CHAPTER V
Diasporic Chronotope

This chapter attempts to delineate how Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*, SKY Lee’s *Disappearing Moon Café*, Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat*, Amy Tan’s *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*, and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* use the trope of the chronotope as described by Bakhtin. Bakhtin in his article mentions that he did not formulate completely all the chronotopes and believes that in future some may be added, “[W]e do not pretend to completeness or precision in our theoretical formations and definitions” (85). This statement thus helped to open a way to formulate a new type of chronotope which is called ‘diasporic chronotope’

The diasporic community, even though they live in the present, most often travel to the past through their memories. They will be living in two different chronotopes: in the present time, the diasporic communities live in the settled land and through their memory they will be traveling to the past time in their homeland. It indicates that the diasporic communities possess two chronotopes, which can be called as physical chronotope and mental chronotope. Physical chronotope belongs to the present time in the settled land location whereas the mental chronotope denotes the past time in the homeland where the diasporic people travel through their remembrance. This ambivalent condition of existing in two different chronotopes at the same time is not possible. This leads to a break in the nature of chronotope which could be called as a dischronotope.

The diasporic community’s stay for a long period of time in the new land, and yet are often haunted by the memories of their homeland. It deprives them from accepting the settled land’s cultural practices. In spite of living for a long
time in the settled land, they consider the land which they left as their own
country and this restricts them to mingle with the society in the settled land. The
nature of changes that occur in the settled land may be varied. In some cases, the
diasporic community happily accepts the practices of the settled land and
assimilates with it. Some prefer to follow certain practices from both cultures,
homeland and settled land, and integrate with it. Few others due to rigid ideas
about the settled society live in isolation and strictly follow only homeland
culture. Through the diasporic community’s preference of cultural practices their
identity formation varies such as, homeland identity, settled land identity and split
identity, which leads to the formation of multiple identities. The formation of
multiple identities leads to a condition of heterogeneity for the diasporic
community.

The various factors faced by the diasporic community such as ambiguous
condition of their living, their heterogeneous nature in accepting/rejecting/assimilating settled land’s culture, changes by the progression
of time. Even though they prefer to accept the homeland culture or the settled
land’s culture, in some way or the other they will be affected by their interaction
with the new culture. The culture, which the diasporic community, prefers to
follow cannot be addressed as a pure culture because it cannot escape from the
influence of the other. In the case of the diasporic community, they can not be
totally a part of the homeland’s cultural practices nor the settled land’s cultural
practices. Somewhere or the other, spatio-temporal factors are split indicating that
the diasporic chronotope leads to the construction of the diasporic community’s
multiple identities.

Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope discusses the inseparability of time and
space. In the concluding part of the essay “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the
Novel”, Bakhtin talks about the significance of chronotope. The ideas which he
shares in this part are taken as a yardstick for the analysis of the select diasporic fiction. First and foremost, he talks about the “narrative events of the novel” (250). Events are narrated in a novel in order to present a particular incident in an effective way or to represent a culture and its practices. He believes that the chronotope helps to present the events in order and writes that “the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins. An event can be communicated, it becomes information, one can give precise data on the place and time of its occurrence” (250). After discussing about the importance of chronotope in the narration of events in novels, Bakhtin concentrates on literary images. He believes that “any and every literary image is chronotopic” (251). The language and images used by the writer helps to understand the picture of the world which he intends to portray. Bakhtin explains that language and literary image are chronotopic because chronotope serves as “the mediating maker with whose help the root meanings of spatial categories are carried over into temporal relationships” (251). In the act of reading a text, Bakhtin presents three different kinds of chronotope. In this part he discusses about the chronotope of the author, the chronotope which he presents in his work and the chronotope of the reader or the listener. He advises the readers not to confuse one chronotope with other chronotopes. Utilizing some of the ideas of Bakhtin’s such as the idea of the portrayal of chain of events, usage of literary image and the portrayal of represented and representing world, autobiographical elements in the work the researcher hopes to depict the methods by which the novels move towards a depiction of a diasporic chronotope.

Bakhtin believes that the representation of events give life to the novels. “It serves as the primary point from which “scenes” in a novel unfold, while at the same time other ‘binding’ events, located far from the chronotope, appear as mere dry information and communicated facts” (250). The presentation of events in the novel helps to convey the intention of the writer. In some novels, writers use
events in a chronological order and some other writers shuffle the chronology by presenting the events in a cyclical manner. The writer uses these techniques to represent the event in an effective manner.

Every work has a beginning and an end. The events represented in it likewise has a beginning and an end, but these beginnings and ends lie in different worlds, in different chronotopes that can never fuse with each other or be identical to each other but that are, at the same time interested and indissolubly tied up with each other (255).

In diasporic fictions various kinds of events are narrated in different ways by the writers in order to portray their diasporic feelings. Certain events are used in diaspora by the writers to bring out the diasporic feelings.

The narration being cyclical in *Obasan*, moves between the past and the present time. As Bakhtin mentions, in this novel even though events are narrated in a shuffled manner, each and every incident is interrelated. The events within the narration are used very well to portray the discrimination faced by the Japanese-Canadian community in Canada during the World War II. When the novel begins Naomi visits the Coulee with her uncle and similarly when the novel ends she visits the Coulee alone after her uncle’s death. Although the beginning and ending of novel is located in the same geographical location the time differs. In between these two different chronotopes, Kogawa presents different geographical space and time to represent the sufferings faced by the Japanese diasporic people in Canada. She presents the traumas faced by the Japanese-Canadian community through several events, which take place in different chronotopes and all the events are interrelated with each other. Herewith, the readers can find three major events which are enriched with the addition of suffering in different time frames. They are the present in Canada, past in Canada and past in Japan.
In the novel, the present is mingled with the past. Therefore when Naomi visits her aunt at the time of her uncle’s death, through her family photo and Aunt Emily’s diary entries, past events are narrated to the readers. The incidents of the prosperous condition of the Naomi’s family before the World War II help to show the transformation of their condition after the World War II. Before the World War II, they lived a luxurious life in a comfortable big house with a successful fishing business. During World War II the Canadian government took away the Japanese-Canadians houses, business and everything which belonged to them and even separated families. It permitted the old people to stay in a separate place and even divided men and women. The bath house incident, where Naomi was neglected by her friends, due to her father’s illness, is used to show the unhygienic condition of the prisons the Canadian government maintained which was addressed as a camp. It indicates that several people were infected with disease and the government did not bother about it. Another incident which talks about the poor health condition of the Japanese boys due to starvation highlights the discrimination Canada showed towards the Japanese. The horror of discrimination can be understood from Aunt Emily’s diaries:

Vancouver—the water, the weather, the beauty, this paradise—is filled up and overflowing with hatred now...mothers are prostrate in nervous exhaustion—the baby’s crying endlessly—the fathers torn from them without farewell—everyone cramped into two buildings like so many pigs—children taken out of school with no provision for further education—more and more people pouring into the Park—forbidden to step outside the barred wire gates and fence—the men can’t even leave the building—police guards around them—some of them fight their way out to come to town what they can do about their families. Babies and motherless children totally stranded—their fathers taken to camp (91).
The Canadian government’s policy of moving the Japanese-Canadians from one to another location depicts the disruption by the Canadian government. The governments’ letters prove that everything about the Japanese-Canadians’ life is decided by the government and the Japanese people are mere puppets in its hand. Twenty seven years later Naomi reads the letter which her family received from the Canadian government. It mentions,

In accordance with the segregation program which is now being carried out by the government, you will be required to move to Kaslo where you will await Eastern Placement; as Slocan project has been selected as a Repatriation Camp and will house only those who have elected at the present time, or who may elect in the near future, to return to Japan.

Transportation arrangements will be made for you and for shipment of your effects and you will be notified as to the exact time that you will for Roseberry to entrain for Kaslo.

Beds, tables, stoves, stools, and all fixtures must be left in house or rooms you are now occupying.

No extension of this order can be granted. (173)

The past events in the novel, which take place in Canada, are utilized in the narrative to register the discrimination shown towards the Japanese-Canadians. The past incidents in a way help to shows the indifference shown by the Canadian government towards the Japanese-Canadians.

