.²⁷

This chapter would merge reality with fiction for the better understanding of the trauma these women had to go through. For instance, it is said that the protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee's short story is somewhat a fictional representation of Lata Pada, a woman who lost her husband and two daughters in the bombing of 1985. She says that on hearing the news "a horrific and unimaginable darkness engulfed me". Much similar to Shaila, Pada found her inner strength and became a public voice for the victims of Air India Flight 182. On a similar light Mukherjee's short story will be focusing on the life of the protagonist in three ways, Firstly, her grief and trauma on learning about the death of her husband and two sons in the bombing. There is her disturbed and confused life as a result of the bombing that had taken place to which she slowly but steadily has to come to terms with. Secondly, the characteristics of Multicultural Canada, how it further increased the misery of the bereaved, how the nation was unable to understand the state of the Indian community in Canada. Thirdly, there is Shaila, the protagonists' final take on her life, her returning back to her host land and finally fulfilling the dream that she and her husband had dreamt off together, shows her triumph as a strong individual, breaking away from the timid image of the Indian women that prevailed

²⁷ Gopinath, Gayatri. *Nostalgia, Desire, Diaspora: south Asian Sexualities in Motion*. Duke University Press. 1997

earlier. The story is narrated from the perspective of a member of the bereaved community, the central character is Mrs. Shaila Bhave, who has lost her two sons and her husband in the crash. Shaila's journey is recorded from her home in Toronto where she first hears about the bombing to Ireland where she had to travel to identify the body of her loved ones. Finally returning back to Toronto to forever mourn over the irreplaceable loss. Like most people Shaila is filled with feelings of sadness and rage not only because of the loss but the casualness of the government officials both in India and Canada.

Shaila, the protagonist of the story is also the representative of the Indian community specifically immigrated Indian women. She thinks to herself that women who have remained far away from policies and had come to different part of the world to avoid such a thing were the first ones to be affected by it. It is injustice and unfair treatment that they are being put through. As a result of the extreme shock caused by the unnatural behaviour of the Canadian government, Shaila had lost the ability to articulate and at this moment, Judith Templeton, a government social worker misinterprets Shaila's state of shock and inability to openly let out her emotions as coping with the trauma well and also labels her as a "pillar of strength" for her community. The inability of Templeton to distinguish what was grief caused numbness and what being strong actually was reveals to us the failure on the part of white Canada to provide security and sympathy to the families of the bereaved. Shaila in already a state of shock wants to shout out to Judith that how badly she wished she could scream jump off the bridge but something inside has choked her. However, both the women, Shaila and Judith are amateurs in their situation and without knowledge of what to do. They have no prior experience of dealing with a tragedy of this scale, the proper one that had befallen on the community. It is evident that they would have never thought of a tragedy from Shaila's expression when she adds, "who could?" meaning that no human in his wildest of dreams could think of something so terrible.

Judith Templeton is the representative of Multicultural Canada; rather of the Multicultural traits of Canada which are shown in the story through the character of Judith. She has neither prior exposure of a tragedy of such a large scale, nor does she make any attempt to understand the situation from the South Asian point

of view. Moreover, she is ignorant of the fact how grief and shock can lead people to react. Thus, she is incapable to feel Shaila's grief and perceives of her to be the strong one while the others have gone hysterical over the trauma caused by the massacre. Shaila even in that state of shock, shows her agency when she says that

By the standards of the people you call hysterical, I am behaving oddly and very badly, Miss Templeton.... They would not see me as a Model. I do not see myself as a model.²⁸

In a state of great grief and loss she holds on to her community, the Indian community that for once was united by grief. She knows she belongs to them and so says that she isn't different from the other people, she mentions she is from the same community as the other people, she is not a Model, therefore referring to the notion that it is collective grief. Her position is made clear when she says, that no matter what she says or does will not make a difference rather people should grief in their own way. Like collective memory which forms an integral part of immigrants such a massacre gave birth to something like a collective grief or collective mourning if it could be called so.

Shaila finds herself struggling between the Indian and the western ways of managing grief. She further adds that,

At thirty-six, I am too old to start over and too young to give up. Like my husband's spirit, I flutter between worlds.²⁹

The sudden grief that her life has been subjected to led Shaila to create a space of her own, a place that did not fit in any of the places be it the original home or the adopted. She created for her the "third space" that most diasporic women did in their battle to fight grief, trauma and patriarchal dominance. Here in this story

²⁸Mukherjee, Bharati. "The Management of Grief. " *The Middleman and Other Stories*. New York: Grove, 1988. P.631

²⁹Mukherjee, Bharati. "The Management of Grief. " *The Middleman and Other Stories*. New York: Grove, 1988. P.633

the Multiculturalism was a trope for excluding the ethnic others that Shaila had understood. Patriarchy as we all know is an oppressive cycle. Here in this story patriarchy attains the shape of Multiculturalism and results in the oppression and othering of women like Shaila. But Shaila didn't want to return and settle back in India because being at the homeland Shaila knew she would again fall prey to the patriarchal society and she would be oppressed by the objectives of widowhood that works in the Indian society. For her being treated as the "other" in the foreign land seemed better idea than being treated as a nobody back home. She knew for a fact that at the host land she would be in charge of her life which will not happen in the homeland. Here in the name of family ties women are oppressed under the patriarchy, every day and she will not be an exception.

"The Management of Grief" told from the point of view of a wife and a mother, Shaila Bhave. It discusses the ending of a relationship rather than the beginning of anything new. The story is one that stands out due to its stillness that often prevails after a great disaster, the stillness that surrounds the life of those who are left alive to grieve and mourn over the loss they had to face. Although the story is one where it is shown how the female protagonist Shaila deals with the grief of her loss and her community, how she is ripped off her sole identity as a wife and mother and how she embarks on a journey post the heinous tragedy to create an identity of her own that feminists have argued (following the lines of socio linguist HomiBhaba) to be a hybrid identity created by the diasporic subject. Diasporic women are often said to hold on to their cultural identity and the roles of the wife or a mother but here for Shaila it is not the retention of the cultural identity that makes her acquire the third space but the trauma that she has been subjected to makes her a hybrid agent acquiring the third space. Shaila hears about the bombing from her neighbor Kusum. Soon after the news of the bombing is broken the narrator Shaila is seen talking to herself in a monologue where she has a lot to say yet is numbed by the extreme shock caused by the horrific event. The first phrase uttered by Shaila in the story post her learning of the devastating news is to her friend, Kusum. In a tone of helplessness and utter regret Shaila tells,

I never told him,' I say. I was too much the well brought up woman.
I was so well brought up I never felt comfortable calling my
husband by his first name.³⁰

This particular lines by Shaila take us to the customs in Indian society where husbands are never to be called by their first names by the wives, how even telling her husband that she loved him was not a sign of well brought up women so she never could voice her feelings even though she loved him with all her heart. Maybe Shaila would not have felt the regret of not telling him how she felt for him had she not come to Canada, that in her attempt of internalizing the western ways of life she has come to the realisation that calling one's husband by name or confessing how she felt for him does not hamper her morals of being a "good and well brought up women". Through these words of Shaila, Mukherjee is hinting to the fact that how in her attempt to create a home for husband and kids, Shaila could not form an identity of her own, in her attempt to hold on to what once she called her own and to embrace the new she was just left being a distorted soul forever living with the regret that she could never gather enough courage to voice her love to Vikram, her husband.

The way Shaila tried holding on to the customs of being the ideal wife, upholding all the values she was taught refers to what feminist Simon de Beauvoir talks of in her book the "*The Second Sex*" (1949) that one is not born a woman but is made one. Going by this statement we see how in society's attempt to make a good woman out of Shaila and her attempt to adhere to society's norms she missed out on what she wanted to do. Shaila's grief, regret, despair is true for almost all Indian women who have faced the constant pull and push in order to keep intact the cultural heritage and at the same time striving to embrace what the current land she was living in, expected of her .In doing so they miss out on an agency of their own. Taking

³⁰Mukherjee, Bharati. "The Management of Grief. " *The Middleman and Other Stories*. New York: Grove, 1988. P 635

us back to the reality that all these women are only hybrid subjects occupying the third space and never really got accepted into the mainstream society.

As it is said that women are born thrice, first as a daughter, then as a wife and finally as a mother. In Shaila's story she loses the two births that she had taken and is once again reduced to being a daughter. Shaila's behaviour from shock to grief to mourning to anger are testimony to the fact that how grave an impact the crash had on the lives of the diasporic women. Though due to the air crash, Shaila is ripped off from her secure, stable identity as a wife and a mother and is forced to rebuild and recreate herself hence when she arrives in India, she shouts at a customs officer for being suspicious about her friend's coffins and comments on the reaction that,

Once upon a time we were well brought up women' we were dutiful wives who kept our heads veiled, our voices shy and sweet³¹.

Through these words there is a regret in Shaila's tone as if in order to be the 'good' women she has lost the people she held close to her, the only people she could call her own. She feels betrayed and victimised but does not really know whom to blame. But yet her remaking of herself also begins or is worked on through her husband's words. Thus, the question here lies in the fact that does Shaila at all remake herself or does she continue to be the dutiful wife to her husband?

Many women that are well brought up also discarded their old selves and forged new identities and in "The Management of Grief" by Mukherjee the process is not always a self-chosen path. Here I would disagree with what Mukherjee tries to convey through the course of her story Shaila had full agency to choose her way of life yet she waited and was in dilemma till her husband descended to her and directed her what to do. Having written this in her story Mukherjee instead of liberating her protagonist off the shackles that had previously tied her, still continues to show her as a woman operating through the workings of patriarchy.

³¹Mukherjee, Bharati. "The Management of Grief. " *The Middleman and Other Stories*. New York: Grove, 1988. P. 635

Shaila does choose a life and makes her own identity but can it be said that it totally was her decision of choosing that life had her husband not descended to her? Instead of presenting her character as a new age modern woman, Mukherjee couldn't make her anything more than a diasporic subject who still needed a man's words or rather approval to take important decisions. Thus, showing how it is a man's duty to liberate the woman and guide her in the right path. This turn in Mukherjee's story falsifies the feminist fight of equality between sexes, though Shaila did take a call yet what problematizes it is the fact that she only does so after her husband descended to her. Even in her attempt to break away from patriarchy Shaila unknowingly falls prey to it. Her liberation is not a free one but a liberation to fulfil the wish of the man in her life. In the name of love, she again gave away to patriarchy like most Indian women do.

At the end of the story we find Shaila's voyage to be still incomplete because could not attain fulfilment in anything. Though she promises to be brave for she has been asked to be so by her departed loved ones. In grave uncertainty she says that she does not know where this voyage that she has undertaken will end. Her voice is too weary by the trauma and sense of loss. Though Shaila on returning to Canada had sold off the pink house that she and her husband had bought and now has a small apartment downtown. In Western terms, it seems that she has managed her grief very well. But here in this story grief just like its bearers is fragmented and goes through many stages. What seemed to be a properly managed grief in the western concept would never hold true in the Indian scene. Precisely why the void in Shaila's could not be filled up with the financial security she had.

Shaila feels pain and sadness but there isn't any way to articulate those feelings into words. Through the character of Shaila, Mukherjee tries to bring up the horrific effects of the tragedy and that there is no way of coming to terms with this loss. The multicultural traits of Canada are shown through the figure of Judith Templeton, the young girl appointed by the Canadian government to "reach out" to the families of the

bereaved. The story also brings to us the incapability of India to take charge of the tragedy and how the women felt more disturbed here. For example, Shaila feels trapped and in great turmoil when her grandmother tells her to shave off her hair as per the Hindu widowhood customs and on the other hand, she does not want to do it because she wishes to return back to Canada. Mukherjee' story is not just about the pain of loss off of a beloved, or multiculturalism. Through the fictionalized character of Shaila, Mukherjee manages to record the disappointment felt by the bereaved because Canadian state had failed to see the trauma as a Canadian loss. Since we, as readers, are meant to identify with Shaila and to experience her grief, others are also encouraged to work through the tragedy as she does and to find ways of coming to terms with loss.

