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CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 Multiculturalism: Definition and Scope

Multiculturalism is broadly defined as the coexistence and mutual acknowledgement of diverse cultures within a shared societal framework. At its core, it promotes cultural recognition, celebrating diversity while fostering collective identity. Normatively, it emphasises shared values, beliefs, and practices within pluralistic societies. Sarah Joseph characterises multiculturalism as “a desired end-state, as a way of referring to a society in which different cultures are respected, and the reproduction of culturally defined groups is protected and social diversity celebrated” (159).

In contrast, Joseph Raz expands this conceptualisation, emphasising that multiculturalism “transcends what any principles of toleration can provide” by rejecting the notion of cultural inferiority and celebrating “different ways in which universal values are realized” (204–205). Such an understanding situates multiculturalism as embracing diversity rather than mere coexistence. Caleb Rosado provides an operational definition, portraying multiculturalism as a societal framework that actively promotes inclusivity and empowerment:

A system of beliefs and behaviours that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society. (2)

Georgiou adds that traditional binaries like centre-periphery and majority-minority are dissolving, while multiculturalism and transnationalism increasingly shape diaspora writing. He describes diasporic literature as a hallmark of postmodernism that promotes the politics of differences and engages with multicultural and ethnic societies, where the responsibilities of citizens extend beyond national boundaries (33).

Multiculturalism remains a widely debated concept, encompassing varying perspectives on its definition and implementation. Alex Thio, in *Sociology*, describes multiculturalism as the “coexistence of numerous cultures, a state in which all subcultures are equal to one another” (44). However, he observes that cultural beliefs and practices in a multicultural society can often conflict, especially for minority groups, which may face exclusion, marginalisation, silencing, or assimilation. T.H. Marshall, in *Citizenship and Social Class*, proposed the idea of citizenship as a framework to integrate diverse groups within a nation-state. Contradicting this view, Gurpreet Mahajan warns that such integration risks fostering cultural majoritarianism, emphasising instead the preservation of minority cultures as a primary goal of multiculturalism (64). Mahajan views multiculturalism as a “manifestation of the postmodernist reaction with the erosion of the hegemony of the dominant culture in advanced capitalist countries” (419). In such societies, Will Kymlicka asserts that minority groups often demand “recognition of their identity and accommodation of their cultural differences” (10).

1.1.1 Recognition in Multicultural Societies

Recognition is important in a multicultural society as it shows the equal value of different cultural identities, thus creating dignity and inclusion. Lack of

recognition, however, leaves minority groups vulnerable to marginalisation and cultural loss, which, in turn, weakens social cohesion. The acknowledgement of identities by society acts not only as a source of empowerment to the communities but also as a means of enriching the social fabric with new ideas through mutual respect.

The concept of recognition thus becomes central to multicultural discourse, reflecting the need for minority groups to achieve public validation of their cultural identities. Will Kymlicka emphasises the increasing demands of minority cultures for “greater public recognition of their distinctive identities, and greater freedom and opportunity to retain and develop their distinctive cultural practices” (228). Similarly, E.B. Taylor notes the profound impact of recognition—or the lack thereof—on identity formation, stating:

Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. (25–26)

Taylor advocates for a politics of difference, arguing that either one’s recognition of equal worth is genuine and based on value judgments, or it is just mere lip service (2–3). This perspective critiques the limitations of universalism, which often marginalises minority identities under the guise of equal treatment. Instead, multiculturalism seeks to acknowledge and celebrate cultural distinctions, fostering societal inclusivity and cohesion.

Charles Taylor advocates not only for the equality of cultures within a multicultural society but also for their recognition. He argues that “non-recognition or

misrecognition can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, reduced mode of being,” emphasizing that “due recognition is not just a courtesy, but a vital human need” (25).

1.1.2 Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Multiculturalism

Recognition in multicultural societies can hardly be comprehended unless its historical background is traced. The fight for cultural confirmation and equal honour erupted from the fateful course of history that consisted of colonialism, forced migration, and racial hierarchies which were the cause of no recognition being given to colonised and displaced peoples. Today, these historical processes have become the basis for the issuing of the recognition, with the communities that were subdued still on their way to achieving justice, visibility, and inclusion in multicultural frameworks.

Multiculturalism has much to do with the historical processes involved in colonisation and global migration. Colonisation signified the beginning of the epoch of European empires, united different groups of people in various regions with rich compositions of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Thus, the British Empire’s colonisation of India, Africa, and the Caribbean established the foundations from where the people of these lands came to visit or emigrate to the UK. This multilateral landscape would be a melting pot for countries like the United States, Brazil, and Caribbean nations through the impact of the transatlantic slave trade and the forced displacement of millions of Africans to the Americas, all with continued influence on contemporary debates about race, identity, and cultural diversity in these regions.

The post-World War II period was the turning point of the world’s migration patterns. It was the devastation from the war and the reconstruction that were being undertaken in Europe and North America that triggered far more historic growth in

immigration by former colonials and war-ravaged nations. This phase made the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom large destination countries for immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This, in turn, produced an extension of the cultural variety of those communities and eventually provided the basis for multicultural policies by the second half of the 20th century.

The post-World War II era is when people first recognised human rights and ensured that minority groups received protection. The awful experience that was formed during the Holocaust and mass dispositions within the whole war became a more fundamental basis for implementing policies to achieve improvements in aspects such as tolerance and inclusion to preserve cultural diversities. It was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948 by the United Nations, which first defined non-discrimination according to race, ethnicity, and religion-the cornerstone upon which multiculturalism policies will henceforth be grounded.

The movements of the civil rights of the 1960s and 1970s also defined the modern face of multiculturalism. As for the United States, it was Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and others like them who sparked a movement to fight for racial equality against systemic racism that relegated African Americans to the peripheries of society. Similarly, no other country differed from Europe, where immigrant and ethnic minorities' rights movements came forward. Countries like Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, needed policies that would assist in the integration of minority groups while at the same time giving these groups the possibility of preserving their cultural identities. Canada then became the path setter in developing multicultural policy when 1971 Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau publicly announced the adoption of official multiculturalism. Subsequently, this policy was consolidated by

the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 1988, which was majorly used to implement and enshrine cultural diversity, social integration, and protection of minority rights.

Individualistic rights, freedom, and equality form the most significant philosophical foundation for multiculturalism, which liberalism provides because it insists, at least classically, that each person is free to pursue his conception of the good life, provided he harms no one. This emphasis on autonomy in the individual raises questions about how liberalism accommodates group rights and cultural diversity.

One of the central tensions within liberal theory is between individual and group rights. In this regard, liberal theorists like John Rawls contend that the state must maintain a precise distance regarding issues of culture and religion so that the principle of equality among everyone is upheld rather than being treated in respect of his or her culture. Critics contend that “neutrality” does nothing but favour the majority culture and condemn minority groups to discrimination.

Another influential work is by Will Kymlicka in *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), who sought to reconcile liberalism with recognising group rights. Kymlicka proposed that this is possible by giving group-differentiated rights to minority cultures to accommodate cultural diversity. According to Kymlicka, such group rights are essential, as they enable groups to place their cultural practices and traditions on an equal footing, allowing minority groups to compete alongside dominant members of the majority culture.

Where liberalism stresses autonomy, communitarianism focuses on the community and its role in cultural traditions regarding shaping the individual's

identity. Notable communitarian theorists are Alasdair Macintyre and Charles Taylor, who disapprove of liberalism as it considers the ideology of individualism to be a theory of human beings as essentially social beings, and their identities are shaped by the cultural communities to which they belong.

One of the most significant contributions to the philosophy of multiculturalism is Charles Taylor's essay *The Politics of Recognition* (1994), in which Taylor articulates that people and groups must be recognised in their specific identities. Taylor does not believe that recognising differences between cultures only matters as a question of showing respect for differences. However, it is rather vital to the growth of a healthful and democratic society. He argues that liberal societies must go beyond the idea of equality as something too simplistic and instead begin to develop frameworks suggesting respect for these differing cultural groups.

Taylor's arguments were inspiring and influential enough to design policies that respond to the needs and demands of minorities. His work also brought critical questions on the limits of cultural recognition and its potential conflict with the right of individual freedoms.

Cosmopolitanism was an even more profound philosophical ideology because it implicated the connectedness of all human beings and required global justice. This is supported by thinkers such as Kwame Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum in the argument that multiculturalism must be more than simple tolerance for diversity within nation-states; ethical obligations must be made to people of other parts of the world.

Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006) argues cosmopolitan multiculturalism beyond the nation. Appiah emphasises that we need to inculcate a shared sensibility of humanhood that considers and honours cultures but does not abolish or pay no heed to our universal interconnectivity. He questions the fixity and immutability of cultural identities; instead, he thinks that it is possible to condition people into multiple cultural identities, and societies can allow them to be so.

Marthe Nussbaum's book *Cultivating Humanity* (1997) also follows the approach of cosmopolitan multicultural education. Nussbaum argues that education must cultivate global citizenship by bringing students into contact with the cultures and experiences of other civilizations. Nussbaum says that education is more than acquiring knowledge; it is about developing the moral and intellectual capacities required to live effectively in a diverse and increasingly interconnected community.

By the mid-20th century, the entire Asian, African, and Caribbean world started experiencing decolonisation. Colonies became newly independent states, and people from such regions migrated en masse towards Europe, North America, and Australia. This migration significantly changed the demographic structure of the affected societies, creating new problems and opportunities in multicultural policies.

The civil rights movements within the U.S. and in Europe did their part in bringing the epitaph toward multiculturalism. A set of acts and laws were enacted in the United States during 1964 like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. These measures were aimed at eradicating racial segregation and discrimination. Every European country sought a way to incorporate the immigrants from the colonies into general society without losing unity.

As the nation evolved into communities of differences, they began to devise multicultural policies on administering different cultural groups in society. These policies became perceived as acceptable and necessary to safeguard the rights of minorities. This further fuelled debates on how far cultural recognition should go and the conflict between laws created by the nation and practices based on culture.

1.1.3 Multiculturalism in Nepal: A Brief Overview

Placed on the Himalayan mountain range, Nepal is the country that borders with China and India, which makes it a strategic and cultural nexus in South Asia. This geographical location has allowed Nepal to draw cultural influences from neighbouring regions for centuries, resulting in its multilingual, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic identity. Such cross-border interactions did not only determine the internal characteristics of Nepal, but they also gave rise to the vibrant diasporic cross-currents that have become the hallmark of Nepali communities which have been moving to different parts of the world for education and work.

Rajendra Prasad Pradhan in his article “Negotiating Multiculturalism in Nepal” discerns three modern periods in the history of Nepal, each epitomising unique dominant models of society shaped by transnational processes and legal frameworks. The first period (1769–1950) features a hierarchical, pluralistic Hindu society that acknowledges but devalues cultural differences to portray Nepal as a ‘genuine Hindu’ nation in contradistinction to its neighbour India, ruled first by Muslims and later by Christians. The second period (1961–1990) saw the emergence of a non-hierarchical, mono-cultural Hindu society that sought to erase cultural differences in the name of nation-building and modernisation, emphasising homogenisation. The third period began after the restoration of democracy in 1990,

evolving into a non-hierarchical, multicultural society influenced by democratic movements and an international turn toward multiculturalism and broader human rights definitions (1).

The restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990 marked a turning point for multiculturalism in Nepal. The 1990 Constitution granted equal rights to all citizens and prohibited discrimination based on religion, caste (*jat*)¹, ethnicity (*jati*)², or race (*varna*). It declared Nepal a multi-ethnic, multilingual Hindu constitutional monarchy. Despite these provisions, the dominance of the elite *Parbatiya*³ class persisted. As Pradhan notes, this was evident mainly due to the pressure of *Parbatiya* Hindus from across the political spectrum: first, by its definition of Nepal as a ‘Hindu kingdom’ and second, by its declaration of Nepali as the language of the nation (*rastrabhasa*)⁴ and official language. (16)

Discontent with these exclusions culminated in the People’s Movement post-1990, as the subjugated communities expressed dissatisfaction with the limited outcomes of democracy. The Panchayat-era ideology that institutionalised *Parbatiya* supremacy while projecting Nepali society as homogenous left many minority groups marginalised. Ethnic and caste distinctions gained political salience following the 1991 publication of caste and ethnic data. However, lower castes, ethnic groups (*janajatis*), religious minorities (notably Buddhists and Muslims), and people of

1. Nepali term denoting caste, often indicating hierarchical identity and social categorisation.

2. Ethnic group: used to refer to cultural communities based on shared language, tradition, and heritage.

3. High-caste hill Hindu groups in Nepal, typically the dominant socio-political group in historical narratives.

4. National language: in Nepal’s context, it refers to Nepali as the official and national language.

Indian origin (*madhesis*)⁵ perceived the national identity propagated in schools and government organisations as exclusionary (Bhandari 8).

This period also witnessed the politics of recognition gaining momentum as marginalised groups began promoting their mother tongues, particularly among the younger generation, and reclaiming their histories through research or revitalised traditions and customs. They pressured the state to implement policies that protected their cultural and linguistic identities and introduced affirmative action to ensure equitable access to education, government jobs, and economic resources (Pradhan 17).

The Maoist Party further championed the rights of ethnic communities and marginalised groups, advocating for the abolition of untouchability and the transformation of Nepal into a secular state. The monarchy was formally abolished on May 28, 2008, by the Nepali Constituent Assembly, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal was established. The preamble of the 2015 Constitution encapsulated the nation's multicultural ethos, recognising its "multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multicultural and diverse regional characteristics" and pledging to create an egalitarian society founded on proportional inclusivity, participation, economic equality, and social justice.

Nepal's transition from a Hindu State to a secular nation reflects its evolving identity as a multicultural society. The 2011 census revealed the country's rich diversity, with over 127 ethnic and caste groups. The largest ethnic group was the Chettri, followed by Brahmin-Hill, Magar, Tharu, Tamang, Newar, Kami, Musalman,

5. A term for people living in the southern Terai region of Nepal.

Yadav, and Rai, showcasing Nepal's cultural heritage mosaic. This transformation highlights Nepal's journey toward embracing its pluralistic identity while addressing the challenges of equity and recognition in a diverse society.

1.2 Diaspora

Diaspora is an off-shoot of multiculturalism. It is the mirror that shows the changes and the continuous aspects of identity, belonging, and recognition, thus strengthening Nepal's position in the global multicultural scene. In South Asia, particularly in Nepal, the diaspora has been affected by both the past and recent movements of people.

The term "diaspora" originated with the Greeks, who used it to describe the relocation of the Jewish population from their homeland. Safran reflects on this origin, explaining that the term initially referred to the exile of the Jews from their native land to several parts of the globe. Over time, the term has expanded to encompass various ethnic and racial groups living in foreign lands. It refers to the "dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location of origin and relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, or countries" (Brazier and Mannur 1). Historically, diaspora emphasised communities displaced through migration, movement, or exile. In the modern context, diaspora has evolved into an inclusive term that reflects the wide scale scattering of populations across the globe, addressing not only displacement but also issues of identity, border complexities, and the cultural dimensions of diaspora that are increasingly prominent in contemporary discourse (Claire Alexander).

Globalisation, economic liberalisation, and the mass movement of people for diverse purposes have fostered cultural hybridity, reshaping the study of world

literature. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha observes that while the “transmission of national traditions was the major theme of world literature,” there has been a significant shift. He suggests that “transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees—these border and frontier conditions—may be the terrains of world literature” (12). Diasporic authors often navigate the duality of belonging to two nations. Their writing reflects themes such as the pursuit of identity, the tension between uprooting and re-establishing, and the struggle with insider-outsider dynamics, memory, and nostalgia. As Ponzanesi notes, diasporic writers articulate “newly changed, merged, differently focused perspectives on their adoptive cultures, and their position as writers with multiple roots in the history of several cultures” (21). However, the notion of “home” becomes ambiguous for diasporic populations. Silverstone explains that

[B]oth, [the domestic and the collective home] are threatened by the media extension of cultural boundaries: both laterally, as it were, through the globalization of symbolic space, and vertically through the extension of accessible culture into the forbidden and the threatening. In both cases, the home has to be defended against material breaches of symbolic security (442).

The traditional binary of centre and periphery, majority and minority, is dissolving, with multiculturalism and transnationalism emerging as central themes in diasporic literature. As a feature of postmodernism, diaspora writing promotes multicultural and ethnic societies, highlighting “the politics of differences... Diasporic writing draws our attention... to our era in which responsibilities of citizens go across national boundaries” (Georgiou 33). Globalisation and trans culturalism lead to parallel identities, which are sometimes discrete and overlapping. These

identities often hinge on “shared myths and memories, as well as upon a sense of belonging in an imagined community which has some continuity and relevance across time and space” (Georgiou). While the diaspora concept has been interpreted in various ways, its geographical and territorial elements remain significant. Steven Vertovec defines diaspora as a term used to

describe practically any population that is considered ‘deterritorialised’ or ‘transnational’—that is, which has originated in a land other than that in which it currently resides, and whose social, economic, and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or indeed, span the globe. (1)

The theory of diaspora remains open to interpretation. Vijay Mishra, quoting Derrida, underscores the intrinsic dilemma of diaspora:

Where then are we? Where do we find ourselves? With whom can we identify in order to affirm our own identity and to tell ourselves our own history? First of all, to whom do we recount it? Derrida offers a Socratic solution: One would have to construct oneself, one would have to be able to invent oneself without a model and without an assured addressee. (55)

Diasporic writers often operate within the “third space,” a term coined by Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*. This space intersecting at the homeland and host land, challenging conventional notions of “native” and “outsider.” Avtar Brah, in *Cartographies of Diaspora*, elaborates on this concept, asserting that the diaspora “decenters the subject position of the ‘native,’ ‘immigrant,’ ‘migrant,’ and the ‘in/outsider,’ in such a way that the diasporan is as much a native as the native now becomes a diasporan” (238).

Bhabha's *third space* challenges fixed identities, enabling hybrid subjectivities beyond homeland-host land binaries. Cohen extends this, showing how digital connections sustain diasporic identities beyond physical migration, emphasising diaspora as a fluid, evolving construct. Robin Cohen redefines diaspora in the context of globalisation and digital communication. He notes that technological advancements have transformed transnational connections, allowing diasporic communities to remain connected without physical migration. Cohen writes,

Nowadays, with the increased use of the term to describe many kinds of migrants from diverse ethnic backgrounds, a more relaxed definition [of diaspora] seems appropriate. Moreover, transnational bonds no longer have to be cemented by migration or exclusive territorial claims. In the age of cyberspace, a diaspora can, to some degree, be held together or re-created through the mind, cultural artefacts, and a shared imagination. (26)

Cohen's idea of diasporic connectivity beyond physical migration aligns with Sujaritha's shift in diaspora studies from discrimination to identity formation. Both emphasise evolving diasporic experiences, where identity is shaped through cultural memory, imagination, and engagement with multiple cultural histories. S. Sujaritha, in her article "Transformation of Diaspora Studies: From Discrimination to Identity Formation" (2014), highlights a shift in diaspora writing from themes of discrimination to those of identity formation. While she acknowledges that discrimination has not entirely disappeared, she argues it has diminished considerably. Sujaritha notes that diasporic literature now explores not just migration but also the complex processes of identity formation. Ponzanesi complements this perspective, observing that diasporic authors reflect "differently focused perspectives on their

adoptive cultures, and their position as writers with multiple roots in the history of several cultures” (21).

1.2.1 Nepali Diaspora

Nepal, a beautiful and developing country in Asia, has a rich history of old and new migration patterns. The historical diaspora primarily referred to the Newars, the inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley. Though labelled as a “trading diaspora,” the Newars include artisans, peasants, labourers, merchants, and shopkeepers. The modern Nepali diaspora, however, has evolved in three waves. The first wave involved migration to the East for work and land. The second wave saw individuals moving to Indian cities for employment, while the third wave involved migration to the Persian Gulf, South Asia, and beyond, particularly to North America, Europe, Japan, and Australia for work and education. In Nepal, short-term migration is known as *ghumphir*⁶, while long-term migration is called *basaisarai*.⁷

A significant portion of Nepal’s population migrates to foreign countries as part of an employment strategy initiated by the government. The Nepali government has listed 108 countries as destinations for foreign employment. The Ministry of Labour (1999) articulated this goal, stating that

Nepal decided to promote the employment of its nationals in the overseas countries with the assumptions that for ‘countries like Nepal, who have been suffering from the serious problem of unemployment and poverty, foreign employment could be an effective medium to avail the opportunity of employment for the benefit of its country and its people. (4)

6 A Nepali term for short-term travel or temporary movement, often for seasonal work or exploration.

7 A Nepali term meaning long-term migration or permanent relocation, often used in the context of rural-urban or foreign migration.

In his article “Changing Paradigms of Nepalese Migration and Emerging Diaspora”, Bhim Prasad Subedi explores the evolving patterns of Nepali migration and diaspora, beginning with historical trends shaped by the movement of caste and ethnic groups from the north and south, eastward migration aiding national unification, and the population shift to the Terai region after the malaria eradication program in the 1950s, alongside rural-to-urban migration. Over the past four decades, Subedi has identified significant internal migration from the hills and mountains to the plains. International migration historically centred on India, mainly due to Nepali recruitment in the British Indian Army and police forces but has increasingly shifted to West and East Asia owing to factors like affordability, education, and accessibility, spurred by the 1985 Foreign Employment Act, which promoted labour migration as a development strategy. Recent trends highlight growing labour migration to countries such as Korea, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, and Kuwait, with the Terai region leading in labour exports at 47.8%, followed by the hills at 46.2%, and the mountains at 6.0%. Women’s participation remains lower, with only 13.3% of international migrants being female, as reported in the 2011 census, reflecting the broader gender disparity in foreign employment opportunities.

Shakya’s research on Nepal’s socio-economic challenges is strengthened by Subedi’s work on the migration patterns of Nepali people. Specifically, the two authors explore the effects of remittances on the economic sector and discuss the feeling of separation from their own culture that arises from this migration. Both authors underline the diversity of the Nepali diaspora and its influence on the definition of self and progress of the nation. Shakya in his book *Unleashing the Vajra* evaluates the current socio-economic climate by addressing Nepal’s struggle with modernity while being tethered to traditional practices. The text identifies

“cartelpreneurs”⁸ as a critical issue in the private sector, where monopolistic behaviors hinder fair economic competition. Similarly, the development sector, led by “donorpreneurs,”⁹ is criticised for perpetuating dependency and inefficiency. Migration and the growth of a global Nepali diaspora are emphasised as dual forces of economic growth (via remittances) and cultural alienation, creating unique challenges in identity and assimilation.

In Shakya’s view, migration is both an economic opportunity and a cultural alienation which is supported by Müller-Böker who shows how the Nepali population abroad grapples with the notion of “home”. By focusing on the tension of being loyal to Nepal while at the same time pursuing new horizons abroad, both articles help shape diasporic culture in a very intricate manner. Müller-Böker, in her article “Hami Nepali? Belonging in Nepal and the Nepali Diaspora” explores the complex relationship between diaspora communities and their concept of “home”. She asserts that the feeling of “home” becomes more potent for those who envision returning to Nepal. However, the concept of home is less important for those looking to leave their homeland to seek a better life elsewhere. This developing history of migration and diaspora testifies to the versatility of the Nepali in response to economic, social, and political crises, as it also manifests a conflict between the continued sense of connection to the homeland and embracing opportunities elsewhere.

Muller-Boker has studied the Nepali diaspora and their sense of home, which is relevant to Bhattarai’s concept of collective memory because the two authors each raise the issue of whether nostalgic longing or adaptation is the stronger force. Each

8 “Cartelpreneurs” refers to entrepreneurs who form cartels to control markets and stifle competition, as discussed by Sujeev Shakya in *Unleashing the Vajra*.

9 “Donorpreneurs” denotes development actors who maintain a cycle of dependency on foreign aid without genuine progress.

longing for a return is found juxtaposed with another's artistic overlay in literature creating a symbolic homeland, which represents the preservation of the idea of cultural identity despite physical displacement. Govindra Raj Bhattarai discusses, in "Strategies Adopted by Transcultural Communities to Compensate the Loss of Collective Memory: A Case of Nepali Diasporas", how the loss of 'collective memory' equates with 'culture death'. It points out how diasporic Nepali literature makes up for the deficit and does so using such themes as nostalgia and the need for cultural preservation. Bhattarai refers to anthologies such as *Poems from Hongkong* (2006) and *Borderless Images* (2006) to demonstrate how diasporic poets create a mental homeland, turning host land landscapes and traditions into symbols of their native culture. For example, diasporic poets equate the Potomac River with Nepal's Bagmati or rename landmarks to evoke familiarity.

Bhattarai's reminiscence on diasporic literature being a way to keep the memories of the people they left behind is like Timalisina's explanation of the difference of migration experiences. Both argue that the evoking of the past and the creation of a new culture are crucial to the construction of diaspora identity, and besides that, Timalisina also underlines the importance of technology as a tool in the encoding of these bonds in the digital epoch. Ramji Timalisina in "Nepalese Diasporic Literature: Voicing the Silence from the Margin" debates the difficulties of defining diaspora and its literature. He argues that diaspora is distinct from transnational migration and cosmopolitanism. He believes that diaspora refers to permanent settlers in host lands, while transnational migrants have temporary relations with their homeland. Critics such as Abhi Subedi and Khagendra Prasad Luitel support Timalisina's view that diaspora must be distinguished from transnationalism. Timalisina criticise other scholars for blurring and confusing the two terms when,

though the transnational communities stay connected to the homeland, they are filled with identity problems, and nostalgia, and longing — all features associated with diaspora. He stresses that technology becomes a connecting link, defining the phenomenon as “a digital diaspora”.

The idea of “digital diaspora” held by Timalisina contradicts the viewpoint of Paudel who criticises the Nepali diaspora for less involvement in the nation-building process. While Timalisina emphasises how technology can prolong the connection among the immigrant community, Paudel ponders whether these relations are deep, and in that case, he requires the members’ more obligation to Nepal by being physically present instead of only contributing digitally or economically. Harihar Paudel, in “A Plead to Nepali Diaspora: An Urge for Homecoming”, strongly criticises the Nepali diaspora for having very little involvement in nation-building and this has low return rates. Paudel criticizes NRN for love towards profit and dual citizenship while urging the government to create conducive environments for them to return. He questions the patriotism of the diaspora but love and concern for Nepal often persist among those settled abroad.

1.3 Nepali Writing in English: An Emerging Literary Tradition

Nepali writing in English is very recent developing literary tradition, reflecting this tension between the local cultural identity and global literary practices. In the past, Nepal’s literature heritage mainly expressed itself through Nepali and other languages native to this region, such as Maithili and Newari. However, with globalisation and excellent communication with the international audience, it has been seen how many Nepali writers have picked up English to express their lives and stories. It allows Nepali writers to express themselves more broadly, with a strong

cultural ethos, while addressing the world's contemporary problems from their own perspective (Bhattarai).

In the study, the word Nepali-English is specifically hyphenated to illustrate the complex nature of language and identity. The hyphen as a cultural marker not only signifies the fusion of two cultures but also epitomises how English is absorbed into the Nepali social matrix. This act of using language shows the condition of the dual and diasporic nature of the texts where the writers accept both Nepali traditions and the global literary practices. This way of writing also aligns with the idea of bilingual creativity and resonates with ongoing academic discourse in South Asian literature.

Nepali writers generally take themes such as immigration, identity, political crisis, and problems of modernisation. International acclamation has also been received through authors like Samrat Upadhyay, whose works interweave Nepali society's storytelling with the larger socio-political realities. Similarly, writers like Manjushree Thapa have brought issues such as gender disparity, human rights, and environmental issues to the foreground, thus enlightening the reader about Nepal's complexities. The bi-lingual and cultural context in which these writers operate enables them to mediate and express the conflicting forces of tradition and modernity, thus creating an enriching, hybrid voice in literature (Subedi).

Nepali writing in English proliferates to mean greater global appreciation for Nepal's literary products. There has been increasing patronage towards young authors who write in English, and therefore, a robust literary culture that finds national and international audiences. Also, various anthologies and literary festivals that concentrate on South Asian literature often incorporate Nepali authors, so much so that they seem part of global literature. While all these cannot be discounted, in the

face of such challenges, Nepali writing in English flourishes into a dynamic, transformative force in contemporary literature (Adhikari).

Sajan Kumar Karn, in his article “This is How I Can Write: Towards Nepali English Literature”, examines the presence of Nepali English in Nepal’s literary landscape. He explores the process of nativisation in Nepali English literature, arguing that this emerging genre reflects the unique cultural identity of Nepal within the global framework of World Englishes. To support his arguments, Karn analyses the works of prominent writers like Samrat Upadhyay and Manjushree Thapa to show how these authors nativise their texts.

Selected Texts for Study

The selected authors and their works weave a rich tapestry of Nepali as well as of diasporic literature; identity, displacement, transformation in society and resilience together form its embroidery.

Manjushree Thapa, one of the chosen diasporic authors, goes deep into conflicts of tradition versus modernity, into the changed nature of being an immigrant in *Tilled Earth*, published in 2007; how personal life merges with development around the globe, as indicated by *Seasons of Flight* (2010); and more recent work, *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, published in 2016. The *Royal Ghosts* (2006) by Samrat Upadhyay reflects on loss and betrayal in its stories. *Buddha’s Orphans* (2010) and *Mad Country* (2017) show problems between generations and issues in politics. Shradha Ghale’s *The Wayward Daughter* (2018), reveals close truths about caste, personal growth, and finding oneself. Greta Rana’s *Hostage* (2018) is set during the political troubles in Nepal where moving away is difficult. *Karnali Blues*, by Buddhisagar Chapagain,

published in 2012 and translated by Michael Hutt in 2021 depicts the vibrancy of rural life and family ties in Nepal. This set of writers and their stories reveal deep insights into Nepali society and changing stories.

Manjushree Thapa

Manjushree Thapa is a Nepali writer. Born and brought up in Nepal, Manjushree now lives in the United States. She graduated from the University of Washington, Seattle. *Mustang Bhot in Fragments* was Manjushree's first published book in 1992. She wrote *The Tutor of History* in 2001 and *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* in 2005. She left the country for Canada after significant stirring. She then published *Tilled Earth* in 2007, *A Boy from Siklis* in 2009, *Seasons of Flight* in 2010. Her other published works include *The Lives We Have Lost: Essays and Opinions on Nepal* (2011) and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016).

Tilled Earth is a collection of short stories that drifts into what life is in Nepal. It focuses on displacement, resilience, and societal transformation, unveiling the struggles and desires of the people amidst these changes. It is through such storytelling that the tension between tradition and modernity is captured. The narrative is poignant regarding reflecting identity and belonging. *Seasons of Flight* describes the life of a Nepali immigrant after she came to the United States by being picked up from the Diversity Visa, DV lottery¹⁰. In the novel, this new environment creates a transformation over time in the way Prema's life, behavior, and viewpoints undergo a change in life. This is a journey that crosses the geographical distance from her homeland to the host country, but more significantly, the journey crosses the

¹⁰ Refers to the U.S. Diversity Visa Lottery Program, which offers immigration opportunities to people from countries with low immigration rates to the U.S., including Nepal.

profound mental and cultural changes accompanying such a move. The novel *All of Us in Our Own Lives* weaves together the private lives of characters with the issues of global development, with identity, purpose, and interconnectedness coming to light. Both these works masterly manage to balance the tension between the personal and the political to reveal very deep insights into human nature against change.

Samrat Upadhyay

Samrat Upadhyay is Nepali author born in 1963 in Kathmandu, Nepal. In 1984, he moved to the United States and now works as an English professor at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea. His first book, the short story collection *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2001), was translated into French and Greek. His second novel, *Buddha's Orphans* (2010), has been translated into German and Czech and was long listed for the DSC prize in India. His other publications include *Mad Country* (2016), *Secret Places* and *The City Son*.

The Royal Ghosts explores loss, betrayal, and unrequited desire, mingling the spirit with the deep personal in an incredibly textured and haunting narrative. *Buddha's Orphans* is the story of Raja and his generational struggle against the political and social storms brewing since the 1960s in Nepal. *Mad Country* is an intense combination of searing satires on the corruption of politicians, social inequality, and individual quests to get on the road again in the face of broken reality.

Shradha Ghale

Shradha Ghale is a contemporary Nepali writer. She resides in Kathmandu, Nepal. Many of her writings have appeared in magazines: *The Kathmandu Post*, *The Record*, *Nepali Times*, and online Indian magazine *The Wire*. Shradha has been

working with numerous national and international organisations engaged in activities for social inclusion and issues of natural resources and disaster-related issues. She wrote *The Wayward Daughter*, published by Speaking Tiger in 2018. *The Wayward Daughter* describes the journey of a young woman, Sumnima, looking for love, self-discovery, and her place in life. It tells her to fight for unfulfilled dreams to go abroad as her friends do and her unrequited efforts to please her boyfriend Sagar, who returned from the US. The story also voices Nepal's rich cultural diversity, largely missed in broader discussions about South Asian caste dynamics.

Greta Rana

Greta Rana is an author and poet born in 1943 in Yorkshire, U. K. She attended the local Grammar school and then graduated from the Victoria University of Manchester. In 1971, she arrived in Nepal and started her poetic journey. Her poetry collection includes *Mara*, *The Stone God Thunders*, *Middle Load*, *Beneath the Jacaranda*, *Hunger is Home*, *Nothing Personal*, and *So Why Not Sleep*. She has also published many novels, of which *Nothing Greener*, *Distant Hills*, *Right As It Is*, *Guests in This Country*, *Place Beneath The Pipal Tree* *Hidden Women*, *Hostage*, and *Ghosts in the Bamboo* is worth mentioning. She was one of the founders of the PEN Centre in Nepal in 1987. In 1991, She was a joint winner of the Arnsberger Internationale Kurzprosa. The novel *Hostage* tells the story of Hari Prasad, one among thousands who migrate to the Gulf in pursuit of a better life. After five years of hard labour, he returns to a homeland transformed by the turbulence of the Maoist insurgency. Undeterred, he migrates again, unaware of the uncertain fate ahead.

Buddhisagar Chapagain

Buddhisagar Chapagain is a prominent Nepali author and poet who is celebrated for his significant contributions to contemporary Nepali literature. He is known for his storytelling, evocating the emotions of love, loss, and societal change. His works often portray the human condition amidst the intricacies of Nepali culture and landscapes. Buddhisagar is considered one of the most significant transformative figures in modern Nepali writing. Buddhisagar's *Karnali Blues*, translated by Michael Hutt (2021), is the author's first novel. The story is set in the distant Karnali region of Nepal. *Karnali Blues* is a touching coming-of-age story that focuses on the Brisha's reflection regarding his childhood and relationship with his father, thus underlining the struggles and resilience of life in rural areas. Here, personal narratives merge with larger social realities: a living image of cultural and geographical diversity in Nepal. A modern Nepali classic celebrated for its depth and authenticity; *Karnali Blues* is the epitome of modern Nepali literature.

1.4 Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach to thematic and textual analysis of selected texts. For the most part, it bases its research on the interpretive method to explore how these works conceptualise the issues of multiculturalism, diaspora, and cultural identity. Discussions of the narratives, characters, and settings aims to unravel the nuances of identity negotiation, cultural displacement, and hybridity.

The thematic analysis targets the recurrence of some motifs such as nostalgia, assimilation, and preservation of identity; in a different approach, the narrative analysis tracks how authors shape the character's journeys to reflect broader socio-political dynamics.

1.4.1 The Rationale of the Study

This research bases its importance on the rising diaspora and multiculturalism influence on individual and collective identities in the contemporary societies of the globe. As far as the development of a multicultural heritage with the rise in Nepal's diaspora is concerned, this context makes it of great importance to realise how such phenomena are changing the process of identity negotiation, cultural maintenance, and assimilation into new settings. Nepali English diasporic writing, with such frequent oscillations between the poles of home and away, constitutes an excellent medium for study. The selected texts are rich in depicting Nepali cultural dynamics and diasporic experiences and offer a unique lens through which to view these issues.

It fills an existing lacuna in the extant work by focusing on Nepali English literature, an emerging and under-explored domain within South Asian literary studies. Analysis helps identify the nature of Nepali authors' engagement with the international discourses around multiculturalism and identity that blur the centre-periphery and homeland-host land binarities. This sense of identity is relevant to explore today from the perspective of multiculturalism and diaspora amidst more than ever migration and cultural hybridity in contexts.

Finally, these study findings enrich our understanding of literature's role as a negotiating space for identity and belonging within multicultural contexts. In so far as Nepali diasporic narratives are concerned, the research opens the scope of academic discourse on multiculturalism while at the same time marking the importance of Nepali voices within global literature.

1.4.2 Aims and Objectives

Aims

To explore the interplay of multiculturalism, cultural identity, and displacement in contemporary Nepali English literature, negotiating identity and belonging in a multifaceted socio-cultural landscape.

Research Statement

This research questions how multiculturalism and diaspora shape cultural identity, displacement, and the negotiation of belonging within contemporary Nepali English literature. Through the discussion of selected texts, the thesis aims to understand how works critique or embrace multicultural ideals and explore the redefinition of Nepali identity within transnational contexts.

Research Objectives

1. To critically examine the interaction between cultural identity and multicultural settings as depicted in selected works by Nepali authors writing in English.
2. To assess the challenges and dynamics of cultural displacement and assimilation as depicted in the novels under study.
3. To analyse the role of cultural preservation and transformation in reimagining Nepali identity in diasporic literature.
4. To explore how Nepali English diasporic texts contribute to understanding multiculturalism and global identity.

1.4.3 Research Problems

Even with the growth in the literary works of the Nepali English diaspora, a critique is still missing that deals with the question of how literary texts juxtapose different cultural identities in a multicultural context. As themes such as displacement and assimilation mark the narrative core-milestones of an immigrant, the degree of transformation of Nepali cultural identity in selected works is still a less explored terrain. This study is about to fill these voids up by studying selected Nepali English literary texts.

