



IN-BETWEEN SELVES AND HAUNTED PATHS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORIC HEROINES IN CONTEMPORARY MIGRANT LITERATURE

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Abstract

This research presents a comparative study of South Asian diasporic heroines through the lens of liminality and uncanniness in "The Seasons of Flight" by Manjushree Thapa and "Oleander Girl" by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Centering on the protagonists Prema and Korobi, the study employs Victor Turner's theory of liminality (1969) and Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny (1919) to explore the psychological and cultural thresholds the heroines navigate in their diasporic journeys. Both characters are examined as liminal figures caught between geographical, emotional, and existential borders, confronting dislocation, identity fragmentation, and the eerie familiarity of the foreign. Through a comparative analysis, this paper investigates how their transitions into unfamiliar sociocultural environments evoke uncanny experiences that challenge and reshape their sense of self. By tracing these overlapping yet distinct trajectories, the study reveals how the interplay of liminality and uncanniness shapes the diasporic female subjectivity in contemporary South Asian fiction. Moreover, the technique of textual analysis and close reading is used for collecting and processing data.

Key Words

Liminality, uncanniness, Migration, Transition, Ambiguity

Introduction

Migrant literature deals with the experiences of persons or communities that have been migrated or displaced from their homelands. It reveals the complexities of cultural consolidation, reminiscence, rootlessness, and identity fragmentation. Migrant literature is described by its wide range of themes, cultural influence, distinctive account and its impact on society. It is created by migrant authors and most often highlights the difficulties and concerns related to identity, dislocation and cultural amalgamation (Bah, 2024). According to Ahmed, Malik and Tahir (2021) migration is a universal phenomenon. During the last few decades, the insight and discernment about migration is changed entirely as the world has experienced austere social, political, geographical and economic deviations. The world has seen colossal dislocation of people from their native places due to war, terrorism, extremism and geopolitical treacheries and as a result of these refugees has greatly increased in number. The migrant authors are producing valuable literature globally to accentuate the significance of borders and boundaries and rendering commendable services for the survival of humanity. Bhabha (1994) has very meticulously analyzed the migrant experiences and concluded that it is full of dualisms and fetch uncanniness along with it. Migrant literature provides insights into the migrant experiences, shedding light on the challenges and triumphs of individuals navigating new cultural landscapes. It reconnoiters questions of identity, belonging, and the interplay

between cultures. It often challenges traditional notions of nationality, culture and identity (Bah,2024).According to Chakraborty (2016) migration whether it is intended or unintended,results in homelessness and Bhabha employs the term uncanny to describe this unhomely experience.

The Season of Flight novel is written by Nepali diaspora writer Manjushree Thapa and published in the year 2010. She was born in Kathmandu in the year 1968 and grew up in Nepal, Canada and USA. According to Bah (2024) there are prodigious similarities in the fiction of Nepal and the fiction written in the other languages of South Asia because it inclines to emphasize on the social problems and are the most far-sighted documents of their times. Sur (2020) proposes that *The Seasons of Flight* is an immigrant story and the protagonist of this story leaves Nepal due to adverse situations of sustenance there and migrates to America.Bhatt (2018) further suggest that Prema encounters austere identity challenges in the new and altered environment of America and she also recalls her homeland as she visits the new Nepal in Los Angeles. She eats Nepali food and recites religious bhajans at the temple of Mata Sylvia due to distressed emotional state and existential suspicions. She also experiences nostalgia, homelessness and identity crises and joins a local identity-based group for affiliation and firmness in her upsetting and perplexing life. Prema struggles unceasingly to adapt herself in the alien environment and towards the end of this novel she is presented as settled auspiciously in foreign milieu.

