



Research Paper

The novel by Chitra Divakaruni: exploring the issue of post-colonial relocation and its influence on the cultural dimensions of the Indian society. “Before We Visit the Goddess”

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Abstract

The current study paper explores the cultural and sociological aspects of Indian alienation and relocation shown in Chitra Divakaruni's book, "Before We Visit the Goddess". Dispersion pertains to the process of relocating from one's nation of birth to a foreign or host nation. The migrating populations and indigenous populations residing in their native land are involved in a cultural interaction that leads to the development of different characteristics between them. In this context, the term "such" refers to a specific object, idea, or The cultural encounter is a notable feature within the domain of postcolonial literary works.

Diverse cultural groups or ideological factions engage in battles with one another as a means to acquire supremacy and enforce their hegemonic perspectives. Given these circumstances, it can be observed that postcolonial literature demonstrates a vibrant vitality that corresponds to the dominant power dynamics present in this interaction. The position of power possesses the capacity to shape its ideology and exercise its cultural impact through the efficient implementation of procedures. This study primarily centers on the linguistic choices utilized in postcolonial literature, which acts as a consistent tool for writers to portray the interactions between persons who have migrated and those who reside in the host country.

Keywords

India; Post-colonialism; Divakaruni; Culture; Displacement

I. Introduction

Alienation represents a multifaceted condition that encompasses both cultural and psychological dimensions. The behavior in question is indicative of an aberrant nature. There exist multiple conditions that contribute to the experience of alienation resulting from a perceived lack of belongingness. These conditions can be categorized into two independent classifications, namely cultural and social circumstances. The cultural parameters are determined through the cultural and social influences that impact the human psyche.

Individuals may experience repressed memories or circumstances that have an impact on their psychological well-being. Consequently, individuals exhibit atypical behaviors. In certain instances, individuals may be susceptible to severe and adverse circumstances that can have a lasting impact on them. Fundamentally, these are the main factors contributing to the experience of alienation. Individuals who have experienced traumatic memories or undesirable circumstances often exhibit a tendency towards solitude. Alienation, in its initial manifestation, occurs when individuals choose to remain in solitude. The cause of their alienation stems from their desire for mental tranquility and psychological solace (Bloom, p.19).

The phenomenon of alienation is significantly influenced by social conditions (Bloom, p.169). According to the author (p.58), they exert an impact on the behavioral dimension of the human psyche. The manifestations of their high level of activity are evident in the manner in which individuals engage and interact with one another. Alienated individuals exhibit atypical patterns of social interaction, thereby deviating from conventional norms of interpersonal engagement. This phenomenon occurs due to the lack of encounters between individuals in typical and recurring circumstances (p.48). As a result, individuals may exhibit atypical behavior, which can be observed by others, thus drawing attention to their behavioral deviation.

The manifestation of this anomaly diminishes their capacity to engage in appropriate social interactions. Individuals exhibit various responses when interacting with individuals who are experiencing alienation. Consequently, individuals who experience alienation perceive themselves as "aliens" or deviant due to their lack

of social acceptance by others. During this particular phase, individuals who feel alienated tend to exhibit a psychological inclination towards solitude, albeit to varying degrees (p.115). This behavior can be attributed to their desire to evade the experience of inferiority. Indeed, their objective is to eliminate the criticism that is directed towards them by individuals.

About the author

Chitra Divakaruni is a renowned author of Indian-American descent. The individual in question has established a strong reputation through the analysis of current societal issues and prevalent challenges, with a particular focus on the alienation experienced by individuals affected by Indian displacement. Her written work serves as a prime example of effectively presenting current national affairs pertaining to the Indian-American community. Moreover, her literary works center on the experiences of Asian migrants, with a particular emphasis on their encounters in the United States. According to Wong and Hassan (118), the author's use of fictional style has a broad appeal that transcends age demographics.

The author's use of fictional elements in their literary works consistently emphasizes the inherent connection between texts and the real world. The features of her characters exhibit a strong sense of realism. The narrative structure and various literary components are subject to genuine representation through the utilization of experimental innovation.

In this manner, it is customary for them to construct a fictitious representation that accurately reflects the Indian encounter in the United States.