The sarcastic tone with which Shaila talks to Judith hints to the fact that we should be suspicious of the way the Canadian government is reaching out to the bereaved families. Judith further explains to Shaila that though "they" want to help yet their hands are tied. Here, Judith is concerned strictly with bureaucratic matters like distributing money to the bereaved families and doing nothing to recognize or understand their grief. The critique Mukherjee seems to be making is that the Canadian multicultural state does not really care about the bereaved who have lost their families in the bombing. What the state wants is to close off the past and make certain that it is forgotten. But it is certainly not forgotten by these women, who suffered a loss of family, home and above all an identity. Their loss is an irreplaceable one and they would continue to operate as subjects occupying the third space.

The year 2006 brought us yet again to the unanswered question as to why and how did the Air India Bombing happen at all. this time however it wasn't some "official" inquiry heard critiquing the government but it was Anita Rau Badami's fictional masterpiece *Can You hear the Nightbird call*, that focused on the social and cultural interactions within the South Asian Diaspora that are specific to the Canadian location. However, the difficulty faced at this point in the chapter is the lack of female voices in the Komagata Maru

incident, while the Air India Bombing had women like Lata Pada becoming the public voice such a strong voice was absent when talking of the Komagata Maru. The only voice that one finds is of Sharon Pollocks' through her one-act play of about seventy-five minutes. The Komagata Maru incident was first staged in the year 1976 which showed the detained British subjects who were kept out from entering the Canadian mainland. What pollock tries to show through the play is the weakness and vulnerability of the diasporic subjects. Through the character of a woman and her new born child who are not being able to complete their journey, Pollock had tried to hint to the untimely journey of the past and the acceptance of diversity in future. The metaphor of the woman that is created by the playwright is an attempt to show the incident of Komagata Maru in feminine light rather than the masculine show of power and strength. The signs of weakness and vulnerability that Pollock tries to show are found in the character of Bibiji in Badami's novel.

How her fathers unfulfilled voyage to Canada makes her vulnerable and makes her go to Canada. The qualities of weakness and vulnerability that are essentially feminine are what the characters show in their quest for identity formation in a diasporic space.

Coming to the treatment of Diasporas, their constant othering raises the question as to what emotional and psychological effect it has on the already fragmented and distorted identity of the individual each time he is regarded as the 'undesirable other'? How does the continuous process of othering, official multiculturalism and the crisis to establish an identity go at par with the Diaspora subjectivity? Moreover, it is important to address where do we place women within this individual diasporic experience as well as with the collective one ?The constant "othering" takes a toll on these already torn up diasporic subjects , who are further torn off their psychological framework and soon enough they create an idea of the homeland left behind as an imaginary homeland. As diasporic othering is a very common practice, hence this creation of an imaginary homeland has become synonymous to the diasporic identity formation. The scenario doesn't change for the women who relocated to Canada as seen in the case of Bibiji, Kamini, Leela and the like. To elaborately explain the condition of the women diasporic subjects and their sense of alienation can well be explained and understood through Edward Said's theory of Metaphorical Exile? Now what does

Said refer to when he talks about the Metaphorical Exile .³² He primarily refers to a state of mind where the subject starts believing in oneself as an outsider within his homeland, be it the old or the new adopted one; meaning that a person can feel in a metaphorical exile state of mind both at home and in the Diaspora . Feminist theorists like Gayatri Gopinath, Sara Ahmed explains women's experiences of displacement through Edward Said's sense of metaphorical exile. The feminist theorists aim to specifically theorize the experiences and struggles of women both in the homeland (India) and the Indian Diaspora in their respected adopted homeland. Patriarchy is the key to the experiences of women's sense of displacement as patriarchy operates both in the home front and in the diaspora. In a place like India where patriarchal society has been putting women through the critical lens at all times the metaphorical exile of these Indian women can be explained through double Displacement.

Positioning her narrative between the historical Komagata Maru Incident and the Bombing of the Air India Flight in 1985 Badami has skillfully tried to focus on the individual struggle of identity negotiation within Diasporic consciousness. The connection between 'here 'and 'there', Canada and India that Badami so keenly explores suggests that the experience of the diasporic individuals here influences or creates diasporic subjectivity there. The novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird call?* looks at the lives of three women – Bibiji, Leela and Nimmo, with Indira Gandhi's assassination 1984 forming the backdrop of the novel. While the narratives of Bibiji and Leela contrast about life in India and abroad (here, Vancouver, Canada), Nimmo's narrative focuses on life in Delhi. However, in this chapter we would discuss the struggles of relocation of Bibiji and Leela, as they experience a displacement that is somewhat discretionary in nature.

Leela carries in her heart the trauma of being a half breed. She was a daughter of a high caste brahmin and her mother since she was a German was regarded as casteless by the relatives. Born out of parents of two different ethnic backgrounds Leela was taunted and marginalized since a very young age. This taunting

³²Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1978.

from her family results in Leela's creating a metaphorical exile for herself. When her mother dies Leela is somewhat relieved and she chooses the religion of her father. Bibiji's trauma on the other hand is born out of the inability to help her mother and sister when things at the home front are not going well. The loss of her mother and sister prompts Bibiji to realize that living in a land than one's own is a lot more than just engaging the scent of the lavender perfume. Since Canada operates more as a psychological space for these women therefore than geographical therefore the place in the psyche that was initially filled up with smell of lavender soap now gets affected by the constant racial remarks. A sense of othering and the sense of despair that no matter how much they try to embrace the new land, the new land will never embrace them. When Bibiji is in Vancouver with her husband, we see that though Bibiji is in her land of dreams, her happy life, yet a sense of guilt and hopelessness takes over her. The feeling that she could not save her family from the instabilities at home is what makes her feel guilty.

This novel also explores the inter dependence of Diasporic Subjectivity that is prevalent among individuals belonging to both here and there. The diasporic subjectivity is put to work in this novel through the transfer of material goods such as the lavender soap. Since her early days as a child Bibiji was envious of her friend Jeeti, as she had an enormous and unending supply of these lavender soap bars send to her by her father from "Canada". So, for Bibiji this lavender soap works as a catalyst and became almost symbolizes her desire to move away from her native place to Canada. This lavender soap initially works in filling in the gap between the new and the old homeland in a way that Bibiji feels that now she has finally attained her long -desired identity being in the land of her dreams. But just as the smell of perfume fades away similarly, Bibiji is made to realize that her life will not be an easy one here in the host land. Migration always involves a mixed bag of emotions, the same can be said for these women Leela, Bibiji, Kamini. Besides having a heart filled with hopes and aspirations they were still battling to come to terms with the trauma of migration. However, no sooner did they land in Canada that they were exposed to the gruesome reality that no matter how much they try to embrace this new land, this land will not accept them as their own. Then begins her quest for survival shown in this chapter through the two female characters. While they are dealing with the

memory of the faraway land that has left behind, the land of her origin. The characters Leela and Bibiji and other women mentioned in the course of the chapter deal with multiple identities and subtle racial comments all hinting to the fact that she can never be one of them. Their life gets stuck in the pull and push conflict between the self and the other and slowly falls out of meaning.

Sociologists while discussing the stages of socialization among individuals have often mentioned that though socialization occurs throughout our lives yet the most important of them happens in childhood. Of the four most influential agents namely – family, school, peers and mass media, Family is usually considered to be the most important agent of socialization. It is in the family for the first time that the child learns his or her role in society, her ways of life and so on. It is here that the words of Premilla D’Cruz and Shalini Bharat³³ holds true when they point to the family as one of the primary agents from where an individual goes through processes of gendering. These gendering processes help shape a woman’s personal and political identities. Family plays a key role in shaping the personal, social and religious identity of a child. It is through the constant dialogue and contact with the family members that the child forms his sense of identity. . Having been gendered and discriminated in the family for so long these women desperately hoped to get a better life. Therefore, forgetting on what was right and what was wrong these women went to the extreme to get the better life that they have always dreamt of.

Here we can see Bibiji demonstrating the same agency for a better life through her repeated attempt to win Kanwar’s(sister) prospective groom for herself. Although she is only sixteen years old yet Bibiji desires Canada as “her fate”. She desires Canada for herself. Though Bibiji was well aware of the decision she was taking yet what she didn’t know that it was a second hand desire. A desire transferred to her by her father’s

³³ D’Cruz, Premilla. Bharat, Shalini. *Beyond Joint and Nuclear: The Indian Family Revisited*. Journal of Comparative Family Studies. 32(2):167-194.2001

desire to reach that land. Through the constant narration of her father of his unfulfilled voyage and how he was almost there yet was denied entry, Bibiji is not aware that her desire is a second hand one and she creates her own world where she is seen rejoicing that she had stolen her sister's prospective groom for herself. This borrowed dream of Bibiji from her father echoes what Sigmund Freud talks of in his Lecture 33 essay titled "*Femininity*". In this particular essay he talks about the female psychological development and talks about a stage where a father complex develops among young girls, where the girls are often seen more inclined to the father and inhibit the sense of authority and inherit the same identity forming abilities as their fathers. In the passage of desire from father to daughter, the fluid nature of desire is brought to the forefront and has the ability to get transferred from one person to the other Thus Bibiji's agency here is not what the South Asian diasporic women are expected to have. The diasporic women are constantly negotiating to form an identity of their own which Bibiji shows after she gets to Canada. Therefore, Bibiji's desire is an influence of her fathers' desire. In countries like India where the females are subjected to the fate chosen for them by their male counterparts similarly we see in Bibiji's case that her dream of settling to Canada and settling there is more due to the presence and her shared experiences with a male figure in her life who has rules over her life and psyche since her initial identity formation process. Bibiji's stealing off her sister's prospective groom is more to be in line with what the patriarchal setup had decided her fate to be than her own jealousy or ill intentions. What is seen as her attempt of her stealing her sister's prospective groom is basically her step towards the fulfillment of her desire, a desire she shared in common with her father but was kept unfulfilled for long. Through the continuous gendering that the females are subjected to it is clear how they are always in need of a male counterpart not only to survive but even to dream.

Bibiji's transformation from a timid rural woman to an urban one is her way to fit into her new land and is completely her own desire reciprocating to the transformation that the diasporic women went through in order to establish her individual identity. It is the diasporic women's attempt to belong to the host land as an individual breaking away from the stereotypical and traditional roles of the wife or mother. Though most

of the time such desires were born out of the man's wish to have a modern wife, yet she nonetheless made her emerge as a confident woman ready to face the challenges of life thrown at her. This desire however is vehemently backed by her husband's desire for a wife who could fit into the life of 'Canada'. Thus, it again takes us back to the age-old belief that how in diasporic communities and even at home a women's life, desire identity is under the shackles of patriarchy, tormenting, dictating her all the time, sometimes subtly but nevertheless always encompassing. Thus, Bibiji's search to create a new identity works in terms with her husband's desire to have a wife with the same qualities that Bibiji's wants to have. Paji's obsession with the new community that always forced Bibiji to change is evident in the words when she says:

Paji would cover several sheets of paper with impassioned essays on the history of Sikhs in North America. He seemed to be obsessed with his community and underlined the richness of Punjabi traditions and culture. Then, in seemingly direct contradiction, he would write that she should learn English easy, should become a modern woman so that she would be able to settle into life in Canada. Bibiji was confused what exactly did he meant her to be? A traditional Sikh or an English mem?³⁴

Paaji wanted his wife, Bibiji, to be a woman who would possess the best of both the worlds. On one hand he wants Bibiji to inhibit the traditions that a good and dutiful Sikh woman should have and on the other hand he also expected Bibiji to be fluent in English speaking. Through this desire of Paaji it is shown that though the decision of migrating or relocating is always a man's decision hence the woman who migrate as dependents on these men are expected to retain memories of the "home" left behind. Paji hence wanted his wife to be the woman who would inherit a fine balance between the two worlds. Paaji had immigrated to the new land with a lot of hopes and aspirations and wanted to be one amongst them, yet he wanted to hold on to his traditional roots. This desire of Paaji to hold on the traditional roots puts the onus on Bibiji to create a "home" possessing the values and traditions of the homeland left behind. Hence adding on to the struggle of Bibiji who was already negotiating to establish an urban identity for herself. As sociologists and feminists' have argued that it is in the family that these women are made to face gendering and develop

³⁴Badami, Anita Rau. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Canada: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. P.56-57

a sense of divided self. This gendering further distorts their psyche and they end up being torn individuals. Furthermore, the South Asian woman's urge to serve as the ideal wife to their husbands lands them in the pull and push between the two nations. These women who are often seem to possess a habit of holding on to their traditional identity as well as to embrace the one that is new, acquire the third space for their identity formation. Although Paaji wants Bibiji to be the modern woman yet at the same time instructs her to learn the "English ways of Life" in order to escape falling prey to the othering in the host land. Paaji did not have any intention of creating an inner struggle within his wife yet he unknowingly does so. As a result of which Bibiji is seen questioning her traditional identity of a Sikh woman. Similar to Shaila, Bibiji also becomes a hybrid subject occupying the diasporic space or the third space.