Oleander Girl is written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni an Indian based American writer who is a celebrated social activist and worked significantly for the welfare of subjugated females. This novel was published in the year 2013. Panjwani (2014) proposes that prestige of Divakaruni as a South Asian writer is very much renowned and acknowledged after Salman Rushdie and Bharti Mukherjee. This novel swaps around the story of an Indian girl named, Korobi Roy. She lives with her grandparents in Kolkata city and is given the identity of Roy family. Korobi is ignorant of her true identity and she comes to know about this after the demise of her grandfather. The disclosure of this truth devastated her personality and she decides to leave her homeland in search of her genetic father. In America she brawls to find her father but during this journey she runs into many situations which question her identity and she also exposes the attitude of Americans towards her. She was not safe there until she transformed her attire absolutely and amalgamated into American culture. The identity of Korobi was positioned between tradition and modernity,familial duty and individual desire, her Indian legacy and American distinctiveness.

Literature Review

Manjuladevi and Kannammal (2021) have critically analyzed four novels by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and studied the impact of immigration on characters. The selected novels are *The Mistress of Spices*, *The Vine of Desire*,*Sister of My Heart* and *Queen of Dreams*. They propose that Divakaruni being an Indo-American diaspora writer has much understanding and observation of everyday issues and struggles of immigrants in foreign land. These novels by Divakaruni offer a comprehension and a useful perspective to deal with the queries related to immigrants like identity crises, transnationalism,amalgamation of different cultures etc. They propose that Divakaruni has given great importance to diasporic experiences and incorporation into foreign cultures. The novels by Divakaruni are full of immigrant characters and the women character as immigrant become more complicated in her novels as they are fighting a battle on two fronts simultaneously. Outside the homes they are encountering racial discrimination and facing patriarchal tenets inside the homes. They are scuffling between two conflicting cultures and the case of second generation of immigrants is even more intricate and complex as they give up having more compromised identity.

Pandey and Mathew (2017) have studied the transcultural journeys in the two novels by Divakaruni and the selected novels are *The Mistress of Spices* and *Oleander Girl*. They propose that Divakaruni has exposed the multicultural facets of America by delineating the characters from diverse nationalities. Thus, the transcultural journeys undertaken by Tilo in *The Mistress of Spices* and Korobi Roy in *Oleander Girl* support them to redefine their identities. Besides, they suggest that with the help of these transcultural journeys Divakaruni exposes that amalgamation of various cultures leads to an inventive process and results in the creation of new cultural values. Nagar (2020) has analyzed the existential crisis in the female protagonist of Divakaruni's selected novels and also studied that how the characters in these novels counter it. The selected novels for this study are *Sister of My Heart*, *The Palace of Illusions*, *Oleander Girl* and *One Amazing Thing*. He offers that Divakaruni has presented her characters with a postmodern subconscious and has given her vintage characters a distinctive expression which makes her work commendable worldwide. Likewise, he recommends that Divakaruni has dealt broadly with the existential crisis of females and their distresses too.

Bakayaraj and Pal (2022) assessed depiction of diasporic identity from the viewpoint of critical approaches to the notion of diaspora in *Oleander Girl* by Divakaruni. They suggest that in *Oleander Girl*, Divakaruni has discussed the issues related to identity and also delineated the parameters which work in the backdrop and affect one's identity. They further add that Divakaruni has creatively portrayed the expedition of Korobi for her new identity formation in order to highlight the disturbances and trials that she has faced during this journey. Ravikumar, Sait and Prabakar (2021) analyzed the character of Korobi Roy in the novel *Oleander Girl* as a ruthless and an impatient spirit. They propose that in this novel Divakaruni has illustrated the struggle of Korobi and also emphasized the contribution of Indian society in her identity formation. Karatudayan and Anbuselvi (2019) examined the novel *Oleander Girl* by Divakaruni from the feminist perspective and offer that Korobi is the expression of Divakaruni's ideal diasporic woman. Kaur (2016) evaluated *Oleander Girl* with exceptional stress on female pursuit for identity.