1.4.4 Research Gap

Though the scholarly attention to South Asian diasporic literature has been extensive, the emphasis is mainly on Indian, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan authors up until now. In contrast, the Nepali-English diasporic literature has not been given the same level of critical recognition despite its engagement with the issues of identity, migration, cultural hybridity, and the politics of belonging. Present studies for the most part completely overlook the ways in which Nepali-English authors deal with multiculturalism and the diasporic identity paradigm in their own distinctive way.

The cultural differences of the various ethnic, caste, and regional people of Nepal are often simplified in the general diasporic interpretations, so they fail to give a real picture of the complicated internal diversity of Nepal. The study shows the multicultural realities of Nepal's diaspora, and how Nepali-English texts explore and negotiate multicultural tensions and diasporic realities from Nepal. In this way, scholars in South Asian literary studies as well as those who study other multicultural topics will benefit. This research identifies gap in the literature by focusing on how selected Nepali-English texts articulate multicultural tensions and diasporic realities

from a perspective of Nepali characters, thus contributing to both South Asian literary scholarship and global multicultural discourse.

1.4.5 Research Questions

This study aims to explore the following research questions:

1. How do the novelists demonstrate the cultural identity of Nepali diasporic citizens in their writings?
2. How do the novelists depict the nuances of evolving multicultural perspectives with changing political culture in Nepal?
3. How does Nepali-English diasporic literature negotiate between cultural preservation and assimilation vis-à-vis multiculturalism?
4. What roles do memory and nostalgia play in shaping diasporic identities?
5. How does the nativisation of English in Nepali-English literature reflect the cultural identity and social dynamics of Nepal?
6. What linguistic techniques are used in Nepali-English literature to convey local themes and contexts?
7. How do multicultural policies in Nepal address identity, inclusion, and integration in diverse societies?
8. How do Nepali-English diasporic literary texts reflect and critique multicultural experiences?

1.5 Chapter Outline

Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter provides an overview of the study, introducing the key themes of culture, multiculturalism, and diaspora as they relate to Nepali English literature. It examines the dynamic nature of culture, emphasising its role in shaping societal identity and values, as scholars such as Charles Taylor and Homi Bhabha have theorised. The chapter also contextualises Nepal's transition from a hierarchical society to a multicultural nation, highlighting the socio-political changes that influenced this evolution. Additionally, it defines diaspora and explores its intersections with multiculturalism, setting the theoretical foundation for analysing the selected texts. The research questions, objectives, and methodology are outlined alongside a detailed description of the subsequent chapters, ensuring a coherent structure for the study.

Chapter II: Cultural Identity in a Multicultural Society

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the conceptual theories regarding cultural identity; it will explore how people place themselves within multicultural milieus. The basis will be concepts from Charles Taylor's "Politics of Recognition" and Homi Bhabha's "Third Space". It investigates how some of the Nepali diasporic texts have been able to narrate how the characters have encountered and negotiated their identities. It reveals the tension of preserving versus adapting cultures while people work out belonging, representation, and self-realisation issues in heterogeneous societies.

Chapter III: Cultural Displacement and Assimilation

This chapter is basically on the aspects of displacement and assimilation related to Nepali diasporic literature. It shows how departure from the homeland and their native culture causes disarrangements to cultural roots, where it introduces nostalgic elements, estrangement, and cultural hybridisation. The selected texts will provide discussions on several displacements, assimilations, and approaches to character-identity negotiation through the host country.

Chapter IV: Nativisation of Nepali Identity

This chapter explores the diasporic contexts in reimagining the Nepali identity. The chapter focuses on nativisation and other processes of cultural preservation through the characters and stories against the backdrops of old Nepal customs, languages, and values maintained or transformed in their new cultural environs. It further describes how selected writers reflect an aspect of the resiliency of Nepaliness, with mutual exchange and interaction that can be had with global forces in a creative redefinition of identity in the foreign setting.

Chapter V: Whither Multiculturalism

This chapter explores the changing nature of multiculturalism, its key theories, and its representation in Nepali English diasporic literature. The chapter examines Multiculturalism's historical evolution and modern concepts like interculturalism and hybrid identities. The selected texts depict struggles with identity, assimilation, and cultural hybridity. The discussion also connects literature to socio-political issues like right-wing nationalism and immigration policies, highlighting concepts such as post-multiculturalism and super-diversity. The chapter argues that while multiculturalism

offers a framework for inclusion, its success depends on structural reforms that address inequalities and encourage meaningful cultural exchange.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The last chapter synthesises the research findings, commenting on the intersections of multiculturalism and diaspora through Nepali English literature. It affirms the cultural negotiation, displacement, and redefinition of diasporic texts. This chapter is rich in the light it casts on the contribution of authors from Nepal as part of diasporic authorship in more general discourses regarding identity, hybridity, and belonging. The overall implication is drawn from articulating these narratives toward making sense of multiculturalism within a globalising process, further pushing avenues to future research into Nepali literature and beyond.

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CHAPTER II

Cultural Identity in Multicultural Society

2.1 Cultural Identity in Multicultural Society

Cultural identity refers to an individual or group's sense of belonging and attachment to a particular culture or community. It involves shared values, beliefs, customs, traditions, language, and practices that give a culture distinct feature. This concept depends on ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, socioeconomic status, and gender. According to Stuart Hall, culture is "a collective one true self, hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed selves which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (234).

Language is more important in cultural identification since it communicates and shares cultural nuances, expressions, and historical narratives. Cultures and traditions are all reflected in rituals, ceremonies, festivals, and everyday practices. Religious convictions and practices influence an individual's and community's cultural identity, including ways of life, values, and moral principles. In addition, ethnicity and race often associate cultural identity with one's heritage, common lineage, historical background, and physical attributes that foster cultural affiliation.

Geography imparts cultural identity in terms of its influence over the progression of cultural attributes. The climate, geography, and local history give a fillip to cultural communities about developing unique attributes. Their historical experiences involving triumph, struggle, and other interactions also significantly shape the cultural identity. The intergenerational transmission of historical narratives is pivotal to this process. Furthermore, through mediums like literature, music, dance,

and visual arts, arts and culture safeguard and convey cultural values, contributing to the collective identity of a community.

Values and beliefs underpin societal norms, ethical standards, and expectations, deeply interwoven into the fabric of cultural identity. Despite its grounding in shared characteristics, cultural identity is inherently fluid and capable of evolving due to globalisation, migration, intercultural exposure, and personal experiences. Individuals may identify with multiple cultures, creating a multifaceted and dynamic sense of identity.

Many theorists have enriched the understanding of cultural identity. Karjalainen posits that cultural identity is “an identity of metamorphosis that continually adapts to new situations” (252), emphasising its adaptive and constructed nature within intercultural contexts. In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldua explores cultural hybridity and the creation of novel identities within borderlands where diverse cultural elements intersect. Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of “hybridity” and his theory of the third space, particularly in *The Location of Culture*, offers insights into the negotiation and formation of cultural identities in dynamic, intermediary realms. Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, examines how the West constructed the “Orient” as the ultimate “Other,” profoundly influencing Western identity in opposition to Eastern civilisations. Clarke asserts in *Culture and Identity* that cultural identity is fluid and contingent on historical and cultural circumstances (527).

The perspectives offered by these scholars highlight cultural identity’s intricate and evolving nature, shaped by historical, social, and political contexts. It

involves the coexistence and interaction of various cultural groups; cultural identity in multiracial societies is notably multifaceted and dynamic.

Multicultural societies are said to converge different cultural elements, encompassing a vast range of ethnicities, languages, religions, and traditions. Individuals in multicultural settings usually find themselves relating to various cultural identities simultaneously by trying to combine both their heritage and the general environmental culture. Identity formation processes in multicultural contexts are sometimes complex since individuals merge influences to make hybrid or bicultural identities. This makes the third culture especially relevant, reflecting a collective cultural space between people from different heritages.

Intercultural communication plays a crucial part in creating harmonious associations in these societies. Awareness of the differences in styles or forms of communication, expressions, and linguistic usage can create understanding and appreciation towards the different cultural groups of people. Multiculturalistic settings also provide scope for cultural exchange, as knowledge of different customs, cuisines, art forms, etc., enriches the thinking and expands the individual's cultural identity. Such encounters are a part of that dynamic interplay of cross-cultural influences within such society.

Multicultural societies are at a time of challenge triggered by cultural clashes, miscommunications, and conflicts. Many values, norms, and perspectives create debates surrounding the concepts of assimilation, integration, and retention. Policies involving education in institutions, jobs, and management impact people's experiences in a plural setting. Implementation of inclusive policies towards diversity leads towards fairness and mutual coexistence.

Artistic expression and community development will be highlighted in multicultural settings as cultural events form the basis of the diversities between different cultures. Since such events promote cross-cultural understanding and enhance social bonding, people in these settings become hyphenated citizens, either Asian American or Afro-European, to signify their affinity with cultural roots and convey a sense of belonging to a more significant identity. This again reinforces the idea of cultural blending.

The idea of tension represents the essence of multicultural societies, where preserving uniqueness in cultural identity while blending into the larger community is quite challenging. The idea of social cohesion goes hand in hand with accepting diversity and appreciation for shared values that bind individuals across cultures. In addition, inclusion and solidarity among individuals form the bedrock for peaceful coexistence.

Multiculturalism emphasises cultural community ties as an integral part of personal identification. It assumes that such connections are central to self-definition, intertwined with language, traditions, shared memories, and cultural frameworks. Furthermore, multiculturalism emphasises the differences and identities and the highly salient systems of meaning that give content to the differences. It puts all cultural practices, linguistic conventions, and other religious traditions found crucial to the identity of a specific community outside liberal critique.

The emergence of multiculturalism in Nepal after transitioning from the monarchical system to democracy beginning in 1951 and significantly evolving after the 1990 People's Movement, is important development. This change has shaped how cultural identity could be projected through the pages of literature. Exploring cultural

identity through characters crafted by selected writers offers a lens to examine how individuals navigate the complexities of multicultural societies in Nepal and abroad.

The study will examine the following research questions:

1. How do the novelists demonstrate the cultural identity of Nepali diasporic citizens in their writings?
2. How do the novelists depict the nuances of evolving multicultural perspectives with changing political culture in Nepal?

2.2 Tracing Cultural Identity in Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth*, *Seasons of Flights* and *All of Us in Our Own Lives*

Tilled Earth

Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth* (2007) intricately explores Nepal's social and cultural landscapes, capturing the nuances of rural and urban life. Through vivid storytelling, Thapa delves into themes of tradition, modernity, family dynamics, gender roles, politics, and cross-cultural exchanges, offering a profound exploration of Nepali identity. Her narratives resonate with the tension between historical legacy and societal transformation, giving voice to marginalised individuals and questioning dominant ideologies.

Homi K. Bhabha's concept of "cultural hybridity" provides a valuable theoretical framework for understanding these texts. As Bhabha observes: "It is the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'" (38). This idea of the "in-between space" or Third Space resonates with the tensions and transformations depicted in

Thapa's stories, where characters grapple with conflicting cultural identities, social hierarchies, and global influences.

By examining narratives of urbanisation, gender inequality, political transformation, and cross-cultural exchanges, Thapa reveals Nepal's dynamic and often ambivalent nature of cultural identity. Through the lens of hybridity theory, the analysis situates these struggles within the broader context of globalisation and modernity.

In "Heera Maharjan Loses His Way," Thapa explores the disorientation caused by urbanisation and material progress. Heera, a woodcutter, returns to his hometown to observe a death anniversary of his father but struggles to recognise his surroundings: "All the old rice fields had been overlaid with construction," he laments, and even the flowers in the garden appear unfamiliar: "He recognised the geraniums: Germany flowers" (Thapa 11). This story encapsulates the fear of cultural erasure amidst modernisations. In "Heera Maharjan Loses His Way," the urban transformation of Nepal reflects Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity. While hybridity traditionally addresses colonial contexts, it can also describe the cultural dislocation caused by globalisation and modernisation. Bhabha asserts, "Hybridity reverses the formal process of disavowal so that the violent dislocation of the act of colonisation becomes the conditionality of colonial discourse" (114). Urbanisation is the dislocating force in this case, creating a cultural ambivalence where modern constructions overwrite traditional Nepali spaces.

Gender inequality is explored in "Soar," which depicts the struggles of Nadia, a U.S. citizen forced to return to Nepal. Confronted by newspaper headlines about trafficking, domestic abuse, and witch accusations, Nadia reflects on societal

injustices: “Her thoughts get so wrapped up in the woes of this country that she forgets how easy it is to leave” (Thapa 14). The story depicts Nadia’s cultural alienation and the patriarchal issues that women face in Nepali society.

The story “Solitaire” revolves around the political changes in the country since Bahadur Kharka, being a government sector employee, observes his tedious work in terms of an always-changing political regime “when he thinks back to democracy having risen and fallen and risen once more throughout his working life” (Thapa 15). The re-entry into his routine at Solitaire becomes a metaphor for stagnation on one hand and, on the other, shows how societal changes have impacted lives. Thapa addresses cross-cultural interactions in “Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make,” where Sarah, an American, tries to connect the cultural gaps with Keshab, a Nepali man. Sarah learns Nepali phrases like “Chiplo” (slippery) but feels an inherent disconnect: “He was so familiar to her and yet, at the same time, so foreign” (Thapa 29). Their relationship gives an example of the challenges that cross-cultural bonds face. Sarah’s feelings are inspired by caste discrimination and poverty, as Keshab remembers, “The rules that barred Dalit¹¹ students from entering classrooms or sharing tap waters” (Thapa 29). In “Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make,” Sarah’s relationship with Keshab reflects the ambivalence of cultural encounters. Bhabha’s assertion that “Cultural difference is the process of signification through which statements of culture or on culture differentiate, discriminate, and authorise” (33) illustrates how their dynamic creates a hybrid space where traditional Nepali norms meet Western expectations.

11 A term used for communities in South Asia that have been historically marginalised and oppressed under the caste system; formerly referred to as “untouchables.”

In “The Secretary of the Student Union Makes a Career Choice”, Ramesh’s internal conflict highlights the influence of politics on personal aspirations. Torn between passion and career, Ramesh recalls abandoning a friend to join a political movement after hearing a news vendor shout, “The government had been overturned” (Thapa 44).

The story “Friends” delves into the cultural exchange within Kathmandu’s bustling district of Thamel. Hrishikesh, a U.S. returnee, struggles with reintegration, lamenting his linguistic limitations: “Perhaps he did not know how to behave, how to fit in, be like a real Nepali” (Thapa 53). His friend Kamal, meanwhile, longs to escape Nepal in pursuit of foreign opportunities. Their diverging paths reveal the tension between global aspirations and cultural roots.

Urban-rural contrasts are vividly portrayed in “Three Hundred Rupees”, where Rohit’s rural attire contrasts with Kathmandu’s urban environment. His observations highlight class disparities, as when a rickshaw driver hesitates to pick up his son from school: “His friends will laugh because I am a rickshaw driver. Imagine that!” (Thapa 74). Rohit’s reflections underscore the struggles of marginalised communities, culminating in a poignant moment when he ponders, “How many meals do three hundred rupees buy in this city, our nation’s capital?” (Thapa 83).

Thapa explores ecological themes in “Diesel”, where Jitendra observes environmental degradation amidst urbanisation. He reflects on the contamination caused by dust and soot, juxtaposed with the natural beauty of red-whiskered bulbuls nesting in an oak tree. Observing the birds, he finds solace: “None of these birds looked diseased. He did not feel diseased” (Thapa 85).

Social hierarchies and childhood rivalries are examined in “I Do Not Like Shanta Khanal”, where Kopila’s resentment towards Shanta is fuelled by their differing social statuses. The theft of books intensifies their conflict, illustrating the impact of class divisions on relationships, even among children.

In “Love Marriage”, Thapa critiques patriarchal attitudes and societal expectations surrounding marriage. Bimal reflects on the Hindu ideal of a perfect woman: “What do you think, Lalita, the thirty-two attributes of the perfect Hindu woman are? Big eyes, fair skin, a girl who smells of sandalwood and sings like a bird” (Thapa 100). His evolving perspective highlights the restrictive norms imposed by patriarchy, culminating in his recognition of Lalita’s individuality and his flawed perceptions.

In the story “Buddha in Earth Touching Posture”, the protagonist, a retired member of a U.N. committee, reflects on this sacred Buddhist site’s commercialisation and religious identity. The commodification of Lumbini¹² is evident in how businesses exploit Buddhist names for commercial purposes: “All the shops, restaurants, and businesses took on Buddhist names: the Nirvans Photo Studio, the Gautam Buddha Lodge, the Mayadevi Hotel, the Lord Buddha Petrol Pump” (Thapa 124). This commercialisation contrasts with Buddhism’s principles, prompting the narrator to critique luxury development projects that undermine the teachings of renunciation and compassion: “Renunciation was little in evidence here. And where was the compassion, the main teaching of the Mahayana school?” (Thapa 120). The intersection of Hinduism and Buddhism is also explored, highlighting Nepal’s cultural

12 The birthplace of Lord Buddha, located in Nepal; often referenced in cultural and spiritual discussions.

tolerance: “Most Hindus – my wife is an example of this – view Buddhism as just another branch of Hinduism. The Buddhists are too tolerant to take offence” (Thapa 137).

“Ta’ Angzoum’s *Among the Cows*” reflects rural Nepal’s socioeconomic struggles, where Ta’ Angzoum’s survival depends on securing legal rights over a calf after her husband’s abandonment. The disparity between her dire circumstances and the lofty discussions of development officials is stark. When Ta’ Angzoum appeals for help, she cries, “We are the poor people of a poor, developing country” (Thapa 169), underscoring her marginalisation in a society rife with political doublespeak and systemic inequities.

In “*Tilled Earth*”, the title story, a female immigrant navigates life in Seattle while grappling with cultural dislocation and nostalgia. Her memories of home are intertwined with food imagery: “Her thoughts stray to memories of the plump flesh of aubergine, of burned fenugreek and spinach. Bitter melon is her favourite dish, deep fried with slices of okra” (Thapa 173). She struggles with adapting to her new environment, whispering to herself in Nepali: “She whispers to herself in Nepali at bus stops, at doorways, in the shower, in bed in the middle of the night” (Thapa 173). Her reflections also highlight criticisms of Nepal’s education system: “She left college after two years. She feels that the American education system is better. She admits, ‘I did not like to study there’” (Thapa 175). As she adjusts to her host country, she learns new words and concepts from an American Heritage Dictionary: “Patter: tiptoe, scurry, scuttle, skip, scamper... Redetermine. Redefine” (Thapa 183). This resonates with Hall’s insight that identities in multicultural environments evolve with historical and social changes. He states: “Far from being eternally fixed in some

essentialised past, [identities] are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture, and power.” (225)

In “Tilled Earth,” the protagonist struggles with cultural dislocation in Seattle. Bhabha’s idea of the Third Space, where cultural identities are constantly negotiated, is relevant here: “It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (1). The immigrant experience mirrors the process of hybridity as the protagonist navigates between her Nepali heritage and American culture.

The immigrant experience also takes centre stage in the story “European Fling”, where Sharada, a Nepali woman, and her partner Matt explore cultural differences during their travels in Europe. Matt, a vegetarian, finds it challenging to enjoy local cuisine: “It was ridiculous to be vegan or vegetarian in France, he knew. All the French restaurants they passed smelled so – meaty” (Thapa 191). His cultural alienation deepens due to his lack of fluency in French: “It was frustrating to be locked out of language, to be reduced to such dumbness that he could not even tell the waiter: I did not realise it came with cream” (Thapa 192). The story delves into issues of neo-Nazism and global diaspora, with Matt musing, “Sometimes I wish I were Jewish. I have always liked their sense of being part of a diaspora: a scattered, wandering mass” (Thapa 201). However, his insensitivity to Sharada’s struggles as a woman from a developing country highlights the layered dimensions of privilege and oppression.

The narrative of the “Eldest Son” in Chicago portrays Nepali immigrants’ economic and emotional struggles. Nostalgic for his homeland, the protagonist is

alienated in a foreign land while grappling with harsh economic realities and cultural dislocation.

Thapa's characters in *Tilled Earth* such as Keshab, Nadia, Sharada, and Ta' Angzoum, embody the tensions between local traditions and global influences. They navigate complex intersections of identity, displacement, and systemic inequality, revealing the human dimensions of broader sociopolitical changes. As Rawal opines, *Tilled Earth* effectively explores the phenomenon of glocalisation, where characters struggle to blend global and local forces. Thapa's work reflects the resilience and vulnerability of individuals negotiating these cultural, economic, and political shifts, offering a rich and textured exploration of Nepali society and its diaspora (54).

Through interconnected stories, *Tilled Earth* offers a multifaceted exploration of Nepali society, grappling with tradition, modernity, and the human condition. Thapa skillfully captures the tensions and transformations of a nation while inviting readers into a rich tapestry of cultural and social narratives.

Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth* probes all the complexities deeply ingrained in Nepali society, weaving into a complex tapestry the strands of tradition and modernity, gender relations, cultural identity, and political change. Thapa underscores crucial intersections between personal experience and social change by portraying characters who walk through diverse landscapes and face challenges.

Seasons of Flight

Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* (2010) is a poignant take on a cultural identity that carries the complexities of Nepal's history, geography, and multicultural dynamics while illustrating a collision between tradition and modernity, spirituality

and materialism, superstition and science. The novel, set against the backdrop of Nepal's transition to the Federal Democratic Republic after the end of its monarchy, uses the experiences of its protagonist, Prema, to explore these themes and offers insight into Nepali society and the diaspora community in the United States. (Adhikari 28; Vishwanath 133).

Prema's story starts in unstable Nepal. She manages to win the lottery for a green card, and she emigrates to Los Angeles. Her musings reveal the psychic effects of the Maoist insurrection: "Should she not leave? This shabby, Third World country. Having received a chance – Having won a lottery... America. Nepal. America. Nepal" (Thapa 66). Her thoughts highlight the turmoil of a nation in transition, with innocent lives caught in the crossfire: "Two clashes between the Maoists and the army had claimed fourteen lives. A curfew had been imposed in a border town" (Thapa 21). Thapa also provides glimpses into the pervasive violence through vivid descriptions, such as a soldier dragging a young boy, ignoring his father's pleas: "There has been a mistake, Sah'b, he is not a Maoist, he is my son, let him be!" (Thapa 47). Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity and the Third Space provides a valuable lens through which to analyse Prema's experiences, particularly her negotiation of cultural identity.

The novel delves deeply into Nepali traditions and their impact on personal choices. Prema's mother's obsession with Hindu rituals and her quest for a son profoundly shaped Prema's view. Witnessing her mother's death due to societal pressures, Prema resolves to reject traditional expectations: "She had seen it consume her mother... She had rejected her mother's faith in the gods. She had gone to college... In no way had she replicated her mother's life" (Thapa 42). Prema's

migration to Kathmandu for her work symbolises her desire to break free from these cultural constraints.

Rajan, one of Prema's relationships in Nepal, introduces her to the nation's shifting political landscape, including the challenges of democracy and the ideology of the Maoist uprising. Thapa explores themes of historical redress through his accounts: "The centre has always exploited the peripheries. It is a matter of historical redress. All this... belongs to the people" (Thapa 27). Prema's observations underscore the struggle of everyday Nepalis caught in this upheaval.

After migrating to the United States, Prema's life in Los Angeles contrasts sharply with her past. Initially disoriented, she grapples with the cultural dissonance and begins to adapt, embodying what Agger describes as postmodern multiculturalism, which highlights individual differences over shared identities (69). Despite embracing her new life, Prema remains tethered to her roots, as shown during her return to Nepal. Her father greets her with a traditional *teeka*¹³ and garland, saying, "By your mother's blessings, you have crossed the seven seas, and you have returned... I did not think I would live to see this day" (Thapa 210).

During her visit to Nepal, Prema reconnects with her homeland, acknowledging the impact of migration on her village: "Most of the young people had left for the cities. A few had joined the Maoists. Others had gone abroad in search of jobs" (Thapa 210). She learns about neighbours sustained by remittances from family members working abroad: "A distant cousin... found work as a gardener for an Arab Sheikh in Kuwait. One of the most promising village boys had become a guard for an American security contractor in Iraq" (Thapa 211).

13 Teeka is a ritual mark applied on the forehead as a symbol of blessing or auspiciousness.

Contrasts between Prema and her sister Bijaya further illuminate their divergent views on cultural identity. Bijaya passionately defends her homeland, likening it to a mother: “‘It is like hating your mother,’ she said” (Thapa 212). On the other hand, Prema is looking for freedom and self-actualisation; thus, she is a more complex character with her heritage.

Prema’s affair with Sergio, a foreign man, is a sign of her changing identity and how she struggles through cultural compromise. Their brief encounter is an example of how Prema is asserting herself despite cultural differences.

Through Prema’s story, the novel skilfully illustrates the complex interplay between cultural heritage, migration, and personal transformation. The narrative presents Nepal’s political unrest, established values, and the challenge of adapting to a new environment very sophisticatedly, resulting in an inspiring and engaging display of a changing identity.

The migration of Prema to the United States becomes a complex insight into cultural identity within a diverse society. When she enters, she has to explain the geopolitical and cultural context of inquisitive Americans. Underlying Thapa’s depiction of Prema’s interactions with those unfamiliar with Nepal are significant cultural differences between the United States and her native land. Prema, being an immigrant, feels estranged and struggles with feelings of confusion and separation. This process forces her to stand between the familiarity of the process and the rigid procedure of attaining a sense of belonging within a strange context. The change in worldview, physical surroundings, and human relationships transforms her into an independent individual (Bhandari 123).

Prema uses her memory to narrate her migration experience. She migrated twice in her life: first, from her birth village to Kathmandu and then from Nepal to the United States. Thapa enumerates the motivations behind these relocations: the pursuit of education and political instability. Prema's initial perception of her countryside home as paramount shifts after her exposure to urban life in Kathmandu, highlighting the unsettling realities of her upbringing.

Upon her arrival in the United States, Prema receives assistance from Sushil and Neeru, who exemplify the Nepali tradition of neighbourly support. Neeru assumes a maternal role, teaching Prema practical survival skills such as navigating public transportation and accessing essential services. Thapa writes,

She thought Prema needed to know to survive in this land... When Neeru said foreigners, she meant Americans. Neeru taught her where to buy phone cards, where to check email, how to take the bus to the Department of Motor Vehicles and get the State of California identity card. (Thapa 111)

Prema gains insight into American society's multicultural and multiethnic fabric in her interactions with Esther King, Meg, and Susan. She observes the respectful treatment of senior citizens, including access to security measures and assisted living programs. Prema also notes differences in familial structures, contrasting the American nuclear family model with the interdependent familial systems of Nepal. For example, Natalie, Esther's granddaughter, offers Prema guidelines for managing her caregiving duties, leaving detailed notes with shopping lists, recipes, and emergency contacts: "She also left recipes on the corkboard, and her various telephone numbers, and emergency numbers – the police department, the fire department, the ambulance – as well as numbers for people Prema never met" (Thapa

14). This resonates with Hall's concept of the hybridity of multicultural societies, where identities are formed at the intersections of diverse cultural influences. He states: "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference." (235)

Prema becomes familiar with the local bioregion, dedicating time to observing wildlife and tidal patterns. Thapa describes her growing connection with nature:

She came to recognise pelicans, cormorants, and sanderlings. Shorebirds and waterbirds. She began to note the coincidence of the tide and the moonrise and to wonder at the life in the splash zone and the depths of the tidal zones churning murkily with giant kelp, anemones, and nudibranchs. (Thapa 32)

Prema's relationship with Luis, a Latino-American, serves as a microcosm for exploring cultural differences. Despite their distinct backgrounds, Luis expresses a fascination with Nepali culture and an idealised view of Mount Everest. Prema, however, offers a more grounded perspective, reminding him of the realities of life in Nepal. This interaction highlights the disparities in their cultural perceptions: "'Mount Everest, wow! You ever been?' 'No.' 'Man, I'd love to go!'" (Thapa 36).

Prema's interactions reveal both the challenges and rewards of cross-cultural relationships. Her evolving identity is evident in her changing perspective on relationships and her self-reinvention in America. Thapa captures Prema's inner conflict as she navigates the complexities of diasporic identity: "Someone as jagged and unmade as she: how could she fit into the format of relationship? American or Nepali?" (Thapa 235).

Prema's adaptation to American culture includes observing its entertainment and culinary habits. Luis introduces her to various restaurants and recreational activities, offering her a window into American cultural preferences: "They went to parlours packed with video games, pinball machines, shooting ranges, air hockey tables. They rode the Ferris wheel at Santa Monica, went to theme parks and got headaches from going on too many rides" (Thapa 82).

Prema also encounters the influence of Indian culture within American society, particularly in spiritual practices. At The Society for Universal Transcendence, she observes Mata Sylvia's teachings and the presence of Indian religious texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Ramayan*. Thapa writes,

A picture of a man with bright eyes was displayed on the wall behind the Mata: some Hindu guru or the other. The shelves in the room were lined with books: the Bhagavad Gita, the Mahabharat, the Ramayan, and books about Osho, Krishnamurti, Vivekananda, Ram Das, Sai Baba, Aurobindo, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. (Thapa 155)

Despite this exposure, Prema reflects on her spiritual scars, recalling the deities in her mother's bedroom shrine and the personal tragedies tied to her family's faith:

She remembered the gods crammed into her mother's bedroom shrine: Krishna, Parvati, Shiva, Laksmi, the avatar of Bishnu in a fossil. Had her mother felt the divine love that this Mata was whispering about? Had it made her feel safe? Even as her love for Prema's father made her lose her life. (Thapa 155).

After bidding farewell to Luis, Prema reunites with Neeru and finds herself increasingly enchanted by the beauty of the natural world and its avian inhabitants. This newfound fascination sparks a desire within her to seek out her happiness. As she delves deeper into the wilderness, Prema better understands herself and her identity. She forges strong connections with the environment and those around her, leading her to view culture and society from a fresh perspective. Additionally, Prema delves into the primal essence of nature, unearthing insights into her instincts and desires. Thapa captures Prema's profound adoration for the natural world:

She breathed in the aroma of the grasses, the wind fragrant through the stems and stalks. She took in the sigh of the earth. Felt out her wounds, the relics below the adamantine deposits. Felt that ancient, familiar shivering in the marrow and waited for it to pass. (Thapa 194)

Prema seeks to establish a connection with Mata's spiritual affiliations. However, despite Mata's attempt to uplift her spirit through Bhajan, it proves unsuccessful as she says,

I really am a bit screwed. 'We're all screwed,' he said. 'So, what do you think?' 'What do you think?' she said. They kept looking at each other. Yes? No? Yes? No? She took a chance on the lottery, the lottery of life. 'Yes,' she said. (Thapa 223)

Prema familiarised herself with financial institutions in the United States and took on the role of overseeing her bank account. On Neeru's advice,

Prema opened an account at a Citibank branch in the neighbourhood. Against her advice, she applied for a 110-credit card. But – having no credit history –

was denied it. In six months, you can have a card with a fifty-thousand-dollar limit. (Thapa 91-92)

Prema and approximately twenty other families reside in the United States neighbourhood called ‘Little Nepal’. Reflecting upon her experiences, she vividly recalls how individuals within this community treated those from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds. Prema emphasises the prevalent existence of racial prejudice and discrimination within Little Nepal:

They talked of Americans – ‘foreigners’ – with some perplexity. ‘Every time a black man comes into the shop, I am worried he’ll rob us,’ one man said. ‘Don’t be friendly with Mexicans,’ one woman told Prema every time they met: ‘If they talked to you, just say no habla Espanol.’ Another woman told her, ‘Never trust the Chinese. Or the Koreans. And always watch out for Indians.’ As brutal in all of America, only they and the white people were pure. (Thapa 92-93)

Prema discovers the presence of undocumented immigrants residing in the United States, witnessing their determined struggle to remain in the country. Prema identifies Neeru and Ganga as individuals lacking legal status, while “Narayan had arrived years ago, on a student visa, now expired” (Thapa 93).

Prema embarks on a journey beyond the confines of Little Nepal, gradually exploring unfamiliar territories. She acquaints herself with the nation’s altered landscape and economic structure along her expedition. Additionally, she has acquired a profound understanding of the heterogeneous American society and the multilingual environment prevalent in the host country.

She had not known there were so many Latino, Asian, and African American people in America. When someone spoke to her, she was invariably taken for Mexican: ‘Que hora es?’ ‘A hacia donde va la camioneta?’ One day, two young men in baggy jeans approached her at an intersection. One said something in Spanish. (Thapa 94)

Prema endeavours to detach herself from her Nepali heritage and acclimate to American customs. Thapa elucidates the rationale behind the transformation in her interests as she “stopped looking up the news of her email account expired. Instead, she scoured the newspapers for information about America: unemployment was up, the housing figures were down, the president’s popularity was dipping” (Thapa 97). According to Shreeja Bhele, Prema must deal with cultural variety and hybridity to fit in with a larger community. Bhele says that because she has dealt with several dislocations, such as exile, diaspora, and transnational subjects—all covered in diaspora and transnationalism—her character is complex, fluid, and constantly changing (35).

Prema embarks on a quest to discover her identity, leaving behind Little Nepal. She realises that her real journey in America is just beginning. Over time, she experiences a growing sense of detachment from her mother tongue and cultural heritage. After several months, she decides to revisit Little Nepal, seeking to reconnect with the language and culture of her homeland. Prema is warmly welcomed by Neeru, who greets her with genuine delight, embodying the response one would anticipate from a fellow Nepali. Neeru says warmly:

Where have you been all this time? We were so worried about you – didn’t know if you were alive or dead! Shouldn’t you have called just once to tell us

you were all right? We thought you had had a mishap after you left us, or something bad – really bad – had happened! We were terrified. (Thapa 169)

According to Deepthi V.G., Prema's search for identity reflects the plight of people who are neither in their country of origin nor in their host nation. She contends that cultural displacement, whether forced or voluntary, causes a sense of loss of identity and separation from one's cultural origins, requiring the community to imagine a home to alleviate the fear of being strangers in a strange land (488).

Prema and Neeru connect to Nepali cuisine by eating momos. Here, the culinary joy of Nepal is combined with the cultural institution built on flavour, spices, and ingredients. They ate the "soft and succulent momos, the chicken savoury with onion, cumin and coriander. Prema felt she had never eaten anything quite so nourishing. She finished them all at once, mumbling with her mouth full: Delicious" (Thapa 172).

Prema discovers from Christopher that America harbours a multitude of complex identities. She listens to him talk about his hyphenated identity. In the diverse American society, Prema seldom had the opportunity to converse in Nepali, as "she hardly had occasion to speak at all. Most of the shop's customers spoke Korean" (Thapa 124). Her interactions with Americans affected how she thought about the world's diversity.

Prema also learns about Guatemalan culture, a nation in Latin America. She gains excellent knowledge about this nation's political and social climate through the library. Luis, too, helps her understand the Mayas, a tribe that lives in Mexico.

Prema's time in the United States was clouded with ambiguity, and she was left wondering as a question persisted:

Should I stay, or should I go? Have I gone too far enough? Was this progress enough? Or should she try to progress further? Perhaps it was her fate- a fate of those like her- to always wonder. Having decided to live in one place, to always experience pangs of doubt whether the other place altogether wasn't the one to live in. While doing one thing, to regret not having done the other. That nagging uncertainty- never knowing, never knowing for sure, or at all- remained with her. (Thapa 234)

Prema establishes a profound link to bygone times through affectionate reminiscence. She adeptly employs the flashback technique to evoke the contrasting experiences that unfolded in Los Angeles and Nepal. However, the recollection of her mother in Nepal remains a delicate fragment of her identity and sense of completeness, one that she cannot fully embrace as her own. Prema's time in America is marked by the difficulties of adapting to two different cultures, leading to a unique hybrid identity. While she sometimes feels isolated, she actively chooses to live in America's diverse society (Prasad 39). The essence of this nostalgia resides in a deep longing for significance and a sense of cultural belonging, which is further complicated by the complexities of contemporary life. The protagonist's nostalgia serves as a tether to her past, motivating her to weave narratives that encapsulate the collective experiences of her generation. In doing so, she draws a stark contrast between the present, marked by growing disparities in race, ethnicity, and geography, as well as a prevailing instrumental rationalism and a historical backdrop that resonates with her identity. It aligns with Svetlana Boym's concept of nostalgia as she

states: “Nostalgia is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy.” (p. xiii)

Prema’s life in Los Angeles illustrates Bhabha’s concept of hybridity, where cultural identity is formed through negotiation rather than as a fixed or singular state. Bhabha writes: “Hybridity represents the re-creation of the self in the world of travel” (37).

This process is evident as Prema adapts to her new environment, integrating elements of American life while remaining tethered to her Nepali heritage. For example, Prema’s growing fascination with the local bioregion symbolises her hybrid identity. As she observes tidal patterns and wildlife, she connects with nature in a way that blends traditional Nepali reverence for the environment with her newfound curiosity about American ecosystems: “She came to recognise pelicans, cormorants, sanderlings. Shorebirds and waterbirds. She began to note the coincidence of the tide and the moonrise” (Thapa 32).

The story of Prema, from Nepal to the United States, depicts how cultural adaptation and changes in identity are interlinked and impacted across a multicultural environment. Her experiences reflect the tension between native practices and host-country cultural norms. Her story within the global and migratory dynamics that carve her identity involves never fitting perfectly into her new surroundings without losing her cultural identity. Thapa’s narrative is a whole of the complex dynamics of diasporic identity as Prema tries to reconcile her past with her present circumstances.

All of Us in Our Own Lives

Thapa's *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016) describes the lives of women from Nepal and the plight of characters such as Ava, Indira, Sapana, and Durga. Thapa crafts compelling narratives depicting multiparty politics' influence at the grassroots level of Nepali society (Chaudhary 73). The story captures the aftermath of a devastating earthquake, the approval of a new constitution by the Constituent Assembly, and the reliance of rural Nepali communities on development organisations. The narrative provides insight into the workings of aid organisations striving to promote development within Nepal's underdeveloped societal framework. With Nepal as the backdrop, the novel immerses readers in the country's rich cultural tapestry while highlighting its transitional political climate. In her review, Kerry Clare praises Thapa for vividly portraying Nepal and offering a contemporary perspective on an interconnected global society (Quill and Quire).

