

Article Received: June 10, 2021; Reviewed: June 27, 2021; Accepted: July 5, 2021
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jodem.v12i1.38727>

Diasporic Consciousness in Bharati Gautam's *Vigata Ra Baduli* [Past and Hiccups]

Ramji Timalsina, PhD

Lecturer of English

Mahendra Multiple Campus, Dharan

Email: ramjikoshi@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims to explore the diasporic consciousness reflected through Bharati Gautam's collection of memoirs Vigata Ra Baduli [Past and Hiccups]. As an American Nepali diasporic writer, Gautam has given expression to her experiences in the book. Spending about three and half decades as a diasporan, the writer's consciousness is different from that of the common Nepali migrants to the USA. To analyse Gautam's consciousness, this research has used African American philosopher DuBois's idea of double consciousness. Different interpretations of DuBoisian double consciousness agree that a diasporan has a specific transnational awareness. The elemental aspects of such awareness are the dual nature of thought, relationship to the memory of the homeland, confused state of mind, alienation, a sense of loss of history and culture along with the gain of new cosmopolitan identity. The analysis concludes that Gautam's diasporic consciousness is expressed through her conscious dealing with diasporic distance, marginalization and discrimination in both the homeland and hostland, the realization of her own divided self, feeling of alienation and the connection with the root. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the discourse of Nepali diasporic consciousness.

Keywords: Diasporic consciousness, divided self, homeland, hostland, memoir and root.

Introduction

When Bharati Gautam, the writer of *Vigata Ra Baduli* [Past and Hiccups], visits Dolakha to worship Bhimasen there, they nearly got a deadly accident. On the verge of this possible death, Gautam worries about the family scattered across the continents. She thinks; “aadhaa parivaara amerikaamaa, aaphoosanga aaekee chhoree viraatanagaramaa, ani aaphoo yahaa [Half of the family is in the America, the daughter who accompanied me to Nepal is in Biratnagar, and I am here.]” (183). She is conscious of the split in the family that

has always made her divided between Nepal and America. Her life does not belong to a single nation, it is a transnational one. Dan Smyer Yu terms such a consciousness as diasporic consciousness that is the result of the experience of living a transnational life (11). It is also termed as ‘double consciousness’ or the ‘two-ness of being’.

Gautam’s *Vigata Ra Baduli [Past and Hiccups]* details out her experiences as a transnational citizen, mother, wife, daughter and relative. She writes how close she was with her father in her childhood in Nepal and even after she migrated to the USA. Every time she finds something interesting or loving in the hostland, she remembers her home village in Nepal and begins to compare them. She misses not only her extended family and relatives back in Nepal, but also other people she likes and praises including her villager and famed writer Jhamak Ghimire. Her childhood activities haunt her even in the middle ages. Whenever there is a Nepali festival, she wishes she were in Nepal to enjoy them in their original flavor. But the love of the homeland does not make her hate the hostland. Despite many problems she faces there to get settled, she appreciates the developed and open lifestyle in the USA. She is proud of her husband and children’s achievements. She prefers the American treatment of pets to the Nepali ones. Amid marginalization and discrimination, she is not in the mood of leaving the hostland. She tries to connect both the homeland and hostland as much as possible and wants to recreate her home in the USA.

Even the critics find her memoirs good examples of transnational experiences. Krishna Bajgain claims that Gautam is a multi-dimensional diasporic Nepali writer (7-8). Similarly, Lila Luitel finds the memoirs serious and thoughtful deliberations of the writer’s long-time life-experiences in the hostland. She terms these texts as self-conscious writings (15). In the same line of argument, Arun Khatri opines that *Bigata Ra Baduli* is a sensitive presentation of the writer’s mentality divided between the homeland and hostland (100). Bashu Shrestha also finds that the memoirs are the writer’s conscious presentations of the realities of her life (40). Khimananda Pokhrel becomes more specific to the point and claims that there is a mixture of Nepali and American cultural consciousness in these writings. Prabha Baral reports that she was moved by the description of Gautam’s consciousness-based descriptions of her life and experiences in America (37). All the critics see the use of the writer’s consciousness in the memoirs. But they do not detail out how the consciousness is created and used in the writer’s real-life practices.

