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Diaspora and Diasporic Literature: Condition to Consciousness

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Abstract

The term Diaspora originated from the experience and state of the Jews of being exiled into many countries back in the eighth century BCE. However, the definition of diaspora derived from the Jewish condition has changed and expanded; so has the concept of diasporic literature. In this context, the aim of this article is to inform the readers that there are some clear lines of demarcation between these key terms namely “Diaspora” and “Diasporic Literature” by showing the discrepancy between these two key terms that are most frequently used and are liable to be conflated in existing and upcoming diaspora discourse due to lack of its deeper understanding. This paper draws from the scholars like Martin Bauman, Robin Cohen, Thomas Faist and Uma Parmeswaran who write on diaspora, and brings it into open discussion among academics whether being a diaspora is a condition or a consciousness? The article discusses how has diasporic literature so far been understood and what are the alternative ways to comprehend it. It concludes that if a piece of literature has some of the qualities of diasporic literature as articulated by Parmeswaran, it will be apt to call it diasporic literature, instead of labeling it as emigrant’s or immigrant’s literature based on the origin, e/(im)migration, station or mobility of the author.

Keywords: Dispersal, diasporic consciousness, expatriation sensitivity, nostalgia, rootlessness

Introduction

The Greek noun "diaspora" is derived from the composite verb ‘dia’ and ‘speirein’, adopting meanings of “to scatter, spread, disperse, be separated” (Baumann 20). The verb form of the term often used with negative connotation in the 5th century BCE evolved even its noun form "diaspora" as a technical term to represent Jewish

existence far from the “Promised Land” (Baumann 21). Liberated after forty years, some of them were forced into exile while the others immigrated to different places and so dispersed and were termed as ‘diaspora,’ however, the old definition of diaspora has been expanded as well as changed as per time.

In this context, the aim of this article is to inform the readers that there are, though thin, but some lines of demarcation between these key terms namely “Diaspora” and “Diasporic Literature.” Whereas in case of Nepal there are some critics who do not agree with the transformation of the term diaspora and argue that the first generation migrants who call themselves diasporas who have the facility of frequent homeland visits are just “jet-settlers” and even the very term “diaspora” when used to refer to them is a “misnomer”(Poudyal 1). This line of thought holds that if we are to confer the designation of diaspora to the first generation migrants then it will be the misuse of the term. On the other hand there is a line of thought that we all have become a virtual diaspora for our orientation, settlement and sedimentation onto the virtual spaces; since a long time ago our on-site stays and activities are curtailed and limited due to our presence in the virtual sites; we work and we all reside in the virtual world. If seen this way then who is not a (virtual) diaspora, a question arises. Everyone has travelled to and accumulated the experience of living in different parts of the world; our psyches are split among places and spaces. Walking between these two lines of thoughts, without entering but informing the readers of this debate the researcher deals with the case of diasporic literature and makes a suggestion that whether written by or not by a diaspora subject, the name of diasporic literature can be conferred to those texts if they have or they deal with or depict the diaspora “consciousness” or sensitivity (Faist 16). In doing so, the researcher carves a constructivist’s space for herself as an academician who accepts the ongoing changes in the ontology that pertains to the evolution of concepts and theories. If anyone remains unaware or finds it difficult to accept it showing academic rigidity and resistance to change of any kind, s/he is not a scholar in true sense.

Methodology

Concepts and theories are sometimes changed due to empirical and practical reasons; so has been the case with diaspora as a term, the same phenomenon applies and will prevail in our definition of diasporic literature in the days to come. To authenticate this claim, the article draws from the diaspora scholars like Bauman, Cohen, Faist and Parameshorwan and brings it into open discussion, what so far has been uphold as diasporic literature and actually how should it be defined and understood in the future. This article will be an argumentative space for the critics and scholars from home and abroad to further debate on diaspora and diasporic literature.

Diaspora Discussion: The Concept and its Expansion

The history of the experience of being a diaspora dates back to eighth century BCE with the Jewish, for their being exiled into many countries owing to the invasions and they used the term diaspora to have the feeling of connectedness. To quote Baumann's words, "in the western common knowledge, the notion of exile is predominantly bound to the experience of the Jewish people in the first millennium BCE (20)". It also reminds one of Babylonia where the garden of Babylonia was situated. To the land of Babylonia, Palestine was embedded where the Jews were detained 587-538 BCE. Freed after 40 yrs, some of them were forced into exile while the others immigrated to different places and so dispersed and were termed as "diaspora", however, the old definition of diaspora has changed and expanded.

