CHAPTER-3

The English word "hyphen" comes from the Greek word *huphen*, meaning 'together'. Comparing words for hyphen in other languages shows different nuances of the meaning, for example, the Dutch word for hyphen is *verbindingsteken* or *koppelteken*, in German it is *Verbindungszeichen* and in French it is called a *trait d'union* – all mean literally a 'sign of connection' or a 'sign of union'. It is like having a double name; one could not exist without the other, without being incomplete. As such, the hyphen signifies that two separate entities are now joined and belong together. Another interesting phenomenon is that the English word *hyphen* is used for joining words as well as breaking off a word into syllables. (In Dutch two different words exist to indicate sign for connection or the breaking off: *verbindingsteken* and *afbreekstreepje*).

In a philosophical sense, a hyphen is a transit space, where the transition from one entity to the other occurs. It is the space and time of neither and either or the hybrid. The hyphen is the liminal or undecided in-between, the *entredeux* or 'true in-between' which includes *tous les deux*, all the twos, meaning all the possibilities, which Cixous (9 25) and Derrida (Cixous 123) both refer to. Derrida uses the term *brisure* for the concept of the hyphen, a "bringing together and yet separating what is hinged, operating across the divide yet never belonging entirely to either side" (138).

A series of hyphens becomes a dashed line. In technical drawings a dashed line indicates what is invisible, what is hidden behind the visible. Also, a dashed line on a document functions as a border, indicating where to separate, tear or cut. A

hyphen (or dash) stands for separation and connection, it indicates and repairs the cut. This is an interesting condition that resonates with the postmodern transnational paradigm—symbolized in, and performed by, the hyphen, between two separate geographies, sociographies and cultural identities. The hyphen connects the visible and the invisible, the tangible and the intangible, while marking the area of passage or transition from one state to another, the transit between absence and presence, myself as I was and the other.

A hyphen is not for instance the full-stop, but rather the "not stopped-stoppable". The poetic has a capacity to reveal different and unexpected dimensions, even in the simplest things and everyday experiences, creating new associations and ways of seeing. The hyphen as connection relates to the concept of the rhizome, as described by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as in that the rhizome is the conjunction, "and…and…and…. …as such, a rhizomic collection of hyphens trace where I have been, connecting all the places where I have lived, defining my psycho geographical habitat, which is always contracting and expanding, forwards, backwards and sideways" (25). The Oxford dictionary has an entry for "hyphenated Americans", meaning American people of mixed nationality, such as Irish-Americans. Lucy Lippard writes about "Americans living on the hyphen", (62) those who are in-between two cultures, such as the native American-Indians. Giuliana Bruno identifies the hyphen as, "home is a hyphen, hyphen is my home. The hyphen is the porous connection, the liminal space in-between. Like our skin, it unites what is inside and what is outside, it marks our intimate topography, the places we have lived, outlining out habitat through time and space. It pulsates, oscillates and assimilates, and is therefore always in flux, in osmosis between here and there, the

past and present". It is the fragile, fragmented line of memories that moves in all directions like a running stitch through our lives, connecting the visible and invisible momentary traces of time, of people, experiences and places that shaped and shape our identities and our belonging in motion. For diaspora there is often an element of trauma in the new life, caused by the disruption and destruction of leaving all that was familiar behind in the home country. Memories are ties to the places and people left behind. They can be painful because they are reminders of what is absent in the present, and yet, simultaneously, they hold a valid key to cultural identity and personal history and belonging amidst all the changes. On the subject of memories and remembering**,** Homi Bhabha notes, "Remembering is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful remembering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present" (63).

The memories act as the hyphen between the here and there, demarcating the past and the present. The hyphen unfolds as a map of memories, a map of identity and belonging. G. Bachelard pointed out that "space contains compressed time" when he coined the term "topography of our intimate being" (8). As we see that uprooting and displacement do not only apply to diaspora. It occurs in all manner of diverse macro and micro levels, across societies and within individuals. What this suggests is that we are all, to lesser or greater degrees, in some form encountering transnational characteristics of longing and belonging or dislocation as belonging. It is very real, for example, to experience dislocation when one has never left home (as that place of origin, birth place, etc.) for the increasing complexities of (technological) networks that deliver cultural differences whether it is via the tele technologies (TV, internet, etc.) that invade homes, or the shifts that occur across or

according to migrant patterns. This is perhaps more legitimate for those who can class themselves as “diaspora”, but we are recognizing “their” characteristics also as more common to a wider community in a Postmodern world.

Before we understand belonging and displacement leading towards the formation of “a hyphenated self” it is necessary to contemplate how we belong and what is and makes a place home and therefore what it means to be at home or not at home. Usually the place where we live is called ‘home’ which can mean the house itself or the geographical location—the area, town, city or country. City, the district, the street, and lastly the number and the house itself. The distinctions here could be described as differences of proximity with respect to contexts of ‘site’ and ‘sight’. The first evoking place and the second a bodily engagement with it, away from this legitimate origin home as in familial birth place etc. The more significant nationhood becomes—this is produced from the condition out-of-sight and so the scale of place as home is enlarged. At home, more specific sites—province, city, district, street, house and its number—closer in proximity and sharper in detail provide the necessary registers for identity. One identifies with smaller, more regional concerns and therefore these two distinct scenarios of relations to, and of, home. This inside-outside spatial condition remarks on how one’s identity is complicated in relation to belonging and displacement via scale, provincial, national and bodily concerns. Thus as our body moves, so does our perspective of what constitutes home. It is on this note that here the second idea of belonging as displacement might start to be understood, in the light of, as Anthony Vidler terms it, “the precarious relationship between psychological and physical homes” (xi).

Christiane Alsop notes how all cultures, “tend to divide the world into a here and there, we and they” (16-19) and how the “connotations of a nation include the incarnate belonging, to a place and its people, to a heritage, to a community”. She explains that when we leave this place where we belong, we “disturb the order of the divide” between here and there, between insider and outsider, and “the gap of not belonging opens up”. Migration not only upsets the usual external divide, it also creates a new personal and internal divide between attachments to the homeland and the new country, as Loretta Baldassar in *Home and Away* points out, “Migration is not simply about departure and establishing one’s home in a new country. It is also about ties to the old homeland and the influence of this attachment on the development of ethnic identity in the new homeland” (70).

Belonging as such has an undertone of stability and permanence, as it is attached to a place of fixity. So how does leaving, not being “there” affect our sense of belonging and identity? Do we stop belonging there when we settle somewhere else or will we always continue belonging there? This question perpetually haunts our minds. For such people, identity is no longer rooted in one single homeland. Their between-ness is continually improvised as they move through time and space, and simultaneously through a series of fluid and invented identities. These identities do not necessarily coalesce into something hybrid, but rather coexist, suspended and independent one from the other. This suspended coexistence constitutes a type of strangeness located within the simultaneities of between-ness.