These women who are constantly trying to form an identity of her own are put with the "added burden" as said by feminists' critics, leading them to a mental exile all her life. Similarly, we see Bibiji trying her way to overcome an immigrant women's constant negotiation of holding on to what she calls her own in her mind and something anew in the land of her dreams. This has been portrayed by Badami in the part where Bibiji faces the challenge to learn both English and "Gurbani".³⁵ Learning English, a whole new language yet at the same time retaining the speaking of Gurbani hints to her attempt to find stability that her Sikh identity provided her with. Her finding of solace in religion is evident when she looks at the Golden Temple in Amritsar in the absence of her husband and family.

From the other window she gazes at the dome of the Golden temple. When she first arrives, determined if often scared or lonely, Bibiji would glance out of the window before her lessons for the blessing she would receive from the mere sight of that golden structure rising gracefully into the hot shrine of the sky.³⁶

³⁵ Hymns in the holy book of the Sikh the Guru Granth Sahib is referred to as Gurbani ³⁶Badami, Anita Rau. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Canada: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. P.34

Bibiji's struggle to establish herself as a woman well -spoken in both languages (Gurbani and English) fulfilling her husbands' desire. She gets mental peace by looking at a symbol of her own religion. In her struggle to create a new self she time and gain revisits her old self hinting how the immigrated woman found peace in their religious identity.

In order to be the ideal wife to her husband Bibiji has gone against her own will of holding to her religious and ethnic identity as a Sikh. In order to be the ideal wife to her husband Bibiji shortens the length of her hair which is against the norms of her society and thus fears the wrath of god. In her desire to share her husbands' vision she fills her life with guilt. However, the act of shortening her hair also shows Bibiji's desire for change in the new society. In her attempt to balance between the traditional and the modern and also to create an identity for herself bibiji is seen acquiring the third space or being hybrid subjects. A subject reduced to the negotiations of the constant pull and push of her desires. A similar attempt to hold on one's own religious identity as a part of identity formation can be seen in a short story "*Montreal*

1962" by Shauna Singh Baldwin. The story has been narrated both from the first and second person narrative and is about the humiliation that a husband and wife have to face when they landed or emigrated to Canada in the search of jobs Baldwin admits that her family had to face similar humiliation so her parents returned to India soon after she was born. Baldwin recollects, her father went back to India because it wasn't fun being a Sikh in Canada in the 1960's. So, he decided, to return thinking that India would let him wear a turban without any question and ethnic attacks.

Another example of ethnic attack or humiliation in the story is new Canadians ridicule the Indian traditional wear, the saree by calling it a 'bed sheet' and 'curtain'. But the protagonist here shows her agency by being steadfast in her decision to heart the save and upholding her Sikh tradition. The narrator, that is the wife goes to describe the washing of the turbans in doing so as most immigrants she also gets immersed in memory and nostalgia takes over her. Her reminiscences find voice in her words when she says,

I placed each turban in turn on the bubbly surface as my mother and her must have done before me, that their men might face the world proud. I drained the tub and new colors swelled – deep red, dark black, mud, rust, orange, soft purple and jade green.³⁷

The whole act of washing and preparing a turban for her husband was her attempt to keep the bonding intact with her national and ethnic heritage. Thus, this act of holding on and of preserving her identity, her struggle to do so in an alien land, shows what feminist had argued and as Sandhya Rao says, in narration of diaspora that it is particularly feminine task of collecting, remembering and documenting memory and images of the past tradition that has been left behind. The onus of relating memories of home, of recreating them within new lands remain vividly feminine. Soon enough she takes up a job to shoulder the responsibility of setting up a comfortable new life in Canada. In order to protect her ethnic identity, I say her ethnic identity because as per patriarchal society, after marriage there is no bigger duty of a wife than protecting husbands from all odds. Hence, she is adamant that at no cost should her husband cut his “*kesh*” (Hindi for hair) and remove his turban, as that is of great pride and honor to a Sikh man”. Her firm will be better understood through her words when she says she will not let him cut his strong rope of hair and roam without a turban in that alien land, where everybody is a stranger to them. Her traditional self speaks the following words,

The knot my father tied between my Chunni and your turban is still strong between us and it shall not fail you now.³⁸

Through her strong words and her firm decision, she creates an identity for herself, an identity that would safeguard the Sikh heritage in the foreign land. Going back to the homeland would have been easier escape but decided to stay in the foreign land for economic prosperity. The woman here creates a “third space” for herself in the host land, as said by Homi K. Bhaba, the space created by immigrant for forming their own

³⁷Baldwin, Singh Shauna. *English lessons and other stories*. Goose lane Editions: 1999. P.209

³⁸Baldwin, Singh Shauna. *English lessons and other stories*. Goose lane Editions: 1999. P.210

identity and to hold on their community ethics through shared interest or language “third space” explains the uniqueness of each person as a “hybrid”.

The inability of the homeland to provide security to woman is well understood through Badami’s portrayal of Leela and Kamini, where her already distorted self gets further fragmented when she reaches and is othered in Canada. Leela’s alienation reflects Gopinath’s theory of double displacement. Instead, of the diaspora othering and alienating her Leela others the diaspora. Leela dissatisfaction with the Canadian soil is born out of her own incapability to please herself. In her mind Leela starts comparing Canada to India and through her missing of the homeland she has left behind is very evident. She feels like a stranger in Canada and this feeling is born out of her fear to lose her identity as a high caste woman. Since Leela always had a stable life and found refuge in religion therefore in Canada she feels she will not be able to hold on to her identity as a religious woman. The feeling that she might slip her personal in the new land forces Leela to embrace her religious identity more. So much so that she starts practicing her religion in Canada. She makes her basement into her mandir. Her place of worship and the place she finds solace and happiness.

The basement, Her India, where the fragrance of incense lingered in the still air, the water pipes had been camouflaged by a false ceiling and the unfurnished walls were draped with an assortment of colorful cotton bedcovers. her gods were waiting for her there. Their silver faces impassive as she rang a small silver bell loudly to catch their attention.³⁹

This is quite evident in the characters of diasporic women, either they establish their new identity breaking away from the one they had before or they recreate their mini imaginative homeland in the host land, the imaginary space mentioned by Sarah Ahmed and other theorists earlier in this chapter. Similarly, Leela recreates “India” through improvisation. For Leela, her religious identity provides her a connection to her old homeland in order to recreate that home land. Therefore, diaspora acts both as a space being for Leela as well as a space for becoming as pointed out by Stuart Hall. Through her religious identity she maintains

³⁹Badami, Anita Rau. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Canada: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. P.71-74

a connection with the old homeland. At the same time, Leela's identity also shifts in the diaspora as she makes friends with Bibiji. Leela begins to assimilate herself into her new homeland.

Though Leela is doubly displaced but Kamini, one of the protagonists of Badami's novel *Tamarind Mem* has relocated to Canada to escape the fate her mother had been subjected to back in India. Kamini a girl born and brought up in a railway colony, always surrounded by relatives find it unbearable to deal with the colonies that engulfs her in the foreign land. Although she is often seen reminiscing the past yet she accepts the foreign land (Canada) as it offers her higher education and an alternative life giving her an agency to come out of the repressive culture back home. She has seen since her childhood days how her mother, Saroja had been subjected to patriarchal dominance. Thus, to prevent herself from befalling the same fate her only refuge was to create her identity in the new land. Soon enough Kamini realizes despite the series of social transformations, Indian culture still expect women to be oppressed and subjugated. Thus, we see both Kamini and her mother Saroja tried to form an identity for themselves by creating a home, the former outside the country and the later within it. In Saroja's life her identity is backed by gender. Every woman soon after she develops a sense of understanding goes through so much of patriarchal dominance that she becomes conditioned to accepting patriarchy and also to bring the subjugation of other women. It can be said though Saroja voiced her desire to do medicine yet she was locked in the marriage bond. Her mother also didn't really raise a voice for her daughter as in Indian society marriage is the ultimate fate that befalls a woman. Thus, when Saroja during her days as a child tried to find out whether her mother was really, but each time she asked her mother she could not give a satisfying answer. Young Saroja could very well figure out the mask of being happy and leading a perfect life that her mother pretended to put on, Saroja was surprised as to why Ajji was letting the same fate be fall her daughter. As said earlier in a patriarchal set up women subject other women to oppression more than men do, this is what the primary argument about third world feminism is all about.

But Ajji being the 'Pativrata wife' that she is happy submitting herself completely to the patriarchal norms, by accepting that her husband is superior as he is the man and that it is her duty to be his shadow. This feminist has argued to be very typical of orthodox Brahmin wife. In the words of Antoinette Burton writes,

The wife, it is true, has not chosen her husband, nor he her; but she is quite sure that her parents have chosen rightly. Her husband is not her companion, but her household tried, and her duty toward him is obedience and submission. She waits on his comforts and minds his house.⁴⁰

Looked at from a cultural perspective it is a story that is set in India narrated by immigrant women of the Indian origin, struggling with the issues of family roles and domination, identities and traditions of Modern India. In the words of Diaspora critic Devika Khanna Narula writes,

One thing that is evident, when reading the literature of immigration, is that one of main causes of migration is the dissatisfaction with the present situation, a desire for upward mobility which comes through education, an increased awareness of better prospects and a sense of ambition⁴¹.

Kamini's will to relocate to Canada is based on the dissatisfaction with her present life in India, especially the position of women in the Indian society, she does not want to live a life like her mother, all the domination her mother had to face she does not want to endure to pursue her research in Chemical Engineering. The novel also addresses the question of 'belonging' that immigrants often face in an alien land. This sense of belonging is especially true for the South Asian Canadian immigrants relocating to Canada, as they get entangled in the harsh Canadian winters and the ever present cultural – differences. Kamini is so troubled to put up with the terrible, unbearable winters of Canada that soon she starts getting nightmares of the same. It is during this time of her stay that she delves into the sea of memories for the

⁴⁰Burton, Antoinette. "Stray Thoughts of an Indian Girl: The Nineteenth Century, Oct. 1891". *Feminism in India*. Ed. Maitrayee Chadhuri. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2004.

⁴¹Narula, Devika Khanna. *South Asian Diaspora: Summer Blooms in Winter Gardens*. New Delhi: Creative, 2005.

long-lost warmth of home. As Sudesh Mishra points out Kamini belongs to that category of Diasporic women who define their identity by attending to some kind of departure manifested on the plane of consciousness, as reified in memory. In spite of facing so much hardships in the new land, she adopts the ways of the new land, as she knows this new land can only let her finish her doctoral research in a way would free her from the shackles of societal and patriarchal dominion back home that is imposed on women.⁴² Uma Parameswaran's metaphor for the dislocated individual, "Trishanku" can also be applied to Kamini's predicament. She often belongs neither to the culture that she leaves behind nor to the adopted one. Kamini like her other counterparts creates the "third space" for herself in her journey of identity formation.