Ava Berriden, one of the central figures, was adopted by affluent Canadian parents during her early childhood, having been born in Nepal. Despite her success as a lawyer in Canada, she abandons her career to work with an international non-governmental organisation in Nepal. Ava experiences more autonomy than many Nepali women but faces social stigma as she struggles to forge an identity in an unfamiliar environment while grappling with her ties to Nepali ethnicity. This resonates with Stuart Hall's concept of identity as a 'production,' which evolves through representation and negotiation of cultural differences (222). Reflecting on her parents' decision, the narrative states, "When their parents brought Ava from Kathmandu to Overland, Ontario, they set her off in one direction, but she could choose another direction for herself. She could even reverse course if she wanted"

(Thapa 2). This reflects what Bhabha describes as the 'liminal space,' where identities emerge and are negotiated through encounters of cultural difference (4).

After leaving her American law firm and her legal career, Ava begins questioning her connection to Nepal, the country that gave her the name Ava. Although initially hesitant to embrace her Nepali heritage, her visit to Bal Mandir, the orphanage where she was adopted, stirs memories of her past. She later learns that the director of the orphanage has been accused of multiple rape incidents. Ava struggles to comprehend Nepal's intricate aid system but gains clarity as she immerses herself in a rural Community-Based Organization (CBO). Her work exposes inefficiencies and contradictions within the aid sector. Collaborating with Indira, Ava asserts her identity within Nepal's patriarchal society. Her development is significant, transitioning from an orphanage upbringing to living in a mansion, forming strong community bonds, and finding fulfilment in assisting individuals like Gyanu and Sapana. Despite their unfamiliarity, Ava's relationships with these women reveal the interconnectedness of their lives. Ava reflects,

She had been shielded by family love, by Mom and Dad's financial stability, by everything that came in her childhood in Overwood: an education, healthcare, and things she had never even thought about not having, like running water and electricity...completely fortified against it. (Thapa 127)

Gyanu fails to identify Ava's caste based on her Mongoloid facial features, observing

her sharp features, dark skin, and large, almond-shaped eyes; she could be of Newari or Dalit or Madeshi background, or, for that matter, from any number of other communities. He said it is not possible to know. (Thapa 209)

Despite being born in Nepal, Ava possesses limited knowledge about women's status in her home country. She reflected as,

She couldn't believe how close the Himalayas were. What a country this was, she thought. What a strange, difficult, complicated country. By now, she'd caught up on background reading, and the indicators related to women were distressing. Women lagged men in health, education, income, mobility, opportunity, political representation. Many of the national laws violated international law. The statute of limitation on rape was three months, and the new constitution, if it were ever drafted at all, was likely to deny women equal citizenship rights. (Thapa 76)

Bhabha's idea of "temporal lag", where past and present coexist in contradiction, aligns with Ava's grappling with her Western privileges while engaging with Nepal's patriarchal society. As Bhabha suggests, such temporal lags signify cultural conflict, where the unevenness of modernity reveals itself through gendered inequalities (7).

Indira Sharma represents a middle-class Nepali woman who balances professional success with societal constraints stemming from sexism. She highlights the struggles faced by working daughters-in-law in Hindu upper-caste households. During a conversation with Ava, Indira reveals,

You see me, a leading gender expert in Nepal. I am modern. I am independent, but how do I live at home? Do you know, Ava, how many rules I must follow as a daughter-in-law? For example, when you come for dinner, could I have a glass of wine at my house? And at work-am I equal? How much I have to

struggle every day, just to be respected by my men colleagues. These men, in public they say: you are equal to us; but in reality? Always, in small things, in big things, they dominate us. (Thapa 175)

Indira's resilience persists despite her challenges, including navigating an alcoholic spouse and an oppressive mother-in-law. She embodies a modern, self-reliant woman, persevering through adversities.

Durga, a domestic servant in Indira's household, represents the plight of marginalised women in Nepal. As the eldest of six siblings, Durga is left at the Sharma household when her impoverished father seeks employment but never returns to visit. Through Durga's story, Thapa highlights the oppressive nature of patriarchal traditions in Nepali society. The novel also portrays the struggles of migrant labourers who endure hardships abroad, such as Fucche, a character who tragically dies overseas: "Jairus was right. He was fortunate. So many Nepali brothers and sisters suffered at home and then came here and suffered even more. So many, like Fucche, perished" (Thapa 15).

The story captures Nepal's cultural traditions, such as funeral rites, as Gyanu returns to his village to fulfil his filial duties:

Then he'd shorn his hair, worn white clothes and lit the funeral pyre, as he had for Ma. For thirteen days, he'd received the company of mourners from all over the village. At mealtimes, he'd eaten unsalted food, and at night, he'd slept fitfully under thin, unstitched sheets. (Thapa 30)

The persistence of Nepal's patriarchal system, despite shifts from monarchy to democracy, is evident in Thapa's depiction:

Thula Ba looked every bit the patriarch. Governments had fallen, regimes had changed, a Maoist had started and ended, the monarchy had been abolished. Allying with every new power in Kathmandu, Thulo Ba had remained ascendant throughout. (Thapa 34)

Gyanu and Kisne reflect on their migration experiences, embodying the challenges those seeking livelihoods abroad face:

What haven't we done hai, Gyanu? In our lives? What haven't we done in our lives?' Kisne said. 'Me, I've worked as a guard in Bombay, as a waiter in Allahabad, a cleaner in Goa. Ey, Gyanu, did I ever tell you about the time I went to Japan? (Thapa 85)

Thapa illustrates Nepal's political evolution, and the struggles tied to governance and democracy:

The bus to the village wasn't in. A newspaper lay crumpled on a bench. He picked it up and scanned through the usual grim news of strikes and closures, blockades and impasses, and grandstanding among the political parties. There was no sign of the constitution ever being drafted. (Thapa 157-158)

CP Aryal acknowledges Thapa's vivid portrayal of Nepali politics, societal expectations, and women's struggles as distressing yet accurate (196). The narrative showcases the role of women in Nepali society, the transitional nature of its political culture, and the dire poverty that drives migration. The experiences of Ava, Indira, Durga, and other characters illuminate the complexities of societal expectations, realities, and relationships within Nepal, offering readers a poignant depiction of Nepali life during both pre- and post-democratic eras.

2.3 Tracing Cultural Identity in Samrat Upadhyay's *The Royal Ghosts*, *Buddha's Orphans* and *Mad Country*

The Royal Ghosts

Samrat Upadhyay's *The Royal Ghosts* (2006) revolves around a range of professions, shedding light on social issues such as child marriage, polygamy, exploitation, challenges faced by widows and labourers, and gender inequality. The hurdles and dilemmas faced by the different characters in the story reflect the society's multiethnic, socio-cultural, and religious backdrop. The text skilfully analyses the narratives that unfolded during a decade-long Civil War led by Maoists, where the working-class populace fought for their existence and the well-being of their loved ones. Enduring the difficulties, sorrows, and obstacles imposed by the wealthy, they underscore the clash between the privileged and the underprivileged. Furthermore, the text delves into war's psychological, sociological, and political impacts on individuals, revealing mainstream society's inherent flaws and shortcomings. In *The Royal Ghosts*, "Characters not only manoeuvre their way through the intricacies of love but also navigate against the backdrop of Nepal's Maoist guerrillas, fighters who have been orchestrating a nearly decade-long civil war" (Kirkus Reviews).

Characters from different social backgrounds are portrayed in the story, showcasing the diversity of contemporary society with its multilingual, multireligious, and multiethnic facets. The characters' utilisation of contradictory signs and symbols serves as a reflection of the ongoing class struggle. Upadhyay focuses on the subalterns in his works, but his portrayal of them as feeble and subservient hinders their ability to represent this marginalised group (Roka 30).

In the story “A Refugee,” the author portrays the shift in political culture by emphasising the prevailing tension between the Maobadis and the government, resulting in many innocent lives being lost. In this story, Kabita tragically experiences the loss of her husband as he falls victim to the Maobadis’ violent actions carried out under the guise of revolution: “They killed him in front of his wife Pitambar, can you imagine what that must have been like?” (Upadhyay 2). The characters’ contradictory signs and symbols signify a struggle between social classes:

For years we suffered under the kings, then we got so-called democracy, but nothing got better. Most of our country lives in mind-boggling poverty. These Maobadis are fighting for people with low incomes. It’s a simple thing that they’re doing. (Upadhyay 4)

Kabita’s narrative is profoundly influenced by the conflict following the Maoists’ assassination of her spouse. Kabita encounters substantial challenges in sustaining herself and providing for her daughter in Kathmandu. Kabita’s struggle reflects Hall’s idea of cultural identities as historical and transformative, shaped by past experiences and present negotiations (225). Despite her working and lower-class origins, she faces hardships adapting to contemporary society and challenging the male hierarchy. The revolt against societal injustices has empowered her significantly. This dynamic reflects Bhabha’s idea of hybridity, where cultural identities are constructed through negotiation and intersection of differences (2).

Further, when Pitambar reads the newspaper, he finds, “In Ropla’s, dozens of policemen had been shot by the Maobaidis. In Baglung, two rebels had been beaten to death by the villagers, who now feared reprisal” (Upadhyay 4). The ongoing conflict is also reflected in the conversation between Pitambar and his colleague: “Simple?

Pitambar had said. Your Maobadis are killing the very people they claim they're fighting for-innocent villagers. They're casualties of the revolution, the man said. They're martyrs, but the revolution has to go on" (Upadhyay 4). The Maobadis were labelled as "wanted by the government" (Upadhyay 16), whereas a faction of individuals revered the revolution and hailed them as 'heroes' (Upadhyay 16).

The story "The Weight of a Gun" illustrates the impact of political conflict on family dynamics through the character of Bhola. Following his father's abandonment of his mother for another woman, Bhola expresses a desire to acquire a firearm to align himself with the Maoists. His journey toward forgiveness for his mother's transgressions is depicted as a challenging endeavour to emancipate himself from societal constraints and unequal opportunities. "Bhola rapped her front door, shouting, 'Ama, Ama.' 'I need to buy a gun. Give me some money, Ama.' 'I am joining the Maobadis,' he said, turning to face her" (Upadhyay 101). Despite this, the characters remain detached from their emotions, highlighting the deep psychological scars of conflict.

In the story "The Third Stage," Ranjit's character vividly illustrates the shift in Nepali cinematic culture towards commercialisation, leading to his decision to abandon his acting aspirations. He expressed disapproval towards the direction in which Nepali films were evolving. When questioned about Nepali cinema, he responded, "It's hard to pinpoint what our movies are about. They're so influenced by Indian movies-you know, Bollywood. Yes, I guess you can call them musicals, but too often these days, the song and dance is barely connected to the plot" (Upadhyay 56). Ranjit embraces a father's role following a lengthy hiatus from his acting pursuits, with the thought that "The movie had the potential of making the statements

about the importance of art and exposing cheap commercial tactics of contemporary Nepali cinema” (Upadhyay 60).

The short story “Supreme Pronouncements” revolves around the character of Suresh, who has developed a keen interest in politics. This narrative delves into the political culture of Nepal, shedding light on its intricacies and dynamics: “he had drafted anti-government pamphlets, incited others to burn tires on the city streets when I disagreed with the policies of palace, and organised and led protests” (Upadhyay 79). He discusses the authoritative decrees made by the monarchs, emphasising the billboards scattered throughout the urban landscape, saying that “Our Nation, Culture and King-dearer than our own life” (Upadhyay 83). Suresh orchestrates a colossal demonstration opposing the government, which escalates into a violent uproar, resulting in numerous casualties. The conclusion of Suresh’s association with Rumila was marked by acrimony.

Nepal’s political landscape has transformed: “The government has been dismantled, and the new government has taken its place, one that represents the mixture of political parties” (Upadhyay 99). However, Suresh still hinted at the ongoing corruption of the present government as “the new regime is already turning out to be as corrupt and oppressive as the old one, and already those criticising it are being tossed in jails across the country” (Upadhyay 99).

The book intertwines historical facts with fictional events, imaginatively portraying the history of Nepal during the tumultuous decade when Maoist insurgents clashed with the government in their quest to establish a republic and dismantle the monarchy. This era profoundly impacted the populace, leading to mass migration to urban centres, rising unemployment rates, and social and economic challenges that

afflicted the nation, particularly in Kathmandu. Female figures such as Janaki, Sushmita, Gauri, Rumila, and Kabita are depicted as grappling with patriarchal dominance and striving to carve out their identities within society.

The Royal Ghosts has presented the social, economic, and political scenario of the nation with social values, traditions, and social strata artistically. The novel deals with the modern urban cityscapes of Kathmandu that reveal the lives of people who are forced to hide themselves from the chaos, unrest, and bloodshed created by the Maoist uprising. The book mainly revolves around the challenges people face in Nepal, especially in Kathmandu, during the Civil War. It narrates the various ways people attempt to navigate their difficult circumstances. The protagonists grapple with ethical dilemmas, yearnings for sexual liberation, and psychological torment, yet they remain resolute in their pursuit of personal gratification. Amidst the tumultuous political climate, they persistently endeavour to find resolutions to their predicaments but cannot unravel the complexities of their problems.

The female characters challenge traditional gender roles and societal norms, actively resisting male dominance and questioning established patriarchal systems. The narrative explores the silenced, marginalised voices, highlighting injustices and enabling a nuanced examination of emerging class struggles within the community. Globalisation, industrialisation, and migration contribute to hybridity and instability in Nepali society, leading to the gradual influence of postcolonial ideology on its psychology (Prasad 63). Globalisation, industrialisation, and migration, as Prasad points out, are shown to have caused hybridity and psychological transformations in Nepali culture. Along the same lines, Koirala's article portrays these changes in the form of social tensions, class conflicts, and the journey of the oppressed people who

lived in the Civil War period. *The Royal Ghosts* blends history and fiction, depicting the challenges women and working-class individuals encounter while exploring caste, creed, and religious tensions, offering a realistic portrayal of Nepal's social dynamics during the Civil War (32).

Buddha's Orphans

Samrat Upadhyay's novel *Buddha's Orphans* (2010) depicts Nepali culture and religious beliefs, analysing the existential features of contemporary individuals as they reject social norms to live their desired lives. Important characters like Raja, Kaki, Ganga Da, Jamuna, Nilu, Ranjana, and Prateema constantly attempt to act independently of social rules and standards. Rabi Thapa opines that *Buddha's Orphans* traces the lifelines of four generations in Kathmandu over the whole period after the rule of Rana, concluding with the 2001 royal slaughter (8).

In a story that spans several generations in Kathmandu, Raja, an orphan boy, marries Nilu, a girl from a wealthy family. The narrative commences in 1960 and spans five decades of political and societal turmoil in Nepal. In the initial sequence, a youthful woman forsakes her offspring before meeting her demise. The story employs a panoramic perspective, providing geographical locations and historical context. The young girl tragically ends her life by drowning in a pond constructed as a solace for a grieving queen who had lost her child. This very location later becomes the backdrop for anti-government protests.

Buddha's Orphans vividly portrays the civilisation and culture of Nepal, presenting it as a captivating metropolis caught between the weight of tradition and the allure of modernity. It depicts the expansion of Kathmandu's boundaries over

time, showcasing the changing moral importance of the city's outskirts and emphasising the transition from viewing these areas as dangerous and chaotic to becoming the preferred residential choice for the privileged individuals in the city (Nelson 11).

The novel delves into various aspects of cultural identity, exploring its complexities and nuances. It delves into the customs, traditions, and values of Nepali society. In an era of rapid change, the characters in the story engage in discussions about the essence of being Nepali. Raja, an orphan, strives to define himself and locate himself in Nepali society. This reflects Bhabha's idea of the unhomely, where displacement disrupts the boundaries of identity and home, creating spaces of cultural negotiation (9). He is estranged from his natural family and struggles to feel like he belongs in a culture that frequently stigmatises orphans. The idea of family and community is essential to developing cultural identity. Raja's connections to Kaki, his adopted mother, and other figures emphasise how crucial these ties are to forming one's cultural identity. The story examines how love and romantic relationships can impact a person's cultural identity. Raja's romantic relationships with several women reflect the difficulties of defining oneself and finding love in a heterogeneous society.

Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, serves as the backdrop for the narrative, offering multiple perspectives on life in the city. It is often depicted as a place where numerous events occur. The majority of Kathmandu is depicted as a community of outcasts and ascetics. Kathmandu's evolution symbolises the 'borderline condition' Bhabha identifies, where modernity and tradition coexist in dynamic tension (6). Upadhyaya describes Kathmandu:

In Freak Street, dreadlocked hippies with long beards and baggy corduroys hung about, looking stoned and happy. A heavy smell of ganja and has permeated the air. A multi-coloured van sat outside a shop, and a girl in a long, flowing frock, a cigarette in her hand, was arguing with a Nepali shopkeeper, probably unhappy over a business deal. From the second floor of a house, the steady, rhythmic beat of reggae, lending the argument below an almost sensual tone, is fine and charming (140)

The novel explores the quest for freedom from oppression, the destiny of orphaned children, a lack of compassion and regard for the elderly, corruption, and the clash between the interests of the young and the old. The Nepali society is depicted as a typical society where individuals strive to escape their distressing circumstances. In the story, Mohini, who is Raja's mother, tragically drowns in Rani Pokhari, leaving her child abandoned.

Characters such as Kaki and Bokey Ba are depicted as needy and marginalised in Nepal. Bokey Ba tragically succumbs to the harsh cold weather and lack of proper shelter, care, and medical attention. After her son and daughter-in-law abandon her, Kaki finds herself homeless and sells maize in Ratna Park. One fateful morning, her son accuses Kaki of stealing his money and sends her falling into the road from their house. On the same day, with her bags at hand, Kaki finds her way around town in such a helpless, fragile condition that has led to her quest to seek lodging.

Raja is found by Bokey Ba, who in turn takes him to Kaki. When they take Raja to orphan house, the supervisor harshly admonishes Kaki and Bokey Ba. The administration asserts that the orphan cannot be accommodated in their creche. The

distinctiveness of Nepali society lies in the lack of accountability exhibited by individuals in positions of authority.

Ganga Da's works as an officer in National Planning officer in Kathmandu. He has no children and lives with his mentally unwell wife, Jamuna, whose illness creates an emotional void in their household. Ganga Da meets Kaki and Raja when he comes to buy corn at Kaki's stall. Impressed by Raja and moved by his situation, he offers Kaki a job as a domestic helper and promises to support Raja's education.

Ganga Da's mother is very spiritual, has given up all material things and lives a pious life. Ganga Da's family is on the brink of falling apart, with his wife, Jamuna, suffering from schizophrenia and mental illness. Her psychotic episodes cause immense distress to Ganga Da.

In stark contrast, most female characters are depicted solely as lascivious beings. A prime example of this portrayal is Muwa, who became a widow following her spouse's tragic demise in an accident. Despite her material prosperity, Muwa forms a bond with Sumit, who happens to be one and a half years her junior, all while residing with her daughter Nilu. Muwa finds solace in the companionship of Sumit, engaging in both drinking and gambling simultaneously.

Upadhyay's portrayal of the Nepali people and their culture in his work highlights the importance of power politics. The text frequently references the king and the presence of monarchical rule:

This king is turning out to be quite stern, isn't he? Kaki said. It was something she'd heard people whisper in Ratna Park. She herself didn't understand much of what was going on, but she'd suddenly begun to notice buttons with King

M's photo on the lapels of government officials who stopped by to munch on her corn; those buttons resembled the one with the Chinese Mao that Kaki had found a couple of years ago and given to Raja. (Upadhyay 32)

Raja, the main character, opposed the monarchical regime by consistently engaging in rallies, enduring imprisonment, and tragically losing his son during one of the processions he actively supported. His discontent with the king is evident when he,

Ignoring Nilu's pleas to move on, kept repeating the gesture, at times bursting into the national anthem, 'Sriman Gambhir Nepali Prachanda Pratapi Bhupati,' but making it sound like a cry for help rather than an ode to the crown. (Upadhyaya 131)

Maitreya, son of Raja and Nilu too, presents the country's culture: "It's a beautiful country. The Himalaya, Gautama Buddha, Kumari¹⁴ the Living Goddess, no British colonialism, the only Hindu kingdom in the world" (Upadhyaya 204). Maitreya falls seriously ill with a high fever at school, Nilu tries desperately to take him to the hospital but he dies on the way as their road is obstructed by a huge protestor. The apparent harm caused by the conflict is illustrated in the subsequent quotation:

Within months of burning Jamuna Mummy's and Ganga Da's remains at the ghat, the Maoist rebels unleashed their violence. They seemed to come out of nowhere—with their old, clunky rifles and their unforgiving eyes. The countryside became awash with blood: policemen butchered, the throats of

14 The living goddess tradition in Nepal where a prepubescent girl is worshipped as a deity.

villagers cut, husbands shot in front of their wives and children. (Upadhyaya 313)

The text also depicts the royal massacre, a significant event that led to the decline of the monarchy in Nepal:

It was all a question of not allowing oneself to feel too much about Nepal's rapid plunge into darkness, into a free-for-all. And, adding insult to injury, one summer evening, the crown prince went berserk and gunned down his family members, including his father and mother and brother and sister, inside the palace (Upadhyaya 314).

The novel demonstrates the comprehensive shift towards democracy in Nepal as Raja informs Nilu about converting the forbidden palace into a museum and a royal palace: "Papa had long ago mocked the palace guards and traumatised Ma. But now, following the king's ouster, the palace had been turned into a museum and a government office, and it no longer looked formidable" (Upadhyaya 415). The novel delves deep into the intricate facets of cultural identity, exploring how individuals and communities navigate the complex challenges of tradition, modernity, belonging, and self-realisation within Nepali society.

Through a rich tapestry of interconnected stories, Upadhyay skillfully weaves together the lives of various characters, each grappling with their struggles and aspirations. Set against the backdrop of Nepal's evolving social and political landscape, the novel offers a nuanced portrayal of the tensions that arise when traditional values clash with the forces of globalisation and modernisation. Upadhyay's urban perspective is evident in this book (Adhikari 52). *Buddha's*

Orphans is a profoundly reflective and thought-provoking novel that offers a multi-layered exploration of cultural identity, tradition, modernity, belonging, and self-realisation within the context of Nepali society. Through its richly drawn characters and evocative storytelling, the novel invites readers to reflect on their journeys of self-discovery and the complexities of navigating the ever-changing world.

Mad Country

Samrat Upadhyay's collection of short stories, *Mad Country* (2017), delves into political unrest, mirroring the contemporary landscape that saturates news, social media platforms, and daily conversations. The book addresses a range of issues, including government censorship of independent journalism, authoritarian abuse of power, economic disparity, social hierarchy, migration, discrimination against foreigners, gender inequality, unjust imprisonment, police violence, and political assassinations. Through these narratives, Upadhyay effectively illuminates the intricate dynamics within society. *Mad Country* explores government censorship, economic disparity, migration fears, gender discrimination, unjust incarceration, and excessive force by law enforcement, shedding light on complex issues in the narrative (World Literature Today).

The story "Fast Forward" explores the depiction of the political culture within the nation, focusing on the government's dominance in regulating the media. "The fourth pillar of democracy is revealed in the story" (Upadhyay 1). Shalini, a journalist, is in dispute with Minister Gujrel as her magazine *Fast Forward* publishes news alleging that a girl's father was imprisoned and executed by the government. Gujrel denies the accusation, stating, "We did not kill him" (Upadhyay 2). He claims the girl's father was not a victim of government violence. However, instead of a casualty

of terrorist actions, saying, “If you need sources who can confirm that the victim was killed by the other side, by the terrorist forces, I can provide them for you” (Upadhyay 3).

Shalini remains resolute in her determination to safeguard *Fast Forward*, describing it as “her baby, and there was no way she was going to let a pudgy-faced minister threaten her with the shutdown” (Upadhyay 6). The magazine had conducted numerous high-profile investigations into corruption, fraud, prostitution, sexual exploitation, and nepotism, having “changed the journalistic scene of the country” (Upadhyay 8). However, Shalini faced death threats and criticism that her work “was an effort to derail the peace process” (Upadhyay 9). The situation escalates when Chitra, another journalist from the magazine, disappears from her residence, and despite Shalini’s efforts to locate her, Chitra remains missing.

The story “Beggar Boy” revolves around social inequality and the struggle between different classes within Nepali society. Upadhyay vividly portrays the bustling streets of Chabel, “with hardly any room to walk; it was as if the whole of humanity had descended upon this road; starving children, poop on the street, counterfeit goods, exhaust fumes” (Upadhyay 29). Ramesh, the protagonist, ponders the stark disparities in privilege, questioning, “What made him so special that he was born with this privilege when many boys his age had to wash dishes in restaurants and get whipped out for jobs badly done?” (Upadhyay 43). He becomes preoccupied with the idea of experiencing a life of deprivation and begins dressing as a beggar in his room. Eventually, he encounters Naresh, a young beggar, and develops a bond with him. However, Ramesh’s discontent with his privileged life leads him to commit a bank robbery to provide financial assistance to Naresh. His attempt fails, as the stolen

money is taken by a security guard who vanishes into the crowd. Ramesh reflects on his actions, thinking, “Never my wealth to begin with” (Upadhyay 62).

The story “Sofi” explores the interactions between a Hippie individual and the local Nepali community. Sofi, the central character, believes she belongs to the indigenous community and is given the Nepali name Sukumari. Her transformation is described as she starts finding her previous name, saying, “She found her previous name odd, and when she whispered it to herself, it sounded like the name of the furniture brand” (Upadhyay 90). Sofi’s journey involves embracing Nepali culture, yet she faces challenges reconciling her new identity with her past. Her relationship with Manandhar and the subsequent events depicts her internal conflict and eventual return to her old self, wandering the streets as “any other hippie who passed through Freak Street on a journey from somewhere to somewhere” (Upadhyay 107).

In the story “Dreaming of Ghana,” Aakash, employed by a tourist publication, envisions Ghana in his dreams, assuming the persona of Hamid. The plot intensifies when Aakash encounters Ghana, a young woman accused of being a witch. Aakash attempts to protect her, reflecting on societal perceptions of skin tone, thinking, “he had gotten himself murdered on a busy thoroughfare, his arms wrapped around a dark habsi, a dark boksi” (Upadhyay 123). Aakash’s struggle with societal disapproval and familial rejection underscores the deep-seated prejudices in the community. His mother’s biases are evident when “she was someone for whom any dark-skinned girl, whether Nepali or foreign, could never be a possible partner of her son” (Upadhyay 129).

The story “Mad Country” deals with the lives of political prisoners and ordinary people affected by political turmoil. Anamika Gurung, the central character,

becomes a political prisoner after being detained during a visit to secure her son's release. Anamika's experiences highlight the oppressive environment within the prison, where rumours and fear dominate the lives of the inmates. The Colonel's announcement of their release creates confusion and apprehension among the prisoners, with Anamika expressing reluctance to leave, revealing her newfound apprehension towards freedom after prolonged confinement (Upadhyay 219).

In "America, the Great Equalizer," Biks navigates racial discrimination and rejection. He recalls how Nepali gatherings often expressed disapproval towards individuals of African descent, referring to them with racial slurs. Biks's own experiences of discrimination, including questions about his ancestry and skin colour, exacerbate his feelings of alienation. After relocating to Furgeson, Biks witnesses the city's turmoil, thinking, "the city was exploding—the burning, the anger, the screams of murder and helplessness—was, in a way, like home" (Upadhyay 252). The narrative captures the intersection of race, identity, and societal conflict in a multicultural landscape.

Mad Country delves into Nepal's political, social, and cultural dimensions, reflecting identity, inequality, and resistance complexities. Upadhyay weaves intricate narratives illuminating the struggles and resilience of individuals navigating the challenges of a rapidly changing world. Through these stories, he offers a poignant commentary on contemporary society's multifaceted nature of cultural identity.

2.4 Tracing Cultural Identity in Shradha Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter*

Shradha Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter* is presented within the framework of Nepali society as an analysis of how caste, class, gender, and ethnicity intersect to create personal and collective identities. Tracing the Tamule family's story, the novel

presents duality where the narrative critiques marginalisation and assimilation through Nepal's hierarchical social structures.

The texts portray the conflict between caste and class through characters such as Premkala and Sumnima, who face the pressure of societal expectations versus their desires. For instance, Premkala is met with suspicion and contempt by her in-laws due to being a Limbu and having a diet comprising pigs. Her mother-in-law's inability to reconcile Premkala's culture with her own reflects the deeply ingrained prejudices of caste-based hierarchies. For example, her in-laws ditched over whether to include her, a pig-eating Limbuni, in their Bahun-style rituals: "They would at one minute set her alongside her husband in a sacred place and the other, shunt her into the corner like an untouchable." (Ghale 12)

Nepali's society shows stratification among social cultures in which the minority ones have to fit into the major one's practices. This reflects Bhabha's concept of hybridity, where the intersection of cultural practices challenges hegemonic norms and destabilises established hierarchies (113). The Tamule family's attempts to integrate into Kathmandu's urban elite reflect the hybridisation of traditional and modern identities. Gajendra, Premkala's husband, is a good example of this duality. Even as he dons high-caste Hindu practices to get social acceptance, his love for pork delicacies among his wife's cultural traditions shows a more fluid approach to identity: "Despite his boundless respect for ancestors, Tamuleji could not resist the pork delicacies that were so popular among his wife's people" (Ghale 61). Such ambivalence underlines the complex negotiation of cultural identity in a hierarchical society.

The generational conflict, therefore, complicates the formation of identity. For instance, Sumnima, the protagonist, fights to balance her indigenous heritage and aspirations towards upward mobility and modernity. The shame about the family's rural roots and the desire for wealth explain the forces of assimilation in a globalised world: "Sumnima wouldn't want her friends to know her father drove a motorcycle... She hated the plain round steel container her food her mother packed" (Ghale 110). Sumnima's identity is formed through constant interaction with different cultural texts and the need for external validation from society.

Gender is also one aspect that influences cultural identity in the novel. Ghale criticises patriarchal norms that make women subordinate to men and confine them to the role of subordination and cultural heritage preservation. Gajendra's mother reflects these expectations when she asks for a male child: "A son is a son after all. He'll gather his father's ashes... He'll free his ancestors from sins" (Ghale viii). This echoes Bhabha's notion of mimicry, as women's replication of patriarchal norms reveals the tension between upholding cultural traditions and questioning their validity (86).

Premkala resists the norms by showing she has a personal life; this shows how one believes she is made up of more than her life of being a wife and a mother: "I am made up of stuff that precedes your Gajey, so stop treating me like his shadow" (Ghale 11-12). Premkala's resistance embodies Bhabha's unhomely, where the tension between personal desires and cultural expectations creates spaces of ambivalence and identity negotiation (10). The conflict of following societal norms versus not can symbolise how gender roles transform within a multicultural society.

As these elements of political history take their place within the novel's landscape, contextualising the struggle for cultural identity. On top of this, the Khambuwan Liberation Movement also stands, which goes beyond just rejecting Hindu-centric national festivals and their Dasain celebrations with "They've decided it's not their festival. Hindu king forced it on us, so we should stop celebrating it" (Ghale 213). These are movements that reflect the demands for recognition and autonomy of the minority communities in Nepal, echoing Taylor's claim that the recognition of cultural differences is essential to achieving social justice in multicultural societies.

The Wayward Daughter captures cultural identity's fluid and contested nature in a multicultural society. While the Tamule family has to travel from rural Lungla to urban Kathmandu, it is a microcosmic representation of Nepal's transition in broader socio-politics. While some, for example, Gajendra, seek assimilation into these dominant cultural norms, other characters, such as Premkala and Sumnima, resist and redefine their identities. The novel makes the nuances of caste, class, gender, and ethnicity in opposition to simplification in terms of multiculturalism, underlining complexity and contradiction with cultural hybridity.

2.5 Tracing Cultural Identity in Buddhisagar Chapagain's *Karnali Blues*

Buddhisagar Chapagain's *Karnali Blues* is a deep coming-of-age story that explores the issues of cultural identity, customs, and the impact of modernisation in a multicultural social setup. The novel is deeply embedded in Nepal's local and cultural context, reflecting the protagonist's inner turmoil amidst various traditions, religions, and social customs.

Many factors, including religion, folklore, language, and social stratification, influence the cultural identity of Karnali Blues. The protagonist, Brisha Bahadur, exists in a world where different cultures intersect with moments of unity and conflict. The text explains how cultural practice shapes individual and communal identity and how cultural practice and external forces like modernisation and migration interact. This aligns with Stuart Hall's notion of cultural identity as a 'positioning,' formed at the intersection of historical narratives and cultural dynamics (225), and Bhabha's concept of temporal disjunction, where modernity disrupts continuity, creating tensions between tradition and progress (250).

Religious beliefs play a vital role in defining cultural identity. Brisha is exposed to numerous religious practices, highlighting the deep-rooted spiritual traditions in his community. For instance, he observes his sister's devotion to Santoshi Mata:

At the head of Sister's bed, he saw the big medicine carton that contained a photo of the goddess Santoshi Mata. Santoshi Mata had a long straight shapely nose and red lips. Once, Sister watched the film *Jay Santoshi Ma* on a video at Tikapur, and after that, she became a Santoshi Mata devotee (Chapagain 51). This passage underscores the importance of religion in personal and family life. The influence of media in reinforcing religious devotion also speaks to the dynamic nature of cultural identity in a changing society.

Folklore and superstitions also shape cultural identity. Fear of supernatural entities like *Bandevi* and *Masaan* ghosts influences the protagonist's perception of his surroundings: "When I heard that Ban Devi lived in the forest and terrorised children and that she made their stomachs swell up so that they died, I was afraid to go out to

peeing when I needed to during the night” (Chapagain 26). Such superstitions reveal how fear and reverence shape everyday life and cultural narratives within the protagonist’s community. This resonates with James Clifford’s assertion that “cultural identity is a site of struggle” (9), always negotiated through encounters with the unfamiliar.

The language of *Karnali Blues* serves as a powerful marker of identity. Initially written in Nepali, the novel uses regional dialects and idiomatic expressions to provide a sense of place and belonging. The protagonist reflects on his mother tongue: “Mother spoke in a soft, lilting tone that reminded me of the lullabies of our village” (Chapagain 202).

However, his gradual exposure to various linguistic landscapes illustrates how language can unify and alienate in multicultural settings, reflecting Stuart Hall’s theory that cultural identity is a fluid, evolving process shaped by historical and social contexts (225).

Social structures and hierarchies also play a crucial role in defining cultural identity. The novel captures moments where societal norms dictate behaviour, particularly regarding gender roles and caste-based practices. For instance, when a girl is forbidden from participating in a funeral procession, it reflects rigid gender norms: “No one would allow Parvati to follow. They said a girl should not join a funeral procession” (Chapagain 123).

Similarly, caste-based customs reinforce social divisions. The astrologer’s fear that a pig might touch Basudev highlights caste discrimination: “The astrologer didn’t let Basudev go out for fear that if he wandered about in the village, he might be

touched by a pig.” (Chapagain 32); “When I entered the yogi’s hut, he would ask me in Hindi from behind a cloud of smoke, Child, will you eat some prasada?” (Chapagain 202)

In *Karnali Blues*, cultural identity is a complex interplay of tradition, folklore, social hierarchies, and modern influences. The novel vividly depicts a multicultural society where historical legacies, religious beliefs, and contemporary changes constantly shape identities. Through Brisha’s journey, the readers experience the resilience and adaptability of cultural identity when confronted with the evolving world.

2.6 Tracing Cultural Identity in Greta Rana’s *Hostage*

In *Hostage*, Greta Rana intricately explores cultural identity challenges in a multicultural society against economic migration, political unrest, and cultural alienation. The novel portrays the struggles of individuals, particularly Hari Prasad, who navigate the complex intersections of their traditional identities and the demands of survival in an increasingly globalised world.

Hari Prasad’s journey from his rural village in Nepal to the Gulf embodies the cultural dislocation migrant labourers face. This displacement is poignantly captured in Rana’s observation: “The intricacies of who was Brahmin, Chettri, Newar, Madesi, Janjati¹⁵, Hill tribe didn’t matter. For the people of Qatar, they were Nepali, laborers” (Rana 22). The homogenisation of diverse cultural identities into a singular label underscores the erasure of individuality in a foreign land. This reduction aligns with

¹⁵ Ethnically indigenous groups in Nepal who are distinct from the dominant Hindu caste groups; officially recognised by the Nepali government.

Edward Said's critique of Orientalism, wherein individuals from non-Western societies are commodified and dehumanised for economic exploitation. The cultural richness and distinctiveness of Hari Prasad's identity are rendered invisible under the economic and social hierarchies of the Gulf.

Hari Prasad's sense of alienation is compounded by the contrasting landscapes of his homeland and workplace. This alienation mirrors Hall's insight into the colonial experience, which fractures identity through trauma and displacement (225). The Rapti River, a recurring motif in the novel, symbolises his deep-rooted connection to Nepal. This displacement echoes Bhabha's concept of the unhomely, where personal and cultural histories intersect to reveal the ambivalences of identity in the face of political and social disruption (10). In contrast, the desert's harshness mirrors his isolation: "The sands along the banks of the Rapti were different from those of the desert. The white sands of the river were sonorous... This desert sand seemed hard, hard as rock under the merciless glare of the sun" (Rana 27). This juxtaposition highlights the psychological and cultural toll of displacement.

In *Hostage*, Hari Prasad occupies this liminal space, navigating his traditional values while adapting to the demands of a foreign culture. This resonates with Bhabha's notion of hybridity, where cultural identities are reshaped in transitional spaces, challenging established norms and creating new sites of negotiation (114). His attempts to communicate with his family via mobile phones symbolise both his connection to and separation from his roots: "Prem had taught him much and had helped him get a mobile... Later they bought a mobile at his suggestion and communication was even easier and more frequent, albeit more expensive" (Rana 79).