The term diaspora had a soteriological and a spiritual dimension implying the "gathering of the scattered" by God's grace at the end of time. For the Jews, as for the post-Babylonian Jews their captivity in Babylonia diaspora implies God's punishment for their disobedience to the commands of the Torah. Though many Jews had become, established and successful in Egypt, Asia Minor and Greece, they still interpreted residing outside Palestine as a transitory, miserable and unfavorable stay and was taken as a preparation for the divine final gathering in Jerusalem. Having become the state religion of Roman Empire in the late fourth century, the idea of diaspora vanished in Christian memory and only a millennium later in the sixteenth century, the term was used to refer to a Protestants living in Catholic territory or vice versa. In the nineteenth century, due to inner state migrations, diaspora became predominantly associated to confessional minority (Baumann 19-20). Whatever the case, the term diaspora in its core implicates an outsider or comparatively a newcomer in an established community or set-up society or an existing nation.

It has connection to the deportment of and enslaving of the Africans to the Americas, the fleeing of many intellectuals, artists, journalists and scientists of Jewish birth from Nazi Germany to Britain and the USA in the twentieth century. During the second half of 20th century, also many Tibetan, Cubans and Armenian people were forced to leave their home countries at the cost of political pressures and persecution (Baumann 23). "Since the 1960s, with increasing transnational and global migrant movements, "diaspora" was employed to denote a national, cultural or religious group living in a foreign land (Baumann 22)." Diaspora, thus has undergone an evolution both as a concept and a phenomenon.

Robin Cohen, in "The Four Stages of Diaspora" (*Global Diasporas: An Introduction*) presents four arguable phases of diaspora:

- i. He shades light that, the term usually capitalized and used only in the singular, was mainly confined to the study of the Jewish experience. The Greek diaspora made an off stage appearance. Excluding some earlier casual references, from the 1960 and 1970s the classical meaning was systematically

extended, becoming more common as a description of the dispersion of Africans, Armenians and the Irish. With the Jews, these people conceived their scattering as arising from a cataclysmic event that had traumatized the group as a whole, thereby creating the central historical experience of victimhood at the hands of a cruel oppressor. Retrospectively and without complete consensus, the Palestinians were later added to this group (1).

ii. In the second Phase, in the 1980s and onwards, as Safran notably argued, diaspora was deployed as 'a metaphoric designation' to describe different categories of people- expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities tout court. The term now acc to Safran implies a vast array of different peoples who either applied the term to themselves or had the label conferred upon them.

iii. The third phase, from the mid 1990, was marked by social constructionist critiques of 'second phase' theorists who, despite their recognition of the proliferation of groups newly designated as diasporas and the evolution of new ways of studying them, were still seen as holding back the full force of the concept. Influenced by postmodernist readings, social constructionists sought to decompose two of the major building blocks previously delimiting and demarcating the diasporic idea, namely 'homeland' and 'ethnic/religious community'. In the postmodern world, it was further argued, identities have become de-territorialized and constructed and deconstructed in a flexible and situational way accordingly, concepts of diaspora had to be radically reordered in response to this complexity.

iv. By the turn of the century the current phase of consolidation set in, the social constructionist critiques were partially accommodated, but were seen as in danger of emptying the notion of diaspora of much of its analytical and descriptive power. While the increased complexity and deterritorialization of identities are valid phenomena and constitutive of a small minority of diasporas (generally those that had been doubly or multiply displaced over time), ideas of home and often the stronger inflection of homeland remain powerful discourses and ones which, if anything have been more strongly asserted in key examples. The phase of consolidation is marked by a modified reaffirmation of the diasporic idea, including its core elements, common features and ideal types (Cohen 1-2).