Lastly another reason why Kamini wanted to immigrate to a new land was because she wanted to escape from the threshold of marriage that she would be essentially forced into if she stays back in India (her homeland). Kamini does not want to get caught in the threshold of marriage and is thus attacked by those caretakers of societal norms, she is made to hear now her decision will bite in the face, later in her life. It is this dissatisfaction of Kamini with the gender position in India that urges her to feel the need to immigrate to a foreign land.

A close reading of these women would take us back to the Second wave Feminist argument of the "Personal is the Political" where feminists argued that there was an underlying connection between personal experiences and larger social and political struggles and structures at work. This holds true when reading the women characters of Badami, Mukherjee and Baldwin. The struggle of all these women, their trauma, alienation, oppression is an outcome of the greater violence that was at work in this case the partition of

⁴² Mishra, Sudesh. *Diaspora Criticism.* "Introducing Criticism at the 20th Century. Ed. Julian Wolfreys. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2002.

1947, the Khalistan movement, the Komagata Maru, the Air India Flight Bombing. The experiences of loss are a shared one, where the whole South Asian women diasporic community was mourning and struggling to build up from the broken pieces, a homeland of their own. Thus, the traumatic personal experiences are a part of the political events that are at work resulting in a violent reality that is quite painful and glossing over the naked truth of raw, soul-searing violence in order to spare everyone the misery implied in such a situation. Constant gendering at home made these women find newer ways to look and live life in the host land. Though larger political and social tensions were at work yet the unfulfilled wish to live a free life is somewhat achieved by these women in the host land. Bibiji emerged as a strong woman with her agency to create a sense of shared community, opening her own business and thus creating an identity for herself. Leela, on the other hand othered since childhood, regarded as a half breed finally finds solace in Canada where within the boundaries of her “new” home she finds and establishes her little India, the space of her dreams, the space that had been very disturbing back in the homeland. But above all these women created a hybrid identity for themselves occupying the third space and forever negotiating the pull and push of the home and the host land. Therefore, being diasporic subjects provided these women with a life that their homeland was unable to provide to them, nonetheless they had to struggle a long way until they found their selves in union and in happiness with their individual identity. Though they still face racism, dominance yet now they have a space to claim their own. Be it the victim women of the crash, immigrant women like

Kamini who relocated for education, or Bibiji and Leela, all these women’s success lies in the creation of the third space for themselves because that is the best, they could do in their constant negotiation both back home and at the host.

Chapter Three

Nostalgia is an important theme in the narratives of those who have migrated from a land and placed themselves in another land. Nostalgia and revisiting the past has been central to the formation of the Diaspora. The sense of displacement and nostalgia are so intricately related to each other that it is impossible to talk about them separately. Though nostalgia might not have led to displacement yet displacement at times can lead to nostalgia. Memory and nostalgia come from the sense of belonging to a particular community, a place one calls “home”. Thus, the nostalgia and memories that engulf the diasporic subjects stem from communities they have left behind. The feeling of nostalgia and missing the land left behind often result in inter-generational conflict due to the smooth assimilation of the first -generation immigrants and the latter ones. In this chapter I shall discuss the community and generation conflict as portrayed mainly in the works of Anita Rau Badami’s *Tamarind Mem* and *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*

V.S Naipaul in an interview had commented that women writers are quite different from their male counterparts in terms of “sentimentality”. He had also said that since women are not complete masters of their houses, they have narrow views of the world and thus resort to sentimentality which is reflected in their writings. Though Naipaul’s comment is misogynistic yet the point lies that it holds true for the common criticism against diasporic writings, more particularly female diasporic writings. Diasporic literature is, most often, destined to be a trope for nostalgia. Diasporic writers are usually considered to be a sentimental lot (the type who want to enjoy the best of both the worlds and often end up enjoying neither), deliberately nostalgic and keep on writing only about their past. Nostalgia blocks out the present, it refuses to do anything with the present times and prefers to cling onto the past. By doing so, it epitomizes for an individual freedom and escape—from the present time and the present space which he/she is occupying. Going by dictionary definition, the term nostalgia, derived from the Greek words “nosto” (homecoming ‘) and “álgos” (pain or ache) denotes a pain or yearning for homecoming and connotes a sentimental longing

for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations. Thus, etymologically the word means homesickness; simply put, the desire to go back home.⁴³

According to Freud, the feeling of nostalgia is actually a mental disorder and it can be cured. Nostalgia is usually born out of feelings of mourning over a loss. This loss could be of a beloved, a place, an object of desire and so on. The feeling of mourning can also be felt with the fear of rejection or not being accepted as desired. Nostalgia is also born out of the fear of losing the ability to love or from the incapability to adopt to newer environments. This theory works in line with Diasporic studies. The object of loss here is the original homeland which is mourned by the diaspora and in a way results in the disinterest in accepting or adopting to the new homeland. People who have been forcefully moved from their place of origin to a new land, often face these feelings. Nostalgia more often than not resembles a happy memory for the diaspora, a place where they have had happy moments with people of their choice. Therefore, when the diaspora faces the constant othering from the host land, they are often reminded of the homeland left behind. The desire to return becomes strong in their minds and nothing else can substitute it. Neither the desire to return nor the sense of losing the old can be substituted. The diaspora turns away from the current place of residence to the homeland it has left behind. This is when the diaspora shuts itself away from reality and starts creating a third space for themselves. This is when their identity become hybridized.

Another aspect that needs to be discussed in regard to nostalgia is the working of a collective memory. In this discussion of diasporic women and their nostalgia, suppose if we regard them as a homogeneous group sharing the same grief, trauma, inter-personal relations etc. Thus, what they want to remember and what

⁴³ Interview of V.S Naipaul by the Royal Geographic society in 2011. (www.theguardian.com) last accessed 15.37 pm on 13.05.2019

they want to forget, is a collective process. Therefore, with regard to the memory of diasporic women, feminists have stated that it more often than not is a collective memory. They say:

Collective memory is in itself a result of prior selections, agreements, and decisions about what and whom to remember, what to document, and how to display events and people. Besides the production of historical knowledge about the women's movement and the struggle for reform, a major role in shaping and upholding feminist identities was also played by invented traditions within the movement. As inventions, such traditions functioned not only as a means of countering the construction of narratives from outside but also served as traditions shaping feminist ideals.⁴⁴

In the characters that will be discussed in the course of the chapter, we will see how women of South Asian origin share a common memory of isolation, loneliness and trauma. The working of the collective memory is so dominant in the works of these diasporic writings, possibly because the creator of the characters is themselves diasporic women having faced the same kind of feelings that surrounds the life of the characters. It can be assumed that through these fictional characters, the diasporic women are letting their experiences known to the world. Most of the works are born out of the author's fond memory of a place or person. Thus, attaching an autobiographical tinge to their tales. For instance, the character of Kamini in the novel *Tamarind Mem* is said to be a fictional representation of Badami herself. Like Kamini, Badami also did not have a very happy childhood as her father was an Engineer at the railways. Also, she as a woman who has her roots in India and immigrated to Canada later just like her character Kamini. However, Badami has denied such claims and said she has written the novel listening to the stories told by her by relatives. The stories she grew up listening to, occupy a large part of her memory and so she penned them down in the form of a novel.

In the two novels discussed we will see the themes of memory, nostalgia and motherhood are very dominant. Both novels show the working of memory through two generations of women. These women

⁴⁴ Ulla Manns. *Identity and collective memory in the making of nineteenth century feminism*. International journal of cultural Studies. 2016. Vol 19(2). P.3

use memory to connect to their family and to hold on to their homeland that has been left behind. The author has shown memory both in positive and negative light. While for some women these memories of the homeland are happy ones, for others the childhood memories form the reason behind their fragmented and fearful identity.

Memory, if we go by the dictionary meaning, means the thought of or remembrance of something that had an impact on us. This impact can be both negative or positive. This attempt of showing memory from both sides might also indicate the diasporic writers' experiences of nostalgia. In her life she has had a myriad of memories that might not always have to be happy ones. While reading the two novels I personally felt that the characters being discussed are just different shades of the authors own self. The different selves she became in the constant process of othering and alienation find recognition in the portrayal of her characters. The concepts of memory and isolation therefore, forms an important part of this novel.

In *Tamarind Mem* Anita Rau Badami projects the memories of two women, a mother and a daughter, and artistically depicts their relationships based on memories that connect the family. Kamini, the daughter, moves away to Canada from her mother Saroja, thus it is only memory that she depends on. She recollects,

My mother, who had seemed unchanging as the Dhura star through my childhood, looked so different in my memory now when viewed from the distance that separated us. Her hair once abundant, was a pathetic clump of white, her this finger no longer smooth and sue in their myriad tasks . . . The same eyes had softened and glowed when she was pleased or proud of us.⁴⁵

On the other hand, in the novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* memory is shown through the characters of Bibiji, Leela and Nimmo. Due to migration from their homeland to the host land they suffer from marginalization. Though both Bibiji and Leela face displacement yet the way they deal with it is different.

⁴⁵Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem*. Canada: Penguin Books, 1996. P 230.

For Bibiji the past is a haunting recollection of memories, at the same time for Leela they are the happiest memories of her life. The longing for the homeland left behind and the strong desire to return, is shown through the character of Leela and her desire to return even though she tried her best to adopt to the land of Canada.

Memory here deals with the recollection of the past. In *Tamarind Mem*, Kamini who is the daughter feels that she does not have any happy memories from her childhood. On the other hand, the mother too has memories of her past. Saroja has a disturbed married life as her husband does not give her time and moves from place to place. She also embarks on a journey of self- discovery post the death of her husband. Kamini on the other hand is found remembering her mother time and again. In a fond recollection of her mother,

Kamini remembers how her mother' dream of becoming a doctor was crushed and she was forcibly married to a man who was not only double her age but also didn't share anything common with her. Through the constant oppression of Saroja in the institution of marriage, Saroja develops a sour tongue towards everybody. Hence, she is termed as the "Tamarind Mem". Her sharp mouth, her acidic words are her only weapon to fight the ongoing oppression that she has been subjected to. Leading a life ignored by her husband, the harsh words are her only companion to get through life. Her only emancipation is seen through her cruel words and her silence. Her short- lived affair with the car mechanic Paul de Costa, hints to the fact how desperately Saroja tried to break out of the 'Pativrata ideal'⁴⁶ that the Indian society often forcibly confers on women. For long Saroja had given into the dominance of society but she finally chooses her agency when she realizes that it is not her railway officer husband but the car mechanic who makes her happy. Though initially Saroja is seen choosing her agency by getting into an affair with the Car mechanic but soon realizes that she has two daughters to take care of. We see that Saroja is again getting tied to the

⁴⁶In south Asia "Pativrata" among Hindus refers to a woman who is loyal and faithful to her husband.

dominance of patriarchal society where her role as a mother takes priority over her will to be happy. In the words of Madhu Kishwar,

most women are unwilling to assert their right in a way that estranges them not just from their family but also from their longer kinship group and community. They meant to ensure that their rights are respected and acknowledged by their family and prefer to avoid asserting their rights in a way that isolates them from those they consider their own.⁴⁷

Since her childhood days Kamini is very unsure about the relationship her mother shared with the car mechanic Paul da Costa, which only gets resolved when her mother herself confesses about her affair with the mechanic.