These efforts to maintain familial ties amidst cultural alienation illustrate the creation of a hybrid identity, blending the old and the new.

Rana also explains how workers develop unions across differences in Nepali regional and caste identities in the Gulf region. They come to share a solidarity rooted in communal adversity. In this context, Hari Prasad's observation, "The hearty laughter made the dark room glow. they had forged a bond they would never have forged in their land" (Rana 25), is an illustration of the union developed. This newly imagined cultural identity, formed in exile, reflects the ability of marginalised communities to adapt to multicultural societies.

Rana's narrative underscores the intersectionality of class and cultural identity, mainly through the exploitation of migrant labourers. The commodification of these workers is starkly depicted: "They had been picked up as the most expendable human commodities... to make an example" (Rana 104). This portrayal aligns with Said's theory of Orientalism, which critiques the systemic devaluation of non-Western peoples. In the Gulf, Nepali labourers are relegated to the lowest rungs of society, their cultural identities overshadowed by economic imperatives.

Hari Prasad's reflections on his motivations for migration reveal the economic and social pressures that drive individuals to leave their homelands. He laments, "My son received it, yes. But I was not aware it was your People's Court. The only court I recognise is the Supreme Court of this nation" (Rana 62). This statement underscores the intersection of personal agency and systemic coercion, where individuals must navigate conflicting loyalties to their cultural roots and economic realities.

Despite the challenges of displacement and exploitation, Hari Prasad's connection to his cultural identity remains steadfast. His final moments are imbued with imagery of his homeland: "As the bullets tore through his skull, the last sound he heard was the rush of wind and the anger of the waves on the Rapti in spate" (Rana 118). This poignant ending underscores the enduring power of cultural memory, even in the face of death. Hari Prasad's sacrifices highlight the resilience of marginalised individuals in preserving their identities amidst adversity.

Rana's critique of globalisation extends beyond the personal struggles of her characters to encompass systemic inequities. The novel exposes the exploitative practices of multinational corporations and the complicity of local governments in perpetuating these injustices. Hari Prasad observes, "The company officials amassed their fortunes and bought their posh cars and villas on the sweat of so many backs" (Rana 116). This critique resonates with the works of scholars like Arjun Appadurai, who argue that globalisation exacerbates inequalities by privileging the interests of the powerful over the marginalised.

In *Hostage*, Greta Rana delivers a deep cultural approach towards identity in multicultural communities by underlining fluidity and resilience. By understanding the journey of Hari Prasad, the novel analyses the complexities of displacement, hybridity, and systemic inequalities while revealing the complex multiformity of identity that might exist in the same world.

2.7 Conclusion

A multicultural society's exploration of cultural identity uncovers the complex interplay between tradition, modernity, and the sociopolitical landscapes that shape individual and collective identities. In this regard, the chapter has explored how

Nepali English literature depicts tensions, transformations, and negotiations of cultural identity through the works of Manjushree Thapa, Samrat Upadhyay, Shradha Ghale, Greta Rana, and Buddhisagar Chapagain. The analyses of characters who navigate urbanisation, migration, political instability, and cross-cultural interactions reflect the complexity of identity formation.

The research questions addressed include how select novelists depict Nepali cultural identity and how multiculturalism perspectives unfold nuances within Nepal's political culture. The answers to these research questions then come richly in depictions of images of struggle, strength and change to epitomise cultural heritage against world influences of juxtaposition and the socio-political turmoil and individual problems that undermine the old and open the doors into cultural hybridity. Significant themes that emerge very strongly in the study include the fluidity of cultural identities, globalisation, the persistence of patriarchy, and changes in identities through migration. The stories that show cultural dislocation and system imbalances, which outline their life experiences, comment aptly on the human condition in such multicultural settings.

This study underscores cultural identity as being dynamic and fluid in its creation, and historical, political, and social contexts also determine this aspect. This work foregrounds the role of literature in the crossing of local and global perspectives. It opens a view from which the complexity of identity could be understood in a more inter-connected world.

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CHAPTER III

Cultural Displacement and Assimilation

3.1 Diaspora and Cultural Displacement

Diaspora is a term which describes the relocation of a community from one geographical or cultural region to another. It comes from the Greek word diaspeirein, meaning “to scatter,” and the first time it was used in connection with the Jews was after the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century BCE. In his article, William Safran states that the idea was initially related to the forced dispersion of the Jewish people from their homeland, but now it is a term for many communities that live outside their native lands, however, they still hold the cultural and emotional ties to those (83). According to Robin Cohen, diaspora communities are those whose sense of identity has been shaped by a collective memory and myth of the homeland, a feeling of estrangement in the place of settlement, faith in a future return, maintaining relations with the homeland, and a strong shared group consciousness (17). The diasporas are some of the most prominent migrations in history, including the Jewish, Aryan, African, Bosnian, Australian, Cornish, Irish, South African, Southeast Asian, and South Asian, including the Indian and Nepali diasporas.

In the digital era, technological developments have significantly changed the dynamics of diaspora, and it is becoming difficult to define the term. Scientific and technological progress has enhanced communication, which has made verbal and facial interactions more accessible and affordable. As a result, diasporic communities have become deeply embedded in the digital age, where the physical and cultural distance between their homeland and the adopted country has been dramatically reduced. This shift has led to a more fluid definition of diaspora that continually

evolves in response to global changes. Shumano Dasgupta, in her research article “Interrogating the Fourth Space”, discusses how transnationalism and transculturation emerge from the global imagination of nation, culture, and community, thereby giving rise to hybrid identities and cultural in-betweenness (117).

Interactions among diverse cultures have facilitated the growth of multicultural societies, with people of diasporic origins often navigating multiple cultural identities. Factors such as politics, social status, occupation, and socioeconomic class significantly influence how diasporic individuals manage their identities. Pathways such as adoption, acculturation, and assimilation are available to diasporic groups, though relocation often leads to identity crises. Migration away from one’s homeland can foster a more objective worldview and contribute to developing new cultural norms. Immigrant culture and ethnic culture differ in aspects such as food, clothing, language preservation, religion, music, dance, community rituals, ceremonies, and traditions, which act as markers of identity. Over time, these markers may be preserved, altered, or adopted in varying ways and settings. However, the sense of unity and a longing for one’s roots often persist even after prolonged periods.

Diasporic literature refers to works created by writers outside their native lands and is often referred to as expatriate or diasporic literature. This genre incorporates nostalgia, memory, imagined homelands, hybridity, identity formation, globalisation, and cosmopolitanism, which define its unique significance.

Key features of diasporic literature encompass the profound use of memory, including vivid recollections of childhood, landscapes, and significant historical events that anchor individuals to their roots. It frequently explores the feeling of being

an outsider in a new society or country, capturing the alienation and disconnection experienced in unfamiliar surroundings. The literature highlights characteristics of the homeland, such as language, rituals, and behaviours, which serve as vital cultural markers and sources of identity. It also involves the reclamation of homeland history and childhood spaces, symbolising a deep longing to reconnect with one's origins. Additionally, diasporic literature often delves into the tension between the desire to assimilate into new cultures and the yearning to retain one's cultural identity, reflecting the complex interplay of adaptation and preservation faced by diasporic individuals. Pokharal posits that

the relationship between diasporic displacement and subsequent cultural output, particularly in creative writing, makes apparent and urgent the plurality and durability of diasporic experiences and how those experiences are committed to memory and demoralisation in literature. (94–95)

Diasporic literature addresses alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, the quest for identity, cross-cultural interactions, fluid identities, and diasporic sensibility. It also engages with fragmentation, racial discrimination, marginalisation, identity crises, cultural clashes, and assimilation. Furthermore, it explores cultural amalgamation and disintegration, vividly portraying the immigrant experience and its evolution during settlement.

In his article “Theorizing Diaspora”, Michele Reis contends that dislocation and regeneration processes often unfold within the context of globalisation, rendering contemporary diasporas dynamic and unpredictable (53). These dynamics of existing diasporas aforementioned by Reis aligns with Ran's saying that the diasporic texts are seen more as a focus on such themes as location, displacement, or relocation,

reflecting it as the never-ending concept of home and the anxiety of taking life as a homeless person. In her work “Theme of Alienation and Displacement”, Suman Rani observes that concepts such as location, displacement, and relocation can be explored in diasporic texts. She highlights the evolving definition of home, the associated anxiety of homelessness, and the impossibility of return as recurring themes (253). P.V. Laxmiprasad in his article “Diasporic Literature” notes that “the diasporic tension is not only spatial (torn between nations/cultures) but also temporal (split between the past and the present)” (104). The main point of Laxmiprasad’s study is the interplay of spatial and temporal and its consequences in diaspora which Timalasina singles out by stressing the central role of collective memory and idealized homeland myths, thus suggesting that by calibrating oneself between the past and present, diasporic identities have inevitably evolved in the process. Timalasina in his article “*Subversion of Ideologies in Manjushree Thapa’s Tilled Earth*” emphasises that diaspora maintains some collective memory and idealised homeland myths; and so, has a nostalgic look/take on them.

Diaspora communities frequently face cultural displacement as they navigate life in unfamiliar and diverse cultural environments. When individuals from specific cultural or ethnic backgrounds settle in new locations, they often change cultural customs, beliefs, and identities. Cultural displacement, also called cultural dislocation, involves significant transformations in cultural practices, beliefs, and identities triggered by migration, colonisation, globalisation, or other external forces. This phenomenon influences numerous aspects, including migration and diaspora, globalisation, cultural erosion, identity loss, cultural resistance, cultural assimilation within the diaspora, adoption of new cultural practices, religious adaptation, identity negotiation, and cultural retention or resistance.

Scholars such as Avtar Brah, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Vijay Mishra, and Robin Cohen have contributed critical perspectives on cultural displacement and assimilation in diaspora contexts. Avtar Brah highlights the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and ethnicity in shaping experiences of displacement and assimilation. She describes the diasporic imaginary in terms of imagining and experiences with the diasporic community, and she emphasises transnational connections as contributing to the constitution of diasporic identities (208).

Brah's emphasis on the link between intersectionality and transnational connections in diaspora identity is not only in line with Hall's position, according to which cultural identity is always unstable and culturally dependent, but also their concepts to evolving and dynamic diasporic identities are the same. While Stuart Hall stresses that cultural identity is not a fix but somewhat fluid and temporal, it becomes an evolution process, elaborated upon by history and social setting. Indeed, he believes that identities are constructed through representation and discourse, specialising in the issue of hybridity and identity politics as the practice of diasporic communities (225).

In his theory, Homi Bhabha introduces the concept of 'hybridity' as blending different cultural elements into new forms. He further explicates the 'Third Space' as a transitional space where hybrid identities are negotiated; this allows an element of adaptation to culture without complete assimilation (4). Ideas introduced by Bhabha like the 'Third Space' as a cultural negotiation relate to Mishra's focus on cultural memory. This is because both critics underscore the fact that the identities of diasporic people are constituted via the interaction of adaptation and the retention of common stories. Vijay Mishra underscores the role of cultural memory in sustaining the

identity of diaspora communities. This includes memories of the homeland, shared rituals, and histories, which help maintain a collective sense of identity across generations. Mishra probes the diasporic imaginary, tracing how communities produce and negotiate cultural identities (10). Meanwhile, Robin Cohen addresses transnationalism, concerned with how diaspora communities maintain relationships across borders that define their identity and reality of living. Cohen indicates how diaspora communities handle displacement and assimilation in varied ways (2).

The study will address the following research questions:

1. How does Nepali-English diasporic literature explore the balance between cultural preservation and assimilation vis-à-vis multiculturalism?
2. What roles do memory and nostalgia play in shaping diasporic identities?

3.2 Cultural Displacement and Assimilation in Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth*, *Seasons of Flight* and *All of Us in Our Own Lives*

Tilled Earth

The text *Tilled Earth* by Manjushree Thapa is an engaging account of a diasporic struggle where people leave behind their homeland to survive in the alien land. The text brings a Nepali society rich in cultural diversity and gender complications. Shalini Shah and Tamishra Swain, in their article, "Exploring In-betweenness in Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth*", discuss how the stories of Thapa explore themes of hybridity, cultural fusion, and double consciousness. Characters cannot completely disengage from their native culture, which still lingers very deep in the minds of these characters. This inner conflict finds expression through their actions and relationships, giving them a sense of being torn between embracing the

foreign culture and holding on to what went before them. Consequently, their identity fluctuates continuously (61).

The stories capture Nepal's transformation over a decade, reflecting different periods and the nation's progression from historical traditions to modernity. Thapa portrays protagonists from diverse cultural, geographical, gender, and social class backgrounds, showcasing her ability to intricately depict each character's subjective experiences. Her nuanced exploration of their personalities establishes her as a skilled storyteller.

The title story, "Tilled Earth", revolves around a young Nepali undergraduate student who recently arrived in Seattle, America. Categorised as a "Non-Resident Alien," she experiences feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, and detachment from her homeland. The unfamiliar surroundings heighten her uncertainty, and she clings to the hope of her boyfriend, an older former professor, visiting her to marry and build a life together in America. Struggling with few friends, she faces the challenges of navigating language, culture, and assimilation. In her article "The Notion of American Dream: Interrogating Manjushree Thapa's Tilled Earth From Diasporic Perspectives," Roy observes how Thapa contrasts the protagonist's aspirations in a society that promises much but delivers complexity. Thapa interrogates outdated stereotypes and beliefs while emphasising a globalised world's unfulfilled desires and evolving opportunities. She illustrates how dreams and reality often intersect, only partially fulfilling one's aspirations (194).

As the protagonist adjusts to life in the United States, her journey explores external and internal dimensions of identity. Externally, she learns to navigate daily life by acquiring practical skills, such as obtaining a social security card, finding a

job, and establishing a social network. Internally, she undergoes a transformative awakening, embracing newfound freedom and carving out her place in this foreign land. This self-realisation allows her to sever ties with her romantic partner, recognising that her insecurities and rebellion led her to this relationship. By rediscovering her essence, she ends the relationship and asserts her independence. The absence of a name for the protagonist universalises her experiences, making her relatable to a broad audience. Thapa captures the diaspora experience through this unnamed character, who demonstrates resilience in facing personal challenges while navigating life in a foreign land. By opening the story with the word “Antipodes,” Thapa emphasises the contrast between geographical and cultural extremes. The term “diaspora space,” as Avtar Brah describes, becomes “the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and otherness, of ‘us’ and ‘them,’ are contested” (208).

The narrative charts the protagonist’s personal growth as she adapts to her new environment. Initially uncertain and timid, she gradually gains confidence, immersing herself in the customs and traditions of her host country. Goswami observes that the protagonist strives to adopt a new identity that aligns with her surroundings while experiencing the emotional turmoil familiar to immigrants. She confronts feelings of isolation, displacement, and the struggle to articulate her homeland’s cultural practices to others (9). Thapa poignantly captures this through the protagonist’s words:

She wakes up one night and—seeing the crisp, creamy edges of the ceiling—cannot remember where she is [...] The people she shares the house with intimidate her. They talk too fast in unintelligible twangs. She is unsure about

the people she sees in the streets. Her classmates at the community college are so animated. She does not move the way they do. (Thapa 173)

The language barrier exacerbates her unease, leaving her unable to ask basic questions. Her thoughts drift to memories of her homeland, such as “the plump flesh of aubergine, of burned fenugreek and spinach [...] She whispers to herself in Nepali at bus stops, at doorways, in the shower, in bed in the middle of the night” (Thapa 173). The protagonist struggles to explain Nepal’s cultural nuances, lamenting, “If she were Indian, she could explain herself better. Everyone here knows India” (Thapa 174).

Her romantic relationship with her professor also reflects the cultural divide. While Jenny, her American friend, views the relationship through the lens of Western norms, the protagonist is torn by Nepal’s caste-based restrictions. Jenny’s comment, “A professor? That is bad—but it is not your fault,” reveals the cultural gap in understanding (Thapa 177). The protagonist’s resentment towards Nepali societal constraints clashes with Jenny’s perspective, highlighting the conflicting cultural expectations faced by the diaspora.

Thapa’s narrative captures the protagonist’s gradual detachment from her homeland and her complex emotions of longing and nostalgia. The guidebook she brought from Kathmandu, intended to help her adapt to American life, contradicts her deeply rooted beliefs: “When Americans encounter a person from another culture who is concerned with following tradition, they often say that this person is indecisive, unsure or weak” (Thapa 177). Torn between tradition and modernity, the protagonist reevaluates her values, struggling to balance cultural assimilation with preserving her

heritage. This internal conflict, compounded by the religious disconnection she feels, underscores the estrangement of the diasporic experience.

As her relationship with her boyfriend deteriorates and her life in America becomes increasingly isolated, the protagonist takes the drastic step of becoming an undocumented migrant, abandoning her education and permanently severing ties with her homeland. She reflects on her situation with profound resignation:

She does not tell them that she will be illegal or that she may never finish her schooling or return home. She would not know how to tell them such things; these are messages the Nepali language does not relay. That is neither here nor there. In Nepali, the expression goes: Neither from here nor from there.
(Thapa 186)

The story concludes with the protagonist bidding farewell to her life in Seattle and embracing an uncertain future as an illegal migrant. Thapa's story captures the protagonist's longing and nostalgia:

For hours before she takes the bus to the airport, she stands at the window of her room, looking into the alley off Olive Street, wracked by longing for what she cannot return to—the warm vapours of tilled Earth, her lover's breath.
(Thapa 187)

Thapa masterfully portrays migration's emotional and psychological toll through this journey, exploring the themes of nostalgia, dislocation, and resilience. The protagonist's transformation from a hopeful migrant to someone grappling with freedom, alienation, and painful detachment reveals the profound complexities of the diasporic experience.

The story “The Eldest Son” explores themes of disconnection and displacement, capturing the experiences of its protagonist, referred to as The Eldest Son, who has recently relocated to Chicago as part of the diaspora. Thapa employs a first-person narrative to vividly portray the protagonist’s thoughts and emotions, offering an intimate depiction of the challenges faced by first-generation immigrants. Through this perspective, the story delves into the struggles of navigating life in a foreign land while reflecting on one’s homeland, encapsulating the diasporic sentiment that “Diasporic identity is at once a claim about routes and roots” (Mishra 10).

The narrative illustrates how characters attempt to resist and adapt to the influences of global and local forces. These forces, which are often intertwined, create contrasting dynamics that reflect the theme of glocalisation. The characters’ unease and struggles are shaped by the persistence of these forces, leaving them disturbed, fragmented, and displaced. This dynamic is analysed through globalisation and localisation, underscoring the characters’ unsettled states (Govinda 52–53).

Set on a hot and humid day in Chicago, the protagonist observes the American way of life while comparing it to his experiences as a Nepali immigrant. Through concise yet impactful reflections, Thapa captures the everyday struggles of diaspora individuals in countries like the United States. Rather than narrating the entire story, she presents a snapshot of the protagonist’s life, effectively encapsulating the diaspora experience. The narrative is an internal dialogue between the protagonist and his father, revealing the hardships and sacrifices required to survive in a foreign land while highlighting the protagonist’s longing for home. His dream of living in America brings him to Chicago, where he not only battles the heat but also faces difficulty

finding employment. Being haunted by memories of his father and other financial burdens attached to his home, he feels like an outsider in America and yearns for familiarity in Nepal.

The protagonist considers whether this life in the United States is what it is meant to be. When he thinks of Nepal, he reflects on differences in lifestyles, sophistication, and risk. He likens himself to a tamarind monkey in a zoo, trapped in a dream of freedom. The picture of the monkey in a cage with the painting of a blue sky in the backdrop is not so different from his situation. The painted sky tries to mimic the monkey's home but cannot be its actual home. Likewise, the protagonist cannot find a home in his new surroundings. The nostalgia comes alive through memories caused by mundane objects, such as the patterned tiles of his rented room, which remind him of buying loose cigarettes for his father at a corner shop.

"The European Fling" explores identity and belonging through characters Sharada and Matt, whose backgrounds are very disparate and whose aspirations are different. Sharada is a gender studies expert from the United States, whereas Matt hails from New York and is a bookstore owner who wants a new beginning. They meet again in Europe when attending a seminar in Paris, embarking on a trip they call their "European Fling." Along the way, their relationship appears sour as bridging cultural differences and pursuing personal aspirations becomes difficult. The story captures the emotional struggles of Sharada, Matt, and Gyatso as they grapple with their identities and connections to their homelands (Sharma 218).

During the "European Fling," she rekindles a relationship with Matt, only to face rejection and unmet expectations. Despite these challenges, she asserts her autonomy by pursuing a romantic relationship with Gyatso, a Tibetan man who is

seven years her junior. When Matt proposes marriage as a way for her to leave Nepal, Sharada firmly responds, “I do not need to be rescued” (Thapa 202). Her rejection of Matt’s offer highlights her independence and refusal to conform to societal expectations.

Thapa addresses the diaspora theme through Sharada’s character, who returns to Nepal despite lucrative opportunities abroad. The gender expert works towards the upliftment of the poor women of Nepal, thus symbolising the emancipated self. Such choices by Sharada reflect her practicality in life because she follows her work with no scope for ideals or societal pressures on her mind.

The story also presents Gyatso, a second-generation Tibetan diaspora born and raised in Switzerland. Gyatso was brought up outside Tibet, yet he strongly relates to his culture. He desires to visit Tibet and acknowledges the Dalai Lama’s residence in Dharamshala, India, referring to it as “the centre of our government in exile” (Thapa 207). Gyatso’s consistent use of “our government” emphasises his solidarity with the Tibetan diaspora and deep sense of belonging.

In contrast, Matt embodies a different facet of the diaspora experience. His concept of “home” is not tied to a specific place but reflects an ideal of belonging and emotional harmony. Unlike Gyatso, Matt lacks a deep connection to his physical homeland and instead searches for a place to find a sense of belonging. This cosmopolitan perspective reflects the broader impact of globalisation and modernisation, which have blurred the boundaries of traditional territorial identities. As Bhabha observes, “The interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (4).

Sharada, Gyatso, and Matt represent diverse experiences within the diaspora, reflecting themes of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity. Khanal in his article “Cultural Inbetweenness and Double Vision in Manjushree Thapa’s *Tilled Earth*” notes that *Tilled Earth* explores “in-betweenness and double vision” as characters navigate different cultures, facing challenges while gaining insights and enrichment” (32).

Thapa’s narratives incorporate the voices of the diaspora, each shaped by unique experiences. Sharada represents a return to one’s homeland, Gyatso reflects the second-generation diaspora’s longing for ancestral connections, and Matt explores the philosophical aspect of belonging. Thapa enriches her diaspora narrative through these characters, illustrating the multifaceted nature of identity and the emotional ties that connect individuals to their roots.

Seasons of Flight

Manjushree Thapa’s novel *Seasons of Flight* (2012) is set against Nepal’s transition into the Federal Democratic Republic. The story revolves around the diasporic protagonist, Prema, whose life journey provides insights into multiculturalism in her native Nepal and the United States, her host country. Prema, a young woman with limited familial, national, or village ties, wins a U.S. government green card lottery and moves to Los Angeles. She struggles to build a life in an unfamiliar city, navigating love and self-discovery there. As Agger states, multiculturalism reflects postmodern perspectives emphasising the differences among people rather than their commonalities. Although the novel primarily follows Prema’s journey and echoes Nepal’s political turmoil, including the Maoist-Nepalese military conflict, it weaves through the narrative without overshadowing her story. This subtle

inclusion of political undertones lends the novel a nuanced dimension while remaining nonpartisan (69). Rabi Thapa observes that *Seasons of Flight* is a “sincere endeavour to delve into the journey of life across time, space, and human society. Undoubtedly, it will speak to many Nepalis who have experienced the pleasure and pain of leaving one’s home behind and seeking another” (Nepali Times).

Unlike her peers who dreamed of migrating to the West for better opportunities, Prema initially felt content with her life in Nepal, as “at a certain age, Prema also wondered whether she should go abroad, but then she had got this job and settled into the hill bazaar” (Thapa 17). However, her life takes an unexpected turn when she wins the Diversity Visa (DV) lottery, offering her the chance to move to America. The escalating conflict between the Maoists and the Nepali government further fuels her decision to leave as she reflects:

The Maoists would not give up, nor would the king and the army, and people who had nothing to do with either side would draw in. Should she not leave? This shabby, Third World country. Having received a chance—Having won a lottery... America. Nepal. America. Nepal. (Thapa 66)

Prema’s displacement results partly from her fortune and Nepal’s political upheaval. Her relocation allows readers to explore how her identity evolves in the multicultural landscape of the United States and her native Nepal. The central question remains whether she fully embraces the foreign culture or remains in inner conflict. Melissa Lam highlights how linguistic hybridity, nostalgia, and homelessness complicate diasporic identity politics, sparking debates about belonging, multiculturalism, and border-crossing (316). Lam’s exploration of linguistic hybridity, nostalgia, and homelessness parallels Deepthi V.G.’s analysis of cultural dislocation,

as both emphasise the struggles of identity, belonging, and the search for home in diasporic experiences. Similarly, Deepthi notes that Prema's search for identity reflects individuals' struggles in their homelands and host countries. She argues that cultural dislocation—whether voluntary or forced—leads to a loss of identity and detachment from one's roots, compelling individuals to envision a home to escape alienation (488).

Upon arriving in America, Prema is supported by fellow Nepali expatriates Sushil and Neeru, who guide her through the complexities of life in her new country. Neeru takes on a maternal role, teaching Prema essential survival skills:

She thought Prema needed to know to survive in this land... When Neeru said 'foreigners,' she meant Americans. Neeru taught her where to buy phone cards, where to check email, how to take the bus to the Department of Motor Vehicles and get the State of California identity card. (Thapa 111)

Prema's journey of self-discovery intensifies as she navigates relationships in America. Her romance with Luis, a Latino-American, reflects cultural differences and shared struggles. Luis remarks, "I know, I know, it is corny. What I mean is there are so many cultural differences between us. But it is like there's no Nepal, no America. Just us, you know?" (Thapa 102). Despite cultural integration challenges, Prema explores her identity in a multicultural world. While Prema seeks independence and rejects societal approval, Pooja Swamy observes that her longing for companionship reveals an inner conflict. This tension is evident when she reflects, "Someone as jagged and unmade as she: how could she fit into the format of relationship? American or Nepali?" (496).

As Prema grapples with life in Los Angeles, she confronts her alienation in a city of diversity, observing: “In the metropolis of millions, there were only ever a few people walking on the pavements. Where was everyone? She had not known there were so many Latinos, Asian, and African American people in America” (Thapa 114).

Even Luis’s fascination with Eastern culture underscores the complex interplay of cultural identities. His references to Nepali food, Hindu gurus, meditation, and yoga highlight his deep interest in the East: “It is like— I have to go over there someday, to Reesh-kesh or Haar-dwaar, with all those hermits meditating in caves. Like something is saying, yo Luis, get yourself over here, pronto. Is that crazy?” (Thapa 48).

While Prema navigates cultural diversity, she also faces prejudice and stereotypes. She hears xenophobic remarks from other immigrants, revealing the complexities of multiculturalism:

Every time the black man comes to our shop, I am worried he’ll rob us, one man said. Do not be too friendly with Mexicans; one woman told Prema every time they met. If they talk to you, just say no habla Espanol. Another woman told her, Never trust the Chinese. Or the Koreans. And always watch for the Indians. As though in all of America, only they and the white people were pure. (Thapa 112)

Sarah Joseph defines multiculturalism as “a desired end-state, as a way of referring to a society in which different cultures are respected and the reproduction of culturally defined groups is protected, and social diversity celebrated” (159). However, Prema’s interactions reveal the underlying challenges of recognition in such

a society, as Luis reflects, “You come to this country thinking you will have a better life, and it turns out you are living in the places that most locals are scared to live in” (Thapa 159).

Prema remains connected to her Nepali roots, frequently sending money to her family and reminiscing about her homeland:

Once a month, she went to the Money Gram Family Market to wire money to her father... There were constant nagging questions—should I stay, should I go? Have I gone far enough? Was this progress enough? Or should she try to progress further? (Thapa 234)

Her nostalgia is vividly portrayed through flashbacks and visits to “Little Nepal” in Los Angeles, where she indulges in Nepali food and chants bhajans. The sight of momos in America evokes her deep-rooted connection to Nepal: “Momos!... Can you believe? Momos in America!” (Thapa 171). Manohar Dujage observes that Prema’s displacement makes her identity fragile, exacerbating her insecurity and alienation in a foreign land (10115).

Despite trying to adapt, Prema remains uncertain about her place in the world. This ambiguity is captured in her interaction with Luis: “Take me to your world! Prema cries. I left the world I had and do not belong in the one I am in now—your world. I do not have any place to take you, Luis. I do not have a place in the world” (Thapa 212).

Prema’s evolving identity reflects the complexities of globalised diasporic citizenship. Sunila Gurung notes that she transcends human and national boundaries, embracing diverse cultural elements while challenging homogenisation (153).

Seasons of Flight portrays Prema's journey as an exploration of cultural displacement, identity formation, and the enduring pull of home. Through cross-cultural encounters, nostalgia, and self-reflection, Thapa captures the complexities of life as an immigrant, revealing the profound impact of displacement on identity and belonging.

All of Us in Our Own Lives

In *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, Manjushree Thapa explores the challenges of modern Nepali society as it grapples with cultural identity and economic inequality amidst globalisation. The characters' lives are interwoven in meaningful ways that deeply influence and shape each other.

The story tracks Ava, an orphan from Nepal adopted by a Canadian couple, as she journeys back to her homeland seeking identity. Alongside this storyline, Gyanu, an expatriate Nepali chef working in Dubai, is trying to plan his future in Dubai with his Filipina girlfriend. Two contrasting stories become parallel journeys into self-discovery, highlighting the deep human desire to belong. Thapa intricately weaves their stories to illustrate the complexity of identity and the pursuit of a place to call home. Rosalyn D'Mello observes that

despite the seeming world-weariness this self-aware novel often projects, what makes it riveting is the determination of Thapa's protagonists and their intriguingly rendered sense of consciousness that casts them as significantly accurate, even endearingly, as people who decide to pursue private callings as selfish as such may be called, and through doing so win for themselves both the privileges of agency and relative freedom. (D'Mello)

D'Mello and Pande find Thapa's novel valuable for exploring the complexities of identity and D'Mello puts the spotlight on the foremost characters' self-awareness and agency, while Pande lauds the novel for its original form and content. Meha Pande praises Thapa's nuanced portrayal of identity, noting that the novel is "rich and refreshing to read in the day and age where South Asian diasporic writing is moving towards a certain form which tends to be formulaic tales of nostalgia, loss, and a crisis of identity for the immigrants settled abroad" (Pande).

The characters Ava, Gyanu, Indira, Sapana, and Chandra represent diverse diaspora perspectives and reflect Nepali society's nuances. While Ava rediscovers her roots, Gyanu stands for the struggle of Nepali migrant workers, Indira represents professional resilience, Sapana dreams of elevating her community, and Chandra represents exploitation by undocumented Nepali workers abroad. Thapa penetrates these characters for displacement, identity, and the general search for belonging.

Thapa vividly narrates the hardship Nepali diaspora workers face, like Gyanu, who experiences hardships in alien countries and dreams of having better lives. Ava is a fostered Nepali child brought up in Canada whose story presents a melting pot of cultures providing alternative viewpoints to multiculturalism and identity. Her professional career in Nepal elaborates on why she has difficulty balancing her cultural roots and self-perception perfectly.

The book traces the story of Ava Berriden, a lawyer from Canada who returns to Nepal to find her roots and join an NGO. Disillusioned by corruption and inefficiency in the aid sector, Ava begins reflecting on her identity and privileges. Her desire to visit the orphanage where she was adopted highlights her inner conflict:

Jesus. How had her life become so dreary? How had she become so dull? She had been born into the jagged world: she knew there were alternative lives for her. She and Luke used to talk about this all the time growing up. When their parents brought Ava from Kathmandu to Overland, Ontario, they set her off in one direction, but she could choose another. She could even reverse the course if she wanted. (Thapa 2)

Gyanu, another central figure, faces challenges as a migrant worker in Dubai. His relationship with Maleah, a Filipina, highlights the struggles of multicultural relationships amidst socioeconomic disparities. Gyanu dreams of returning to Nepal to care for his ailing father, but he recognises the limitations imposed by his life abroad: “No one was indispensable in the desert” (Thapa 5). Thapa juxtaposes Gyanu’s longing for home with Ava’s search for direction, illustrating the different facets of diaspora longing.

Indira, a Nepali professional in Paris, reflects the diaspora’s duality as she balances life in developed countries with her roots in Nepal. She laments the contrast between her homeland and the opportunities abroad:

Whenever she was in the developed world, Indira always regretted how she, as a Nepali, had to blunder through life without refinement or joy, merely getting the needful done. Emotionally, it saddened her, though rationally, she understood why this was so. There was no comparison and contrast between her life and the lives of people from Paris. The developed world was the developed world, and Nepal was Nepal. (Thapa 8)

Characters like Surya further illustrate the exploitation of Nepali labour migrants. Surya leaves Nepal to work in India, losing contact with her family for years. The community suspects she may have been trafficked, a reality faced by many Nepali women seeking work abroad.

Gyanu and his peers face systemic challenges as part of the labour diaspora in the Middle East. Their vulnerability to exploitation and harsh working conditions highlights the sacrifices made for economic survival. Gyanu's reflections capture this reality:

So many Nepali brothers and sisters suffered at home and then came here and suffered even more. So many, like Fuchhe, perished. Everyone who worked in the desert recognised the haunted expressions of the distressed. In the past month alone, six workers from Gyanu's home district had been cheated by a manpower agency. A Nepali sister had been raped and became pregnant. One of the other servers at Five Spices kept breaking down in the middle of work but would not say why. The desert could be ruthless, Gyanu knew, but it had given him everything he had. His livelihood. A future. True love. (Thapa 15)

Despite his hardships, Gyanu dreams of returning to Nepal, but the harsh reality of limited opportunities forces him to reconsider. His employer, Shantanu Kumar, encapsulates the mindset of migrant workers when he advises Gyanu: "Free yourself from your entanglements there. The village is the past; it holds you back. The future is in cities like Dubai. For people like us, opportunities take time to come by, Beta. You have to take them when you can" (Thapa 74).

Ava's return to Nepal marks a transformative period of self-discovery. Initially hesitant to embrace her roots, she gradually begins to connect with Nepal's landscapes and cultural heritage:

By the time they left the resort, a haze had settled over the sky, and the Himalayas were no longer visible. Ava started, nevertheless, at the undulating hills and steep mountains. There were houses scattered about in small clusters—villages. One or two houses stood alone, separated from the rest. They looked fragile and unprotected against the vastness. It was impossible not to think: I could have been born in one of those houses. (Thapa 47)

A pivotal moment in Ava's journey is her visit to the orphanage where she was adopted. Initially reluctant, Ava ultimately confronts her past, gaining closure and a deeper understanding of her identity:

The orphanage differed slightly from the crumbling wreck she had remembered it as. It was palatial, if run-down and ornate, decorated with columns, arches, and balustrades. There were two entrances, each flanked by Greek-style fluted columns with Corinthian capitals. The paint on the façade was chipping, as it was on the doors and windows, but there was a faded grandeur to the building. (Thapa 79)

Ava's experiences in Nepal bring clarity and a sense of purpose. By assisting characters like Gyanu, Sapana, and Indira, Ava finds fulfilment in supporting others while reconnecting with her heritage. Her journey demonstrates the complexities of diaspora identity and the universal quest for belonging.

3.3 Cultural Displacement and Assimilation in Samrat Upadhyay's *The Royal Ghosts, Buddha's Orphans and Mad Country*

The Royal Ghosts

Cultural displacement and assimilation are central themes in Samrat Upadhyay's *The Royal Ghosts*, where stories revolve around various professions and shed light on critical social issues such as child marriage, polygamy, exploitation, the challenges of widows and labourers, and gender inequality. The narratives, set against the backdrop of the ongoing Civil War in Nepal, delve into the struggles of diverse characters as they navigate a multiethnic, sociocultural, and religiously complex society, striving for equality and prosperity (Koirala 32).

The story "A Refugee" portrays the political and cultural upheaval caused by the conflict between the Maoists and the government, which results in significant civilian casualties. Kabita loses her husband to the Maoists' revolutionary cause, as conveyed in a letter that reads, "They killed him in front of his wife Pitambar, can you imagine what that must have been like?" (Upadhyay 2). Her struggle to survive in Kathmandu and provide for her daughter exemplifies the difficulties faced by lower-class women defying male dominance. The war transforms Kabita, propelling her into a position of resilience despite societal obstacles. This ongoing conflict also manifests in Pitambar's reflections on violent incidents and his disbelief in the harm caused to innocent villagers by the revolutionaries. When Pitambar questions, "Is it really that simple? Your Maoists are causing harm to the innocent villagers, the very people they claim to be fighting for," his colleague dismissively replies, "They are casualties of the revolution. They're martyrs, but the revolution has to go on" (Upadhyay 4). Such exchanges underscore the societal tensions of the time.

In “The Third Stage,” Rangit offers insight into the changing landscape of Nepali cinema, critiquing its increasing commercialisation. Rangit expresses dissatisfaction with the industry’s trajectory, noting, “It’s hard to pinpoint what our movies are about. They’re so influenced by Indian movies—you know, Bollywood. Yes, I guess you can call them musicals, but too often these days the song and dance are barely connected to the plot” (Upadhyay 56). His reluctant acceptance of a father’s role in a film illustrates his struggle to reconcile artistic integrity with the industry’s commercial demands. Rangit reflects on the compromises made, mainly when Diwakar replaces a significant scene with a more provocative one, reflecting the prioritisation of sensationalism over substance. Although the film succeeds commercially, Rangit’s injuries and disillusionment prevent him from fully returning to the industry, signalling the complexities of artistic pursuit in a rapidly changing cultural milieu.