Belonging and displacement (in relation to identity) turn out to be far more complex, fluid and multi-layered concepts than they appear at first sight—for

example, we may simultaneously experience a belonging in both places (or a plurality of experience per se), or a belonging in some ways but not in other ways, at some times and spaces, certain moments or in particular circumstances. What is subsequently of critical importance in this notion of identity and belonging—in the plural scene—is recognition that it is perhaps not fixed or permanent. There are many sides to belonging that are constantly subjected to change, flux and multiplicity. M. Foucault emphasized a notion of a time and space (an epoch) of simultaneity, juxtaposition and dispersal. This is not a time and space condition that allows for difference to happen through oppositional thinking but rather through differences according to multiple juxtapositions that mark experience in a moment. Diaspora instantly recognize this position of being in-between, of feeling suspended—between two countries, two cultures, two homes—all these twos (and we shall return to this notion from Cixous and Derrida (Cixous 25 123) of *tous les deux*, or *all the twos*)—simultaneously together, never predictable, create a threshold that complicates belonging and longing, displacement and certainty of place, etc.

In his "Moving images of Home" John Di Stefano describes this migrant's state of being in suspense as "the tension of knowing both worlds and never being able to arrive or entirely depart". In relation to this state of displacement he regards the concept of home as "a sense of being between places, rather than being rooted definitively in one singular place" (39-40). Gaston Bachelard writes how "an entire past comes to dwell in a new house"(5) and this is exactly what happens when we take up residence in a new place, we bring not only our material belongings, but also our immaterial personal and cultural belongings, such as memories, relationships, cultural identity, customs etc., from our place(s) of origin**.** Norman Bryson points

out how domestic objects create cultural memory and as such provide a tangible, transportable familiarity and history which reinforces aspects of identity and belonging. In this way we project ourselves with all the objects that belong to us and transfer with us through time and space and which give us some sense of self and belonging—even if this belonging is to somewhere else and far away. Bachelard calls this "the topography of our intimate being" (xxxvi) which can be depicted as a kind of internal map of our personal life that is compressed into this new domicile. Lippard elaborates on this idea of personal topography, "Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has a width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there" (7).

Lippard's description of such a personal topography evokes the vision of a richly layered quilt, the family heirloom in which history, personal memories, dreams and relationships, a kaleidoscope of past, present and future are carefully threaded and stitched together, piece by piece. Belonging is being part of this fabric of life, of history, of place; we have sewn ourselves into this heirloom. If we leave this place this "quilt" becomes our internal and external "travel blanket" as a transportable part of our identity. This notion of transportable identity is taken up by Baldassar as she poses, "Spatial self-identity is not spatially fixed but is rather an idea of a place. Identity can transcend space, even spatial identity, because the idea of space or place can be transplanted" (91). This can be so, but this does not omit the psychological consequences that occur sooner or later, and which are experienced to a greater or lesser degree by different people, depending on the individual

disposition and the personal circumstances of leaving. Having said this, we will always carry this internal map with us, as an inherent part of our makeup. We can deny its existence of course, but that doesn't mean it is not present. Nietzsche is said to have commented that invisible threads are the strongest ties, and in some ways what is absent can have a stronger presence just because of its absence.

Di Stefano remarks that people who feel displaced often attempt to trace the past and "make tangible what is missing and absent", (39) and that "the void of what has been left behind is present precisely because it is not physically tangible". The trace is one of Jacques Derrida's key concepts—that what is left behind from the past which is now absent, leaving a sense of incompleteness, the impossibility of ever being totally present. The trace itself is not visible, and as such has a presence through its absence. It is that what makes us yearn for something, from the past, from elsewhere; it evokes a sense of missing, of loss. The trace is a displacement of what a fleeting memory was, and which cannot be replaced. While the pre- 1967 immigrants were predominantly of the skilled or unskilled labor class, those who have entered Canada after the introduction of the 'point system' generally had professional qualifications or were technicians who were employed in Canadian industries. For some, the familiar strategy was to arrive in Canada as students and then by their academic performance gain employment there. In the multi-ethnic polity of Canada, where the people of Indian origin are a 'visible minority', the question of their image and identity has been critical. In this context, we may note, as Tinker does, that in the 1960s, being widely distributed throughout Canada, the immigrants "preserved their Asian identity simply as their own private possession" (193).

Over a period, the Sikh identity has developed as not only a separate identity, but also in contradistinction with the 'Indian'. This was fostered by the long-distance sub-nationalist movement for Khalistan and accentuated by the Indian Army entering the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Sikhism's holiest shrine, in June 1984. Taking a cue from Robin Cohen's classification of diaspora, Darshan Singh Tatla, a Sikh diasporic scholar, even characterizes Sikh diaspora as a "victim diaspora". The diaspora as an academic discipline emerged in the early twentieth century settled in different countries. The Indian diaspora formation began in the 20th century largely and Vijay Mishra broadly divide the Indian Diaspora into two categories-the "old" and the "new" diasporas. The old diaspora basically severed their ties with India when they crossed the ocean or 'Kala Pani' (black water) as it was called. The new diaspora, on the other hand, according to Mishra, are "diasporas of late capitalism". Similar to other diaspora communities, the chief characteristic of the South Asian diaspora is mobility. These "border crossers", unlike their predecessors, maintain stronger kinship and cultural connections with the homeland. They oscillate between two worlds. They offer a more visible and confident presence because of their increased numbers, economic clout and a more accepting multi-cultural environment that encourages interactions.

In spite of an easier acculturation passage and the celebration of multiple identities and plurality of homes, the niggling suspicion that fuels the diaspora is of carrying a hyphenated identity. Although the term diaspora was not widely used as a category in the 1960s, Attia Hosain, author of the novel *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) and a collection of short stories *Phoenix Fled* (1988), is seldom classified as a diaspora writer even today. Yet she lived in England after the 1947.

How then should we categorize Shauna Singh Baldwin who was born in Montreal and grew up in India and she now lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with her American husband. She describes herself as an "Indo-Canadian- American woman".

This kind of articulation of a hyphenated identity has become a much more common phenomenon now and especially among a certain class of diasporic Indians. It also reflects a very specific vision of insider/outsider. In Singh Baldwin's short stories this double vision is most in evidence. Some times diasporic people face a sense of hyphenated identity while returning back to the homeland also and find it hard to connect again literally to the homeland though imaginary homeland has always been their "longing" but real one might have disillusioned them. Being at the "borders" provide them a sound perspective to see and evaluate things. But sometimes this gives them a dual identity to see the both sides of the coin.

Hosain and Singh Baldwin are comparable not merely because they both could be considered diaspora writers- but one is one and one is not- but also because both are pioneers in offering minority community perspectives, one Muslim and other Sikh. This normalization of the minority where the everyday practices of Muslims or Sikhs frame the worldview provides a unique perspective. Similarly, Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* can also be seen as a narrative of Sikh experience before, during and after partition. Singh Baldwin herself is completely aware of this and feels that we haven't read novels in English that put Sikh women in front stage center and certainly none that are about the experience of these women during Partition. Women's narratives have seldom been included in mainstream telling of South Asian history, but as Urvashi Butalia, Ritu Menon and Kamla

Bhasin's works with women's oral narratives have shown, they add a very different dimension to the story of Partition. It also reminds us that women's bodies were the sites on which these battles were fought and therefore it is imperative to pay attention to women's voices. Writing back the history with women's perspective is an attempt to assert their unproclaimed identity.