A brief synopsis of the novel

The novel chronicles the experiences of a family whose dynamics are simultaneously strengthened and weakened by the pervasive themes of love and ambition. The character known as Sabitri assumes the role of the protagonist in the narrative. She is the offspring of an economically disadvantaged baker residing in Bengal, India. The individual in question exhibits a strong drive for success and possesses a desire to successfully attain her educational goals. However, her family asserts that attaining an education is exceedingly unattainable. An individual hailing from Kolkata endeavors to realize her aspirations, yet ultimately encounters a setback in her pursuit. Over the course of several years, Sabitri's daughter, Bela, becomes motivated by her mother's strong desire for education. Bela, consequently, emigrates to the United States alongside her partner who is a refugee, Sanjay. Subsequently, the marital union between the aforementioned individuals deteriorates, prompting Bela to impart moral teachings to her daughter Tara. These lessons encompass principles of loyalty, freedom, dedication, and other relevant virtues that are deemed essential for navigating her existence in a foreign nation, distinct from her country of origin, India. Tara and her mother reside in Houston, Texas, where they experience a distinct interplay between Indian and American cultural influences in their daily lives.

Problem statement

This paper endeavors to examine the themes of alienation and displacement as portrayed in the novel *Before We Visit the Goddess*, published in 2017. The primary focus of this study will be the issue of alienation experienced by the main Indian characters in their interactions with their American counterparts. Hence, the research illuminates the phenomenon of Indian alienation as a distinct sensation of otherness. In order to provide further elucidation, it is perceived by individuals of Indian descent that they possess a distinct identity in comparison to the American populace due to their affiliation with a divergent cultural background. Consequently, individuals encounter social challenges when adapting to the American way of life. Therefore, this study examines the phenomenon of alienation as a consequence of displacement. In other words, the Indian individuals relocate from India to establish their residence in the United States.

This phenomenon of displacement engenders a sense of distinctiveness from American society, a topic that has received limited attention in prior scholarly investigations. My research will examine the phenomenon of Indian displacement as a catalyst for the characters' sense of alienation, stemming from their distinct cultural and societal backgrounds. Therefore, the study's importance lies in its examination of displacement as a contributing factor to the characters' sense of alienation, a topic that has received limited attention in existing research on the novel. Another significant aspect of this study is its contribution to the academic scholarship on Indian displacement, cultural studies, and the novel, particularly in relation to themes of alienation and social issues.

Objectives

The objective of this paper is to attain the subsequent objectives:

This study aims to investigate the sense of alienation experienced by individuals of Indo-American descent as a result of their relocation to a foreign country, contrasting it with their experiences in their country of origin.

This study aims to examine the role of displacement in inducing a sense of alienation among the characters as they depart from India and settle in America, thereby encountering a novel cultural environment.

II. Review of Literature

Surbhi Saraswat conducts research on the interplay between myth, gender, and their connection to the notion of counterculture within the novel.

In this literary work, the female protagonists embark on an extensive voyage to the United States with the purpose of attaining personal identity and autonomy. The novel chronicles the progression of these women as they navigate the path towards womanhood.

The novel explores the themes of identity and independence, which are pursued and ultimately attained by all of its characters (748).

In this study, Saraswat explores the notions of counterculture and self-concept within populations characterized by a significant presence of adolescents. The individuals in question are male adolescents who have been selected with the purpose of uncovering the underlying norms associated with "contraculture" (748). The emergence of contraculture is rooted in the pursuit of ideal norms that foster improved socialization dynamics within society. Saraswat persistently examines the underlying motivation behind the development of psychological barriers that impede the process of socialization. There are two factors that contribute to the formation of self-concept, namely alienation and anxiety. Conflicts and frustrations arise within a society when multiple individuals share common values within the broader social boundaries. These individuals are unable to attain certain values that they deem worthy of pursuit.

The underlying cause of this deprivation stems from individuals' lack of familiarity with the broader normative frameworks governing societal values within their respective communities. The norms that are established within "subculture" contexts are shaped by the unique processes of socialization within a particular society.

Individuals who are categorized as members of subcultures engage in a social process through which they internalize a set of values that are derived from the broader societal norms. It is important to note that these individuals are not deprived or hindered from achieving meaningful values (Saraswat, p.748). The successful implementation of these psychic measurements relied upon a cohort of male adolescents who were selected as the study's sample.

The inclusion of male adolescents in this study is likely motivated by their potential understanding and engagement with the concept of counterculture. The exploration of these concepts through the lens of psychoanalysis may potentially contribute to a more refined understanding and conceptualization of both. The study's sample consists of individuals from diverse social classes, selected specifically for their representation of the underlying characteristics and socialization norms within society. The study's target demographic bears a direct resemblance to the investigation of the genuine motivations behind countercultural movements. The selection of a gender-based target group enables Saraswat to explore the underlying implications of counterculture in a comprehensive manner. Therefore, the selection of the sample would yield a genuine evaluation of these concepts and their impact on individuals' personality.