In “Supreme Pronouncements,” Nepal’s political culture and class struggles take centre stage. Suresh, deeply involved in anti-government activities, observes the societal unrest marked by riots, anti-monarchy slogans, and frequent shutdowns. His belief in the inevitability of a western-style democracy contrasts with the corruption and oppression of the emerging government, as he laments, “The new regime is already turning out to be as corrupt and oppressive as the old one, and already those criticising it are being tossed in jails across the country” (Upadhyay 99). The story reflects the socio-political tension and class conflict, as illustrated by Suresh’s experience of being brutalised for his dissent: “Two policemen came to my house and hauled me off to the home minister’s quarters, where the man read my article aloud... The policemen took me to their headquarters, and in a tiny room, they smashed the side of my head and my back with a metal pipe” (Upadhyay 82). These accounts

highlight the intersection of political activism, personal sacrifice, and systemic inequities in Nepali society during the civil war.

“The Weight of the Gun” explores familial and ideological conflict through the character of Bhola, whose fascination with the Maoists leads to tensions with his mother, Janaki. Bhola’s desire for a firearm and his radicalisation reflect the lure of authority promised by the Maoists. His mother’s terror escalates upon discovering a gun in his room, and her fears deepen as he disappears. Janaki’s dread is palpable when she dreams of Bhola’s demise: “She had a terrible nightmare, about Bhola hanging from a river by the side of the hill, a noose around his neck” (Upadhyay 113). Her subsequent depression and isolation mirror the personal toll of political strife. In the story’s poignant conclusion, her hope and uncertainty are encapsulated when she hears someone at her door and wonders if Bhola has returned, only to find herself paralysed with fear: “Who knew where he had been? Who knew what crazy thoughts now cluttered his mind?” (Upadhyay 121).

The Royal Ghosts effectively captures the essence of Nepal’s socio-political landscape during a tumultuous era. These stories demonstrate the meeting points of individual and social struggle: how war and political turbulence, migration and economic problems touch down in various personal lives and stories. Here again, with civil war raging on, people fight their wars through large movements against their forced relocation and against being assimilated and fighting personal internal conflicts as well. The text thus emphasises, in its vivid narrative of struggles of the middle and lower classes, that it is also about resistance and civil awareness; female characters here often figure more prominently in ethical and social change. That enables this novel to be even more nuanced in describing the diasporic identity and conflicts of

getting into multiple worlds as reflective of greater sociopolitical and cultural changes at work in contemporary Nepal.

Buddha's Orphans

Samrat Upadhyay's novel *Buddha's Orphans* unravels the intricate cultural displacement and assimilation processes in Nepali society. The protagonists have to seek a balance between their cultural bases and globalisation's needs. Upadhyay addresses how, through the characters of Raja, Nilu, and Ranjana, the four forces of race, class, political instability, and multiple cultural identities come together in the novel.

In Buddha's Orphans, cultural dislocation profoundly impacts the characters in Nepal and elsewhere. Being abandoned as a child illustrates Raja as estranged from society, and he grows up on the periphery of Kathmandu. All the sobriety of social prominence cannot erase the scarring of his orphaned past, which affirms the outcomes of displacement. Likewise, Ranjana's experiences in the United States reflect the struggles of holding onto one's culture while trying to fit into the new environment. This tension can be seen in the way Nilu rebukes Raja about his objections toward their daughter spending too much time with Nepali culture, saying, "What's the point of spending so much money to travel all the way to America if all you ever did was fraternise with your own countrymen? She's going there to study, not to plunge herself into Nepali culture, which she knows well by now" (Upadhyay 358).

Ranjana's sojourn in America encapsulates the identity crisis that usually follows displacement. She faces race prejudices within the Nepali diaspora, where

derogatory attitudes towards black Americans reveal a much deeper tussle with cultural assimilation. Her relationship with Amos, the black American, reflects her effort to defy these biases while affirming her identity in a multicultural context. She notes the contradictions of Nepali attitudes, remarking, “During the New Year’s party, one skinny Nepali girl had said, ‘I get so scared when they come near. I feel like they are going to rob me or rape me or something.’” However, Ranjana sees Amos as “more gentlemanly and intelligent than most Nepali men she’d come across so far” (Upadhyay 405). This dynamic illustrates the intersection of race and identity as Ranjana strives to reconcile the values of her upbringing with her lived experiences abroad.

The narrative also critiques the persistence of caste-based and racial biases within Nepali society. Upon Ranjana’s return to Nepal, she hears remarks about her child’s dark skin and African heritage from society—such as “Chee!! A baby with a habsi father. Disgusting! These kaleys are the worst. Mugging, drugging, murders, riots—you name it, and these blacks are the ones behind it” (Upadhyay 428)—highlight the enduring prejudices of the community. Her decision to conceal her relationship with Amos highlights the tension between personal liberation and societal expectations, showcasing the difficulties of navigating multiple identities.

The novel further explores the power dynamics within familial and social relationships. Raja and Nilu’s tension over their daughter’s cultural immersion exemplifies patriarchal expectations. Nilu’s hesitation about accepting a foreign son-in-law reveals the cultural barriers embedded in such relationships: “We are not ready for a son-in-law, are we? Imagine a stranger in this house, demanding our deference, our samman” (Upadhyay 428). Similarly, Ranjana’s eventual decision to distance

herself from the Nepali community reflects her desire for autonomy. When Amos invites her to discuss Nepali culture and politics on his radio show, she agrees. However, she notes her minimal knowledge of politics and prefers to “stick to the culture” (Upadhyay 406). These instances demonstrate how women in displaced communities must navigate societal and gendered boundaries to assert their independence.

Political instability in Nepal forms a critical backdrop to the characters’ struggles. Raja’s work as a journalist exposes government corruption, such as detailing the prime minister’s foreign bank accounts, even as he notes the country’s post-Rana achievements:

The piece he was working on now was a frontal attack on the prime minister, charging him with corruption, detailing his oversized foreign bank accounts where, Raja wrote, European companies had deposited large amounts for profitable contracts in Nepal. (Upadhyay 433)

The political environment mirrors the emotional displacement experienced by the characters, with journalists and editors frequently being detained: “Over the past few months, several journalists and editors had been hauled off for questioning” (Upadhyay 432). Raja’s critiques of political corruption and his navigation of shifting power dynamics reflect the broader societal struggles with modernisation and identity.

Buddha’s Orphans is Upadhyay’s astute exploration into the complexities of cultural displacement and assimilation, revealing how personal and societal identities are dramatically affected by issues of race, gender, and politics. The characters’ lives highlight the costs of cultural assimilation in a globalised world and how individuals

and communities find their places at the intersection of tradition and change. In the end, the novel reminds us that while assimilation might be a way of survival, it always involves the cost of both cultural and personal identity, making individuals and societies struggle with the outcomes of such transformations.

Mad Country

In *Mad Country* (2017), Samrat Upadhyay portrays the cultural dislocation and integration of Nepal's sombre political and social scenarios. The collection of short stories probes into identity belonging and adaptation, all rich in themes despite the changes in local and global fluxes.

In "Fast Forward", Shalini, a journalist, fights against the repressive political climate in Nepal. The narrative evolves to depict how the entrenched government censorship affects independent journalism. Minister Gujrel uses overt denials and threats to control the media. His intimidation displays a more extensive control imposed over public discourse: "Minister Gujrel smirked as he dismissed Shalini's accusations with a wave of his hand" (Upadhyay 2). Even at the risk of losing her paper and the inevitable threat of closing, Shalini stands as a sign of resistance against the erasure of truth. Her struggles resonate with the collective struggle of the society against political displacement and censorship (Upadhyay 6-7).

"Beggar Boy" is a story of a young boy who grapples with the chasm between his privileged existence and the grim realities of beggars in Kathmandu. Struck by existential doubt, he attempts to immerse himself in their world and, in doing so, tries to understand their plight firsthand: "I wanted to feel what it was like to beg, to live on the streets without the safety net of privilege" (Upadhyay 36). However, his

eventual decision to withdraw cash to aid people experiencing poverty and the ensuing realisation of the futility of his actions underscores the depth of economic inequality and societal displacement. His disillusionment reveals the challenges of reconciling privilege with a genuine understanding of the marginalised experience (Upadhyay 62-63).

“Sofi” examines cultural assimilation through the journey of a hippie who adopts the Nepali way of life, renaming herself Sukumari. Her transformation encapsulates the complexities of abandoning her American identity to embrace another culture. Sofi’s integration into Nepali traditions and her evolving relationship with Manandhar highlight the dualities of assimilation as she balances newfound belonging with the sacrifices of her previous self: “I am no longer Sofi. Sukumari is who I have become” (Upadhyay 95). This narrative illuminates the personal costs and rewards inherent in navigating cultural boundaries (Upadhyay 79-107).

In “Dreaming of Ghana”, Aakash’s interactions with a dark-skinned girl named Ghana expose the insidious effects of racial prejudice and societal judgment. Aakash’s internal conflict reflects his awareness of Nepal’s deep-seated biases, as he fears the consequences of being associated with Ghana. His hesitation and eventual disappointment when Ghana married another man reveal the enduring barriers of race and identity: “Aakash felt the weight of his community’s scorn every time he thought of Ghana, their whispers pressing down on him like stones” (Upadhyay 178). This story features the intersections of racial discrimination and cultural displacement, demonstrating how societal norms constrain personal relationships.

“America, the Great Equalizer” captures Biks’s struggles with racial discrimination and cultural adaptation in the United States. His experiences of

prejudice and rejection further bring out the issues of acculturation into a multicultural community. Bik's struggles with low-grade prejudice and full-blown exclusion as he tries to establish his identity in a new land: "It didn't matter what he said or did; his skin colour always spoke first" (Upadhyay 252). The novel depicts the resilience one requires to endure displacement and the quest for belonging in a fractured but multiracial world.

In *Mad Country*, Upadhyay develops thoughtful aspects of displacement and assimilation through cultural identity, sharpening the focus on nuanced personal and collective struggles. Be it stories about political repression, economic inequality, cultural integration, or racial discrimination, every story shows the complex game of identity within the changing forces. The stories form a complex and varied image of people struggling to understand who they are amid changing and challenging situations.

3.4 Cultural Displacement and Assimilation in Shradha Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter*

Shradha Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter* portrays the cultural dislocation and seeking of assimilation through the narrative of the Tamule family getting along with the complicated design of Nepal. The displacement is portrayed through the movement of the Tamule family from rural Lungla to the urban centre of Kathmandu. This geographical shift does more than relocate the family physically; it is a bid to transcend the confines of their ethnic and social roots while finding ways to live through their marginalised situation in the city. The patriarch's desire for social mobility through the effort to lead a high caste life reflects the disconnection of the family from cultural roots. He "chanted Sanskrit mantra during puja, marked his

forehead with sandalwood paste, and fasted three days a week” (Ghale 60). However, these efforts do not grant him full acceptance, as his neighbours continue to view him as an outsider, nicknaming him “Chimse Bahun” to mock his mimicry of high-caste behaviours.

The displacement is social and emotional, particularly for Premkala, who feels alienated within her household. Married into a family that perceives her as an ethnic outsider, Premkala struggles with her identity as a Limbu woman in a Tamule household. Her in-laws’ disdain for her cultural practices, especially her dietary habits, underscores the pervasive caste-based prejudice: “Her in-laws ditched over whether to include her, a pig-eating Limbuni, in their Bahun-style rituals. One moment, they would place her beside her husband in a consecrated area, and the next shunt her to a corner like an untouchable” (Ghale 12).

The Tamule family’s journey to Kathmandu is also a narrative of assimilation as they attempt to integrate into the city’s elite social circles. Gajendra, the family’s patriarch, views assimilation as a pathway to upward mobility. His attempts to emulate high-caste Hindu values expose his belief in cultural hierarchies, as his Matwali (drinking caste) background is devalued. His father drives home the point by cautioning him never to let pork into their home: “Gajey, you have married a Limbuni all right, but don’t ever defile your house with pork” (Ghale 61).

However, assimilation comes at a cost. This erases Gajendra’s ethnicity since he opts for societal recognition instead of conserving his cultural heritage. Gajendra is someone whose hybridity has resulted in success but compromise: respected in Kathmandu but lost roots.

For younger characters like Sumnima, assimilation is driven by a desire to fit into modern urban spaces. She feels embarrassed by her family's rural background and their inability to meet urban standards of sophistication: "Sumnima would not want her friends to know her father drove a motorcycle... She hated the plain round steel container of food her mother packed" (Ghale 1, 10). Her longing for acceptance within the elite circles of her classmates exemplifies the pressure to conform to dominant cultural norms, often at the expense of authenticity.

While assimilation dominates much of the narrative, *The Wayward Daughter* also explores moments of resistance and cultural preservation. Such an act of defying patriarchal and caste norms by Premkala signifies a refusal to get fully assimilated into her husband's culture. She denies her worth being as just a wife and mother and tries to establish individuality: "I am made up of stuff that precedes your Gajey, so stop treating me like his shadow" (Ghale 11-12).

Similarly, the Khambuwan Liberation Movement is a collective expression of resistance to cultural assimilation, as in the case of Hindu-centric festivals such as Dasain. The refusal of the movement to celebrate the Hindu practices depicts the larger struggle that Nepal's oppressed ethnic groups are facing in trying to assert their cultural identities: "They've decided it's not their festival. Hindu king forced it on us, so we should stop celebrating it" (Ghale 213).

Gender further complicates the experience of displacement and assimilation. Women in the Tamule family constantly find themselves burdened with conserving cultural mores and appropriating new mores. In the case of Gajendra's mother, she represents conventional values in their emphasis on the male heir and rigid adherence to the caste rituals. Her rejection of Premkala's cultural practices reveals how women

can also perpetuate systems of exclusion: “To crown it all, her daughter-in-law was a pig-eating Limbuni. Try as she might, Gajey’s mother could never suppress that queasy feeling while swallowing the food cooked by her” (Ghale vi).

In contrast, Sumnima’s experiences reflect a more modern perspective because she has to deal with the complexities of gender and cultural identity in a rapidly changing society. Her body image struggles, class consciousness, and peer acceptance are examples of the intersecting pressures that young women face in multicultural societies. This is well supported by Stuart Hall’s assertion that identity is “constructed through difference.” Sumnima defines herself in opposition to both her family’s traditions and the elite urban culture she aspires to join.

Shradha Ghale’s *The Wayward Daughter* centralises cultural displacement and assimilation to present an acute portrayal of identity in a multicultural society. In the case of Tamule, assimilation causes losses for individuals and collectives; however, it makes the marginalised groups survive the culture and disappear from the dominant spaces.

The Wayward Daughter represents both displacements, assimilations and nuanced negotiations, born from forces deeply rooted in history, society, and politics. All this complexity gives a critical vision to the contestation of the space of belonging and recognition in a multicultural society through the work of Ghale.

3.5 Cultural Displacement and Assimilation in Buddhisagar Chapagain’s *Karnali Blues*

In Chapagain’s *Karnali Blues*, the odyssey of the Brisha Bahadur from Matera to more urban areas like Kohalpur and Kathmandu follows the intricacies of cultural

displacement and assimilation. The narrative lingers on his journey through new cultural terrains and his struggle with losing his traditional self. Cultural displacement is not merely geographical but also an emotional and psychological shift. The story of Brisha itself reflects an ode to everyday life amidst the struggles of rural Nepali communities in trying to resolve the financial dilemmas modernisation brings about. His father's declaration, "May my son's fortune be extensive," (Chapagain 4) captures the hopes well rooted in tradition but contrasted with the uncertainties presented by modernity.

His coming to Kohalpur gives an actual shape to his alienation from home: "I was standing under the main gate of Kohalpur Teaching Hospital, panting. My black leather shoes were covered in dust, there was a stain on the knee of my blue jeans, and from my shirt rose the strong aroma of the inside of a bus" (Chapagain 5). This scene represents his entering a new, unfamiliar world where he needs to learn new cultural norms. Displacement is a change in one's self-perception apart from a simple relocation. His father's poor health and economic downturns also represent fading traditional structures faced with social transformation: "Father's invalid face was like a yellowing leaf, his breath was like a monsoon river" (Chapagain 14). The novel presents this generational shift as an emotional burden, where the protagonist oscillates between nostalgia and adaptation.

In *Karnali Blues*, where Brisha's identity changes as he encounters urban life. In the hospital, where he interacts with people from different backgrounds. Language also serves as a determinant of his belonging. The novel's regional dialects and idiomatic expressions depict his attachment to his cultural heritage. Birsha recalls his father's speech: "Father spoke with a gentleness that reminded me of the lullabies of

our village” (Chapagain 16). However, his experience in new linguistic environments points out the problems of assimilation and how it sometimes presents obstacles in communication during displacement.

Another way to view his adaptation is through Judith Butler’s theory of performativity. According to Butler, identity is performed through repetition rather than ontological status (45). For example, Brisha tries to live a familial life within the city. This tension between the traditional expectations and new cultural realities is articulated in his attempt to care for his father despite feeling inadequate: “I could not speak, my throat was choked with emotion, as I watched him writhe in pain” (Chapagain 18). His emotional turmoil underlines the strain between traditional expectations and new cultural realities.

The assimilation theme unfolds through his interactions with urban institutions and people. Even as he adopts elements of city life, he will remain deeply tied to his rural identity, presenting an internal contradiction. Homi Bhabha’s theory of cultural hybridity is relevant here, as it describes identity as emerging in the “third space” of cultural interaction (56).

Beyond personal experiences, the novel addresses the broader socio-political implications of displacement. Economic migration is a recurring theme as Brisha and his family move in search of better opportunities. He reflects on the economic necessity of relocation: “We cannot buy a house in the bazaar, and it’s not right to rent a house in your own place. If we go to Surkhet, we have to climb up a hill to get there, and it’s just the same in Kalikot” (Chapagain 301). This highlights how economic struggles drive displacement, making assimilation an unavoidable reality rather than a choice.

Political turmoil also contributes to cultural shifts. The Maoist insurgency forces many characters to flee, illustrating the involuntary nature of displacement: “‘Come and join us,’ the Maoists told them. ‘It can’t go on like this.’ Even Rané ran away to India the other day” (Chapagain 360). The protagonist’s reaction to a friend becoming a Maoist further reveals the emotional dislocation that political upheaval causes: “I ran away across the ridges of the fields feeling chilled inside, like people are chilled by their own sweat” (Chapagain 383-384). This fear and alienation emphasise the larger societal forces that disrupt personal and cultural continuity.

Despite these struggles, the novel does not depict displacement solely as a loss. Instead, it presents a nuanced perspective where memories and cultural heritage shape identity even in new environments. Brisha’s nostalgia for Matera remains a source of strength: “My heart was torn. What should we leave? The Amauri Khola? The cluster fig tree? This house? The cowshed? The papaya trees, all standing in a row?” (Chapagain 140). This emotional attachment demonstrates that cultural identity is never entirely erased while assimilation is inevitable.

Karnali Blues poignantly explores the psychological and social dimensions of cultural displacement and assimilation. Brisha’s journey highlights the emotional toll of leaving behind familiar traditions while adapting to new cultural landscapes. Through evocative prose and deeply human experiences, Chapagain illustrates that displacement is not just about moving to a new place but the ongoing struggle to reconcile past and present.

3.6 Cultural Displacement and Assimilation in Greta Rana’s *Hostage*

In Greta Rana’s *Hostage*, the themes of cultural dislocation and assimilation are discussed in the lives of Nepali migrant labourers in foreign nations. The novel

portrays the psychological and social sufferings of Hari Prasad, who is trying to retain his identity in alien surroundings. Rana voices the structural disadvantage towards minorities and portrays the strength that is to be reflected by those people who are struggling to keep their cultural identity under a state of displacement.

Hari Prasad exemplifies the cultural displacement of millions of migrant workers coming to the Gulf. Dislocation is not a movement from a physical place alone but instead displaces one of his identities as an economic unit. Rana writes, “The intricacies of who was Brahmin, Chettri, Newar, Madesi, Janjati, Hill tribe did not matter. For the people of Qatar, they were Nepali labourers” (22). This homogenisation points toward erasing rich cultural identities in the globalised economy, where labour is the determining identity marker.

This erasure resonates with Edward Said’s critique of *Orientalism* that non-Western individuals are often reduced to monolithic stereotypes, denying them agency and individuality. The dehumanisation of Hari Prasad and his peers aligns with this dynamic, as their cultural heritage becomes irrelevant in the face of economic exploitation.

In *Hostage*, Hari Prasad’s attempts to balance his traditional values with the demands of his new environment exemplify this liminality. For instance, despite his alienation in the desert, Hari Prasad clings to his memories of the Rapti River: “The sands along the banks of the Rapti were different from those of the desert. The white sands of the river were sonorous, silvery in the twilight. This desert sand seemed hard, hard as rock” (Rana 27). The juxtaposition of these landscapes reflects the tension between his rooted identity and his hybrid reality.

Assimilation in *Hostage* is portrayed as both a survival strategy and a source of internal conflict. Hari Prasad's integration into the labour community in the Gulf illustrates forced assimilation. Rana writes, "The hearty laughter made the dark room glow. As they settled down to sleep, they had forged a bond, which they would never have forged in their land" (Rana 25). This unity among displaced workers creates a collective identity that transcends regional and caste divisions.

However, assimilation often comes at the cost of individuality. Hari Prasad's internal conflict is evident when he reflects on his decision to migrate: "Inside the pit of his stomach he wept, and his heart already grieved for the family he knew he would be lucky to see again" (Rana 98). This grief illustrates the emotional toll of assimilation, where survival necessitates abandoning aspects of one's cultural self.

Rana critiques the systemic inequalities that exacerbate cultural displacement. The commodification of migrant labourers is starkly depicted: "They had been picked up as the most expendable human commodities... to make an example" (Rana 104).

Hari Prasad's reflections on the systemic corruption in Nepal further highlight the interplay between displacement and exploitation. He laments, "Nepal had opened its doors to the world, but still the exploitation continued: by police, district officers, and the army" (Rana 73). This critique underscores the cyclical nature of displacement, where systemic failures in the homeland push individuals into exploitative environments abroad.

Despite the challenges of displacement, *Hostage* emphasises the resilience of cultural memory. Hari Prasad's longing for his homeland is a recurring theme: "As the bullets tore through his skull, the last sound he heard was the rush of wind and the

anger of the waves on the Rapti in spate” (Rana 118). This imagery underscores the enduring power of cultural roots, even in moments of profound alienation.

The solidarity among Nepali workers also reflects resilience. By forging connections based on shared experiences, these characters create a new cultural identity that incorporates elements of their homeland and their current environment. Rana mentions, “They had discovered more similarities to bind them than differences to separate them” (181). This unity proves the strategies adopted by displaced individuals to preserve their cultural essence.

In *Hostage*, Greta Rana gives a subtle account of cultural displacement and assimilation as it portrays the psychological and social plight of migrant workers. The novel goes into the depth of identity, memory, and resilience through the journey of Hari Prasad as it navigates systemic inequalities.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter sought to explore the negotiation of balance between cultural preservation and assimilation of diasporic literature, as well as the functions of memory and nostalgia in shaping diasporic identities. After an analysis of this chapter, it is apparent that the literature reflects the complexity of cultural dislocation and integration, a duality of individual situations in diasporic communities. It indicates that literature from the diaspora captures both personal struggles and deconstructs broader social structures in their efforts to define identity.

Significant themes include hybridity, identity negotiation, and cultural in-betweenness, ultimately defining the diasporic experience. These themes express how globalisation affects the preserved culture but is tempered with external forces that

require the individual to assimilate. This tension between tradition and modernity strains the attempts at belonging, which are resilient and fragile.

Memory and nostalgia further anchor the diasporic to his origins. All these elements go toward establishing the emotional and psychological links with the cultural past in which people get transplanted to a different environment. The narratives show how conflicts of inner crises, which result from alienation and displacement, are overcome; the idea of diaspora identity is thus a constant play between rootedness and transformation.

In addition, discussing marginalisation and racial prejudice will bring out some systemic challenges faced by diasporic communities within multicultural settings. The struggles, which in most cases are presented in personal stories, present the more serious societal tensions shaping diasporic identity. The selected texts demonstrate how, though resilient, cultural identity may be reshaped under assimilation pressures.

The findings affirm that diasporic literature is a key tool through which the balance of preservation and assimilation of cultural values can be understood. Through it, the very narrative of belonging captures the nuances entirely, along with memories and nostalgia, thereby creating a central place within the processes of identity formation. Diasporic authors may reveal continued negotiation between strength and fragility in these narrations to try and capture the subtleties surrounding the act of being between two worlds.

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CHAPTER IV

Nativisation of Nepali Identity

4.1 Nativisation of English

Nativisation of the English language, also known as indigenisation or nativisation of English, refers to the process by which English evolves and adapts within a specific linguistic community or region, incorporating local vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and usage patterns. It is a process in which a language gains native speakers in different regions and countries where it is used as a second language or a lingua franca. The prominent linguist Braj Kachru in his books *The Alchemy of English: The Spread, Functions, and Models of Non-Native Englishes* (1986), *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures* (1992), *World Englishes: Approaches, Issues, and Resources* (1992), *Asian Englishes: Beyond the Canon* (1997), *English in South Asia: The Indian Context* (2005), *Linguistic Variation and World Englishes* (2009), *World Englishes in Asian Contexts* (2010) and articles “The Indianization of English: The English Language in India” (1983), “Standards, Codification, and Sociolinguistic Realism: The English Language in the Outer Circle” (1985), “The Ecology of English: Toward a Dynamic Model” (1992), “Models for Non-Native Englishes” (1994), “English as an Asian Language: Implications for Language Teaching” (2006) and “Beyond the ‘Three Circles’: A New Understanding of World Englishes” (2010) has discoursed extensively on the concept of nativisation.

The term nativisation describes the formal changes that a language undergoes at several linguistic levels, such as phonetic, lexical, syntactic, discoursal, speech actions, and literary (Kachru 196). It describes the ‘acculturation,’ ‘indigenisation,’ or ‘hybridisation’ of language in an unfamiliar socio-cultural context. In his work, *The*

Alchemy of English, Braj B. Kachru expresses the opinion that the nativisation and acculturation of the English language result in the ways of shift that regional variants of English have undergone by creating new semantic and literary identities (138).

Nativisation occurs when speakers of a second language eventually alter the language to express thoughts, facts, and concepts pertinent to their unique context. Kachru proposed the Three Circles Model, which categorises English into three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle comprises countries like the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where English is the native and first language with a long history of nativisation. The Outer Circle comprises countries like India, Nigeria, and the Philippines, where English is used as a second language with key functions in education, governance, and communication owing to the influence of colonial history or linguistic diversity. The Expanding Circle spans areas like China, Japan, and European nations where the medium of teaching English has been for education purposes and worldwide activities and is thus widely increasing (12).

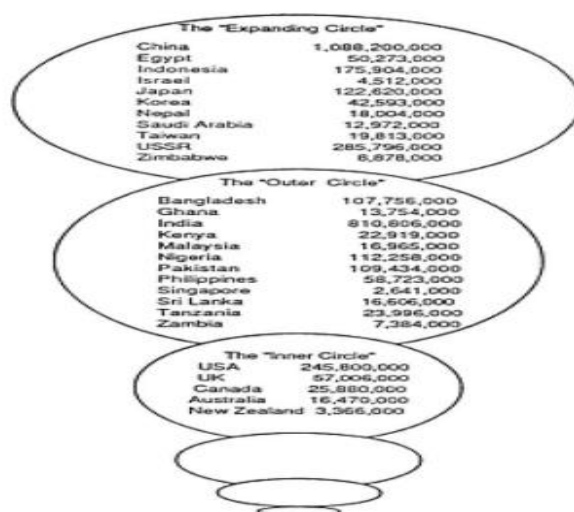


Figure 1. Kachru's Three Concentric Circles as illustrated by Hu and Jiang (2011). The model visualises the global spread and categorization of English use into Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles.

According to Kachru, English undergoes nativisation, incorporating local vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and cultural expressions in Outer and Expanding Circle countries. The nativisation of English in these contexts results in the development of new varieties or “Englishes” that reflect the linguistic and cultural features of the local populations. Thus, the process of nativising local culture and identity is apparent in English literature. Kachru, in his paper “English as an Asian Language,” opines that English has taken on functional nativeness in Asia and is used for the following things: It is an innovative pan-Asian language that enables communication among different linguistic and cultural groups, using nativist media to express regional identities within and beyond Asia (103).

Kachru uses the word ‘functional nativisation’ to describe the development of numerous variations of regionalised registers and genres to express regional social, cultural, and religious identities. The functional nativeness of English’s diversity can be characterised by “creative processes employed to form localised identities, language exponents of acculturation, and types of cross-over contributing to canons of creativity” (198). Further supporting his claim, Kachru says that each tradition or strand’s architects have improved what a Western medium is by moulding, reshaping, assimilating, and reinventing it. The result is a liberated, vibrant, unique, linguistically diverse, and culturally distinct English (106).

The nativisation process results from translating regional languages into English and vice versa. The need for English to adapt to its new surroundings and represent regional conceptions drives nativisation. English is the language most frequently used to acquire bilingualism and multilingualism throughout Asia (Kachru

94). Thus, the glocalisation of English literature is gaining momentum due to the growth and ascent of literary figures from various national and cultural contexts.

Kachru's concept of nativisation challenges the notion of English as a monolithic, standardised language and recognises its diversity and adaptability in different contexts. It highlights the dynamic nature of language and the influence of local cultures on the development and use of English in non-native settings.

Proshina and Nelson, in their work "Varieties of English and Kachru's Expanding Circle," discuss the concept of Kachru's Expanding Circle, which categorises varieties of English used in non-native contexts. They highlight the World Englishes (WE) paradigm and argue that English has become pluricentric for varied factors like lifestyle, geopolitical, etc. Each variety has its uniqueness supported by lingua culture, which enables it to transmit the cultural identity of its speakers and include characteristics from their native tongues and/or other languages with which it frequently interacts (526).

This nativisation effect can be seen in a variety of ways. In her paper on the nativisation of English, Rajeswari Pandharipande discusses the linguistic levels at which English is being nativised (149). She provides an example of adopting terminology from local languages into English (150). Thus, through borrowing, creating new terms, and changing meaning, the nativisation of English has improved both English and the native tongue.

Rajeswari also points out the departure that may result in the nativised variations of English with or without deliberate effort on the user's part (155). She discusses the intentional and unintentional usage of deviation by creative writers and

native speakers. She opines that intentional deviation is when a user consciously uses a deviation to carry out a specific task. Such deviation can be found in creative writing in nativised English when the author employs ‘deviation’ as a language method to get the desired extra-linguistic effect (155); while addressing unintentional deviation, she opines that the speaker is unaware of and has no control over the speech. Such a process occurs in the everyday speech of native English speakers, such as Chinese English, Indian English, etc. English has unintentionally adopted native patterns, which is the source of this aberration (156). Rajeswari opines that this is how English creative authors intentionally deviate from the norm to nativise their texts.

Authors often engage with and transform the English language in native nuances to reflect their cultural, social, and political realities. Creative writers nativise English at both form and content levels by drawing on their native tongues’ lexical, syntactic, and symbolic richness. Bablu and Abhinav claims that creative writers occasionally use language innovations like lexical borrowing, reduplication, hybridisation, code-mixing, code-switching, and collocations in nativisation. He contends that one of the stages of the nativisation of English in literary texts of creative writers is the translation or direct transfer of social, cultural, and religious components from one’s home tongue into English (123).

One of the most effective ways of nativisation is by employing code-switching. Code-switching occurs when people change between two or more languages or dialects during a conversation, sentence, or talk. It appears within multilingual communities for differing purposes of communication. The term “code-switching” appeared in print in 1953 in the book chapter *Results of the Conference of Anthropologists and Linguists* by Roman Jakobson (16). According to *Bilingualism*,

Language Contact, and Immigrant Languages in the United States: A Research Report 1956-1970, code-switching is defined as “the alternate use of two languages, the whole range including everything from the introduction of a single, unassimilated word up to a complete sentence or more into the context of another language” (21). Blom and Gumperz identify two types of code-switching: situational and metaphorical. Situational code-switching happens when the language changes based on the context or social situation. Metaphorical code-switching shows changes in identity, emotions, or social connections (113-15). Code-switching makes stories more interesting in literature by showing characters’ dual identities and language realities. It creates a mix of languages that highlights cultural blending and questions traditional language limits.

Nativisation of English involves vocabulary adaptation; for instance, speakers take or use words from their native language to convey local phenomena or culture, as in “sushi,” which is from Japanese or “chutzpah,” which is from Yiddish. Grammar and syntax are also nativised because non-native speakers often emulate the linguistic rules of their mother tongue, which gives way to variations in sentence structure, verb forms, or word order. It is influenced by native language pronunciation and phonetics, just like the Indian or Nigerian accents of English. New idioms, expressions, and phrasal combinations also arise as a blend of English with native languages and cultural features, which may be incomprehensible outside the mother linguistic group.

Nativisation is thus the natural path of linguistic development as languages change to suit the situations of their speakers. From the perspective of its use as a world language, there was regional and community-based nativisation of English with different variations and dialects of the language developing on other continents. This

nativisation of the English language globally is an example of its innate ability to adapt and flexibly change into various forms and ways of using English as it interacts with various linguistic and cultural milieux.

4.2 Nativisation of English in Nepal

Nativisation in Nepal refers to the process where the work of English literature was adopted and assimilated into Nepali culture and language. It is, therefore, a translational and interpretative process of reimagining an English literary text to render it accessible to the Nepali audience. The Nepali writers in the English language have taken inspiration from the English literary canon and their cultural heritage. They infused themes, settings, and characters in writing based on Nepal so that it may have a very local flavour. This way, they tried to amalgamate two kinds of writings into something which may be truly Nepali, between the massive vastness of English literature.

Nativisation in the context of Nepali literature means searching out and transforming through English traditional forms and genres specific to Nepal, thereby allowing Nepal's writers a means of reconciling their culture with the globally applied usage of English literature towards creating new, unique ways of writing. Nepali writing in the English language has started to grow gradually throughout international English literature.

The introduction of the English language in Nepal during the Malla Monarchical Period (12–18th century), the spread of Christian missionaries in 1661, the Sugauli Treaty's recruitment of Gurkha soldiers in 1815, the opening of the Durbar School for Rana Children, and the selection of Dr Hugh B. Wood as advisor to NNEPC contributed to the introduction of English language in Nepal. Laxmi Prasad

Devkota's writing, which accompanied the country's growth, saw the emergence of Nepali writing in English in 1950. It gained momentum in 1990, following the establishment of multi-party democracy.

English has become a second language in Nepal and is widely used in various domains, including education, business, government, media, and tourism. Due to innovation in multiple languages, whether bilingual or multilingual, English has gained consistent pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, discursal, and stylistic traits (Kachru 200). The cosmopolitan bent of modern society, which is rapidly nativising English literature, imparts a multicultural flavour to English compositions. As a result, English is influenced by bilingual or multilingual speakers (Kachru 16). This element is also not very uncommon in Nepali English writing. Although Nepal belongs to "The Expanding Circle" of the Three Concentric Circles in the profile of pluricentricity, English usage there has increased (Kachru 137).

With the aid of Nepali terms and usage in Nepali English literature, Nepali identity and culture have recently been nativised. English literature has been more deeply ingrained in Nepali culture and identity because of the rise of Nepali English literary authors. *Bilinguals' Creativity* by Braj B. Kachru asserts that the role and language identity of the users have a significant impact on nativisation and acculturation (24).

Although the British never colonised Nepal, the effects of colonialism can still be seen in the country today because of the progressive growth of the English language for literary and artistic purposes and everyday communication. Ram A. Giri discusses the substantial code-switching and linguistic blending between Nepali and English. He also points out that it is standard to translate English words into Nepali

and that English terminology, syntax, and writing traditions are adjusted (201). In addition, he claims that there is an increasing demand for English to be recognised as an official language in Nepal and that the country uses the language creatively to achieve “the local people’s aesthetic goals.” Nepali English meets all the criteria for the Kachruvian Outer Circle (Giri 323).

Sajan Kumar Karn thoroughly examines Nepal’s English Literature and the nativisation of some of its well-known authors’ stories and novels in his paper, “This is How I Can Write: Towards Nepalese English Literature.” He examines prominent Nepali authors writing in English, like Manjushree Thapa, Samrat Upadhyay, Govinda Raj Bhattarai, Rabi Thapa, Vishnu Singh, DB Gurung, etc. He demonstrates how Nepali English authors have attempted to nativise their literary works using expression, code-switching, lexical borrowing, suffix and prefixes, hybridised words, and the transfer of Nepali expression and reduplication, among other linguistic techniques (30).

Scholars and critics have used varied measures to examine the nativisation of texts written in the English language. Sajan Kumar Karn uses the characters’ names and settings to illustrate Nepalese socio-political and cultural traits (32). Many academics and researchers have investigated code-switching as an example of nativisation. In his article “Emergence of Nepalese English: A Case of Short Stories”, Prakash Bhattarai argues that character naming and code-switching in literary texts help Nepali English become a distinctive variant of English like Australian English, Singaporean English and Indian English (107).

Researchers have also looked at the possibility that lexical borrowing is one of the nativisation processes. Shankar Dewan and Chandra Kumar Laksamba claim that

lexical borrowing is one way to nativise English (15). Some academics have employed hybrid reduplication to demonstrate nativisation in the texts they have looked at.

Today, English is the second most widely spoken language in Nepal. Nepali English literature is expanding because more writers are producing their creative works in the language. Shankar Dewan and Chandra Kumar Laksamba opine that English has been diversified, nativised, and hybridised in many countries because of its spectacular use and spread. The nativisation of English in Nepal suggests how interaction in the language is fluid and how English will adapt to local linguistic and cultural settings. It reflects on creativity and adaptability in Nepal: how Nepali speakers go creative about fitting this language into their daily living and communication.

Within the Kachruvian model, this framework provides insight into how English usage and adaptation are practised across various contexts. It visualises the multilevel varieties of English and elaborates on how local languages and cultures help determine these unique forms. Nativisation in this thinking is tantamount to putting English in the local languages and the local cultures. This creates different forms of English that depict various forms of identities and communication needs among each speaker group.