This realization led Singh Baldwin to reconsider history from a gendered perspective and she says that to write *What the Body Remembers* she had to 'pull Sikh Women's history out from under Sikh men's history". She expresses in an interview, "It is depressing, because Indian women writers have been around since the 16th century. We haven't been silent, just undiscovered". Baldwin insists that the 'hypermasculinization' of the religion has disempowered women. She says that practice in the Sikh community rather than the scriptures are to be blamed for rendering Sikh women passive. In the diaspora, as Singh Baldwin's stories show, on the one hand the community feels threatened by the institutional and individual racism of the mainstream culture; and on the other hand they struggle to maintain socially accepted customs because they are perceived as ways of preserving the family and notions of Indianness and of Sikhism especially abroad and away from a nurturing environment.

In the patriarchal set up of *What the Body Remembers* the only milestone in a woman's life are marriage and child birth. Both are depicted as the only mean to assert a woman's identity. The two co-wives Satya and Roop both are tied only through the fertility and motherhood issues. Satya is banished from Sardarji's life as she cannot have children and has to accept his taking on a younger wife Roop, who

does give him children. Roop, who Singh Baldwin describes as her 'she-ro', marries Sardarji, a man much older than herself and lives not only in Satya's shadow but constantly aware of her role as a child-bearing womb. Gradually though, Roop becomes wise in the ways of women and finds a way of reclaiming her children who have been given to Satya and of dethroning her from senior-wife position. She also learns that one can find a way to survive and even assert one's will without confrontation. But Roop does this by overtly conforming to and accepting the patriarchal structures. Ultimately the central struggle in the novel is for a man. The man, Sardarji in this case symbolizes both security and status. Women's identity in a patriarchal set up becomes dependent on "Family Ties". They are trained, conditioned, nurtured accordingly. Women embody the honor of the family but they also have a duty to protect it; men on the other hand assume the guardianship of that honor and have the right to destroy, if need be, the very women who embody family honor. Singh Baldwin shows Sikh empowerment at level with masculinity beside highlighting the hyphenated self of woman where she receives confused messages of passivity and courage as she is advised on one hand to have courage to stand up for herself and yet submit to the male notion of honor.

One other way, women become "Women Warriors" to use Maxine Hong Kingston's phrase, is through their connections with other women. This is the 'mutuality between women' (111). This is the idea of a 'women space'. It is a space of woman to woman friendship and empathy emerging from lived experiences of common gender roles, vulnerabilities and celebrations. In Singh Baldwin's narrative though the creation of women space serves many functions; at one level it is there to provide the 'breathing space' of healing and support , but it is also sometimes a

reminder of another way of thinking or proffering advice. Campbell's elaboration on the phase of the journey is, "When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves and our own self-presentation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness" (126).

In the feminine journey, the effacement of self and living finely tuned to mother's needs on an everyday basis may, however, be less a process of becoming a hero or a "she-ro" but much more a quiet self-destruction. Self-preservation and not self-sacrifice may prove to be the more heroic act for females. In Baldwin's work the assertion of self is often at the heart of the work. For instance in *What the Body Remembers* it is Roop's coming to selfhood both vis-à-vis her husband and her children that makes her stand out. This recognition of self is completing the "self" from hyphenated. This journey of achieving of 'self' has various milestones, violence, anger, self-destruction as well as compassion and heroism. Baldwin negotiates the blurry boundary between passive "self" and a recognition of "self", towards the assertion of strong identity. Her novels, on the one hand, present women as "colonized" by their men. But this is not a mere reiteration of stereotypes that are in vogue, especially in the west. The ingenuity and mutual reliance of women to change the script or break the patriarchal code is a testimony to an 'asserted strong self'. This theme runs like a red thread through all of Singh Baldwin's work. Diasporic writing experiences displacement at various levels such as physical, metaphysical and political. Large scale migrations all across the globe have unsettled the centre and have produced millions of people who work with two epistemologies. Their hybridity works on various planes.

The very opening sentence of the novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* seeds the very theme of the book, "Years before she stole her sister Kanwar's fate and sailed across the world from India to Canda, before she became Bibi-ji, she was Sharanjeet Kaur" (1). From those twenty-five words grows a study of the fragility of bonds, the makeshift nature of home and identity.

Finally Nimmo, Bibi-Ji's niece and only family member to survive the horrors of the partition, struggles along with little knowledge of who she is. Her few childhood memories consist of vague flashes that she hesitates to accept as real. The images that do linger disturb her peace of mind: her mother hiding her in a grain bin just before the family's home is raided and upon creeping from her hiding place, the sight of her dead mother's feet suspended above the floor. For Nimmo life boils down to seeking and trying to hold on to safety. "Her fear was a monstrous, silent thing that often woke her, sweating and shaking, from troubled sleep. It made her suspicious of everyone-----every single one of them was a threat to her security, her peace of mind" (220). Nonetheless, uncertainty remains a constant and it can be both exhausting and disheartening for those who are living with it. While tensions within the book resound with social-political difficulties and tragedies worldwide, the foregrounds scramble to make a better life, to move from old to new and find belonging is for many a painful daily reality. Leela recalls her grandmother saying, "Nothing worse than to be a dangling person, a foot here and a foot there and a great gap between. Imagine how painful it is to stay stretched like that forever" (270). With this book, one which should garner much attention, Badami suggests that home can be found or made anew. Despite the conflicting tug of loyalties and differences, it's possible to place both feet solidly in one spot.

In her poem “Indian Movie, New Jersey” Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni takes up these incidents and shows the disillusionment of the immigrants:

We do not speak of motel raids, cancelled permits, stones
Through glass windows , daughters and sons
Raped by Dotbusters. […]
Here while the film-songs still echo
In the corridors and restrooms, we can trust
In the corridors and restrooms, we can trust
In movie truths: sacrifice, success, love and luck,
The America that was supposed to be. (39)

It is exactly the polarity between such an America that South Asian diasporic writing often portrays. This is its post-colonial predicament which carries residues of colonial mimicry and decolonizing resistance. Here the duality is expressed on the one hand as a feature of it. In Samina Ali’s novel *Madras on Rainy Days* (2004) the main character Layla listens to her husband Sameer compare the US twin cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis to the Indian cities of Hederabad and Secunderabad:

Twin cities […] you go from one city to another. Twins, like you”.
“Like me?”
“Yes, like you. You, the Americans, you, the Indian. Same face, two people. So where is your home?”[…]
“I was supposed to inhabit America without being inhabited by it- that was what my parents wanted”. (67)

