

**An Article on: Diasporic Literature with Literary Prostitution  
Rajneesh Kumar**

Assistant Professor of English and Language  
Department of Humanities and Social Science  
Jayoti Vidhyapeeth Women's University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India  
E-Mail: [luhanirajneesh@gmail.com](mailto:luhanirajneesh@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

This article represent, the essay is a critique of existing literature of Diaspora, which is merely a prostitution of literature. Under the generalized rubric of Diaspora, I will engage with some of the following topics: such as the histories of slavery and indentured labor, the material aspects of migrant labor and livelihood, the experiences of displacement and homelessness (the 'politics of dispossession' as Said called it), the ideologies of home and nation, the cultures of Diaspora, the politics of multiculturalism, the predicament of minorities, the exilic perspective, the redefinition of cosmopolitanism, identity questions (belonging, national origins, assimilation, acculturation), and issues relating to race, sexuality and gender.

**Keywords:** Critique. Diaspora, Palestin, Migrants, Cosmopolitanism, Multiculturalism, Transnational Mobility.

**Introduction**

The phenomenon that is human migration is best captured by the term we have all come to know as "Diaspora". Literally "Diaspora" means scattering or dispersion. It was originally used for the dispersion of Jews after their exile from Babylon in the 6th Century BC, and later to refer to all the Jewish people scattered in exile outside Palestine. Today it has come to describe any group of people who are dispersed or scattered away from their home country with a distinct collective memory and a myth of return. Migration, a fundamentally essential ingredient of Global Social change, is a phenomenon that has been taking place for thousands of years and continues all over the world. It happens when people can no longer sustain themselves within their own milieus. They migrate to places where resources are more easily available. In earlier periods people migrated from one place to another in search of food, shelter, and safety from persecution. Today, people tend to migrate in search of better career opportunities and better quality of life.

Migrants not only take with them their skills and expertise to their new locales, but also their culture, living styles and collective memories. Over the ages, this has been a common thread irrespective of nationality or ethnicity, whether it is Jewish, Irish, Italian, Polish, British, German, Chinese, or Indian. As I look back at Diaspora's past, and try to look forward to its future, I am reminded of Omar Khayyam's famous poem from his signature work "Rubaiyat", and I think it best articulates my observations:

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ

Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit,

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,

Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

Language and culture are transformed when they come in contact with the others. Diasporic writers are often pre-occupied with the elements of nostalgia as they seek to locate themselves in new cultures. They write in the relation with the culture of their homeland and at the same time adopt and negotiate with the cultural space of the host land. Migration tasks place due to various reasons and in the universal context the migratory movements were governed by historical, political, economic reasons including higher education, better prospects and marriage. But when we come out from homesickness or nostalgia, will find the many problems. (The) Natives treat them through exilic perspective. There is a need to redefine the cosmopolitanism under the politics of multiculturalism.

The chief characteristic features of the diasporic writings are the quest for identity, uprooting and rerooting, insider and outsider syndrome, nostalgia, nagging sense of guilt etc. The diasporic writers turn to their homeland for various reasons. For instance Naipaul who is in a perpetual quest for his roots turns to India for the same. Rushdie visits India to mythologise its history. Mistry visits and re-visits India for a kind of re-vitalization and to re-energize his aching soul. Bharati Mukherjee's childhood memories harken her time and again. All the same it is necessary to realise the importance of cultural encounter, the bicultural pulls which finally helps in the emergence of the new culture. The diasporic writings also need to know as the 'theory of migrancy' helps generate aesthetic evaluation, negotiate with cultural constructs and aid the emergence of a new hybridity, and issues relating with race, sexuality and gender.

The dispersal signifies the location of a fluid human autonomous space involving a complex set of negotiation and exchange between the nostalgia and desire for the Homeland and the making of a new home, adapting to the power, relationships between the minority and majority, being spoke-persons for minority rights and their people back home and significantly transacting with the new 'sense of place' a new unknown geographical space. Kingsley Davis (1968) puts in the Indian context, "...pressure to emigrate has always been great enough to provide a stream of emigrants much larger than the actual given opportunities." And Tinker (1977) puts, " there is a combination of push and pull: the push of inadequate opportunity in South Asia and the pull of the better prospects in the West."

It is an undisputed historical fact that the past century has witnessed the large-scale displacement and dispersal of populations across the world as a result of major political upheavals, among them the two European wars, decolonization and the Cold war. Following on these, globalization, spurred by free trade and increased capital flows, and new technologies of communication, information, and travel, has accelerated the movement of people, commodities, ideas, and cultures across the world. Diaspora is regarded not as a singular phenomenon but as historically varied and heterogeneous in its aspects. The transnational mobility of people may be the result of forced or voluntary migration, of self-exile or expulsion. Refugees, people in transit, are the product of war, ethnic conflict and natural calamity.