The chapter will examine select novels and short stories using a Kachruvian linguistic framework on nativisation, considering the use of names of protagonists and characters, the setting, code-switching, Nepali expressions, and other linguistic features. The study will address the following research questions:

1. How does the nativisation of English in Nepali-English literature reflect the cultural identity and social dynamics of Nepal?
2. What linguistic techniques are used in Nepali-English literature to convey local themes and contexts?

4.3 Nativising Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth*, *Seasons of Flight* and *All of Us in Our Own Lives*

Tilled Earth

Manjushree Thapa is an author of novels, short stories, and essays that study different aspects of Nepali society, primarily concerning globalisation and life in the modern world. She often studies the minutiae of Nepali identity and the nation's changing political and social climate. Thapa is dedicated to shedding light on the intricacies of Nepali culture and history and the problems people face in a fast-changing world. Her writings describe how nativisation works by adding elements, traditions, and views she finds locally to her stories, thereby challenging stereotypes and serving a more realistic and detailed picture of Nepali life.

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters in *Tilled Earth*

In *Tilled Earth*, Manjushree Thapa intricately weaves a Nepali identity through names that resonate with Nepal's own rich culture and society in the narrative. Some rapport is best established by some characters who personify different districts, castes, and histories and can establish a place in the Nepali characters' lives, such as in Heera Maharjan, Sridhar Jung Rana, Bahadur Khadka, or Kuber Sharma.

Names such as Sridhar Jung Rana and Kuber Sharma signify the position of social hierarchy and caste binding and indicate Nepal's higher sections. The names of Bahadur Khadka and Naresh Pariyar symbolise some similarities towards the working class and lower-income sectors. These reflect Nepal's multicultural dimensions through caste and classes. Such an ensemble may create an understanding of complexities within the society.

Including names from the rest of the world, like Sarah, Monica, and Nadia, but with traditional Nepali names such as Pasang, Dhundi Raj, and Dilip Basnyat, demonstrates that Nepali culture constantly changes. It brings together elements of local influence and global inputs to focus on migration, modern life, and cultural changes in Nepal.

Thapa wisely selects names that reflect the pluralistic social structure of Nepal and bring out a balance between traditional and modern life. This technique makes the reader feel attached to the characters as it places them squarely in Nepal's unique cultural, historical, and political setting.

The Setting of the Story

In *Tilled Earth*, Manjushree Thapa skillfully incorporates the setting to ground this story in uniquely Nepali places. She vividly brings places like Kathmandu, Helambu, Ulleri Village, and Muktinath Temple, so this story allows readers to experience Nepal's landscape and culture. It represents Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, with a glimpse of modern life and its old traditions. The nerve centre of Nepal's politics, social system, and culture, Kathmandu's place in the heart of modernisation is filled well by the busy streets of Thamel. These places reflect all

aspects of urban life, where the lively energy will be balanced with its very peaceful spiritual background.

Thapa brings rural locations, such as Ulleri Village, Tatopani Village, and Lete Village, between Annapurna Mountain ranges and Kali Gandaki River that portrays a part of the wild beauty of Nepal. This highlights the significant presence of the environment around which the life of these characters revolves. It establishes the feeling of oneness that these people have with their land. Also, showing places like Muktinath Temple and trips through Dhaulagiri and Tukuiche Village capture Nepal's spiritual nature, adding to the cultural and emotional parts of the story.

Thapa localises the story by including the city and the rural background, which is integral to Nepal's geography and culture. Different environments, customs, and social systems blend into one another's backgrounds. This use of setting not only enhances the story's authenticity but also anchors the characters' experiences within the uniquely Nepali context.

Code-Switching

In *Tilled Earth*, Manjushree Thapa employs code-switching, alternating between Nepali and English, to reinforce the native cultural and linguistic elements of the narrative. This linguistic technique adds authenticity to the setting and illustrates the fluidity of identity and communication in a multicultural and multilingual context like Nepal. Code-switching mirrors the everyday conversations of Nepali speakers, particularly those navigating between traditional and modern, rural and urban, or local and global spheres.

In *Tilled Earth*, Manjushree Thapa uses code-switching by shaping the Nepali language and expressions into the English narrative to establish cultural authenticity and ground the characters within their native surroundings.

For example, in the line, “For her benefit, he always enunciated soft Nepali jas and tas with special emphasis: haami jasto gaunma hurkekaaharu” (Thapa 17), the language Nepali, meaning ‘those of us who grew up in a village like ours,’ indicates the speaker’s rural life and communal upbringing. It is through the phonetic opposition between Nepali and English that the character is more deeply rooted in a distinctive cultural experience. Similarly, Sarah’s response, “Mo American ho” (Thapa 18), which, translated into English, states, “I am American,” exhibits a mixing of Nepali grammar with the vocabulary from the English language to illustrate her attempt at connecting with locals and diving into the culture. This integration of languages indicates cultural adaptation and inclusion.

Thapa further concretes the authenticity of cultural reality through conversation dialogues, for example: “Kasab was asking the lodge owner about her infant son: Kati barsa bhayo?” (Thapa 19), meaning How old is he? This use of Nepali situates the dialogue locally, reflecting everyday life and familial concerns in Nepal.

In another instance, “She nodded. Janney?” (Thapa 23), meaning “Will you go?” maintains the local tone and cadence of Nepali conversation, subtly emphasising cultural identity.

Language learning is another avenue through which Thapa integrates Nepali culture into the narrative. In the line, “We take Nepali lesson now. Chiplo means

slippy” (Thapa 27), the translation of “Chiplo” (slippy) underscores the interaction between cultures as foreign characters adapt to the local language. This theme continues in “Repeat: Yo baato Chiplo tcha” (Thapa 27), meaning “This road is slippery,” where the active engagement with Nepali language learning enriches the cultural immersion of the narrative. Similarly, the single word “Ghaans” (grass) in “Ghaans. She said” (Thapa 30) illustrates how seamlessly Nepali words are woven into the dialogue, reflecting the characters’ natural connection to their environment.

Thapa uses code-switching to enhance the authenticity of interactions and settings, as in “Bholi djanne? Keshab asked at one point” (Thapa 40), meaning “Shall we go tomorrow?” This phrase highlights the everyday use of Nepali in dialogue, grounding the characters in a realistic setting. The line “Hrishikesh responded, Ma Nepali hun” (Thapa 68), meaning “I am Nepali,” emphasises Hrishikesh’s cultural pride and personal connection to his identity. Familial relationships are also highlighted, as seen in “Dai, Narayan called out from the door” (Thapa 81), where “Dai” (elder brother) conveys respect and familial closeness.

Thapa enriches the cultural ambience further through sensory details, such as the description of traditional Nepali music in “Then breaks into a ding-tang of drums” (Thapa 105), evoking the sounds of festivals and ceremonies. Similarly, the question “On a pilgrimage, sah’b?” (Thapa 122), where “sah’b” is a term of respect derived from “sahib,” reflects the interplay between Nepal’s religious traditions and interactions with outsiders. Through these examples, Thapa uses code-switching to nativise the narrative, blending Nepali language and culture with English storytelling to create an authentic and immersive experience.

Use of Nepali Expressions

The use of Nepali expressions in *Tilled Earth* significantly contributes to the nativisation of the text by grounding the narrative in the local cultural and linguistic context of Nepal. These expressions, even when translated or used minimally, carry cultural weight and bring a sense of authenticity to the story.

Manjushree Thapa grounds the narrative firmly in a Nepali context by using a rich tapestry of Nepali expressions, phrases, and cultural references in *Tilled Earth*. For example, with the inclusion of “Ka Kha gag ha gha” (Thapa 19), which refers to the Nepali alphabet, the story is tied to the native language. It proves that the characters engage with the culture, rooting the text in its local environment. Similarly, the frequent usage of “Namaste” (Thapa 19, 154), a traditional Nepali greeting, depicts the deep-seated culture and the submersion of characters into everyday Nepali traditions. By introducing this greeting in Nepali without translation, Thapa further strengthens the authenticity of the setting and its cultural relevance.

Thapa integrates indigenous Nepali terms such as “Ainselu” (a type of wild berry), “salla” (an insult), and “dal-bhaat” (a staple meal of lentils and rice) (Thapa 21, 30, 32, 153). These terms introduce readers to the local flora, food, and environment, vividly painting the story’s backdrop. By using these native words without direct explanation, Thapa signals that the narrative is inherently tied to Nepal’s cultural landscape. Expressions like “The lodge-keeper busted. Eh” (Thapa 23) and “A woman clucked, tch, as he brushed against her” (Thapa 71-72) incorporate common Nepali exclamations and sounds of disapproval, which not only enhance the realism of the dialogue but also highlight cultural mannerisms and everyday interactions.

Exclamations such as “Oho, he exclaimed” (Thapa 74) and “Tch: how cold they must be, he thought” (Thapa 76) reflect the characters’ inner thoughts and reactions in a distinctly Nepali way, adding depth and authenticity to their voices. Similarly, the onomatopoeic phrase “Dhin-tang, dhin-tang, dhin-tang-tang” (Thapa 106) mimics the sound of traditional Nepali drums, capturing the rhythm of local musical traditions and festivities. This auditory imagery enriches the narrative by anchoring scenes in Nepal’s cultural and sensory experience.

Thapa also incorporates linguistic markers of respect and politeness typical in Nepali society, such as the use of “ji” as an honorific suffix in “Secretaryji, I do not even think I can write my lyrics anymore” (Thapa 108). This detail reflects Nepali interactions’ hierarchical and respectful nature, emphasising the importance of social norms. Through these elements, the story not only tells a narrative but also immerses the reader in the cultural essence of Nepal, blending language and identity seamlessly into the text.

Seasons of Flight

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters

Manjushree Thapa takes on names to underscore the points of nativisation and cultural juxtaposition made during Prema’s process of becoming a Nepali immigrant in the U.S. Western names like Esther, Natalie, and Tim encapsulated for her the new America that she had to now acclimate to and yet reflected off her Nepali home she left behind. However, names such as Ismaili and Wayne Chu are multicultural diversities in American society that complicate Prema’s attempts to find her place within these diverse cultural identities.

Rather than Nepali names, what is needed is to anchor that narrative in her homeland of Nepal, connecting her again to her cultural roots. Names such as Prema, Bijaya and the people and values that could mould her formative years like Ram Bahadur sets the stage for nativised names.

The Setting of the Story

The location in *Seasons of Flight* highlights the themes of cultural juxtaposition and nativisation in an American setting with roots in Nepal. Urban locations like Los Angeles and Manhattan characterise the immersion of Prema in the Western world, revealing the struggles of displacement and assimilation into a foreign culture. These places juxtapose her with the memories in Nepal, which imply an excessive attachment to her home.

Thapa very explicitly shows the beauty of Nepal by describing Kathmandu, the Hill Bazaar, and the Himalayas. These places reflect the richness of their natural beauty and culture. The terraced fields and foggy hills are important to Prema's sense of who she is and represent the balance between her heritage and new experiences as an immigrant. Since Nepal appears quite often amidst vivid use of natural imagery, Thapa weaves a constant seam of native elements and brings out Prema's subconscious attachment to her homeland underneath. Mount Everest and the Himalayan setup symbolise Prema's emotional attachments and spiritual relationships with her Nepali homeland.

The contrast between these two kinds of places—Nepal's natural beauty and America's busy cities—shows Prema's inner struggle and sense that she does not belong there. Many references to Nepali places and landscapes, natural sites, temples,

and terraced fields make the text feel as if it is more intimately connected with her background while writing about her life and experiences in a foreign land.

Code-Switching

Code-switching in *Seasons of Flight* is a strong nativisation tool that shows the characters' cultural identity and connects them to their native backgrounds. In *Seasons of Flight*, Manjushree Thapa fluidly incorporates Nepali words and phrases into English dialogue in a way that lends cultural authenticity and depth to the narrative. For example, "Tch, tch, tch, you must be freezing, bahini" (Thapa 17) - here, "bahini" sister conveys sibling affection and intimacy and represents the age-old values of Nepal's tradition about family love and bonds. In another example, "When you will come back, Chorri? He asked, his voice soft and gravelly over the line. I am going to live there, Ba" (Thapa 74) employs the words "Chorri" (girl) and "Ba" (father) to express familial relationships and emotional tones deeply rooted in Nepali culture. These terms highlight the intimate connections between characters while reinforcing the cultural setting.

Thapa incorporates cultural elements such as food and geography to nativise the text. For example, "You cooked dull-bath and ate it all by yourself" (Thapa 80) introduces "dull-bath" (dal-bhat), a staple Nepali meal, emphasising the importance of traditional food in the characters' lives. Similarly, the line "What no swimming pool in Nepal? But then you have the himmels" (Thapa 80) contrasts Western luxuries with Nepal's majestic mountains, "himmels," showcasing pride in the country's natural features. Religious practices are also highlighted in "He shook the bracelet and examined the picture of that guru on the locket" (Thapa 81), where the mention of a

“guru” (spiritual teacher) underscores the integration of spiritual traditions into everyday life.

Thapa often blends Nepali and English to reflect the characters’ bicultural identities. For example, “Swaagat cha Americamaa,” he said (Thapa 107), meaning “Welcome to America,” demonstrates the fluid interaction between the two languages, while “That’s the best kind of work you can find when you first come to this country, Bahini, Sushil explained to her delicately” (Thapa 108) integrates “bahini” (sister) into an English sentence, reflecting warmth and cultural ties. Likewise, “Yes, Ba” (Thapa 115) uses “Ba” (father) to maintain the familial bond within the context of English dialogue. Informal expressions like “Eh, let her try” (Thapa 121) further capture the vernacular flavour of Nepali conversations, lending authenticity to the dialogue.

Interactions in native Nepali also enrich the cultural landscape of the story. In “Kahaanbata yahaan aaipugnuhako?” she repeated (Thapa 170), meaning “Where are you coming from?” and “Tapainn Harihar Bora haina? Harihar Bora haina? Kahabata yahaaan?” (Thapa 170), the repeated names and questions reflect local linguistic and conversational patterns. Thapa also incorporates religious elements, such as in “The Mata switched on a CD player, and soon the room filled with harmonium wails and the tinny ching-ching of cymbals: bhajans hymns” (Thapa 182), where “bhajans” (devotional hymns) evoke a distinctly Nepali spiritual atmosphere.

Cultural practices of addressing people with respect are evident in lines like “In Nepali, she asked: Neeru-didi hunuhuncha?” (Thapa 194), where “Neeru-didi” (Neeru-sister) reflects the use of honorifics. Thapa’s integration of concern and familiarity is demonstrated in “On Friday, she emailed Rajan again: Kanchhalai ke

bhayo? Bhetiyo?” (Thapa 208), meaning “What happened to Kanchha? Was he found?”. Lastly, the blend of Nepali and English in “Luis, for his part, came out with: Nah-mass-tay Neeru-dee-dee, Soo-sheel-been-a-jew” (Thapa 245), where “Nah-mass-tay” (Namaste) and “Dee-dee” (sister) are used, showcases cultural integration and the efforts of foreign characters to adopt Nepali traditions. Thapa masterfully intertwines language and culture through these examples, enriching the narrative with authenticity and depth.

Use of Nepali Expressions

Nepali expressions in *Seasons of Flight* contribute significantly to nativisation by embedding cultural authenticity and emphasising the characters’ cultural identities. In *Seasons of Flight*, Manjushree Thapa intricately weaves Nepali terms and expressions into the narrative, reflecting the cultural and emotional depth of the characters. For instance, in “Eh, our bahini isn’t a child” (Thapa 120), the term “bahini” (sister) reflects familial affection and respect, situating the character within a cultural framework where hierarchical family relationships hold significant importance. Similarly, “Tch, tch, tch, you must be freezing” (Thapa 17) employs a typical Nepali exclamation of concern or sympathy, emphasising the character’s connection to Nepali ways of expressing care and empathy.

In “Oho, Sir, Sister” (Thapa 33), the use of “Oho,” an informal Nepali exclamation expressing surprise or exasperation, is combined with English terms, which shows cultural hybridity in the characters’ dialogue.

She never hides using informal vocabulary terms when narrating an event through rich emotive detail. Like “Where are they Saala? Chutiya!” (Thapa 61) where

Nepali terminology words are the word “Saala, and Chutiya” referring to someone who does not use any good sense. Here, “Saala” (a derogatory term) and “Chutiya” (idiot) are Nepali expressions that bring authenticity to the character’s frustration and anger. These strong phrases reflect how local vernacular is deeply tied to emotional expression. Familial terms are also integral to the narrative, as illustrated in “Ba, I’m going to America” (Thapa 74), where “Ba” (father) integrates seamlessly into English dialogue, highlighting the importance of respect and connection in familial interactions.

Finally, in “Is it you chorri, he said?” (Thapa 205), the term “chorri” (girl) conveys the relational nuances within Nepali-speaking communities, reflecting the affectionate and culturally rooted interactions between characters. Through such examples, Thapa skillfully incorporates the Nepali language into the text, enriching the narrative’s authenticity and deepening the portrayal of the characters’ cultural identities.

All of Us in Our Own Lives

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters

In *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, the mixture of Nepali and Westernised names has enriched nativisation with cultural and contextual diversity. The presence of Nepali names like Ava (Abha), Gyanu, and Ram has deepened the culture into the roots of Nepal’s traditions and its focus on cultural identity and social customs. In contrast, Westernised names such as MacKenzie, Gavin, and Claire Ross-Jones symbolise globalisation and cross-cultural relationships, highlighting the dominance of Western culture in Nepal.

By juxtaposing these names, Manjushree Thapa portrays the changing, multicultural dynamics of modern Nepali society. This blend underlines themes of identity, globalisation, and cultural intersectionality, giving the narrative depth and authenticity.

The Setting of the Story

In *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, the setting plays a highly instrumental role in the nativisation. The story is brought back by anchoring its places of action into culturally and geographically specific locations. Such settings include Kathmandu, Mount Everest, Tinau River, Bouddha, the Himalayas, and Bal Mandir, reflecting how cultural and natural beauties combined to create the context that characterises the sociodynamics within the country in its narrative. Such contrasting environments include international settings such as Sharjah and locations such as Champagne and Bay Street, which bring into view the characters' global interactions and diasporic experiences. Such a confluence of the local and global settings brings in themes about identity, migration, and cultural intersectionality.

Code-Switching

In *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, code-switching plays an important part in nativisation and blends Nepali words and phrases into English storytelling. *All of Us in Our Own Lives* uses code-switching very prominently to fuse Nepali words and phrases into an English narrative to add cultural depth and specificity to the narrative. Manjushree Thapa shows Nepali traditions, relationships, and societal norms through this language technique. For instance, the words “Ba” (father) and “Dai” (elder brother) in the line, “Ba needs a son to light the funeral pyre, Dai” (Thapa 5), point

out the cultural significance of family roles in Nepali culture. The use of familial terms such as “Muwa Buwa” (mother and father) in “Surya di had told her Muwa Buwa” (Thapa 11) reinforces the traditional Nepali focus on family structure. At the same time, references to Nepali cuisine, such as “The lodge owner began to serve dal-bhat-tarkaari” (Thapa 11), ground the reader in a vivid Nepali setting through culinary details. Similarly, “dal-bhat-tarkaari” reappears in “She drew dal-bhat-tarkaari towards her and began to eat” (Thapa 13), underscoring the cultural significance of food. The familial term “Bhauju” (sister-in-law) in “I am not hungry, Bhauju” (Thapa 11) highlights social relationships and hierarchy within families.

The term “chorri” (girl) adds tenderness to interactions, as seen in “You are pretty chorri; you’re the prettiest girl in the world” (Thapa 17), while expressions like “Hajoor” (a term of respect) in “He never hears me, Hajoor” (Thapa 18) reflect the formal politeness embedded in Nepali communication. This respect and cultural grounding are also evident in the line, “The other day I was thinking: after Ba goes, no one will ever call me chorri” (Thapa 27), which merges familial roles with emotional weight. Thapa also uses colloquial Nepali terms such as “laptanni budhi” (old woman) in “I wouldn’t have been asked on the tour, but old laptanni budhi, she’s the committee chairperson, she dropped me out” (Thapa 31), adding a layer of realism and vernacular authenticity.

Cultural elements extend to attire and exclamations. The line “Dressed in traditional labeda sural, Thulo ba looked every bit a patriarch” (Thapa 34) incorporates “labeda sural” (traditional Nepali clothing) and “Thulo ba” (grandfather), emphasising cultural dress and familial respect. Expressions like “Oho! The labour secretary exclaimed; My daughter is also living in Canada” (Thapa 46) and “Tchee,

look, there's a stain on my kurta" (Thapa 32) incorporate Nepali exclamations and references to traditional attire, grounding the narrative in local culture. Food references, such as "The time you made that anarasa roti" (Thapa 50), a traditional sweet, and the consistent mention of "dal-bhat" (lentils and rice) in lines like "There were left over dal-bhat in the fridge" (Thapa 171), highlight culinary customs central to Nepali life.

The novel also uses Nepali terms for familial affection, such as "Nani" (a term used for small kids) in "Is that you, Nani?" (Thapa 51), and for respect, such as "Hajoor" in "Perfect, Hajoor" (Thapa 177). Geographic references like "Ah, look Ganesh Himal" (Thapa 76) and "Ganesh Himal was visible beyond" (Thapa 171) situate the story within Nepal's iconic landscapes. At the same time, conversational markers such as "Lau, then" (Thapa 105) and "Oho, Gyanu, I heard you came for your Ba" (Thapa 84) reflect the rhythm of Nepali dialogue. Terms like "meri maya" recur in affectionate contexts, as in "Okay meri maya" (Thapa 86), emphasising emotional intimacy.

Expressions like "Tchee, then why was he flirting?" (Thapa 90) and "Hajoor, I should take poison and die" (Thapa 92) incorporate typical Nepali reactions, adding depth to emotional exchanges. Similarly, "Bahini" (younger sister) in "Use it for the girl's treatment, bahini" (Thapa 104) reflects familial and social bonds. Traditional greetings like "Namaste" in "Chorri, say Namaste to Gyanu kaka" (Thapa 122) highlight cultural etiquette. At the same time, colloquial terms such as "queeray" (white man) in "A queeray, a white man—the dishonour" (Thapa 148) offer insights into social attitudes.

Through these instances, Thapa effectively nativises English storytelling, blending it with Nepali cultural references to create a narrative that resonates deeply with its cultural roots. By incorporating terms for familial relationships, culinary habits, attire, and geography, she paints an intricate portrait of Nepali life, ensuring the authenticity of the story's setting and characters.

Use of Nepali Expressions

In *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, Manjushree Thapa carefully weaves culturally specific language and expressions to make the story more authentic and give readers a feel for the Nepali setting. For example, phrases such as “Tch, look at yourself” (Thapa 9), “Namaste, Ava Madam” (Thapa 39); “Tch” happens to be a common exclamation which people use to express disbelief, and “Namaste” is a traditional method of greeting. Such phrases set a cultural background for readers to digest the story's ambience.

Thapa further illustrates how language mirrors social dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Expressions such as “Eh, girl, aren't I here to care for Ba?” and “Ey, Dai, what are you doing?” (Thapa 10 and 36) exemplify the employment of terms like “Eh” and “Ey,” which underscore informal and familial tones, alongside the term “Dai,” signifying older brother, which reflects social hierarchies and conveys respect. These phrases, therefore, add depth to interactions in characters and reveal the cultural and social roles that people in Nepali society tend to play. Emotional states and reactions are vividly conveyed through culturally specific exclamations such as “Oof. Indira followed her out” (Thapa 17) and “Tchee! Namrata cried again” (Thapa 53). These phrases, unique to the Nepali context, express frustration, sadness, or exasperation, allowing readers to experience the characters'

emotions in a way that feels authentic to their cultural background. Similarly, cultural practices and norms are showcased through references like “Then because she was up, she started to cook dal-bhaat-tarkaari for the evening meal” (Thapa 118), where the mention of a traditional Nepali dish provides a glimpse into daily life, and “Lau, Secretaryji, you’re going to have to turn this into an international tour, re” (Thapa 10-11), where “Lau” emphasises a point, further anchoring the scene in local customs.

Thapa builds cultural continuity through the consistent use of expressions such as “Lau, I’ll get you to your destinations through the back alleys” (Thapa 106) and “Namaste, Indira ma’am! Pat Sir and rest are already here” (Thapa 110). The repeated use of “Lau” for transitions and emphasis and “Namaste” for greetings reinforces the cultural setting and ensures that the narrative remains steeped in its Nepali roots. Specific cultural nuances are also conveyed through phrases like “Honourable CBO Chairmanjyu” (Thapa 132), where the suffix “jyu” denotes respect, and “He sends her a message: skype, meri maya?” (Thapa 146), where “meri maya” (my love) blends Nepali and English, reflecting the cultural interplay experienced by the characters.

Finally, Thapa reinforces cultural identity with terms such as “Eh, Sir, Gyanu Dai went up to him” (Thapa 183) and “Ey, muwa, ey, ey” (Thapa 153). Words like “Dai” (older brother) and “muwa” (a colloquial term for mother) ground the characters in their cultural milieu, enhancing the sense of place and identity. Through these elements, Thapa weaves a narrative rich in cultural authenticity, making the story an immersive exploration of Nepali life and traditions.

4.4 Nativising Samrat Upadhyay's *The Royal Ghosts*, *Buddha's Orphans* and *Mad Country*

The Royal Ghosts

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters in *The Royal Ghosts*

In *The Royal Ghosts*, Samrat Upadhyay uses names as devices to enhance the cultural genuineness of his writing so that it is firmly sutured to society at large in Nepal. In the names Pitambar, Kabita, and Ramsharan, Jung Bahadur Rana one can sense the reality of standing position, family ties, and living values. Gaurishankar or Ganga are names that instantly evoke a sense of historical, mythological, or symbolic undertones that place characters in the rich tapestry of cultural history and spiritual icons. Nativism, like this, places the narrative within the flesh and blood of Nepal, providing its readers with a deep sense of ownership and cultural depth.

The Setting of the Story

In *The Royal Ghosts*, Samrat Upadhyay tactically uses specific Nepali settings, including Kathmandu, Pashupatinath, Thamel, and Swayambhu, to add the cultural flavour of the region and fully immerse the reader in the cultural practices, traditions, and daily life of Nepal. The locations bring an element of authenticity, evoke memories, and are historical or spiritual landmarks that make the story even more prosperous. Upadhyay makes the reader experience the difference between rural Dhunche and Thapathali in an urban setting, reflecting Nepal's geographical and cultural diversity. Local landmarks such as Indra Chowk and the Maitidevi Temple have been linked to characters and mood in a way that decisively grounds the story in Nepali geography and identity.

Code-Switching

The code-switching in *The Royal Ghosts* is an essential nativisation device that infuses the story with authenticity and cultural richness. In this regard, the various forms of linguistic or dialectical variation presented in dialogue and narrative serve the following purposes. In *The Royal Ghosts*, code-switching is the practice that gives cultural authenticity to the characters and their development and narrative realism by mirroring the intricate linguistic and social tapestry of Nepal. Expressions like “Bhut bhutbhutbhut” (Upadhyay 3) and “Pudkey corpse” (Upadhyay 98) use Nepali terminology and idioms that have no direct equivalents in English. Consequently, conversations among Nepali speakers exhibit a heightened sense of cultural authenticity. Specific terms and expressions give insight into the everyday speech of the characters and their surroundings and cultural backgrounds.

Code-switching also characterises people based on their backgrounds, social relationships, and formality levels. For example, in the lines, “Dai, my friends were saying you seem like a fun person” (Upadhyay 18) and “Dai, what brings you here?” (Upadhyay 155), the word “dai” is used, which is a term of respect to elder brothers or older men and indicates closeness and respect in Nepali culture. Likewise, “Hajur” (Upadhyay 32, 33, 179) is the term for politeness or respect used to address elders or superiors. These linguistic choices help expose their relationships and adherence to societal norms, thereby providing deeper insight into the social nature of the play.

The text further highlights social rank and relationships through words such as “Buwa” (Upadhyay 10, 22), which is used to refer to the father, “Sureshji” (Upadhyay 86) as an honorific suffix, and “Ama” (Upadhyay 101) for the mother. These words represent respect and love given to people who are related and have societal ranks,

adding depth and meaning to the story about the hierarchical structure of Nepali society and communication between people.

These aspects come into view with Nepali terminology, as well as through expressions of culture, “Bhoj with mutton, pilau and ice cream” (Upadhyay 37), or words like “Pudkey” (Upadhyay 79, 81), which translate some traditional food and cultural behaviour; they place the whole novel in a Nepali locale but also enable one to imagine the environment, making reading even more immersive in terms of knowledge of the culture and surrounding.

Code-switching also manifests emotional intensity and social nuances. For instance, “Tch, she said to the machine, then to Pitambar, Dai?” (Upadhyay 15) has “Tch” denoting frustration and “Dai” denoting familiarity, depicting the character’s emotional state as well as his social connectivity. Likewise, “This is what I think of you being a pudkay” (Upadhyay 81) utilises a term that conveys derogatory meanings, bringing out social tensions and conflict in the narrative. Upadhyay integrates Nepali words and phrases into the text so that the fluidity of the narrative seems realistic, mirroring the multilingual nature of life in Nepal. This adds to the dialogue and brings in cultural elements to represent the local culture authentically. These integrations provide insight into the language and expressions used in daily interactions for readers unfamiliar with Nepali culture.

The code-switching used in *The Royal Ghosts* enhances the nativisation of the text since the characters’ speech will be situated in a specific cultural and linguistic context, increasing authenticity, drawing attention to social dynamics, and fostering a comprehensive understanding of Nepali culture and norms.

Use of Nepali Expressions

The Nepali expressions and the lexical borrowing in *The Royal Ghosts* contribute significantly to the nativisation of the text by embedding it in the cultural and linguistic context of Nepal. In *The Royal Ghosts*, Nepali idioms and lexical components significantly enhance the storyline as they contextualise the entire action very deeply into the country of Nepal in its language, culture, and practices. For example, when referring to how “He made them tell Namaste to us” (Upadhyay 36) uses “Namaste” as the standard South Asia greeting, it immediately puts a framework to the story, with its roots within a specific culture. This term reflects local customs of politeness and respect, offering readers a glimpse into the characteristics of social interaction in Nepali society. Similarly, “Long time, no see” (Upadhyay 94), while a familiar English phrase juxtaposed with other Nepali elements, highlights the bilingual reality of many Nepali speakers and the blending of linguistic traditions within the narrative.

The borrowing of lexical items further contextualises familial relationships and cultural practices. Terms such as Dai (elder brother) (Upadhyay 15), Didi (elder sister) (Upadhyay 112), and Bhai puja (Upadhyay 19), a ritual performed during festivals, convey respect and affection, preserving the social norms intrinsic to Nepali culture. Similarly, references to festivals such as Dasain and Tihar (Upadhyay 18) and historical events like Kot Parba (Upadhyay 191) connect readers to Nepal’s cultural rhythms and historical background, emphasising these traditions’ significance in shaping the characters’ lives.

Food-related terms like dal-bhat (Upadhyay 102, 155) and Chuley (Upadhyay 167) introduce local cuisine, reflecting its everyday importance and cultural relevance

in Nepali society. These elements localise the narrative and provide sensory details that immerse the reader in the setting. Colloquial expressions and historical references, such as Aiya (an exclamation) (Upadhyay 197), Chakkas (slang) (Upadhyay 198), Baba (father) (Upadhyay 200), and raja maharaja (Upadhyay 206), further enrich the dialogue by incorporating the linguistic diversity of Nepal. These terms reflect both the informal and historical dimensions of Nepali life, creating a dynamic and authentic portrayal of the culture.

By borrowing and blending these expressions, Upadhyay not only preserves the integrity of Nepali culture within the text but also makes it accessible to a broader audience. These elements offer readers insight into the characters' language, traditions, and daily experiences, ensuring that the narrative remains deeply rooted in its Nepali setting while highlighting the multicultural and multilingual realities of its people.

Buddha's Orphans

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters

In *Buddha's Orphans*, Samrat Upadhyay employs names to enrich nativisation, bringing the story to the roots of Nepali culture and identity. Cultural authenticity was brought out through traditional names such as Raja, Vaishali, and Jamuna. Others were Bhadra Kumari and Singh Sir, showing social hierarchies and roles. Multicultural names, such as Rose and Yuko, introduced global influences, focusing on the themes of cultural exchange. Names such as Shakya and Himal are symbolic, connecting characters to Nepal's religious and geographical heritage.

Upadhyay creates a vibrant sense of location and fortifies the narrative's Nepali identity by carefully selecting culturally relevant names.

The Setting of the Story

In *Buddha's Orphans*, the detailed settings in Nepal and the USA, by Samrat Upadhyay, add to nativisation by situating the narrative in cultural authenticity. Nepali landmarks such as Tundikhel, Rani Pokhari, and Pashupatinath Temple lend cultural depth and historical significance to the story. Urban and rural contrasts, such as Kathmandu and Pokhara, mirror Nepal's social diversity. Market hubs such as Asan and Tangal capture everyday life and social dynamics.

Multicultural settings in the USA, such as Nebraska and Chicago, bring a dimension of diversity by projecting characters to new locations. The interweaving of Nepali and American locales underlines the integration, development of character, and plot, where the strong imagery puts readers into a rich cultural experience of both Nepal and the diaspora.

Code-Switching

In Samrat Upadhyay's *Buddha's Orphans*, code-switching enhances the narrative by embedding cultural authenticity, emphasising multilingualism, and providing deeper insights into the characters' emotions, relationships, and social dynamics. "Ba, pani" (Upadhyay13), "Aijaa chari kataun kaan, laiiaa chaari Goisthan" (Upadhyay18) and "Wearing official national dress daura suruwal" (Upadhyay 20) provides the local taste to this narration.

Phrases like “Chimi nani chimi-chinim” (Upadhyay 29) and “Tyo sarrik nashako sugandh?” (Upadhyay 79) indicate linguistic diversity; it is because of their multilingual nature that the Nepali society is very much alive. The representation of various languages and dialects through which Upadhyay makes it apparent how linguistic pluralism transforms everyday talk and interrelationship, a feature of nativisation. This approach to multilingualism authentically portrays Nepali life as more than one language being used within one social frame.

Nepali phrases also indicate the emotional depth and social nuances of characters. Such phrases as “Eh, eh mula” (33) and “Chup! Chup!” (Upadhyay 44) elicit charged emotions such as frustration or exasperation, making characters relatable and human by relating their emotional states to their cultural heritage.

Similarly, the culture and their traditions shine through terms like “King’s button” (Upadhyay 32) and “mitini” (Upadhyay 115), throwing light on the culture and social rules which lead characters into their lives and adding more dimensions to the plot due to its link with its cultural background. The constant usage of local words such as “bacha” (Upadhyay 140), “rajinama” (Upadhyay 170), and “bahini” (Upadhyay 103) brings a feel of home and a sense of belonging. Such terminologies strengthen the identity of the characters in a locality, thereby giving readers a commonly known flavour of the Nepali setting and making the story more convenient and accessible for them. Social statuses and bonds are expressed through terms like “baje” (Upadhyay 151) and “bhauju” (Upadhyay 353), which express family relationships and social levels. This careful integration of Nepali terms helps portray the intricate social structures of Nepali society, enhancing readers’ understanding of the characters’ positions and interactions.

Cross-cultural interactions and conflicts are also an important theme, as represented by phrase such as “You Khaireys, you imperialist” (Upadhyay 173). This shows the cultural contact and tensions the characters are going through in reflection of the complexity that arises from the need to operate between cultures. Code-switching here represents integration as well as friction between the two cultures. Character development and individuality are developed through the different uses of language, such as in “Sarkar” (Upadhyay 134) and “Shiva-ji” (Upadhyay 297). The way characters change language and assimilate cultural references into their speech makes them more dynamic and realistic so that readers can differentiate between their voices and understand their unique cultural identities. Internal conflicts are also depicted in phrases such as “You are too young chora” (Upadhyay 239) and “What do you mean harai?” (Upadhyay 360). These examples depict the emotional struggles of characters who live between two cultural worlds, struggling to find their identity. Through the smooth integration of Nepali language and cultural references, Upadhyay enhances the authenticity of the narrative, creates a greater understanding of Nepali culture, and gives richness to character development and emotional resonance. The novel is a compelling tale of life in Nepal where local specificity is balanced by universal themes of identity, belonging, and change.

Use of Nepali Expressions

In Samrat Upadhyay’s *Buddha’s Orphans*, Nepali expressions play an important role in the concept of nativisation- the narrative is saturated with a particular cultural uniqueness and authenticity. In *Buddha’s Orphans*, local terminologies and cultural references are pivotal in establishing cultural authenticity and situating the narrative within a distinctly Nepali context. Terms like “dal-bhat”

(Upadhyay 66), a traditional Nepali meal, “daura suruwal” (Upadhyay 89), traditional apparel, and “khukuri” (Upadhyay 102), a traditional knife, add to the cultural setting while also giving insight into the everyday life and practices of the characters. Similarly, references to traditional beverages like “chaang” and “tongba” (Upadhyay 162) enrich the depiction of Nepali customs and social rituals, offering readers a vivid picture of communal and cultural practices.

The sense of place is further enhanced through geographical and cultural references such as “Chitwan National Park” (Upadhyay 240) and “Kantipath” (Upadhyay 414), which ground the story in actual and identifiable locations within Nepal. Local expressions like “bhaini” (Upadhyay 328) and “handighopte” (Upadhyay 179) add a layer of colloquial authenticity, reflecting the linguistic nuances of the setting and helping the reader to visualise the social and physical landscape. These elements provide a strong sense of immersion, making the cultural environment tangible and relatable.