The events of Naomi’s mother and grandmother’s visit to Japan enables the readers to get the glimpse of the horror of Nagasaki incident. Naomi’s mother and her grandmother visit Japan often. In the described event in the novel, Naomi’s mother accompanies her grandmother to Japan in order to visit her great grandmother. When she was around four years old, her mother leaves for Japan.
Even though several times Naomi desires to know about her mother from her uncle and aunts, she does not get any relevant answer. Naomi did not learn the truth of her mother till she was 37 years old. Later, she reads the horror of the Nagasaki incident and the terrific sufferings of her mother from her grandmother Kato’s letter to her Aunt Emily. The events narrated in the letter helps to understand the atrocities done to the people in the name of war. Grandma Kato narrates the Nagasaki bomb incident in her letter. She hears a child’s shouting in the street and she explains,

“Look at the parachute!” A few seconds later, there was a sudden white flash, brighter than a bolt of lightning. She had no idea what could have exploded. It was as if the entire sky were swallowed up....She gradually became aware of the moisture, an intolerable heat, blood, a mountain of debris and her niece’s weak voice sounding at first distant, calling the names of her children. Then she could fear the other sounds—the far-away shouting.... (237)

She further sates the shock that she underwent,

It took Grandma a long time to claw her way out of the wreckage. When she emerged, it was into an eerie twilight formed of heavy dust and smoke that blotted out the sun. What she saw was incomprehensible. Almost all the building were flattened or in flames for as far she could see. The landmarks were gone. Tall columns of fire rose through the haze and everywhere the dying and the wounded crawled, fled, stumbled like ghosts among the ruins. Voices screamed calling the names of children, fathers, mothers, calling for help, calling for water. (237)

The events narrated in the present shows the effect of discrimination in the nature of the characters. Aunt Obasan becomes very calm and always mentions about the past while Stephen feels uncomfortable about the Japanese atmosphere
at their home. Naomi, on the other hand, becomes silent and lives with the identity problem while Aunt Emily lives as a warrior who thinks she has to fight for her people. When the novel begins, Naomi feels nervous to talk about her identity to other people. When the novel ends, she finds an answer for her doubts through Aunt Emily’s letters and understands her community’s past. The present, past in Canada and past in Japan incidents are interlinked to present the diasporic condition of the Japanese community in Canada.

Like Obasan, Disappearing Moon Cafe too follows circular narration where past and present are assorted. When compared to the other novels, sequences of incidents in this novel are well connected. A single incident becomes a trigger responsible for the happenings of several incidents. The novel hinges on the incident of Chang’s marriage with Kelora and his abandonment of her. The result of the abandonment and its effect upon him becomes the cause for the change of other characters’ nature.

Chang comes to Canada to work as a bone collector. He meets Kelora, a native woman, in a wild atmosphere where she saves his life. This incident becomes responsible for their marriage. The cultural difference between them makes him to leave Kelora and marry Mui Lan, who is from China. Separation from Kelora changes Chang very much and it affects the intimacy between Chang and Mui Lan. Similarly, Mui Lan’s life in a deserted land like Canada and her loveless life changes her nature. Her earlier life in China presents her as a cheerful and spirited woman; but in Canada she turns into a disgruntled, hard and arrogant woman. Mui Lan’s unpleasantness causes several problems for Fong Mei, Mui Lan’s daughter-in-law. In order to take vengeance against her mother-in-law and her husband and also due to her love for Ting An, she indulges in an affair with Ting An. It results in the birth of three children to Fong Mei and Ting An. This leads to an incestuous relationship between Morgan, (Ting An’s son) and
Suzanne’s, (Fong Mei and Ting An’s daughter). In this novel all the incidents are thus interconnected. Every incident becomes the result of a previous act. Even though the incidents are not narrated in the chronological order, each and every incident is interrelated. If Chang lives with Kelora without marrying Mui Lan, or marries Mui Lan without meeting Kelora, there is no possibility for the development of other incidents. This proves that the first incident of Chang’s meeting of Kelora becomes responsible for other incidents. By portraying the history of the family, the writer Portrays the loneliness faced by the diasporic people, the discrimination showed by the settled country on them and survival problems of the diasporic community.

The incidents which are used in the novel, *An American Brat* helps to focus on the representation of the nature of diasporic people, cultural practices of the Parsee community people and the political situation of Pakistan. The incidents, which Feroza faces during her initial stay in the US, represent the experiences of the first generation of immigrants. Feroza visits her uncle Manek in the US to spend her vacation. Several incidents are presented to indicate the changes that occur in Feroza. Even though her experience with the immigrant officers makes her to hate the US, her visit to museums and shopping malls changes her opinion a bit. The events of her stay with her uncle, in the museum where Manek leaves for sometime, in the lift, etc. moulds her nature. Her relationship with Jo and her indifferent nature with Jo’s friends in the restaurant, later her adaptation of smoking and drinking proves the identity transformation. The incidents of the cultural conflicts, which torment her, the homesickness which she often feels, her discomfort to mingle freely with the White, her love for David and the break up of her love with David due to the different cultural practices represent the nature of trauma faced by her. Similar anguish even if not the same kind of experiences are part of the life of the diasporic individuals.
Incidents which occur around Zareen and her community people help to focus on the cultural practices of the Parsee community. The costumes, the Parsee wear and the language they speak (often in English and in Gujarati) and the friendly relationship between men and women show them as being different from the Muslim community. Zareen worries about her daughter’s shyness and timid nature and decides to send her to the U.S. When the news of Feroza’s love with David reaches her, she goes to the U.S in order to put an end to her daughter’s love affair. Even though she appears to be modern in her attire and her attitude, she does not want to move away from the tradition of the Parsee community. It enables her to create misunderstandings between Feroza and David. Most of Zareen’s behavior and some of the incidents in the novel helps to understand the Parsee community’s cultural practices. Zareen and Feroza’s visit to Agyari, the temple of Parsee presents their method of worship.

Feroza covered her head with a scarf, daubed her eyes with water form a silver jar, and performed her *kusti* in the lobby. As she unwound the sacred thread girdling her waist and retied the knots in the front and the back, she asked Ahura Mazda’s forgiveness for every ignoble thought, word, and deed she was guilty of and prayed that she might have the good thoughts, the eloquent tongue, and the strength to perform the deeds that would advance His Divine Plan. Having thus girded her loins in the service of the Lord, she entered the circular hall fragrant with sandalwood smoke and frankincense.

Feroza lit an oil lamp and saluted the enormous framed portraits of departed Lahori Parsees and, removing her shoes, knelt before the marble threshold of the inner sanctum…. (41)

Even though the novel focuses mainly on the experiences of the first generation of the diasporic people, it also talks about the political condition of Pakistan. Through the conversation of characters and through some incidents, the writer
presents the political condition of Pakistan. The conversation between Zareen and her husband Cyrus in the initial chapters of the novel gives two different opinions of citizens about Bhutto. Bhutto’s arrest and his sufferings in the jail are narrated to the readers through the conversation of Zareen and her family friends. The incident of Feroza’s and Zareen’s visit to the temple represents Bhutto’s sisters mourning over her brother’s arrest. The letter communication between Zareen and Feroza also enables the portrayal of the political condition of Pakistan. Bhutto’s death, people’s planning of a riot and revolt and later people’s forgetfulness of Bhutto is also narrated to the readers though the events which occur in the life of Zareen and Feroza. The presentation of the incidents of Famida and Allah Baksh, Safia Bibi and Jehan Mian’s cases intend to portray the gender inequality in the Pakistani society. Even if men do mistakes women are seen as responsible for it. One such incident is Famida and Allah Baksh who had run away to get married. The girl’s father accuses her of committing adultery:

They were sentenced to death by stoning. On an appeal to a higher court the charges were dismissed. Fortunately, stoning to death was declared un-Islamic because there was no mention of it in the Koran….the blind sixteen-year old servant girl, pregnant out of wedlock as a result of rape, was charged with adultery. She was sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment, fifteen lashes, and the fine of a thousand rupees. (236)

Sidhwa through the chain of incidents presents initial traumas faced by the diasporic people and the political and cultural practices of the Pakistani Parsee people.