Bhattarai (2022) examines *The season of Flight* by Thapa and studies the transnational identity in this novel. He suggests that identity of immigrant is fluid in foreign milieu and likewise Prema in this novel has experienced the volatility in America as she has to live under the influence of two cultures. This instability of her personality generates hybridity which in turn creates frustration in her personality and it is the effect of her dislocation. He offers that immigrants like Prema and many others live in-between situation. They have to adapt to the host country's culture while also holding on to their own cultural roots. He further adds that adjustment in foreign land is always very challenging for the immigrants because it fetches along with its new set of intricacies and worries. Tiwari (2023) evaluated *The Seasons of Flight* and studied the impact of migration and cross-cultural experiences in this novel. This novel narrates the stories of migrants especially Nepalese surviving in America. He proposes that Thapa has offered the travails of displacement and snags of being fraught between two cultures. The immigrants' success, wealth and prosperity are challenged by the cultural cost of leaving their homeland behind. Adhikari (2022) analyzes the process of migration in *The Seasons of Flight* novel from a global perspective. He suggests that migration is a deeply ingrained cultural phenomenon in Nepal, with many Nepali people seeking opportunities in European countries, while America remains a coveted destination for ambitious youth from developing nations, symbolizing a land of promise and growth. It is because globalization passes a new spirit in the youth of developing nations and offers them legal ways to migrate from their homelands. He further adds that

although globalization offers opportunities but it also brings various sorts of challenges along with it.

Mukherjee (2021) examined *The Midnight Children* by Salman Rushdie and studied the liminal spaces in this fictional work. He used the terms like recollection, memory and reality which are psychological terms actually and elaborated the sufferings, anxieties, frenzied states and misperceptions of characters with the help of these terms. Mehmood, Mohsin and Ali (2023) study the concept of displacement and transition in Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon*. They suggest that tribal communities, particularly females are presented as subservient and subdued, stripped of autonomy and freedom of expression, exploited and dominated by their ruling elite. They have analyzed those socio-political elements in this novel which highlight the attitude of government towards people of tribal communities which are liable for the feelings of displacement in the people living near border areas. According to Gairola, Curtis and Falanagan (2021) catastrophes, wars, migrations, refugee crisis and pandemic all of these resulted in displacement, alienation, Nostalgia, homesickness and shakiness with menace and transformations that have been exponentially exaggerated during the time of COVID-19. They further add that during COVID-19 the world was in the phase of shared crisis as borders were closed and migration was restricted it signifies liminalities of human beings. According to Asif (2024) the concept of uncanny by Freud endeavors to discover the vagueness and outlines the experiences of eerie and bizarre simultaneously. For this purpose, he used the notion of postcolonial uncanny and applied it on Sadat Hassan Manto's *Toba Tek Singh* and explored uncanny in relation to depiction of slums and asylums in contemporary India and Pakistan.

Lemus (2021) examined Hamid's *Exit West* and revealed the connotation of uncanniness in his thesis. He evaluated that Hamid has used uncanny literary devices in liminal spaces which are not essentially physical like the presence of magical black doors in this novel. They are not present physically but transfer the individuals from one place to another place instantly. He proposes the existence of these magical doors creates anxiety and mystery in this novel and indeed it is frightening experience as migrants are not certain about their future.

Material and Methods

The term “liminality” is originated from a Latin word “limen” meanings are threshold, starter, divider and a separator. Liminal space is the in-between location of cultural action, in which according to a number of cultural theorists, anthropologists and psychologists meaning is created (Chakraborty, 2016). Wasiq, Rashid and Shah (2024) also propose that liminality is a threshold and an intermediate space. They further add that being on a threshold that splits one place from another is in fact a psychological course that comprises a physical or mental transformation. In the words of Zainab and Rind (2024) liminality according to Thomassen (2014) is a universal notion because human lives and cultures cannot exist without instants of transition as we live through these transitory spaces and in-between moments. This transformation forms the personality and formulates the identity as it is vital for the development of any individual or society. Marotta (2025) suggests that liminality specifies a spatial and temporal position that captures the transitional phase between initial point and culminating point.