Kamini as an immigrant woman in the foreign land of Canada finds herself immersed in nostalgia. Amidst the bouts of nostalgia and the memories of the glorious past she feels covered with the warmth of the mother's love. Even when she is dreaming Kamini feels that her mother is there protecting her from all odds. Being thousands of miles away from her mother, Kamini recollects the anger and love that her mother possessed and also the innumerable conflicts she had with her. In her fond recollection of her mother, Kamini realizes the social evils that her mother had to fight with. Kamini, still in the state of feeling isolated herself, tries to understand how her mother must have felt leading a life without having any long-lasting friendship as she was married to a man who was constantly travelling. In another instance, Kamini is seen remembering, how she felt that something strange was inside her mother when she was pregnant with her second child. As her mother's belly was increasing the innocent Kamini thought her mother had become a ghost. It is during this time says Kamini, that she enjoyed the company of Linda Ayah, her nanny, who would tell her ghost stories. Kamini since her childhood days is a sensitive child who is easily feared. This fear in her was instilled by her mother's words that she will leave them and go away due to her frustration

⁴⁷ Kishwar, Madhu. *Off the Beaten Track: Rethinking Gender Justice for Indian Women*. New Delhi: Oxford U P, 1999. P31

with her husband. The unpleasant memories of her childhood haunt Kamini throughout her life. Through the character of Saroja and Kamini Badami tries to portray the pure bond between a mother and her daughter. A bond which is that of shared memories and nostalgia.

Saroja does not have a happy marriage and she is very lonely in her life as she misses the companionship of her husband. It is in times such as this that Saroja is reminded of her past days,

Before my Marriage, the world seems a smooth found place. My father is a true patriarch. As long as Appa is in charge, we don't have to worry about anything . . . Nothing is steady after my marriage. I have no friend to talk to without feeling that I am revealing my inadequacies as a wife. Friendship is like a tree, it needs time to mature, and we never stay in one place long enough for that! And my husband is a gypsy who I see for a short while every month.⁴⁸

It is the loneliness of women like Saroja that Badami has tried to portray. The loneliness faced by Saroja in her marriage hints how patriarchy operates within the institution of marriage. It is the institution of marriage that has taken away all her dreams and aspirations. After her marriage there is no one to understand her. She has people with her but yet she is lonely. Memories can often create troubles in life. Here Subhadra Sengupta observes that Badami through her portrayal of Saroja have created a character that is real. Characters with which one can relate to. The loneliness and isolation that Saroja faces holds true for most women of Indian origin who are tied to the institution of marriage. In the Indian patriarchal set up there are a lot of woman that Sengupta is reminded of who have shattered aspirations and dreams and continue to live their lives negotiating the unfulfilled dreams. These women are often seen possessing an acid tongue like that of Saroja.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem*. Canada: Penguin Books, 1996. P235-236.

⁴⁹Sengupta, Subhadra. *Not Sour Enough*. Biblio: A Review of Books, Vol.2(9).1996

Another prevalent theme in the novel besides memory is the feeling of Isolation. Each character I have discussed so far, had to face isolation at some point in their life. The relocation of Kamini to Canada for pursuing a Doctorate degree results in her feeling isolated. In a land where she is surrounded by snow, the memories of home start haunting her even more. Here the author says that memories have something ghostly about them and it fills one with uncertainty. What binds the novel together is the similarity between the lives of the mother and daughter. Saroja's life from her childhood to the time she was married has been blurred because they are often replaced with new stories of isolation as she used to move from one place to the other with her husband. Her dreams of becoming a doctor were shattered and broken as her parents decided to get her married off to a man who was double her age. For Saroja's parents only the monetary stability of her husband made him an eligible groom for their daughter. Little did Saroja's parents know then that the monetary stability of this man would result in the isolation of their daughter. Kamini like Saroja possesses a sharp tongue and Badami regards it as a gift. Badami being a women writer of the diasporic community knows the essentiality of having a sharp tongue to deal with the complexities of life in the host land. Once in Canada, where she often feels isolated, Kamini frequently calls up her mother and who is her strongest and closest bond back in the homeland. In a fond recollection of her mother,

Kamini remembers how she tried to share a memory of a travel episode in India with her mother during one of her Canada-India phone conversations and how her mother denied that the event ever occurred her mother once again accused Kamini of making up stories.⁵⁰

Badami weaves a tale of Nostalgia, where she describes the Indian domestic life with much detailing. She explores all small detailing that make family life so rich and joyous. Through varied images, sounds and memories that each character experiences, Badami talks of how every individual in a familial structure deal and view the institution of home and family differently. Be it the mother and the daughter or the husband and wife each relationship and each individual experience is different in a particular familial structure. It

⁵⁰Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem*. Canada: Penguin Books, 1996.P.118

unfolds how the past cultural restrictions shape the personal lives of the characters. The endless conflict between a mother and daughter, husband and wife all lie at its core. So, for emotional nourishment we often interact or complain to members of the family. Similarly, Saroja is seen complaining to her parents about her loneliness. However, the blame is always on the women in a patriarchal set up. This is exactly why, when Saroja complains to her parents about the meaningless lonely life she leads, her father replies that her husband is a good man and he is the best his parents could do for her. The silence in her husband's house is very difficult for Saroja to adjust to as she has been brought up in a family full of love and laughter. It is her loneliness and the negligence on the part of her husband that results in her outburst when she says that the silence that engulfs the house is maddening. Her frustration is more prominent with the news of her pregnancy. She says that the child that is conceived out of silence is squeezing against her whole being making her breathless. This incident that Saroja is made to go through puts to light the male- female and culture- nature binary that has been debated and discussed by feminists in both East and West. Feminists have rejected the age-old notion of fertility and reproduction that have been pushed on women have been. Mary E John says,

the very assignment of women to biology was laboriously produced and that there is nothing natural about the hysterization of women's bodies, the privatization of the family and the confinements of motherhood⁵¹.

Through this whole argument we can deduce that reproduction and motherhood more than giving and identity or agency to women tie them more tightly to the shackles of patriarchy. For instance, Saroja could have shown her agency by going away with Paul de Costa but her motherhood prevented her from doing so. Thus, she continued to be unhappy in the oppressive cycle of patriarchy, in this case her marriage.

In *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Badami shows memory differently. Here the character of Bibiji is seen having haunting memories of the past. She holds a belief that since she has done so much wrong in

⁵¹ John, Mary E. "Feminism in India and the West". Cultural Dynamics 10.2(1998): P.203.

the past hence her life is filled with unpleasant memories. During her younger days she had stolen the groom of her sister and also the son of Nimmo, her sister's daughter. As a result of which she has lost her friend Leela to the Air India Crash of 1985 and her husband, Paaji was shot to death in front of her eyes. In such situations she could hear the voice of her mother, telling her,

Greedy girl, Sharanjeet Kaur, Gurpreet says, shaking a thin finger at Bibi-ji, one day you will pay for all that you have stolen from others. You will pay. 'I have, Amma,' Bibi-ji whispers. 'I have.' Not once, but twice. She has learned that for everything you gain, you lose an equal amount. She had grabbed her sister's fate, and Fate had turned around and taken that sister away. Then she had taken Nimmo's son, and he had so warped her sense of right and wrong that she had sacrificed her friend Leela to the gods.⁵²

Badami presents the character of Nimmo in a much more sympathetic light, where the readers invariably sympathize with her. Nimmo had nobody to call her own. She had lost her mother in the childhood and her son was taken away by Bibiji. Her daughter and her husband were killed in the Hindu- Sikh riots. She is often found recollecting the memories of her husband and children. In her heart she only hopes that she will meet them all one day. In the dead of the night she opens the doors and windows of her house waiting for her families return. So, we see that while Saroja and Kamini deal with bittersweet nostalgia, the character of Bibiji and Nimmo are experiencing a sense of mourning and melancholy through their recollection of the past.

The writer feels for the character of Nimmo who is emotionally unstable since her childhood. With the loss of her mother at a very young age, she has forever been fearful of her life. Whenever Nimmo felt that she could overcome fear and she could rise up from her trauma it all came gushing back to her. She was just trying to come to terms with the death of her mother when the death of her husband and daughter added to

⁵²Badami, Anita Rau. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Canada: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. P.394-395

her already fragmented being. Nimmo had lost her mother to the partition struggle and Badami gives details about the horrifying incident saying that the morning was a peculiar one and all that Nimmo could recollect was a scream at the far end of the road and her mother coming in and closing the door. Moments later there were knocks on the door. There were some male voices, they were saying something to her mother. Her mother's voice rose up in anger and in the next moment it was silenced. Through the silence that surrounded her mother's death, a void in her daughters' life was created forever. That is the thing about Nostalgia, it takes you back to sites of trauma from where one can hardly make a return.

The fragrance of lavender soap is another important imagery in understanding the working of memory in *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* For both Bibiji and Nimmo the fragrance of the lavender soap brought back haunting memories of the past. For Nimmo the fragrance of lavender soap brings back memories of her mother as her mother used this soap to bathe. Her mother says Nimmo used the lavender soap to cleanse herself after she had been raped in the riots. On the other hand, for Bibiji the fragrance of the lavender soap would bring her memory of how she took away her sisters' prospective groom and how that marked her entry into Canada the lands of her dreams. The lavender soap in this context is an epitome of a number of emotions. The lavender soap that was once a symbol of wealth, prosperity, fragrance of a beloved is now a symbol of death and traumatic memory. Therefore, Badami is of the view that the same lavender soap that was synonymous to Canada for Bibiji, is now the symbol that continuously reminds her of her loss - the loss of her homeland and also the loss of her husband. Though now she has all the wealth and riches to buy as many lavender soap-bars as she wishes to yet she is not happy with her life. The land that she so desperately wished for herself is the same land that has provided her with a life filled with traumatic memories and loneliness. Similarly, for Nimmo the fragrance that was so soothing and comforting for her at one point of time, reminds her of the loss of her mother now. Each time she gets the fragrance of the lavender soap she is reminded of how she has to go on living without her mother. Thus, we see how the lavender soap serves as the point where the traumatic experience of two women gets connected.

The effect that traumatic incidents of violence leave on people can be understood through the character of Nimmo. She had faced violence and experienced death from close quarters at a very young age and hence she had grown up with a fragmented character. Nimmo is a character who has been fearful from her childhood days; she does not trust anybody and feels safe only within the confines of her home. This takes us back to the words of Freud where he said that once an individual is haunted by nostalgia, he will never try to substitute it with something else. The individual would shut himself up from the rest of the society, and that is exactly what Nimmo does.

Past memories continue to haunt the characters of Bibiji and Leela. As Beena Agarwal points out that the novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* brings to the readers how the ominous shadows of national disintegration gives birth to individuals who have a divided-self and who no matter how much they try, can never enjoy the feeling of wholeness again.⁵³ The loss of her mother in the partition riots has resulted in the fragmented identity that Nimmo possesses. Having lost her mother at such a tender age is the result why Nimmo is presented throughout the novel as an individual growing up with a distorted self. For Bibiji, the loss of her husband in the riots has resulted in her fragmented psyche. The whole episode of her husband being killed in front of her eyes and her incapability to help her mother and sister back home during the time of national disintegration are episodes that reduces Bibiji to an individual with a divided self. The trauma faced by both Nimmo and Bibiji at different junctures of their lives have made it impossible for them to feel complete again. Both the woman are examples as to how national disintegration results in the fragmented development of individuals.

⁵³ Agarwal, Beena. "Partition and the Predicament of Sikh Minority in Anita Rau Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*" *The Commonwealth Review*, Vol. 19(2).

Just like *Tamarind Mem*, isolation is also a prevalent theme in Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*

Here the isolation is shown through the character of Leela. Though she was lonely in the first half of her life as she was called a half breed by her relatives but her married life took away that sense of isolation to a large extent. She says,

For almost ten years she had lived the comfortable life of Mrs. Bhat – a full and happy existence, punctuated by weddings, birth and death ceremonies, and the dozens of festivals that marked the Indian Calendar. She had borne her husband a son and a daughter, Arjun and Preethi, and had believed him as satisfied with their tip as she was.⁵⁴

As Freud has stated that the feeling of rejection or not being accepted as desired creates in the mind of the diasporic subject a void that can never be filled up. This holds true for Leela, though she is happy in her married life yet the othering she had faced as a child has scarred her forever. Thus, for the diasporic subject connecting to situation of the present with an identical or similar situation that has occurred in the past is a very common trait. Here, this claim of Freud is justified through the character of Leela. Since Leela was born to a Brahmin father and a German mother she was marginalized and isolated since her childhood days. The constant isolation and marginalization that Leela faced as a child is reflected in the infliction of a prejudiced notion, she has of her future daughter in law who is white girl. Leela's inability to accept the white girl whole heartedly shows her that the scars of her own marginalization run very deep. With the coming of the white girl into her life Leela is once again made to remember the depressing and traumatic memories of her past. Leela's skepticism in accepting the white girl and her continuous query whether her son had chosen an auspicious day for the wedding ceremony shows that though Leela was very happy in her married life, yet the isolation and marginalization had made her create a space of her own and she could not come out of it. No matter, how much Leela tried yet she could not accept the foreign land and this clearly understood by her behavior towards her would be daughter in law who is a white.