Here the duality is expressed on the one hand as a feature of individual identity- “same face, two people”- and on the other as a social contestation-“that was what my parents wanted”. In the field of literature, diasporic writing comes from the margins entering the arenas that it is allowed to occupy. The obstacles are manifold and Uma Parmeswaran comments on them in the Canadian context by saying “supported by neither the ethno- centric community nor the larger community, literary efforts of the Diaspora are stifled at birth while the publishers, of course, prefer the marketability of negative stereotypes” (Parmeswaran 38). In the wake of decolonization, large scale migrations have resulted in the formation of increasingly hybrid multiracial and multicultural societies, suggesting the possibility that cultural identities may cut across national borders. Perhaps unsurprisingly in this context, the acceleration of migratory flows in the last part of the twentieth century is often associated with celebratory evocations of multi-hyphenated identities and cross-cultural transmogrification by hybridity theorists such as Homi K.Bhabha and James Clifford who tend to portray the migrant as an icon of Post-Modernism and as a symbol of an identity “always-in-becoming”. Vanaja Dhuvarajan states in this context, “On the one hand, it is the sense of self-identity for new immigrants when they see the sacred river of their original homeland in the river of their new homeland, on the other hand, it is also an expression of hope that Canadian vocabulary and sensibility will expand to include the cultural construction of hyphenated communities to form a composite Canadian ethos” (105).

Bhabha speaks of the double process of scattering and of gathering. He writes—I have lived that moment of the scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of gathering.… Also the

gathering of people in the diaspora: indentured, migrant, interned; the gathering of incriminatory statistic, educational performance, legal statutes, immigration status. In Bhabha's words "the diasporic circuit highlights the institutional side of relocation" (15). His scenario of estrangement includes the sea voyage of the *girmit* expatriates and the contemporary measures of control and punishment in the oppressive multicultural world. The fictional range of his discourse encompasses as its starting point *Sea of Poppies* (2008, by Amitav Ghosh), to close so far the sequence with *Londostani* (2006, by GautamMalkani). Transportation and urban micro-guerrilla, or in Transmission individual mutiny, define scattering and gathering in terms of imposition and reactive conflict with authority. This belligerent condition is enhanced in *My Revolutions*, a novel in which everlasting scattering and gathering again (on the background of the momentous Sixty-Eight) play out migrancy within the urban city as a spatially reduced version of diaspora. One should compare the claustrophobic microcosm represented by the ship 'Ibis' in *Sea of Poppies* to the communes in *My Revolutions*. With Amitav Ghosh and Hari Kunzru scattering and gathering constitute the keywords that instruct the diasporic discourse as such they are agencies of counter institutional behavior and above all markers of continuity in the history of the relationship between East and West.

"Home", "Roots" and "Belonging" are some of the primary concerns of diasporic writers. The basic issues and the common themes are nostalgia for homeland, pain and agony of homelessnes, displacement, dislocation and relocation, the split between the native homeland and the adopted nation, the bicultural pull between the donor and recipient cultures and the emotional fragmentation between two identities, two mindsets. If experience of migration is painful and emancipating

then its challenges lie in hybridization, acculturation, and assimilation despite fragmentation. Landscape of memory carries the 'Imaginary Homelands' as frozen pictures, but at the same time it gives a new dimension to rethinking of concept of home. For home is where your feet are.

Apart from the theme of roots/routes, journeys/identity, home/nations, the women writers have focused on miniature India in America, Canada or elsewhere. The Indian microcosms are pulsating with Indian customs and traditions, festivals and rituals, Indian music and dance, language and cuisines, dress and religion, films and art. Women play an active role in expanding various practices. In most of the parts of India, women have psychologically accepted their movement away from parental home to a new acquired home and this helps the women to move away from one nation to another and resettle there, but of course with their socio-cultural baggage their heart and flowing in their blood, revitalizes and passes on as cultural heritage to coming generations.

Thus the hyphenated existence of an individual's is in two worlds-geographically, economically, psychologically and culturally yet these heterogeneous group of people in new lands. The diaspora may be transnational, deterritorialized population who are caught in an identity crisis, live as spaced twins on the margins of two societies face a spilt, yet they have an edge as they live and enjoy two fold lives. They are fully conversant with the cultures, ideologies and attitudes of the two worlds. Thus, notions of nations/nationalism; history/ politics; ethnicity/ racism; identity/ belonging; roots/ displacement; home/ hybridity; all are contested words and spaces. Situations for the diasporic communities can be oppressive or liberating, hyphenating

or self defining and discriminatory or accommodating. Writers are products of a specific culture, drawing sustenance from it and enriching it with their lived experience. The world of diasporic writings belong to the in-between space, the cultural no-man's land or creatively everyone's world.

Anita Rau Badami's attitude towards her diasporic status is eloquently recorded in her affirmation of the blessings of double vision, "We are both doomed and blessed, to be suspended between two worlds, always looking back but with two gorgeous places to inhabit, in our imagination or hearts". This was the statement given by her on the release of her second novel *The Hero's Walk*, the recipient of 2001 Commonwealth Writers Prize for best book in the Canada Caribbean region.

The Hero's Walk differs from other diasporic texts, as in this novel, Badami follows the track of reverse immigration. She expresses her concern for people caught up in this trauma, the homelessness feeling and the traumatizing past and memory affecting personal relationships. Migration here was a decision by the first generation but displacement has been forced upon second generation through a return to the 'homeland'. The novel is set in Toturpuram, a small town on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, three hours by bus from Madras. Here stands the Big House, the site where all the action takes place. Here lives Sripathi Rao,57 years old copywriter with his obedient wife Nirmala, 42 year old disillusioned spinster sister Putti, a social worker son Arun, a loud theatre artist like mother and last but not least an absent yet always present daughter Maya affecting their mutual relationships and life. Maya a dear child of of Sripathi made him proud when she received a prestigious fellowship to study abroad. But all her achievements got a scar with the

very news of her decision to marry Alan Baker, her Canadian love cancelling her engagement with Indian boy Prakash. Sripathi's parental ego hurts badly and he renounces this child who ransomed all name, faith and family honor for her selfish love and that too for 'other' caste man. Traditions and conventions and caste system makes it even impossible for Sripathi to forgive Maya, though he loves her deeply. Sripathi keeps on carrying his anger cloak with false hardness hood till nine years. It has been nine years since he has heard his daughter's voice and then all of sudden one day he hears his Maya has gone so far away that now he cannot even think of reconciling with her. His anger cloak became Maya's shroud. But strange are the ways of God, Maya was destined to come back in their lives, surprisingly after death in the form of Nandana, her daughter left behind all alone .Sripathi as being her legal guardian after the death of Nandana's parents has to take the child into his care and bring her to India. Entering Maya's unfathomed world in Vancouver at her flat Sripathi wonders, "Why do people leave the familiar for unknown worlds?" He realizes "he had not known his daughter's inner life, the secret world of dreams, fears, the complexes and affectations----------he did not know" (101).