Through the narration of the family history, *The Bonesetter’s Daughter* delineates the lives of the three generations of women. The incidents which occur in the life of each generation of the main characters are united with the concept of a family. Precious Auntie belongs to the nineteenth century and her life
portrays the cultural practices of China during that time. Her independent nature and education distinguishes her from her community women. It is revealed from her selection of her life partner and rejection of Chang’s proposal of marriage.

In the life of LuLing, Precious Auntie’s death becomes a major incident, and she, therefore, faces a lot of problems such as her experiences in the orphanage home, her marriage with Kai Jing, his death and her hardship to save money for her trip to the US, and the cultural clash in the US. After Precious Auntie’s death she was sent away to the orphanage home by her family members. They fear because of LuLing, Precious Auntie’s ghost would stay in the house and bring destruction to the family. She is helped by education in the orphanage and later she works as a teacher there. Her stay in the orphanage paves the way for her meeting with Kai Jing, who is the son of one of the teachers. Japanese war on China brings an end to her married life and her stay in Hong Kong presents the chain of struggles she faces there. Thus, Precious Auntie’s death becomes the major reason for the chain of sufferable incidents which LuLing faces.

The incidents which talk about the relationship between LuLing and Ruth portray the conflict between the first and second generation of the diasporic community. LuLing’s hardship in life makes her as a strong and strict woman. Her sufferings in the orphanage home, in Hong Kong and in the US after the death of her second husband, mould her as a strong woman. Ruth as a child believes in emotional relationship with her mother. Like other American girls she too wants her mother to be free and friendly. Her mother’s strictness makes her to hate her and she is also ashamed to acknowledge before her friends. She believes that her mother is different from her friends’ mothers. “Experience had taught her that her mother worried too much even when she had no reason to worry” (120). LuLing forbids Ruth from mingling with boys, smoking, etc. LuLing often reads
Ruth’s personal diary and scolds her for the incidents which she narrates there. It results in Ruth’s writing of diary in Latin and Spanish:

Didn’t Mom ever realize, Ruth now mused, how her demands for no secrets drove me to hide even more from her? Yet may be her mother did sense that. May be it made her hide certain truths from Ruth about herself. *Things too bad to say*. They could not trust each other. That was how dishonesty and betrayal started, not in big lies but in small secrets. (139)

It creates a gap between in their relationship. And also results in hurting her mother’s feelings:

“‘You talk about killing yourself, so why don’t you ever do it? I wish you would. Just do it, do it, do it! Go ahead, kill yourself! Precious Auntie wants you to, and so do I!’”

At the time she was shocked that she could write such horrible feelings. She was shocked now to remember them. She had cried while writing the words, full of anger, fear, and a strange of freedom of finally admitting so openly that she wanted to hurt her mother as much as her mother hurt her. (141)

The incidents of misunderstanding between LuLing and Ruth help to portray the problems faced by the different generations.

The incident of Japanese war on China is explained through the conversation that occurs in the orphanage. The event of Japanese attack on China is presented through the English radio news. Many incidents regarding the war are revealed in the novel through conversations and dialogues. One such illustration is when GaoLinig tells LuLing of her escape from the soldiers:

All the passengers got off and milled around like sheep and ducks. We had soldiers poking us to keep moving. They herded us into a field, and I was certain we were going to be executed. But then we
The two political groups of China – Communists and Nationalists – are mentioned in the novel. The conversations between the characters sketch the nature of the two parties:

[T]he Communists are closer to God even though they don’t believe in Him. Share the fish and loaves, that’s what they believe. It’s true, Communists are like Christians. May be they should form a united front with Jesus worshippers rather than with the Nationalists. (254)

In the novel, the Communists’ anger towards the Japanese is well portrayed. During the fight, the Communists lose their soldiers gradually and begin to lack medicine. When the Communists find their strength dwindling, they compel ordinary citizens to take part in war, “‘We’re asking all men in the villages we defend to help us. You don’t need to fight. You can cook or clean or do repairs.’” When no one said anything, he added in a less friendly voice: “‘This isn’t a request, it’s a requirement. Your village owes this. We order you. If you don’t come along as patriots, we’ll take you as cowards.’” (264). Due to such enforcement, Kai Jing is drafted into the army. The Japanese attack on the US too is mentioned in the novel. The orphanage run by the US missionary was not attacked by the Japanese soldiers earlier due to the neutral stance of US but later when the Americans declared war on the Japanese, the Japanese soldiers marched into the orphanage. This resulted in LuLing’s departure from the orphanage along with others and their move into Peking. The ending of the war in 1945 gives relief to all of them. The incidents related to war portrays the suffering of the Chinese and the manner in which it disrupts their lives.
The Namesake contains a sequence of incidents which takes responsibility to present cultural disparity between the generations. Even though the novel is written by following chronological order, some incidents which are presented in the flash back (past) become responsible for the present events. This novel contains of two kinds of incidents that is, events which occur in the past and which occur in the present. Incidents which occurred in the past are responsible for the present occurrences in the novel. The incident of the train accident which Ashoke has faced becomes the reason for his naming of his son as Gogol. Ashoke remembers the train accident in the hospital when Ashima gives birth to their first son. The horror of the accident is narrated emphasizing Ashoke’s escape. The narrative also points out how Ashoke’s reading of Nikolai Gogol’s work saved him during the accident. This incident is the reason for him to name his son as Gogol. When the doctors ask them to give a name for their child immediately, Ashoke stands there, “…with a slight quiver of recognition, as if he’d known it all long, the perfect pet name for his son occurs to Ashoke. He remembers the page crumpled tightly in his fingers, the sudden shock of the lantern’s glare in his eyes. But for the first time he thinks of that moment not with terror but with gratitude” (28). The name Gogol which once reminded Ashoke of the cruel incident of the train accident, now reminded him of his happy life with his family. These two incidents show the changes in the character of Ashoke. He himself acknowledges that his son’s name reminds him of “everything that followed” (124). Similarly when Ashoke leaves for Ohio for research work, Ashima decides to stay alone and Ashoke arranges for her comfortable stay. This incident is remembered by Ashima after Ashoke’s death and makes her think that her husband’s visit to Ohio was meant to teach her to stay alone.

The writer presents the changing nature of Gogol through his views about his name in a series of incidents. Gogol’s parents decide to change his name as Nikhil when he joins in a kindergarten. But Gogol rejects it because at such a
small age he does not feel comfortable to be addressed with a new name. Later in his high school, his reading of Nikolai Gogol’s biography makes him to be uncomfortable with his name. It forces him to reject the short story of Gogol without reading. “To read the story, he believes, would mean paying tribute to his namesake, accepting somehow. Still, listening to his classmates complain, he feels perversely responsible, as if his own work were being attacked” (92). This incident compels him to change his name to Nikhil. Later when his father narrates the incident of his train accident, Gogol’s discomfort towards his name increases. “[A]nd suddenly the sound of his pet name, uttered by his father as he has been accustomed to hearing it all his life, means something completely new, bound up with a catastrophe he has unwittingly embodied for years” (124). He lives a happy and free life after changing his name to Nikhil. His father’s death brings certain changes within him. During his mother’s send-off party Gogol begins to read Nikolai Gogol’s book which his father presented to him with affection during his fourteenth birthday. It symbolically shows his changing nature towards the name Gogol.

The presentation of a series of incidents helps the readers to understand the initial feelings experienced by the diasporic people and their way of coming out of it. Ashima’s loneliness and her constant feelings of home-sickness are narrated through several incidents. Objects such as her watch, Desh magazine, her bracelets, and each and every item in her home reminds her of her life in India. Much later, her life with her son Gogol, her friendship with other Bengali people enables her to come out of her loneliness. Ashima’s coming out of her loneliness is explained to the readers through various incidents.

