

RESEARCH ARTICLE



ISSN

2395-2636 (Print):2321-3108 (online)

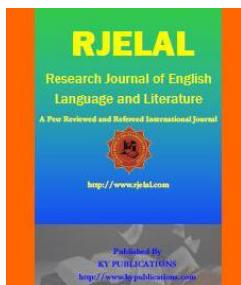
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

DIMENSIONS OF DIASPORA CONSCIOUSNESS IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S "THE UNKNOWN ERRORS OF OUR LIVES"

GOUTAM BARMAN

Assistant Teacher

Narikeldanga High School, Kolkata



ABSTRACT

The paper explores the different dimensions of Diaspora consciousness in Chitra Banerjee's short story collection entitled *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives*. It shows that like other Diaspora texts the short stories of the volume deal with many strands of immigrant experience undergone by the female protagonists of the stories: uprootedness, utter alienation, perilous danger, racial discrimination, afflicted hardships, imminent brooding of haunting tension, vain repentance, irretrievable loss, constant homesickness, nostalgic longing, identity crisis, Trishanku existence, cultural liminality and hybridised cultural identity.

Keywords: Errors, immigrant, liminality, alienation, nostalgia, diasporic

©KY PUBLICATIONS

At present Diaspora has become a buzzword, a catch-all phrase to represent or speak for all movements, theorizations of hybridity and cross-cultural, multi-ethnic dislocations. The history of the word Diaspora says etymologically the term Diaspora is derived from the Greek composite verb 'dia' and 'speiren'(infinitive), literally meaning, 'to scatter', or 'to spread', or 'to disperse'. It was initially applied to the phenomenon of the dispersion of Jews after the Babylonian exile in 586 BC and to the aggregate of Jews or Jewish communities dispersed in exile outside Palestine. In present parlance, the term is attributed to the people, irrespective of the countries, who scatter outside their national territories.

Diaspora occurred mainly on two grounds—one forced and another willing. The former diaspora took place in the form of indentured labour or enslavement mainly during colonial period. The latter diaspora has two sub-types: trade and better opportunities. The diaspora undertaken during the post-colonial period was advertently accepted due

to the better socio-cultural conditions and job opportunities in the foreign countries as against the suffocating socio-cultural and political situations and the low job opportunities in the home. Jhumpa Lahiri, in her interview in the New Yorker, said rightly the purpose of the post-modern immigration: "It[immigration] was a combination of hunger for new experiences, perhaps wanting a better quality life, and furthering one's education. But it was accompanied by a certain sense of misgiving. They were leaving behind their families essentially for personal gain. So, a hard decision to make."

The diaspora communities share a common characteristic experiences: alienation, strong nostalgia for the 'roots', 'homing desire', an acute sense of isolation, loneliness and aloofness, an agony of unbelongingness, uprootedness, aches of being marginalised and insecurity, identity crisis, cultural conflict etc. The diasporans leave the improper and imperfect native cultures for the so-called superior cultures of the host country but there they cannot fully adopt and assimilate or

adjust to the alien cultures. That is why, they suffer from the pangs of alienation physically and mentally. Then they nostalgically long for their fetishized home. Here they also fail to accept completely the erstwhile rejected home cultures. They cannot hold on to any of the two cultures wholeheartedly. They dangle between two diametrically opposite cultures. Rushdie says he immigrants "straddle two cultures" (Rushdie. 15). Consequently their state is like that of Trishanku. They move in the margins or fringes. They feel culturally alienated and are mentally and psychologically torn between the two antipodal cultures. Moreover, they suffer racial discrimination, sideways glances and insinuation. Consequently their unhappy existence in the alien country is of constant antagonism, perpetual tension and pregnant chaos, uncertain hazards and perilous risks. Another feature of this community is the multiculturalism. They mix and adapt to the cultures of the host country while retaining and preserving the home cultures. Consequently, they develop a double identity, sandwiched hybrid culture and plural society of sojourners. William Safran in his *Diaspora in Modern Societies: Myth of Homeland and Return* brilliantly assembles the distinguishing characteristics of the diaspora:

