

# **Narration of the Displaced: A Study of Female Characters in the Novel *Island of a Thousand Mirrors***

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**Abstract** Identity crisis is the new affair down the literary mannerism. And to extenuate it further female characters portrayed as the one displaced from their location. A woman when marries goes to stay with the in-laws which itself is socially acknowledged dislocation of the female self. In the novel *Island of Thousand Mirrors* there are prominent female characters that belong to war torn Sri Lankan society and their experiences during a certain time frame are implausible. Yashodhara, Saraswati and Lanka are the characters that draw attention because Yashodhara and Lanka are sisters of Sinhalese descent whereas Saraswati is a Tamil who later joins the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Consequently, this paper looks intensively into their lives and how they have evolved into some new identity and had cast away their previous lives. There is impact of violence as well, in their lives as they change their demeanor. Female dislocation is itself a transgression and the death of two female characters in Sri Lanka at the end of the novel relates to the journey and the affinity they have pulled through being apart.

**Key words** female; identity; dislocation; Sri Lanka and migration

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## Introduction

“Migration and diaspora are results of a multitude of social, political, and economic circumstances which, in turn, result in social, economic, and cultural marginalization” (de Zepknek 2). Migration in Sri Lanka is a kind of reaction against the Sri Lankan Civil War that will be discussed along with the aspects of socially, politically and economically displaced people in this paper and it will further discuss the aspect of dislocation/migration<sup>1</sup> of women in Sri Lanka. Referring to female in general, it is not a mere sex distinguished from male, but it is an identity that a woman possesses. Calling a woman female, relates her to the dominance of patriarchy. Profound writers like Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter have written much about the female. Feminists were of the view that they should be given equal rights and annihilate discrimination and objectification. It was later that writers like Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir dealt with the narration of female identity and experiences in fiction as well as in non-fiction, but the genesis of feminism could be the book *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) by Wollstonecraft and it was probably first of its kind that talked about “rights of women.” This paper will thus study women and their “identity crisis,” after dislocation, therefore feminism will be at the background and females as individuals dealing with their “identity crisis” will be foregrounded.

## Discussing the Displaced

Dislocation or the concept of space is common to all expatriates but in a post war country like Sri Lanka where the Civil War lasted for twenty-six years, there is nothing much to discuss about the female domination in particular because the novel does not discuss the women from the aspect of marginalization of them but one can speak about the predicament that the women have experienced through the war. The novel *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* (2013) by Nayomi Munaweera is about Sri Lankan women, characters, Yashodhara, Lanka<sup>2</sup> and Saraswati who are born during Civil War in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan Civil War is the result of continuous conflict between its two ethnic communities the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The reason for the conflict is that the Sri Lankan Sinhala through the government (which was Sinhalese as well) tried to suppress the Tamils. But the Tamil revolt against the government and their political ideologies (which upheld Sinhalese speaking nation and citizenship) in the form of an insurgent group called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (from now on as LTTE). The LTTE declared genocide against the government when their demand for a separate Tamil state in

Sri Lanka is rejected.

The story begins in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, where a Sinhalese family resides. The children in the family grow along with the Tamil tenant's children. Yashodhara and Lanka are those children who grow up with Shiva (the Tamil boy who was the son of the tenant). But after the death of Yashodhara's and Lanka's uncle in the Sinhala-Tamil riot, Yashodhara and Lanka's mother Visaka insist their father Nisan to leave the country. Their parents are not resilient enough to sustain the Civil War (1986-2009). Amidst the Civil War they leave for America. Visaka's brother Ananda is already settled in America and so they all move in with him and his wife.

On the other hand, in Sri Lanka Saraswati a Tamil girl who stays with her family in the north of the island is enjoying her school unaffected by the war until the LTTE took her two brothers Krishna and Balram as soldiers. Saraswati aspires to become a teacher when she grows up. But her childhood dream is disrupted when she is raped by the soldiers of the Sri Lankan army. After such barbarism, Saraswati too is taken away from her family by the LTTE. Later she joins the "Black Tigers" a special squad and becomes a suicide bomber. She is sent to Colombo after being trained to murder a Tamil leader. In the process of murdering the politician, Saraswati and Lanka also die. Lanka was on her way back home to meet Yashodhara who was leaving for America the same day. Lanka and Saraswati met just before the explosion. They looked into each other and as Saraswati was dressed like a pregnant woman, Lanka felt sympathy towards her as she thought that Saraswati was pregnant and yet she had to travel in a crowded bus. They both felt a kind connect. And few minutes later they both explode. Both were there for a cause, Saraswati for the cause of Tamil nation and Lanka for the cause of war stricken children.