Studying the literature of Diaspora means to pay attention to how the old country, land, or nation still has some claim or hold on those who have migrated to another place, and this may include communities who were enslaved, those who chose to immigrate for reasons of labor or trade, those who were dispersed for political or imperial reasons, as well as those who are in cultural exile a more loose term describing individuals or communities who are in some sense 'transnational', living between, alongside, or in several communities. More specifically, taking a diasporan approach to what is often called 'ethnic', literature calls for the language and theory of postcolonialism to be applied to the immigrant experience.

In particular, undergoing Diaspora means to reexamine the meaning of home, its different senses of where, what, and how. Diasporan peoples find themselves restricting, expanding (and mixing and matching) their new and old homes, their new and old lives and identities. To be in a diaspora is to be part of a larger group in transition, part of an alternative community within a larger national whole, and to be an individual who must feel the claims of various nations and cultures. It is a study of what is taken with one, of what is left behind, and of what is transformed. Displacement and liberation are both at hand. It should be clear, then, that there is no one model for such experiences, each diaspora is different, as are the differing responses of a community's members. Though some general observations can be made, the Cuban diaspora in South Florida fled for different reasons than the various Asian communities that have come to the U.S. Those Germans who fled Nazi control have still a different story to tell as they worked to relocate themselves in such places as Australia, India, and Argentina.

In regards to Israel's Babylonian captivity, I will examine two passages closely. The first, Psalm 137, is a bitter prayer of resistance in exile. It repays quotation in full:

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept

When we remembered Zion.

There on the poplars

We hung our harps,

For there our captors asked us for songs,

Our tormentors demanded songs of joy;  
They said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"  
How can we sing the songs of the LORD  
While in a foreign land?  
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
May my right hand forget its skill.  
May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth  
If I do not remember you,  
If I do not consider Jerusalem  
My highest joy.  
Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did  
On the day Jerusalem fell.  
"Tear it down," they cried,  
"Tear it down to its foundations!"  
O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction,  
Happy is he who repays you  
For what you have done to us-  
He who seizes your infants  
And dashes them against the rocks.

Exile as both a curse and yet also a just punishment, this psalm focuses on the struggle of being in exile and the injustice of what has been done to exiles. There is a sense of physical displacement; they are in the wrong locale by a Babylonian river, rather than home. Equally, there is cultural displacement, the songs of Zion, songs which identify the people's relationship to God and land, are demanded for entertainment by the oppressor. To sing one's songs in this way is to recontextualize them as something decidedly goyish, is to give into the hegemony of the dominant power.

The biblical tradition stresses justice for, even agape love of, those in exile. Recalling enslavement in Egypt, the Mosaic laws enjoins, "Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt". Economic and domestic compassion proceeds from Israel's own experience of being cut off from her home. Likewise, the New Testament continues to recognize the importance of treating diasporas with hospitality. The particular landedness and landlessness of Israel does not automatically apply to other diasporas because of God's particular revealed purposes for the ancient Jewish nation. Their various experiences of exile carried with them not only memories of slavery but also lessons in faith-building, as well as judgment for sin. Scripture certainly teaches that God oversees the nations and is concerned for their justice, repentance, etc. By extension, we can suggest, then, that God uses other experiences of diaspora for his purposes. However, I am reluctant to concluding why another diaspora occurs from God's perspective rather I would conclude that the biblical commands concerning those in exile already tell us what the Christian community's response should be compassion, hospitality, and justice.

Diaspora is therefore, a scattering of the seed in the wind, the fruits of which are a new creation and a fight to survive. Every diasporic movement holds a historical significance, as it carries within itself the kernel of the nations' history.

Diaspora is a journey towards self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition. There is an element of creativity present in the diasporic writings and this creation stands as a compensation for the many losses suffered.

Anna Karenina puts it that “all Diasporas are unhappy, but every diaspora is unhappy in its own way”. Apart from drawing attention to the acts of writing back to, or rewriting of, Western canonical works so common in postcolonial literature, the statement also raises a pertinent question that, why is the experience of unhappiness so crucial in our understanding of the diaspora implication.

### **Reference**

- [1]. Ashok Rao, The Indian Diaspora – Past, Present and Future (Part I).
- [2]. Dr. Sushil Kumar Mishra, Diaspora Literature with Reference to Indian English Literature.
- [3]. Omar Khayyam’s poem “Rubaiyat”.
- [4]. Murshid Alam, Diaspora Literature with Special Reference to the Indian English Literature.
- [5]. Shaleen Singh, Diaspora Literature - A Testimony of Realism.
- [6]. Babylonian, Diasporas: Israel, the Church, and Lessons from Exile.