The concept of liminality was introduced in the field of anthropology by Van Gennep in Rite of the Passage (1960) as a three parts structure: separation, transition and aggregation (Turner, 1969). Based on Van Gennep's ideas, Victor Turner proposed that rite of passage is found in all societies and each rite of passage has these components, separation, transition and reincorporation (Turner, 1967). Turner was profoundly influenced by Van Gennep's ideas and he adopted his framework particularly the concept of liminality which mentions to the transitional stage during a rite of passage (Thomassen, 2014). Turner presented his concept

of liminality for the first time in his paper in 1964 "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage". As Turner relates "Liminality during initiation is the primary datum of this study, though I will draw on other aspects of passage rituals where the argument demands this" (Turner, 1967, p.235). According to Turner liminality refers to the transitional stage during a rite of passage where individuals are betwixt and between their previous and future social statuses (Turner, 1969).

According to Taylor (1998) Turner accentuated the anti-structure nature of liminality which is known as 'communitas', proposing that during this phase, individuals experience a transitory liberation from social norms and hierarchical structures. This type of bonding is only possible when an individual experiences in anti-structure society and undergoes liminal phase it never happens in structured society because structure holds people apart (Taylor, 1998). Turner outlines the factors that produce communitas which is created by displacements and dispossessions that individuals experience during liminal phase and show need for unification (Turner, 1969).

Despite the fact that Turner's work on liminality has been comprehensively credible, it has also defied criticism and argument. Some scholars have upraised numerous concerns and critiques concerning his theories. Turner, E (2012) Victor Turner's wife and fellow anthropologist has expressed reservations about certain aspects of his work. She has suggested that his theoretical concepts might be overly abstract and not fully applicable to the rich and complex realities of fieldwork. Thomassen (2014) proposes the challenge of applying the idea of liminality to present-day political and social commotions. He suggests that Turner's framework does not adequately account for conditions where transitions remain unsettled or where individuals stay continuously in a liminal state. Kepferer and Gold (2024) study Turner's contribution to understanding socio historical processes, highlighting his influence on the concept of egalitarian dynamics. They put forward although Turner's work is foundational, it must be reconsidered and expanded to remain relatable in up-to-date social science debate.

According to Bennett and Royle (2009) uncanny is connected to strangeness, eeriness and with fracas of acquainted as they have explored the notion of uncanny with a various examples centering on "The Uncanny" essay written by Freud. They resolved that uncanny is all about effects and experiences of the reader rather than the theme of uncanny. Freud used a German word 'Unheimlich' for uncanny that means bizarre, curious and not familiar. "The uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" (Freud, 2003, p.124). Freud's concept of the uncanny explores the unsettling feelings evoked by something familiar becoming unfamiliar or something hidden coming to light. It's a sense of unease or dread arising from repressed childhood fears and desires resurfacing in adulthood. Freud delves into the psychological roots of this unsettling feeling, suggesting it stems from a conflict between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the known and the unknown (Freud, 2003). Employing Victor Turner's notion of liminality for the present research work enables a contemplation of the structural and symbolic processes underlying transition and transformation, whereas Freud's idea of the uncanny infuses the discussion with psychological and affective complexity. The triangulation of these two frameworks thus offers an incisive interpretive lens for understanding the disquieting and transformative experiences of migration.

Results and Discussion

Oleander Girl starts with a nightmare in which Korobi saw the ghost of her late mother, "But there it is, in the armchair in the corner of the bedroom: a still female form, black against the darkness of the room, looking towards me. "Mother?" (Divakaruni, 2013, p.6). This uncanny encounter of Korobi with her dead mother mists the line between veracity and unfathomable and incites the sense of uncanniness as Freud (2003) suggests that uncanny is used to convey

unusual fears related to unfamiliar things typically not found at home, but it can also describe inexplicable fears about familiar things that were once present at home but remained unnoticed. The appearance of Korobi's mother as ghost in her dream is an uncanny phenomenon. *The Seasons of Flight* kicks off with Prema getting the nod for her interview at the American Embassy. She promptly gets in touch with the officer handling her case, "As an afterthought the woman added, 'Where are you going to live? Do you have a family or friends there? Have you thought about where to go when you land? Have you found a job for yourself?'" (Thapa, 2010, p.51). These questions throw Prema off balance, and she finds herself wavering, "America. Nepal. America. Nepal" (p.51). Sur (2020) explains that Prema's got nothing left to lose, and her mind's torn between Nepal and America, but America is the ultimate goal. She further adds that Thapa's hinting at a mental shift, a mindset that will help her navigate the complexities of crossing borders, rather than just physically going through the motions. Prema's migration and displacement from her homeland creates a sense of disorientation, leaving her unsettled and anxious about the unfamiliar culture and mysterious world awaiting her. Freud's framework would say this sense of unease is fertile ground for the uncanny (Freud, 2003).