Saraswat's research reveals that individuals who are institutionalized, specifically those categorized as delinquents in the study, exhibit a higher susceptibility to anxiety due to their inclination towards deviant behavior (p.749).

This debilitating psychological condition prompts individuals to generate capricious assertions regarding their own identities. The equivalent form of these statements can be characterized as a self-deprecating assessment of oneself. The elucidation of these disparaging remarks is rooted in the inclination of individuals to diminish their own values. Individuals start to develop a disapproval towards themselves, particularly regarding their actions and societal contributions. Individuals experience a gradual decline in their self-confidence due to a lack of adequate satisfaction with their immediate social milieu. This statement refers to the psychological force behind individuals' self-perceptions.

The initial facet of the reciprocal association between alienation and anxiety is being discussed.

According to Saraswat, the central aspect of this relationship is the coexistence of anxiety and peculiarity in individuals who possess self-concepts. The manifestation of a countercultural personality ultimately leads to the selection of individuals who engage in institutionalized delinquency.

Nevertheless, the non-institutionalized cohort, often labeled as delinquents, comprises of adolescent males who occupy a marginalized position within society. The cohort lacking affiliation with formal institutions demonstrates the most conspicuous manifestations of self-deprecating assertions. Moreover, the researchers establish a linkage between the highest degree of the reciprocal connection between isolation and anxiousness. The non-institutionalized community is characterized by its existence prior to the establishment of a genuine subcultural group. Within this non-institutionalized group, those who are not involved in delinquent activities abstain from engaging in any type of self-deprecating self-evaluation. The cohort of individuals who abstain from delinquent conduct demonstrates the least propensity for experiencing sentiments of estrangement and worry.

Abirami Kanagarajan undertakes an examination of the storytelling approaches utilized in the work. The author conducts an analysis of the narrative focalization in the novel to explore its role as a social action

contributing to women's growth. The literary work is widely recognized for its intricate nature, which stems from the author's skillful implementation of different focalizations. As a result, it is considered to be one of her most exceptional pieces of writing (p.53). Kanagarajan conducts a comprehensive examination of literary realism as it pertains to the novel's contextual framework. Realism, a prominent literary trend, gained dominance within the United States. As per Kanagarajan's analysis, the term "fits" is applicable to literary works that engage with reality in its unaltered state. This suggests that the integration of fantastical elements is not present within the realistic components of the novel's narratives. The individual demonstrates the capacity to perceive and understand reality by employing well constructed fictitious perspectives. In other words, they depict individuals, events, and places in their authentic and present state. However, individuals utilize symbols as a mechanism to actively interact with and critically examine reality, aiming to offer insights or enact modifications to particular facets of human existence. The characters and location in realistic literature exhibit a notable similarity compared to their actual life equivalents. These entities do not possess any additional or paranormal attributes. Individuals confront the obstacles associated with their daily lives as they arise within the framework of their particular cultures. Kanagarajan engages in scholarly investigation pertaining to the various variables that have played a significant role in the development and establishment of realism as a prominent literary movement.

Kanagarajan asserts that realistic literature encompasses the depiction of events that are identifiable and resonant with the reader's comprehension. Realistic writers often adopt a style that can be characterized as dull. The artistic approaches and the subject matter presented in the work are not characterized by innovation. In contrast, these narratives center their attention on the firsthand experiences of individuals within tangible societal settings. Consequently, the reader fails to obtain intellectually stimulating pleasure from actively engaging with these writings. The major aim of literary realism is to eradicate the use of fantastical and exaggerated aspects within literary works. Realism can be understood as a literary response to the styles of fiction and romanticism. The novels primarily focus on the characterization, setting, topics, and narrative point of view. The frequency of using ornamental language elements, such as figures of speech and metaphors, into their discourse is low. Within this particular framework, the notion of realism is presented as a divergent viewpoint in relation to idealism, a literary propensity that has traditionally garnered popularity among writers who lean towards the romantic and fantastical genres (p.53).

Kanagarajan utilizes the concepts of hermeneutics in order to direct attention towards the symbolic characteristics inherent in literary texts. The book employs the author's subjective interpretation of the universe and conveys it through the utilization of symbols. Consequently, the idea of hermeneutics requires a significant degree of understanding pertaining to the text and its depiction of the author's building of the literary events and characters. As a result of this reasoning, the analysis of literary texts would produce varied interpretations concerning the anthropological circumstances portrayed within the literary occurrences. Hence, the selected literary works can be subjected to analysis through an exploration of the author's personal interpretation of her own lived experiences and its consequential influence on the psychological condition of the characters inside the novels.