First, diaspora as a term refers to people who have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral', or foreign regions; second, diaspora applies when those dispersed communities "retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland- its physical location, history and achievements" ; third, Diasporic communities are marked by a firm belief that "they are not-and perhaps cannot be-fully accepted by host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulate from it"; fourth, diasporas overwhelmingly " regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return- when conditions are appropriate"; fifth, Diasporic communities firmly "believe that they should collectively, be committed to the maintenance or

restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity"; and sixth, diaspora and diasporic communities typically "relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such relationship." (Safran. 24-25)

Memory plays a prominent part in diaspora writings. As Gauri Shanka Jha points out Vijay Laxmi's view expressed in her paper titled *Of Immigrant Writing*:

"The tension between what was and what is, between memory and reality, energizes the writer's work. The constant diving into the deep waters of memory helps the writer reconstitute or recreate a remembered part. In the process of recreation the writer evolves into a new being who is and is not the person who had started out. Memory, besides language, becomes the most significant factor that sets the diasporic writer's discourse in the centre...memory, invented or real, helps the writer escape the confines of conformity and creates new literature a hybrid literature-which does not conform to any one tradition or culture, but creates a new world...."(Laxmi. 159)

India has a vast range of diaspora writers. Among the Diaspora creative writers we may mention the names of Meena Alexander, Panna Naik, Malathi Rao, Sujata Bhatt, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Nair, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Meera Sayal, Amitav Ghosh, V.S. Naipaul, Rohinton Mistry, Salman Rushdie etc. All these writers like the true diaspora writers exhibit through their writings the myriad facets of diaspora experiences of the diaspirans-that is, nostalgia, homesickness, unbelongingness, rootlessness, alienation, identity crisis, cultural hybridity, racial discrimination etc. They express no monolithic notions of home or identity. They lucidly ventilate that "a swing between nostalgia and anguish, anger/cynicism and love, reconciliation and acceptance" (Jha. 141) is clearly discernible in the life of all the immigrants. All the characters of their

writings are their alter egos, as the writers are, like their characters, immigrants.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, one of the prominent Indo-American Diasporic writers, emigrated to America for studies. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning and best-selling author, poet, activist and teacher. She was born in Kolkata in 1956. She received B. A. from the University of Calcutta in 1976, M. A. from Wright State University of U.S.A. and Ph.D on Christopher Marlowe in 1985 from the University of California, Berkeley. She is the co-founder and former president of Maitri, a helpline for the South Asian Immigrant Women to assist them lift from their domestic violence. She is presently engaged in many non-profit organisations in the areas around Houston. She presently teaches Creative Writing at the University of Houston. She writes for both adults and children. She has to her credit seven novels- *The Mistress of Spices*(1998), *Sister of My Heart*(1999), *The Vine of Desire*(2002), *Queen of Dreams*(2004), *The Palace of Illusions*(2008), *One Amazing Thing*, and *Oleander Girl*(2013)-two short story collections- *Arranged Marriage*(1995) and *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives*(2001)-two important poetry volumes- *Black Candle*(1991) and *Leaving Yuba City*(197) and *Brotherhood and Conch* series and many more volumes of writings. She has received many awards, some of which are The American Book Award, PEN Oakland/ Joshephine Miles Literary Award, Allen Ginsberg and Pushcart Prize. She features in the "Twenty Most Influential Global Indian Women" list issued in 2015 by The Economic Times. The theme of her writings ranges from Indian immigrant experience, history, myth to migration, Indian women, and the joys and challenges for living in a multicultural world.