Problem, Objectives and Methodology

The reviews show that Gautam’s *Vigata Ra Baduli* is consciousness writing. But they have not specified what type of consciousness it is. As the writer is a Nepali diasporan, the texts describe her diasporic experiences. There is a different making of the diasporic consciousness. DuBois used the term ‘double consciousness’ to refer to the diasporic people’s consciousness

that puts both the homeland and hostland together, but is not satisfied with the both. The homeland is lovely, but it is not with them. Whereas, the hostland is with them, but they find themselves marginalized and discriminated there. They have to live in the hostland pining for the comfort of the homeland. So, the diasporans are always mentally divided. Dickson D. Bruce summarises the crux of DuBoisian double consciousness:

Du Bois used double consciousness to refer to at least three different issues— first the real power of White stereotypes in Black life and thought, … second, the double consciousness created by the particular racism that excluded every Black American from the mainstream of the society, … third the internal conflict in the individual.
(301)

T. Owens Moore specifies it as “the thought process of being a Negro or an American” (752). Bringing this Afro-American analogy to the Nepali American people like Bharti Gautam, double consciousness or the diasporic consciousness can imply the thought process of being a Nepali American/ Nepali or American.

Humaira Riaz and Ruzbeh Babaee explain ‘diasporic consciousness’ as “a specific kind of awareness dominant among the contemporary transnational communities”. They argue that such a consciousness possesses “a dual nature”. It is defined “in relationship to the memories of the homeland” and it focuses on “describing a myriad of experiences showing a particular state of mind and most prominently a sense of identity”(163). At the same time, diasporic consciousness “features a sense of alienation in a new society and culture” (165). It is also argued that double consciousness is related to the “collection of denied historical and ancestral memories” that result from “the lived experiences that are transmitted generationally among oppressed groups” (De Walt 5). Gautam’s memoirs are related to such experiences as well. Thus, this article deals with the role of the writer’s double/diasporic consciousness in the making of these texts. Specifically, this research tries

- to find out how the writer expresses the diasporic distance
- to explore the writer’s marginalized and discriminated position in the hostland, and
- to highlight the way the writer connects her homeland and hostland in her thoughts and actions

Diasporic Distance

Gautam expresses her physical and mental distances from the homeland including its people and culture during her stay in the hostland. She describes how it was impossible for them to make a phone call to Nepal in the beginning years of their stay in the USA. It was the 1980s when telephone calls were pretty expensive in the USA and rarely available in private

residents in Nepal. She used to call her home back in Nepal once a month despite the high telephone bills that sometimes equaled to their house rent. It was because of the geographical distance between the homeland and the hostland. Such a physical distance gave birth to mental (conscious and emotional) distance as well.

The distance grows more when the writer's parents pass away. She thinks: "*ghara nai sakiepachhi ghara pharkine vichaara garbhaimaa haraaune bhayo* [The thought of returning home would vanish in womb when there is no home]" (60). It is an end to her emotional protection. She feels even the time is lengthened: "*bitekaa paancha varsha mero jeevanamaa pachaasa varsha bhaera aaekaa thie* [The last five years came as fifty years in my life]" (78). The distance increases when her uncle also passes away. She is shocked both by death and the instantly uncoverable distance between Nepal and the USA. The physical distance now combines with emotional distance. The number of people she is emotionally attached to is gradually depleting. Nepal is not so close to her now as it used to be when her parents and parental generation existed.

