

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Man, from the very origin of his being has been wandering like a pilgrim on this earth. It is believed in the Indian tradition that the whole earth is a sacred temple where man goes out in wild and searches his inner self by sitting and praying in meditation under the tree. In this sojourn, he contemplates over various tensions between body and soul, mind and matter, past and present, and memory and desire. It is useful to make outer journeys in order to make inner journeys. In our great epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabhartha* also we come across such kinds of journeys in which Prince Rama and the Pandavas had to undergo this chastening experience of outer world. Though it was a forced exile yet it contributed in their spiritual and intellectual making. There is no doubt that when man moves away into the forest from home and family and from culture and civilization, it becomes a training ground for him in which trees, birds, beast, flowers and rivers become his companion, bring changes and strengthen his life for better. Similarly, this exile immensely affected Prince Rama and Pandavas and built them stronger kings while they returned back to their lands to rule over their kingdoms. But in contemporary world the major question is that whether it always happens to those visa-glued immigrants or NRI's who don't find their home anywhere on earth once leaving their homeland. This most haunting question rises in the mind of an exponent diasporic writer Uma Parameswaran who has been residing in Canada for past four decades. In the present research it is intended to explore the various issues of expatriates, under the reflection of Uma Parameswaran's notions of home and abroad depicted in her fiction.

Uma Parameswaran, like every diasporic writer attempts to 'grab the best of two worlds' in her literary works by presenting the Canadian sensibility with Indian historic past. Most of her plays are enriched with Indian past, mythology, legends, the gods and goddesses. In her play *Sita's Promise*, she has attempted to link the epic India with modern Canada by depicting the forest exile of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. When one arrives in a new land, one has a sense of wonder and adventure at the first sight of a landscape so different from what one has been accustomed to and there is also a sense of isolation, fear and intense nostalgia for the lost land. An expatriate leaves his homeland and settles down on foreign land for better future prospects but he always remains in an animated suspension, feels insecure in his new environment, the loss of geographical

boundaries haunts him and alters his sensibilities. He wants to grab both the roots and fruits together. Moreover, he becomes a Trishanku, the legendary king who is hung between heaven and earth. Ms. Manju Jaidka in her paper “Expatriate Writing from India: So What’s Indian About it?” elaborates the mythical story of Trishanku and explains its meaning as far as the situation of an immigrant is concerned. This story has been taken from the *Baal-Kaand* of the *Ramayan*. Trishanku, was a legendary king of Suryavanshi clan and he was deeply in love with his body. He had a strange wish to ascend to the heavens in his mortal form. His desire was brutally thwarted by the guru Vashisht and his sons who turned him into a monster, a *Chandaala*. When the sage Vishwamitra saw him in this situation, he took pity on him and promised to help him achieve his lifelong ambition. Vishwamitra, with his great powers and prayers, helped Trishanku ascend to the skies. However, when Trishanku reached the portals of heaven in his monstrous *Chandaala* form, the gods together pushed him out and sent him spinning back to earth. But Vishwamitra not only prevented Trishanku from falling headlong back into “*prithvi-lok*,” he also created another heaven, complete with a constellation of stars, so that Trishanku might have his heart’s desire. And there Trishanku was said to remain- suspended upside down, in a heaven created especially for him. The name “Trishanku” would denote a triangle. In fact he got suspended in the centre of a triangle formed by the three worlds, sea- earth- sky: the heavens, the earth, and the underworld. Hanging in between these three worlds, in the alien form that was thrust on him, he became the master of a new world, not the one he aspired for, but one that was created for him. (Vinoda, Shailaja, 36)

Incidentally, Uma Parameswaran has taken *Trishanku* as the title of her collection of poems, though she has not elaborated the idea but Trishanku metaphor is well be applied to the condition of expatriates. This human predicament like Trishanku is negative and creates a situation of non-belongingness but writers like Uma Parameswaran does not believe in close doors and keeps her doors of hope open to survive on alien land. This Trishanku syndrome is found in most of the works of Indian expatriate writers who try to express the suppressed feeling of Diaspora through their writings.

To discuss the research topic analytically, it is imperative to define the term “Diaspora” which has varied definitions and connotations associated to it. According to Wikipedia¹ sources,

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diaspora>

etymologically, the term Diaspora is derived from the Greek composite verb “dia” and “speirein”, literally meaning “to scatter”, “to spread” or “to disperse”. The first mention of the word Diaspora was used as a result of exile, which was found in the Septuagint. Later, it began to develop from this original sense when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek. In ancient Greece, the term Diaspora meant “scattering” was used to refer to citizens of a dominant city-state who immigrated to a conquered land with the purpose of the colonization, to assimilate the territory into the empire. The term derives from the verb “diaspeiro”, “I scatter”, “I spread about” and that form “dia”, “between, through across”+ the verb “speiro”, “I sow, I scatter”. After the translation of the Bible into Greek, the word diaspora then was used for dispersion of Jews after the Babylonians exile in 586 B.C. and aggregate of Jews or Jewish communities scattered “in exile” outside Palestine or present day Israel. Further from the same source the definition of the term “Diaspora” is “the movement, migration or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland” or “ a people dispersed by whatever cause to more than one location “ or “people settled far from their ancestral homelands”. In the same fashion, the Oxford English dictionary online states that, the first known recorded usage of the word “diaspora” in English language was in 1876 referring “extensive diaspora work of evangelizing among the National protestant churches on the continent”. The term became more widely assimilated into English by the mid 1950s.