Therefore, it is possible for researchers to approach the analysis of the theme of ethnicity in the selected literary works from an academic standpoint. The central theoretical argument of hermeneutics critique asserts that the interpretation of literature ought to be based on pragmatic assumptions rather than theoretical ones. The examination of a literary text is significantly dependent on both the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of the text. The text requires a thorough analysis of the particular historical circumstances in which it was written. Moreover, it is crucial that criticism upholds a requisite degree of direct involvement with the author. By embracing this methodology, critics are able to skillfully navigate the pitfall of anachronism, which pertains to the examination of a literary work without duly considering the particular temporal milieu in which it was produced.

Hence, the utilization of hermeneutic critique as a valid approach may yield benefits in the analysis of the selected novels by actively engaging the author in the analytical process, with the objective of revealing the latent motivations that propel the narrative.

The literary work comprises hermeneutic components, which are concerned with the interpretation and comprehension of the written material. The story elements presented in this context explore the numerous psychological complexity that individuals encounter when confronted with disturbing thoughts. Throughout the course of individuals' daily lives, they are confronted with a multitude of circumstances that give rise to psychological distress. Escapist fiction aims to portray and introduce non-traditional literary situations in order to captivate the reader and immerse them fully in the unfolding narrative events. Within this particular framework, escapist fiction offers the reader or audience a mechanism via which they can detach themselves from the banal facets of their everyday lives. The literature employs compelling components by introducing psychic alternatives that seek to navigate the obstacles encountered by the reader. The book provides therapeutic and didactic features by promoting reader engagement with the escapist aspects of fictional literature. Furthermore, it actively interacts with the physical facets of human existence through the simulation of the complexities of reality, albeit in a unique

and atypical fashion (Kanagarajan, 55). Hence, it serves as a means of addressing and remedying the deficiencies inherent in a specific social framework. Hence, the concept of "escape" assumes a prominent position throughout escapist literature present in diverse literary genres, including satire, fantasy fiction, and science fiction.

Escapist fiction, which is distinguished by the inclusion of fantastical elements, represents a collective tendency to pursue psychological relief through means of escapism. Kanagarajan thinks that the genre of fantasy functions as a manifestation of the shared desire for escapism, offering individuals psychological consolation and facilitating the process of healing. Head (YEAR) argues that the principal purpose of fantasy in works of fiction is to operate as a tool for imagination, with escapism assuming a secondary role. Both fantasy and escapism encapsulate the fundamental nature of literary imagination. According to Head (p. 56), the inclusion of fantastical aspects in literature might function as a cautionary indication of the possible dangers that may arise from an uncontrolled imagination, wherein the prevalence of escapism becomes prominent. The author's depiction of supernatural entities, such as dragons and fairies, serves as a prime illustration of these particular components. In addition, escapist literature fulfills supplementary objectives. One of the main goals is to provide amusement. It evokes a range of behaviors and experiences that serve as alternate expressions of reality. Within this particular context, the notion of escapism can be seen as corresponding to the concept sometimes referred to as a "guilty pleasure" (p.55). Kanagarajan contends that the notion of a "guilty pleasure" pertains to the gratification received from indulging in escapist literature, characterized by romantic narratives that lack a basis in actuality. However, these literary works portray and examine the flaws, virtues, and vices of humanity by employing inventive and fantastical depictions. The primary aim of this study is to elucidate the relationship between alienation and displacement, and the subsequent social and cultural ramifications experienced by the central characters in Divakaruni's novel *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017).

Interpretation and Discussion

In his book "Revolution in Psychology: Alienation to Emancipation," Ian Parker (2007) posits that alienation refers to the condition of living in solitude or occupying an abnormal position. In the field of psychology, for instance, it signifies the intricate condition wherein individuals experience feelings of isolation and a deficiency in their sense of affiliation. According to the author (p.83), individuals refrain from engaging in social interactions with others within their respective society or community.

Alienation represents the most conspicuous characteristic of estrangement.

The presence of alienation is apparent in both social and cultural contexts. However, there is a correlation between alienation and the conditions of cultural alienation (p.200). The reason for this phenomenon can be attributed to the multitude of events that occur in individuals' lives.

As posited in the preceding paragraphs, social alienation can arise from the repression of memories or experiences, leading individuals to experience solitude and subsequently become alienated.

In this way, individuals have limited opportunities for social encounters and interactions (p.193). Conversely, individuals find themselves subject to the adverse consequences of their own cognitive processes and suppression. Social alienation is a phenomenon that is closely linked to numerous interactions and occurrences (p.70). It is possible for individuals to experience adverse circumstances.

