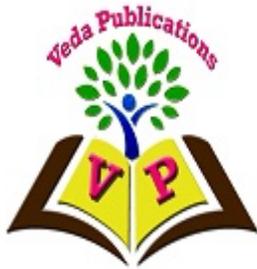




## RESEARCH ARTICLE

**THEMATIC CONCERNS OF DIASPORA IN THE NOVELS OF BENYAMIN'S  
GOAT LIFE AND V.S. NAIPAUL'S THE MIMIC MEN – A STUDY**Dr. G. Kiran Kumar Reddy<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. B.S. Selina<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>(Assistant Professor in English, Rajeev Gandhi Memorial College of Engineering and Technology, Nandyal, AP, India.)<sup>2</sup>(Academic Officer, Academic Cell, AP State Council of Higher Education, Mangalagiri, AP, India.)Email: [kiran.mokshita@gmail.com](mailto:kiran.mokshita@gmail.com) ; [selinakolaventy@gmail.com](mailto:selinakolaventy@gmail.com)

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Doi: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2025.12302>**ABSTRACT****Article history:**

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Indian writers contribution to the global cannons is remarkable one, explores major themes of displacement, migration, diaspora in Indian Fiction. Indian diaspora cementing the bond with host country/ countries highlights the universal displacement, yearning for better life. Diaspora deals with scattered people who settled for the sake of employment in different countries. It portrays the displacement, nostalgia, Identity themes. It is a broad area which covers native/ alien culture, Integration and disintegration of culture. Human beings reminiscence the past in an isolated mood and become nostalgic. The aim of this paper stresses on settlement, bad experiences of the main characters in these two novels. Decolonized people experience anxieties, mental pain, domination, national identity. In the recent literature, diaspora played crucial role by portraying universal homogeneity, ethnicity, communication problems, humanistic way of life, in humanism, interpersonal relationships.

**Keywords:** *Diaspora, Identity, Nostalgia.**Author(s) retain the copyright of this article*

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## INTRODUCTION

Diaspora is an ancient word. Its etymological Greek origins indicate its meaning, as 'dispersion' and metaphorically sowing or scattering seeds across or migration of people or community, its place of origin to other place. Originally it was used for the dispersed Jews after the Babylonian captivity and also in the apostolic age for the Jews living outside of Palestine. Diasporic culture is necessarily amalgamation of different cultures.

Diaspora is a recurrent word in the globalized world. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the meaning of Diaspora runs thus: people migration from their own country or any other country. In the second part of 20<sup>th</sup> century, authors such as Bharathi Mukharjee, Caryle Philips, Rohinton Mistry and Hantif Kureshi have apprehended the diasporic state of migrant communities. In diasporic literature authors depicted the trivial and tribulations of dual locations and dual roots. Diaspora is a common phenomenon that existed during colonialism. Diaspora influenced the impact of migration, immigration and exile. Europeans' colonization influenced the people throughout nook and corner of the world. They settled majorly in Canada, India, Australia, and America. Especially, the Indians who had migrated and settled in abroad, faced problems did not share common religion, language, dress etc. This diversity is reflected in their writings.

Dewitt Boden asserts that "Making literary work into film is a creative gargantuan task. It requires a sort of ability to restore the established mood."

The *Goat Life* deals with the issues of diaspora, migration, unemployment. The novel is centered on the happenings in and around the life of its protagonist that is concerned with the theme of migration and unemployment problems.

This presentation draws a comparison between the novel and its cinematic version where Beniyan is both the screen play writer and the narrator. This article throws light on the transformations made from the novel into the movie and advocates them as legitimate and worthwhile as a support to Linda Seger's view mentioned in her book, she says, 'not every adaptation has to follow the original' and justifies that 'adaptation is a new original.'" This presentation establishes how the changes have made the movie substantial.

Many critics had opined that such a novel can never be made into a movie. Therefore, this study also reflects how the changes made in the movie made it possible for the film makers to transform such a complex and voluminous novel to cinematic.