The author brings out the nostalgia towards their homeland which both the sisters feel while in America. Yashodhara and Lanka while growing up in America often missed the sea. Whenever they used to go swimming they miss the salt water. They both grow up missing their homeland, sea water and curries. At one instance Yashodhara imagines about the island

we remember the ocean that we have lost. Those morning walks down to the beach. Our father's swimming lessons inherited from the fishermen of his own youth. We are used to water without cease, water that stretches warm and endless to the very rim of the world. This glorified bathtub cannot satisfy our water desire. We swim to exhaustion, lungs threatening to burst, our

just developing biceps and thighs quaking, sinews stretched and lengthened.  
(Munaweera 106)

Later in the novel Yashodhara becomes a book worm indulging in literature. She marries Siddharta a Sinhalese boy settled in America but she is not happy with her marriage. Even Lanka after getting tired of her illicit relationship with his art teacher in college decides to go back to Sri Lanka. There again she meets the Tamil boy Shiva who is a selfless doctor ready to offer help and medication to all the Sri Lankans irrespective of their ethnicity. Yashodhara after her unsuccessful marriage decides to join Lanka in Sri Lanka for some time. When she reaches Sri Lanka she got surprised to see Shiva and shocked to notice the intimacy between Lanka and Shiva, because as children, she and Shiva have shared the same bond as her sister Lanka. But after losing Lanka, (in the explosion mentioned above) Shiva and Yashodhara both are distressed and choose to move to America. It is the first time for Shiva but it is the second time for Yashodhara, for in childhood she did not know what losing a dear one can cause but now the immense pain caused by the death of a sister in this time of war has made her an escapist by choice. Consequently, in the novel, escapism causes dislocation in all the characters. There is a lot of dislocation brought out through the characters which intensifies their sense of uncertainty and disorientation towards their belongingness arising out of conflicting situations.

Sri Lanka is an island nation and so the author has used water as a very impactful cause to illustrate the sense of belongingness missed by the characters once they are away from home. The above-mentioned extract from the novel necessitate us to believe that the author wants its reader to understand the emphasis of water and the displacement caused by the unavailability of the “sea” and “well” in the three protagonists. Saraswati feels wistful towards the “well” she had in the backyard of her home “Sometimes when I am by myself I miss the taste of the “well” at home. Water filtered through our small piece of earth, its exact mineral consistency, the taste of home. It is the only thing I allow myself to remember” (180), Yashodhara and Saraswati cannot appreciate the coolness of swimming pool in America but they long for the ocean where they used to go with their father in Sri Lanka. Even Lanka’s room that Yashodhara describes “hers, phosphorus blue-green, the shade of deep water just beyond the surf so that entering her room felt like falling into the lair of a mermaid” (Munaweera 180). Yashodhara’s fondness towards sea compels her to name her daughter Samudhra (meaning ocean). Water is very close to all the characters and in the novel, we find water as lively and as a

benefactor who soothe those protagonists in times of “identity crises.” Lanka had drawn pictures of sea in her room and Saraswati connects herself to the well at her home. In the novel Pacific ocean is also mentioned which reminds both the sisters of the salt water that they have separated from.

There is always dislocation that prevails in their mind even when they are not where they belong to. They are no less than tourist, they are “only a different shade of tourist, darker skinned than these boiled lobster Europeans and for this reason perhaps more deserving of scorn . . . . This obscene sun worship is a habit we have picked up in colder climes” (Munaweera 197). They call themselves tourist; because they cannot identify themselves with the American culture and the Americans look at them as visitors.

These are cross cultural influences that determine their hybridity. It is obvious that “cultural contacts are leading to such a hybridization of behavioral modes across the world that it is difficult to identify any “local culture” as being genuinely, with a timeless quality” (Sen 154). In many ways, Lanka is more audacious than her sister she tries to gather what she had left behind in her childhood days in Sri Lanka because she always asks Yashodhara to narrate stories from the island and though the two places (America and Sri Lanka) share nothing at all in common she travels back to Sri Lanka and wants a new life there. Whereas Yashodhara inextricably tied by culture and tradition, even in a foreign land and this restrains her to enact preposterous. In Lanka perhaps the past (the time spent in Sri Lanka) had sustained which now brings her back to the past, the place where her forefathers rest. Sri Lanka has now become even more terrifying but she wants to teach the children who are now orphan and disabled from the brutality of the war. She wants to help and wants to transform the idea of ethnic divide into unity between the two cultures. Lanka loved colors; art was her identity a way of holding herself in times of beseeches. She is ready to sell her studio in America and provide assistance to the war-torn children. Her cultural identity is churned though she never identified herself with America because at some instance she calls herself tourist.