⁵⁴Badami, Anita Rau. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Canada: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. P. 94

Badami in her novel presents all three characters namely Bibiji, Nimmo and Leela who are alienated and marginalized and have memories to cherish. As we know, these women also faced their share of happiness and sadness. For Leela and Nimmo the memories are those of the happy moments of their married life. While on the other hand, for Bibiji, the memories aren't happy ones. Though she has all the riches for living a happy life yet the isolation she faces, makes her remember the unhappy days of her childhood. She recollects how she used to make cakes out of cow dung and put it on the wall to dry. All she had to herself, were haunting memories of the past and the happy memories have gotten suppressed under the pile of unhappy ones.

Another theme that is very essential to the diasporic women's identity formation is the concept of Motherhood. In 1970 in *The Dialectic of Sex*, feminist Shulamith Firestone wrote:

the heart of woman's oppression is her child bearing and child rearing role. The contradiction between motherhood and liberation has been a key to feminist thinking. Indeed, motherhood as a symbol, the subjugation of the self to the needs of the others is the antithesis of liberation. The role of the mother has ramifications for women far beyond that individual relationship between mother and child. It has been used to enclose women with their children in the shrinking domestic domain and to put both practical and psychological impediments in the way of women's participation in the world. Women's role as mothers and their powerlessness run side by side, each feeding the other and perpetuating women's dependence on men.⁵⁵

For long now pregnancy and motherhood has been used as tropes of the patriarchal society for exercising power on women. Patriarchy often tries to link the relationship between reproduction and the way different woman deal with it as a natural process. What patriarchy fails to recognize is though reproduction is a natural process but the way woman deal with it has long been a part of the historical struggle for woman. Feminist have argued that a woman should have complete control over her pregnancy because the inability to do so would be letting her body be a site of patriarchal oppression. In the novel *Tamarind Mem*, we see

⁵⁵ Shulamith Firestone. *The Dialectics of sex*. 1970. P.156

Saroja falling prey to the oppression of patriarchy and letting her pregnancy tie her up to her unhappy marriage. Even though Saroja is agitated and frustrated by the news of her pregnancy at first because she feels that the child is born out of the silence and not love. But she continues to carry the child and even goes on to give birth to it. Saroja's giving in to patriarchy is understood better when she is pregnant with her second child. It is this trope of motherhood that patriarchy used to trap Saroja in the unhappy marriage till the death of her husband. Though Saroja is shown as a very outspoken woman in the novel yet there is nothing much she could do to break away from the shackles of patriarchy.

In this light we see Saroja's incapability to move out from the unhappy marriage even though she finds an agency through her short affair with Paul De Costa but gives up on that as her daughters are small. The novel focuses on the conflicting as well as a supporting side of motherhood through the character of Saroja. Every woman, soon after she developed a sense of understanding, goes through so much of patriarchal dominance that she becomes conditioned to accepting patriarchy and also to facilitate the subjugation of other women. The example of such a woman would be Saroja's mother. Saroja during her days as a child tried to find out whether her mother was really happy being the ideal wife, just the perfect one. But each time she asked her mother she could not give a satisfying answer. Young Saroja could very well figure out the mask of being happy and leading a perfect life thither mother pretended to put on, but all the while she was tied to the shackles of patriarchy seeing her mother unhappy in her marriage. Saroja was surprised as to why Ajji was letting the same fate be fall her daughter. Saroja thought to herself if her mother was unhappy in her marriage why did she force her daughter to have the same sorrow filled life. But Ajji being the 'Pativrata wife' that she is happy submitting herself completely to the patriarchal norms, by accepting that her husband is superior as he is the man and that it is her duty to be his shadow. Feminists have argued that the trait of woman submitting to the husband is found more amongst orthodox Brahmin woman turned wives. If we go by the caste division, we will see that the Brahmins are the higher castes' and are said to be closer to god. For the Brahmin woman or wives, the husband takes the place of god. Therefore, submitting to him is their duty they believe. Antoinette Burton further writes that the behavior of women serving as

dedicated wives to their husbands are their way of respecting the choice of their parents as the groom is often chosen by them. Moreover, these women have accepted their husbands as their fate and their sole companion. She seeks happiness in serving his house and submitting herself completely to him.

Familial relationship is extremely important to understand the social environment that the characters live in. There exists great complexity between the relationship shared by husband-wife, mother and daughter, parents and children in a familial structure. Badami's *Tamarind Mem* is built on the tales of blooming relationship between a mother and her daughter, Saroja and Kamini. They share with each other their stories of friends, family and neighbors which makes them bond with each other more like friends than as mother and daughter. Though the relationship between Saroja and Kamini see a lot of conflict yet they are the best of friends too. This bond between the two deepens when Kamini goes away to Canada. Though there are still conflicts and fights yet the love they share surpasses it all.

Badami uses the voice of Kamini and her mother to narrate the tale of the struggle of women both in the home and adopted homeland. The initial part of the novel is about the struggles of Kamini to escape her mother. However, in the later part it is about the mother and the daughter who possess sharp tongues and use them indiscriminately to negotiate dominance and to turn their memories (both good and bad) into stories. Kamini as the first narrator is seen to be remembering the conflicts with her mother time and again.

At first Kamini is very confused about her mother. She doesn't understand why her mother behaves so harshly towards her father. As a child Kamini always had the complain that her mother was more affectionate towards her sister than towards her. Since the days of childhood, Kamini had failed to understand her mother. The argument between the mother and the daughter which forms the first half of the novel, arises as both of them had different perceptions about life. However, unlike her mother, Kamini is successful in moving out of the country for her Doctoral Degree in Chemical Engineering at Calgary, Canada though her mother had protested initially.

In the novel *Badami* very beautifully portrays the relationship between a mother and a daughter. Though Kamini loves both her parents equally yet she hates her mother when she made her stay with Linda Ayah. She also disliked the fact that her mother loved her younger sister more than her, even though Kamini believed that she was the better kid amongst the two of them. In the course of the novel, we see that it is Kamini who keeps thinking and calling up her mother from Canada and not her sister, Roopa, even though her mother preferred Roopa over Kamini. Kamini's interest on the minute details about her mother since her childhood days and her eventual missing of her mother shows the strong connection that exists between a mother and a child. This shows a strong inward relationship between the mother and the daughter that *Badami* is exploring.

Next in the novel *Badami* shows the relationship between Vishwa Moorthy and Saroja. The relationship wasn't that of a happily married couple. Saroja was always seen disgusted with her husband and often hurled harsh words at him. Behind this sour tongue lies the heart of a woman who has no affection and care of her husband. Possibly the lack of love has led to Saroja's present nature. Her mother finds some reason and takes to her bed when her father comes home or springs into activity on his departure, depict the strange affinity between her mother and Paul da Costa, the car mechanic. The frustrations and discontents that her unhappy marriage provides her make her a moody, sharp tongued, irritable person and hence she is called a 'tamarind mem.' Her husband expects her to play the role of a perfect member but she likes to join him in his railway tours and acts as a dutiful mother and a failed wife. In almost everything they differ and there is absolute marital disharmony. *Badami* depicts colonial legacy through the characters' language, schooling and other institutions of the railroad. She also shows men's reputation as chauvinism in India. They expect their wives behaving certain way, being at home, having several children, looking after the house, cooking proper meals, and being a good wife.

The episode with Paul is not Saroja's real revenge against her husband. Paul hanged himself, when Saroja would not go away with him to make a new life. Her revenge and her transformation are in the choice she has made when her daughters leave home. She refuses to stay at home playing the role of a quiet widow waiting for her daughters to visit her once in a while. She insists on travelling around by herself in trains, aimlessly to give herself freedom which was denied by her parents who cut short her education, to marry her off to an older man who continued to treat her as a chattel. Through Saroja, the work also unfolds how past cultural restrictions affect women in their personal lives and aspirations. The lessons that Saroja's mother taught her, worked as barrier between Saroja and her husband. She could never feel comfortable with him. The very fact that Saroja got attracted to a man who is not her husband pushes her into the circles of immorality by the patriarchal society. But society would never acknowledge women like Saroja who sacrificed their happiness in order to keep the family bonded together. Saroja could have easily fled with Paul and started her new life because by then Saroja had well realized that he is the kind of man who could keep her happy. Yet the very markers of 'good' and 'bad' are so deeply ingrained in the psyche of Indian women that knowingly or unknowingly she adheres by it. In this novel also we see how Saroja selflessly gave up on her happiness to bring up her two daughters. For a long time now, feminists have been arguing how the institution of marriage has been oppressing women. In a society like India, feminism and the equality between sexes is a utopian idea. Women are often made to believe that their fate is only to get married. As if they are born to be a burden to the men and the men are here to save her from her miseries. But in reality, marriage does not end her miseries but definitely increases them. Even if previously she thought of escaping from the fate that was to befall her, she would be still judged but not as critically as she would be if she fled after marriage. In case of Saroja, her parents made her believe as if she was born to be married to Vishwa Moorthy and he was the best. She would thus get pushed into a life of isolation and negligence. Later though Saroja does get a chance but Indian morals restricted her from doing so. Throughout this novel we see how women are oppressed throughout their lives in a patriarchal set up, only the markers of oppression change. Badami writes graceful evocative prose and plays complex variations on

her themes. All her characters are vibrant and deftly drawn, and her narrators' opposing points of view create a poignant irony.

It is her relationship with her mother and the estranged relationships that she has been seeing since her childhood at her home, that made Kamini all nostalgic once she reaches the foreign land and constantly faces being othered. The narrative of Kamini which entirely forms the first half of the novel, weaves together several memorable instances of her life starting from her growing up years in the railway colonies, listening to countless stories by her father. The innumerable stories that come gushing back to Kamini, the ones she remembers and narrates in great details, questions her position as an immigrant woman. Through she speaks in an adult tone, an adult who has nothing other than her memories to hold on to, of which she herself grows skeptical at times. More often than not the story and incidents narrated find mention in

Saroja's narrative but this truth is presented with a tinge of irony and made more dramatic, thereby changing the course of the narrative subtly. Thus, Badami elaborates that this book is largely about memories and the shifting nature of it. Most relationships float on a sea of memories and this particularly hold true in families where each member of the family uses memory to connect with parents or siblings. In

Tamarind Mem, when Kamini the daughter, moves away from Saroja the mother, both spatially by moving to Canada and temporarily (by moving up), she depends on memory to reconstruct the past she has left behind. But by bringing in Saroja's side of the story, the author wanted to problematize the idea that memory is often insubstantial and subjective.

Though memory is said to be fluid and elusive yet people often depend on it to create identity and belonging. Kamini's narrative is solely based on memory with a tinge of nostalgia for her motherland and she keeps recapitulating the past events. The primary theme of Kamini's narrative is the problematics of immigrant experience which is directly involved with the geographical displacement and the psychological adaption that it involves. Even though Kamini is very passionate about her doctoral research yet it becomes almost impossible of her to bear with the unbearable cold of "Calgary North Pole place". It is at this time that

loneliness seeps into Kamini's life, she desperately misses her mother, wants her to understand her daughter. Her solitude finds voice through the words:

I waited for her interpret the silences between my records, to sense my loneliness, to say, 'why don't you, just come back home, I need you, I am getting old. I would drop my work and catch the next flight back.'⁵⁶

Only a later part of the novel Kamini is desperately homesick and she calls up her mother in India. Kamini thinks about her home to keep herself warm and going amidst the Canadian winter, colorful, not so happy memories are her only resort in the cold land of Calgary. She says

The nicest thing about Ma's flat was the gulmohar tree that scattered its flaming red flowers all over her balcony. Here, in Calgary I had no gulmohar outside her window, but a lilac bloomed in summer and filled my home with its delicate fragrance.⁵⁷

Soon enough Kamini realizes that a lilac can never be a substitute of Gulmohar.