In literary terms this concept has been used for those people who migrate from the pleasant shelter of their homeland and seek a place on the foreign land to call it a home. But unfortunately, they not only lose their home but also their identity which is shown through the reflection of their language, culture and heritage. When we analyze and go deeply to make a distinction between homeland and host land, we come to a conclusion that it is a border that makes all differences; it separates a nation into two distinct entities. It defines our nationality, social identity and moreover, it elucidates where our feet lie is our “homeland” or a “host land”. The term border not only signifies physical or geographical boundaries but it also connotes different culture and tradition, language, history and heritage. When this border is traversed by a group of natives voluntarily or involuntarily and stepped down on a foreign land for better educational and economical pursuits, are put under the term “Diaspora”. It carries a sense of displacement, nostalgia and a hope or desire to return to their homeland which always exists in their memories.

The well known diasporic critic Gabriel Sheffer in the work *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* takes a primary focus on ‘the relations between the homelands and host countries’, in this respect he defines it in the following words “Modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin -their homelands. (3)”

With the emergence of the literary term “Diaspora”, other symbolic terms like immigrant, exile and refugee also crop up. The term immigrant defines a voluntary migration or a physical movement to another land and he tries to have a forward looking attitude. “Exile” indicates a compulsory isolation and separation from the homeland of a person and he resides on an alien land which always frowns at him for being a foreign element into its territory. The term “Diaspora” also carries within it the ambiguous status of being both an ambassador and a refugee. The requirement of both the role is entirely different. One is expected to represent or project one’s culture and the other seeks protection, refuge and a kind of environment in which one feels secure to practice and maintain one’s cultural values. William Safran in his controversial article, “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return” complains that the term Diaspora has become too flexible a term and may refer to ‘several categories of people – expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities’. He proceeds and enumerates some characteristics of Diaspora – he says the expatriates are those who have been dispersed from a specific original ‘centre’ to two or more ‘peripheral’ or foreign regions. They retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland. They believe that they are not fully accepted by the host society and therefore feel alienated and isolated from it. Further, the expatriates regard that their ancestral homeland as their ideal home and they would return to it when the conditions are appropriate. And at last, Safran says that these expatriates continue to relate to their homeland in one way or another. Such a relationship with their homeland defines their ethno communal consciousness and solidarity. (1, 1, 83)

Diasporic writing includes the two invariables of their experience: host land and homeland. It is an attempt to negotiate between these two polarities. The writings of expatriate writers usually undertake two moves, one temporal, and one spatial. In the temporal move, when a writer keeps looking back at the past, it is called as ‘analepsis’ and looking forward at the future is known as ‘prolepsis’. Analepsis includes romanticizing his past days back in the homeland remembering the

tradition and customs but in prolepsis he looks forward for survival on alien land with new hopes and new opportunities, it creates the chances of cultural assimilation into the new land. On the other hand, the spatial move involves a de-territorialization and a re-territorialization. The term de-territorialization means the loss of territory both geographically and culturally but the important point to note here is that the loss of territory always accompanies with gain of new ones. Dislocation *from* is always followed by a re- location *to*. The diasporic writings deal with space that moves between 'home' and host country, between old culture and new one. 'Home' or the 'old' country is constructed out of memories from childhood days, traditional dresses and food habits but this home is just an imaginary and mythic place and in this sense, it is difficult to return. It can only be retrieved, reached or returned to in memories of an expatriate. An expatriate is not only a man who migrates across the physical boundaries but also a man who carries his socio-cultural values, his imagination and psyche with him to the host land. According to N.Jayaram, as he says in *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration* that the immigrants carry with them: "...a socio-cultural baggage which among other things consists of (a) a predefined social identity, (b) a set of religious beliefs and practices, (c) a framework of norms and values governing family and kinship organization, and food habits and (d) language"(16). Among the other things, there is always an idol of *Ganpati*, a family frame and a jar of pickle which keeps the émigré in touch with his home. In this context, the immigrant does not want inevitably cut off completely from the land of his breed. Though he knows that the host country would provide every possible amenities of life for which he had been longing, but he is destined to an ambivalent life. Although the migrant may get all kinds of spices of his country at every corner of the street, yet he craves for the aroma of mother's hand-made spices. He celebrates his festivals like Holi and Diwali with all the pomp, but the distance between the homeland and host land is so far that he is unable to hear Holi ka *Hoodhdang* for which he invariably yearns. The twinkling of Deepawali illuminates an alien land but not his own.

