CHAPTER-7

CONCLUSION
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The indepth study of the diasporic consciousness concludes that ‘diaspora’ is a part of postcolonial studies or a Third World literature. It is a migration of a diasporic from his ‘homeland’ to ‘foreign land’ and from ‘the colonial country’ to ‘free country’ where he represents himself according to Jasbir Jain as a cultural “ambassador and a refugee”¹ in the alien land. The conflict of cultures creates “cultural identity” as well as “cultural ethnicity” where one’s “true self” becomes a part of “one shared culture” or “a shared history and ancestry hold in common.”² Stuart Hall in his article “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” finds that the diasporic cultural identities reflect “the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us the concept of “one people” or the sense of “oneness”.³ These migrants project a world of geographical and cultural dislocation which creates the poetics of exile, displacement, rootlessness, homelessness, nostalgia, past and memory and it generates a conflict between two cultures i.e. “biculuralism” and it finally leads to “multiculturalism”. Such people become “the marginalized people” or “the Third World people” or share the feelings of “the other world”.

Salman Rushdie treats these people of “exiles or emigrants” who suffer from “the sense of loss” or “physical alienation” and creates fictions of “invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of mind.”⁴ The
culture of origin and ‘the world’ – the culture of adoption. These ‘expatriates’ or ‘immigrants’ are always in “the process of decentering” and their quest for past and the play of memory make as “individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels.”5 They think and experience between “what we really are” or “what we have become” as “the lost origins” in the alien land. As a result, a new person is born out of diaspora who builds a ‘New World’ that Stuart Hall considers as “the beginning of diaspora, of diversity, of hybridity and a difference”6 that Afro-Caribbean people build as a diaspora of America. It, according to Stuart Hall, is “the old, the imperializing, the hegemonising form of ‘ethnicity’.”7 Diaspora identities are creating the aesthetics of the ‘cross-overs’ and of ‘cut and mix’ which make them “anew, through transformation and difference.”8 Therefore, Franz Fanon in “On National Culture” in The Wretched of the Earth considers, “A national culture is not like a folk-lore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover a people’s true culture.”9

The first chapter is quite introductory in nature. It deals with the historical perspectives of diaspora. An attempt has been made to define ‘Diaspora’ and particularly ‘Indian Diaspora’. Diaspora is relatively a new term used in the 21st century in connection with the study of those writers who went abroad either forcibly or willingly and produced a
concept of nation state, multiculturalism, reappraisal of the British Literature in new perspective, new global village etc. It is a multi-disciplinary area which covers literature, sociology, history, geography, culture and so on. ‘Diaspora’ is gaining popularity at present which is the movement of people from any nation or a group of people away from their own country. They migrate from their own country for seeking opportunities “for work, research and freedom” from a colonial state to a free country which necessarily make them “an ambassador and a refugee” in the alien land. It creates a way of thinking about ‘cultural identity’ which means as “one shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.”¹⁰ Their cultural identities reflect “the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us as “one people” ¹¹ or the sense of “oneness”, as observed by Stuart Hall in his ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’. These migrants project a world of geographical and cultural dislocation and creates the poetics of exile, displacement, rootlessness, homelessness, nostalgia, past and memory which cultivates a conflict of culture - biculturalism and multiculturalism.

The second chapter deals with Ruth Prawer Jhabvala as a story writer. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is a notable name in the field of
Indian by marriage. In a way, English is her mother tongue, and she
writes her novels and stories in it with utter sincerity and command.
Her portrayal of Indian life is sensibly executed, with the added
advantage of a somewhat detached observer. Her picture of India
reinforces its image as an exotic land of sexy men. This sentence from
the short story, "Passion" is very considerable: "Indian men have such
marvelous eyes - when they look at you, you can't help feeling all
young and nice."\(^{12}\) *East into Upper East* contains fourteen short stories,
six set in India, the rest in New York’s Upper East Side. It is perhaps the
most mature of her works. The worlds of the East and the West are
joined by the theme of emotional deprivation. The social comedy of her
earlier work is absent in the Indian stories. The dominant tone is one of
somber disillusionment, and pain and suffering are common to both
worlds. Now it is quite apt to sum up this part of our discussion on R.P.
Jhabvala in the words of C.V. Venugopal: "In spite of the scanty
dialogues, the characters often bordering on caricatures, near-
commonness of themes which are quite often insufficiently dramatized,
her special mode of realism, presentation of the East-West encounter in
all its implications and authenticity, her profound and objective
understanding of the post-independence Indian scene, her
metaphysical concerns preserve Jhabvala’s stories for the posterity."\(^{13}\)
phenomenon of juxtaposition of the two diametrically opposite cultures, namely the oriental and the occidental. It is natural that Indo-English writers should dwell on the problem of the cultural transplant’s quest for identity. What is remarkable is the psychological insight, the familiarity and the ease with which the problem is dealt with by the women writers. The confrontation between the East and the West, the strange love-hate relationship that exists between the two, the cultural alienation and the loss of identity faced by the expatriates and immigrants are some of the aspects that are presented with a deep insight by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala in her short stories and novels.