Kamini does not want to get caught in the threshold of marriage and is thus attacked by those caretakers of societal norms. She is made to hear now her decision will bite in the face, later in her life. Kamini is dissatisfied with her gender that in her homeland and in the host land it is she who is to make efforts to accept the surrounding. In a tone of despair and disgust Kamini says that it is not only for her to accept the host country she had migrated to but also the duty of the host country to accept the ethnic others. Kamini here talks in behalf of all the diasporic women migrating to Canada with the dream of getting accepted in the host land.

During her lonely days, Kamini used to call up her mother, talk about things left behind at home, talk about things left behind at home, talk about her father. For the immigrant women it is always double burden living

⁵⁶Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem*. Canada. Penguin Books, 2006. P.215

⁵⁷Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem*. Canada. Penguin Books. 2006. P.236

outside her own country, breaking norms of the traditional culture for embracing the new, but then again only skepticism and othering is what you get from the foreign land. Each time Kamini receives a postcard sent to her by her mother, she would hold it very close to her, the various images of places on the postcard was her only way of feeling connected to her homeland. Once Saroja had rubbed an orange peel on the post card and on receiving that Kamini kept smelling it and said

I held Ma's card against my face and breathed it deeply. Depend my eyes and I could see, against the implacable white snow outside my window, dark leaves and the bright color of repining in the sun. My mouth filled with the tart juice of a burst orange.⁵⁸

The feeling of the sour taste of orange juice in her mouth hints at the fact that Kamini is inheriting the sour tongue from her mother. This inheritance of the sour tongue from her mother can both be a sign of friendship with her mother and also can be a sign of her decision of using sour words to face and fight the hardships of the foreign land. We see that Kamini is deeply influenced by her mother, both these women use their tongues to fight oppression. The novel captures Kamini at a very delicate yet at the same time in a very crucial stage of her life, her anguish filled growing years, not developing a good understanding with her parents, willful filled teenage fantasies and her lonely adulthood amidst the snow of Calgary.

Despite the nostalgia and the constant bouts of loneliness that Kamini has to face on a daily basis and also the snow, she controls her urge to go back to her homeland. She knows for a fact that the oppressive cycle of patriarchal dominance that operates within the society of her native land, the harsh imposition of dominance that women of her home has to face. Thus, leaving the homeland behind for a foreign land and somehow struggling her way through it and not finding refuge in her land of comfort (though not completely) is Kamini's way of revolting and resisting against patriarchal norms. Though Kamini faces a

⁵⁸Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem.* Canada. Penguin Books. 2006. P.228

lot of difficulties created by the snow that surrounds her apartment but, on another level, she feels liberated by the education, the experience and freedom of exploring the unseen world that her mother had been denied by her family. Furthermore, as Kamini was of the “marriage age” and quite an eligible woman who would attract a lot of prospective of grooms, so her decision to stay away from the homeland and her parents is also her attempt to escape the bond of marriage. Though her mother tries hard to stop her from going yet could not stop her in the end Kamini, a very timid kid who sat astonished by the stories told by her nanny, has transferred into the strong woman, with an even core personality, who understands the difference between stories and the harsh realities of life:

In stories things could be made to happen. You could grow wings on horses, or give the heroine a voice like a koyel bird and people never died. In real life, if you brayed like a donkey, no amount of honey could sweeten your throat, people went away and returned only as memories. In real life, I reflected, you carried yourself on cold winter days in a foreign land by willing out a Mag – bag collection of those memories. You wondered which ones to keep and which to throw away.⁵⁹

A close analysis of the characters of Saroja and Kamini provides us with the contrasting lives of woman in the homeland and the host land. While being tied to the traditional norms of society, Saroja is unable to live life on her own terms, while on the other hand her daughter Kamini lives her life breaking away from tradition. Kamini is scared, afraid and disgusted by the institution of marriage and finds refuge in a foreign land, though most of her time she remains nostalgic. Post the death of her husband Saroja cuts loose from all ties and decides to travel something that she had wanted to do for long. The female characters or rather protagonists of *Badami* are women of possessing a lot of inner strength and high potential. On the one hand Bibiji occupies the third space as a part of her identity formation also gets torn in the haunting memory of her past, Leela on the other hand remains a half breed between the old and the new, the tradition and modernity. The writer is trying to portray that there is a fire in every woman, only a little spark is needed

⁵⁹Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem*. Canada. Penguin Books, 2006. P.236

to ignite it. This trait of women is seen by Badami at the same time providing Kamini the independence to take her life decisions. To leave behind her motherland and find an alternative life in the cold land of Canada.

Like Badami has explored the working of memory in women both in the home and host land similarly Shauna Singh Baldwin in her collection *English Lessons and other short stories*(1996) talks about women who have migrated to Canada and like Kamini or Bibiji had tried to assimilate within the host culture while however the host culture has only alienated and othered them. Through the short story that will be mainly discussed, “Toronto 1984”, we will see how the constant othering on the part of the homeland pushes these diasporic women to recollect and how they tend to hold on to their cultural identity even more.

The story “Toronto 1984” is a short story written post the Anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of Indira Gandhi in the year 1984. The story is narrated through the two major characters Bibiji and her daughter Piya who is a computer specialist, employed in an accounting firm in Canada and is doing financially well for herself and her family. Bibiji being of the earlier generation thinks it is not safe for an unmarried girl to go to Canada alone. Here we see Bibiji’s similarity with Kamini’s mother, Saroja. Both are objecting to their daughters’ will to go abroad for a career.

Piya’s ways of adapting to Canadian ways of life greatly worries Bibiji. Piya’s late nights and her dressing up in the western way worries Bibiji. This is a hint at the inter-generational conflict that arises between immigrants and the earlier generations. Bibiji thinks that getting Piya married to a traditional Sikh guy would solve all the problems. She further adds that Piya isn’t young anymore, she is twenty- four years of age. It is Bibiji’s fear that makes her think that marriage is the ultimate solution to all problems. Bibiji’s fears and her concerns for Piya is representative of a universal feeling experienced by immigrants all over the world, at the same time they are associated with the cultural conflicts associated with Asian Indian immigrants.

Piya being a young girl working in Canada, finds it convenient to carry “skirt”, “slip”, “lipstick”, carries a “brief case” and also wears “Canadian Pearls”. But Bibiji who desperately tries to uphold her traditional identity is against Piya’s style of dressing. Though Piya is amongst those immigrants who try to assimilate within the foreign culture, their continuous attempt to be one amongst the main stream Canadian citizens, yet she is seen wearing earrings owing to her ethnic individualism. The way one dresses up says a lot about one’s cultural identity and being in their traditional attires makes immigrants feel at home. Thus, Kamini tries holding on to her homeland through the post cards sent to her by her mother and the memories of her home. Here we see Piya trying to holding on to the same by remembering her traditional way of dressing up. This shows the pivotal role that memory plays in the lives of these women.

Another aspect of immigrants is their way of sticking to traditional food and cooking that for daily consumption in the foreign land. Food acts as a metaphor to the immigrant sensibility. Hence Bibiji tells Piya to eat the dals⁶⁰ as she has made them for her, post that she serves a curry made out of brinjal as it is Piya’s favorite. Lastly, Piya is served with “kheer” to keep the cultural and traditional aspect associated with food alive in the foreign land where Piya prefers cold milk over hot just the Canadian way. Thus, through Piya’s way of dressing and Bibiji’s way of cooking we see how the mother and the daughter have tried their best to retain memories of the homeland and to create a sense of belonging in an otherwise unknown world.

Immigrants especially those from South Asia are referred to as “Paki” by the whites. Though only people from Pakistan should be referred to as so, yet the whites refer to all people from the South Asia as “Paki”. Piya gets insulted and felt badly humiliated when she refuses to drink in the ceremony of raising a toast to the Queen. Her boss in a rather taunting tone called her a “damn Paki” and even added that she would have never hired Piya had she known the same. The sense of “othering” was felt by Piya for the first time in her Canadian firm. It is this realization that no matter how much she dresses talks or adapts their eating habits,

⁶⁰“Dal” is a term used in the Indian Subcontinent for dried, split pulses.

they would never consider her to be one of them. From that incident Piya changed from trousers to her traditional Salwar Kameez. This decision on her part shows her growth both as an individual and also as a woman. Piya too hurt by the way the representatives have treated her thinks that going back to her roots is her only refuge. This torn phase of Piya is that stage where a diasporic subject feels that she cannot get fully accepted by their host land and thus feels alienated and insulted from it. They regard their ancestral home as their permanent home to which all of them would return when conditions are favorable.

At the end of the story we see that Piya is forced to go by the conventions as her marriage is fixed by Bibiji to a Sikh boy in Canada. For the two women protagonists, foreign culture fails to give them that comforting and fulfilling refuge that they longed for. Piya's life is a quest, where she has to make her way through irrational colleagues and a mother rooted in traditions. The resolved positionality of her in relation to her homeland and host land makes her identity hybrid. At the end she emerges as a hybrid subject just like that of Bibiji or Kamini who does not leave the host land physically and holds the homeland and its ways in her memory and nostalgia. Like her other counterparts she also becomes a subject caught in between the pull and push of the two cultures. She becomes a hybrid subject who tries to hold on to both cultures without belonging to any of them wholly.

However, my specific research question was whether these women of the diaspora who acquire the third space not quite belonging anywhere but in-between, ultimately form an identity of their own. In this context it can be said that Kamini's steadfast decision to have a Doctoral Degree from Canada tells us that she does form an identity of her own. But the question still remains was she really accepted? Could she actually assimilate within the culture or was she accepted completely is still an unknown? Like Freud said that these women try to assimilate in the host land initially but the othering they face makes them recollect memories of the home land. Due to a sense of loss and mourning over the homeland they immerse themselves in memories and become individuals whose lives are working on the basis of memory. Nostalgia being the catalyst.

We see how these women through the memories of their homeland and their lived experiences create an identity of their own. In the process of Identity formation these women often acquire the “third space” or the “diasporic space” and construct their own culture. As Bhaba has pointed out that culture has no past or future but it is set in the present moment. Thus, we see how the characters such as Kamini, Shaila, Leela create their culture by negotiating their identity within the third space. Though the women are often subjected to racial discrimination, patriarchal oppression, marginalization and isolation in their quest to establish themselves yet the way they emerge as individuals acquiring the third space shows their initial triumph as diasporic subjects.

Conclusion

There are some common features of the Diaspora Literature, that differentiates them from other forms of literature. Through the course of the chapters it is clear that these issues are Racism, Nostalgia, Patriarchal dominance, sense of displacement. This thesis has examined the lives of women who are negotiating their everyday existence in Canada. The representation in the works of Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Singh Baldwin, and Bharati Mukherjee have been analyzed. The women I have mentioned in the course of study and mostly fictional characters yet their thesis also had shed light on the life of living legends, Lata Pada. Through the life of Lata Pada and her horrific experience of losing her whole family in the crash of 1985, the fictional character of Mukherjee 's short story, Shaila has been analyzed and understood. The way Lata Pada fought through oppression and othering (both in homeland and host land) and stood out stronger than ever is what I had in mind while studying the character of Shaila. However, though Shaila emerges as a strong and independent woman yet somehow, she was still tied to patriarchal shackles. Mukherjee's character of Shaila bears similarity to Lata Pada but couldn't completely shape up her life as her real life counterpart.