As soon as, the migrant traverses the national territory and lands down on the place which is completely alien to him in all aspects, he realizes the loss of his identity. He becomes an NRI to his own nation and a foreigner or an alien for the host country. In this condition, for an expatriate the urge to survive becomes the immediate requirement. This detachment from tradition and culture leaves a deep scar on the psyche of the immigrant and on the alien land he finds himself in a painful state of duality –on the one hand, he preserves his ethnic-religious identity and

“communal solidarity” and on the other, he constantly searches for new identity and tends to adopt the alien culture. In this context these diasporas are oscillating between two mutually exclusive worlds, they may be termed as transitional beings because they waver between two cultures. They seem to be trapped in a Janus like situation. Janus is a roman god “having two faces, one looking forwards and one back” (Dresner, Avison, 567). It implies the ambivalent nature of the Diaspora. According to Homi Bhabha these diasporas tends to move in an obvious circle from home land to alien land leading to an assimilated culture. Edward Said also adds to the definition and classification of diasporas in his *Culture and Imperialism*: “The person who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner, he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong, but he is perfect to whom the entire world is a foreign place... and a survival in fact is about the connection between things. (407)”

Before analyzing the larger span of Indian diaspora abroad, we should know how this wave of immigrants started from India to different nations. In 1492, a Spanish expedition headed by Christopher Columbus reached America, after which European exploration and colonization rapidly expanded. When India was discovered by Vasco-de Gama, it soon became a major source of raw material and spices as far as European business and trading was concerned. There are some accounts that show that the Buddhist ‘bhikkus’ used to travel the remote areas of central and eastern Asia in ancient times. The evidences also prove that there were continuous contacts between the kings of the Coromandel Coast and the islands of South-East Asia. There was a continuous wave of trading and business with East Africa, however which led to a permanent settlement of Indian merchants there. In the year 1600 BC, The British Empire established “The East India Company” in India with a purpose of trading but gradually they grabbed the ‘golden sparrow’ in their clutches and ruled over it as masters.

As far as Indian diaspora is concerned, it can be studied into two phases of emigration- the overseas emigration during colonial phase in the 19th century and the post-colonial phase in the 20th century to the industrially developed countries. During eighteenth and nineteenth century, the onset of a revolution in transportation and communication facilitated closed economies into open economies. In the wake of geographical discoveries, large scale Indians migrated to different parts of Europe through the Suez Canal. Gradually, the Europeans started bringing the people of the third-world nations as slaves to work on sugarcane plantations and in mines. These poor laborers

were forcibly brought to British colonies and usually inhumanly treatment was given to them. When Slavery Abolition Act was passed by British parliament in 1833, which freed the slave labour force throughout the colonies, it resulted in an extreme shortage of labours in many of the British colonies. This problem was resolved under 'Indenture labour emigration agreement'. It was a contract signed by the individual labourers to work on plantations for a specific period of time and it was officially sponsored by the colonial government. It began in 1834 and ended in 1920. The innocent illiterate Indian labours could not pronounce the word 'Agreement' and they called it as *girmit*. In the colonial phase, the British used to call the Indian emigrants as *coolies*, *Girmityas*, East Indians and Asians. Even in South Africa Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was often called as 'the first coolie lawyer'. The working conditions of these labours on the sugarcane plantations were degrading, and brutal. These labour emigrants were taken to the British colonies of British Guiana, Fiji, Trinidad and Jamaica, the French colonies of Guadelupe and Martinique and the Dutch colony of Surinam. There were other systems like "Kangani" and "Maistry" that prevailed in the recruitment of labour for emigration to Ceylon, Malay and to Burma respectively (Jayaram, 21).

On the eve of independence, a new and significant phase of emigration took place when India was divided into two nations- India and Pakistan. During this painful incident, there was a mass exodus from India to Pakistan and vice versa. In the late 1960s and the 1970s, there has been large scale and steady emigration of doctors, engineers, scientists, teachers and other semi-professionals to the industrially advanced countries like America, Britain and Canada. This pattern of emigration is often described as "brain drain". Due to this displacement and detachment of the people from their native land to an alien land for one reason or the other, the term "Diaspora" came into existence. Though this term had always been in vogue yet it gained intense intellectual attention during the post-colonial era when the anguish, sufferings and the psychology of the colonized people of the third-world got manifested in the works of various post-colonial theorists.