Social dynamics and relationships are reflected through hierarchical terms and emotionally charged expressions. Titles like “principal sahib” (Upadhyay 269), and “Shiva Bhai” (Upadhyay 290) convey respect and familiarity within Nepali society, illustrating the intricate social roles and hierarchies. Additionally, expressions such as “chee” (Upadhyay 55), an exclamation of disgust, and “badmas” (Upadhyay 62), meaning troublemaker, highlight the emotional interactions between characters, capturing social nuances in a culturally relevant way.

The narrative also communicates cultural identity through familial and spiritual terms. Words like “chora” (239), meaning son, and “chorri” (143), meaning girl, emphasise family relationships and societal roles. At the same time, phrases like

“om mane padme hum” (Upadhyay 162), a Tibetan Buddhist mantra, reflect the spiritual traditions inherent to Nepali and Buddhist culture. These elements root the characters in their cultural heritage and showcase their connections to tradition and identity.

Authenticity in dialogue is achieved through Nepali expressions like “mhhhaaaa mhhhaaa” (Upadhyay 196) and “tch, tch” (Upadhyay 249), which lend a genuine voice to the characters. Such phrases make the dialogues resonate with readers familiar with Nepali culture, while humorous and emotional expressions like “Eh! Badmas Eh! Idiot” (Upadhyay 62) add depth and relatability to the characters, illustrating their reactions in culturally specific ways.

Incorporating cultural artefacts and practices further strengthens the narrative’s connection to Nepali life. Objects like “nanglo” (Upadhyay 323), a traditional basket, and “dhara” (Upadhyay 366), a community water source, depict everyday life and the tangible artefacts of the culture. Similarly, terms like “julus” (Upadhyay 212), referring to a procession or protest, highlight conventional social practices, providing context to the characters’ experiences and actions within their cultural framework.

Upadhyay crafts a narrative deeply rooted in Nepali culture through these elements, blending linguistic, social, and geographical details to create a rich, immersive storytelling experience. Code-switching and cultural references add to the novel’s authenticity, allowing readers to understand the characters’ lives and the traditions that form their identities.

Mad Country

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters

In *Mad Country*, Samrat Upadhyay uses names familiar to Nepali, such as Gujrel, Shalini, Mahendra, and Urmila, to enhance nativisation. They ground the narrative in cultural authenticity with the names, Nepali traditions, social contexts, and linguistic patterns. Names such as Mrs. Malla and Gaurav help outline characters' identities and backgrounds and evoke cultural associations and expectations. Embedding culturally specific names enhances the story's authenticity, bringing the readers closer to the Nepali context and the characters' experiences.

The Setting of the Story

Cultural authenticity is established with the colourful Nepali settings in *Mad Country*, with mention of places like Jhamsikhel, Thamel, Swayambhunath, and Basantapur. These are the grounds through which the story gains its geographical location in Nepal, cultural and historical wealth, and local flavour. Such sites as the Bagmati River and Dharahara reference Nepali heritage, while areas like Indrachowk and Pokhara refer to everyday life and social dynamics. Vivid descriptions of varied settings create the atmosphere, mood, and cultural practices, which immerse the reader in the Nepali experience and fortify cultural identity in the narrative.

Code-Switching

The code-switching in *Mad Country* aids nativisation to great lengths through intertextual relationships, brought from elements of the Nepali language and culture, all threaded through text. By employing code-switching techniques, Upadhyay includes real-life cultural details to render cultural authenticity. For example, phrases such as “Arre, let me, yaar” (Upadhyay 4) and “Say Namaste to your brother” (Upadhyay 33) are natural speech and social behaviours in Nepali culture, making the

narrative stay in its cultural context. Moreover, code-switching provides social context by opening windows to social relationships and practices. References to traditional Nepali customs like “His bride is put in a large doko” (Upadhyay 36) and traditional dress in “Ramesh wears a daura suruwal, holds a bidi in his fingers” (Upadhyay 16) provide depth to the description of cultural practices.

This further develops flavour and colour for the story using words like “khoi” (Upadhyay 46) and “mitho mitho” (Upadhyay 80) in Nepali to add cultural flavours and a sense of the experience of the locale. It also characterises the voice and identity of the character with phrases such as “Sahuni, Sukumari said, Ma maas ko bara Khanncha” (Upadhyay 87), where depth in the use of language and the cultural setting of the characters is provided. Cultural practices and expressions are vividly captured by referring to Nepali food and customs such as “chhoila and Kachila and raksi” (Upadhyay 92) and “spicy meat, momos, fritters” (Upadhyay 78), thus connecting readers instantly to the local traditions.

In addition, the emotional and expressive content of the story is enhanced using Nepali phrases such as “mitho cha” (Upadhyay 82) and “La hera, sahuni said” (Upadhyay 86), which, in their respective cultural contexts, have emotional tones that cannot be perfectly translated into English. Such elements make the reader feel the book’s authenticity because language creates a rich cultural and linguistic environment, mirroring the characters’ experiences. Lastly, code-switching brings cultural flavour and humour into the scene, with casual commands and humour such as “Eh ramro” (Upadhyay 92) and “La, aangara” (Upadhyay 95). In these examples, Upadhyay’s use of code-switching profoundly enriches the narrative by blending language and culture seamlessly to deepen the story’s cultural resonance.

Use of Nepali Expressions

Nepali expressions in *Mad Country* largely contribute to its nativisation by granting cultural specificity and authenticity to the narrative. The Nepali expressions used within the text of *Mad Country* contribute heavily to the narrative's cultural specificity and authenticity. Such terms as “daura suruwal” (Upadhyay 23) and “Jyapu dress” (Upadhyay 79), being traditional attires in Nepal, locate characters and settings within a specific cultural context. These phrases help create a mental imagery of the folk clothing and, in turn, the culture with which they derive. Lastly, local practices and local traditions-things like the staple Nepali food known as “dal-bhat” (Upadhyay 95) and “Kuireney” (Upadhyay 78) describe mundane life and gustatory life all these provide further authenticity of the setting.

This is also supported in the plot with terms like “Ma Nepali keti”, meaning “I am a Nepali girl” (Upadhyay 97), for cultural pride and identity of one's nation. Using terms such as “sano bank” (Upadhyay 53) and “daura suruwal” (Upadhyay 23) gives an authentic and flavoured tone to the writing which makes readers able to immerse into the ordinary words and local reference that is the part of Nepali culture. Moreover, it furthered the description of the cultural practices and social mores that “Jyapu dress” (Upadhyay 79) is the clothing of specific classes and “dal-bhat” (Upadhyay 95) is socialising and communal eating.

The context that these expressions give the readers allows them to understand the subtle setting and character of the story. For instance, “Sano bank” (Upadhyay 53) could mean a small financial institution or a community-based bank; therefore, local economic practices are shown. Finally, emotional and social content created through lines such as “Ma Nepali keti” (Upadhyay 97) and “Dudhjastogori” (Upadhyay 105)

have fleshed up the text-culture, personal identity, and social interaction by adding more flesh to the story.

4.5 Nativising Shradha Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter*

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters

In *The Wayward Daughter*, the characters' names give much scope to setting the narrative in the cultural and ethnic background of Nepal. The protagonist, Sumnima Tamule, deeply connects with Nepali mythology as she refers to the wife of the great Kirati monarch, Paruhang. This links her to her indigenous ancestry and forms a metaphor for the difficulty she faces with her identity in a middle-class home struggling with Kathmandu's urban elite. Agata's fictive surname again evokes indigenous groups' nomenclature trends, enforcing the cultural duality within the text. Similarly, Gajendra--whom they call Gajey in common--is double named; part of him is a 'proper' in a word from Sanskrit, and a popular name--a byname in colloquial or regional versions enlists his battle to maintain ways of tribal against trying and emulating high caste mannerisms. There is another dimension of cultural conflict through Premkala Limbu, Sumnima's mother: her surname is a name to anchor herself to her Kirati roots, but being ostracised by her husband's family, a situation that depicts the prejudices around inter-caste marriages.

The names and titles of the characters add cultural authenticity to the story. The Nepali word "Boju" is a term that means being affectionate and reverent in Nepali for the grandmother. In addition, Ganga and Manlahari have Nepali-named cousins, whereas traditional rural values contrast with modern urban aspirations. In this manner, these names carry for Shradha Ghale not only the multiple social hierarchies of Nepal but also the broader questions of migration, class advancement,

and cultural identity in a society in transition. Such names take on the nature of cultural markers, infusing the story with multifaceted dimensions of significance related to ancestry and social intercourse.

The Setting of the Story

The setting in *The Wayward Daughter* serves as instrumental in the nativisation of the narrative, placing it in Nepal's cultural, social, and geographical contexts. The movement of the Tamule family from the pastoral highlands of Lungla to Kathmandu's bustling streets is one of the dominant trends for many first-generation urban immigrants. The detailed descriptions of Kathmandu, ranging from the bustling thoroughfares, historical architecture, and socio-economically stratified districts to the more intimate spaces of middle-class homes, imbue this story with a strongly localised quality. For instance, Sumnima's description of her ordinary yellow, two-storey house in Bhasichaur against the high-standard, lavish houses of Sumnima's affluent friends evokes the deep inequalities prevailing in the capital city. Similarly, references to the Rhododendron Girls' School, the elite institution where Sumnima fails to cope as a member, mirror the aspirations and challenges of middle-class families in social mobility while being burdened with their cultural heritage.

The rural settlement of Lungla is portrayed with comparable intricacy, representing the ethnic identity of the Tamule family as well as traditions dating from times. The ecological environment of a village, coupled with *Udhauri* and *Ubhauri*, local celebrations, and a practice of presenting millet liquor during the matrimonial proposals, aptly represents the cultural richness of the indigenous communities in Nepal. The dal-bhat and halwa type of food served in the family setting shows the much-needed cultural heritage they get with their identity. This is where there is an

apparent dichotomy between the nonsensical plain simplicity of Lungla and the complexity of the urban landscape of Kathmandu. Such settings allow Shradha Ghale to establish a richly linked narration with the geography of Nepal, and the text, therefore, becomes truly reflective of its socio-cultural fabric.

Code Switching

Blending Nepali phrases with English in *The Wayward Daughter* richly enlarges the narrative's cultural authenticity and linguistic texture. For example, the descriptive sequence, "This is a Nepali soup. Its name is gundruk. It is made of green leaves called as saag." (Ghale 21), shows traditional cooking habits but broaches a crucial concern about the characters' linguistic struggles to describe cultural phenomena in a second language. Similarly, exclamations like "Bichara! Why is he carrying such a heavy load in this heat?" (Ghale 45) convey spontaneous empathy, showcasing how native expressions are seamlessly integrated into bilingual dialogue. The phrase "Gilsin lagau, ha? Your skin will get better in the cold" (Ghale 72) illustrates the nativisation of English words such as glycerin, reflecting everyday conversational quirks in middle-class Nepali households.

The juxtaposition of dal-bhat and pizza in "We eat dal-bhat every day, but in my friends' auto-books, I wrote that my favourite food is pizza because it sounds cool" (Ghale 56) emphasises the protagonist's cultural duality, navigating between her traditional roots and aspirations for global acceptance. Similarly, adapting borrowed words, as seen in "Dai, chibistik cha? My lips are so dry in this weather" (93), where chapstick becomes chibistik, highlights how English vocabulary is localised in Nepali phonetics. Urban slang like type (junkie) and chowk (square) in "This type is always hanging around the chowk. He has no shame!" (Ghale 101) reflects societal

observations and the influence of urban Nepali culture. Meanwhile, phrases such as “Aisyo gaisyo bhuja khaisyo—speak like that, not like a villager!” (Ghale 68) underscore class-conscious linguistic hierarchies, showcasing societal pressures to adopt refined speech.

Cultural traditions and familial interactions are vividly portrayed through expressions like “Sumnima, let’s go to Tundikhel for the mela, okay? It will be fun!” (Ghale 112), where mela (festival) reflects the blending of languages in urban settings and “Boju, don’t throw away my halwa! I’ll eat it later” (Ghale 87), where halwa (a traditional sweet) emphasises food as a marker of identity. The coexistence of traditional and global influences is evident in “Sathi, you want momo or pizza?” (Ghale 134), where momo (Nepali dumplings) is paired with pizza, reflecting contemporary Nepali culture. Commands like “He told me, ‘Chup bas! Don’t talk back to me,’ and left the room” (Ghale 147) capture Nepali discourse’s emotional tone and cultural specificity. At the same time, the reflection in “I don’t understand why they call it thukpa when it is just noodle soup!” (153) highlights the cultural integration and resilience of traditional terms like thukpa, which resist direct translation. These linguistic nuances provide a vivid sense of place, identity, and cultural dynamics, enriching the reader’s immersion in the narrative.

Use of Nepali Expressions

In *The Wayward Daughter*, idioms and phrases rooted in Nepali culture significantly contribute to the text’s nativisation by anchoring it in the sociolinguistic fabric of Nepal. For example, the grandmother, Boju, frequently uses colourful, sharp Nepali idioms to express her disdain or frustration, such as calling someone a “boksi ko nach” (Ghale 47) (witch’s dance) to describe chaotic behaviour. These idioms are

the standard expressions of older generations yet convey lively and culturally expressive communication. Such phrases add a specific reality to dialogue, revealing characters like Boju as highly connected to indigenous roots.

The idiomatic expressions, which are Nepali and English together, reflect the linguistic hybridity of the characters. The phrases such as “Afino kera apai khayao, aru lai ke dinu?” (If you eat your bananas, what’s left for others?) are humorously juxtaposed with their English translations to point out the attempts of the characters to negotiate bilingual realities (Ghale 123). This blend highlights the dual linguistic identity of the characters, thus rendering a defining feature of life in urban Nepal. By weaving in idioms and proverbs with cultural specificity and linguality, *The Wayward Daughter* gives its narrative a grounding in Nepal’s vernacular speech patterns and cultural psyche, giving more authenticity and resonance to the text.

4.6 Nativising Buddhisagar Chapagain’s *Karnali Blues*

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters

In *Karnali Blues*, the characters’ names are deeply rooted in Nepali culture and language; hence, the text shows nativisation. For example, the main character’s name, Brisha Bahadur, carries the suffix “Bahadur,” a traditional title associated with bravery and masculinity in Nepal, with cultural norms and expectations. “Brisha” is a unique regional choice that stresses his rural identity. Family words like Aama, meaning mother, and Ba, meaning father, indicate the proximate and authentic nature of Nepali rural family relationships. Secondary characters, like Bhagiram Tharu, is a name of native Tharu, and Jarilal Dalit porter’s name talks about casteist identity, indicating the ethnic and class diversity of Nepal. Any name, such as Parvati, the name is used from Hindu mythology and thus depicts religious traditions influence in

naming. Names like Chandré, colloquial and affectionate, suggest familiarity in the way characteristic of the countryside. These names embed the narrative in Nepal's socio-cultural and linguistic context, making the characters relatable to Nepali readers while providing non-Nepali readers insight into the local customs, caste dynamics, and cultural identity.

The Setting of the Story

The setting of *Karnali Blues* plays a crucial role in nativising the text by immersing readers in the physical, cultural, and social environment of rural and semi-urban Nepal. The vivid descriptions of Matera, a fictional village near the Karnali River, evoke the natural landscapes of western Nepal, where the river's power symbolises the intimate, yet precarious relationship rural communities have with their environment. Local architecture, such as mud-built homes and smoky kitchens, and the bustling Katasé Bazaar, with its trade activities and rural transportation routes, reflect the daily life and socio-economic realities of the time. Nature and religion intertwine with sacred trees, like the pipal tree covered in bells and prayer flags, integrating spirituality into the landscape. Seasonal changes, including the monsoon's impact on the Amauri Khola, further anchor the story in the distinctive climate of Nepal. The portrayal of local festivals like Dasai and the influence of the People's War, alongside challenges like poor healthcare infrastructure, ensure that the setting is not only geographically authentic but also historically and culturally resonant, grounding the narrative in the lived experiences of the Nepali people.

Code Switching

The use of Nepali expressions in *Karnali Blues* adds cultural specificity and enhances the local flavour of the text. For instance, “The Sauji, who had been dozing on a cot inside...” (Chapagain 134) uses the term “Sauji,” a respectful way to address a shopkeeper or store owner in Nepali, grounding the narrative in its cultural context. Similarly, traditional greetings like “Raam Raam, Daju” (Chapagain 123) reflect respect and cultural norms of politeness, particularly when addressing elders. The colloquialism “La, do me the good” (Chapagain 145), where “la” indicates readiness or a casual request, captures the tone and structure of Nepali informal speech. Emotional expressions such as “thukka!” in “He’s thirteen years old. He still rips up his books, thukka!” (Chapagain 161) are indicative of frustration or disappointment, adding authenticity to character interactions.

Terms like “dost” in “Let’s go, dost!” (Chapagain 157), borrowed from Nepali and Hindi, signify camaraderie and endearment, strengthening the portrayal of friendships. The inclusion of “The bhatbhaté stopped at the tea shop” (Chapagain 112) highlights local vernacular, with “bhatbhaté” being a colloquial term for a motorbike, reflecting the Nepali tendency to incorporate sound symbolism into language. Familial bonds are emphasised through terms like “Ba,” as in “No, if Ba found out, he’d beat me” (Chapagain 157), which signifies Brisha’s father and underscores emotional intimacy. Respectful greetings such as “Namaste, Doctor Saap” (Chapagain 146), combining the traditional “Namaste” with the honorific “Saap” derived from Hindi and Urdu, demonstrate cultural etiquette.

Additionally, the phrase “With a water pot in one hand, ash on my brow, bam bhole, hahaha!” (Chapagain 146) incorporates a devotional chant associated with

Lord Shiva, adding spiritual and playful undertones to the narrative. The reference to “Maoists” in “As soon as you switched the radio on, it blared out this word” (Chapagain 168) situates the story within Nepal’s socio-political context during the insurgency period, further enhancing the realism of the setting. These expressions enrich the text by embedding linguistic and cultural elements that immerse readers in the Nepali experience.

Use of Nepali Expressions

In the text, several Nepali idiomatic expressions and cultural phrases enrich the narrative and add authenticity to the setting. For instance, the phrase “ghadyaama” (Chapagain 145) imitates a heavy sound, heightening the scene’s drama. Similarly, “lau” (Chapagain 112) is a common exclamation of surprise or realisation, reinforcing the cultural nuances of Nepali speech. The confusion over “chattis” (Chapagain 175), which refers to sandals but is mistakenly understood as underpants, highlights the linguistic diversity within Nepal. The onomatopoeic “phatyaak phatyaak” (Chapagain 10) vividly describes the sound of sandals slapping on the ground, enhancing the sensory detail of the scene. “Babai” (Chapagain 105), a term of endearment or mild surprise, adds warmth and informality to the dialogue. Finally, the phrase “What is life if not full of thorns?” (Chapagain 210) reflects the resilience and fatalism common themes in rural Nepali philosophy, where life’s challenges are viewed as inevitable. These expressions combine to create a rich, immersive reading experience that speaks to the cultural fabric of Nepal.

4.7 Nativising Greta Rana's *Hostage*

The Use of the Names of the Protagonists and Characters

The protagonists and characters of *Hostage* by Greta Rana have names to nativise the text by placing it deep into Nepal's socio-cultural, geographical, and historical context. Characters like Hari Prasad, Jamuna, and Subadhra symbolise traditional Nepali names with caste, religion, and ethnicity attached to their identity, thereby showing relevance to the country's strict caste system in society. Names like Nanda Chaudhary evoke the feudal legacy in rural Nepal. Questions of land ownership and class struggle often crop up with such names. His name is also a metaphor for the Rapti River, which signifies a strong homeland connection, though in direct contrast to his alienation in the harsh deserts of the Gulf as a migrant worker. References to "Arab" were used colloquially to refer to the Gulf region, and the ethnic and caste diversity represented by names such as Siva Bahadur grounded the story in Nepali realities. Such names in the novel reflect the characters' struggles, sacrifices, and aspirations, enhancing the narrative's authenticity and connecting it to Nepal's cultural and geographical identity.

The Setting of the Story

In *Hostage*, the setting is important because it gives the story a local feel, keeping it in Nepal's cultural, geographical, and social context. A metaphor such as describing the Rapti River as having "snake-like currents" and "silvery twilight sands" makes reader know aware how Hari Prasad is connected to his homeland and how much he values rural life in Nepal. This environment is very different from the deserts of the Gulf, showing the strong separation experienced by the Nepali migrant workers. The contrast between the lush fields of Nepal and the harsh sand of the Gulf

brings their strong desires for their native place and the sacrifices people make for better lives by keeping the story closely intertwined with real-life situations in Nepal.

Additionally, the social-political background of Nepal itself — Maoist insurrections, feudal tenancies, and pervasive corruption — expands the process of nativisation in the text. Describing Hari Prasad's village, which suffers class exploitation and the emigration of men abroad for employment, depicts the economic insecurity which is synonymous with much of rural Nepal. Thus, urban landscapes such as Kathmandu serve as a testament to the contrast between the elite and the working class, which fuels the pressures that force people like Hari Prasad to migrate. In this sense, Rana creates a tale deeply associated with Nepal's everyday lives and cultural heritage, making the book uniquely a representation of Nepali culture.

Code-Switching

Integrating culturally specific terms and references in Rana's work adds depth and authenticity to the narrative, anchoring it firmly in Nepali cultural and social contexts. For instance, the term "Arab" in "He had just borrowed money against a piece of land to finance his flight to 'Arab' where he had been given to believe a lucrative job awaited him on a construction site" (Rana 2) is a localised Nepali reference to Gulf countries. This term reflects how Nepali migrant workers casually refer to their destination countries, capturing their socio-economic realities and aspirations. Similarly, "Hadn't he refused to accept a groom for her three years ago when Nanda Chaudhary's family had asked to bring food and sweets as 'magani' for Subadhra?" (Rana 5) uses the word "magani" to describe a key cultural practice in Nepali weddings, adding specificity and cultural resonance to the narrative.

The mention of significant festivals in “One or two of them picked up a few words in the local language, and each Dasain and Tihar came by they were able to invite the local workers to their festivities” (Rana 30) further roots the story in Nepali traditions. By referencing Dasain and Tihar, the text celebrates central cultural events that connect Nepali migrant workers to their homeland despite their physical distance. Additionally, the use of sentence like “They’re completely ignorant about Nepal, about our beliefs, about the facts that we are tolerant of all faiths,’ her aunt said in an imitation of one of her husband’s favourite political slokas” (Rana 166) underscores the importance of Hindu traditions and Sanskrit verses, reflecting cultural and religious influences in political and social commentary. These cultural elements collectively enrich the narrative, offering readers a nuanced understanding of Nepali life and identity.

Use of Nepali Expressions

Idioms like “the grass is always greener” (Rana 31) and similes such as “the river like a snake winding through” (Ghale 27) adapt universal expressions by infusing them with Nepali geographical and emotional context. These phrases articulate the protagonist’s longing for home while evoking rural Nepal’s lush landscapes and hardships. Similarly, expressions like “licks the arses of the Maoists and the army” (Ghale 68) and “burning tyres at the drop of a hat” (Ghale 36) critique the opportunistic behaviour of individuals and groups within Nepal’s socio-political sphere, rooting the narrative in the nation’s unique struggles and frustrations. The language incorporates the dualism that Nepali migrant workers carry to balance native tradition with the global surroundings they navigate.

4.8 Conclusion

The selected works illustrate that the English nativist literature written in Nepal represents and embodies the diversity of cultural identity and complicated social dynamics Nepal encompasses. The selected writers use linguistic features like code-switching, lexical borrowing, and hybridisation to express local settings, themes, and identities within their narratives in the English medium. Thapa's emotive use of nomenclature, environments, and vernacular in *Tilled Earth*, *Seasons of Flight* and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* very well portrays Nepal's varied social and geographical spaces. Upadhyay's literary works, *The Royal Ghosts*, *Buddha's Orphans* and *The Mad Country*, present the nuances of Nepali life, family relations, and similar important historical events. Ghale, Chapagain, and Rana significantly contribute to Nepali English literature by integrating regional idiomatic expressions, cultural customs, and socio-political dynamics of their environments, crafting narratives that appeal to local and global audiences.

Further, the authors aptly use linguistic techniques to integrate the global into the local. Thus, English becomes adaptable to the contexts of Nepali society. Techniques of code-switching and indigenous phrases smoothly integrate both worlds. Chapagain's *Karnali Blues*, Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter* and Rana's *Hostage* have exemplified that the English language has undergone many transformations to capture Nepal's hybrid cultural expression and the complexity of its society. This way, they show a dynamic interaction between the rural and the urban, with the indigenous and global views incorporating elements of traditionalism and contemporaneity while furthering cultural identity imbibed through language.

Thapa and Upadhyay's nativisation approaches are likely a symptom of fluid assimilation with local Nepali features of the linguistic and cultural backgrounds. On the contrary, Ghale, Chapagain, and Rana insist that the stories are given more 'inherently local taste' and must be grounded within more profound layers of Nepal's socio-political milieus.

Thapa and Upadhyay tend to read ideas of globalisation and identity crisis using nativisation, thereby negotiating the expansive topographies of culture. The authors' choice employs linguistic and cultural anchorage for projecting Nepal's resilient diversities of tradition and experiential realities. Collectively, these perspectives weave a resilient fabric of Nepali English literature, demonstrating its capacity to mirror and influence Nepal's changing identity and socio-cultural landscape.

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CHAPTER V

Whither Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has long been a defining ideological and policy framework in modern societies, designed to accommodate cultural diversity while fostering social cohesion and equal rights. At its core, multiculturalism refers to the coexistence of many cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups within a shared political and social space. However, its effectiveness and sustainability remain contested. While proponents argue that multiculturalism enriches societies by promoting inclusion, protecting minority rights, and encouraging cultural exchange, critics contend that it can contribute to cultural fragmentation, social divisions, and tensions between majority and minority populations.

This chapter aims to critically examine the evolving nature of multiculturalism, its theoretical foundations, and its application in both global and Nepali English diasporic contexts. The chapter addresses the following research questions:

1. How do multicultural policies address identity, inclusion, and integration in diverse societies?
2. How do Nepali-English diasporic literary texts reflect and critique multicultural experiences?

5.1 Historical Evolution and Theoretical Foundations

The origins of multiculturalism as both a concept and a policy can be traced to post-World War II migration patterns, decolonisation, and civil rights movements, which reshaped global demographics and governance frameworks. In Western

democracies such as Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, multicultural policies emerged as a response to increased immigration and the need for more inclusive governance structures. Will Kymlicka, a leading theorist in multicultural studies, asserts that multiculturalism is essential for liberal democracies, ensuring the equitable inclusion of minority groups through group-differentiated rights. He argues that democratic societies must acknowledge cultural diversity and accommodate it institutionally, granting minority communities full participation in public life.

Likewise, Bhikhu Parekh disapproves of passive tolerance in *Rethinking Multiculturalism* and proposes active intercultural encounters and dialogue (18). He opposes dogmatic presumptions concerning culture, underlining its fluidity and need for cross-cultural interchange. This view aligns with Tariq Modood, who, in *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, argues that public institutions must respect both individual rights and collective identities, particularly in societies where religious diversity plays a central role (76). Modood specifically critiques Western secular frameworks for marginalising religion in multicultural policies, arguing that faith-based communities require greater recognition in diverse societies.

While classical multiculturalism focuses on coexistence, contemporary scholars like Geoffrey Brahm Levey promote interculturalism, or active interaction among cultural groups, instead of passive tolerance (150). This is especially applicable in the digital era, where social media and diasporic communities in cyberspace have opened new avenues for cultural negotiation. Diaspora members are now able to have strong cultural connections with their country of origin while simultaneously integrating into their host nations, resulting in what can be termed virtual multiculturalism. Nepali English authors have utilised digital media to explore

hybrid identity and transnational experience, enhancing an emerging and more dynamic concept of multiculturalism.

Despite its inclusive aspirations, multiculturalism has faced significant criticism. Brian Barry argues in *Culture and Equality* that multicultural policies can inadvertently undermine individual rights by prioritising group rights, which may reinforce cultural divisions rather than fostering integration (24). Paul Scheffer takes this argument further in *The Multicultural Tragedy*, contending that poorly managed multicultural policies can create segregated communities resistant to broader societal integration (45). Similarly, Amartya Sen critiques rigid identity politics within multicultural discourse in *Identity and Violence*, arguing that overemphasising cultural differences can heighten social tensions rather than promote unity (91). These critiques suggest that while multiculturalism aims to foster inclusion, its implementation requires careful balancing to prevent social fragmentation.

Alternative models, such as interculturalism and post-multiculturalism, have gained traction as a response. Levey argues that societies must shift from mere coexistence to active cultural engagement, fostering environments where cultural identities interact and evolve (150). Nasar Meer, in *Post-Multiculturalism?* highlights the limitations of traditional multiculturalism, asserting that symbolic recognition of minority cultures is insufficient for addressing structural inequalities (187). These evolving perspectives suggest that traditional multiculturalism, while foundational, must be restructured to address contemporary socioeconomic and political challenges.

Interculturalism is a diversity paradigm that encourages active contact, dialogue, and cross-cultural knowledge sharing. Interculturalism transcends traditional multiculturalism in that it requires tolerance and accommodation.

Interculturalism encourages active contact and productive cooperation across cultures. Interculturalism also stipulates diversity as living together and how people interact, affect, and transform each other. Interculturalism also implies a sense of belonging and argues that cultural diversity revitalises social cohesion but does not disintegrate it; instead strengthens the social fabric.

One of the foundational pillars of interculturalism is the assumption that culture is never fixed but always dynamic. Rather than seeing cultures as immovable objects of customary practices, interculturalism acknowledges that culture is modified upon encounter. For instance, London, Toronto, and Singapore brought together different traditions into new forms of culture—either fusion cuisine, hybrid language, or public festivals that blended heterogeneous crowds.

One of the most evocative differences between multiculturalism and interculturalism is that they differ in approaching the issue of cultural identity and integration. Interculturalism tries to surpass differential cultural identities, whereas multiculturalism is more concerned with holding on to such identities. This is not imposed homogenisation where people are compelled to move away from their origin cultures but an open interaction where cultures can borrow ideas from each other in a way that they do not lose their uniqueness. For example, instead of just allowing for the mere sight of various cultural festivities among ethnic minorities, an intercultural orientation would allow for communal celebrations, shared histories, and collaborative cultural activities, thus strengthening the bridges of communities.

Interculturalism is most directly related to public policy and education systems. Education institutions play a key role in developing intercultural sensitivity by challenging students to value different viewpoints rather than simply accepting

differences. An intercultural education model would concentrate on grasping the bilateral effects of diverse cultures on each other throughout history, incorporating scientific development, arts, and the evolution of language rather than just concentrating on ethnic narratives. Further, government administration and corporate environments can implement intercultural policies mandating the induction of cross-cultural interactions rather than mere acknowledgement of diversity within abstract spaces.

Another key feature of interculturalism is that it emphasises the equality of power relations between cultures. Some cultural groups dominate other cultural groups in political, economic, or social aspects, creating asymmetry in the power of cultural influence. Interculturalism tries to remove this asymmetry by giving space for all voices to be heard and capable of contributing something to society. This requires integrative policy, leadership representation, and space for various communities to influence national discourse instead of being marginalised or forced to assimilate into dominant cultures.

One of the weaknesses of interculturalism is that it is a two-way process and requires effort and will on both sides. In contrast to passive tolerance, interculturalism involves being open, curious, and respectful towards the other. This is especially needed in multicultural societies with heightened nationalism or ethnic conflict since cultural miscommunication leads to conflict. Societies can build environments conducive to effective interaction through systematic intercultural programs, integrated city planning, and community activities.

With a world ever more stitched together by migration, new media, and globalisation, interculturalism is the more agile and robust counter to a quest for

diversity. It acknowledges that people no longer live in air-tight cultural packages, and harmonious, diverse societies are constructed not merely on passive tolerance but on positive partnership and cultural exchange. Employed positively, interculturalism can heal cleavages, fuel innovation, and build communities where everyone feels at home and is valued.

Scholars such as Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall offer additional critical perspectives on multiculturalism by shifting the focus to cultural fluidity and hybrid identities. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha introduces the concept of the “third space”, a site where cultural identities are neither fixed nor pure but continuously reshaped through intercultural exchange (56). In his work on diasporic identities, Stuart Hall similarly argues that identity is an ever-evolving construct shaped by historical, social, and political forces (222). These perspectives challenge essentialist views of culture and emphasise that multiculturalism must adapt to transnational and hybrid identities.

The rise of right-wing nationalism, restrictive immigration policies, and economic inequalities further complicates the sustainability of multiculturalism. Right-wing nationalism has recently become more influential globally, shaping politics, popular opinion, and state policy. It is motivated to preserve national identity, protect indigenous-born nationals, and combat globalisation and immigration. Right-wing nationalist politicians and parties have taken over the U.S., the U.K., India, Brazil, and parts of Europe with the language of a populist orientation: foreigners-immigrants, refugees, or minorities-are dangers to national cohesion. These politics have drawn more and more people who are economically hard-pressed, anxious about

cultures, and experiencing times of political turmoil so that citizens turn to established traditions and nationhood for security.

One of the primary causes of the surge of right-wing nationalism is the fear of change within the culture. To most nations, there is imposed globalisation and migration that results in multicultural, multi-ethnic cultures with traditional values and norms in disarray. While some individuals believe that this multiculturalism is enriching, some other individuals feel it makes them feel a sense of loss and insecurity. Right-wing populist movements tend to utilise these fears in an argument that immigrants and minorities are watering down national culture, appropriating jobs, and breaking up traditional practices of life. This fosters resentment and an “us vs. them” mindset where indigenous people believe they are victimised through cultural invasion.

Economic desperation is also a motive force behind right-wing nationalism. Millions of ordinary citizens have been faced with lost opportunities, stagnating wages, and rising living costs, all of which have economically dislocated them. Nationalist politicians blame the adverse effects of globalisation, free trade, and immigration for these and contend that foreign workers and multinationals are taking away opportunities from native people. This economic insecurity has been converted into a policy that toughens immigration legislation, promotes protectionist trade, and enforces “locals first” labour policies. Such policies, though populist, are prone to avoid real economic issues, such as automation, corporate monopolies, and disequilibria.

One of the main impacts of right-wing nationalism has been the subversion of democratic values. Under nearly every nationalist regime, a clear move in the

direction of authoritarianism, censorship, and political repression can be observed. Nationalist ruling parties usually berate the press, demonise oppositional voices, and crush dissent, attributing any critical voice as a betrayal of national interests. The shift poses democratic, pluralistic characteristics to hard-line exclusionist actions consistent with a dominant majority cultural or ethnic factor.

Right-wing nationalism also spawned social uprisings and violence. The nationalist rhetoric serves to inspire further rising hate crimes, racial segregation, and xenophobia. Muslim communities and religious minorities are taunted, shunned, and attacked as they are exposed by Islamophobic brutality in Europe, anti-Semitic assaults in America, and attacks against immigrants in India and Brazil. Nationalist ideologies justify discrimination by depicting minority groups as foreigners who do not belong to the nation and, hence, lead to a divided society where people are defined according to their origin, religion, or ethnicity and not what they can contribute to the nation.

While it has ruinous effects, right-wing nationalism is very attractive to individuals, most notably in times of uncertainty. It creates a sense of belongingness, meaning, and empowerment, providing individuals with a distinct identity in an increasingly complex world. History, however, has demonstrated that intense nationalism tends to create isolationism, violence, and social unrest. To counter these risks, societies must embrace inclusive nationalism—a diversity-focused patriotism of civic commitment and shared democratic values, not exclusion and disintegration. It will be necessary to remedy economic and social injustices fuelling nationalist feelings—without scapegoating and hysteria—to build a more stable, unified, and equitable society.

Political events such as Brexit, the resurgence of nationalist movements in Europe, and anti-immigration policies in the United States and Australia have cast doubt on the future of multicultural frameworks. Some scholars, including Kymlicka and Modood, argue that these challenges stem not from inherent flaws in multiculturalism but from failures in policy implementation and socioeconomic inclusion (Kymlicka 112; Modood 212). They suggest that rather than retreating from multiculturalism, societies must improve integration mechanisms, ensure equitable opportunities, and foster excellent intercultural dialogue.

5.2 Nepali English Diaspora: An Emerging Literary Tradition

Against this backdrop, this chapter critically examines the evolving nature of multiculturalism by analysing its strengths, weaknesses, and potential trajectories. Through the lens of Nepali English diasporic texts, the subsequent sections explore:

1. How multicultural policies and lived experiences shape individual and collective identities.
2. The tension between cultural hybridity and assimilation in diasporic literature.
3. Ongoing debates on cultural preservation vs. integration.

Multiculturalism has significantly contributed to the preservation of cultural diversity and the recognition of minority identities. This manifests through characters navigating cultural hybridity, belonging, and adaptation in literature. Will Kymlicka argues that multicultural citizenship enables minority groups to retain cultural distinctiveness while participating in broader socio-political structures (47). Similarly, Bhikhu Parekh emphasises that multiculturalism fosters intercultural dialogue,

allowing cultural identities to evolve rather than remain static (72). These perspectives provide a foundation for understanding how multiculturalism is depicted in literature.

Multiculturalism is a tool for protection and change of cultural identity. On one hand, it allows people to maintain their heritage; on the other hand, it challenges traditional identities by subjecting them to the power of new socio-political forces. This conflict is depicted beautifully in Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth*, especially in "The Buddha in the Earth-Touching Posture", where the protagonist sees Buddhist identity commercialised in Lumbini. That which was holy and pure is now being sold to global tourism, and characters must realise that cultural preservation is all about change.

Stuart Hall develops the concept of cultural identity as a process of "positioning" rather than an essentialist characteristic, suggesting that identity is constantly redefined through historical and social encounters. *Buddha's Orphans* demonstrates this through an intergenerational struggle in which characters shift between Nepal's traditional structure and the demands of modernisation. Homi Bhabha's "theory of hybridity" is particularly apt in this context, as the novel demonstrates that identity is not simply inherited but created through negotiation and accommodation. Raja's journey, defined by socio-political turmoil, is an excellent example of multiculturalism creating hybrid identities—neither entirely based on the past nor entirely incorporated into new systems of culture.

