

Post-colonial Displacement and the Cultural Features of Indian Experience in Chitra Divakaruni's *Before We Visit the Goddess*

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Abstract

This paper studies the cultural and social aspects of the Indian alienation and displacement in Chitra Divakaruni's *Before We Visit the Goddess*. Displacement, moreover, designates the movement from homeland to a foreign or host land. Both the migratory people and the host land peoples are set in a cultural encounter which makes them different from each other. Such The cultural encounter is another definitive feature of postcolonial literature. Different cultures or ideologies conflict among each other in order to pose power by which each front tries to affirm its hegemonic position. Being that so, postcolonial literature provides a bustling vitality in accordance with the dominating power at the ultimate sense of this encounter. The powerful position, then, could construct its ideology and exerts its cultural insinuation via well-implemented procedures. Most significantly, the study sheds light on the language of postcolonial discourse which is the perennial tool used by writers to incarnate the scenario of these conflicting powers between the migratory people and their host land's counterparts.

Key words: Culture; Displacement; Divakaruni; India; Post-colonialism

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1. INTRODUCTION

Alienation is a cultural and psychological state. It represents an abnormal behavior. There are several conditions that lead to the feelings of alienation due to the sense of non-belonging. These conditions fall into two categories, namely, social and cultural conditions. On the one hand, the cultural conditions are formed by the cultural and social circumstances of the human psyche. People may suffer from repressed memories or situations that affect their psyche. As a result, they develop abnormal behaviors. In some cases, people are prone to severe and negative situations that could leave their apparent impact upon them. In essence, this is the primary cause of alienation. Persons with some tragic memories or undesired situations tend to be alone. As such, alienation originally takes the form of alienation when persons stay alone. The reason of their alienation is their need for mind "serenity" and psychological relief (Bloom, p.19).

The social conditions of alienations, moreover, are so influential (Bloom, p.169). They influence the behavioral aspect of the human psyche (p.58). They are extremely active since they appear in the way people treat and interact with each other. In such a way, alienated persons do not interact with other people in a usual way. This is because they do not meet people on common and habitual situations (p.48). Consequently, they become unusual, and other people may notice their behavioral abnormality. The result of this abnormality belittles their ability to interact with people in a proper way. People respond to alienated people in different reactions. Hence, alienated people find themselves "aliens" or abnormal because they are not regularly accepted by other people. At this stage, alienated persons develop a psychic propensity to be alone in different extents (p.115). This is because they want to escape the feeling of inferiority. In fact, they try to get rid of people's criticism directed towards them.

2. THE AUTHOR

Chitra Divakaruni is an Indian-American author. She stamped a great reputation by examining contemporary themes and existing problems, especially the alienation of the Indian displacement. Her writing is a millstone exemplar of presenting the contemporary Indian-American national affairs. Furthermore, her literary writing focuses on the Asian migratory experiences, especially in America. Her fictional manner appeals to all people of all ages (Wong and Hassan 118).

Her fictional novelty throughout fictional works consistently highlights the intrinsic relationship between texts and reality. Her characters' features make much sense of realism. The plot and other literary elements undergo real representation within experimental novelty. In this way, they commonly create a fictional depiction which truly portrays the Indian experience in America. Her major works include *Arranged Marriage* and two of her novels *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart*, as well as a short story *The Word Love. Before We Visit the Goddess* is one of her most outstanding novels.

3. THE NOVEL: A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

The novel narrates a story of a family that is both fortified and disintegrated by the overwhelming themes of love and ambition. Sabitri is the protagonist. She is a daughter of a poor baker in Bengal / India. She is ambitious; and she wants to complete her education. Yet, her family tells her education is merely impossible. A woman from Kolkata tries to achieve her dream, but she fails afterwards. Years Pass, and Sabitri's daughter Bela is inspired by her mother's aspiration for education. Bela, therefore, migrates to America with her refugee lover, Sanjay. After that, their marriage fails; and Bela begins to teach her daughter Tara moral lessons about loyalty, freedom, dedication ... etc. that should prevail her life because she lives in a foreign country which differs from her native homeland, India. Tara and her mother live in Houston, Texas where they lead a life full of difference between the Indian and American cultures.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper attempts to study alienation and displacement in *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017). The study will primarily focus on the issue of alienation since the main Indian characters feel at odds with their American counterparts. Therefore, the study sheds light on the Indian alienation as a strange feeling of difference. To clarify, the Indian characters feel that they are different from the American people because they are from a different culture. Accordingly, they face social hardships as they get accustomed to the American lifestyle. For this reason, the study looks into alienation as a product of