Her love to the homeland does not decrease; but she does not find the same level of care there as it used to be. She likes even the hard scent of cow dung; but it seems she is not equally wanted there. In her return to Dhankuta after her two-decade long stay in the USA, she feels that even in the Dashain there is nobody who speaks to her with love in her birthplace. He writes: "*sabai ustai bhae pani maile bharkhar bhet gareko dhanakutaa ra aanganamaa tersieko naurathaa ustai thienu. Mero laagi yo eka apatyaarilo yathaarththa thiyo.* [Though everything was the same there, the Dhankuta I have just met and the nine-day long Dashain celebration lying on my home yard was not the same. It was an unbelievable reality for me.]" (210). These experiences make her be conscious of her position in the homeland. This land treats her as an outsider. She thinks that she is not needed there as she has already left the birthplace in search of a better place and opportunities.

The distance with her people in the homeland is more acute than the distance with the land itself. She could meet her parents physically only after ten years of her shift to America. After this meeting, she returned to the USA. Then when her father was seriously ill and hospitalized, she was not informed about it on time. She knew it only when she herself called for some other works. Both her parents and she herself used to be so hurried to meet each other that once her father used a satire on her saying that they were the tourists to Nepal so that they could visit many places before they visit the parents in Dhankuta. She is so emotional in their separation that she feels as if her soul is left back in Nepal. Back in the USA, she is frightened each time she calls back home. She thinks that there must be some serious problem in the family; otherwise, they would pick the phone up very soon.

The geographical and temporal distance created a gap between the writer and her relatives and friends back in Nepal. Once when the writer meets her childhood friend Laxmi at Dhankuta after more than three decades, she consciously thinks: “*chaara dashakasamma bheta nabhaekee saatheesanga bheta garna maile chaara dashakanai pharkinu parne hunthyo* [I had to go four decades back to meet my friend who was not met for four decades.]” (215). When she finds her uncle unusually old in her meeting with him after decades, she thinks:

Varshaipichchhe kamasekama dashaimaa maatrai bhet hune gareko bhae pani jhaskine kisimako parivartanako aabhaasa hune thienaa holaa. Pheri dekhna paainchha ki paaidaina waa pheri dekhna paaie pani kuna rupamaa paaine ho bhanne anishchhitataale pani poldainathyo holaa. [If I could visit my home at every Dashain, I would not have to experience the startling change in my seniors. I would not have to worry about the uncertainty of the next meeting or worry about the form of next meeting]. (113)

She feels that whenever the physical distance increases, the relatives come closer in the heart and mind. This affinity becomes more acute when the relatives pass away. Though she feels helpless with the news of her parents’ demise, she feels they have travelled all the way from Nepal to the USA and have taken their permanent residence in her heart and mind. She is conscious of this dichotomy of loss and gain.

The dichotomy of loss and gain is also found in the case of cultural distancing and regaining it in a different form. Gautam is conscious of the food, clothes, religion and festivals. She pines for the Nepali food, but consoles herself taking the American ones. She thinks: “*ghara chhodepachhi pharseekaa paatakaa daanthako achhar kahilyai khaana pani paaieko chhaina* [After I left home, I have never got a chance to relish the pickle made up of pumpkin leaves and peduncle]” (143). Here, home refers to Nepal though she has her own home in the USA. The taste of organic Nepali pickle is what she misses there. But she knows that it is not possible to get it. So, she eats whatever is found and waits for her visit to Nepal to enjoy the Nepali dishes.

The writer works with the Nepali cultural consciousness in the hostland. But she finds that her children have already learned and are used to with the western lifestyle. She accepts it as the reality of their life. For example, when she wants to help her son to pack his luggage the day before he is about to shift to the university hostel, he responds: “*aba ma sabai milaauchhu, tapaaiharoo gae hunchha. Sabai tyasai chhodidinoo, ma pachhi aaphai garchhu* [Now, I will arrange all these; you may leave them there. I myself will do it later]” (232). As they are Nepali parents, the writer and her husband want to make sure everything is okay with the son. But, the son, with the American consciousness, wants to be self-dependent. He has learned that one should do one’s work on one’s own. This is the responsibility that accompanies freedom in life.