Cohen in "The Prototypical Diaspora" says migration scholars often find it remarkably difficult to separate the compelling from the voluntary elements in the motivation to move. However, when we talk of a trauma afflicting a group collectively, it is perhaps possible to isolate a class of events characterized by their brutality, scale and intensity so as unambiguously to compel emigration or flight. Being shackled in manacles, being expelled by a tyrannical leader, or being coerced to leave by force of arms,

mass riots or the threat of ‘ethnic cleansing’ appear qualitatively different phenomena from the general pressure of over-population, land hunger, poverty or a generally unsympathetic political environment. Although Jews often allude to their earlier period as slaves in ancient Egypt, particularly in the Passover rituals that recount the story of the Exodus, it was the destruction of Solomon’s laboriously-constructed temple in 586 BC by the Mesopotamian Empire that is evoked as the central memory of trauma. The Jewish leader of the time, Zedekiah, vacillated for a decade, and then impulsively sanctioned a rebellion against the powerful Mesopotamian Empire. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, brutally suppressed the revolt and dragged Zedekiah and the key military, civic and religious personnel in chains to Babylon. Jews had been compelled to desert the land “promised” to them by God to Moses and thereafter, the tradition suggests, forever became dispersed (2). All the diasporas had a socking episodes in their history that led to their original or further dispersion (3).

To the first American diaspora set into motion by the African slave trade. 20th century, post-colonial African emigration prompted by civil war, famine, economic failure and political instability can be thought of as generating a ‘second’ incipient, set of ‘new’ African diasporas (ref no. 5). The horror of the slave trade to Asia and the Middle East was enormous—perhaps as many as four million were involved, but it was the forcible transshipment of ten million people across the Atlantic for mass slavery and coerced plantation about in the Americas that provided the defining misfortune that constituted the African diaspora.

There was early expulsion of Armenians by Byzantine emperor in the sixth century AD and many Armenians were involved in long distance commerce and trade. However, the crucial historical events that led Armenians to be characterized as a victim diaspora followed the massacres of the late 19th cent and their forced displacement during 1915- 16, when the Turks deported two-thirds of their number (1.75 million) to Syria and Palestine (Cohen 3). Many Armenians subsequently landed up in France and the USA. it is now widely accepted that a million Armenians were either killed or died of starvation during this mass displacement, the 20th century’s first major example of what has come to be known as ‘ethnic cleansing’ (3).

The migration of the Irish over the period 1845- 1852, following the famine, can be regarded as a comparable tragedy. To be sure, there have been ups and downs by Irish historians of migration in seeking to assess just how salient the famine was in propelling the vast and continuous transatlantic migrations of the 19th century. In addition to the aforementioned, Safran lists Cubans and Mexicans in the USA, Pakistanis in Britain, Maghrebis in France, Turks in Germany, Poles, blacks in the North America and Corsicans in Marseilles. Ukrainians, Italians, Afghans Lebanese, Vietnamese, Iranians, Tibetans, Russians, Germans, Tamils, Sikhs, Hindus, Somalis or Kurds all have at least as strong a claim to inclusion as diasporas and have been so described.

It has been a matter of debate among social scientists to decide whether who or which group is a diaspora and which is not. Cohen states that the concept of diaspora according to Safran can be applied when members of an 'expatriate minority community' share several of the following features: The people who or whose ancestors have been dispersed from an original 'center' to two or more foreign regions, those who retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland including its location, history and achievements. Those who believe that they are not and perhaps can never be fully accepted in their host societies and so remain partly separate, those whose ancestral home is idealised and it is thought that when conditions are favourable either they or their descendants should return, those who believe all members of the diaspora should be committed to the maintenance or restoration of the original homeland and to its safety and prosperity and they continue in various ways to relate to that homeland and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are in an important way defined by the existence of such a relationship. Cohen adds to and amends the first characteristic and states, "dispersal from an original center is often accompanied by the memory of a single traumatic event that provides the folk memory of the great historic injustice that binds the group together" (Cohen 5-6). In short dispersal, collective memory, myth of original homeland, idealization of homeland, a will to return, maintenance of homeland and ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are the core diaspora characters.

Some other categories of diaspora are: 1. The diaspora, groups that disperse for colonial or voluntarist reasons. This is probably the most controversial departure from the prototypical Jewish diasporic tradition, but one that can be justified by the compelled and voluntary elements of the Jews' own migration pattern. We can move into its sub-categorization with the Indian indentured migrants who were recruited for their labour to be used in the tropical plantations are termed as 'labour diaspora' (Cohen 7). Likewise, as many merchants as the indentured labourers had spilled outside the Chinese mainland to the rest of Southeast Asia casting a more long-term influence so most suitably it is primarily called a 'trade diaspora'. To the prototypical victim diaspora other three sub-types are added up i.e. labour, trade and imperial diasporas (Cohen 18).