## DIASPORA

In the words of Grace Daphne in *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts* (2007), "Literature is a part of the self-referral quest of the human being to express consciousness. Deviating from the conventional research-based methods of numbers and percentages the narratives provide experience of people and lives in close quarters. The contribution of Diaspora literature is quite significant in this context. Having acquired the experience on an align land of the trials and tribulations expatriate writers explore in their writings a double identification with



the original homeland and the adopted land. Homi Bhabha expresses in *The Location of Culture* (1994), “a range of contemporary critical theories suggest that it is from those who suffered the sentence of history-subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement - that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking.”

A close perception of history, socio-psychology and economics of humans may reveal the transformation and development of society. Numerous situations in the history of human development moulded condition of humans such as Darwin's Evolution theory, Marxist ideology, technology growth; globalization established the quality of the world. Human existence became complex, they migrated from their home land to alien lands.

The word Diaspora denotes the immigration, exile, dislocation and it has undergone tremendously. The word “Diaspora” originated in the Greek word “Diasperio”. In 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Sophocles, Herodotus used the word diaspora. Prominent post modern writers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Lyotard combined sociology and anthropology. In 1980s, it paved the way for English cultural studies movement. In that aspect, Diaspora emerged and differed from definitions.

In the words of Sturat Mill, Diaspora's definition runs as It is recognized by a necessary unification of heterogeneity and diversity. According to Avtar Brah, “Diaspora space is the intersectionality, border and dislocation as a point of confluence of politico-economic, cultural processes.

The above said discussion has elucidated the reality. Diaspora deals with migration, nation - boundary, isolation, dislocation, movement, alienation are closely interconnected with identity. Diaspora theory is based on three main elements- host country, diaspora group and homeland.

**Migration:** Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary has defined migration as the movement of people from one place to other place.

### STUDY OF INDIAN MIGRANTS TO GULF COUNTRIES

From the ancient days onwards, India maintained bilateral relationship with Gulf countries. According to the sources, Arab world has good trade relations with India in 10<sup>th</sup> century. It was a golden period. The International Labour organization has categorized International migration into settlement migration and contract migration. The former one is a traditional migration, people migrate from one nation to other nation availing jobs and settled there. In the latter one, people from underdeveloped nations migrate to developed nations possessing professional ability to secure better jobs.

Migrant workers undergo numerous problems like nonpayment of wages, delayed payment of wages, allowing the workers for menial jobs, long waiting hours.

Based on Nitaqat law, Saudi companies hire Indian or any nation workers. Poverty is the main reason for migrants more than 18 million workers settled in gulf countries. United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are favourite destined countries, which sheltered Indians in various companies. Migration is an optimistic one for the



economic growth of migrants and their nations. Majority of the migrants from India are Keralites and second goes to Rajasthan. Malayalis are high wage earners in the gulf. According to United Nations report, approximately 250 to 258 million migrants settled in other countries. Reasons may be different. Growth of population, inequality, climatically changes had taken place. Climate shows tremendous impact on the livelihood of people in various areas like cyclones, rise of sea level etc.,

#### **AN OVER VIEW OF GOAT LIFE**

The Beniyamin's Goat Life is divided into Four parts. First part Prison, Second One Desert, Third Absconding and the last one Refugee. The novel begins in Batha city at the police station where the protagonist stays as a captive refugee. He tries to attract the attention of Sentry guards. He has no work permit visa. Najeeb is imprisoned in a big jail, but enjoys the prison life along with other nationals. He is unaware of his crimes, associated with them happily. A sentry escorts the captives to a Barber. Initially his companion Hameed is tonsured, later he gets opportunity. They look at each other and laugh themselves. Then, they are shifted to another big prison. It is divided into different blocks. Nazeeb was placed in Indian Block, thronged with more than 250 tonsured Indians. On the first day, protagonist and Hameed sleep at a corner due to tiredness. Share their agony with the inmates of prison had tea and dinner. All the convicts experience miserable life; hero listens their story and shows empathy.

On the parade day, silence shrouds the prison. Arbab masters appear at the prison to identify their

slaves. Prisoners are scared of their master's shadows too. Nazeeb waits at embassy office, feels nostalgic, implores god to show mercy. Alienation torments him a lot. All his block inmates leave Batha. Najeeb's own Arbab appears on the parade day, the protagonist is very confident but after some time finding Arab, he swoons and holds other inmate's arm.