The third chapter deals with Bharati Mukherjee as a short story writer. Bharati Mukherjee as a novelist and a short story writer deals with the problems of transition which brings the state of displacement, separation, rootlessness, cultural conflict or biculturalism and it cultivates the ocean of diasporic ethos in her works. If we look at her characters in novels and short stories, we can find them as a harbinger of diasporic consciousness in shape of sufferings, pains, predicaments, loneliness, homelessness and rootlessness. Bharati Mukherjee has published the collection of short stories Darkness and The Middleman and Other Stories which are discussed in this chapter. The Middleman and Other Stories deals with theme of diasporic feelings which is reflected through the dream of America as a land of fortune, freedom and happiness of characters in the stories. The writer considers herself as a
Clark Blaise, her novelist husband, in his book Resident Indian, calls as “unhousement” and “rehousement” (p. 648). In the stories, her characters have to pay a heavy price of being ‘American’ and they belong to different countries of world like India, China, Italy, Hungary, Iraq, Trinidad, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Germany, Philippines, Vietnam and Afghanistan. Protagonists are generally women characters who are crazy and inclined to have a sexual relationship which finally results in the sexual misadventure. In these stories sex becomes a bond of love which allures them to come to America for seeking happiness and fortune. It is a tragic situation of characters which provides them the sufficient stock of diasporic experience of exile and alienation.

The fourth chapter discusses the short stories of Uma Permeshwaran. In recent times Canada has been witnessing a coming together of people belonging to many different countries and cultures that has resulted in the flowering of a multicultural ethnic mosaic. Among the new immigrants the South Asian group has emerged as the major ethno-cultural group in Canada. The South Asian literature deals with the problems faced by the immigrants in Canada like alienation, questioning, protest and assertion along with search for identity. People of ethnic minorities always find themselves in the margin. Their struggle to adjust to their marginal status frequently makes them nostalgic about their past and their country of
origin. Uma Parameswaran, a prominent South Asian Canadian writer voices the anguish, aspirations and anxiety of the South Asian Canadians in her writing.

Diasporic writing addresses issues related to amalgamation or disintegration of cultures. An expatriate writer fixed in two cultures, the one of origin and the other of settlement, carves a new identity synthesizing the old and the new, thus blurring the discriminating margins of the two social milieus- this phenomenon is referred to by critics as melting pot syndrome-, or he reluctantly bids farewell to his native soil. Internalizing nostalgia and suffering a forced amnesia he constructs an identity accepting the oddities of the soil wherein he has sought refuge. Here margins obstruct, confluence of the binaries becomes a remote possibility as the past intrudes and the present dominates. The picture is that of a Salad Bowl where components exist with the distinct identities without any scope for merger. Uma Parameswaran herself has said that connecting two ‘home lands’ has been the main theme of her critical creative writings. A study of Uma Parameswaran’s work reflects the ongoing involvement of an immigrant writer with reality. Her first short story “ The Door I Shut behind me” (1967) reflects the sense of wonder and fear of the immigrant at the new world around him, and nostalgia for the world left behind. The writer Uma Parameswaran writes from the heart as an Indo-Canadian woman relating life in present day Canada, with all its riches and its flaws. We are convinced
that some of the author's characteristics may exist in the protagonists, lending an air of authenticity, resulting in powerful and enduring stories told with a touch of delightful humour.

The fifth chapter deals with Mena Abdullah who is an Indo-Australian writer. Mena Abdullah's collection of short stories "The Time of the Peacock" was published as a single volume in Australia by the renowned publishing house, Angus and Robertson in 1965. It became extremely popular and was reprinted in 1973, 1974 and 1989. The volume was well received in literary circles, both in Britain and Australia. Favourable reviews appeared in the Time literary supplement in Britain and the western Australian Review in Australia. The Australians congratulated Abdullah on her sensitive depiction of a beautiful world in Australia and culturally rich canvas of India.