Out of the nine poignant stories in the short story collection *The Unknown Error of Our Lives*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, through seven stories, highlights the many faceted dimensions of immigrant experience of the immigrant Indians to America-alienation, tension, cultural conflict, loneliness, deracinated, homesickness, nostalgia, identity crisis, cultural hybridity. Her characters are either first generation or second generation Indian Immigrants to America. The Indian immigrant

characters went to America for getting more affluence and better social realities. But there they face another kind of problems-the problems of racial discrimination, constant tension, bitter alienation and pungent hardships in their activity compact day-to-day life. They revert back to their native lands. They are seized in what Avtar Brah says "the homing desire of the migrants" (Brah. 180). They are also caught between two diametrically opposite cultural values-the values of the native country and that of the host country. Because they cannot fully shed off the cultural values of their native land under which they or their former generations had been so long born and brought up and cannot totally adapt to the cultural values of the alien country. Consequently they suffer from utmost loneliness, complete uprootedness, and mental agonies.. They are divided multicultural souls.

Mrs. Dutta Writes a Letter, the first story of the volume, poignantly chronicles the immigrant experience of an ageing widowed woman, Mrs. Das, who went to stay at his son's house in Sunnyvale in America. Through the feelings and longings of Mrs. Das, the story delineates almost all the aspects of what the diaspora writing should contain-alienation, nostalgia, homesickness, tension, danger, multiculturalism. The immigrant characters are torn between two polarised cultures and this conflicted situation is well discernible in Mrs. Dutta. It is 5 a. m. but Mrs. Das remains in bed complete awake like "trapped wasp" (Divakaruni. 1). Early rise is uncannily unnecessary in her son's house in Sunnyvale. Whereas the ingrained habit of her old home says "a good wife wakes before the rest of the household" (Divakaruni, 3). Mrs. Das feels it "curious custom" to let the children sleep in another room closing their door against their parents. While in Calcutta, Mrs. Das would wash everyday's used clothes every day, but in America the custom is totally opposite. All the used clothes of every day are heaped up to be washed only at the week end. She also amazed to see that her grandchildren are more interested in the alien world of Power Rangers, Spice Girls than the old stories of her girlhood. There is no amicable feeling between the adjoining families. Whereas in Calcutta, there was a good relation among the neighbouring families. She

has to suffer humiliation from both her daughter-in-law Shyamoli and her grandchildren for her old habit of bathing long time in the toilet. Her humiliation was complete when she gets snapped by her daughter-in-law for hanging her clothes on neighbour's fence. She feels: Oh, this new country where all the rules are upside down, it's confusing her. Her mind feels muddy, like a pond in which too many water buffaloes have been wading" (divakaruni. 28).

Any bleak situation in alien land reminds the Immigrants of the respective situation of their homeland. When Mrs. Dutta watches the ever solitary next yard through the window of her son's house, she nostalgically remembers Calcutta, its narrow blackened flats crammed with the members of the six or eight families. The utter deserted Sunnyvale street prompts into her memory the Ghoshpara lane which is frequented by either the vegetable vendors or dehati women or the animals like goats and stray dogs.

Such tussling cultural difference between the native and the host country makes Mrs. Dutta morose and disillusioned. She is completely alone in the alien land of young people. In her letter to Mrs. Roma, Mrs. Dutta expresses her severe yearning to return to Calcutta and writes "I cannot answer your question about whether I am happy, for I am no longer sure I know what happiness is. All I know is that it isn't what I thought it to be...Perhaps we can figure it out together, two old women drinking cha in your downstairs flat(for I do hope you will rent it to me on my return)..." (Divakaruni. 33).