Postcolonialism refers to a set of theories in philosophy and literature which has a direct bearing on the legacy of colonial rule. It is generally referred to the literature or writings produced by those countries which were once under colonization of European rule. Moreover, Postcolonial theory is an attempt to uncover the colonial ideologies adopted by Europeans to exploit the poor countries economically as well as politically. In a general sense, it is a study of relations between

the colonizer and the colonies during the era of imperialism. Postcolonialism as a discourse deals with unequal power relations which existed between the colonizer and the colonized. It also explores strategies of resistance and ideologies undertaken by the subjugated men and nations for their independence and freedom. Primarily, the post-colonial literature emphasizes on the dreadful experience of natives who happened to live in colonized countries. It is in this sense that the term “Postcolonialism” not only analysis the psychological struggle of natives in order to get emancipation but it is also associated with varied implications which deals with examining how colonial power used cultural apparatus to colonize the people from body and mind. Dennis Walder’s views in *Post- Colonial Literature in English: History, Language, Theory* add to this discussion when he says:

‘Postcolonial’...demands a double awareness: of the colonial inheritance as it continues to operate within a specific culture, community or country; and of the changing relations between these cultures, communities and countries in the modern world. . . the colonial experience persists despite the withdrawal of political control, as a result of the continuing strategic and economic power of the former colonizers,...however minimal the impact of empire upon a particular people in the long perspective, it has always left its imprint.(2-3)

Due to the psychological colonization, the natives of colonized societies are still under its shock and fear even after decades of independence because such kind of psychological entrapment is far more hazardous than any political colonization. Its impact remains indelible even after the end of colonial rule. O.Mannoni’s *Prospero and Caliban* was one of the earliest attempts to analyze the psychological process of colonialism. He depicts that Europeans believe that the mentality of the natives is incomprehensible and degraded and they must follow the European way of thinking which is always explicit and right. Even their thinking is so right that it must be imposed upon the rest of the world. Frantz Fanon’s *Black skins, white masks* is an attack on the ideologies adopted by European to prison the minds of the natives. He depicts that whiteness is representative of completeness but blackness as the colour itself suggests that it is dark and connotes ignorance, and it represents incompleteness. Fanon in his work presents this kind of ideology adopted by Europeans to weaken them. It implies that the blacks or the natives can put all their efforts but can never become whites or civilized beings. They are destined to be slaves and will remain slaves forever. Their blackness symbolizes incompleteness, incivility and ignorance which would remain forever intact. During colonization, the relationship between Europeans and natives was represented through binary oppositions, all of which treated the natives

as the negative or the dark shadow of the master: civilized/ barbaric, white/ black, positive/ negative, mature/ immature, masculine/effeminate and progressive/ primitive. Here, the first term signifies the Europeans and the second always applies to the native. Besides the serious damages done to the economy of these countries, imperialism has caused an indelible scar on the psyche of the colonized people. Ashis Nandy argues that:

This modern colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once for all. In this process it helps generalize the concept of the modern west from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The west is now everywhere, within the west and outside, in structures and minds. (11)

When the native is fully trapped in the cage of psychological suppression of the Europeans, they start imitating the footsteps of their master whom they consider superior to them. They imitate their culture, language, education and way of living. In this context, Homi K Bhabha has propounded a term 'mimicry' in which he analyses the fractured nature of the colonial condition. The colonial power requires the native should 'mimic' the master. The entire colonial mission is to transform the native into 'one like us', a copy of the colonizer. These Europeans wanted that the natives should adopt European education and learn their language so it would be easier for them to interact with them. As Macaulay in his *Minute* (1835), depicted that Europeans wanted a class of Indian educated babus who could become interpreters between the British and the millions of people whom they governed. It was a class of persons which was Indian in blood and colour, but English in their behaviour, tastes and opinions, morals and in intellect. The colonizers wanted to establish their cultural hegemony over the inferior colonies in order to strengthen their power over them. Antonio Gramsci's concept of "hegemony" also implies that the colonizers could claim their dominance over the colonized societies not only by using forceful and threatening measures but also by creating the feeling of self- disgust among them and a sense of superiority for the white colonizers. But the natives who were deeply rooted to their culture and heritage, they could not throw it immediately to adopt the western culture. So, this inviolable relation with native culture and involuntary assimilation into an alien culture gives a very important concept in post colonial theory which is termed as "ambivalence". Webster's New World College Dictionary defines the term as "simultaneous conflicting feelings toward a person or thing, as love and hate" (43). The ambivalence feeling further connotes the feeling of in-betweenness, half-ness, and divided- selves among the natives and expatriates who leave their homeland and try to adopt western culture in