The Hero's Walk is about loss, how time and history, the movement of people away from the past and their homelands, divide families. Here, though our characters get a chance to get in terms with themselves and to relocate their 'lost' selves. With the arrival of Nandna this process starts. When one arrives in a new land, one has a sense of wonder and adventure at the sight and feel of a landscape so different from what one has been accustomed to, there is also a sense of isolation, fear and intense nostalgia is a buffer many retreat. But Nandana's displacement had started long ago even before her arrival to India , in Vancouver itself when unaware

of her parents' death she misses them during her sleep over at Anjali's house and wonders at her parents' absence. Unable to seek warmth in her little possessions, she many a times tries to run away to get to her home. She could simply not understand how her parents could die when they still had not turned hundred years old, as her mother made her understand. For Nandana 'Canada 'is her home, her birth place. She has never been to India, never seen her grandparents. Her mother used to talk about India sometimes but "she hadn't ever thought much of it". She is not going to leave Vancouver and as for her grandfather, Nandana did not like him, "he made her mother cry" (209).

Through Nandana , Badami shows how displacement and dislocation is more acute with the children of second generation, who neither have the memories of ' lost homeland' nor the yearning like their parents ' to belong' .For them their parents' homeland is equally 'alien' as any other accustomed land. In Nandana's case India is forced upon her, not desired or 'longed'. Carrying a few negative impressions and a number of fears she comes to India. She finds India 'too hot'. Indian people are 'strangers'. At Toturpuram, Big House seems 'too old and horrid' to her and 'full of strange noises and dark corners'. She feels 'homelessness' and keeps on thinking that she would not be staying here for very long. A prejudiced Ammayya and and smelling Nirmala makes her feel repulsive for them in the beginning. Memory plays its role and does not let the child forget Canada. She is not able to understand Indian environment, people, work habits, language and the result is Nandana turns into 'a silent child' .Unable to negotiate with her surroundings, she feels like 'an alien'. Many a times she tries to run away to Vancouver. This cultural displacement is multifaceted and has psychological connotations. We see that with

Nandana's arrival, there starts a process of multi level transformations. We see that it is not only Nandana who is displaced in 'Big House'; through her experiences we capture sight, sound of deep unfamiliarity within our other characters. They seem internally dislocated. Sripathi, too self absorbed and egoistic, find it hard to accept a perspective other than his own in rejecting Maya's decision. He is not able to understand Nirmala's genuine large-heartedness and perseverance, He does not understand how his son keeps on devoting his time and hard work to save the world, leaving his own needs unnoticed. He is strick1en with a sense of failure.

Nirmala, the obedient wife and daughter in- law, obeyed elders, followed rules, did all the rightly declared things, all her life time. But her daughter's death knocked most of those habits out of her. She now starts coming in terms with herself. She starts believing that heroism is not always in following rules, but sometimes it is about doing what you think is right, at the cost of displeasing people around you. Her decision to stand for Putti's proposed marriage with Gopala, discarding all bedraggled caste conventions, at the risk of displeasing Sripathi and Ammayya, is a great step towards relocation. Relocating the 'self 'in relation to 'other'. It is an attempt on her part to overcome the guilt, the guilt of 'being silent', 'being afraid'. She asserts, "I am sick of all of you. All these years I listened to your father and your grandmother and this person and that. I should have done what I thought was right" (292). When Nandana runs missing, she bursts, "I waited and waited for my Maya to come home, and now I have lost her daughter too. I should have told her ten years ago to come home. Why did I wait? Why was I afraid? " (304).

Putti's decision to go against Ammayya and marry Gopala, is another move towards relocation. Till 42 years she obeyed her 'feisty' mother, suffering under her overpowering clutches, but ultimately her voice gets independence. Her self-identification, discarding dominant stereotypes and power structures, lead towards recognition. The diaspora is 'dispersion from' and hence the term necessarily implies the notion of a centre, a home and invokes images of journeys and displacements. Here the pattern is reversed , for second generation child Nandana ' home' is her mother's adopted land , Canada, native and birth place for Nandana. With this land her identity is defined, with its climate, experiences, possessions, relations and lived experience of familiar sights, smells and sounds, Nandana's is attached. She is pushed out of her home against her will. This kind of dislocation is painful because it leads to a denial of what one has grown up with, of being rooted in a definite place and time, which are crucial for defining one's self.

Nandana looses that sense of belongingness as she lands on Indian land and feels uprooted, lost, bewildered, like an alien figure among strangers. Memory torments her and makes her nostalgic of her Canadian past. This dilemma curbs her voice and she silently suffers. It's only after tunnel test and Mrs. Poorna episode that she comes to terms with Nirmala's love and from here her relocation starts. Her child sensibility starts negotiation with outer environment. This expression, interaction is a step towards acceptance and assimilation. Nandana's final decision to write to her Canadian friends Molly and Yee has to be seen as an independent move, assertion of 'self' without merging to 'other'. Sripathi's recognition of Arum's 'self' is another new beginning.

Nandana's journey makes us see how the strange smells, colours, noises, and flowers and holidays gradually grow familiar. By the time Nandana begins to speak again, tragedy has receded, strangers have become family and all the Raos have a new understanding of 'home'. Her journey has been from out of place to in place, from Vancouver to India, from silent fears, inhibitions to open spectrum of negotiation from 'nowhere' to 'somewhere'.

Another novel by Anita Rau Badami being discussed here is *The Tiger Claw* which is very unconventionally diasporic and which imparts new dimensions to the issues of identity, home, belonging, alienation, displacement and other, so closely associated with the conventional diasporic narratives. It shows how 'War Zones' turn 'homelands' into 'hostile lands' and leave both immigrants and native inhabitants 'uprooted'. Badami reflects on the fact that identity is 'relational' and one's own 'Self' can only decide where 'to belong'. The novel opens at Pforzheim, Germany and we read the date, Dec.1943 and the first sentence "December moved in, taking up residence with Noor in her cell and freezing the radiator"(1). As we read more, we come to know that a woman named Noor is kept behind bars, all enchained and she is trying to write something which she also wants to hide from her captors. She says, "I am still here. I write, not because this story is more important than all others but because I have so great a need to understand it. What I say is my truth and lies together, amalgam of memory and explication" (3).

She is addressing to a spirit 'ma petite' assuming that a man 'Armand' would revisit in her retellings. This is our first introduction to our protagonist Noor Inayat Khan. Next the time and place of action is displayed July 1945, Germany. Flight

Lieutenant Kabiruddin Khan of Royal British Air Force is proceeding for the first time on the ground through Germany to locate his sister Noor Khan who was held in a German Camp. Germany with all its terror appears 'Hiterland, the omnivorous devourer of the hapless, racially impure and the non-Gentile' (6). Kabir, knowing the fact that only one in ten people survived a camp, finds it hard to locate a woman among billions displaced during war. Immediately after Germany surrendered, Kabir obtained permission to return to Paris and for weeks kept on waiting for the transports bringing deportees and prisoners of war home to Paris. And when all that exercise proved futile, he straight away wheedled a motorcycle and leave and a high level pass and came searching for his sister. Passing through the land Kabir sees "Anonymous survivors of the terror, weak from their time in the camps, still wearing their sack like prison attire, the liberated-----displaced persons or DPs---on their way to somewhere they once called or could now home"(8).