According to Abu Jweid (2022, p.9), individuals who experience alienation are subsequently subjected to the adverse consequences of such circumstances. They lack memories or detrimental experiences. The individuals are experiencing a profound sense of surprise and astonishment in response to their immediate environment. The individuals experience negative emotions in response to their environment, leading them to prefer solitude (p.142).

Divakaruni's novel, *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017), explores the theme of cultural alienation. Bela exhibits a significant level of aspiration. However, she acknowledges the disparity between her current circumstances and her desired future. The individual consistently recalls their previous experiences. Consequently, she has a tendency to reside in seclusion. Therefore, the individual's elusive history and uncertain trajectory remain incongruous, resulting in the gradual dissolution of her lofty aspirations.

Individuals who experience alienation tend to suppress their negative emotions.

According to Parker (p.112), there is a lack of belief among individuals that the general public will perceive them as conforming to societal norms. There exists a lack of adequate confidence among individuals regarding the assurance of equitable treatment on par with their fellow human beings. In this context, the suggestion is made that individuals engage in a process of alienation, wherein they actively suppress their adverse circumstances and recollections (p.142). Over time, individuals may develop a sense of paranoia, leading them to harbor suspicions about others and perceive them as adversaries. The critique of individuals who experience alienation is predominantly suppressed within their unconscious psyche. According to the author (p.142), the unconscious mind serves as a repository for memories and situations that are deemed undesirable.

In the novel *Before We Visit the Goddess*, published in 2017, the character Bela experiences a sense of estrangement from American society. She experienced difficulty in adapting to the presence of other individuals

from the United States in her surroundings. The individual exhibits a tendency to engage in solitary walks due to a lack of companionship. Consequently, the protagonist experiences a sense of deprivation due to her lack of a sense of ownership, as she is not native to America and perceives all Americans as unfamiliar. This sentiment is expressed through her recollection of her senior year, during which she frequently embarked on solitary walks along the rain-soaked Brazos River, plagued by the unsettling notion that she did not fit in (p.125).

Moreover, alienation, such as the phenomenon of repression within the context of social alienation, represents a manifestation of a societal feeling of not belonging. Both repression and alienation are indicative of the development of an alienated psyche (Parker, p.98). The correlation between repression and alienation is evident within the context of social circumstances. Individuals resort to repressing past memories and experiences in their unconscious minds as a means of avoidance (Abu Jweid, 2016, p.531).

The unconscious mind, in turn, exerts an influence on the psychophysical structure of the body (p.100). Individuals may experience a sense of alienation, leading to atypical behavior. Behavioral abnormality can be understood as a manifestation of psychological distress that is stored in the unconscious mind. The deformation of body behavior is attributed to repression, which functions as a social mechanism of alienation within the context of this psychological process (p.117). In contrast, alienation can be understood as a psychological disorder that arises from the experience of cultural alienation. Individuals who experience alienation often feel disillusioned by certain events or individuals, which subsequently manifest in atypical behaviors, such as living in a state of alienation. Non-belonging can be considered as an additional phase within the broader concept of social alienation (p.194). Both repression and alienation are two distinct components of the phenomenon of alienation. Individuals who experience alienation tend to harbor suspicions that others are intending to cause them harm. Individuals experience a sense of apprehension regarding the potential interference of others in their lives. Consequently, individuals experience a perpetual state of apprehension due to the potential harm that may arise from accusations and suspicions. Alienation, in this context, arises from a multitude of social tensions.

In her work titled "Alienation: a Social Process," Diane Einblau posits that there exists a significant interconnection between the various social dimensions of alienation.

They exhibit simultaneous proximity. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of alienation from a sociological standpoint, it is imperative to examine the social components inherent in the phenomenon. In a similar vein, the examination of alienation from a societal standpoint, while neglecting to address the individual elements of individuals, may result in a deficiency in comprehending the fundamental connotations of alienation (p.84). In the novel "Before We Visit the Goddess" published in 2017, the character Bela provides a narrative of her social encounters. The protagonist and her Indian associate experience a sense of alienation due to their upbringing in an Indian cultural milieu that diverges from the American way of life. His family regards his homosexual inclination as a form of deviance: "I endeavored to find the appropriate language." One of my Indian acquaintances at the educational institution, who is also a member of the LGBTQ+ community and experiences estrangement from their family, disclosed to me that their family regarded their sexual orientation as a "perversion" (p.135).