### **Identity in Crisis: Yashodhara, Lanka and Saraswati**

Habermas gave two kinds of identity crisis: “legitimation crisis” where a person is unable to fulfill its commitments made by one and “motivational crisis” where a person struggles to make commitments (407-408). If we refer to the characters like Yashodhara and Saraswati, they both are cases of legitimation crisis as individuals. Yashodhara as a wife made commitments towards his husband

Siddharth because of the social stigma, but left him after knowing about his husband's extra-marital affair. Her identity as a wife vanished and her subconscious did not allow her to continue her identity as a wife. There is "identity crisis," certainly but there is cultural "identity crisis" as well. Sinhalese culture is full of tradition and values and leaving a husband is yet another step away from the social and cultural entity. For Yashodhara "The legitimate crisis or identity conflict refers to the problem of the multiply defined self whose definitions have become incompatible. It is characterized by severe difficulty in reconciling the demands that follow from diverse commitments, the situation makes it impossible to choose and act consistently with all the person's values and goals" (Baumeister 408). As for Saraswati the "legitimation crisis" begins when she is raped. She no longer considers herself a part of the society nor does her parents try to explain constrain of the social dogma. And her identity as any other Tamil girl is lost. But she fights back for her new identity as a LTTE. The cultural constrains for both Yashodhara and Saraswati leads to "becoming" from "being."

Cultural identity is a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being". It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something that already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything that is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to continuous "play" of history, culture and power. (Hall 225).

The three protagonists show the "becoming" and "being" because their existing individuality is affected by their present. Saraswati, Yashodhara and Lanka are women who have lost their previous individual self and that individual self was their identity and now they have a new cloak of a different identity (from Sri Lankan to American and again back to Sri Lankan and Saraswati from a timid Tamil girl to a LTTE). There is identity crisis that wanders in the characters. Identity at the same time confuses; "Erikson (1956) described a unidimensional continuum ranging from firm identity to confused or diffused identity" (Baumeister 407). But voluntarily or unwillingly they all accept the nature of their transformation which is confusing. Identity is perhaps "when we shift our attention from the notion of being identical to oneself to that of sharing an identity with others of a particular group (which is the form the idea of social identity very often takes), the complexity increases further" (Sen XII). Distressed by the idea of having plural identity has to

do much with woman and especially a woman who belongs to an Indian society<sup>3</sup> or perhaps to a Sri Lankan society<sup>4</sup> as well. Shashi Deshpandey's *That Long Silence* is an example for a conventional Indian woman Jaya whose life is surrounded by her husband and children and later when she is fed up of the routine life of waiting for his husband's return from work and children coming back from school she goes into introspection about her dual identity. She was an individual in her father's house but after marriage she has lost her individuality. "Jaya's journey towards a well-defined self-hood is mired in the labyrinthine mazes of societal pressures, ..." [Sic] (Gaur 179). A female after being a human is a woman and then daughter, wife, sister and mother. And she has to follow some orthodox etiquette in order to be socially blessed and not to be baptized as a slut, or prostitute. Even it varies from culture to culture.

"Identity is a process, identity is split" (Hall 16). Even Saraswati weaved a new identity for herself she was no longer a timid Tamil girl but a ferocious "Tiger" who was determinant to give everything the war demanded. She wanted a new land for her fellow Tamils. She no longer longed for her home. In the novel, she says "but it is useless. I inhabit a different world now and there are no bridges between that place and this" (Munaweera 184). This clearly shows the displacement she has gone through, she has forgotten all the emancipation and love she got back at home instead she says "My true family is back at camp, these are strangers I knew in a different time" (Munaweera 184).

