

NEGOTIATING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES IN CHANG RAE LEE'S *NATIVE SPEAKER*

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Abstract

*With the onset of postmodern and postcolonial movements, the literary and critical scholarship took a new direction. The scholarship that emerged in diverse fields of Humanities and social sciences not only challenged and critiqued some of the foundational concepts and 'cemented notions' but also dismantled and dismissed them as mere constructions. One such concept that earlier stood for coherence and stability was the question of identity. Identity earlier signified a fixed notion that was incapable of being changed and was linked to particular place and location. Diaspora played a crucial role in unshackling identity from territoriality and foregrounded its dynamic and fluid nature. This study analyses Chang Rae Lee's *Native Speaker*, a significant diasporic novel that gets at the heart of immigrant crisis and depicts the identity crisis of a Korean-American immigrant Henry Park, who struggles with the questions of identity as he negotiates his many balancing acts while straddling two cultures and two worldviews.*

Research Objectives

1. To analyse multiple layers of identity unfolding in Diasporic Space.
2. To explore the immigrant's plight between two cultures with adherence to none.

Methodology

*Close textual analysis of Chang Rae Lee's *Native Speaker* will be done and moreover different insights of prominent postcolonial, postmodern and Diasporic thinkers will be taken into consideration to substantiate the arguments taken from the text.*

Introduction

Diaspora is a term which we use to refer to those people or their writings that have left their countries due to one reason or the other and have settled down in some other countries which mostly are western countries. The reasons for settling down in these western countries are numerous. In some cases it is due to political reasons and sometimes it is the western dream which allures these people to leave their homelands and live diasporic lives. During the last century there has been tremendous increase in the number of people who immigrate to other countries to live there permanently. Globalization could be seen as one of the main reasons for such huge bulk of human movement from one country to another. In these countries they experience different kinds of problems which relate to their clash with the new culture, their identities are split between two allegiances, one which they own to their homeland and one which they owe to their

newly adopted country. The term if we look back at its proper use was employed for the experience which Jews suffered. Jews referred to their experience of scattering as a result of a cataclysmic event that had affected the community as whole as diaspora. Later the term Diaspora was also used for the scattering of Palestinians who were forced out of their homeland by the wars between Israel and Arabic countries. In 1980s, the term Diaspora assumed broader significance as it came to be used for different categories of people such as expatriates, political refugees, expellees, alien residents, immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities. So the term is now used almost for all those people who are living away from their homes in a host land.

William saffron in his article "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" listed six characteristics of contemporary diaspora and for him, the term