The cultural conditions of alienation, however, arise from external circumstances. Individuals who experience feelings of alienation may potentially endure psychological distress as a result of traumatic occurrences (Parker, p.82). For instance, armed conflicts have the potential to give rise to circumstances that result in individuals experiencing profound grief and sorrow. Individuals who feel alienated often seek solace in environments that afford them solitude, thereby avoiding participation in such events. Individuals express a desire to avoid participating in events that have had a significant impact on their lives, ultimately leading to a state of isolation. The experience of isolation can be seen as a form of alienation and may contribute to the development of neurosis. This phenomenon is associated with two distinct factors. Initially, the phenomenon of alienation arises in a consistent manner when individuals choose to isolate themselves.

When individuals reside in an isolated location, the experience of alienation emerges as a prevalent symptom. Seclusion can be considered a cultural characteristic of alienation. The correlation between alienation and loss is the second factor (p.82). To exemplify, when individuals experience the loss of their most cherished or beloved possession, they subsequently exhibit a proclivity towards solitude.

The conditions of alienation can also vary in relation to the concept of self-alienation. The term "it" pertains to a psychological condition in which individuals experience a sense of estrangement or detachment within their native countries. In reality, individuals possess a sense of being the indigenous population of a specific nation. However, in instances where their nation experiences a significant event such as an economic downturn or instances of political misconduct, individuals may perceive a sense of detachment as they find themselves stripped of their fundamental rights as members of the community. Subsequently, individuals experience a sense of discordance arising from the incongruity between their patriotic ideals and their roles as members of the human race. Individuals, in their capacity as human beings, experience a state of self-alienation, which is a form of alienation resulting from collective occurrences (Parke, p.16). In this context, alienation can be understood as an atypical psychological condition that is associated with feelings of estrangement due to individuals'

disillusionment with the decline of their nation's social and cultural environments. In the present study, the term "psychic alienation" will be utilized synonymously with "self-alienation" in order to facilitate interpretation and textual analysis.

According to Parker (p.40), the pinnacle manifestation of alienation is characterized by a profound sense of seclusion and solitude. The manifestation of this phenomenon is characterized by individuals' reactions to events, memories, or situations that have a profound impact on their psychological well-being. The aforementioned events can manifest in diverse manifestations, including acts of violence, experiences of loss, and feelings of disillusionment (Abu Jweid, 2020, p.12).

The experience of being disconnected from others can be described as a state of alienation, characterized by a sense of disharmony between individuals who are alienated and those who are not. This sentiment reaches its peak in the manifestation of animosity.

Individuals who experience alienation tend to develop a growing aversion towards others, including both individuals and the larger community. This pertains to the phenomena of isolation and seclusion in which individuals develop a sense of familiarity. During the phase of alienation, individuals who experience alienation develop a heightened sense of "absolute subjectivity" (p.122), wherein their focus and concern are solely directed towards themselves. The reason for their actions is rooted in their desire to eliminate events, situations, and memories that are inconvenient (p.83). Bela embodies the phenomenon of alienation, as she experiences a sense of detachment from American society. The migration to America was undertaken by the individual in question, accompanied by her romantic partner, with the intention of pursuing their respective aspirations.

In the novel *Before We Visit the Goddess*, published in 2017, the characters Bela and Sanjay experience a sense of alienation upon their arrival at the airport, leading them to suppress their emotions. The individuals in question lack familiarity with American culture and lifestyle. Consequently, individuals suppress their concerns in an effort to project a sense of gravity and earnestness to their American constituents. The source of this concern stems from their sense of alienation and unfamiliarity in the United States. The individual in question is depicted as standing outside, separated by frosted double doors. Notably, they appear thinner than the observer recalls, and their unkempt student beard has been replaced by a well-groomed mustache. The individual explains that they grew this facial hair in an effort to be perceived as more respectable and credible by Americans. On page 81, it is observed that the individual in question exhibited a level of concern that was commensurate with the emotional state experienced by the narrator.

Displacement

According to Ashcroft et al. (p.68), displacement can be defined as the deliberate or involuntary migration of individuals from their native land to unfamiliar territories. Displacement occurs when individuals are compelled to depart from their native land and establish residence in alternative locations. In alternative terms, displacement can be delineated as the phenomenon wherein individuals from a particular national group or culture disperse and relocate to various regions across the globe (p.63).

According to Ashcroft et al., these individuals encounter challenges in the process of integrating into the host country, leading to feelings of alienation and persistent contemplation of returning to their home country, given the appropriate circumstances. Consequently, individuals often possess a strong inclination to enhance their ancestral territory, wherein their interpersonal connections are consistently founded upon harmonious interactions and a collective awareness among the various groups involved.