The Intelligence of Wild Things is imbued by the dimensions of the Diaspora experiences of the immigrant characters like Malabika and Tarun. Malabika wanted eagerly (too eagerly) to be married off with Sandeep because he lived abroad. Initially she wanted transformation, but when the sweeping transformation besmeared her she flinched back and thought nostalgically:

"If I'd been an artist, this is what I would have painted, to keep it safe from loss-and from change, which is perhaps crueler than loss. This is what I have brought to Tarun today: that dim kitchen, our own cave, with its safe odors of coriander and fenugreek;

the small blue glow of the gas stove in the corner; three people, cross-legged on the cool cement, making food for each other while the stories wrapped us in their enchantment." (Divakaruni. 40)

Alien life is the trouble-torn life. She felt the wild things like fish and sarash were superior to her. Because they knew how to avert the marauding baneful effect of the alien life, but she could not know. She was so changed that when Tarun, her brother, came to America she could not extend him her sisterly assistance to come out of the dismal life of the immigration. Because she was in more distressing situation. As she said, "For a long time I didn't know about the rift between Ma and Tarun, although I wonder now whether it was more that I didn't want to know" (Divakaruni. 40). Malabika could not wear the gold wedding bangles because "they were too elegant for my pedestrian Sacramento life" (Divakaruni. 44). Sandeep and she were not on good terms until their second child. They feared aloneness in that companionless alien land. One time Sandeep said about Tarun, "I'm the only family he has here, after all" (Divakaruni. 45). She felt that the only persons she loved in Sacramento were Sandeep, his daughter and her brother.

Diaspora is a nowhere man. Malabika suffers from homesickness and permanent loss of the native culture. But when she was caught in the traffic jam of Kolkata on her way from the airport to her mother's house, she started to discover that she no longer belonged to it.

Through *The Lives of Strangers* the authoress tries to show that home is never obliterated from any diaspora character-either first generation or second generation immigrant. They always bear home with them like a boat with the slow-growing barnacle. They never shed off the home. They straddle between two cultures, which makes them transformed and they feel disoriented and bear identity crisis. They are confused as which culture they will adhere to- either the culture of the home or that of the host country. It has been seen that whenever the immigrants face any trouble in the host country the home flashes before them. Leela, a second generation immigrant character,

values the privacy and aloneness like her parents. But when her lover left her after love-making with her, she could not bear her partner-less state, she ended up in hospitalisation by swallowing up sleeping pills. After the abortive suicidal attempt, the idea of 'home' came up to the surface of her mind. As the narrator said, "She didn't know when it was that she started thinking about India, which she had never visited. The idea attached itself to the underneath of her mind and grew like a barnacle" (Divakaruni. 61). Though she was a second generation immigrant, India was not an alien to her. She could not tear the umbilical cord. At the airport her aunt Seema, being overjoyed, pulled her to her bosom. Leela thought in America she would have been surely repelled by such effusion from an unknown woman. But here it seemed to her as right. As she said, "Here it seemed as right-and as welcome-as the too-sweet glass of orange squash that the maid brought her as soon as she reached the house" (Divakaruni. 62). Before her leaving for India, her parents cautioned her not to mix with the strangers. But she freely and over joyously mingled with the stranger pilgrims and even shared room with Mrs. Das, one of the pilgrims, shattering the America idea of privacy. One time when Mrs. Das mentioned "eksangay", the word, as the narrator said, "opens inside Leela with a faint, ringing sound, like a distant temple bell" (Divakaruni. 69).

The demarcating line of different cultures blurs in the immigrants. They fall in-betweenness of the two antipodal clashing cultures. They feel identity crisis not being fully associated with either of the two cultures-home or host. Leela like all Americans believed in pragmatic explanation of any events especially of the accident. Destiny to them is confusing. But when Leela mixed with the strangers in India, and was saved from the troubles by the unseen power she recalled the words 'luck' and 'unlucky'. She now raised question to her western mind what made her avert those accidents-the suicidal attempt, falling of streaming dal on her, falling from the bike just before a moving car. When everybody in the pilgrimage party believed Mrs. Das was 'unlucky', Leela earlier did not believe that. But, at last, she believed that when she said, "All of them are right. You are cursed. Go away. Leave me alone"

(Divakaruni. 85). Consequently, Leela was caught in the cultural in-betweenness. She felt disoriented and identity crisis. She saw a blank oval reflection in the dusty window of the bus on her return journey from Amarnath to Calcutta and could not recognise the features of the reflection which she thought "they belong to someone she has never met" (Divakaruni. 88).