In the case of Lanka and Yashodhara they migrated to U.S. when they were quite young so they do not remember the ethno-national concept. Here ethno-nationalism relates to the divide between Tamils and Sinhala, both the ethnic communities of Sri Lanka were at war when they left the country. The Sinhalese called themselves legitimate owners of the land and the Tamils said the land equally belongs to them for their kings had won battles to get this piece of land. But in America they are only known as south Asian. They are identified as Americans or migrants and the problem with South Asian people abroad is that often people identify all the South Asians to be similar. People cannot recognize a Sri Lankan as Sri Lankan, an Indian as Indian or a Bangladeshi as a Bangladeshi. "These Indians. Always cooking with their onions ... She thinks we are Indians. We have never even been to India!..." (Munaweera 110) This problem is prominent all around the globe. Even, for us it is grim to identify a Korean, Japanese or Chinese respectively. In India people of north-east are look-alike to Nepali or Bhutani. In the novel, likewise these Sri Lankans are identified as Indians. Lanka and Yashodhara's family is identified as Indians. There is reference to the curry

and spices that are found in the island nation which are substituted by American grocery. Substituting spinach in place of gotukola (green leaves known as Brahma in India) brown sugar for jaggery and olive oil in place of coconut oil (Munaweera 109). These are cultural constraints, and a remorse in using American good because they feel hollow and yearning desire for their traditional foods only found in their own culture (specifically in South Asia). Migrants have individual identities shaped in their motherland before their exodus. And will have personal affections to the culture, and from there will come conveyers of the “ethno-national torch” (Sheffer 152). And this action brings out their stand in foreign land and their patriotism for their homeland (Sheffer 152). The novel *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* too has a torch bearer of ethno-nationalism; he is Yashodhara’s uncle Ananda who is also an immigrant. He shouts at his colleague and friends “what are you going to do? Sit here and let these Tiger bastards take the country?” (Munaweera 120). Lanka is more attracted towards her motherland her shift in identity from a Sri Lankan to American has not yet gripped her. Unlike a leader (Anand) but like a devotee (Saraswati) she is still able to connect to the island. Yashodhara is disparate her sister because her inclination towards Sri Lanka is not as much as her sister. Hitherto both sisters awaken the cultural identity through their attributes in the new country by recognizing themselves as Sri Lankan and delivering remorse over American food and accent. Saraswati too through herself ascertains her culture of Tamil nationalism.

There is a tint of cultural identity even in the novels like *Shadow lines* (1988) by Amitav Ghosh and *Anil’s Ghost* (2011) by Michael Ondaatjee. Somehow Tha’mma and Ila (in *The Shadow Lines*) and Anil Tiserra (protagonist of *Anil’s Ghost*) share the same circumstances. As Tha’mma is always concerned about ‘boundaries’ and her inclination towards Bangladesh (Tha’mma was born in Bangladesh but after partition she stays in India with her younger generations), Anil not concerned about her new home (abroad) and Ila who has always been away from India cannot identify herself with this country. They all have spent major part of their lives in some distinct land. There is alienation in all the three characters. Culturally, Ila does not find herself as part of the Indian culture because of the constraints of tradition which restricts her from exercising her own free will. Cultural identity is a global term used impeccably to show where one belongs to in other words its part of Orientalism. Orientalism is nothing but being identified (as an orient) by the west. This identification is particular in the case of west towards the east. The ‘cultural gap’ is perhaps the reason the west looks down upon the east. Here Anil belongs to the west, her identity is differently extrapolated and other



people who are victims of the Civil War are differently recognized or say they are fighting for their identity. Even Lanka and Yashodhara are cultural mulattos just like Anil and Ila. Anil goes to Sri Lanka for investigation regarding civil war, she is also Sri Lankan and unlike the sisters she is not very nostalgic about the space she was once in.

### **Space of Their Own**

It is demography, the role of space which ultra-actively pushes an individual to escalate from the place one lives in and jump into another. There is no empty space one looks to fill with things instead every individual has a space where he/she escapes from. Displacement/dislocation from the view-point of a migrant or immigrant there is a narrow line of differentiation. This differentiation in the case of Saraswati is distant because she does not move from one country to another but from one space to the other. She lived in the house and now she lives in the camp. 'House' is a space much spoken of by Gaston Bachelard in his *Poetics of Space* (1994). He writes "The house, quite obviously, is a privileged entity for a phenomenological study of the intimate values of inside space, provided, of course, that we take it in both its unity and its complexity, and endeavor to integrate all the special values in one fundamental value" [Sic] (Bachelard 3). But after moving from house she goes to the camp and she becomes a migrator (there is displacement of space). Earlier discussion on space revolves around women's confinement to a relative area where she is comfortable. But the aspect of space in relation to environment challenges the very existence. Geo-criticism evokes this aspect of existence. Robert T. Tally in his book *Geo-criticism and Spatial Literary Studies* brings the idea of space in relation to geography which influences personal identity. If one belongs to one country and moves to another country for persistence, even then the person looks back to his/her own country. Such men's lives are suspended and they indulge in "identity crisis." "Today in the wake of such postcolonial and critical theory, we are less surprised to hear that maps, or any other "scientific" device or discourse, for that matter are also ideological, that they are embedded within and often serve the interests of structures of power or domination" (Tally 4). Other than the ideology that pertains within the nation every individual has their own assortment of ideologies. But even respective ideologies of each country are prejudiced by its tradition and culture. And culture/tradition leaves a mark of individuality which is perhaps deferred or in predicament when talked about cultural identity.