Additionally, Ashcroft et al. highlight that individuals who have been deported and find themselves in displaced communities experience adverse effects due to the deportation process. These individuals maintain a strong connection to their original culture in their day-to-day lives and perpetuate the narratives and traditions associated with their homeland (pp. 13-14). Therefore, while individuals who have been deported and are experiencing displacement are typically influenced by the cultures of the host country, they continue to hold onto the belief of eventually returning to their country of origin and maintaining the cultural elements associated with their ancestral homeland. Furthermore, Ashcroft et al. assert that the discourse surrounding displaced culture centers on the subjective encounter with both separation and entanglement, as individuals navigate the complexities of residing in one location while simultaneously yearning for and recalling another place. Consequently, individuals who have been disowned experience a sense of displacement upon their arrival in a foreign territory. The sensation described bears resemblance to the experience of expatriates who depart from their country of origin and subsequently encounter a loss of their cultural identity (p.15).

In the novel *Before We Visit the Goddess*, published in 2017, the character Bela serves as an illustration of voluntary displacement. The protagonist makes the decision to depart from India and relocate to America alongside her romantic partner, Sanjay. She relocated to the United States in order to pursue her ambition. She and Sanjay intend to wed promptly upon their arrival in the United States.

Furthermore, Sanjay can be identified as a political activist who harbors aspirations of attaining economic success within the United States. The subsequent passage depicts their initial arrival in San Francisco.

Upon Bela's arrival in the United States at the age of nineteen, she possessed documents that falsely indicated her status as a tourist. Sanjay, being the sole acquaintance she had within the entire nation, was the only individual known to her at that time. He had not yet become her spouse; their intention was to enter into matrimony promptly upon her arrival. She exhibited a strong infatuation towards him, as evidenced by her engagement in this desperate action. However, it is possible that she harbored some degree of mistrust towards him, as evidenced by her sweaty palms upon the airplane's arrival in San Francisco. (p.81)

In addition, postcolonial critics demonstrate a keen awareness of a specific genre of literature that is generated by the dominant social power and the literary compositions that emerge from the colonized individuals. Therefore, postcolonial criticism focuses on examining the role of the western literary canon and the historical significance of western enlightenment as dominant forms (Ashcroft et al, p.13). The themes and issues of displacement and unhomeliness give rise to both individual and collective resistance, impacting cultural identity.

Regarding the previous point, the discourse surrounding displaced identity is pertinent to understanding both the experience of displacement and the concept of multi-local supplementation. Consequently, the concept of displacement is posited as a "loosely coherent adaptive constellation of responses to the experience of residing in a state of displacement" (Ashcroft et al, p.14). Moreover, it is widely recognized as a symbol of the ongoing struggle faced by individuals who have been forcibly removed from their established place in society. To put it differently, the perception of cultural politics that positions its goals in opposition to nationalism and assimilation is regarded within the context of societal consciousness regarding displacement. Therefore, the term 'displacement' is applicable to the majority of expatriate communities, regardless of the reasons for their forced migration. In this context, the concept of displacement is employed to highlight the significance of a particular place as a geographical location within the discourse of self-identity.

In the novel *Before We Visit the Goddess*, published in 2017, the character Bela undergoes a period of familial separation. The protagonist makes the decision to separate from her mother, Sabitri. Prior to embarking on her journey, she takes leave of her mother. The reason for her apprehension towards this separation stems from her concern over her mother's potential anger, which in turn arises from her forced relocation to America. Due to this rationale, the protagonist pens a farewell letter to her mother, speculating that Sabitri has likely received the aforementioned note, which Bela had entrusted to Bishu's acquaintance in Kolkata, the individual who assisted her in obtaining her passport and ticket. Sabitri would likely experience a significant degree of anger. Bela harbored apprehension regarding her potential actions, both towards herself and towards Bishu's acquaintance (p.83). The following is the correspondence authored by Bela, addressed to her mother: "Upon your perusal of this message, I shall have embarked on my journey to the United States with the intention of uniting in matrimony with Sanjay."