Korobi's grandparents raised her after her mother's passing at birth, leaving behind a mysterious legacy that fuels Korobi's fixation on her mom. Since childhood, she has been drawn to risky situations, almost as if trying to conjure her mother's presence, as she says, "I longed for a visitation from my mother" (Divakaruni, 2013, p.7). Roll with the times, as she entered into adulthood, she accepted the truth that her mother has gone. Likewise, Prema in *The Seasons of Flight* possesses an ammonite with her as a god and reminiscence of her departed mother, the occurrence of this ammonite in the life of Prema is an uncanny phenomenon, "The ammonite had belonged to her mother. A Hindu ascetic who came wandering through Prema's birth village had given it to her" (p.3). Prema is raised by her father because her mother died when her little sister Bijaya was born and Prema left alone with her memories. She is also obsessed about her mother just like Korobi as Freud (2003) proposes about changes in mind as an individual moves from childhood to adulthood. He is very prurient about the hidden veracities inside individuals that frighten after revelation. He meticulously highlights the mental and psychological changes that occur during the growth and development of an individual. He further suggests that children are ferociously dedicated to mothers because of the closeness, unconditional love, care and protection so, anything or anyone that gets in this way develops into a fear or threat in the irrational baby mind and converts into a danger (Freud, 2003). Korobi's wish to meet her mother and Prema's desire to keep the ammonite of her mother in reality imitates their repressed and suppressed yearning to be with their mothers always. Henceforward, uncanny is related to some of repressed and suppressed desires and beliefs or cover up in mind because those beliefs were weird and wrong and in order to become an adult, development of a rational mind is necessary which deals with logics and asks for cause and effects relations (Malewitz, 2020). Ultimately, Korobi decides to leave India for America in order to search the true meanings of her dream and at the airport, she even feels the presence of her deceased mother as she says, "The monitor flashes, it's time for me to go through security check. As I turn, behind Rajat's head I see two ovals of light. Is it just a trick of my tear-filled eyes? I want to believe it's my mother" (p.86). Likewise, Prema also decides to leave Nepal for America, "She packed some clothes, shoes and books into a suitcase. She also packed the ammonite and the binoculars" (p.55). It spawns an uncanny and inexplicable influence which inflames bizarreness and according to Freud (2003) uncanniness occurs when suppressed remembrances or spirits reemerge in an unanticipated milieu and generate sense of uneasiness. The departure of Korobi and Prema from their homeland drive them into liminal phase as Turner (1969) proposes that during the liminal phase of a rite of passage or ritual, the initiates are in a