Saraswati, from her parent's home, goes to a space where she finds an identity

for herself and later when she is about to explode she has a grin in her face. This grin is not of remorse but of pride that she will be remembered by all and she could make her Tamil parents proud that she became a martyr and there was nothing more she could give them. Being a woman and a Tamil woman is more resilient. In Sri Lanka Tamils were always outsiders or say aliens. They are descendants of South Indian Tamils who came as laborers to work on tea plantations during British rule. This is one of the reasons why Tamils are not counted as Sri Lankans. Tamils flourished during the British rule, which is one of the reasons for the conflict between the two. With the ethnic divide in Sri Lanka the people there considered themselves as Indian Tamils and Sinhalese. "Indian Tamils" is a label provided by the Sinhalese so that Tamils could always feel that they do not belong to the island. And formation of the LTTE is one major reason behind the Tamil displacement in the land of the Lions. And now Tigers (LTTE) were ready to make a place/space for themselves. So, this new space (the LTTE camp) gave her a destiny an aim and recognition. And as Foucault says, the home is "utopia" (4) for Saraswati, "the space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space" (Foucault 3) though it exists because the society wants it to exist but for her it is not real it is just not homely. Stated above how she calls it not hers even though she once belonged to them (her parents). Even Yashodhara finds herself displaced when she is on the Air Lanka flight and she tells "I am drowning in this sensation of dislocation when La comes. I bury my face in her shoulder and weep my jet-lagged exhaustion, my rage at what I have left behind" (Munaweera 188). She has been carried by plane from one space to another and she gets nostalgic. The flight itself is a "space" where there are people of different origin and hybridity. There is a concept of "here" and "there." Earlier when Yashodhara was in America it was "here" and Sri Lanka was "there" whereas when she was in the flight she was suspended and now when she is in Sri Lanka this island country has become "here" and America has become "there." Lanka and Saraswati never lamented for the things they left behind in the places where they lived before, after entering into the new space, but Yashodhara had that 'turning back' once a while. The reason may be she was too emotional to counter the past and face its angst. So she wanted to go, even though her subconscious mind asked her to stay. The space where Yashodhara used to hide with Shiva the Tamil boy was also a 'space' which she never wanted to share with anyone. It provided her content.

### **Migration: An Aspect of Nation/Nationalism**

Saraswati, Lanka and Yashodhara all are migrants. Among them few contrived and few self-imposed. Saraswati is a Tamil migrant fighting a war against the Sinhalese in the Sinhalese nation whereas Lanka and Yashodhara are immigrants or migrants in America. They had left their country as children with their parents to escape violence. All the three characters have displacement and relocation in common. But the type or level is different. Saraswati wants nation for herself and her Tamil community for survival. And the other two left their nation for survival. The contradictory aspect of nation is critical. Anderson defines nation as “it is an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6). But a nation’s existence does not make a nation nationalist instead “... Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist” (Anderson 6). The Tamil community wanted a separate state for them which would help them provide a politically secure community. Therefore, Saraswati was a nationalist to the Tamils. The being or becoming a nationalist has nothing to do with nation. Lanka and Yashodhara are liberals they do not discriminate between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The reason behind this could be that they had not witnessed the conflict and its brutality but Saraswati has in person witnessed and experienced the grossness of war. In the context of “us” and the “outsiders” Said says “just beyond the frontier between “us” and “outsiders” is the perilous territory of not-belonging: that is to where... in the modern era immense aggregates of humanity loiter as refugees and displaced persons” (177). Tamils are the “outsiders” whereas the Sinhalese are the “us.” But in the novel *Island of Thousand Mirrors* all are “outsiders” Saraswati, Yashodhara and Lanka respectively. Saraswati is outsider to the Sinhalese Yashodhara and Lanka are outsiders to the Americans. But there is a cultural difference. Yashodhara and Lanka despite being part of American community do not forget Sri Lanka they always miss their homeland. But for Saraswati, it is like fighting for a separate nation while residing inside a different nation. She is displaced in her Land<sup>5</sup> Sri Lanka which is historically contested whether it actually belongs to the Tamils or not. Dislocation also causes language barrier or rather dislocation crosses language barrier. It becomes easy to adopt a different tongue and it is also important for existence in an unknown land. Since you are an immigrant consequently you should learn the new tongue.