Gogol’s life, from his birth till the age of thirty two is narrated to the readers through the presentation of important incidents which occurred in his life. Incidents like his attitude towards his name, romantic side of his life, his
marriage, failure of his marriage are presented to the readers. The name, Nikhil brings tremendous changes in his nature. With the new name he feels comfortable to mingle with women. His affair with Ruth and Maxine are possible due to his new name. Moushumi’s break up with Graham, with whom he got engaged and Gogol’s break up with Ruth and Max may symbolically represent their failure to cope with the American culture and their problem of mixed identity. They both have same kind of feeling in many cases and it may be the reason for their separation. Gogol thinks, “They had both acted on the same impulse that was their mistake. They had both sought comfort in each other, and in their shared world, perhaps for the sake of novelty, or out of the fear that that world was slowly dying” (284).

The second generation of the diasporic people in many cases feels uncomfortable with their parents due to their behavioral nature and cultural practices. Several incidents are presented to show Gogol’s discomfort about his parents’ behavior. His trip to Calcutta, visit to Bangladeshi friends’ houses in the US, weekend parties of his parents, his parents unfriendliness with Maxine, and Ashima’s caring lead to a feeling of discomfort.

In Brick Lane three different types of events (incidents) are interlinked: incidents which occurred in the past in Bangladesh, incidents which occur in Bangladesh and in London in the present. The past incidents such as Nazneen’s mother’s assumption of delivery pain as indigestion and possession of evil spirit, leaving everything to fate enables the readers to know about the superstitious beliefs and ignorance of the village people in Bangladesh. Hasina’s letters to Nazneen tells about the condition of Bangladesh in the present. Growing amount of the usage of plastic, women’s condition in Dhaka, election and the disparities in women’s lives are demarcated to the readers through Hasina’s letters.
The events that take place in the present in London around Nazneen help to frame the drastic changes that Nazneen undergoes. When Nazneen comes to London she was, as Chanu mentions, “a girl from the village; totally unspoiled” (23). Her experiences and presentation of sequences of incidents is presented in such a way as to reveal the changes in her personality. Her maturation and her indifferent nature are explained by the writer through the usage of certain incidents. The incidents which talk about her dedication to do prayer five times a day and her belief upon God and His presence everywhere shows her as a pious woman. In the beginning of the novel the writer focuses on Nazneen’s activity of reading the Quran often and her habit of praying. As the narrative moves forward one notice that Nazneen focuses less on these practices and begins to be interested in other activities.

Nazneen, while in the village like her mother believes that fate decides everything in human life. “What could not be changed must be borne. And since nothing could be changed, everything had to be borne. This principle ruled her life. It was mantra, fettle and challenge” (16). In this way she accepts her marriage to Chanu and lives in London. When her son Raqib falls ill, she takes him to the hospital, which considered by her community people as a fight against fate. Nazneen’s mother appears in her dream and accuses her for killing her son. “You thought you would keep him alive. You decided you would be the one to choose. She began to spit the words out and drops of red flew with them. ‘when you stood between your son and his Fate, you robbed him of any chance’” (432). But this incident does not bring much change in the nature of Nazneen. When Chanu prepares for their return to Dhaka, she is not ready to accept it as her fate. Now she believes, “Anything is possible” (62) and nothing is there for the fate to play in her life. She believes that she has to decide about her life and decides to stay in London with her daughters.
Brick Lane’s depiction of incidents revolving around the two movements, Bengal Tigers and Lion Heart enable readers to understand the different views of the same community people. The fight between the two movements through leaflets enables the public to know about the happenings in the world. The events which narrates the meetings attended by Nazneen helps to picturise the discriminations faced by the poor people in the name of religion and politics. The incident of bombing the ‘Twin Towers’ is mentioned in the novel. It helps to focus on the problems faced by the Muslims in London as a result of the bombing event. “A pinch of New York dust blew across the ocean and settled on the Dogwood Estate. Sorupa’s daughter was the first but not the only one. Walking in the street, on her way to college, she had her hijab pulled off. Razia wore her Union Jack sweatshirt and it was spat on” (368). Collections of events are portrayed by the writer to show the White’s extreme dislike towards the Muslim community

Several incidents prove that the condition of Bangladeshi women in Bangladesh as well as in London is similar in many ways. They are expected to cover their head, indulge in domestic activities, restricted from public spaces, and over all neglected by society. In London some of the women from the Bangladeshi community, who worked were condemned by their own community people. Women stopped talking to them and the men sent them away from home. Nazneen was the only woman, who worked with the support of her husband, among the middle class families. The events that occur in the life of Razia and Jorina regarding job proves the mentality of the Bangladeshi community in London. Not only in London, in Bangladesh too, women are treated in a similar way. Incidents that occur in Hasina’s life portray the cultural practices and condition of Bangladeshi society. In a letter to Nazneen, Hasina explains the situation in Bangladesh:
Some people making trouble outside factory. They shout to us. ‘Here come the garment girls. Choose the one you like.’ A Mullah organize whole entire thing. Day and night they playing religious message with loudspeaker. They say it sinful for men and women working together. But they the ones sinning take Gods name give insult to us and tell lie. Aleya husband getting anxious like anything. He want Aleya to wear burkha inside of factory. (152)

In this novel, the collection of events helps the readers to know about the social practices prevalent in Bangladesh. It also gives a glimpse of the Muslim community in London and reveals the status of women in Bangladesh as well as in London.

The analysis proves that the diasporic writers use the incidents to portray the problems, feelings and conditions of the diasporic people. In the novels, past and present incidents are portrayed to present a history of a community or a country. In *Obasan* and *Disappearing Moon Café*, past incidents are used to portray the history of the diasporic people. *The Bonesetter’s Daughter* contains incidents of past which deals with the history of a country and its culture while *Brick Lane* elucidates the cultural practices of Bangladesh. In all the novels, the narration of present incidents ultimately reveals identity problems, and ambivalent nature of the diasporic community. The reading indicates that even though the writers follow different narrative methods, the commonness among their work is their ability to portray the problems of diasporic people and their life style in the settled society.

Bakhtin mentions that every literary image used in a book is chronotopic. The language and image used by a writer helps to convey the spatial and temporal facts/settings of the novel. In diasporic fiction too, writers use cultural terms and images to portray their home country and its culture. Most of the diasporic writers
in their works discuss food items, dress practices and certain cultural practices, which helps the readers to understand the culture of the diasporic writers. Most of the characters’ names in the diasporic fiction symbolically indicate their culture or their home country.

In *Obasan*, Joy Kogawa uses the Japanese language here and there and cultural practices throughout the novel. The characters of the first and second generations of the Japanese community in Canada often use Japanese language in their conversation. From the reading of the novel, it is understandable that among the family members, they prefer to talk in Japanese language. Joy Kogawa through the presentation of the Japanese language tries to show the Japanese people’s continuous attachment with their language and culture. She often uses Japanese cultural practices and tradition in the novel. Aunt Obasan is represented as a woman of Japanese culture. Her expressions and mannerisms are used to express the Japanese cultural practices to the readers. She is silent and does not show her feelings outwardly. In the Japanese culture marriages are arranged by the elders and there is no choice or chance for the bride or the bridegroom to select their partners. In the novel it is mentioned that Naomi’s parents’ marriage is the first love marriage. “The marriage between Father and Mother was the first non arranged marriage in the community” (20). Married people will not express their love and affection in front of others and they consider it as private. Commenting on this distance between her parents, Naomi mentions, “I’ve never once seen them caressing” (6).

In the novel Japanese food items are variously mentioned by the writer. Naomi’s family members eat Japanese food by using chopsticks which is a typical representation of Japanese culture. Food items like ‘sticky rice balls’, ‘rice osushis’, ‘fried vegetable okazu’ and the method of making dishes are also mentioned at several places. Along with the Japanese food items they eat
Canadian dishes too. It shows that slowly they are trying to accept both cultures. Even though Japanese people settled in Canada, they have separate Japanese newspapers and schools which teach Japanese language for their children. They prefer to talk in Japanese languages among themselves. They entertain their children with Japanese stories and by doing this they try to educate them with culture. In *Obasan* there is a mention about the Ninomiya Kinjiro statue who was a great teacher of Japan. Naomi’s father by telling stories encourages his children’s education. Naomi’s family members are educated and they give preference for educating their children. Naomi’s uncle uses Hikoo in an ordinary conversation and it shows his knowledge in Japanese literature. Naomi’s grandparents Katos and Nakanes are Buddhist. Thus, Kogawa uses language and certain images to talk about the Japanese culture and practices followed by the Japanese diasporic people in Canada.