betwixt and between status which is a kind of threshold or starter from which a new distinctiveness or social status can emerge. Just after reaching airport, Korobi feels traumatized as she relates, "I stumble out of the customs area of Kennedy Airport exhausted and dizzyUnable to sleep, I had obsessed over all the things that might go wrong in America" (Divakaruni, 2013,p.87). But soon after this her viewpoints are entirely altered as she comes across various gigantic buildings, bridge with mysterious color water and enchanting scenarios all around as she says, "Grandmother is right, this will be an adventure. For the first time, I feel ready" (p.88). This swift transferal of feelings implies the growth of her personality. Korobi's journey can be seen as a prolonged liminal experience from her acquainted life in Kolkata to various bizarre and outlandish milieus in New York. Initially she is portrayed as a traditional India girl, naïve and idealistic, who is unaware of the challenges of life but after reaching New York significant change in her personality is observable as she pays fare to taxi driver and stops the advancement of shaven head man with tattoos towards her as she says, "Already I 'm losing my Indian courtesies; I'm thinking in terms of survival, like an immigrant" (p.88). Prema in *The Seasons of Flight* also experienced alike circumstances as the author relates, "Prema had wanted to reinvent herself in America, but-What is here to being human?The body which desires, persistent and unreasonable; thoughts and temperaments. Instincts. A capacity to harm. And history, which lingers as a spectre" (Thapa,2010,p.3). Prema was also disturbed after reaching America but her feelings are also transformed just like Korobi as she ran into various individuals from different cultures at Shalimar. At first she lives in littleNepal with Sushil and Neeru and works at The Shalimar but soon she becomes upset and "She wanted to leave, just-go. Get as far away as she could from the past" (p.102). Her liminal journey can be seen as a protracted liminal experience just like Korobi, from her familiar life in Nepal to strange and uncanny environments in America. Prema is represented as a traditional Nepali girl, impassive, unassertive and a discontent person yearning for change. But after reaching America a substantial transformation in her personality is evident as she ended contacts with people in little Nepal and also never contacted her family back in Nepal. She pursued for a better and improved life in Los Angeles as Thomassen (2014) submits that liminal experiences shape the individuality, foreground mind and experience and focus human agency. During liminal phase the individuals are at the center of change and are prepared for and embody their new statuses.

As Korobi and Prema pass through in between-spaces in America,experiences get infested on their way and their identities take on a considerable process of transformation which is a characteristic of liminal experience. According to Turner (1969), "During the intervening "limninal" period, the characteristics of the ritual subject(the"passenger") are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (Turner, 1969, p.94). In America both Korobi and Prema face many challenges and struggle hard to find their lost identities. Korobi's first challenge in America is to be with maneuverer Mitra whom she never trusts due to his suspicious activities especially about Rajat's family.Mitra's wife Seema suggests Korobi to endure in the superfluous land and offers her classy western dresses to fit into her new role. Durable affection nurtures between Korobi and Seema and this phase functioned as a liminal space and *communitas* for Korobi because of its anti-structure and homogeneity. According to Turner, "Communitas emerges where social structure is not" (Turner, 1969, p.126). Korobi's stay with Vic is another example of *communitas*, "Vic is a part of show now"(p.116). Similarly Prema stay with Sushil and Neeru at little Nepal and with Meg, Susan in new apartment and with Luis at his home in Los Angeles are examples of *communitas* during which she cultivates a strong intimacy with these individuals but momentarily.As Korobi moves from one place to another place in search of her real father, she must acclimate to various cultural