displacement. That is, the Indian characters leave India and settle down in America.

This displacement makes them feel that they are different from the American society, which is hardly studied in previous studies. As such, my study will tackle the Indian displacement as an impetus of the characters' alienation due to the fact that they are from a different culture and society. Consequently, the significance of the study's lies in its exploration of displacement as a cause of the characters' alienation, which is scarcely discussed in the existed studies on the novel. Another major significance, moreover, is the study's enrichment of academic the scholarship of the Indian displacement cultural studies on the novel within the scope of alienation and social issues.

5. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this paper is to achieve the following objectives:

To examine the Indo-American people's feeling of alienation due to their living in a new land differs from their native one.

To explore displacement as a cause of the characters' feeling of alienation because they leave India for America and how they meet a new culture.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Surbhi Saraswat studies the role of myth and gender and their relation to the concept of contraculture in the novel. Here, the novel's women protagonists go on a long journey to America in order to achieve identity and independence: "The novel unfolds the journey of women to womanhood. The novel is a discourse of identity and independence as strived and achieved by all the characters" (748). Saraswat examines the concepts of contraculture and self-concept by applying a study on populations that have a number of adolescents. These adolescents are males; and they are chosen to find the latent norms of "contraculture" (748). The concept of contraculture comes out of the ideal standards that result in better socialization relations in society. Saraswat continues to scrutinize the inherent impetus of formulate the psychic obstacles for such socialization process. There are two factors that lead to self-concept, alienation and anxiety. They are conflict and frustration which takes place in society in which several individuals are shared the same values within the larger social peripheries. Such individuals are deprived of achieving some values that they consider worth doing. The drive of this deprivation is that individuals have not learnt the larger normative codes regarding values in their own societies. Whereas the norms obtained in "subculture" circumferences are constructed through the specificity of socialization in a certain society.

People who are classified within subcultures have an social process by which they social a number of values inherited from the larger social standards; and they are not deprived, or “thwarted,” of accomplishing significant values (Saraswat, p.748). The achievement of such psychic measurements depended on some male adolescents who were taken are sample of the study. The selection of male adolescents, presumably, has an affinity with discerning the concept of contraculture. They might precisely lead to better conceptualization of the two concepts in the light of psychoanalysis. The sample chosen for the study are taken from different social classes and they particular embody the latent features of society and the standards of socialization. The target group for the study has a contiguous analogy with exploring the authentic motives of contraculture. The choice of such gender-based target group helps Saraswat delve into the deep-seated insinuation of contraculture. As such, the sample chosen would results into real appraisal of these concepts and what they do to individuals’ personality.

Saraswat finds that the institutionalized individuals – delinquents as described in the study – are prone to anxiety since they have predilection to be strange (p.749). This severe psychic condition makes them develop whimsical statements about themselves. The analogous version of these statements is self-derogating estimation of the self. The clarification of this derogative statements lies at the sense of individuals’ tendency to belittle their values. They begin to disapprove of themselves, especially their behaviors and role in society. They gradually lose their self-confidence as they do not have the sufficient satisfaction with their surrounding social classes. This judgment is the psychic thrust of their self-concepts. This is the first aspect of the mutual relationship between alienation and anxiety.

