ABSTRACT

The thesis, ‘Diasporic Chronotope in Women’s Fiction: A Select Study’ is a research work that aims to analyse historical/temporal and cultural/spatial features in the novels, Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan* (1981), Amy Tan’s *The Bonesetter’s Daughter* (2001), SKY Lee’s *Disappearing Moon Café* (1990), Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat* (1997), Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2003) and Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* (2003). These writers represent different diasporas, such as Japanese-Canadian (Joy Kogawa), Chinese-Canadian (SKY Lee), Chinese-American (Amy Tan), Pakistani-American (Bapsi Sidhwa), Indian-American (Jhumpa Lahiri) and Bangladeshi-English (Monica Ali). Diaspora studies, generally, discuss the nature of exile, nostalgia, memory, alienation, in-betweeness and identity crisis.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION maps out the context of the study and also explores the two key terms used throughout the thesis, namely, ‘diaspora’ and ‘chronotope’. Diaspora writing has thrown up the significance of spatio-temporal locations time and again. The six novels of diaspora taken up for study, reveal this juxtaposition of past and present, as well as the spaces of the home country and the settled country.

CHAPTER II: DIASPORIC FEATURES explains the general features of diaspora such as nostalgia, discrimination, survival, cultural change and identity and focuses on explaining how the six novels—*Obasan, The Bonesetter’s Daughter, Disappearing Moon Café, An American Brat, Brick Lane* and *The Namesake* -- follow the general characteristics of diasporic literature.
CHAPTER III: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES uses Bakhtin’s idea of history with regard to temporal factors from his essay “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel” (The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays) and by utilizing this as a tool, attempts to read Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*, SKY Lee’s *Disappearing Moon Café* and Amy Tan’s *The Bonesetter’s Daughter* from the perspective of history. In these novels, history is retrieved in two ways, that is, personal/individualistic and public/communal. Moreover, a discussion about historical time and contemporary time also is delineated herewith. Although spatial references are minor, wherever possible issue of geographical/physical space is analysed within this chapter.

CHAPTER IV: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES explains the value implied in traditions and the characters’ attempts to survive culturally as revealed in the novels-- Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat*, Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*. By reading these novels, utilizing the tools of Bakhtin’s chronotopes of ‘adventure novel of ordeal’ and ‘adventure novel of every day life’ one understands that the three writers, Sidhwa, Lahiri and Ali, to some extent use the traditional cultural practices to portray the culture shock faced by the diasporic community. The writers use their work as a device to present their identity problems, cultural clash and inbetweeness in the settled society. Along with this aspect, features of temporality are sketched whenever it is possible to locate them.

CHAPTER V: DIASPORIC CHRONOTOPE attempts to read both space and time aspects in the novels. Bakhtin’s chronotope had been a literary device to enable the reading of different genres of literature. However, one understands in a reading of diasporic literature that it is not possible to isolate the social and cultural aspects of life. When the literary works are analysed keeping them in view, then one finds that it gives rise to a heterogeneity as well as a living suspended in space and time. This kind of feature has been termed as the diasporic chronotope.
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION tries to explain how the women writers consciously or unconsciously utilize time and space in order to deal with possibly fractured consciousness and split identities. This chapter also attempts to sum up the issues in the earlier chapters and to explain the significance of such a study as a possible area of focus in diasporic writing.