Kabir holding firmly to faith about Noor's survival amid wavering hope recalls the times how after the fall of France, while being a refugee in England his British Indian citizenship gave him a chance to fly. Kabir, insidiously conveys the pain of being an Indian in Britain, how everywhere he had to put that extra loyalty on his part towards the King and the Country. He curses the moment when he introduced his sister to some journalist enumerating all her accomplishments:- multi-lingual, children's writer, pianist, qualified nurse, wireless telegraphist, bringing her the recommendation to join 'secret service' on behalf of Britain. Now after so many years Kabir reflects back and gets shocked, "How anxious he'd been for Noor to prove her loyalty to Britan" (10). Kabir, digs deeper and finds his own male hypocrisy behind his decision as Noor being the trained Red Cross nurse that how he

could not stomach the idea that if Noor became a nurse on active duty “she, his sister his unmarried sister would touch, hold, bathe men’s naked bodies-unrelated men” (11). But he could imagine Noor, gentle Noor only as a wireless operator as Mother, Dadijaan and younger sister Zaib believed too, never as a secret agent. His male pride hurts while confessing that Noor took the decision on her own of going overseas for secret service neither taking his permission nor informing any of the family members. Kabir son of an Indian father and an American mother belonging to Baroda, a tiny kingdom in India and descending the great lineage of Tipu Sultan sees himself more of a Frenchman and paris as his home as if his British passport, Dravidian face/colour, American colour all were unnecessary attributes, believing that ‘ your home is where your heart is’.

Paris and all of France, abandoned but fixed in still life for four years in Kabir’s memory, had been held hostage by the Germans, “His city had endured unspeakable deprivation, pain, secrets and shame”(20). His father, a sufi muslim who owned the Sufi music Centre was a dervish, a divine man but right from the day, Abbajaaan transferred his mantle on Kabir’s shoulders, Kabir could never open up to that invisible connection to the Divine which his father always had. But Kabir experienced something when he was nine years old that the United States had only two classifications, white and the black for all people but his kaftaned Abbajaan was brown not “ coloured or Black. His father had returned from a performance tour to the States, annoyed by reviewers who devoted more inches to his coloured skin”, “ his exotic dress and accent” than to the music he so cherished”(22). Pity, surprised Kabir, a pity he never forgotten imagining his father’s discomfort in the midst of his moneyed white followers in San Francisco, Chicago and NewYork.

Racism is predominantly discussed in this novel. Because of a few Anti-Raj musical compositions, Kabir's father invited the wrath of English authorities and the whole family had to flee to France when Kabir was only five years old. But Kabir's family again had the misfortune of being caught up amid Hitler's occupation of world, outlawing 'sufism' and before he came to France, Kabir's family escaped to London and he and Noor both found themselves fighting 'for England'(28). He never imagined himself or Noor, fighting for England. He could not fit "their" image of an Indian –too tall, too fair, not Hindu, not Gurkha , not even Sikh, a muslim. A Sufi Muslim, they sniggered –"sounds delicious". His equal presence in the officers' mess had required an effort of mental inclusion that was beyond his fellow British citizens, "You have to fly better, do everything better, be more anxious, show more courage and shout louder for King and country" (25).

Getting recognition and acceptance is always a humiliating task. In spite of loving Noor a lot as a brother, Kabir shared some envy also with Noor, her being so close to Abbajaan, being "too damn Indian" with Abbajaan gone and without Noor their family would now be European in every way"(33). Kabir's complete male chauvinism gets reflected all through. He had three women to support on his pay and he wants to exercise boundless control on his sisters' lives, dreams, desires and aspirations. Noor no longer only the elder daughter of Abbajaan, rather an officer in his majesty's Directorate—Air intelligence, calling herself Nora Baker. So long Noor's beloved remained in touch; Noor remained in high spirits, afterwards she, all through her toughening and training waited for her chance to return to France, perhaps on an assignment to travel overseas to search her love Armand. During interview for SOE, Noor had to face number of questions focusing on her not being

white or being hybrid, someone whose family moved around a bit –England, America, India and not being fit enough for SOE. Since her own displacement to England, Noor understood how her father must have felt all through his sixteen years as an immigrant to France, duty bound to someday return 'home'. For him 'home' was India. For Noor 'home' was now wherever her love Armand was (48). But Noor adamantly thinks of going to France on her own to find Armand in case rejected by SOE on account of her being an 'Indian'. But her three years long hard work in England made her a pliable, eager, multilingual woman with harness able energy making her too irresistible for resistance.

Home, a fluid concept changes into multiplicity of versions here, even among the members of single family. Noor's unearthly and celestial love for Armand, a good hearted man could not resist her family's rejection earlier because of his Jewish identity. A music composer with the depth of listening and playing heavenly music, enlarged Noor's soul but Noor could not reconcile with all her inner strength, that Noor of her "ruh", to stand beside her love against family hypocrisy and pressure and left Armand for England, a decision she wants to penance now by putting efforts to reunite with Armand, though all the time apprehensive about his well being, hearing about the condition of Jews in occupied France.

Noor recalls the times when Armand came in her life at the age of seventeen. Her bourgeois ambitious mother, highly conservative prejudiced and hypocrite uncle Tajuddin and too much like of a 'brother' Kabir, all forcing their wills on her seeing her through their respective glasses, as a daughter, as a muslim girl or a sister could never see her as a human being. Years of clandestine romance came to a sudden halt

one fateful day and there was consternation, anger, accusation of betrayal which followed endless suggestions and restrictions on Noor. For them her love for a Jew was a blasphemy and the sin of loving without permission. Whatsoever Noor believed in her Abbajaan's sufi beliefs that love in any form though it be for an idol or another person is sacred because it derives from love for the Divine, they all were eager to assert their masculine authority on Noor, making her ashamed of loving Armand, ashamed of love though there is never enough in the world. Her uncle's vindictive, hate filled powerful presence made Noor coward enough to abort her child also, a spirit to whom she will recall years after as ' ma petite', during her imprisonment, narrating whole life story to her. But years after while going to France again Noor tells herself that she was no longer a trembling kind of a woman that she claimed her life and body as her own, with the faith of not failing Armand this time. Strangely mixing love and war missions together. Baldwin sees Nora Baker/ Madeline/ Anne Marie Reniger, be it any of her code-names, not as a dry hearted spy, rather a woman with much passion, love, loyalty who would prove her bravery in the long run of her war time services. Landing on French soil on 15 June 1943 in charge of Air movements officer Gilbert. Noor was Anne Marie Regnier from Bordeaux, for her mission on visit to her very sick aunt Lucille. Visting Gare Montaparnasse station again in Paris, after a long time, memories surged like desperate fish rising against the nets of time, for Noor nostalgically reminding her how her Abbajaan left for 'home' for India, leaving them all back when she was twelve years old. And other memories after receiving the telegram announcing his death in India of Pneumonia five months later, leaving from this same station in 1927 to pay their respects at his father's tomb in India with mother, Kabir and Zaib