Kogawa also uses certain incidents symbolically to convey some other ideas in the novel. Two such incidents are analysed in this part. While narrating the past in *Obasan*, there are references to chickens. When the chickens and hen are kept in the same cage, the hen starts to kill the chicks.

The white hen stops scratching and cocks her head at them. The chicks begin to leave the cluster, hoping, cheeping, their shiny round eyes black as apple seeds. One chick reaches the hen’s feet. Without a warning, the hen’s sharp beak jabs down on the chick up again and down, deliberate as the needle on the sewing-machine. A high trilling squeal and the chick spreads its short wings like a fan as it flops forward. Again and again the hen’s beak strikes and the chick lies on its side on the floor, its neck twisted back, its wings, outstretched fingers. The hen lifts a scaly leg, the claws collapsing and clutching as it struts around the cage, bayoneting the chicks darting past her feet, their wings outspread. (58-59)
This incident symbolically shows, like chicks, Japanese-Canadians are tortured and killed by the Canadians. The Canadians as hen attack the chicks due to their inhabitation in Canada and proves the powerlessness of the chicks that is the Japanese-Canadians.

Kogawa’s portrayal of the stone cake made by Naomi’s uncle symbolically shows the cultural identification of the Japanese-Canadian community. Her uncle follows the method used by the bakers to bake cake but it ends up like stone. Even after several trials, he produces the cake which is very hard and they end up calling it as stone cake: “Uncle had baked the bread too long, I refused to eat it but uncle kept making it that way over the years, “including” the recipe with left over oatmeal and barley. Sometimes he even added carrots and potatoes. But no matter what he put in it, it always ended up like a lump of granite on the corner” (13). Till his death he could not make soft bread but only the stone bread. It symbolically proves how much ever a Japanese people try to adopt the Canadian culture, their cultural practices will be differentiated in some way or the other. They cannot be fully seen as the Canadians by the government. Even though they are in Canada, they are Japanese-Canadians like the stone cake which is different from the soft bread, which is the Canadian.

Disappearing Moon Cafe has very less cultural images or language used by the writer. Even though there is a reference to China, portrayal of cultural images of China is very less. An American Brat contains a huge list of the Gujarati words which helps to convey the cultural/traditional meanings of the Parsee community. It is given in the glossary at the end of the novel for the usage of the foreign readers. Most of the practices of the Parsee community people resemble the practices of the Western culture like attending parties, wearing
modern dresses, sleeveless tops, playing hockey and cycling by women in the 1950’s and 60’s and women conversing freely with men.

*The Bonesetter’s Daughter* makes use of many of the Chinese cultural images when it talks about the life in China. Chinese use different names for years through which they believe that their future depends. The novel outlines the different names of the years such as Water Dragon year, Fire Dragon year, Rooster year, Snake year, and Wood Horse year. By using the names of the years they check the possibility of relationship between people. LuLing mentions that she and her daughter are born in the opposite names of the years, and therefore will be against each other. “She was born in a Water Dragon year and I in Fire Dragon year. So we are the same but for opposite reasons” (1). Similarly marriage proposal between Precious Auntie and Baby Uncle is rejected due to, “Their combination of birth years was also inharmonious, she a fire Rooster and he a Wood Horse. The girl would ride his back and peck apart piece by piece. She would consume him with her insatiable demands” (169). It also exhibits Chinese belief in fortune telling. This novel presents many of the Chinese cultural things such as “Chipao” (195), a kind of old fashioned dress used by the Chinese, and the “Full moon festival” (82) celebrated by the Chinese. Chinese’s beliefs in ghost are mentioned many times. Almost all the Chinese characters of different generations, from Precious Auntie to Ruth believe in ghosts: “Ruth had had nightmares about that, the ghost with long hair, dripping blood, crying for revenge” (21). Their belief in talking to the ghost is mentioned at several incidents in the novel. LuLing’s compulsion to Ruth to write in a sand tray with chopstick, her talking with a girl who talks with Precious Auntie’s ghost in China, the incident with the famous catcher of ghosts show their cultural beliefs in ghosts.

In this novel, even though most of the characters talk in Chinese and Mandarin, a dialect of Chinese, the whole novel is narrated in the English
language. The cultural words of Chinese and the name of places are translated into English. The novel also tells about different kinds of bones from hills such as, “Chicken Bone Hill, Old Cow Hill, Dragon Bone Hill. Of course, it’s not just Dragon Bones in Dragon Bone Hill” (161), which are used for the purpose of medicine. These bones are used in a traditional way to heal disease.

The Namesake sketches the lives of the first and second generation of the diasporic people, and also outlines the Indian culture. Lahiri uses Bengali words that are used to address family members such as, “‘Dida’, ‘Dadu’, ‘Manu’” (45), “mashi and pishi, mama and maima, kaku and jethu” (81). Several words and cultural practices are used as a literary imaginary by the writer to present Indian cultural practices. Ashima even after settling in the US for several years continues to wear saris, which is India’s traditional dress. Moushumi, the second generation of the diasporic community, wears sari and jewelry for her marriage. It records how the further generations of the diasporic people follow their cultural practices. Kabadi, a game played in India is mentioned in the novel, when the writer talks about Ashoke’s brothers. Katha Kali, the traditional dance of Kerala, is mentioned by the writer in the novel. In this novel, there is also a reference to the various Gods worshipped by the Hindu people in India. Ashima teaches her children, “the names of the deities adoring the ten-handed goddess Durga during pujo: Saraswati with her swan and Kartik with his peacock to her left, Lakshmi with her owl and Ganesh with his mouse to her right” (54).

Important incidents in the life of a human being are marriage, child birth and death and each has different kinds of rituals in the Bengali community. Each one of it is narrated in a detail way in the novel. The rituals of marriage followed by the Bengali community are narrated to the readers through the marriage of Ashima and Ashoke by Lahiri:
Her lips were darkened, her brow and cheeks dotted with sandalwood paste, her hair wound up, bound with flowers, held in a place by a hundred wire pins that would take an hour to remove once the wedding was finally over. Her head draped with scarlet netting. The air was damp, and in spite of the pins Ashima’s hair, thickest of all the cousins’, would not lie flat. She wore all the necklaces and chokers and bracelets that were destined to live most of their lives in an extra-large safety deposit box in a bank vault in New England. At the designated hour she was seated on a peri that her father had decorated, hoisted five feet off the ground, carried out to meet the groom. She had hidden her face with a heart-shaped betel leaf, kept her head bent low until she had circled him seven times. (9-10)

Rice ceremony which is another important ritual followed by the Bengali community after child birth, is also mentioned. Rituals followed after the death of a married man is remembered by Ashima after her father’s death, “[H]er mother’s vermilion erased from her part, her brother’s thick hair shaved from his head in mourning” (47). These cultural images with details help the readers to understand the cultural practices of various nations.

In Brick Lane two kinds of English language is used by the writer, namely, language spoken by the Bangladeshi community people in London and language used in Hasina’s letters. Many critics have passed several comments about Monica Ali’s usage of the English language in this novel. Hasina’s ungrammatical and broken language may be the translation of colloquial Urdu to English. Cultural images are also presented by the writer. At many places, there are descriptions about Bangladeshi food items and cultural practices. Food items like lamb curry, rice, tamarind sauce, cauliflower curry, dal, etc. are mentioned in this novel. Ali uses certain Muslim cultural words in this novel like namaz, burkha,
Koran, etc. Since the novel *Disappearing Moon Café* focuses on the history of a family and their failure in truthful relationship among themselves, it pays very less importance to cultural images and language. The detailed portrayal of the cultural practices of the home country in the select novels enables the readers to understand the tradition of different countries and also indicate the attachment towards their home country’s cultural practices of the diasporic people, even in the second and third generation.