In addition, Cohen opines, in some limited circumstances the term diaspora can be used to describe transnational bonds of co-responsibility even where historically exclusive territorial claims are not strongly articulated. This applies to particularly to groups that have been multiply displaced, to those whose homelands are for all practical purposes lost to them, and to some religious communities. The most novel dimension to it according to Cohen is the 'de-territorialized diaspora' i.e. a diaspora that can be formed through the mind, through artifacts and popular culture in a global age where space itself has become re-inscribed by cyberspace (8).

Features of Diaspora

As in any other growing or expanding fields diaspora also has a lot of questions, contradictions and uncertainties. For example, the concept itself is not devoid of debate like who to address as diaspora itself is a very pertinent query. Below are some Common delineating Features of diaspora according to Cohen:

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions.
2. Alternatively or additionally the expansion from a homeland in search of work in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions
3. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements
4. An idealization of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity even to its creation.
5. The frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland.
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and the belief in a common fate.
7. A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group.
8. A sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even where home has become more vestigial and
9. The possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism. (15)

In this era of cosmopolitanism, a nation's population does not confine only within its geo-political boundaries or only the people who inhabit it do not constitute its complete community. However, it has to incorporate, enrich and expand its identity consolidating multifarious identities produced by its emotionally deep-rooted-to the nation but physically scattered population, which we term as "diaspora". Cultural theorists like Arjun Appadurai and Anthony Smith point out, "large communication networks erode national boundaries and even as they promote intense interaction between members of diasporic communities remain local and provincial even as they acquire transnational characteristics." (qtd. in Natarajan xiii)

It's true that due to the tremendous advancement in science and technology as well as the impact of globalization, the human population is caught into dynamism of migration for various purposes. This flux has formed various diasporas in various nations or multiple diasporas even in a single nation as Govinda Raj Bhattarai, the most prominent Nepalese critic on diaspora opines ("Emigrant" 117-118).

The aforementioned discussion highlights that diasporas were the formations of various obligations in the past as humans were obliged to live at the host land as refugees and exiles due to war, strife, natural calamities, religious or political reasons at their homeland; and their experiences were synonymous to punishment and expiation. Cohen in his *Global Diasporas* states, “. . . "diaspora" evolved as the preferred and catch-all expression covering sin, scattering, emigration and the possibilities of repentance and return” (21-22). Over the centuries the term diaspora carried a predominantly negative meaning which was used to capture the various misfortunes that afflicted this group.

However, at present, conversely, being a diaspora can be at one's will for a change, better opportunities, novelty or even as an adventure. In Bhattarai's words:

The term today connotes a minority community of emigrants with bilateral connection, which lives new experiences and undergoes a gradual process of fusion or heredity . . . Diasporic literature embodies all these. It is made up of its own people. We come across concepts like displacement, diasporic culture, identity, space, multiculturalism, transnationalism and many more. Such concepts distinguish this study from the rest. ("Envisaging" 63-64).

Diaspora, at present global context, is an extension of a nation's population which serves as a bridge to the national identity in the transnational arena. It can also be a credible body for national development, prosperity and peace. Moreover, it has been a significant component of transnational culture and human resource.

The internal and intricate resistance of the foreign culture and identity along with the rejection of the host land is found to be manifest in discursive, cultural, religious identity establishments of the diasporas and finally it ends up in the will to establish a state, a homeland far away from home (Bhattarai 89 "*Digital*"). On the other hand, some diaspora along the flux of time assimilate into the host land and identity, the Nepalese in Fiji and Trinidad, Hongkong and Burma, similarly the Africans in the United State (Bhattarai 99 "*Digital*").

Thus, the term "diaspora" in the globalised world today has become a vital phenomenon which connotes a "settlement" or "state of being" or "category" of people who reside in a foreign land away from their home land for various reasons and purposes (Subedi 2). Also, that they have a "shocking episodes in their history" (3) as Cohen talks about is less external and more internal with the modern diasporas. As Faist mentions, the article focuses on the fact that diaspora is more of a "consciousness" (16). Some critics seem to be totally dismissive of all these alterations and transformations in its definition; it might be on their personal choice or it's their state of being uninformed. Similar is the case regarding diasporic literature.