The representation of South Asian women in these works allow us to theoretically understand the complexities and nuances through which they become empowered agents in Canada and India. The experiences of these women as we see make them subjects who acquire the third space. They are often the decision makers as to how they want to construct their lives and relations and also choose how they want to continue their lives in either the home or host land. The themes that keep recurring are trauma, fighting racism and patriarchy both at home and in the host land and their continuous attempt to hold on to both traditional and the new modern have been studied and analyzed in this thesis through a gendered lens.

South Asian women have very little or no representation when it comes to popular culture or academics scholarship. More often than not they are regarded as oppressed women who are dependent on them

husbands or their sons. This stereotypical image of the South Asian women is what needs to be changed. Therefore, the characters discussed in this particular work are not 'typical' South Asian women who are nothing more than dependent wives but instead are empowered women who are trying to make a meaning out of their life. They are not individuals who confine themselves to the traditional and modern pull push but use this very binary as an agency to empower themselves. They are the constructors of the culture. The ways in which these women are portrayed in the works bring to us how they will continue to grow and prosper within the hybrid or the third space they have created for themselves. They are women who use the third space as a positive step and evolve stronger over time and even after the end of the stories. All the works discussed have an open – ended ending hinting to the fact that these women would continue to grow even after. The experience of the Indian immigrant women is very different from the women living back in their homeland. This is because the first and second generation of women might not necessarily hold the same sense of attachment or belonging and also because they face constant othering in the process of relocating to the host land. Therefore, their position both as an insider and as an outsider provide to them insights into both the old 'home' and 'adopted' home.

As discussed earlier that the female characters in the literary works acquire the third space therefore the ways their identities evolve are also different and varied. As Bhaba points out this in-between space of the immigrant is said to be a space of possibilities because this place is neither one nor the other but something else. The characters discussed in this work through their constant negotiations and struggles prove that the space that they occupy is a "new" space, and using this 'new' space they are constructing their identities. This third space that has come into our discussion time and again is the "tool of change" as pointed by diaspora theorist. By the utilization of the concept of 'third space' we are able to reconceptualize the subjectivities of the South Asian diasporic women who are largely under or misrepresented in academic scholarship and popular culture.

This reminds me of Stuart Hall's important point about our understanding of identities, that they are constantly in the process of becoming rather than being.

In this context I would like to mention about Stuart Halls observation when he is asserting that it is not about 'who we are' or 'where we came from' or for that matter how that representation puts emphasis how we might represent ourselves. But the third space enables these women to feel empowered even though everyday they are made to take up the dual challenge of fulfilling both the traditional expectations of the homeland at the same time adjusting to the 'modern' life in Canada.

Since South Asian women have been widely misinterpreted and have stereotypical representation in academic scholarship it is extremely important to shed some light on the same. This thesis is a feminist project of prime importance because through this thesis the reality of these women has been brought out. In reality the women who relocate occupy third space, which helps them to form an identity of their own. This "third space" makes them empowered agents.

Lastly, as mentioned earlier in this conclusion that the experience of these women and their journey of empowerment continues even after the stories end. More of such works are coming up in the recent times. This unexplored arena of Diasporic women has attracted young scholars like me and it is my belief that soon Diasporic literature of Canada would make its mark in the global context.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem.* Canada: Penguin Books, 1996. Print.

Badami, Anita Rau. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Canada: Alfred A. Knopf. Penguin Books, 2006. Print

Baldwin, Singh Shauna. *English lessons and other stories.* Goose lane Editions: 1999. Print

Blaise, Clark, and Bharati Mukherjee. *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting legacy of the Air India Tragedy.* Markham: Viking Penguin: 1987. Print

Mukherjee, Bharati. "The Management of Grief. " *The Middleman and Other Stories.* New York: Grove, 1988. Print

Secondary sources

Agarwal, Beena. "Partition and the Predicament of Sikh Minority in Anita Rau Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*" *The Commonwealth Review*, Vol. 19(2), pp.111-19. Print

Agnew, Vijay. "*South Asian Women in Ontario: The Experience of Race, Class and Gender*". *Women Changing the Academe.* Eds. S. Kirby et.al. Winnipeg: Sororal, 1991. Print

Banerji, Jaya. "*The Razor's Edge: Rev. of Tamarind Mem: A Novel*". *Indian Review of Books.* 16.2 Nov.-Dec. (1996)

Beauvoir, Simon de. *The Second Sex.* New York: Knopf, 1989. Print

Bhabha, Homi K. "*Introduction: Narrating the Nation.*" *Nation and Narration.* London: Routledge, 1990.
Print

---. *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Bhatia, Nandi. *Diasporic Activism and the Meditations of "Home": South Asian Voices in Canadian Drama.* Western University, Canada. 1996

Bissoonadath, Neil. *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada.* Toronto: Penguin, 1994.
Print.

Bhasin, Kamla, and Nighat Said Khan. *Some Questions on Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia.*
New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1986. Print

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diasporas: Contesting Identities.* London: Routledge, 1996. Print

Bromley, Roger. *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh
UP, 2000. Print

Butler Judith. "*Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist
Theory.*" *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988)

Burton, Antoinette. "*Stray Thoughts of an Indian Girl: The Nineteenth Century*", Oct. 1891 *Feminism in
India.* Ed. Maitrayee Chadhuri. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2004. Print

Caroline, Anita., (2013). "*Family as Depicted in the Select Novels of Anita Rau Badami.*" *American
College Journal of English Language and Literature* Vol. 2

Chattopadhyay, Suchorita & Dattaray, Debasree.ed. *At the crossroads of Culture and Literature.* Primus
Books. 2016

Clifford, James. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century.* Massachusetts: Harvard
UP, 1997. Print.

- Davison, Rosena. *Emigration, Relocation and Dislocation*. (www.erudit.org) Vol 23, 2004.
- D'Cruz, Premilla. Bharat, Sharmila. *Beyond Joint and Nuclear: The Indian Family Revisited*. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. 32(2):167-194. 2001. Print
- Forbes, Geraldine. "*The Women's Movement in India: Traditional Symbols and New Roles*". *Social Movements in India*. Ed. M.S.A Rao. Columbia: South Asia Books, 1979. Print
- Gilroy, Paul. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture beyond the Colour Line*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000. Print
- Gopinath, Gayatri. "*Nostalgia, Desire, Diaspora: south Asian Sexualities in Motion*". Duke University Press. 1997
- Hall, Stuart. "*Cultural Identity and Diaspora*". *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Eds. Jana Evans Braziel, and Anita Mannur. Wiley, 2003. Print
- Heartner, Megan. Emily, Punnett. *Memory, Trauma and the Body: An analysis of the Children of Air India: un/authorized exhibits and interjections*. Western University. 2016.
- Interview of V.S Naipaul by the Royal Geographic society in 2011(www.theguardian.com) last accessed 15.37 pm on 13.05.2019
- Jaidka, Manju. "*The Writer as Trishanku: Indian Writing in a Foreign Space*." *The Diasporic Imagination: Asian American Writing*. Ed. Somdatta Mandal. New Delhi: Prestige, 2000. Print
- Jain, Jasbir. *The Diaspora Writes Home: Subcontinental Narratives*. Springer. 2017. Print
- John, Mary E. "*Feminism in India and the West*". *Cultural Dynamics* 10.2(1998): 197-210. Print
- Johny, S. *Past Cultural Restrictions in Anita Rau Badami's Can You Hear the Nightbird Call? and Tamarind Mem*. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. Sage Journals.2014
- Jolly-Wadhwa, Kanwar Sonali. *Gender: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New Delhi: Gyan, 2000.

- Keith Axel, Brian. "*The Diasporic Imaginary*." *Public Culture*, Vol.14. (2).2002. Print
- Kishwar, Madhu. *Off the Beaten Track: Rethinking Gender Justice for Indian Women*. New Delhi: Oxford U P, 1999. Print
- LaCapra Dominique. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. John Hopkins University Press. 2001. Print
- Lugones, Marie. *On Complex Communication. Hypatia*. Volume 21, Number 3, Summer 2007, pp. 75-85. Print
- Mahtani, M. *Interrogating the hyphen-nation: Canadian multicultural policy and 'Mixed Race' identities*. *Social Identities* 8(2002): 67-90. Print.
- Major, C John. *The Families Remember*. Issued by the Commission of Inquiry into the Investigation of the Bombing of Air India Flight 182 (2007). Print
- Mehta, Rao Sandhya. *Exploring Gender in the Literatures of the Indian Diaspora*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2015. Print
- Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Doubleday, 1970. Print
- Mishra, Sudesh. "*Diaspora Criticism*." *Introducing Criticism at the 20th Century*. Ed. Julian Wolfreys. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2002. Print
- Mishra, Vijay. "*The Diasporic Imaginary: Theorizing the Indian Diaspora*". *Textual Practice* 10.3 (1996). Print
- Narula, Devika Khanna. *South Asian Diaspora: Summer Blooms in Winter Gardens*. New Delhi: Creative, 2005. Print
- Parameswaran, Uma. "*Home is Where Your Feet Are, and May Your Heart be there too*." *Writers of the Indian Diaspora*. Ed. Jasbir Jain. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1998. Print.
- . *A Meeting of Streams: South Asian Canadian Literature*, Toronto: TSAR Publishing, 1989. Print.

---. *A Study of Representative Indo English Novelists*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, 1976. Print.

Parameswaran, Uma. Dispelling the Spells of Memory: Another Approach to reading our Yesterdays”.

Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments. Ed. Monika Fludemik. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2003. P.ixv

Paranjape, Makarand. *In Diaspora*. New Delhi: Indialog Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2001. Print.

---. “*Writing Across Boundaries: South Asian Diasporas and Homelands*.” *Diaspora and Multiculturalism: Common Traditions and New Developments*. Cross/Cultures 66. Ed. Monika Fludernick. NY: Rodopi, 2003. 231-60. Print

Ruprai, Kaur Sharanjeet. *Being Sikh, being Women: Negotiating Religion and Gender in South Asian Women’s cultural Productions*. York University Press. Toronto.2013. Print

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands*. London: Granta Books and Penguin India, 1991. Print

Rahman, Shazia. "Marketing the Mem: The Packaging and Selling of a First Novel". *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad* 18.1 (1999). Print

Rustomji-Kems, Roshni. "Travelling Mems: Rev. of Tamarind Mem". *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad*. 15.2 (1997). Print

Rutherford, Jonathan, ed. "The Third Space: Interview with Homi. K. Bhabha". Lawrence and Wishart, ed. "A Place Called Home". *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. Print

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1978. Print

---. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1994. Print.

---. *The Politics of Dispossession*. London: Vintage, 1995. Print

Saraswati, Pandita Ramabai. *"Women's Place in Religion and Society"*.

Women in Patriarchy. Ed. Jasbir Jain. Jaipur: Rawat, 2005. Print

Saklikar, Sarojini Renee. *Children of Air India*. Nightwood Editions. 2013. Print

Showalter, Elaine, ed. *"The Feminist Critical Revolution"*. *The New Feminist*

Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory. Pantheon, 1985. Print

Sidhu, Birinder., (2014). *"Anita Rau Badami's Tamarind Mem."* Muse India.2014. Web 15 July 2014

Sengupta, Subhadra. *"Not Sour Enough."* Biblio: A Review of Books, 1996, Vol.2(9), pp.18

Somani, Rehana Alia. *Broken Passages and Broken Promises: Reconstructing the Komagata Maru and Air India Cases*. University of Western Ontario. 2012 (Monograph)

Shulamith Firestone. *The Dialectics of sex*. William Morrow and company. 1970. Print

Tejero, Navaro Antonia & Gupta, Taniya. *India in Canada, Canada in India*. Cambridge Scholars publishing. 2013

Ulla Manns. *Identity and collective memory in the making of nineteenth century feminism*. International journal of cultural Studies. 2016. Vol 19(2). Print

Vassanji, M.G. ed. *A Meeting of Streams: South Asian Canadian literature*. Toronto:

TSAR.1989. Print

Van der Veer, Peter. *Nation and Migration: The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995. Print

