Conclusion

Contemporary literature has been transformed by the rising tide of globalization where texts are now cutting across the borders of nations as authors express voices of those once considered the subaltern. Joy Kogawa and M.G Vassanji in particular have distinguished themselves as ground-breaking novelists in the genre of Asian Canadian diasporic Literature. Their accounts of the experience of diaspora provide the readers with insight into the lives of Asians who reside in Canada.

Both M.G Vassanji and Joy Kogawa are diasporic writers who show their commitment towards their communities in the new homeland by presenting realistically the conditions of the 'visible minorities' in Canada. For both Kogawa and Vassanji writing is a necessity wherein with great detail and sensitivity they expose the politics of power practised by the White Canadians which keeps minorities on the periphery.

As both these authors are themselves hybrids, Kogawa a Japanese-Canadian and Vassanji an Asian African, so also are the protagonists of their novels hybrids who strive hard in their adopted land for belongingness and not mere assimilation.

Canada as a multicultural nation does give a feeling of oneness to all its minorities but it also provokes a lot of questions about cultural and personal identity because living in such an atmosphere is not an easy task. It is a painful experience and often leads to identity crisis, and this happens with the protagonists of all the novels analysed in this thesis. The struggle to define multiple
and shifting identities is an integral part of the writings of Kogawa and Vassanji. Their writings dwell in particular on the politics of racism and colonization. In their novels they exhibit community in such a way that the community emerges almost as a protagonist. Memories form an important constituent of all the novels where action is unfolded through memory.

*Obasan* and *Itsuka* by Joy Kogawa are semi-autobiographical novels where Kogawa describes in detail the plight of Japanese-Canadians due to the atrocities committed by the Canadian government against their community. Kogawa shows the struggle of a community against the backdrop of Noami’s story.

*Itsuka* is a sequel to *Obasan*. Where *Obasan* resists closure and has an open ending *Itsuka* ends with an optimistic note where the Prime Minister of Canada acknowledges Japanese Canadians as Canadians citizens. The novels trace Noami’s journey from a silent and unquestioning being to a person who finally participate in the redress movement and acknowledges the importance and value of speech in life.

Like Kogawa who writes about Japanese-Canadians in Canada, Vassanji chronicles the unique history of a migrant community against the Black-versus-White colonial logic. Through his fiction, he argues that the Asians of East Africa are neither Blacks nor Whites but are a third entity between the two. His fiction reflects a nexus between history, literature and the politics of identity in Africa in *The Gunny Sack* and in both Africa and Canada in *No New Land*. 
The Gunny Sack, The Book of Secrets and the first few pages of No New Land are primarily set in Africa and deal with the ambiguous situation of South Asians in East Africa who are neither indigenous Africans nor European colonizers. They cannot find a secure place for themselves either in India from where they originally migrated or in Africa which they adopted as their new home.

Vassanji is concerned with effects of history and interaction between personal and public history. The colonial history of Tanzania and its struggle for independence and then finally emerging as an independent nation serves as the backdrop of his work, but it is the personal history of the main characters that primarily concerns him.

As in Kogawa’s novels, so also in Vassanji’s narratives memory forms the core. While Noami gets to know about the past through the diary of Aunt Emily, Vassanji uses a sack in The Gunny Sack to acquaint the protagonist Salim about the past of his community. Like Obasan, The Gunny Sack also has an open ending where Salim, now in Toronto, thinks of going back to Africa. The Book of Secrets which also traces the past intertwining of Pius and Pipa the colonized, also ends on an optimistic note where Pius, a teacher, wishes to teach hybrid children.

Vassanji’s No New Land narrates the plight of an immigrant Nurdin who migrates from Africa to Canada in search of better life opportunities. Nurdin becomes a victim of racism in Canada.
novel however ends on an optimistic note where Nurdin wishes to adopt Canada as his new home.

In all these novels the minorities have to experience dislocation. In all the novels people get dislocated when they are pushed out by social, political or economic factors which include discriminatory policies, oppression, suppression or both. In Vassanji's novels both the push and pull factors seem to operate.

The consequences of people's dislocation are many. Vassanji and Kogawa show them in various ways. At the physical level, the dislocated people have to face verbal abuse, physical assault and violence. The host society irrespective of its much acclaimed liberal policies does not tolerate the overwhelming presence of silent visible minorities which may affect them economically, socially and politically. In *Obasan* and *No New Land* there are a number of incidents of racial hatred, discrimination and violence against the diasporic people. The natives remain hostile to the people with different cultural affiliations.

In Kogawa's novels the Japanese-Canadians are asked to shift from Vancouver to outskirts of Canada where they have no facilities. Their properties and personal things are confiscated by the Canadian government. They are asked to accept this or go back to Japan.

In Vassanji's novels the Asians are dislocated from their positions of superiority to the status of people who are unwanted in Africa after Tanzania's independence. Their properties are
nationalised and they are asked to accept this or go back to their respective original nations.

At the mental or emotional level the members of diaspora have to face many identity related issues. The problem is that they cannot change their physical appearance and cultural identity. This is really what seems to create problems for the diasporic communities. They try to accommodate themselves to new societies and new cultures. Only when they are ill-treated by white Canadians, do they realize their inbetween state. The hybrid nature of their identity produces a painful crisis. Due to which some reject their community like Huseni in *The Gunny Sack*, Fatima in *No New Land* and Stephen in *Obasan* and *Itsuka*, some migrate to other countries like Sona in *The Gunny Sack*, Ali and Rita and in *The Book of Secrets*. The question of survival and defining one's identity in hostile circumstances continues to be the central question.

The novels make a comparison between first generation and second generation migrants. Where the first generation migrants are loyal towards their traditions and beliefs and cling to their faiths, the second generation migrants feel no ties with the original homeland and easily adapt themselves to their adopted home. Stephen in *Obasan* rejects everything Japanese. Fatima in *No New Land* also rejects everything of the original culture of her parents and wants to associate with the English ways of life. The second generation migrants feel no connection with their parents' traditions and beliefs.
A very important factor stressed by both Kogawa and Vassanji is that the journey's end becomes a new beginning by becoming the circular route back home. In other words, the journey towards selfhood comes with the realisation that a very essential part of oneself lies in the house where one was born and that family ties could not be and ought not to be, completely severed. All the protagonists go home again either imaginatively or literally and the house of origin wears a new aspect to the now mature and more experienced protagonists. The journey which may not be an actual one but a mental voyage, brings about these profound acknowledgements regarding the house and the family left behind in bygone years, and will help the protagonists in reconciliation with the past as well as the present.

The novels thus propound a vision of humane Canada devoid of racial discrimination. Kogawa and Vassanji extend and reinforce the anticipated and much desired peace and harmony in Canada, as their protagonists arrive at wholeness of identity there.