Like most diaspora writings, *The Love of a Good Man* deals with tragedy, unhappiness, nostalgia. The alien land like the mirage in the desert seductively allures the immigrant persons, which leads the general current of the events to unhappy endings. Monisha's father got bored with the monotonous distressing life in a house built by his grandfather. He wanted a break from it. He left his cancer-afflicted wife and little daughter, Monisha, back home for a more enchanting new life in America. Nostalgia plays a great part in shaping immigrant writings. Every event, incident, thing or activity of the alien land reminds the immigrant characters of the past memories of their homeland. When Monisha broke glass to douse her anger against her immigrant husband Dilip, she plunged into her past memory:

"My mother had been meticulous in her housekeeping. All the glasses in our house shone, even the ones we never used...When I watched her turning a glass around in her elegant, capable hands, I knew she would keep it safe, protected forever from falling" (Divakaruni. 99).

When Dilip and his little son Bijay played crocodile in the lawn, Monisha's mind went down the memory lane of the past event of her father's carrying her on his shoulder.

The Blooming Season for Cacti is tinged with the distressing hues of the alien life-a life of tension, albatrossed alienation, uncertainties, bitter hardships and aching solitariness. Mira's brother wrote her to go to America as India was not safe to an unmarried girl like her. She also learned about the beauty and riches of California. Mira went there to stay with her brother's family. But when she went there her life of uncertainties and hardship began. She reveals her disillusioned view about the alien life in America: "It was my own fault, my desperate

mythologizing of America" (Divakaruni. 170). When she was about to leave her brother's house for a mediocre job in a restaurant, her brother cautioned her, "How dangerous it was a girl travelling America" (Divakaruni. 175). When Malik, the owner of the restaurant, dismissed her from the job and ordered her to vacate his flat which she co-shared with Radhika, Malik's wife, she fell into utter void situation-jobless, shelterless, companionless and even moneyless. She resigned her life on her destiny. The immigrant had to engage into very ordinary jobs for their livelihood in the alien life. Mira's brother undertook a "second-rate career" and Arpan was "the owner of his own company, something to do with bathroom cleaners" (divakaruni. 182). The owner of the restaurant where Mira went to find a job told her matter-of-factly, "You're too educated, too smart, I can see it in your face..." (Divakaruni. 174).

Radhika, the second wife of Malik, suffered from the pangs of aloneness in the alien life. When she came to know that Malik had another wife, she tried to kill herself. She found a life-giving drop of water in her desert life in Mira when she came to co-share her flat. She loved Mira and cautioned her not to fall in the illusionary life in the alien land. When Mira left her she went for her second suicidal attempt leaving for Meera a note:

In the desert of my heart,
You, cactus flower,
Blooming without thorn. (Divakaruni. 205)

Diaspora literature evokes haunting nostalgia for fetishized homeland. When Mira smelt the cumin and coriander roasted air in the Malik's restaurant, she thought that they must be frying fat and crisp samosa like her mother. She recalled her mother's sayings "stuff carefully, Mira. Wet the dough ends and pinch the tips together so no air bubbles remain" (Divakaruni. 171). Moreover, Radhika's suicidal attempt reminded her of the tragic fate of the Bombay women at the time of riots.