In the second part of the novel, Desert Life is depicted in a pathetic way. Najeeb comes to know about Gulf Visa through his friend. He determines to earn money like other Malayalis. His wife is four months pregnant, feels dilemma to emigrate or not, share his thoughts with Sainu (his wife). With the consent of Sainu, he takes decision to work in Saudi Arabia. He accompanies Hakim from Kainkulam to Mumbai in a train and in flight too. They reach Riyad airport, full of dazzled lights, cannot bear the emanated light. Both Nazeeb and Hakim had eager to meet their sponsor, wait for a long time.

After a long time, Arbab approaches them takes them in an old vehicle. Nazeeb feels thirsty and implores him to offer water. His Arbab doesn't consider his plea. Long journey in the Arbab's vehicle, it provides him some sort of relief. In the vicinity of darkness at an isolated area, Arbab stops his vehicle and wakes up both. But forcibly, handovers Hakim to another Arbab and leaves the place. After one kilometer journey, Arbab's vehicle stops at an isolated place. He becomes captive in the hands of Arbab and forced to face drudgery, scarcity of water, food, sanitation among goats. He cannot bear the odour of goats. The next day morning, he takes goat



life to Arbab. He tries to pacify with his words to leave this area. Nazeeb never cares about an old worker of Arbab. Arbabs offer 'Kubbus' to Nazeeb. He recollects his past days at his homeland, he never touched food without taking bath. He experiences mental pain in an alienated place. Arbab goes inside and handovers a Thobe (Robe) a long white shirt. His master advises the protagonist to provide water to goats in Masara. He obliges the words of Arbab, but Arbab haunts like a shadow, convinces him to involve in the work. He takes the goat for grazing and faces hardships in the desert. On an inauspicious day, he knows about the death of old worker.

Nazeeb habituates to the atmosphere, shows great care towards goats, treats in an empathetic way. He adores a goat very much and implores his Arbab not to sale it to slaughter house. He feels pathetic in this situation. He learns some words Arbab – protector, Masara -Goat shelter, Kubbus - local food, it is like Indian Chappathi, Ganam (Goat), Halib (milk), THibbin (Grass) Barsey ( Dry grass), Jamal (camel) , La ( No), Ji ham ( Ok Master) , Halaah (Go away from here) from Arbab for his communication purpose.

After losing bond with beloved goat Sabeel, hero decides to abscond from the masara. In the winter season, he enjoys sunset. In the winter, he recollects his first love story with Mary in fifth standard. After witnessing a beautiful goat, he reminiscences Mary's memories in his mind. He undergoes loneliness and craves for identity in an abandoned desert. Nazeeb meets Hakim, knows the cruel deeds of Hakim's Arbab. Hakim introduces his accomplice Ibrahim

Kadhiri. This trio plan to escape from cruel hands of their masters.

The third chapter of the novel is Absconding. Nazeeb's Arbab intimates him about his departure and reveals his daughter's marriage. Trio use this opportunity to abscond, Ibrahim Kadhiri leads the plan, Hakim, Nazeeb pursue Kadhiri's instructions. They toil, face many difficulties in this journey with men and climatic conditions. The trio bear it for their own survival. Their limbs become numb to walk in the desert. Hakim craves for water very much, dies. In one situation protagonist eats sand to quench his thirst and prays Allah to show mercy upon them. Finally, they reach the path. This section is full of vivid desert description and tedious one.

The last section of this novel is Refugee. Nazeeb faints at a Banyan tree near Kuninjinka hotel in Batha city. Malayalis surround and offer him oranges, apples, grapes, bananas to him at hospital bed. They enquire his personal story and doctor handovers mirror, looked into the mirror. He recollects three years, four months and nine days struggle in Saudi Arabia. He calls his wife; silence takes place for some time. Both Nazeeb and his wife exchange their emotions and sobs. His wife informs him their son is in kindergarten. At the end of the novel hero gets relief from his Arbab and learns that he is fake sponsor. Nazeeb gets free out pass from Embassy, signs on some papers, boards flight, and extradition takes place. The hero feels that he is a victim of the victims. He transforms his life from hopeless to hope.