Saraswat says that the crux of this relationship is that individuals – who have self-concepts – are anxious and strange at the same time. Contra-cultural personality culminates in the choice of institutionalized delinquents. However, the non-institutionalized group (delinquents) comprises those marginal male adolescents. The non-institutionalized group has the most obvious tokens of self-derogative allegations (statements). Moreover, they equate the highest degree of the mutual relationship between alienation and anxiety. The non-institutionalized group comes before the legitimate shape of subcultural group where the non-delinquents do not make any kind of self-derogative judgment about the self. Just so, the non-delinquents group has the least propensity for alienation and anxiety. In sum, Saraswat explores the mutual relationship between contraculture and society. They are the institutionalized, the non- institutionalized and the non-delinquent groups.

Abirami Kanagarajan studies the narrative techniques in the novel. She explore the novel as a social activity

for women progress through examining the its narrative focalization: “The novel is considered most complex because of the multiple foclaizations employed by the author and at the same time is recognized as one of the best of her collections for the intricacies of the narrative” (p.53). In so doing, Kanagarajan examines literary realism in the novel. Literary realism came into prominence in America. Kanagarajan argues that the term fist the literary works that approach reality as it is. This means that realistic aspects of the novel do not incorporate fantastic elements in her plots. She perceives reality from precise fictional perspectives. That is, they depict, people, events and places as they are exist in reality. However, they approach reality through symbolism in order to comment or amend a certain issue in life. The characters and setting, in realistic fiction, resemble those in reality. They do not have additional or supernatural traits. They approach the problems of everyday life as they occur to people in their actual societies. Kanagarajan studies the circumstances that led to the appearance of realism a literary movement.

Kanagarajan says that literary realism presents events that are familiar to the reader’s reception. Realistic writers’ style is relatively banal. It does not have innovative styles or subject matter. Instead, they deal with the experiences of people as they happen in reality. Consequently, the reader does not find exciting entertainment in reading them. The essential purpose of literary realism is to obliterate the romantic and fanatic elements in literary works i.e., realism is a literary response to fantasy and romanticism. They focus on the novels’ characterization, setting, themes and narrative point of view. They scarcely use decorative language devices, such figures of speech and imagery. In this sense, the term realism is an opposite of idealism which is long desired by romantic and fantastic authors (p.53).

Kanagarajan applies the theory of hermeneutics concentrates on the symbolical characteristics of literary works. It draws upon the authorial perception of reality and depicting it in a symbolic manner. Consequently, the theory of hermeneutics requires a degree of profound understanding of the text and how it reflects the author’s creation of the literary events and characters. For this reason, studying literary works would result in various notions about the anthropologic contexts projects in the literary events. As such, the selected novels could be studied by appropriating the author’s perception of her reality and its influence on the mentality of the characters. Therefore, academicians might approach the issue of ethnicity in the selected novels. **The main conceptual argumentation of hermeneutics criticism is that literature should be interpreted in the light of practical assumption rather than theoretical ones.** That is, analyzing the literary text depends largely on the synchronic and diachronic textual axes. In other words, the text must

be approached by scrutinizing the historical moment in which it is written. In addition, criticism should have, to some extent, a direct contact with the author. In this way, critics could avoid anachronism fallacy i.e., analyzing the text without regard to the temporal epoch of its writing. Consequently, hermeneutic criticism might be a practical approach to study the selected novels by engaging the author personally in the analysis process for the sake of exploring the latent impetus of the novel.

The hermeneutic aspects of the novel are a kind narrative that deals with the psychological complication of people who have disturbing thoughts. In everyday life, people confront some incidents that make them psychically turbulent. Escapist fiction portrays these thoughts and provides the reader with bizarre literary situations in order to have the reader extremely immersed in the narrative events. In this sense, escapist fiction offers the reader, or the reception audience, with an “escape” from the thoughts of everyday life. It has entertaining elements as psychic alternatives to thwart the reader’s problems. Being so, it provides therapeutic and didactic themes by making the reader absorb the function of the escapist fictional text. Furthermore, it approaches the real life through simulating reality but in an exotic manner (Kanagarajan, p.55). As such, it serves as a corrective means exposing the defects of, for example, a certain society. Consequently, the word “escape” is a key factor of escapist fiction projected in many literary genres, especially satire, fantasy fiction and science fiction.