and returning home to Paris two years later. And soon after greeting Abbajaan's half brother uncle Tajuddin on his arrival from Baroda in 1929 to live with them and manage father's school of Sufism. Paris looked familiar as when she and Armand met in cafes talking for hours 'familiar, yet strange. She was alone (91). "People were different from Parisians of three years ago. Probably different. Everyone had been altered by war" (90). Walking down the platform, avoiding looking anyone in the eye, ignoring the Swastika flags and banners, Noor /Anne Marie heads towards her safe house. At Renee Garry's, Noor faces hard interrogation for her 'dark skin', considering her a Jew and thus untouchable and risky for her host Renee Gerry's family. No one had ever remarked on the olive tone of Noor's skin or her nose the many years, she lived in Paris but Emile her fellow agent Phono who makes it understand to Noor how things changed due to war, not only for his sister Renee Garry whose husband was a war-prisoner in Germany but for many people like her. Noor herself after the seal on the last postcard she received from Armand from Drancy is someone who is so dear to her and is war-striken. Amid all tales of representation, mass execution of dissenters and German savagery, Noor holds hard to her faith and hope that her Armand and his mother would be safe. Seeing Paris,Noor blurts out with pain. "How unthinkable that this beautiful land could be invaded. How could Paris have fallen before Hitler? In Paris, young Frenchmen had been spirited away- some like Armand to camps in France some like Renee's husband, to Germany" (116). "Oh, Armand how shall I find you? The country we knew and loved has grown strange" (124).

Archambault, the radio operator she was going to replace to free him for retraining at London makes her learn how to transmit, encode and send messages

safely to England. Having left the only radio operators in North France, they had to take extreme care. As Noor feels, “So many cautions! Necessary, but each administered a dose of contagious fear” (125). Grignon safe house must also be changed seeing the increasing danger in keeping on transmitting from there. Noor thinks of getting a room suitable for transmitting and as close to Armand in Drancy as could be. All sorts of thoughts kept on fluttering, questioning the justice and the existence of it in the world. At the lycee Noor’s teachers often blamed the ills of the world on the inflow of immigrants, immigrants coming to France from anywhere. Foreign born people like herself who lived in Paris and even those like Armand, born in France of naturalized parents. But for immigrant Jews they reserved a special distaste. How could Vichy believe that people behind those walls deserved such treatment? That someone like Armand, born in France, someone who composed music from the wind whose every performance gave nothing but joy, posed a danger to France? Or to anyone?” (163).

We see how perceptions and people change and immigrants get so vulnerable all of a sudden during emergency times. When war was declared in 1939, France incarcerated thousands of non-citizens, using amorphous words like ‘patriotism’ and ‘prevention of terrorism’, ‘war, said everyone required the imprisonment of immigrants, especially if they were Jewish. French could no longer afford equal rights for citizens and non-citizens. Or even all citizens. How often had newspapers said even “Israelites-Jews like Armand born in France, speaking French were inassimilable and Noor had dismissed them for the peeves and pettiness of the French rose from the same dark mongering against muslims. “If the French didn’t have Jews to blame they ‘d have chosen the muslims” (164).

Meeting all her partners in SOE/Resistance, at France Monseiur Hoogstraton, chief , prof. Balachowsky, Gilbert, Emile(Phono),Viennot and Prosper, Noor learns rapidly about all required qualifications. First whole interrogation with the SOE team here, with Noor, leading same questions about her father's identity, nationality, color, caste and other factors. Secret mission demanding extreme secrecy force Noor to change one safe house from another thus making every day harder. Being a young and beautiful lady, one more hurdle she fights with, every day the lecherous glances of people she faces sometimes even her fellow agents like Gilbert and Viennot as well in that category. Amid hard preparations for ground invasions, sudden arrests of agents, all such daily risks cover up an agents' life but Noor's inexplicable courage and confidence in her duties finds no escape route not even Renee Garry's rude and harsh treatment she bears upon with all love carrying in her heart Armand. Being so tender hearted, loving, full of love, compassionate, sensitive Noor never falls short in courage and valor.

In the safe house near Dranny, Noor takes up all possible steps to ensure Armand's presence and safety at the camp. Collecting information about convoys being sent to Germany, possible ways to send message to Armand or ensuring his safety, Noor takes all risks during war times to locate her love. Due to the fear of endangering her mission, Noor could never send letters to Armand yet she thinks that the message she has come so far to deliver to deliver must be the perfect representation of her love. Looking for some shape so powerful, swallowing the need for words, Noor sends the 'tiger claw', fastened in the golden chain, translucent yellow, the power of the deadly beast, for luck and courage, the ancient relic of the pride, she sends actually a tiny apartment for too many messages. She wanted to say

that, “She was sorry for the seven years of waiting, for the intolerance of her family, she had never stopped loving him and she was as Rumi’s separated reed without him”(165).

But anonymity was the safety for Armand as well as for her mission and sending the tiger claw hid the sender into the message. But ironically Noor could never get to know whether Armand received her tiger claw at Drancy or not, always trusting Allah to keep Armand safe away from hunger, wound or pain. Whole labor of these three years- codes, supply lines, maps of secret passages, courier lines, workshops, escape routes and safe houses, fears extinction from Gestapo. With growing number of arrests in Resistance network at a time in June 1943. Noor finds it hard to believe. This was not supposed to happen. Arrests happened to others, theoretical agents who didn’t study the SOE handbook carefully, or agents with code names like Vidal and Max. Not to people she knew, people in her cell. Not to jug-eared Prosper who moved in time with the Jazz and called her ‘old girl’, or Lycee, smelled of old spice and was to leave for London as soon as Noor’s transmitters were operating. (201)

But all these developments also could not deter Noor. Hiding all her transmitters at different safe houses she keeps on transmit to London. She risks going to Institute National Agronmique, the place where all arms and ammunition sent from London used to get stored, to determine the damage and to send the information to London, just to get more shocked to discover the presence of Gestapo in the campus with all their terror and injustice. Here killing of two German soldiers by Noor in self defense while hiding in forest enhances danger for her. Though she

felt most grieved for that act of hers and cried for penance in front of Allah. Noor thinks about her own probable arrest and thinks how long she would be able to resist if capture. War made all people 'homeless' like 'aliens' in their own land. Emile once voiced this dilemma, "Monique and I were walking in the gardens yesterday and a soldier came and asked what I was doing there. What am I doing in my own country? Where else should I be? We're second class in our own land- they call us chimpanzees" (327).

While Noor also finds Renee's die hard nationalism too aggressive, France for the French, as defined by Renee, none of them- Armand's family, Noor's family- none of them could assimilate into Renee's ever closed circle. And she felt her anti-Jewish, anti-foreign diatribe more like Gestapo, Vichy's policies against Jews. On the day of Noor's proposed departure from France, Noor could not leave, fearing betrayal on the part of Gilbert. Suffering more with her stay, with Influenza, Noor discovers her family's hypocritical complicity in her abortion years ago, only discovered by Madam Dunet, enhancing her agony, "If she couldn't comprehend the motives of a person with whom she shared two parents, was it possible to understand any other being? We are all doomed to be exotic, each to one another" (364). Finding her so alone and displaced Noor feels, "Family love- that myth she had maintained and bowled to for years, believing in their concern for her. Now she had no family but Armand and others who fought tyranny, fellow resist ants" (372).