Bhabha, in *Location of Culture* quotes C. Lefort who says that language is enigmatic even though one understands others language it does not mean that he/

she has adopted their tradition, sometimes it is like Caliban. Prospero the king who lives in an island with his daughter Miranda has taken Caliban as his slave and even taught him his own language. Bhabha's theory of "adopt" "adept" and "adapt" is appropriate with Saraswati. Even Saraswati tames her tongue to learn Sinhalese to defend herself and deceive the Sinhalese; it takes a year for her to master the foreign tongue. "I am taught Sinhala. I let its ugliness take over my tongue" (Munaweera 186). "The Colombo shopkeepers speak Sinhala at me and I reply effortlessly and smile back at them. I own their tongue as if I have been brought up in this smoky, crowded city instead of in quiet northern places" (Munaweera 188). Therefore, it is necessary to learn the language of dominance or power. Every nation has a language and the Language Act of 1956 in Sri Lanka brought out the envious nature of the language that could cause destruction. Anagarika Dharmapala who was a Buddhist revivalist chose the path of non-secularity. Though Dharmapala, revived Buddhism, he injected nationalism into the minds of Sinhalese which resulted in hostility towards the Tamils. Regarding them as "eternal enemy" (Weiss 24). Religion should never become a nationalistic fervor, because it will lead to bloodshed and communal riots. This is one instance to prove that language is a barrier to immigrants but there are instances that prove that language helps in the development of a nation if it is not looked up as a tool for nationalism. Just because Joseph II <sup>6</sup> decided to change the "language of the state" to German from Latin it does not mean at all that he has changed the language to show any kind of dictatorship, but for advancement of his people. German as a language was widely used and communication was a lot easier for connecting his entire realm (Anderson 84-85).

## Conclusion

Displacement conceptualizes the movement of individuals as immigrants across the globe. The cultural constraints forbid the identity to play and hence leads to identity crisis. The sense of identity gets fractured as a result of diasporic displacement and nostalgia acts as the only soothing agent. Saraswati, Lanka and Yashodhara all are victims to the vicious dislocation. All the more shocking is that, Yashodhara's family considered as Indians and not as Sri Lankan's because they cook curries with a variety of spices. "even when we are clear about how we want to see ourselves, we may still have difficulty in being able to persuade others to see us in just that way ... Our freedom to assert our personal identities can sometimes be extraordinarily limited in the eyes of others, no matter how we see ourselves" (Sen 6). Even as Americans they are dislocated. In the epilogue of the novel the writer

says Yashodhara is fear full and does not want her daughter to know where they come from and so Yashodhara tells Samudhra stories of Rama, Sita and Ravana which have no association with their culture except Ravana who is God in Sri Lanka. Saraswati's rape by the soldiers was an act of war crime. Her body was spoilt but her mind was more troubled than her body perhaps. She was somehow devastated, and so she almost felt dumb. Her mind had a shift and she could not locate herself anymore to the society so she gave up, in order locate herself once again. Dislocation of females starts at home and the females through their feminine self-generate a long list of identities or rather plural identities.

### Notes

1. I am using dislocation and migration together because migration to my knowledge is also dislocation because a person travels and shifts from one place to another and re-settles in a new social political and economic environment.
2. Lanka is the name of a protagonist taken from Sri Lanka but readers may find Sri Lanka written as Lanka in some texts. But here Lanka is the name of the character and nowhere throughout the paper has Sri Lanka been written as Lanka.
3. In Indian society a female has to abide by certain norms set by the family and society. She has to become an obedient daughter and wife. She cannot impose ideas she has to only adhere to the ideology set by the family and society. Therefore, Indian culture is very different from the west.
4. Sri Lankan society is not widely different from Indian society. Women are treated secondary. They have to be quiet and composed and listen to their counterparts.
5. Her land that is Saraswati's land is Sri Lanka. She is a Tamil she stays in the north with her family but Tamils in Sri Lanka are not the aborigines or original settlers therefore they are regarded as outsiders. So her place of displacement could be contradictory. History says that Sri Lanka is the land of lions that is Sinhala and not the Tamils.
6. He was the German King from 1765 to 1790.

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