Bakhtin talks about the real world and the represented world of the writers. When the author tries to portray a real world in his/her work, it becomes a represented world, “there is a sharp and categorical boundary line between the actual world as source of representation and the world represented in the work” (253). The moment when the author talks about his/her personal incidents, he/she becomes an outsider of that incident. By narrating the story, the writer becomes an outsider of his/her work, because the writer lives in different time (present) and writes about the past. Even though the writer writes about the world in which s/he lives/lived, that can be partial presentations only. In the diasporic fictions too, writers write about the experiences which they faced in the settled country. They use their work as a tool to express the diasporic experiences. Even though most of the diasporic experiences presented in the novels are autobiographical, they cannot be accepted as full fledged personal incidents. In some cases it may be fictional.

The society represented in *Obasan* is Canada and it tells us about the World War II period. This is the first novel which talks about the internment and dispersal of Japanese-Canadians during the war time. *Obasan* was written after nearly three decades after the war, yet it represents the sufferings of the Japanese-Canadians to the world. To prove the originality of the incidents, at the end of the novel, Kogawa attaches the proof for the Canadian government’s discrimination
against the Japanese. The novel clearly sketches the traumas suffered by the Japanese-Canadians during the World War II. Even though the writer tries to fully capture the world in which she lived and tries to portray it in the novel, in some instances and in some characters the presentation is fictional. Kogawa in an interview states:

I was not thinking particularly of writing about Japanese-Canadians, I was simply writing out of my own life and writing it in some of the way I wrote poetry…When I was at the Archives, though, in Ottawa, that’s when I became aware of another voice that I was not conscious of being within me – Muriel Kitagawa’s voice. To me, it was a voice from the outside, one that I had never encountered, and one that I could only report on. So Aunt Emily’s voice was always outside of me throughout the entire writing of *Obasan*. (www.eng.fju.edu.tw)

It proves that in a lesser level the world which the writer tries to represent and the represented world is not similar.

*Disappearing Moon Cafe* discusses Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth century from the point of view of the Chinese-Canadians. The writer, SKY Lee who belongs to the twentieth century tries to portray the glimpse of history of their community through the history of a family. The writer talks about the task of bone collectors, railroad construction by the Chinese and the discrimination faced by the Chinese in Canada. At several instances the writer presents the problems and sufferings faced by the Chinese diasporic community in Canada. Even though the writer was born in the twentieth century she wrote about nineteenth century Canada in her novel. She uses some of historical information to construct the world in her work but it is not entirely based on the history. It indicates that the world represented in the world is not similar to the representing world by the writer.
The world Sidhwa represented in her novel *An American Brat* is the world in which she lived and lives. Sidhwa’s portrayal of the Parsee community people and their importance to their religion is based on the world in which she lived. After living in the US for some years she portrays the American characters in the novel *An American Brat* by basing on her observation. She herself mentions about that in many of her interviews.

Tan’s novels even though they are mainly based on the autobiographical events, have more fictional elements. She depicts China and her ancestor’s lives through what she has learned from her mother or from her family members and relatives. Most part of *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, comments about the past, which has occurred before Tan’s birth. It proves that the world represented in the work and the writer’s world is different. Tan visited her relatives in China along with her mother in 1987. That was her first visit to China. But the novel talks about the nineteenth and the twentieth century China. She observes “We find bits and pieces of our own past or those of our parents and ancestors, and we try to re-configure these fragments in order to understand ourselves” (www.powells.com). will be applicable to her writing of novels. Through her imagination, she tired to create a world of her ancestors in the novel.

Several people condemn Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*, for the portrayal of Bangladesh people as uneducated, lazy and economically poor. Many feel that, “the book has insulted the lane's hardworking Bangladeshis: Ms. Ali knew nothing about them, since she was only half-Bangladeshi and married to ‘a white man’ (Tripathi). The geographical location of Brick Lane, which Ali uses in her work, is a real place where Bangladesh community lives in London. People who live in Brick Lane criticize her novel and say “She said something not true about us in the book and we’ve got a right to protest these things, you know, because this is not right. What she said about our history through her characters, she’s
imagining the things in the head” (www.bbclearningenglish.com). Regarding this Ali mentions that, “although it’s true that 50,000 Sylhetis live in Tower Hamlets in overcrowded conditions, I shouldn’t have written about that. I should have written about some other successful Sylhetis, a region of Bangladesh, who’ve got big houses and swimming pools and so on. Which is - that’s a book for somebody else to write if they wish to!” (www.bbclearningenglish.com)

In another interview, when Monica Ali was asked as to why she had written about the place in which she did not live and about which she knew nothing, she answers, “It’s sort of the wrong question to be asking. In one way it’s perfectly obvious that your first novel draws from some part of your background hinterland. But the essential part of writing fiction is to use your imagination” (http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk). Many people from Bangladesh also criticized her novel. A ten page letter from Bangladesh was sent and it, “complained that the book needed “corrections”, that Bangladeshis weren’t all poor, some had big houses with swimming pools. In the book, Nazneen’s husband, Chanu, is rude about people from Sylhet. This caused further rancour” (http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk). The above comments from both the writers and the people who live in Brick Lane and in the Bangladesh prove the represented and the representing world may be different.

Lahiri in *The Namesake* represents the world where she has faced the ambivalent life and feeling of loss. In the represented world in *The Namesake* Gogol too feels the same:

I always say that I feel that I’ve inherited a sense of that loss from my parents because it was so palpable all the time while I was growing up, the sense of what my parents had sacrificed in moving to the United States, and in so many ways, and yet at the same time, remaining here and building a life here and all that that entailed (www.pbs.org).
Gogol always had the conflict about his inbetweeness and when he grows up he changes his views about the condition of his parents and also his view points. Similarly Lahiri too had conflicts about her inbetweeness. She explains this feeling:

It was always a question of allegiance, of choice. I wanted to please my parents and meet their expectations. I also wanted to meet the expectations of my American peers, and the expectations I put on myself to fit into American society. It's a classic case of divided identity, but depending on the degree to which the immigrants in question are willing to assimilate, the conflict is more or less pronounced. My parents were fearful and suspicious of America and American culture when I was growing up. Maintaining ties to India, and preserving Indian traditions in America, meant a lot to them. (www.hinduism.about.com)

She also explains how her parents had problems raising her and she being a small girl had no idea of their intentions:

Now that I'm an adult I understand and sympathize more with my parents' predicament. But when I was a child it was harder for me to understand their views. At times I felt that their expectations for me were in direct opposition to the reality of the world we lived in. Things like dating, living on one's own, having close friendships with Americans, listening to American music and eating American food - all of it was a mystery to them. On the other hand, when I was growing up, India was largely a mystery to Americans as well, not nearly as present in the fabric of American culture as it is today. It wasn't until I was in college that my American friends expressed curiosity about and interest in my Indian background. As
a young child, I felt that that the Indian part of me was unacknowledged, and therefore somehow negated, by my American environment, and vice versa. I felt that I led two very separate lives. (www.hinduism.about.com)

Lahiri is very clear about the world which she intends to represent in her work. She says that she is not representing the whole Bengali community. She talks about her parents and their family members and friends. By using many of the autobiographical elements of hers and her parents and her visit to Calcutta she represents the world to the readers. The reading shows that the represented world and the world the writer represents are in many ways similar The Namesake.

The analysis proves Bakhtin’s idea of represented and representing world. Bakhtin says that even though the writer portrays the world of his or hers in the work, after completing the work the writer becomes an outsider. He believes that even though they write about their experiences when they write that in their work they have come out of it. It enables them to look at those incidents as an outsider. In this way their writings also will be somewhat partial. In the case of Kogawa, SKY Lee, Monica Ali and Amy Tan the world which they represent in their work is known to them from sources like friends, relatives or from books. Even though they write about the place in which they live or visited, knowledge about that place is gained from some other sources. Due to it, their portrayal of the world is mixed with imagination. In the case of Bapsi Sidhwa and Jhumpa Lahiri they talk about the world in which they lived and live. So their portrayal of the world is more similar to the world in which they live. The diasporic fiction in most of the cases by using imaginary incidents the writers focus on the problems and sufferings faced by the diasporic people. The reading of the select diasporic fiction with the idea of Bakhtin’s represented and representing world, helps to understand that in spite of its imaginary and fictional events, diasporic fictions
enable the readers to come across several problems faced by the diasporic people and the kind of place they occupy in the world in which they live.