The individual's well-being was at risk in this particular context. This is the reason for his departure from Kolkata. I am unable to sustain my existence in the absence of his presence. The individual expresses remorse for their delayed disclosure, acknowledging that had they informed the recipient earlier, the recipient would have intervened. (Author's last name, page number). Furthermore, Ashcroft et al. contend that displacement encompasses "the encounters of detachment and interconnection, of residing in one location while recollecting and yearning for another" (p.14). This implies that individuals who are disowned may experience a sense of displacement in a new territory, similar to those who undergo a loss of cultural identity due to being separated from their homeland. The formation of dislodges' identity is contingent upon the connections they have with their homeland, as well as the distinction between fictional and genuine dislodges. Consequently, the fundamental aspects of our self-identity will be diminished due to the erosion of our underlying framework in the world or our sense of purpose within society. The impact of displacement on individuals is profound, leading to a state of existence characterized by significant upheaval and disruption. This intervention is targeted towards individuals who have experienced a loss of their sense of belonging and stability within their community, resulting in them becoming an integral part of the homeless population. This is significant because it impacts their social and functional capabilities, which are crucial for their successful reintegration into both housing and society (p.14).

Encompassing various aspects such as social class, society, culture, and the individual's own existence. Moreover, the emotional experience of belonging and personal identity significantly impacts the physical surroundings of the colonized population. According to Ashcroft et al. (year), the concept of displaced people is characterized as an authentic, inherent, and enduring characteristic that is passed down from one generation to the next (p.76). Essentially, the phenomenon of displacement has been passed down from ancestors to posterity as a tangible manifestation of the ongoing process of migration, serving to reinforce the notions of belonging and independence. The notion of displacement is employed to exemplify the manifestation and conceptualization of individuals' personal traits or collective affiliations, such as national identities and cultural values. The concept is employed with regard to the process of assimilation of migratory individuals into the new host culture.

In the novel *Before We Visit the Goddess*, published in 2017, the character Bela experiences a diminished sense of belonging due to her residence in a foreign country, specifically the United States. Following her displacement, she encountered difficulties in adapting to the American cuisine and cultural norms.

In addition, both she and Sanjay experience a sense of homelessness. Initially, their ability to adapt to life in America was severely hindered due to the stark contrasts between their previous living conditions and the new environment. The individuals in question experience a lack of comfort within the United States as a result of their limited understanding and familiarity with American society.

At present, Bela finds herself in the seventh month of her pregnancy and is experiencing difficulty in accommodating her growing belly behind the steering wheel of the pre-owned Chevrolet vehicle that Sanjay had recently acquired. The individual in question did not feel at ease navigating American roadways and instead opted to commute to work using the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system. She also experienced fear, however, she remained resolute in her determination. Possessing the skill of driving would enable her to actively seek employment opportunities with higher remuneration subsequent to the birth of her child, thereby facilitating the realization of her aspiration to acquire her desired residence. (pp.99-100)

III. Conclusion

The primary focus of this study has been on the themes of alienation and displacement as depicted in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *Before We Visit the Goddess*, published in 2017.

This study has examined the novel as a representation of the Indian diasporic experience in the United States, focusing on the main characters and the various locations depicted in the narratives. The main characters are depicted as individuals of Indian origin who emigrate from India to the United States, where they encounter unfamiliar individuals and a distinct cultural environment. The settings have been previously examined as the initial Indian locales for the characters, as well as the subsequent American society to which the characters relocate. Consequently, the immigrants' process of relocation has been elucidated through the application of the theoretical construct of displacement. Additionally, their unfamiliar emotions serve as a manifestation of their social estrangement, stemming from the challenges they encountered in assimilating into the American way of life. The focus of this study has been on exploring the dual concepts of alienation and displacement within the novel, with the aim of illustrating the transformative experiences of Indian individuals in the United States. The reason for this phenomenon is that displacement engenders a sense of incongruity among migratory individuals, as they find themselves in a host society that is markedly distinct from their native homeland. Consequently, the examination of the characters' unfamiliar emotions in America resulting from their relocation from their indigenous Indian homeland has led to a scrutiny of the experience of alienation.

Displacement, in addition, is recognized and defined as the inclusive conceptualization of diverse cultures and traditions as portrayed in the chosen novel. One prominent manifestation of cultural diversity lies in the capacity of various civilizations to mutually comprehend and value one another based on shared understandings and respect. In certain cultural contexts, certain cultural practices may not be deemed acceptable, whereas they may be considered customary within the host culture. In the present context, the host culture serves as a conducive means of integrating diverse cultures within a single location. This location is associated with the indigenous culture of the host community. Nevertheless, this location experiences substantial transformations as it gradually diminishes in its national and hereditary significance to a certain degree. The original location experiences inherent transformations as it encounters various cultural diversities.

The Indian immigrants exhibit distinct socio-cultural characteristics that set them apart from the American host population. Displacement encompasses both the indigenous host culture and the foreign cultures. Therefore, the study has provided evidence that displacement and alienation are interconnected socio-cultural elements of the Indian experience in America.

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