The title story "The Time of the Peacock" is truly representative of the two worlds of the writer- India and Australia. The story tells us about the childhood days of Nimmi when she, along with her sister Rashida and brother Lal, enjoyed the open fields of New England. It was a time when she was under the influence of her Hindu mother who used to tell her about the teachings of Lord Krishna and how Krishna could move even the hills. Thus we see that Mena Abdullah presents a world of children in Australia. She is not bothered about the life in the big cities- Canberra, Sydney – in Australia. Her world is a peaceful world far from the madding crowds of the cities. In her world there are peacock, bird, tiger, kite, the blue sky and the hills. The entire collection
“The Time of the Peacock” presents the varied experience of the children in this peaceful world of Australia. But like Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri, Mena Abdullah also presents in her stories the problems faced by the expatriates in the alien land.

The sixth chapter discusses Jhumpa Lahiri as a short story writer. Here her masterpiece *Interpreter of Maladies*, a collection of short stories is discussed in detail in order to bring out her diasporic consciousness. The Pulitzer Prize winning volume of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri, despite the clear insignia of Indianness is universally relevant. The loneliness, a deep sense of remorse and emotional isolation that some of her fictional characters go through, are common enough the world over. The individuals of different countries and cultures who for various reasons are forced to live away from their own country go through trying phases. Whether she suggested a cure or not, Miss Lahiri’s endeavor to interpret the maladies of the mind that people suffer from and the unique manner in which she makes them realize their own flaws, certainly merit the prize and the prestige she won with her maiden volume of short fiction. With a remarkable insight she delves deep into the psychological depths of her characters and reveals their inner world by a fascinating yet deceptively simple style. We come across more reality than fancy in her fiction. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that her interpretation of the maladies itself acts like a potent medicine. Yet they are interesting and often make humorous studies of life. Alienation and estrangement are “maladies”
Nine stories in the collection offer a wonderful variety of experiences gathered from the cultural clashes rippling outward in many directions. The trauma of dislocation, an acute sense of loneliness and the pangs of estrangement suffered by the millions of exiled Indians who try unsuccessfully to balance themselves between ‘home’ and ‘abroad’ are the major maladies Lahiri attempts to interpret. Most of her characters keep hanging in limbo—between two identities—non-Indian and Indian, a fact that brings Jhumpa Lahiri fairly close to Bharati Mukherjee, another successful interpreter of immigrant anxiety.

Thus we see that all the writers selected for study in this thesis are diaspora writers. All of them belonged to India but now they have settled abroad. Naturally they have to face problems in their land of adoption. They will always be treated there as foreigners even though they have lived there for long. Whatever they have written is not merely their flight of imagination but their stories are based on their own experiences in the foreign land. Diaspora writers are migrants from orient to non-orient countries and the West even after leaving orient was curious to know more about the orient. Such people build the body of knowledge of Neo-Orientalism. The orientalists were created out of the non-orient whereas Neo-Orientalists came from the orient. They construct the discourse about the orients (the land of their origin) and offer the images and options about the orient for the future
Mukherjee, Uma Parameswaran, Jhumpa Lahiri and others are doing in their land of adoption.

The puzzle of identity is also an important feature of diaspora literature. In Indian scriptures like *Vedas and Upanishads*, there is a process of meditation theory or *Dhyana yoga* where a man questions, 'who am I?' Externally, man has familiar labels like name, sex and identity but internally, the idea of self is realized when a man shuts his external windows of sights, sounds and smells, he moves in the world of silence where all dusts of confusion are settled and a new face of man emerges. But the diasporic writers like Bharati Mukherjee and Jhumpa Lahiri could not ignore such ferocious wars of identity which are national, racial, ethnic and religious going on in this world. But their identity of self which is an integrated identity of 'native land' and 'adopted land' remains yet as a puzzle of identity in their diasporic context. The diasporas sometimes create homelands like homelands which create diasporas. When we cross the boundary of nation, home and race, we cultivate the identity of 'cross-overs' and 'cut-and-mix' of cultures. A New Land is a fresh identity of the New World where these "new settlers" are rooted. After creating a new face in foreign land, the diasporic writers generate a transnational, transcultural and global identity of diasporean as a part of their diasporic experience. Their personalities share two faces of being as 'an immigrant writer' or 'a
their ethos like their suffering characters. Their 'divided self or a fractured identity' is the diasporic identity which pervades their writings.


3. Ibid., p.111.


5. Stuart Hall, op. cit., p.113.

6. Ibid., p.113.

7. Ibid., p.120.

8. Ibid., p.120.

9. Ibid., p.120.


11. Ibid., p.111.