Through the use of fantastic elements, escapist fiction denotes the collective desire for escapism form psychic problems. Kanagarajan argues that fantasy exemplifies the “mass desire for escapism” where people could find psychic remedial reliefs. Head contends that fantasy is the first imaginative tool used by fictional authors and escapism is secondary since both of them incarnate the sense of literary imagination: “fantastic elements suggest the dangers of the unfettered imagination, where escapism is in the ascendancy” (p.56). Such elements embody the author’s depiction of supernatural creatures, like dragons, fairies and so forth. Escapist fiction has also other purposes. One of the most significant purposes is entertainment. It arouses some action and events that serve as alternatives of reality. In this sense, escapism conforms to the notion of “guilty pleasure” (p.55). The meaning of guilty pleasure, according to Kanagarajan, is that escapist fiction portrays episodes of romance adventures that do not occur in reality. However, they represent the human defects, virtues or vices and critique them via fantastic fictional descriptions. The purpose of this study, however, is to demonstrate the relationship between alienation and displacement and how they socially and culturally influence the life of the protagonists of Divakaruni’s *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017).

7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Alienation

In *Revolution in Psychology: Alienation to Emancipation*, Ian Parker (2007) argues that alienation denotes the state of solitary living or position in an abnormal way. In psychology, for example, it represents that complicated state when persons suffer from loneliness and the lack of the sense of belonging. They do not interact with other people of the same society or community (p.83). Alienation is the most blatant peculiarity of alienation. It is evident in both conditions i.e., social and cultural manifestations of alienation. Yet, alienation is connected with cultural alienation conditions (p.200). This is due to the multiplicity of events that happen in persons’ life. As argued in the previous paragraphs, social alienation might come out of repressing memories or situations, then, persons tend to be alone which make them alienated. In this manner, they do not have many encounters and interactions with people (p.193). Instead, they become a victim of their thoughts and repression. Social alienation, however, is associated with many interactions and events (p.70). Other people might incur harsh events. Alienated people, accordingly, become the victims of these events (Abu Jweid, 2022, p.9). They do not have memories or harmful satiations. They are shocked by their surroundings. These surroundings make them feel negatively; and they consequently like to be alone (p.142). Divakaruni’s *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017) evokes the implication of cultural alienation. Bela has a great degree of aspiration. Yet, she recognizes the gap between her present life and her aspiration. She keeps remembering her past. As such she tends to live in isolation. As such, her unknowable past and unpredicted future do not reconcile; and her ambitious dreams fade away.

Alienated persons, then, repress their negative feelings. They do not believe that “the public” people will judge them as being normal (Parker, p.112). They do not have sufficient confidence that they will be treated on the ground of equality with other people. Here, the insinuation of their alienation is process by which they inhibit their negative situations and memories (p.142). By time, they become paranoid and begin suspect other people of being against them. People’s criticism of alienated persons’ behaviors is repressed largely in alienated persons’ unconscious mind. The unconscious mind becomes the repository for the undesired memories and situations (p.142).

In *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017), Bela feels that she is alienated from the American society. She could not cope with other American people around her. She tends to walk alone because she does not have friends. Therefore, she suffers from the lack of belongings because America is not her homeland and all Americans are strange: “in my senior year, I took long, solitary walks along the rain-

drenched Brazos River, tortured by the suspicion that I didn't belong" (p.125).

Additionally, alienation, like the case of repression in social alienation, is a manifestation of social sense of non-belonging. Both repression and alienation reflect the formation of alienated psyche (Parker, p.98). The relationship between repression and alienation appears through social conditions. When persons need to avoid previous memories and situations, they repress them in their unconscious minds (Abu Jweid, 2016, p.531). The unconscious mind, in turn, influences the psychical structure of the body (p.100). The alienation persons become behaving in an unusual way. Behavioral abnormality is, in this sense, a reflection of psychic ailment deposited in the unconscious mind. In the light of this psychological process, the deformation of body behavior is caused by repression as a social conditional mechanism of alienation (p.117). In contrast, alienation is a psychic disorder caused by cultural alienation. Alienated persons are disappointed by events or people which are, later on, incarnated in abnormal behaviors, such as living in alienation. Non-belonging is another stage of social alienation (p.194). Both repression and alienation are two definitive elements of alienation. Alienated individuals suspect other people of harming them. They suffer from the feeling that people will hinder their lives. Being so, they live in a constant fear of harm that is brought about accusation and suspicion. Alienation, in this regard, stems from a variety of social tensions.