But resisting all odds emotional as well as physical, Noor have been awfully brave and quite alone in her mission. Seeing Major Boddington too willing to believe on Gilbert, Noor finds to have her own way to continue her work going

against SOE guidelines, not to contact anyone known to you from past, she decides to contact Josianne, her best friend (someone she could trust more than Gilbert) and continues her transmission from Suresnes successfully till the time Gestapo arrests her. Arrested on 12 Oct.1943, during transmission after five months long halluva job, Noor here even at Gestapo Headquarters sits 'like a tigress' with courage and determination of not disclosing any information about her mission or fellow agents to the interrogators, even in face of extreme torture. Whichever secret they want to hear from Noor's mouth like 'To whom do you report in England?' 'At what hours did you transmit? 'Name your accomplices', 'Where are the arms and ammunition?, Noor single handedly handles all of them with a stubborn silence or innocent evasion. Chief interrogator Herr Vogel falls immediately on her beauty, on her 'exotic thing' and tries to take all sorts of 'advances' with her, all successfully declined by Noor all the while. Vogel already under the aura of her royal beauty and intelligence addresses her 'princess'. Vogel's all attempts to justify German actions prove futile. Noor says," The scent of his desire, words of tender concern so long as he had her sitting before him with chained feet. He was calling to the fear she had in common with women of all nations" (471).

In face of all covetous glances of Vogel, silence was her only defense. All temptations offered by Vogel could not move Noor. Neither safe departure to Switzerland, candle light dinner, hot bath, silk dress nor any such 'pleasures' could make any sense to Noor who opted out prison Pforzheim dungeon and all sorts of 'martyr luxuries' for herself. With heavy manacles on wrists, chained all above sleeping amid insects on the dark, damp and cold stone floor, Noor thinks about her plight, "My cheekbones have edged to the surface. And my hair! Its sheen is long

gone. It's long, matted and crawling with lice. My hip bones fit in the groove of my cupped hands. My stomach has flattened as if to my spine. What is my body------ what the poet Kabeer called 'but a skin sheet stuffed with bones" (201-2).

Her captor Vogel provides pen and paper to her and Noor blurts out all her story to 'ma petite'. Her captor wanted her to write children stories as she had done earlier in her life. But ever since she had been writing from 1934 every story she wrote for 'ma petite'. Trying hard to hide all her written words, Noor shares the news of Allies' invasion with rest of the prisoners. But one question also hovers above them 'can we last till the Allies reach us?"(387). Torture continues in all forms, "The guard served me over salted soup and now ignores my cries for water. My shackles have rubbed deep pink rings about my wrists and ankles. The ceiling leaks. I feel my hair growing, growing, my nails growing, long and brittle" (390).

But Noor's 'will', grows more bloody minded by every day. Daily fear, all tension, pole of worry for Armand troubled Noor but could never stop her. The work must go on. Betrayal of her family, their accomplice in getting her child aborted almost breaks her, "But as for mother and Kabir- the hiatus between discourse and actions astounded. I can say it to myself now where no one hears me, to myself if to no one else: I was ashamed of them and ashamed for them. Their actions showed coinciding reasons to see me as a woman but never as Noor" (366). Noor stifles under these restrictions but love for Armand enlarged her soul, infused enough strength in her to leave England and come all the way to France for him. It was not only Noor, Kabir who suffered because of raciest attitudes, Herr Vogel type German officials also reflects its rigidity:

No, no, what are you saying? It was against orders to touch a non- Aryan woman. And she was a mischlinge- a mixed breed- I don't know the word in French. Do you know that I could have been sent to a camp myself for that? Kabir felt he was flying into the centre of paradox. Vogel called Noor princess yet by Nazi definition considered her a menial. If the non –Aryan and the mischlinge were equivalent to the dhimmi of Islam or the untouchable of Hinduism, it meant millions had become sub-human to the Germans. (515) "Allah for which country do I die? Be with me now. Let me be true to you, now and always. Send my father to meet me in spirit, send my child to greet me", these were her last prayers (538). A night and fog prisoner as she was labeled. Noor dies but not unknown as people left behind always keeps her memory alive. At Afzal Manzil, every year since 1946, Noor's family keeps a memorial visited by most of her loved ones.

In the wake of increasing, all enveloping globalization, Multiculturalism has become a way of living in diasporic societies. Sometimes economic compulsions, sometimes Individual choices, have forced people to go beyond 'borders'. These immigrants received mixed reception from their 'host societies'. But largely, they faced conflictual attitudes within themselves and felt 'hyphenated Identities' constructing all around their lives. Some of the hostile attitudes of the peoples in 'adopted land' enhance their alienation and longing for the homeland. This feeling is followed gradually by the attempts 'to adjust, to assimilate and to acclimatize' on their part.

All diasporic writers depict the cultural dilemmas, generational differences, identity complexes, assimilation processes in their fictional renderings. Hence

somewhere, their writings meet at one edge. Diasporic characters, presented in their works, swing between 'two worlds', 'here and there', either blessing to one or cursing other or sometimes 'balancing both'. Early writings in this field like Anita Desai's *Bye Bye Blackbird* and Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* , are some of the ideal examples of those pieces which depict immigrants' plight in its full scope. Bharati Mukherjee's novels like *Wife* and *Jasmine* depict Indians in the US-depicted as dream land for immigrants-both legal and illegal-before globalization got its momentum. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her novel *Mistress of Spices* depicts Tilo, the protagonist, as an exotic character to bring out the migrant's anguish. Anita Desai in the second part of her novel *Bye Bye Blackbird* examines the plight of Indian immigrants in London.

Younger generation women writers, such as Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Rau Badami, Kiran Desai, Uma Parmeswaran and Shauna Singh Baldwin have unveiled the complexities of discrimination, assimilation, social and demographic change which not only affected the society itself but the various ethnic groups and the immigrants. The cultural barriers, identity crisis, racism and violence faced by immigrants expressed with their assimilation moves. Diaspora writers and critics have been seeking new suitable expressions and exploring the old ones to find new connotations since decades to fit into their narratives. In this process, a whole branch of 'diaspora literature and criticism' has off shooted which have given birth to one of the most eminent critics in the history of this genre. First generation diasporic writers are different from second writers in their treatment of various themes. Whereas one class comprises those who have spent a part of their life in India and have migrated alien land. The

other class comprises those who have had a view of their country only from the outside as an exotic place of their origin.

These writers while depicting diaspora characters in their fiction explore the theme of displacement and dilemma of cultural identity. These diasporic writers have generally dealt with the characters from their first hand experiences which make their narrative as ‘genuine and rooted’ as that of the native writers.