Likewise, in *Karnali Blues*, Buddhisagar captures the coming-of-age experience of the protagonist, who is influenced by rural culture but impacted by outside forces. This is evidence of Kymlicka's contention that multiculturalism promotes the maintenance of cultures in democratic institutions (89).

Multiculturalism promotes an inclusive society where all cultural groups are valued and recognised. However, In Shradha Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter*, the protagonist, Sumnima, struggles with her Limbu identity in an urban, caste-conscious society, reflecting the challenges of inclusion in a fragmented multicultural landscape. This aligns with Tariq Modood's argument that multicultural policies must account for ethnic and religious pluralism to ensure meaningful integration (76).

Similarly, Samrat Upadhyay's *The Royal Ghosts* explores caste and ethnic exclusion, reinforcing Parekh's assertion that genuine multiculturalism must challenge structural inequalities (104). In *Buddha's Orphans*, intergenerational conflicts reflect how shifting cultural landscapes can either reinforce exclusion or create pathways for greater inclusion through cross-cultural understanding. This parallels Nasar Meer's *Post-Multiculturalism?* which argues that multiculturalism must transition from symbolic recognition to substantive policy reforms (187).

Multiculturalism has expanded economic and educational opportunities, particularly for diasporic individuals. In *Seasons of Flight*, Prema's migration to the United States presents her with professional opportunities that would have been inaccessible in Nepal. However, her integration struggle aligns with Kymlicka's assertion that multicultural policies must go beyond recognition and ensure that immigrants actively participate in society (47). Similarly, in *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, Ava Berriden's work with international aid organisations reveals the complexities of multicultural engagement in Nepal, where structural inequalities remain embedded. However, economic benefits are not equally distributed as envisioned in Multicultural ideology.

In *Hostage*, Greta Rana portrays the harsh realities of migrant labourers, demonstrating how economic mobility in multicultural societies can often lead to exploitation and discrimination. This echoes Paul Scheffer's concerns that multiculturalism may contribute to socioeconomic segregation rather than proper integration (45).

In *Mad Country*, some stories depict economic migration, where individuals pursue better opportunities yet face systemic barriers in their adopted countries. This critique aligns with Brian Barry's argument that economic disparities must be addressed for multiculturalism to be effective (112).

Homi Bhabha's hybridity theory is particularly relevant in *Mad Country*, where characters exist in liminal spaces between tradition and modernity. In "Fast Forward", the protagonist grapples with cultural displacement in the United States, reinforcing Stuart Hall's argument that cultural identity is fluid and negotiated (222). Similarly, Thapa reflects on Nepal's historical and cultural transitions in *Forget Kathmandu*, exploring how global interactions reshape national identity.

In *Buddha's Orphans*, the protagonist's journey across different societal settings highlights the fluidity of identity, reinforcing Parekh's assertion that multicultural societies must actively foster intercultural engagement rather than rely on passive coexistence (133).

The rise of digital technologies has transformed multicultural experiences, allowing diasporic individuals to stay connected to their homeland while engaging in their host societies. In *Seasons of Flight*, Prema's life in the U.S. exemplifies how digital platforms help migrants maintain cultural ties. Similarly, *Tilled Earth* explores

how globalisation and digital networks shape Nepali migrants' aspirations and identities.

Multiculturalism has influenced policies promoting equitable access to education, employment, and political representation. However, symbolic recognition is insufficient. Nasar Meer argues that multicultural policies must transition from mere representation to structural inclusivity (192). In *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, Ava Berriden's work in international aid exposes the complexities of multicultural policy implementation, where power hierarchies determine the level of inclusion different communities experience. Through these narratives, multiculturalism emerges as a force for opportunity and tension, shaping cultural identity, adaptation, and integration in contemporary societies.

These texts illustrate that while multiculturalism fosters diversity and inclusion, it also requires policy frameworks that address socioeconomic disparities and cultural misrepresentations. From rural hardships in *Karnali Blues* to urban diasporic life in *Seasons of Flight*, these narratives expose the multifaceted realities of multiculturalism. Theoretically, these stories concur with today's multicultural discourses to prove that if multiculturalism is to be long-lasting, it should be involved in structural reforms to guarantee equity, inclusion, and intercultural dialogue.

While multiculturalism promotes diversity and inclusion, it also presents significant challenges. Literary narratives often expose limitations, particularly in how cultural divisions, socioeconomic inequalities, and identity conflicts emerge within multicultural frameworks. Scholars such as Brian Barry (2001) and Paul Scheffer (2007) argue that, despite its intentions, multiculturalism can reinforce social fragmentation, deepening ethnic divisions rather than fostering proper integration

(Barry 112; Scheffer 45). Similarly, Nasar Meer critiques how multiculturalism often fails to translate symbolic recognition into substantive socioeconomic reforms, leaving marginalised communities vulnerable (187).

While multiculturalism advocates for peaceful coexistence among diverse cultural groups, in practice, it can lead to social fragmentation rather than integration. In *The Royal Ghosts*, Samrat Upadhyay narrates how individuals experience ethnic identity and exclusion through the caste system, demonstrating how cultural pluralism may not necessarily have to be inclusive. Similarly, in *The Wayward Daughter*, the main character, Sumnima, a Limbu woman, tries to survive a fragmented urban world along ethnic and caste lines, demonstrating the limitations of multicultural inclusion.

Intergenerational conflict also highlights the dilemma of cultural continuity in multicultural settings. In *Buddha's Orphans*, younger generations, like Raja's daughter Ranjana, want to break free from the constraints of traditional practices but are constrained by their cultural heritage, illustrating the dilemma of cultural conservation and modernisation. *Karnali Blues* further solidifies this dilemma as Brisha, exposed to different cultural influences, cannot fully integrate into a new Nepali society that is still deeply rooted in traditional paradigms. The dynamic nature of identity, argued by Stuart Hall, reveals that cultural identity is always constructed by historical moments and external factors and is not fixed (222).

5.3 Challenges of Assimilation and Alienation

Multiculturalism often places the burden of integration on minority groups, requiring them to constantly navigate between preserving their heritage and assimilating into dominant cultural norms. In *Mad Country*, Sofi undergoes cultural alienation to reconcile her Nepali identity with the new environment around her. This

captures Hall's understanding of cultural identity as an ongoing negotiation, during which diaspora subjects are expected to redefine themselves based on how they respond to their environments (228).

Internal migration within Nepal also points to multicultural integration challenges. In *Karnali Blues*, Buddhisagar captures the alienation of rural migrants as they attempt to adapt to urban multicultural environments, revealing how internal divisions create social displacement even within a single nation. Likewise, in *Buddha's Orphans*, characters grapple with cultural changes and generational expectations, capturing the conflict between traditional values and contemporary influences. *Tilled Earth* furthers this debate to diasporic migration, asking if assimilation is a matter of cultural erasure or adjustment to novel socio-political conditions. Tariq Modood argues that multiculturalism must move beyond passive coexistence and foster intercultural engagement to prevent alienation (76).

These stories collectively reveal that the flaws of multiculturalism do not stem from the ideology itself but from its inconsistent application in practice. Structural inequalities, socioeconomic barriers, and cultural resistance often prevent multicultural inclusion. Rather than achieving full integration, multiculturalism frequently reinforces existing divisions—whether economic, ethnic, or social—raising concerns about its long-term viability. Multicultural societies tend to grow more segmented than harmoniously diverse without policy changes to redress these structural inequalities.

Bhikhu Parekh argues that multiculturalism must be considered a dynamic process that modifies itself according to modern social facts instead of imposing fixed cultural identities (72). The literary works under consideration in this chapter support

the contention that the destiny of multiculturalism lies in how it brings structural change instead of symbolically recognising change.

Though multicultural policies purport inclusiveness, they are more prone to ignore the unique concerns of women and gender minorities in multicultural societies. In *The Wayward Daughter*, Sumnima's struggles are framed not just by ethnic discrimination but also by gender-based exclusion within the prevailing Nepali social order. Her case illustrates how multicultural structures often do not accommodate gendered power disparities.

Though multiculturalism is generally inclusive, it still falls short in practice, leading to economic inequality, segregation of cultures, and widespread disenchantment. The literature concedes that multiculturalism as a theory is not flawed but cannot solve structural injustice. The future of multiculturalism is doubtful as it is increasingly under threat. The emergence of right-wing nationalism, hybrid identities, and demands for systemic changes have altered the rhetoric from passive coexistence to active intercultural engagement.

Right-wing nationalist movements have gained strength globally in recent years, pushing back against multiculturalism and demanding cultural homogeneity. Immigration, national identity, and economic competition have driven restrictive policies and exclusionary discourse. Will Kymlicka warns that populist nationalism directly threatens multicultural frameworks, shifting political discourse towards exclusionary narratives that reject pluralism (67). This transformation is especially apparent in Western democracies, where multiculturalism used to be marketed as a template for integrating diverse populations.

Nonetheless, Paul Scheffer contends that the inability to address integration issues adequately has caused resentment, resulting in a political environment in which nationalist ideologies flourish (45). The impact of right-wing nationalism can be seen in (i) Restrictive immigration policies, limiting cultural diversity; (ii) Cuts to funding for minority support programs, undermining inclusivity; (iii) A shift from cultural preservation to forced assimilation, suppressing minority identities.

Nasar Meer notes that post-multiculturalism has emerged as a response, advocating a transition from symbolic recognition to structural reforms promoting inclusion (192). However, nationalist movements frame multiculturalism as a threat, reinforcing stereotypes about immigrant communities and ethnic minorities.

5.4 Nationalism and Multiculturalism in Nepal

The rise of nationalist sentiments also threatens multicultural inclusivity in Nepal. The Nepali English diasporic experience also reflects the consequences of nationalist backlash. In *Seasons of Flight*, Prema's alienation in an American society favouring assimilation over multicultural integration mirrors immigrants' struggles in nations resistant to diversity. Tariq Modood argues that multiculturalism must evolve into interculturalism, fostering active engagement between cultural groups to counter nationalist exclusion (101). Similarly, in *Hostage*, Greta Rana depicts how Nepali migrant workers face systemic exploitation in Gulf countries, revealing how nationalist policies contribute to economic and social marginalisation.

As right-wing nationalism continues to shape global discourse, the future of multiculturalism depends on its adaptability. Scholars like Kymlicka and Modood emphasise the need for policy-driven approaches that reinforce pluralism, ensuring that multiculturalism remains a viable framework for inclusivity. Literature is a

powerful lens to examine these tensions, demonstrating that while nationalist movements seek to undermine multiculturalism, the resilience of diverse communities continues to challenge exclusionary ideologies.

As traditional multiculturalism faces resistance, hybrid identities and intercultural engagement have gained increasing scholarly attention. This shift is evident in literary texts, where characters navigate multiple cultural influences, revealing the complexities of belonging in multicultural societies. In *Mad Country*, characters exist in liminal spaces where tradition and modernity intersect. In *Seasons of Flight*, Prema's journey exemplifies the constant negotiation of cultural identity, balancing alienation and transformation.

In *Buddha's Orphans*, characters across generations embody hybrid identities, reflecting broader socio-political transitions in Nepal. *Tilled Earth* further illustrates how cultural displacement forces characters to adapt, emphasising the struggles and possibilities of cultural fusion. Tariq Modood advocates interculturalism as a necessary evolution of multiculturalism, emphasising interactive engagement between cultural groups rather than passive coexistence (89).

5.5 Super-Diversity and the Future of Multiculturalism

Steven Vertovec introduces the concept of super-diversity, which goes beyond traditional multiculturalism by recognising the complexities of migration, hybrid identities, and intersectionality (104). Super-diversity is a concept applied to describe the rising complexity of diversity in the modern world beyond the traditional understandings of multiculturalism. According to sociologist Steven Vertovec, super-diversity recognises that diversity transcends ethnicity or nationality but encompasses immigration status, economic position, language, religion, and social networks.

Before, people used to simplify diversity by breaking it down into majority and minority groups. However, in today's globalised world, diversity is much more nuanced and complex, with people of the same ethnicity having very different life experiences depending on their migratory background, education, and social environment.

The most significant characteristic of super-diversity is that it challenges conventional integration models. Hitherto, states have approached diversity on the understanding that immigrants gradually integrated into mainstream culture, accepting its language, traditions, and way of life. However, super-diverse societies show us this is no longer a straightforward or inevitable process. In a place like London, New York, or Toronto, people from scores of various backgrounds live together, each with his or her tradition and lifestyle and engaging with various cultures at once. Such a community may encompass recent refugees, second-generation immigrants, international students, and longtime residents with varying languages, economic standing, and worldviews.

Super-diversity also affects social relationships and identity formation. In multicultural societies, it was taken for granted that individuals identified with their ethnic or national origin. In super-diverse societies, individuals' identities are converging, changing, and in a state of continuous flow. An individual from a super-diverse city may belong to a national origin from one country, speak multiple languages, practice religion influenced by many cultures, and engage globally through new technologies. This implies that identity is not so much about any given group, but rather that identity is a syncretic synthesis of influence shaped by history, immigration, and globalisation.

This change also has significant policymaking and governance consequences. Policies that reduce all immigrants or minority groups to a single category do not work in super-diverse groups. A one-size-fits-all diversity policy overlooks socioeconomic variations, levels of education, legal rights, and cultural practices.

One of the most significant effects of super-diversity is how it alters social relations and cultural expression. In a world of super-diversity, cultural exchange naturally and unexpectedly takes place. Instead of living in two cultures (national and their own), individuals are simultaneously subjected to multiple influences. This can be seen in food, music, fashion, language, and day-to-day interaction, where cultures mix and recreate each other. For instance, cities today feature fusion restaurants that mix African, Asian, and European cuisine, or how young people grow up mixing different slang from different languages in daily conversation.

Super-diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity. It pushes societies to redefine how they understand integration, identity, and governance. The older ideas of static cultural boundaries do not apply, so institutions must adapt quickly to changing populations. Super-diversity also offers new possibilities for creativity, collaboration, and transnational connection. By embracing this diversity, societies can build more diverse, adaptable, and inclusive communities where people are not defined by their homelands but valued for the many and changing selves they bring into the world.

In *Buddha's Orphans*, generational shifts illustrate how multiculturalism must evolve to account for overlapping cultural affiliations. This highlights the increasing need for policies that address not just ethnicity but also economic status, migration history, and transnational influences.

Nepali English diasporic writings provide important insights into the changing dynamics of multiculturalism and its promises and limitations. The selected writers have pointed out the multicultural challenges in Nepal. Samrat Upadhyay describes in *The Royal Ghosts* the legacy of hierarchies based on caste, and the impression is that multiculturalism in Nepal is more dreamed of than accomplished. *All of Us in Our Own Lives* criticises the role of international aid and globalisation, asking if outside influences promote inclusivity or reinforce power dynamics. In *Hostage*, Greta Rana exposes the exploitation of Nepali migrant workers, illustrating the disparity between multicultural ideals and lived realities. Nasar Meer argues that post-multiculturalism must transition from symbolic recognition to policy changes that address socioeconomic disparities (192). *Karnali Blues* explores internal migration, highlighting the tensions between rural and urban identities in Nepal.

These texts suggest that while multiculturalism has the potential to foster inclusivity, it requires structural changes that address economic and political inequalities. Tariq Modood argues that multiculturalism must be supported by civic policies that actively promote integration rather than reinforce divisions (101).

Multiculturalism is at a crossroads. While nationalist movements seek to undermine diversity, evolving concepts like interculturalism, hybrid identities, and super-diversity present new possibilities. The future of multiculturalism will depend on structural reforms that move beyond symbolic inclusion and intercultural engagement to counter nationalist backlash and the recognition of hybrid identities in policy and social discourse.

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CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

This research has explored how the themes of multiculturalism, diaspora, and cultural identity intersect in contemporary Nepali literature in English. More broadly, it has examined the construction of identity formation and negotiation, with issues such as globalisation and cultural hybridity through complexities of the situation, as depicted by selected authors. The thesis has discussed the issues of displacement, assimilation, nostalgia accompanying migration, and the everyday experiences of characters in the diaspora through select authors' work.

Chapter I has set the foundation for this research by describing main ideas such as culture, multiculturalism, and diaspora in the sphere of Nepali English literature. It has reflected on the changing aspects of culture and its impact on the development of self-identity, relying on the arguments of philosophers such as Charles Taylor and Homi Bhabha. The chapter has further recounted Nepal's journey from being a hierarchical towards becoming a multicultural society, which was greatly influenced by important socio-political events. The chapter has further discussed the meaning of diaspora and explaining how it is linked with multiculturalism to establish a conceptual foundation for the subsequent inquiry. It has then outlined research questions, objectives, and methodology, and provided an overview of the structure of the study,

Chapter II has explored cultural identity in a multicultural society to portray the complexity and fluidity of identity formation through selected literary works. The chapter studies the relationship between cultural identity development and language, tradition, ethnicity, and migration in multicultural settings. The selected writers offer a

deep understanding of the negotiation of identity among Nepalis and its diaspora, reflecting local and global dimensions of cultural change.

In *Tilled Earth, Seasons of Flight* and *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, Manjushree Thapa investigate the themes of cultural displacement, gender inequality and the conflict of tradition and modernity where the characters are faced with the choice between the affirmation of city life, migration, and cross-cultural interactions. Samrat Upadhyay's *The Royal Ghosts*, *Buddha's Orphans*, and *Mad Country* analyse the question of identity in contexts of political upheaval and the scheme of social hierarchies while questioning the topics of censorship, inequality, and resistance. Shradha Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter* is a scathing narrative that examines how caste and class problems in Nepal is coupled with gender issues. Greta Rana's *Hostage* is a cultural exploration of identity in diverse societies that demonstrates fluidity and resilience factors. Buddhisagar Chapagain's *Karnali Blues* depicts rural life and the shifting of the identities of generations and portrays the battle between the traditional and the modern lifestyle.

The selected texts bring to the fore the realities of negotiating with cultural identity. On one hand, there may be acceptances against resistances, or even be real techniques of transformation induced by modern technology. Despite the geographical and temporal differences, they also resonate with universal themes of migration, diaspora, and multiculturalism, unveiling the commonality of the existential angst of identity in the era of interconnectivity.

Chapter III has examined the cultural portrait created by the dislocation and assimilation in diaspora literature, highlighting the struggles of the individuals as they navigate identity, nostalgia and belonging in a new cultural environment. The selected

texts explore how mobility, globalisation, and historical displacement are all factors that influence the construction of cultural identity. The texts show that diasporic cultures demonstrate hybridity, their situation on the margin, and cultural negotiation, which enrich and/or contradict the indigenous practices of the home country with postcolonial factors. These struggles demonstrate diverse manifestations of cultural identity since immigrants continually face situations that require them to compromise their roots while adjusting to the customs of their host country.

Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth*, *Seasons of Flight* and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* analyse the themes of alienation, nostalgia, and adaptation in unfamiliar terrains, as shown by the characters. The concept of political displacement, ethnic tensions, and social disparities is explored by Samrat Upadhyay in *The Royal Ghosts*, *Buddha's Orphans* and *Mad Country*. Shradha Ghale, in *The Wayward Daughter*, explains how displacement is compounded by societal advancement and patriarchal norms. Greta Rana's *Hostage* and Buddhisagar's *Karnali Blues* project economic migration as their chief concerns and show how migrants face exploitation, cultural erasure, and identity fragmentation.

The selected texts show the conflicts between keeping one's own culture and becoming one with the major group, and at the same time, it presents the psychological, emotional, and societal factors caused by migration through the characters. The writer indicates that the main factors of memories and nostalgia, which are the roots of diasporic identities, highlight the integration of the homeland and the new resulting inner battle.

The texts also negotiate racial discrimination, social exclusion, and resistance to show that migrants and displaced individuals negotiate belonging and exclusion.

The chapter spans a variety of subjects, for example, hybridity and cultural adaptation that create more general conversations about global migration, identity politics, and diasporic prospects. Literature distils the uneven and most grounded reflections of dislocation in a globalised world.

Chapter IV has examined the nativisation of English in Nepal, where the language has undergone a unique transformation due to historical, cultural, and linguistic influences. Thapa's literary texts show that she uses code-switching, lexical borrowing, and cultural imagery to nativise her texts. Thapa's stories usually contain not only the usual forms of Nepali greetings (Namaste), food references (dal-bhat), and exclamations (tch, oho, aiya) that make them seem authentic. Samrat Upadhyay's texts confirm the nativisation process by giving the Nepali character names and describing them with hybrid linguistic expressions. Chapagain, Ghale and Rana have exhibited the lived realities of the characters and portrayed Nepal's hybrid and complex social structure using the English language, in amalgamation with the local Nepali terms. This way, they show a dynamic interaction between the rural and the urban, with the indigenous and global views incorporating elements of traditionalism and contemporaneity while furthering cultural identity imbibed through language.

The outcomes corroborate the claim that the nativisation of Nepali English literature is a dynamic process that mirrors Nepal's multilingual and multicultural background. The analysis affirms Kachru's belief that English has not only been a foreign language in Nepal but has also found its place among the locals and provided space to express their identity. The change undertaken by this act helps building of Nepali English as a separate literary tradition. It makes Nepali English serve as a

bridge between the English-speaking international literary world and the local Nepali origins, which signifies the birth of a unique voice in the literary world.

Chapter V has critically explored the evolving nature of multiculturalism, highlighting its theoretical foundations, policy applications, and literary representations, particularly within Nepali English diasporic writings. The tension between multiculturalism and right-wing nationalism is discussed in the chapter. The chapter illuminates the reader with illustrations such as restrictive immigration policies and cultural clashes as the effects of the nationalist resistance. Nevertheless, interculturalism is projected as an alternative to this way of looking at things and is thus considered a more effective way of handling cultural diversity.

This study has examined Nepali English diasporic literature as it contextualises the representation of multiculturalism in literature. The selected works highlight identity struggles, hybridisation and socio-economic challenges faced by migrants. These works argue that multiculturalism should evolve from a symbolic recognition towards structural inclusivity.

The chapter argues that multiculturalism must transition from passive tolerance to active engagement, ensuring equitable access to economic, social, and political opportunities. Literature is vital for this discussion because it can present complex depictions of the conflicts between different cultures and the potential of multiculturalism. The study concludes that although multiculturalism represents specific challenges due to the rise of ethnic and nationalist prejudices and socio-economic inequalities, engagement between cultures and policy adaptations can help sustain its relevance in increasingly diverse societies.

The selected texts are a tapestry of human struggles, desires, and transformations. They depict an individual's lived experiences caught between their cultural heritage and the pressures of adapting to the new, often alien environment. The selected authors highlight the changing nature of the Nepali identity when put in the face of global influences and cultural flows that cross borders.

The selected authors have successfully woven the themes of hybridity, cultural negotiation, and resilience into their works. Their works are resonant beyond the specificities of Nepali culture. The selected works highlight the multicultural nature of Nepali society and its diaspora. The authors vividly portray pictures of cultural plurality inherent in Nepal, where diverse ethnicities, languages, and religions have lived together for quite some time. However, the texts also explore how multiculturalism becomes a challenge in foreign lands as a person has to navigate between the hybridity of culture and assimilation and politics of recognition.

Tilled Earth by Manjushree Thapa portrays the friction between tradition and modernity, mainly in the urbanised world. As characters strive to assimilate into global influences, they encounter cultural changes opposite to their previous values. In the loss of orientation of characters like Heera Maharjan with rapid urbanisation, there is a more significant challenge of holding onto cultural heritage in a globalised, modern world. In *Buddha's Orphans*, Upadhyay unveils the intersecting play of political history and personal identity regarding how multiculturalism could simultaneously serve as a source of enrichment and conflict in diasporic contexts. As depicted in texts like *Tilled Earth* and *Buddha's Orphans*, multiculturalism encompasses not just celebrations of diversity but also includes homogenisation, nonrecognition, and marginalisation of minor cultures.

The selected texts also bring forward the emotional and cultural dissonance that characters in Nepali diasporic literature, uprooted from their native environments, undergo. Nepali diasporic literature exemplifies the physicality of being found displaced and the psychological nature of being “in-between” cultures.

In *Seasons of Flight*, Prema’s journey towards freedom, concerning her immigration into America, breaks the attachment to her known heritage, which she had left back home. There is a flight for the coexistence of new life in America, and the memories in Nepal present the duality of immigrant life. *The Hostage* by Greta Rana also follows the displacement pattern in which Hari Prasad migrates repeatedly and constantly moves, seeking stability and belonging amidst economic and social turmoil. The above texts criticise assimilation, a process often assumed to be inevitable in the context of migration. For example, in *Tilled Earth*, characters like Sharada face integration problems into host cultures while holding onto their unique Nepali identity. However, the texts also show that assimilation is the compromise required, which leaves people feeling divided or alienated.

A major conclusion drawn from the analysis is that Nepali diasporic literature represents a duality regarding the protection and development of cultural identity. Some characters make great efforts to maintain their cultural heritage, while others, due to their migration, change and rebuild their identities. The theme of cultural preservation is represented in Buddhisagar Chapagain’s *Karnali Blues*, where Buddhisagar gives a detailed representation of life in the rural areas of Nepal. Intergenerational connections and traditional values point to a long-term affinity with the cultural heritage of Nepal, but in this context, social changes are also visible.

Cultural change is represented by the protagonists of Shradha Ghale's *The Wayward Daughter* and Greta Rana's *Hostage*, how their Nepali identities get altered through international influences, and hence develop hybrid identities that are Nepali and something else.

Nostalgia and memory are prominent motifs in the formation of stories in Nepali diasporic literature, where the yearning for the lost homeland and the interaction with both past and present become recurring themes. In Manjushree Thapa's *Tilled Earth*, the protagonist's recollections of home are intricately linked to sensory experiences, including culinary elements and language. The characters find solace and a poignant reminder of what they have forsaken in these recollections. Nostalgia is one of the key themes of *The Royal Ghosts* as the characters negotiate their ties to Nepal under new situations outside. Such narratives present memory as an apparatus that brings the past together with the present so a diasporic individual can reproduce continuity in his life despite disjointed realities. More importantly, nostalgia is seen as a two-edged sword; while it comforts, it also creates an ache.

This research brings out the growth of Nepali English as a new form of communication for the complexity of Nepali identity in the global scenario. The authors employ linguistic devices to communicate local themes and contexts by fusing English with Nepali cultural expression. In Thapa's writing, the Nepali idiomatic expressions and phrases authenticate the stories that reflect Nepal's cultural heritage. Upadhyay's texts contain Nepali idioms and proverbs and utilise a hybrid linguistic style that relates to people locally and internationally. This nativisation of the English language brings Nepali literature more fully and simultaneously

challenges the traditionally conceived linguistic purity to make a potent tool of cultural expression enter the global literary arena.

Nepali diasporic literature finds a unique place in international literary discourses that offers invaluable insights into the negotiation of culture, identity, and migration. The selected works narrate individual experiences negotiating their respective places within multicultural and diasporic contexts and, more importantly, serve as a critique against the broader societal and political dynamism.

The phrase “celebration of diversity” is often heard about multiculturalism, but Nepali diasporic literature talks about the critical engagement regarding such complexities and contradictions of multiculturalism. The texts reveal how multicultural societies, despite their appearances to co-exist, may instead be systems of inequality, impose culture homogenisation, and deny identity to minorities. In *Tilled Earth*, Manjushree Thapa brings the subtle and overt marginalisation of the voices of Nepali from a rural background within the development process of urban structure. Stories like “Three Hundred Rupees” take on the socio-economic imbalance that modernisation increases through critiquing multiculturalism that hides the inequalities from its eyes. Samrat Upadhyay’s *Buddha’s Orphans* presents a notion of multiculturalism as a contestation space in which identities are not assimilated passively but are instead negotiated and contested. The stories negate the ideals of multicultural harmony and how this representation severely makes it difficult for such groups to achieve speaking positions over society. Although the stories are enriching, they point out that there will be a continued struggle against the power dynamics and equity issues that mark multiculturalism.

The concept of identity within Nepali diasporic literature is an evolving and complex construct developed by the unrelenting flux of local and global aspects. In *Seasons of Flight*, Prema's experiences in America symbolise the struggle within the third space where one has to tread through knotty challenges with care not to fall into one of the twin pitfalls of giving up one's heritage or simplifying the complexity of life. Greta Rana's *Hostage* takes the concept of hybrid identities with character like Hari Prasad struggling between the double pressures of economic survival and cultural preservation. Here, the identity is perceived to be dynamic and changing in these stories, adding to the general understanding of cultural hybridity and its implications in a global world. It shows that identity is not an entity but a perpetual negotiation and even reinvention process.

Nepali diasporic literature speaks against the absolutist idea of culture that encapsulates identity inside rigid and impermeable criteria. The diasporic use of varied characters and narratives attacks the binary conditions of tradition vis-à-vis modernity, autochthonous foreign and homeland vis-a-vis host land. In the book *The Wayward Daughter*, Shradha Ghale analyses the idealised stereotype of the land of the Himalayas and pristine ethnic purity- by deconstructing the ideal notion of a conflict-free, ethnic-homogeneous place. By introducing the complexities of caste, gender, and class issues into the novel, it foregrounds the internal diversities complicating singular understandings of Nepali identity. In *Karnali Blues*, by Buddhisagar Chapagain, rural life is de-romanticised as a location of rich culture, and systemic neglect is present.

Diasporic Nepali literature also became a powerful tool for criticism of social and political structures. The author's works draw attention towards gender inequality, caste-based discrimination, and political scenario instability by comparing the two

personal and political spheres. *Mad Country* has expressed opposition to Nepal's political corruption and social inequalities through satire. Upadhyay in *Mad Country* has utilised his acerbic, incisive storytelling to speak out against Nepal's absurdities and injustices of political corruption and social inequities. Thapa's *All of Us in Our Own Lives* also explores Nepal's socio-political environment through personal stories highlighting societal change. Stories about individual life expose the costs of political instability and the meanings of economic globalisation. These texts thus present literature in the forms of weaving individual experiences and broader socio-political realities that mirror and thus criticise society. It showcases how such story will challenge dominant narratives, give voices to the downtrodden, and invoke reflection in the audience or reader.

Nepali English diasporic literature's most important contribution is engagement with global literary discourses. The narratives bridge the local and global, offering a view that recreates our understanding of diasporic and multicultural experiences. As a vehicle of expression, Nepali English literature situates such works in world literature without losing their cultural particularities. The selected authors blur the lines between idioms, proverbs, and cultural references, as in English; they use a hybrid voice to reach diverse audiences. Furthermore, foregrounding Nepali perspectives in global literary discourses opposes Eurocentricism through texts. These works, therefore, foreground themes that cross boundaries of geography and culture and, by so doing, underline the interconnectedness of human experiences. The Nepali English diasporic authors have made the literary landscape of their diaspora more representative and inclusive by claiming a stake in world literature. Their writings remind us of the potential of the power of narration in bonding, critiquing, and changing.

This thesis's findings move beyond Nepali diasporic literature's limits, presenting profound perceptions regarding the developing nature of cultural identity, migration, and interconnectedness of the modern world. This study emphasises important implications of texts regarding subtle manifestations of multiculturalism, displacement, and hybridity. It is congruent with the tremendous current attention paid to society and the scholarly arena.

The selected texts epitomise the complexity of migration in modern society, which increasingly characterises it by mobility and the inequalities between economies and cultural interactions. Two opposing aspects relating to migration—opportunity and loss, integration and alienation, and preservation and transformation—exist in Nepali English diasporic literature. The use of characters such as Prema in *Seasons of Flight* delivers some emotional and cultural effects of migration as challenges people face when trying to adapt to new situations. Hari Prasad in *Hostage* represents a more widespread phenomenon of economic migration, where people had to survive exploitative labour conditions abroad and hold on to the homeland. Such stories will lead to a greater sympathetic understanding of the migrant experience. They will encourage more inclusive policies and practices in all those countries to address the issues of the diasporic communities.

Such diasporic literature from Nepal exemplifies the increasing trend of cultural hybridity at the global level. In the stories here, the individual and collective negotiation of identities in overlapping landscapes of culture creates the possibility for hybrid forms of expression and belonging. It bears similarities to *Tilled Earth* and *The Royal Ghosts*, wherein the characters inhabit a “third space” and grapple with the tensions arising from their cultural lineage while seeking assimilation into the

unfamiliar territories they occupy. In this respect, these narratives illustrate the innovative capacity residing in cultural hybridity, such as integrating Nepali idioms and cultural allusions into English by challenging traditional notions of linguistic and cultural purity. These works lead to rethinking fluid and dynamic identities that would finally accept incredible diversities in the modern, more integrated world in normalisation.

This makes it clear from the study on multiculturalism that it may be an enrichment opportunity and, on the other hand, a conflict site. However, coexistence between diverse cultures in productive innovation continues to come with questions on power, equity, and recognition.

Works such as *Mad Country*, *The Wayward Daughter*, and *Karnali Blues* are directed towards issues of systemic inequalities still rampant in multicultural societies. The implication here is that policies must go beyond the tolerance threshold to address the issues of marginalisation and exclusion.

Through this perspective, the texts above explore the significance of protecting cultural identities globally by preventing differences but creating a commonality. The insights drawn from the Nepali English diasporic literature can be applied in other contexts, enriching the discussion on multiculturalism based on integrated frameworks that support the liberation of all cultural groups.

This body of Nepali English diasporic literature is, thus, a contribution of great and vital importance for international literary and cultural discourses. These texts render local conceptions of identity, migration, and resilience feasible by expanding the scope of consideration and bringing universal issues together with localised

matters. The stories of people such as in *Karnali Blues* and *Hostage* represent an attempt to make underprivileged voices part of global debates. Furthermore, exploring the interconnectedness of personal and political realities, the selected texts point towards the role of literature as the medium for the cross-cultural establishment of empathy and understanding.

Nepali English diasporic literature, therefore, challenges dominant narratives and opens the scope of global literature to greater diversity and representation by contributing to a more inclusive literary landscape. This kind of study is important as it illuminates some unexplored areas concerning the growing phenomenon of Nepali English literature, which forms an essential voice within the literary traditions of South Asia. In fact, with a rich multicultural heritage and a continually growing diaspora, these trends influence the process of identity negotiation, cultural preservation, and assimilation. The study emphasises the transformative power of storytelling in articulating human experiences by focusing on how literature acts as a medium for these explorations.

It thus resonates with issues concerning migration and the implications of immigration at the contemporary global level, issues of cultural authenticity under the challenges of foreign land, and the possibilities of hybridity. This research feeds into more extensive academic conversations by making Nepali diasporic literature a critical participant in discourses on multiculturalism, identity, and globalisation through the global literary scene.

This research contributes to the growing area of South Asian diasporic studies by focusing on the specific views of Nepali authors in the English language. It focuses

on the importance of Nepali English literature as a distinct voice in the world's literary map, which further research should expand its reach and impact.

Possible Future Studies Could Include:

1. Comparing Nepali diasporic literature with other South Asian diasporic traditions.
2. Gender, caste and class as factors that mediate the diasporic identity in Nepali narration.
3. Diasporic connections and digital technologies across the Nepali Diaspora.

Drawing from this study's outcomes, further research into richly and diversely conceptualised Nepali English diasporic literature can be developed, ensuring a legitimate place within wider international literary and academic platforms.

This serves as the indication of rich potential for further research in Nepali diasporic literature. Addressing these areas, future studies can thus deepen understanding of how multiculturalism, diaspora, and identity interlock in complex ways, all while situating Nepali voices more prominently within global literary and academic discourses.

Nepali diasporic literature is strong evidence of the multifaceted human identity relevant in a globalised world. The selected authors paint vivid and colourful stories of the dynamics between preservation and change in culture, displacement and belongingness, and local and global contexts. It provides an immense understanding of what people in the community and others experience from multicultural and diasporic reality.

As globalisation continues to remould cultural identities and transnational connections, the themes engaged in Nepali diasporic literature will always be relevant. New challenges in future narratives will include how digital technology affects diasporic communities, how environmental crises intersect with migration, and how gender and caste are developing in global contexts. All these stories will continue evolving, reflecting the resilience and adaptability of Nepali identity in the face of change.

In conclusion, this research testifies to the relevance and importance of Nepali diasporic literature to any global literary and cultural practices. The selected texts challenge one to embrace a more inclusive worldview- an appreciation of cultural tradition's uniqueness. As Nepali literature expands, these voices must be supported and amplified so that their stories can reach wider audiences. That way, we are not only paying homage to the power of literature in terms of connecting, inspiring, and transforming but also reasserting its role as a cornerstone of cultural understanding and a pillar of global unity.

Glossary

Basaisarai – A Nepali term meaning long-term migration or permanent relocation, often used in the context of rural-urban or foreign migration.

Chiplo – A Nepali word meaning slippery, often used literally or metaphorically to describe instability or uncertainty.

Dalit – A term used for communities in South Asia that have been historically marginalized and oppressed under the caste system; formerly referred to as “untouchables”.

DV Lottery – Refers to the U.S. Diversity Visa Lottery Program, which offers immigration opportunities to people from countries with low immigration rates to the U.S., including Nepal.

Ghumphir – A Nepali term for short-term travel or temporary movement, often for seasonal work or exploration.

Janajati – Ethnically indigenous groups in Nepal who are distinct from the dominant Hindu caste groups; officially recognized by the Nepali government.

Jat – Nepali term denoting caste, often indicating hierarchical identity and social categorization.

Jati – Ethnic group; used to refer to cultural communities based on shared language, tradition, and heritage.

Kumari – The living goddess tradition in Nepal where a prepubescent girl is worshipped as a deity.

Lumbini – The birthplace of Lord Buddha, located in Nepal; often referenced in cultural and spiritual discussions.

Madhesi – A term for people living in the southern Terai region of Nepal.

Pahadi – Refers to people from the hilly regions of Nepal.

Parbatiya – High-caste hill Hindu groups in Nepal, typically the dominant socio-political group in historical narratives.

Rastrabhasa – National language; in Nepal’s context, it refers to Nepali as the official and national language.

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