Diane Einblau, in *Alienation: a Social Process*, asserts the social dimensions of alienation are strongly connected. They have concomitant contiguity. To explain, the study of alienation from a social perspective could not be completely achieved without studying the social elements of alienation. Similarly, the treatment of alienation from a social perspective without dealing with the personal factors of persons might be lacking the inherent meanings of alienation (p.84). In *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017), Bela recounts her social experience. She and her Indian companion suffer from alienation because they are brought up in Indian lifestyle that differs from the American one. His family considers his gay tendency as a kind of perversion: "I searched for the right words. One of my Indian friends at college, also gay, also cut off from his family, had told me they had thought his condition—that was the word they used—a perversion" (p.135).

Alienation's cultural conditions, on the other hand, spring out of outer circumstances. Alienated persons may suffer from psychological shocks caused by tragic events (Parker, p.82). For example, wars might bring about events that leave people in bitter bereavement. Alienated persons, as a sequence, tend to avoid these events by resorting to places where they could stay alone. They do not want to be in the same events that affected them; and they lead to isolation life. The isolation life is alienated

neurosis per se. This is connected with two factors. First, alienation develops consistently when people stay alone. When persons live in a secluded place, alienation becomes a contiguous symptom. That is, seclusion is a "cultural" feature of alienation. The concomitant relationship between alienation and loss is the second factor (p.82). To illustrate, when persons lose their most precious or loved possession, they consequently have a tendency to be alone.

Alienation conditions may also differ from the notion of self-alienation. It refers to that psychological state in which persons feel that they are alienated in their homelands. As a matter of fact, people feel that they are the original nation of a certain country. Yet, when their country is stricken by, for example, an economic crisis or political corruption, they feel that they are alienated since they are deprived of their rights as citizens. Then, they feel the contradictions between their national ideas and their positions as human beings. Persons, as such, become self-alienated i.e. alienation caused by collective events (Parke, p.16). In this sense, alienation becomes an abnormal psychological state which is connected with alienation because people are disappointed by the deterioration of their country's milieu. In this study, I will use the term psychic alienation interchangeably with self-alienation for the sake of interpretation and textual analysis.

The ultimate state of alienation is the feeling of isolation and loneliness (Parker, p.40). It takes the form of a response to events, memories, or situations that have deep-seated influence upon the persons' psyches. These events may vary in different forms, such as violence, loss and disillusionment (Abu Jweid, 2020, p.12). Feeling separated from other people is the alienation "disharmony" between alienated individuals and other people. Such feeling culminates in the form of hostility. Alienated persons gradually become to hate other people or community. This belongs to isolation and seclusion lives which they become accustomed to. In the course of alienation stage, alienated persons get a degree of "absolute subjectivity" (p.122); whereby they only attend and take care of themselves. They do so because they need to get rid of inconvenient events, situations and memories (p.83). Bela is an incarnation of this alienation experience since she does not feel that she belongs to the American society. This is due to the fact that she migrated with her lover to America for the sake of achieving their dreams.

In *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017), Bela and her lover Sanjay repress their feeling of alienation when they arrive at the airport. They are not familiar with the American life. For this reason, they repress their worry in order to appear serious in the eyes of their American people. This worry is created by their feeling of being alienated and strange in America: "Out there he stood, on the other side of the frosted double doors, thinner than she remembered, his scruffy student beard replaced by a trim,

responsible-looking mustache grown, he later told her, so that Americans would take him seriously. He looked as worried as she felt” (p.81).