The Unknown Errors of Our Lives confirms that the uncertain danger is strewn all across the alien land. When Ruchira saw first Biren in a smoke-fogged cafe he seemed to her foreign and dangerous. Ruchira heard a knocking on the door in the middle of an afternoon when her husband Biren

was out in the office. Before opening the door a thought struck to her "she really should be more careful and keep the chain on while she checks who's outside, though this person doesn't look particularly dangerous" (Divakaruni. 226). The immigrants spurn the traditional Indian values for the liberal western ones which are mostly unintelligible to them and become the reasons of their distress. But when they face trouble in leading their lives according to the western values, they revert nostalgically to the tradition ones. Ruchira rejected the idea to marry any traditional minded bride. So she married a westernised bride, Biren. But when she came to know Biren was already a father of an illegitimate unborn child in the womb of Arlene, she was chilled and looked back to the traditional values. Inside her brain she heard her grandmother telling her: "Why do you ask me? Can you live your life the way I lived mine"? (Divakauni. 231)

In *The Names of Stars in Bengali*, the memory of the past plays pivotal. It deals with loss, nostalgia, cross-culturalism, cultural difference and a swing between love and hate. The narrator's mother, called Khukhu, an immigrant character, after many years returns to her native place Bengal from America with her two children aged four and five. Here she all the time loses herself into the sweet-sour memory of her past life. She takes her children and the family servant boy to the pond to give them bath. When the servant boy splashes water flapping his elbows like wings, she plunges into past memory of her swimming in the pond. As the narrator says:

"This time the memory comes as a sensation on her skin. She is as old as the servant boy-twelve, perhaps-swimming across the pond in her frock and knickers. She has tucked up the skirt so she can swim better. It sloshes pouching against her stomach, makes her feel ancient and marsupial...She will never tire". (Divakaruni. 245)

Though she is a good swimmer she had to take the servant boy to watch the boys. In America she swims in swimsuit. But in the village, she thinks, swimsuit is 'out of question'. While sitting on the

steps of the pond the bitter past memory flashes in her mind. She remembers her fishing with the home-made fishing rode. But she cannot recall what happened then. This fills her with "an absurd sense of loss" (Divakaruni. 242). She also remembers some beeri-smoking boys' ugly comments and kissing sounds, while she was returning from the pond. She had to run back home wrapping her with the large towel around her frock and knickered body. Her mother permanently stopped her swimming. This dismal socio-cultural situation forced her to seek successfully the theorem of escape in the books as the books lay 'the formula for the life she craved' (Divakaruni. 247).

The texture of alien life is activity-compact busy, fast and risky one. When the old visitors of the village eulogise the alien life, she cannot express to them complicity they are always ensnared in:

"...how at the end of the day she rushed home from the work (her computer with its psychedelic screen-saver at which she sometimes stared, zombie-eyed, for chunks of time), picking up the children on the way, stopping at the grocery if they were out of milk. How the boys insisted on hanging from the edge of the grocery cart in exactly the way the little red warning sign on it said not to. How they whined for Gummi Worms" (Divakaruni. 251).

She also cannot tell them the high insurance rate or the driver who cut her off during rush hour, or honked and yelled, "Fucking Dothead go home" (Divakaruni. 253). She likes the visitors speak about the old times, time beyond her remembering. She likes the old tales of the benevolent zaminder's serving khuchiri to the starving peasants in the drought-time to pass on to her children. She regrets the America leaches away her sweet past life.

The first generation immigrant always is caught in the cultural mesh of the alien Land. Khukhu managed to persuade her mother to visit her. But from the very first, as Khukhu says, "It was a mistake" (Divakaruni. 259). Because they engaged in altercation about silly things like how to cook cauliflower curry, what is better for hair, whether family should indulge in fun and so on. That tussles terminated in flouncing from the room by any of

them with teary eyes. Her mother felt culturally alone. Sometimes, her husband drove his mother-in-law to the homes of other Bengalis with old relatives. But that brought no effect on her. One day her mother pathetically told her "Khukhu, send me home" (Divakaruni. 259). Here comes the panged revelation of Khuku:

"...they had stepped into a time machine named immigration, and when they fell from its ferocious spinning, it was into the alien habits of a world they had imagined imperfectly. In this world, they could not inhabit a house together, in the old way. They could not be mother and daughter in that way again." (Divakaruni. 261)