order to settle down there. This concept of ambivalence is another product of post- colonialism which includes concepts like “mimicry”, “hybridity”, and “multiculturalism”. Hybridity refers in its most basic sense to mixture. The term originates from biology and it has been subsequently used in linguistics and in racial theory in the nineteenth century. Its contemporary uses are scattered across numerous academic disciplines. According to wikipedia², “Hybridity originates from the Latin *hybrida*, a term used to classify the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar. A hybrid is something that is mixed, and hybridity is simply mixture”. As an explicative term, hybridity became a useful tool in forming a fearful discourse of racial mixing that arose toward the end of the 18th Century. Key theorists in this realm are Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak, and Paul Gilroy, and their work respond to the increasing multicultural awareness of the early nineteen nineties. A key text in the development of hybridity theory is Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* (1994) which analyses the liminality of hybridity as a paradigm of colonial anxiety. His key argument is that colonial hybridity, as a cultural form, produced ambivalence in the colonial masters and as such altered the authority of power. Bhabha’s arguments have become important in the discussion of hybridity. Further, the concept of multiculturalism signifies co-existence of multiple cultures in a country. According to Wikipedia³, “Multiculturalism is the appreciation, acceptance or promotion of multiple cultures, applied to the demographic make-up of a specific place, usually at the organizational level, e.g. schools, businesses, neighbourhoods, cities or nations”. In a political context, it extends equitable status to distinct ethnic and religious groups without promoting any specific ethnic, religious, and/or cultural community values as central. Multiculturalism as cultural mosaic is often contrasted with the concept assimilationism and social integration and has been described as a "salad bowl" rather than a “melting pot”. This concept has been officially accepted as a policy in several Western nations since 1970. First it started in Canada in 1971, followed by Australia and now many great cities of the world are increasingly made of a mosaic of cultures. In Canada’s open policy of multiculturalism, the amalgamation of diverse Indian culture has been able to flourish due to the freedom to establish their religious institutions,

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybridity>

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism>

social and cultural practices. The notable influence of Indian culture on Western countries can easily be explicated in the increasing interest towards Indian music and cinema. Moreover, the melodious voice of our nightingale, Lata Mangeshkar has been mesmerizing them since ages and the great singer, A.R. Rahman has won laurels by giving enchanting music for the song “jai ho!” in Danny Boyle’s “Slumdog Millionaire”. If we glance at the list of prominent personalities in Indian diaspora abroad, mainly in America and Britain, the name of Lakshmi Mittal comes at the top most in steel manufacturing field, whereas Boby Jindal and Nikki Haley who have been recently elected as the governor of two American states- Louisiana and South Caroline respectively. They have brought fame and pride for their country by representing India at this level of success. To give respect and honour to these expatriates Indian government has started celebrating *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* on January 9th each year, it is sponsored by Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs for those who mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. Multiculturalism has opened new doors for different cultures to flourish but it has also been a major cause of racial discrimination. After 9/11 terror attack in America, South Asians are becoming the targets of racialism. Recently, in Australia many Indian students became the victims of this heinous crime. So, in this way the policy of multiculturalism has some bad effects also.

The Indian diaspora is the third largest diaspora which is scattered throughout the world after British and Chinese. Most of the Indian diasporas abroad are economically, politically, and educationally sound and they are contributing a significant part in the growth of economies of the countries in which they are residing. The Indian diasporic community is diverse in nature. It has dozens of religions, languages, races and castes according to different regions of India. The host country is also being enriched by Indian diaspora due to its varied and complex nature. In this context, it can be assumed that Indian diaspora is like a banyan tree which represents its culture and Indian way of life. As the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore says in *The Banyan Tree*

To study a banyan tree, you must not only know its main stem in its own soil, but also must trace the growth of its greatness in the further soil, for then you can know the true nature of its vitality. The civilization of India, like a banyan tree has shed its beneficent shade away from its own birthplace...India can live and grow by spreading abroad –not the political India, but the ideal India. (qtd. in Vinoda, Shailaja, 11)

The diasporic Indian like the banyan tree spreads his roots on several soils, nourishes himself and gives shelter to the land where he settles. He makes many homes far from his home. But this multiple home construction does not construct the bridge between homeland and host land. There is always a conflictual boundary between the two. He always longs for his home which has been left behind. Even our contemporary Indian film industry is very much attracted towards the diasporic Indians abroad and portrays their dilemma through films, like *Purab Aur Paschim* in the 70s, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jaenge* and *Pardes* in the 90s and a recent movie *Namaste London*. In all these super-hit movies, the first generation immigrants who are mainly fathers are shown in the state of in-betweenness of two homes. They are well settled and economically sound, but they yearn to go back their homeland. Though they have brought up their children in western culture but want an Indian life partner for them. That is reason that most of the NRI's come to India for bride and groom- hunting. These people adopt the culture of the country in which they reside but giving up their customs and rituals seems to be difficult for them. Furthermore, Indian women never forget to wear *Bindi* and *sindur* and prefer Indian dresses like *Saree* and *Salwaar- kameej* rather than western clothes. Indian food like *makee ki- roti*, *chole- rice*, *khadhi*, and *Aam- ka – achaar* are still their favorites. Even names of these foods take them to their past days spent in the home back in India. Their situation reminds us the statement of Anita Rau Badami in which she expresses her crises of being diasporic in Canada. She says "I was 29 years in India and 10 years here, so I have one foot in India and a couple of toes here". Further, she eloquently claims in her affirmation of the blessing of double vision: "We are both doomed and blessed, to be suspended between two worlds, always looking back, but with two gorgeous places to inhabit, in our imaginations or our hearts" (qtd. in Paranjape, 161).