Some of the diasporic writers use their personal incidents as a source for their works. In some cases they use their ancestor’s history/experiences through which they try to present their community’s history. The purpose of such writing is to create individual identity and simultaneously it pictures the identities and experiences of the ethnic society. In *Obasan*, Kogawa uses the historical incident of discrimination against the Japanese-Canadians by the Canadian government as a major theme of her novel. Kogawa makes use of this novel to portray both her own personal experiences and her ancestors to the readers. Even though the novel gives a great deal of information about the public experiences, Kogawa presents it through her personal experience. In the book *Obasan*, she herself accepts that this novel is based on real incidents. “…this novel is based on historical events, and many of the persons named are real…” (Preface). Here the writer uses Naomi’s character to represent her personal experiences and feelings. Some critics are of the opinion that this novel is semi-autobiographical. Kogawa uses her personal experiences and her remembrance of the discrimination which her community faces during the World War II as a source for this novel. Similar to her life incident, she made her character Naomi’s family to relocate their home due to war: Naomi’s family moves from Vancouver to Slocan and then to Alberta. Kogawa uses the same location where she moved with her family members for Naomi’s family’s movement. This novel to a large extent is based on the author’s personal history.

Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat* has some of her personal experiences. Sidhwa belongs to the Parsee community and was born in Lahore. She makes her characters also a Parsee who belongs to Lahore. As the characters Zareen and Feroza, Sidhwa too talks in Gujarati at home. She has mentioned in an interview
that the story of *An American Brat* is based on her life incident. Feroza’s character is based on her daughter’s and Sidhwa uses her experiences to portray Zareen’s character. Her experiences with the American society and the feelings of cultural shock are portrayed well in this novel. Bapsi Sidhwa in an interview with Preeti Singh says the reason for writing about the US: “In *American Brat*, there are many experiences that me and my family actually went through personally or heard about after migrating to the United States. Otherwise I would not have dared to write about America” (291). When she is asked about the reason for using American characters in the novel, Sidhwa answers,

> I am not sure it was such a good idea to attempt to create so many American characters in *An American Brat*. But I wanted to do it. I didn’t want to sit in America and writer only about the expatriate community here or about the community I left behind. I could have done that even in Pakistan. I am having new experiences here everyday and they need to be incorporated in fiction. This is a great dearth of candid writing about our expatriate community here and its experiences with the mainstream American community. (291)

Generally in Amy Tan’s works readers can find autobiographical elements. There are many incidents which she portrays in her novels occurred in her life. Among them some of the incidents, she repeats in many of her novels. Mother-daughter relationship and mother’s survival problem in the new land will be a common theme in her novels. Tan used several personal incidents to portray the three major characters as Ruth, LuLing and Precious Auntie. Like in other novels, in this novel too mother character is based on the life of Tan’s own mother. Tan’s mother Daisy has witnessed her mother’s suicide when she was a child. It affects her health throughout her life. In “Writers on Writing” Tan says, “As long as she (my mother) was alive, her mother’s death was an everlasting
punishment to her. Whenever bad luck visited us, she asked aloud whether her mother was angry at her. Was this a curse” (www.nytimes.com). This incident is presented in The Bonesetter’s Daughter by making Precious Auntie to commit suicide. Later, whenever LuLing meets with problems in her life, she raises questions regarding curses and ghosts. LuLing believes in ghost and talking with ghosts. LuLing makes her daughter to write about the future or to answer for some of her doubts by using chopstick. This characteristic of LuLing is also the inspiration from Tan’s mother’s characteristics.

My mother also believed, as LuLing believed about Ruth, that I had the ability to see and talk to spirits, and she was especially keen that I communicate with my grandmother. As a child, I did not know that my grandmother had died by suicide, so I had little sympathy for my mother’s urgent desire to talk to her. But every now and then, I would say a phrase that reminded my mother of her mother. She was sure that I had been in contact and that I was keeping this information from her. (www.powells.com)

The character of Precious Auntie is inspired from two of her family members. In an interview Amy Tan states,

My inspiration for Precious Auntie derives from two people in my family. One is my grandmother’s cousin, who was known to my mother as “Precious Auntie.” My mother pointed her out to me in a photo; this young woman had once turned down a marriage proposal to a man who wanted her to be his second wife. She was pretty enough to be someone’s first wife, she decided. Soon after, she contracted smallpox and her face was scarred. The man came back and asked her to be his wife again, only this time he wanted her for the number four position, since he already had a second and third wife. Since she had no other place to go, she accepted. Later,
she killed herself. The other inspiration was my grandmother, my mother’s mother, who also killed herself. She died in China in 1925 at the age of thirty-seven. Suicide reverberates through the generations, and I have played out in my mind many times what my grandmother felt when she decided to kill herself. In writing about Precious Auntie, I would look at the photo of my grandmother and try to understand her. (www.powells.com)

Similarly the writer presents her personal experiences through the character of Ruth. Regarding this she mentions in an interview:

Ruth’s anxiety is similar to mine. My mother saw danger in every gesture, in every unturned corner. I inherited her fears, had them reinforced by watching my brother and father die, and by other life events that told me: “See? Life is dangerous. You have to be careful. You have to prepare.” In 1976, my roommate and one of my dearest friend was murdered during a robbery. I had to identify the body, go through the room, look at the blood, and identify what was taken to the police. I thought I was pretty calm about it. His death had a huge impact on my life though. I quit my doctoral program to do something useful. I went to work as a program consultant, working with kids with developmental disabilities. The following year, I lost my voice on the exact date of my friend’s death. Laryngitis, I figured. The following year, the same thing happened. I felt fine, but I was completely mute. The next year, same thing. I realized that part of my body was reliving the unspeakable horror of what had happened. To this day, my body reminds me. Ruth also has things from her past that she cannot talk about, and once a year, she too falls mute with what she thinks is laryngitis. Other parts of the book draw directly from my life. Foremost is my mother’s experience with Alzheimer’s: what she
did, what she said, the way she seemed to finally forget her sorrows, and, most important, the way she asked me to forgive her for terrible things she had done to me but could no longer remember. In writing, I always try to draw upon the emotional truth of my past experiences but never on the actual factual truth. I alter the details while trying to retain the sensual impact. This it seems to me is what fiction does and what makes it often more effective than straight biography or memoir. (www.powells.com)

In the case of Monica Ali, she too uses her personal experiences in her novel. Ali, like her heroine Nazneen was born in Bangladesh in 1967. In Ali’s case, when she was three years old her parents moved to London and lived a poor life in Bolton. During her young age she faces racial discrimination, due to her parents’ different nationality, which results in her feeling of inbetweeness, “Growing up with an English mother and a Bengali father means never being an insider. Standing neither behind a closed door, nor in the thick of things but rather in the shadow of the doorway is a good place from which to observe” (www.booksttaransworld.co.uk). Ali does not use her autobiographical elements to portray the character of Nazneen, she tells that, “I did not grow up like Nazneen (my protagonist) in a small Bangladeshi village, have an arranged marriage, and move to Tower Hamlets unable to speak a word of English” (www.booksttaransworld.co.uk). But Nazneen’s character is based on Ali’s mother’s life and Hasina’s character is based on the incidents which Ali witnessed in Bangladesh. She comments on it:

There is a character in my novel called Hasina. She lives in Dhaka, while my protagonist and her family live in London’s Tower Hamlets. The reader is introduced to her through a series of letters. Her life is a pedestrian (that is to say, unexceptional) tale of outrageous misfortune. How did I construct Hasina? From books,
articles, academic researches? From that fastidious disclaimer, Imagination? The first-timer's bosom buddy, Experience? I can point to this and that. But the only thing that interests me in this analysis is the impulse to create her and that brings me back to the Dhaka balcony: my inherited memory, my internalised folklore that tells me that life hangs by a thread. (www.booksttaransworld.co.uk)

Even though the novel is not an autobiography of Ali, still it contains some of the autobiographical elements of her parents’ life and hers. She, like her character, Shahana refused to talk in Bengali at home and as a result she has forgotten that language and faced the conflict between the first and second generation of immigrants.