Cross-cultural amalgamation is well discernible in the diaspora writings. When Khukhu came back home, she comfortably wore sari, applied sindur in the head discarding totally American dresses like t-shirt, jeans. She ate with her hands and wore a dozen silvery glass bangles on her hands. Her mother praised her for teaching the children their mother tongue, Bengali. Khukhu's husband, at his arrival to his wife's ancestral home, put on loose white pants and a white kurta of the great-uncle. He amazed the visitors munching the "lethal snacks like a born-Bengali" (Divakaruni. 262), pouring his steaming tea in his saucer to cool it, taking the cup of tea from grandmother and bowing before her.

Cultural non-adaptability, nostalgia, perilous alien, identity problem, disillusionment and irony are soul of all the diaspora writings. 'What I wanted is not this' rings through the fibre of the immigrant writings. Mrs. Das, Malabika, Leela, Manisha, Mira, Ruchira and Khukhu went to America to adopt the alluring alien life as it would be, as they initially thought, more meaningful: happy, peaceful, prosperous and danger-free which is much against the hard social-cultural realities of their mother country. But ironically that probable blissful life remains mirage to them. They cannot fully adapt to the cultural artifacts of the alien land because of the haunting past memory of the mother land and dangerous problems of the alien land. Every incident of their personal life in the alien land itches in them the flames of the past memory relating to their so-long cherished traditional cultural values of the

home. They feel nostalgia. When they return back to their original birth place to find a solace in their tension-afflicted lonely alien life, they become disgusted with the current socio-cultural realities. Their pendulum-like to and forth oscillation, physical or psychological, make them suffer lonely the unhappy uncertain life in the alien land. Vijay Mishra's observation about the condition is perfect. He says that, "All diasporas are unhappy, but every diaspora is unhappy [in his or her] own way" (Mishra. 1). They become divided souls on identity grounds. While retaining and preserving their home cultures, they adopt the alien cultures basically for leading their lives according to the westerners to get assimilated with them, finding jobs and averting the danger of racial discrimination. Their cultural liminality accentuates in them the poly-cultural identity and they become multi-cultured. Actually, they become translated. With regard to their translated conditions I refer to the definition of translation given by Rudiger and Gross as "a wider term covering the interaction of cultures, the transfer of cultural experience, the concern with cultural borders, the articulation of liminal experience, and intercultural understanding"(Rudiger and Gross. ix). It is clear from the above discussions that memory or nostalgic reminiscences provide an important link between the past and present. And Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, an immigrant writer, successfully and authentically has been able to verbalise the many-faceted recurrent strands of experiences of the poly-cultured confused diasporans, as she herself is the victims of alien life.

WORKS CITED

- Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. New York: Routledge, 1996. p. 180.
- Divakaruni, C. Banerjee. *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives*. New York: Random House, 2001.
- Jha, G. Shankar. *Dimension of Diasporic English Fiction*. New Delhi: GNOSIS, 2011.p. 141.
- Laxmi, Vijay. Of Immigrant Writings. In *Dislocations and Multiculturalism*, (ed) Jasbir Jain. New Delhi: Rawat Publication, 2007. p. 92-94.
- Lahiri, Jhumpa. "Trading Stories". The Yorker 7 June 2011.
(http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/06/13/110613_fa_fact_Lahiri)
- Mishra, Vijay. *Literature of the Diaspora: Theorising the Diasporic Imaginary*. New York: Routledge, 2006. p. 1.
- Rudiger, Petra and Konrad Gross(ed.). *Translation of cultures*. New York: Rodopi, 2009. p. ix.
- Salman, Rushdie. *Imaginary Homeland*. London: Vintage Books, 2010. p. 15.
- Safran, William. *Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return*. Diaspora, 1991. p. 24-25.
- <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/word/diaspora>.