norms and milieus during her journey. This perpetual alteration leads to variability and fluidity in her identity and it accentuates the liminal nature of her existence as she wears cream pant suit on her way to Boston, she changed her attire for her survival on the alien land. Being a traditional Indian girl Korobi used to wear salwar kamees but she changed her attire in order to fit in the foreign milieu she says, "I'm dressed perfectly for deception in my Prada suit" (p.174). Similarly before going to San Francisco she gets a haircut to sale her hair as she runs short of money so that she can continue her search for her father as she says, "Once I get over the shock, I decide that I, too, like the new me" (p.160). Prema also adapts to various cultural norms and milieus as she visits the tourist beach, "At one of the stalls, she bought a red bikini for \$24.99, and flip-flops for \$4.47. She changed into it at a public toilet-restroom-examining, in the mirrors by the washstands, the way the bikini curved over her breasts and back" (p.63). At another place when she goes out for dinner with Luis, she wears her Bollywood heroine dress, "She changed into an indigo dress that she had bought, along with the field guide, at a Salvadorian street fair in her first year in America" (p.72). Prema parties her first thanksgiving with Peggy and Ron, at Luis's parents' home. She also brawls to become an American and her acceptance of American life style with Luis is an evident of this fact. As Thomassen (2014) suggests liminal experiences form the individualism, foreground mind and experience and focus human agency. During liminal phase the individuals are at the center of change and are prepared for and embody their new statuses. She develops American relationship with Luis, "I love you'. 'I love you'. Each time Luis and she said this, it sounded more resonant, true. How easily they slipped into a relationship. That this was a relationship, or what the Americans called a relationship, Prema was certain" (p.112). Andrew and Roberts (2015) propose that a dynamic and unnoticed characteristic of the liminal phase is its association with vulnerability. The subsequent risk involved to the entering of a liminal space and liminal phase is of dropping steady sense of self and identity, or of not being incorporated into the social world that had been expected or sought after. Turner (1969) suggests that liminality is founded in a situation that has qualities of doubt and absence of predictability between what is known, has gone before and future outcome. Each transitional space and phase ascertained to be a combination of known and unknown, accustomed and bizarre. The absence of accustomed indicators from their preceding state can create a sense of loss or extraction. Liminality is a time of changeability and prospective transformation. It bids the chance for personal growth, alteration, and variation as individuals concoct to transfer into their new roles or statuses. Eventually, Korobi meets her father, Rob Lancey and she comes to know the dreadful fact about her Afro-American identity and her illegitimacy which shattered her badly but after having an impassioned appeasement she comes closer to her father, "We sit in silence, thinking of many things. Hesitantly, I tell him about the dream that started off this whole search for me, my mother's visit....." "I believe". He says, "You were lucky. What I wouldn't give to see her one more time, even if it's in a dream" (p.225). Korobi was very amazed after watching the sunset as this situation was exactly the same as she had perceived in her dream. She finally understood her mother's message. Prema contemplates her assimilation into American society with Luis but as she visits The Journey Church with Luis she is astounded by the remembrances of her past life, her family, and homeland, she is dazed by the absence. After this incident, she senses out of place and meets Mata Sylvia who narrates few lines from Hindu scripture and talks about everlasting love. Prema feels elevated and lost herself, in her dream she saw her parents and home in Nepal. The divine presence of her mother in her dream disrupts the conventional understanding of time and space by pacing her in a liminal space where she can relate with the departed. This uncanny experience offers a vision and acumen. It suggests a connotation to another realm and accentuating her alteration between the living and the spiritual world, "It was then that she realized she had to go: she had to set out again on her zigzag trail. But which direction was she to take this time? That,

she didn't know”(p.161).Recalling the past is substantial for all and nostalgia recompenses in correlating the gap between past and present.Memories of the past help one to drip from the harsh realities of the past.Prema transforms as a more insightful, contemplative and an emotionally resilient person.

Conclusion

The liminal journeys of Prema and Korobi, as explored in this study, epitomize the profound psychological, cultural, and existential transformations that occur within diasporic subjectivities navigating liminal spaces. Both female protagonists inhabit the threshold between the familiar and the foreign, the past and the present, the self and the other, a state of liminality that compels them to renegotiate identity,belonging, and meaning. Their encounters with the uncanny, emerging through dislocations of space, memory, and emotion, render the foreign both alluring and unsettling, reflecting Freud's notion of *unheimlich* as that which is simultaneously strange and intimately familiar. The foreign landscapes they traverse become symbolic sites where buried fears, desires, and attachments resurface, forcing each heroine to confront the ambiguities of home and exile.

Experiences of nostalgia and homesickness further intensify this liminal consciousness,situating Prema and Korobi within the paradox of yearning for origins while being irrevocably transformed by displacement. In their navigation of alien geographies and cultural codes, they face fragmentation of identity but also gain the potential for reconstitution and renewal. Through the oscillationbetween belonging and estrangement, they move beyond static definitions of selfhood, evolving into hybrid subjects wwho embody the fluidity and resilience inherent in postcolonial and diasporic existence.

Ultimately,the journeys of Prema and Korobi underscore that liminality is not merely a space of loss or alienation but also one of becoming, a dynamic process through which the self is reimaged. Their transformations testify to the transformative potential embedded in the experience of the uncanny and the threshold state.Having traversed borders both physical and psychological, they emerge as reconstituted selves, no longer confined by the binaries of home and abroad, familiarity and otherness. Their narratives thus affirm that identity, when subjected to the forces of migration and displacement, is a perpetually evolving construct, one that gains depth and complexity precisely through the tensions of the liminal and the uncanny.

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