Jhumpa Lahiri states that The Namesake is not fully autobiographical but it portrays some of the experiences of her parents and her own, to portray the problems and characteristic of the diasporic character. Ashima and Ashoke’s characters are built on that of her own parents: “My parents come from Calcutta. They arrived in Cambridge, much like the parents in the novel”. Even though the character Gogol is not fully derived from Lahiri’s, some of the feelings which she felt are portrayed through Gogol. Like Gogol, Lahiri too had the tension of inbetweeness. “A lot of my personality was informed by feeling very different in the world I grew up in,” says Lahiri, “feeling that I didn't fully belong, that my parents didn't belong. I feel that I inherited a sense of that loss my parents suffered in moving to the United States, because it was so palpable while I was growing up” (www.sfgate.com).

Some of her experiences are used to portray the character of Gogol. Like Gogol’s, in Lahiri’s life too, pet name becomes a good name: “I'm like Gogol in that my pet name inadvertently became my good name. I have two other names
on my passport and my birth certificate”. She further comments: “But when I was enrolled in school the teachers decided that Jhumpa was the easiest of my names to pronounce and that was that. To this day many of my relatives think that it's both odd and inappropriate that I'm known as Jhumpa in an official, public context” (www.hinduism.about.com). As Gogol, she too felt frustrated to spend her vacation in India. “As I grew older, going to India was frustrating, because growing up in America is different - I have my own room, I can shut the door. There, we became a part of other families, lived according to their schedule, did things their way. I was used to traveling around New York by myself but in Calcutta, we had to respect the family's concerns” (www.sawnet.org). The major theme *The Namesake* is about the question of identity. Lahiri uses her experience of inbetweeness to portray Gogol’s characters.

The question of identity is always a difficult one, but especially so for those who are culturally displaced, as immigrants are, or those who grow up in two worlds simultaneously, as is the case for their children. The older I get, the more I am aware that I have somehow inherited a sense of exile from my parents, even though in many ways I am so much more American than they are. In fact, it is still very hard to think of myself as an American. (This is of course complicated by the fact that I was born in London.) I think that for immigrants, the challenges of exile, the loneliness, the constant sense of alienation, the knowledge of and longing for a lost world, are more explicit and distressing than for their children. On the other hand, the problem for the children of immigrants - those with strong ties to their country of origin - is that they feel neither one thing nor the other. This has been my experience, in any case. For example, I never know how to answer the question "Where are you from?" If I say I'm from Rhode Island, people are seldom satisfied. They want to know more, based on things such as my name, my
appearance, etc. Alternatively, if I say I'm from India, a place where I was not born and have never lived, this is also inaccurate. It bothers me less now. But it bothered me growing up, the feeling that there was no single place to which I fully belonged. (www.hinduism.about.com)

From the analysis regarding the narration, readers can understand that the select writers use their personal experiences in their works effectively. Through their writing, they present what it means to be an Asian-American, Asian-Canadian or Asian-British and their experiences. Even though they are not writing their autobiographies, their works portray their inbetweeness, their identity problems and cultural clash.

The concept diaspora is mainly based on displacement in space. The very meaning of the term diaspora denotes dislocation in space, which pinpoints the importance of space in diaspora. It talks about the people who leave their home country in order to settle in a new country due to various reasons. Without movement in space, the condition of diaspora is not applicable. Even though time too plays an important role in the formation of diaspora, the main credit goes to space. Diaspora literature in many cases reflects the life of the diasporic people. Most often it deals with the changes in the nature of the diasporic people due to the displacement of space. “Within diaspora studies, the temporal dimension of diaspora for the most part continues to be regarded as the consequence of – and therefore subordinate to – an ordinary displacement in space” (Peeren: 67). It shows that like the concept of diaspora, diasporic literature too pays more attention to space than to time.

On the other hand, Bakhtin’s concept chronotope talks about the inseparability of space and time in literature. In his essay “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel” he analyses European novels by using the yardstick
chronotope which results in the formation of various chronotopes. Bakhtin uses the concept chronotope especially for literature and he mentions that, “we understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature; we will not deal with the chronotope in other areas of culture” (84). In some of the chronotopes, space plays a major role than time and in some, time occupies a major position. Bakhtin in general feels that scholars pay more attention to time than to space in literature. Bakhtin writes that, “it has been temporal relationships by and large that have been studied” (258). His idea proves that in general scholars and readers pay more attention to the temporal factors than to the spatial factors. This part by using the two concepts, diaspora and chronotope, attempts to prove that space as well as time occupies equally important position in diasporic literature. Diaspora in general talks about various changes that occur in the life of the diasporic people due to the displacement in space. Those changes can be well reflected in the nature of the diasporic people when time too moves. It shows that in diaspora space and time plays a major role.

Space and time aspects are available in almost all the literary works. Without the presence of space and time literature is not possible. It is understandable that the concept of chronotope can be applicable to read any literary work. The study tries to show that reading an ordinary literary work by using chronotope is different form reading the diasporic literature. In ordinary literature, space and time aspects are used to narrate a plot or an incident while in diasporic literature, it is used effectively to portray ambivalent natures of the diasporic people. As already stated, the role of space and time in diasporic literature is inevitable. In diasporic literature, both the movements in time and space bring tremendous changes in the lives of the diasporic people, especially in their identity formation. Reading diasporic literature by using only the spatial aspects or the temporal aspects will not be a full fledged work. Therefore this project has given equal importance to both these aspects.
In the novels, movement in space and time is utilized well to portray the changes in the nature of the characters. Descriptions about the movement of the diasporic people or details about their movement are presented to the readers. In *Obasan* and *Disappearing Moon Café* descriptions of the shift in space is not elaborated as in the other four novels. The other four novels *An American Brat*, *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, *The Namesake* and *Brick Lane* talk about the situation of their movement and their initial experiences in the settled land. Displacement in space is used in all the select novels as a major issue. Dislocation in space without the movement of time does not view the details of the experiences faced by the diasporic people. Movement in space as well as in time portrays the experiences of the diasporic people. It proves that movement in both space and time is essential to talk about the predicament of the diasporic experiences. It indicates that unlike in other literatures, usage of space and time is necessary in diasporic fiction.

When time moves the diasporic people, even after living for a long period, still face several problems in the settled country. Japanese community in *Obasan* and Chinese community in *Disappearing Moon Café* even after the several decades of their settlement in Canada, struggle with their identity as Japanese/Chinese and do not possess even the basic rights of the citizenship. Even though the second generation of the diasporic people in *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, *The Namesake* and *Brick Lane* and the first generation of the diasporic people in *An American Brat*, do not face discrimination, they struggle with their identity problem. When time moves slowly they try to find out answer for the question of their identity. In the beginning of the novel *Obasan*, Naomi feels uncomfortable when anyone enquires about her identity. It restricts her from mingling with others. When time moves, at the end of the novel she finds answer to this issue of identity. Kogawa presents the answer to Naomi’s question of identity symbolically. When the novel ends, Naomi visits the Coulee by wearing
her Aunt Emily’s coat to protect her from the snow. It symbolically represents Naomi’s acceptance of her Aunt Emily’s path to fight for her rights in her country. In *Disappearing Moon Café, An American Brat* and *Brick Lane*, the decision of staying in the settled country (in the case of the second and third generation, which is their home country) indicates the solution for their problem of identity. In *The Bonesetter’s Daughter* and *The Namesake*, after knowing about the life history of the parents’, the protagonists accept their hyphenated identity happily.

The question of identity rises due to the movement of space and solution for that question is obtained when time moves. From this reading it is understandable that in diasporic literature, space and time play a significant role. Even though in the reading of the select diasporic fiction, space and time are not intrinsic, its usage in it is very essential. The reading of the select fictions by using some of the ideas from Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope shows that in many ways diasporic literature is different from other literatures. The applications of the select ideas of Bakhtin’s chronotope to read the select fictions, helps to cull out the essential features of diaspora and it results in the emergence of a new concept called diasporic chronotope. The study shows that diasporic chronotope is definitely different from other chronotopes and it helps to read various issues addressed in diasporic literature.