Beniyan's Goat life outlines the migratory issues and the capacity how protagonist confronts it. The author depicts the hero Najeeb Mohammad, migrant in Saudi Arabia. Najeeb and Hakim migrate from Kerala to Saudi Arabia. In the beginning of the novel, Najeeb leads happy life with his wife Sainu and his mother. He feels comfortable at his home. Najeeb realizes and searches the way to earn more money for his livelihood. He falls into the trap of Middle men by paying some ransom, gets work visa in Saudi Arabia. He starts his journey along with Hakim from Mumbai to Saudi Arabia.

Benyamin, Malayali writer's Adujevitham (2002). In this novel, Najeeb Muhammad is a protagonist, aspires to work in Gulf to clear his debts, wishes to give new life for his members of the family. He takes goats to graze, undergoes tough situations in Saudi desert. With the help of Ibrahim, Najeeb escapes from the clutches of slavery.

Goat life sheds light on Diasporic life who migrates from India to Gulf countries. The novel is an insightful one, gives voice to the emigrants. Author portrays the hardships of slavery and mental pain of Najeeb. He is forced to be a shepherd - slave. His Arabab is a cruel master tortures him a lot. At last, he escapes from the masara and shows reverence towards Khadri. He toils himself as a pedestrian in the desert undergoes weariness in the desert. In the conclusion of novel, protagonist reaches the prison and to his homeland. The novel throws light on insecurity of an immigrant life and cruel mindset of arbabs.

## ARBABS' BARBARIC TREATMENT TOWARDS THEIR LABORERS

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, slavery existed in numerous forms in different places. It still pervades when protagonist and his assistant Hakeem reach the airport, they are entrapped and forced into slavery of some arbabs. Worldwide laws cannot save him and becomes a puppet in the hands of an arbab. An arbab tortures him and no one would defy the arbab. Najeeb lives in a deplorable condition. No one values the life of immigrants.

Najeeb expresses his agony "The arabab cared only about my work, not my discomforts". He obliges the words of his master, adjusts for his survival. The arbab shows little care towards health and minimum needs of his servant. He provides "Khubub" as a reward twice a day. Arbab controls Nazeed's life with his gun and binocular. Nazeed and Hakim's life become meaningless and toil for the sake of minimum food.

His mental pain can be understood when he reveals his thoughts: "I saw fumes coming out of its nostrils. All that the arbab did was pour some hot water on my face."(117)

Like this many incidents in the novel that portray exploitation and persecution in the work place. Najeeb experiences loneliness, isolation in the masara. At his work place no one speaks to him.

No one likes prison's life, but protagonist enjoys a lot. He gets a sort of freedom at prison. At the end of the novel, his life journey moves to freedom. His life turns from hopeless life to hopeful life.

**V.S. NAIPAUL'S THE MIMIC MEN**

V.S. Naipaul, one of the poignant fictional writers, received Nobel Prize in 2001. *The Mimic Men* is probably Naipaul's second important novel, set in Isabella, depicts memoir of humiliated minister Ralph Singh exiled from the island. The narrative of the novel moves back and forward, portrays protagonist's childhood, student life in London, returns to the Isabella Island and exile in England.

Ralph Singh, an exiled politician, composes his past experiences. He struggles like an artist to create something; his story becomes more than a discovery. It becomes a recovery, a retrieval of a blighted individual. At another juncture his political autobiography moves from a personal report to modern man's existential allegory. The story, he composes traces Ralph Singh's transitional innocence life to experience. The writing becomes the very means to endure the terror, shipwreck, abandonment and loneliness of situation. He reflects his own hardships, determines to find some order in present chaotic life and disorder in the postcolonial society. The novel is not a linear one, chronological memoir because the protagonist in his endeavors to salvage his wrecked life creates a deliberate order on his life, experiences to reconstruct the meaning of his life.