Canada is the most northerly country in the Commonwealth and the coldest and it is considered as a land where adventurous individuals can realize their private dreams free of the restrictions imposed by conventional society. There were three distinct waves of emigration to Canada. The Indo-Canadian community started emerging during the beginning of the twentieth century, when Sikhs from Punjab who were the veterans of the British army ventured out to Canada for good economic opportunities. Between the years 1905-08 approximately 5000 Indians entered Canada. But some settler colonies like Australia and Canada put restriction on the colored people to land on their shores in order to protect their working men class and to build a western country with white civilization; it led to implementation of orders which curtailed Indian immigration.

Meanwhile, many Punjabi peasants and army men opposed this exclusions and racism. There was an enterprising Sikh, Gurdit Singh, who gathered the support of some Indians and challenged the exclusions by transporting them to Canada through a ship, named Komagata Maru, which was renamed as Guru Nanak Jahaj by the passengers. When this ship Komagata Maru reached Vancouver harbour on May 23, 1914, it was quarantined off the coast for two months along with passengers. This incident was a great humiliation for Indian immigrants and on the other hand Canadian government found it the best way get rid of the brown people and later the ship was sent back. The story of Komagata Maru entered the lore of the overseas population. The second wave of immigrants took place during 1950-60s, when educated Indians like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers and businessmen ventured out to try their fortune in a technological advanced country like Canada. The third wave of migration is of those whose forefathers had already left India during 19th and 20th century to Africa, Caribbean and Fiji islands. More recently these descendants had moved farther northwest to Canada. With the influx of South Asians, racial discrimination also gradually got rooted in Canada. However, Canadian Human Rights Act and other Acts prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of nationality, ethnic origin and language have been passed yet every individual immigrant in Canada is a hyphenated Canadian like an Indo-Canadian or a Ukrainian-Canadian or a French- Canadian. The second incident in Indo-Canadian history took place when crash of Emperor Kanishka happened in 1985, in which 349 people including Indians and Canadians got killed.

After 1960s educated, professionals and those who belonged to high class Indian society came to Canada and tried to strike their roots in the literary richer soil of Canada by depicting their 'in- Canada' or immigrant experience through their works. Among the notable writers are Himani Bannerji, Saros Cowasjee, Stephen Gill, Surjeet Kalsey, Suniti Namjoshi, Bharti Mukherjee, Uma Parameswaran and many others who are generally preoccupied with the complexities, contradictions and ambivalence associated with the home, culture and heritage which they have left behind and their struggle to adjust in the new culture of their adopted land. Stephen Gill in his novels likes *Why, Immigrant*, and *The Loyalist City* has portrayed characters that are estranged and feel lonely in the settings of large cities such as Ottawa and Montreal. He deals with the themes of alienation, racialism and Otherness in the novels as well as in his poetry. Himani Bannerji, inspite of lamenting over the lost culture and feeling nostalgic for a lost home all the time she maintains a kind of hope in her works to deal with a multicultural society.

During the last two decades, there has been a virtual renaissance in the Indian diaspora writings and most of the Indian expatriate writers have achieved the highest level of success in world literature. There have been many who are the poster boys of many top publishing houses at international level, among the best of them are Salman Rushdie, Chitra Divakaruni, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri and many others. But now it is the time for Indian directors to show their talents to the world by making a genre of films which are based on diaspora subject. At the moment, the renowned known directors of this genre of films are Gurinder Chadha, Meera Syal, Deepa Mehta, Nisha Ganatra, Mira Nair and many others, who have tried to portray the true diasporic experience through their films. There is a long list of movies which have earned lot of recommendation and appreciation by the world audience, among best of them are *Masala* (1991), *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), *Chutney Popcorn* (1999), *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), *Bollywood/Hollywood*, *Bend it like Beckham* (2002) etc.

Expatriates, exiles or emigrant settlers find themselves displaced and detached from their home land or culture and aspire to accept the new identity of the alien land into which they have moved into. Due to this act of displacement, the diasporic Community suffers a kind of trauma and a sense of banishment from the native land which never allows them to integrate into new region and new culture. They always feel to be oscillating between the polarities of two distinct cultures and identities and spend most of their time in the memories of lost land to refurbish their emotional and cultural loss. Many expatriate writers who have left their home land for settlement abroad have become the voice of these people by articulating their diasporic experience in words and bringing to the surface the deep seated sense of rootlessness. The main theme of diasporic writing is to search for home which they either try to find in the memories of the land they have left behind or in the new settings of alien land on which they are presently living but unfortunately neither of the land belongs to them. Among the best writers who opt for permanent exile are Bharathi Mukherjee, Uma Parameswaran, Rohinton Mistry, Chitra Divurkarni.