Diaspora, Literature and Diasporic Literature

Advocating for the recognition of the positive virtues of retaining a

diasporic identity, Cohen asserts that “the tension between an ethnic, a national and a transnational identity is often a creative, enriching one”(7). Illustrating the paradigmatic case of the diasporic Jews (in Babylon, the Islamic world and in early modern Spain) Cohen says, they were responsible for many advances, in medicine, theology, art, music, philosophy, literature, science, industry and commerce so it is difficult to discount the achievements of diasporic Jews in such diverse areas of settlement as Bombay, Bagdad or Vienna (7). Even if there is a degree of subterranean anxiety in the diaspora, Cohen argues that this is precisely what motivates the need for achievement. “If life is too comfortable, Neusner convincingly argues, creativity may dry up”(qtd. in Cohen 7). The virtues rather than the dangers and traumas, of a diasporic existence are also emphasized by Werbner who alludes to “the positive dimensions of transnational existence and cosmopolitan consciousness” (Cohen 7). The literature which is produced by diasporas and characteristically represents their feelings and experiences is called diasporic literature. It depicts the diasporas psychological, social, economic, cultural state of being inscribed amply in the text they create. It buries the themes like, the crisis of identity, the "rootlessness", the perennial mental "ambivalence" a deep-rooted "sense of belonging" and a latent permanent "will to connect" as well as "return" to the home land. Creation of literature of their own kind is one of the ways to vent the above-mentioned agitations out. Therefore diasporic literature is explored and studied as a testimony of their unique existence.

Regarding the diasporic literature, there are debates afloat. Whether the literature like travel abroad memoirs and diaries be included in this category or not? Likewise, some writers may write about a place without going there or a short-term visitor may also produce literature about a particular place of stay. The scholars and the critics assert these kind of literature don't fall under this category. Instead diasporic literature is the piece or body of literature produced by a diasporic individual living in a diasporic community for long. However, of late the debate seem to be taking in the new definition of diasporic literature for good, that is— a piece of literature which shows some of the diasporic sensibilities, irrespective of its creator's state of being or geography of being, can be called diasporic literature.

The Characteristics of Diasporic Literature

Each genre tends to possess some specificities of their own kind in their own light, so does diaspora in the arena of its literature. Hanif Kureishi, British Asian author who said, “the only way I could make sense of my confused world was to write” (qtd. in Knott 145) in 2002 UK, makes a point that the diasporic literature is founded on the diasporic subjects or themes.

The relationship between cultural loss effected through the diasporic displacement of peoples and subsequent cultural production, particularly seen in the

realm of creative writing diaspora offers, makes visible and urgent the multiplicity and persistence of diasporic experiences and how those experiences are committed to memory and demoralization in literature. The diasporic subject, conscious always of a slippage between origin, belonging and location, seems best placed to respond to the questions that have vivified modern literature. Diasporic literature in these ways is replete with its producer's personal as well as collective diasporic un/consciousness. However, a question can be asked here i.e. can this consciousness also be emulated or feigned? What if it is internalized and expressed in his/her work by a non-diasporic author? Will we term it pseudo-diasporic writing or name it magical-diasporization? Questions are easy but answers are not, however, they create an intrigue for a debate, discussion and engagement that keeps the discourse alive.

Uma Parameswaran in "What Price Expatriation" excavates and explicates a set of diasporic characteristics that prevail in diasporic literature. They can be listed as follows:

- i. Expatriate sensibility
- ii. Social, cultural disorientation
- iii. Rootlessness
- iv. Expatriate dilemma
- v. Search for identity
- vi. Dichotomy among values, norms and ways of life
- vii. Inner-alienation
- viii. A failure, both to 'repatriate' as well as 'impatriate' oneself
- ix. Colloquialism and regionalism
- x. Lack of first-hand knowledge of economics, political and social changes,
- xi. Tensions of impatriation
- xii. Compromise and co-existence (20-35)

Seen in light of the specifications above, the state of being a diaspora seems the most heart-rending psychological experience of perennial dichotomy between a choice or an obligation to expatriate and or a will but inability to effectively impatriate. There are also some literary creations which celebrate the newness, material affluence and hybridity, making of a myth of a new homeland in memory of the old, so creation of a third home-land. However, to be perceptive of these two possibilities one needs to possess the consciousness; the diaspora consciousness. Hence, Parameswaran articulates the diasporic literature is expected to depict, consciously or unconsciously, one or two of the above mentioned characteristics.