The novel is divided into three parts, begins with Ralph Singh's student life in London, his romantic affairs with different women, his matrimonial relationship with Sandra. The first part deals returning with Sandra to Isabella Island, his trauma, his successful life in business, and the dissolution of

his marriage. In the second part of the novel, Singh goes back into the past to present his boyhood experiences and adolescent life. Third part of the novel is a sequel to part one where the protagonist is discovered to enter political life in order to restore vacuum and unrest left by Sandra's exit. It evolves fine commentary on the dishonest post-colonial politicians. As a role of historian and autobiographer finds that the pace of events had been no more than the pace of chaos. As a writer he finds his herculean task to be one of determination of neutral self-perception, which would free the valid interior from the fraudulent exterior of personality. His autobiographical recall acquires artistic dimensions in seeking to impose order on chaos through isolation, selection, and intensification of mere facts into a pattern of significance and beauty.

In the beginning of the novel, Ralph Singh, a disgraced colonial politician resides in a modest hotel in London. He is a middle aged, determines to give an order to his chaotic experiences by composing his memoirs. The hero of the novel begins his story in the middle his student life in London. At the very outset he betrays his earlier fascination for the city, for London in particular, in which he had hoped to find order, but could, to his disappointment, find nothing but disorder.

Because of his wayward life style, he fails the exam and loses the scholarship. In the distressed state of mind, he roams aimlessly, finds Sandra, an English girl at the college notice board. His accidental meeting with Sandra unifies his marriage with her. Ralph Singh is attracted by her social ambition,



surrenders his life to her, depending upon her resources. Singh marries Sandra, accompanies her to Isabella in celebration mood. His marriage dreams shatter due to his mother's disapproval and deny Sandra at the first sight. Singh experiences helpless and frustrated, hostility of his people. He focuses on work and becomes a successful business man. He names the township Kripalville the inheritance from his grandfather. He attains a rich status, recognition in the elitist society. Sandra feels monotonous life in Island and their intimacy gradually declines.

The second part of the novel is the most interesting one, portrays the protagonist father memories. His father was a school teacher. His mother's family runs Bella-Bella bottling works, local bottlers of coca cola. Ralph Singh in his childhood had intimacy with his mother's family because they associated with the foreign product, coca cola. Indeed, he stays in his father's house, feels insecurity. His father shows hatred towards his in laws and coca cola. Ralph Singh's father leaves his home, secludes in the hills, wears Hindu saint robes becomes a preacher. His father Gurudev Movement spread like a wild fire and ignites many people minds. After the incident of "A race horse Tamango" is killed in an obscene way and is attributed to the Gurudeva and his men. Gurudeva withdraws himself into oblivion.

Ralph Singh gets seat and scholarship in a London school. Before leaving to England approaches the Gurudeva, his father embraces him in silence. Singh handovers a hundred dollars to the woman his father seemed to have been living with. He pays all his past

debts, gets relief to face the new world. The second part ends with Ralph Singh father's death.

Ralph Singh then records his school life. He reminiscences his schooling appears puzzled. The child's first lesson is about the weight of the king's crown has no relevance at all. The children imitated what they learned to be real. Singh's real name was Raniit Kripal Singh. Singh breaks into two. Ralph and Singh. So, he became Ralph Singh at school. Thus, the protagonist strives hard to transform both his identity and nemesis.

The third part of novel echoes political times of colonial society, Isabella. When Sandra departs, Brown occupies Singh's life. Browne designs the political future for Ralph Singh. The Roman house becomes a hub of busy political activism. His party fascinated support from all races and classes. After coming to power, Ralph Singh comes to know the hollowness of Isabella Island's independence. He romanticizes his role as leader and liberator of poor people. He deludes himself by stating that the masses sweat is a more real source of power than foreign investor's money.

As tricky issues and problems heap up one after the other, he realizes his powerlessness and inability to solve problems without the source of finance. Politics is a challenge and trap for the colonial politician.

## CONCLUSION

Loss of home is a recurring theme in post-colonial literature. It explores socio economic identity within the nations. Home and identity are the major themes in Indian – Diaspora literature.

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