7.2 Displacement

Bill Ashcroft *et al.* define displacement as “the voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homeland into new regions” (p.68). Displacement is, thus, created when people are forced to leave their homeland and settle other places. In other words, displacement can be defined as the spreading of people from a national group or culture to other parts of the world (p.63). According to Ashcroft *et al.*, the term displacement is a widespread expression which refers to the migration of an ethnic minority or religious minority group from their motherland to a different location for whatever purpose with no attention to the extent of cultural relationship between their motherland and the host country (pp.13-14). In this study, the concept of displacement will be defined according to Ashcroft *et al.*’s description of it as being the movement of individuals from their original homeland to another strange location or ‘host land,’ but all the while carrying with them their affinity towards their ancestral motherland. Ashcroft *et al.* add that these individuals have difficulties assimilating into the host country, resulting in a sense of alienation and constant thoughts of returning to their homeland and when the situation permits. Accordingly, the individuals usually have a desire of improving their original land in which their relationship is continuously based on the harmony as well as the consciousness of the individual groups.

Furthermore, Ashcroft *et al.* point out that the deported people in displaced communities suffer as a result of the deportation as “they continue to identify with the original culture in practical, everyday matters and that they keep the myths of the homeland” (pp.13-14). Thus, although the deported people in the discourse of displacement are usually influenced by the cultures of the host land, they still believe in the notion of returning to their motherland as well as the notion of preserving the cultural aspects of their ancestral country. Moreover, Ashcroft *et al.* emphasizes that the displaced culture discourse is the “experience of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place.” Thus, the disowned suffer from displacement in the new land. This feeling is similar to the expatriates who leave their motherland then they lost their cultural identity (p.15).

In *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017), Bela exemplifies the voluntary displacement. She chooses to leave India for America with her lover, Sanjay. She migrated to America to achieve her ambition. She and Sanjay plan to marry as soon as they arrive in America. Moreover, Sanjay was a political activist; and he wants to achieve his economic ambition in America. The following excerpt illustrates their first arrival in San Francisco:

When Bela arrived in the United States at the age nineteen, carrying papers that falsely claimed she was a tourist, Sanjay was the only person she knew in the whole country. He wasn’t her husband yet; the plan was for them to marry as soon as she got here. She was crazy about him—how else to account for this desperate thing she had done? But perhaps she didn’t trust him all the way, because when the airplane landed in San Francisco, her palms were slick with sweat. (p.81)

Moreover, postcolonial critics are attentive to a kind of fiction produced by the social authority and literary works created by the colonized. Consequently, postcolonial criticism is concerned with the function of the western literary canon and the history of western as prevalent types of enlightenment (Ashcroft *et al.*, p.13). Accordingly, the themes and issues of displacement and unhomeliness generate the resistance of an individual likewise the collective cultural identity.

In reference to the last point, the displaced discourse of identity is relevant to an awareness of displacement as well as an issue of multi-local supplement. Therefore, displacement is argued as a “loosely coherent adaptive constellation of responses to dwelling in displacement” (Ashcroft *et al.*, p.14). Besides, it is regarded to represent the image struggle for those who are expelled from the status of settlement. In other words, the image of cultural politics that locates its objectives against nationalism and assimilation is considered within social awareness of displacement. Consequently, the word ‘displacement’ is appropriate to most of the expatriate groups in any case of the purpose of their exile. Here, displacement is initiated to expose the importance of the place as a certain geographical location from the appearance of the discourse of self-identity.

In *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017), Bela experiences separation from her family. She decides to leave her mother, Sabitri. She bids farewell to her mother before she travels. This is because her mother would be angry and, therefore, she feels afraid of this separation which is caused by her displacement to America. For this reason, she leaves a goodbye note to her mother: “By now Sabitri would have received the goodbye note Bela had entrusted to Bishu’s friend in Kolkata, the one who helped her get her passport and ticket. Sabitri would be very angry. Bela had been afraid of what she might do — to herself as much as to Bishu’s friend” (p.83). This is the letter left by Bela to her mother: “By the time you read this, I will be on my way to America to marry Sanjay. His life was in danger here. That is why he had to leave Kolkata. And I can’t live without him. Please forgive me for not telling you earlier, but you would have stopped me” (p.72).