Among the exponents of Indo-Canadian diasporic writers, the name of Uma Parameswaran is always listed foremost because of her major achievement in the works like *Trishanku*, *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees*, *What Was Always Hers* and *Sons Must Die*. She has been living in Winnipeg since 1966 and working as a professor of English at the University of Winnipeg. She is an author and editor of several books of poetry, fiction plays and criticism. She has won

‘1999 New Muse Award’ and the 2000 Canadian Author’s Association ‘Jubilee Award’ for her fiction- *What Was Always Hers* (collection of short-stories). Uma Parameswaran is also known for the contribution to the emerging field of South Asian Canadian Literature. Parameswaran’s creative writing explores the challenges of Indian diaspora in coping with ambiguous identity; she deals with the issues of assimilation and racism in her short stories, plays, and poems, shares a common theme and at times even the same characters.

Uma Parameswaran has been living in Canada for past forty years and she is very well aware of dilemma that an expatriate faces on an alien land. In the essay, “Ganga in the Assiniboine: A Reading of Poems from *Trishanku*” which is contained in the book *Writing the Diaspora: Essays On Culture and Identity*, she talks about this experience and observes that “though the landscape around me is cedar and pine, there are other sights and sounds in the landscape of memory- mango blossoms, monsoon rains, and temple bells” (85). In her another essay “Dispelling the Spells of Memory: Another Approach to Reading our Yesterdays” she says that the people who leave their native countries and come to foreign land with some good hopes, they always occupy a liminality, an uneasy pull between two cultures. She calls this pull Trishanku’s curse, a king who was denied by both heaven and earth in mortal form and later he was given his own constellation. She gives her own example that as a Canadian she believes in borders but as a member of Indian diaspora she sees that strength lies in the erasing of borders. As a Canadian, she becomes a part of the oppressor group which dominates the rest of the world by Coca-Cola, McDonald’s empire and multinational companies. Simultaneously, she also feels as a victim being a Canadian because there is always a threat to Canadian sovereignty by the United States for acquiring its industries, cultural properties and natural resources. It seems that the history of his native land is being repeated in her new homeland. But when she takes herself as a literary member of the Indian diaspora she actually feels a strong bond with her fellow Indians friends who come from the same country and culture. As far as the meaning of diaspora consciousness is concerned she states that it is positive and celebratory linking across political borders of the people who come from the same home culture and heritage. Many writers, publishers and editors are also contributing their efforts in making this bond strong but this literary and social bonding results into ghettoization where one’s emotional and social needs are fulfilled without going outside the ethnocentric community. But Uma Parameswaran considers ghettonization as an unhealthy element and a big impediment for the success of multicultural society like Canada. It does not allow the individual to integrate

with the host society. Furthermore, she encourages and wants writers and critics of Indian diaspora to shift their focus of their writing from homeland to host land. They should not be afraid of writing about the country in which they are presently living in. she has also suggested three main points to the writers and critics about reading their yesterdays. She says that they should introduce and establish archetypes and cultural illusions out of their historical events like Komagata Maru incident of 1914 and Air India tragedy of Kanishka in 1985.

In her famous essay “Ganga in Assiniboine: Prospects for Indo-Canadian Literature”, she presents her utmost desire in which she wants to see the confluence of Ganga and Assiniboine rivers. The river Ganga is the most pious and sacred according to Hindu tradition and on the other hand Assiniboine river also represents Canadian culture and its richness, so when these two sacred river merge into each other, there would be a merger of two cultures as she says “the confluence of any two rivers is sacred for the Hindu ethos, perhaps because it is symbolic of this enrichment” (71). Thus, she is looking forward for the time when Indian immigrants see their holy river Ganga in the Canadian landscape and every Canadian citizen recognizes the importance and emotional attachment of his neighbours to this river. In a nutshell, she intends to see the combination of two distinct cultures which would lead to an establishment of a new enriched culture.

Furthermore, she identifies four phases of the immigrant experience. In the first or the primary phase, one is conscious of the vastness and harshness of the Canadian landscape, this initially makes one feel wondered and curious at the sight of new environment. The immigrant seems to be nostalgic for his homeland and culture. In the second phase the immigrant tries to overcome his nostalgia and struggles to establish himself in society by slowly getting integrating into a new way of life and set of values. In the poem “Trishanku: A Cycle of Voices” which is in the famous work of Uma Parameswaran *Trishanku and Other Writings*, Tara’s mother-in-law, expresses her feelings of joy and pain to see her son settled in Canada. She says:

Son, son, it gives me great joy
to see you so well settled,
children and wife and all,
Though my hairs do stand on end
When your wife holds hand with men
And you with other men’s wives.
But I am glad, son, I really am
That you are settled good good