The Debate on Diasporic Literature in Nepal

Critics and scholars in Nepal too are having dynamic dialogues on diaspora and diasporic literature. The main thrust of the debate is: should a piece of writing be written by a member of a diaspora or not? Should diasporic literature depict some specific qualities of its own? If yes, how many of them? Nepali diaspora that has its

history since Gorkha Migration to Lahore and the UK in 1850s also has its literature. Scholars like Govinda Raj Bhattarai, Ramjee Timilsina and Mahesh Poudyal have been constantly floating the dialogues on various aspects related to diaspora. However, there seems some sort of hesitation or rigidity in accepting the change that a piece of literature that consists of two or more than two of the characteristics as articulated by Parameswaran.

In this condition, Mike Ball's notion of travelling concepts proves to be considerably pertinent. Bal in her book *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities* allows 'concepts' to carry multiple and contextual manifestations. She writes, "But concepts are not fixed. They travel between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods and between the geographically dispersed academic communities" (24). Each theory can be revisited and redefined. On one hand critics like Mahesh Paudyal seem to stick to the first and the rigid definition of diaspora conceived by Cohen and argue that "dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions" should be the bottom line for a diaspora to be a diaspora (Cohen 15; Paudyal 1). Standing on this definitional ground, Poudyal claims that many of the Nepalese first generation emigrants, the (self) claimed diasporas are misnomers (1). Yet, the question remains, "what about the literature they have produced which is no less than any diasporic writing from any other part of the globe?"

On the other hand some scholars in Nepal are in line of Cohen's second thought that "alternatively or additionally the expansion from a homeland in search of work in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambition is more liable situation for forming the diasporas" (15). The first definition as well as the second does not articulately talk about the sedimentation duration such as how many centuries or generations should it cross for a diaspora to be a diaspora if taken as a settlement. In addition, provided that both the definitions by Cohen are considered, the focus is not on the dispersal or departure but on the formation of the communities and retention of the memory of home land as well as a rejection to assimilation into the host land. Is not it time that moving out of the ancient orthodox rigidity of the definition with a stagnant focus on 'traumatic dispersion' with Greek illustration we discuss that diaspora to be diaspora at this era need not necessarily be the case of a traumatic dispersal but also a departure on one's choice. The foundation on traumatic dispersion suffers stagnation for due to various reasons mass exiles alike in the Greek times have themselves become a history. Besides, some scholars also argue that the term diaspora can be applied to those who can visit their homeland but can't stay longer or has delimited-homeland-stay; that is— they are entitled to only the duration of a tourist for homeland stay; in simpler words how many days a foreign citizen can stay only that many days they can stay. Likewise the expatriated citizens who need visa to and fro homeland, who cannot vote in homeland, and who have virtual connection but not physical can be called the modern diasporas.

Conclusion: The New Notion of Diasporic Literature and a Case for Nepali Diaspora

The debate on diaspora and diasporic literature has undergone a sea change since and from Cohen. Globally, the richness and variety of creative responses to diasporic existences and histories particularly has been in two genres of literature that have evolved in modernity i.e. novel and lyric poem and Nepali diasporic literature is no exception to it. V.S Naipaul, Derek Walcott, Lorna Goodison, Wilson Harris, Salman Rusdie, Hanif Kureishi, Michael Ondaatje, Amitav Ghosh, Jumpa Lahiri are the world prominent novelists and poets who speak from diasporic subject positions and explore the psychic terrain of diaspora. They have been recorded as world diaspora as well as Indian diasporas, but the mention of Nepali diasporas in such regional or global record is very meager.

To it, Nepali diasporic literature also is making its face in leap and bounds some of them are writing in English and the others are getting translated from Nepali to English. In its initial stage towards making its space in the wider horizon, there feels a need to impart it a wider audience, to it rather than being harshly judgmental and dumping rigid worn out definitions over them and their literature. With the efforts of various Nepali diasporic literary associations a surge of its promotion has been very palpable. At this point studying and making critiques of it proves an imperative as it serves a spring board preparation for taking it to the wider audience as well as the repertoire of world literature/s.

Since there are some major features of diasporic literature, it can be called as diasporic without concerning by whom it is written or compiled whether by a diasporic community member or a non-member. And, can we not call the literature by any generation of the migrants a diasporic literature too? If not, what is there in not permitting recent migrants' works imbued with diasporic qualities to be called as a diasporic literature? Theories and concepts undergo transformations and modifications so why not the notion of diaspora and diasporic literature?

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