Moreover, Ashcroft *et al.* argues that displacement involves “experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/ desiring another place” (p.14). That signifies the disowned may suffer from

displacement in the new land alike those who lose their cultural identity for the reason of amputation from their mother land. So, forming the identity of dislodges are based on whatever connexions that are associated with their homeland, and also whether they are fictional or genuine. Being so, the essentials of our sense of self will be decreased as a result of our lost foundation in the world or purpose in society. The displacement influences the individual in a devastating way resulting in unleashed existence. This is done towards those who have lost their sense of belonging as well as footing in the community and become "a vital dimension of homelessness simply because it influences social and functional abilities that are relevant to the re-entry into homes and society" (p.14).

Though, the foreign society shares the host culture's main socially aspects, such as tradition, history, language, class, and culture. Moreover, the critical scholars argue that the concern of identity crisis is with the "development and recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place" (Ashcroft et al, p.14) in which all of the class, society, culture and individual's own being are included. Furthermore, the feeling sense of belonging and identity of individual have strong influences on the physical environment of the colonized. According to Ashcroft *et al.*, the displaced people are defined as "a genuine, inherent and eternal trait that is transmitted from father to sons" (p.76). In essence, the displaced people was transmitted from the ancestors to the posterity as a manifested indication of assuring the constantly movement of migration to insist on the sense of belonging and independence. The concept of displacement is used to illustrate individuals' expression and ideation of their personality or group association, like national identities and cultural values. The concept is used with consideration to the migratory people's assimilation with the new host culture.

In *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017), Bela loses her sense of belonging since she lives in a foreign country, namely, America. After her displacement, she could not be accustomed to the American food or ways of life. Furthermore, she and Sanjay feel homeless. They could hardly live in America at the beginning because life is totally different. They do not feel comfortable in America due to their ignorance of the American society:

Bela was seven months along now and hardly able to fit behind the steering wheel of the second hand Chevy Sanjay had recently bought. He himself wasn't comfortable with American roads yet and preferred taking BART to work. She had been scared, too, but determined. Knowing how to drive would allow her to look for a better paying job once the baby was born, to reclaim her house-dream. (pp.99-100)

CONCLUSION

This study has focused on alienation and displacement in Divakaruni's *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2017). The study has tackled the novel as a manifestation of the Indian experience in America by shedding light on the protagonists and the settings. The protagonists have been approached as Indian people who leave India for America; and they confront new people with new culture. The settings, furthermore, have been discussed as the Indian original places for the characters and the new American society to which the characters immigrate. Therefore, their immigration has been revealed by the use of the concept of displacement; and their strange feelings as a representation of their social alienation because they could not easily adapt to the American lifestyle. In this regard, the study has concentrated on the duality of alienation and displacement in the novel to demonstrate how the Indian people undergo new experience in America. This is because displacement makes the migratory people feel at odds with the host society which is complexly different from their original homeland. Therefore, the sense of alienation has been scrutinized through the characters' strange feelings in America due to their migration from their native Indian homeland.

Displacement, moreover, comes to be known and defined as the comprehensive conceptualization of different cultures and traditions as depicted in the selected novel. The most conspicuous token of this cultural diversity is the ability of different civilizations to comprehend and appreciate each other on the ground of common understandings and respect. That is, one cultural manner might not be accepted by certain cultures, but is regarded as normal in the host culture. In this context, the host culture provides a facilitative unification of different culture in one place. This place pertains to the host culture. However, this place undergoes radical changes because it loses its national and inherited significance to some extent. The original place undergoes inherent changes since it receives different cultural diversities. The new arrived Indian people are completely different from the American host socio-cultural places. As such, displacement includes both the original host culture and the foreign cultures. Thus, the study has demonstrated that displacement and alienation are concomitant socio-cultural aspects of the Indian lives in America.

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