And thought to bring me all the way
To see this lovely house and car and all. (61)

The third phase emphasizes on the second generation Canadians who live on monstrous meat, burgers and mingle within ethnocentric community. They often make mental inner and outer journeys of their idealized homeland and often burst out their frustration over the discrimination they have to face in the host country. As Vithal outrages in the same poem in the following lines:

We shall build our temple
where the Red meets the Assiniboine.
Let us swear to stand together
And there can be no fall.
Those pissed off whites can hang a moon
Yeah that's where their energy lies,
Not in their head. (77)

Finally, Uma Parameswaran says that in the fourth phase the immigrant takes an active participation in the larger political and social arena outside his own immediate community. He finds a place to call home where he can be himself and feel comfortable in assimilating into the new culture. He grows emotional roots on the soil of the new land and that becomes a home for him. Though Uma Parameswaran claims that most of the immigrants reach the fourth phase yet many critics and psychiatrist do not agree with her and believe that complete assimilation into the stream of host culture, especially for first generation is quite impossible, they might acquire a relative adjustment, that is 'acculturation', but not 'assimilation'. A critic Mrs.R.Vedavalli in her critical essay "Sending Roots: A Study of Uma Parameswaran's *Sita's Promise* and *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees*" explains the meaning of the words 'Acculturation' and 'Assimilation'. The word 'Acculturation' is "the adaptation of changes in external behaviour for a smoother acceptance by the new society, whereas 'the assimilation', is the ability to react instinctively and emotionally to a culture" (Balachandran, 132). In the process of acculturation and assimilation, every immigrant has to forget all the ways of his/her own culture and has to undergo a new learning process in the host country. This process of transplantation seems to be difficult for older generation but it becomes relatively easier for younger generation because they are not deeply rooted to their past culture and heritage. All these plights, dilemma of identity crises and the various stages of acculturation and assimilation are clearly portrayed by Uma Parameswaran

in her novel *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* and some of her short stories which I intend to take in the present research work.

The novel *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* depicts the real life like characters living in Indo-Canadian community and the events, situations and experiences presented seem to be so common and typical that usually occurs in various families of immigrants in Canada. The novel focuses around two East Indian families from Pune, presently living in the suburbs of Winnipeg for a long time. The author has presented various characters belonging to three generations that represents the Indian diaspora in Canada. The parents, Sharad and his wife Savitri Bhave, Sharad's sister Veejala and her husband Anant Moghe represent one generation. These two households left India in their adult years after marriage, for different reasons. The Bhave and Moghe children Jyoti, Jayant and Vithal are in their twenties represent the second generation as they were born and spent their childhood in India and seem to be familiar with their culture, heritage, and language. But having spent seven or eight years in Canada they are very much influenced by its culture so they can be seen as a unique blending of two cultures. The young siblings Krish Bhave and Priti Moghe who are in their adolescent years represent the third generation. They have never been to India and are only exposed to residual elements of Indian culture through mythical stories, food and clothing. They are deeply immersed in the culture in which they are living. So, the objective of dealing with novel is in this research is to expose the dilemma of three generations who have left their home and their struggle to get assimilated in Canadian culture and how they make out a way to survive on alien land.

The story "Darkest Before Dawn" is taken from the collection of short stories *What Was Always Hers*. It emphasizes on the two major characters Jayant and Jyoti, portraying their life and problems being in diaspora. Jayant loves his culture and heritage from the core of his heart which is truly passed on to him by the stories that his father usually tells him. The influence and indelible impression of his heritage can be seen through his memories in which he presents the every detail of the courtyard of his ancestral house so minutely as if he still be living there. He feels proud for his culture and heritage whenever he remembers about it but simultaneously feels betrayed and cheated because he has been moved away from it. This story deals with Jayant's strong relationship with his home back in India.

The story “The Door I Shut Behind Me” has been taken from *Trishanku and Other writings* in which Uma Parameswaran has delineated two characters Chander and Kishen Agrawal. They are in contrast to each other, because Agrawal speaks in loud voice and is always open to express his feelings spontaneously. On the other hand, Chander is a well educated, sophisticated and an introvert man of twenty five years. The ambivalent feelings of new immigrants and how the Indian diaspora living in Canada have been in a state of in-betweenness, has been wonderfully depicted in the story by Uma Parameswaran.

The present research intends to explore the question whether the diasporic elements portrayed by Uma Parameswaran in the fiction *Mangoes On The Maple Tree*, “Darkest Before Dawn” and “The Door I Shut Behind Me” are a genuine expression of emigrants’ ambivalence or it is merely an exaggeration of the typical diasporic sentiments. As the topic “The Politics of home and abroad” concerns itself to find out how far the notion of “home” and “abroad” troubles the expatriates depicted in Uma Parameswaran’s fiction.

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