The writer, then, accepts this American spirit of life: “*swatantrataako pahilo ghatko piuna usalaaee hataara bhaeko holaa* [He may be hurried to drink the first sip of freedom]” (232). Then she thinks that her children have nearly forgotten the close connection among family members that the Nepali culture promotes. She is divided between the feeling of achievement and loss at the same time. She is satisfied with the children’s achievement of being able to follow the American life; but at the same time, she finds that her family is gradually losing the Nepali culture.

Gautam finds that the distance is ever increasing in her life. It is not only the distance between her diasporic life and the life back in her homeland, but also the distance among different racial groups in the USA is ever growing. She consciously feels it after the twin tower attack in 2001. The White community began to look at the non-Whites, especially the Asian and the Muslim with suspicion. The writer reports the situation:

chhaalaako rangako vividhataa ani pujine devataako vividhataakaa aadhaaramaa khichieko raastriya ra araastriyako saandha pharaakina thaalyo. Sanglina nasakne garee amerikee aakaasha dhamiliyo [The border between the nationals and the non-nationals drawn on the basis of the diversity of the skin colour and the gods worshipped began to broaden. The American sky was clouded never to be clean]. (253)

The suddenly appeared distance between the Nepali community as an Asian one and the mainstream American community pinches the writer more than the distance she has realized between her homeland and hostland. Now, she is compelled to realize that though she is an American for about two decades, she is not accepted as the American. It raises a serious question on her identity. Who she is! How her family can adjust there in such a situation! This makes her more conscious about her position as an outsider in the hostland.

Marginalization and Discrimination

Marginalization and consequent discrimination in the hostland are major experiences of the diasporans. It is directly connected with their security and self-respect. Danielle D. Dickens argues that “experiences with discrimination or being rejected due to one’s identities can threaten one’s sense of self-efficacy” (29). As a result, an individual grows conscious of their existential condition. Here starts the diasporic consciousness. The diasporans come to realize that “at the level of everyday social practice cultural differences are persistently racialized, classed and gendered” (Clifford 313). Mohan Kumar Gautam points out that marginalization and discrimination threaten the ‘self’ and so an individual grows conscious of the need of collective fight against discrimination” (26). Dickens also has similar findings: “racism involves the lack of power and the exclusion or discrimination against an individual due to their

membership in an underrepresented racial group” (29). The social practices of exclusion impacts on the diasporans’ feelings as well.

Gautam has undergone experiences of marginalization and consequent discrimination. She belongs to the Nepali American community that contains a very small number amid the large American population. They do not enjoy all the facilities in the society in par with the mainstream. In everyday life practices they undergo the experiences of discrimination. The writer mentions how acute it grew after the terrorist attack on the twin tower. She finds even her close friends begin to look at the writer with certain suspicion. She gradually realizes her position in that society. So, she takes it as a normal practice in the hostland when her son comes home with a complaint that his classmate in the primary school told him to go back to his own country. She is thoughtful about the situation: “*dasha varshaaghi amerikaamaanai janmieko mero chhoraale pani yo aparaadhako alikati dosha boknuparyo* [My son, who was born in the America ten years ago, also had to bear some amount of accusation of the crime]” (252). Her son is an Asian and so has some similarity with the terrorists in the American eye.

The writer’s son’s experience of being a pure American is threatened with this incident. She concludes that

Usakaa saathee haroole dekhekaa a-amerikana ra uneeharoo amerikana beechako duee pustaa itihaasabaata ekai chhinamaa bilaayo. Mero chhoro ra ujastaa thupraiko abodhataako pani yasai dinadekhi apaharana bhayo. Kalilo hridayamaa umrieko aasthaako biruwaa pani kalilaimaa sukna thaalyo [The history of two generations that his friends saw as non-American and they themselves as American elapsed in a short while. The innocence of my son and many children like him was abducted from the same day. The plant of faith grown in a delicate mind began to dry soon.]” (253)

Even her primary school going son realized the gap between the Nepali and the American people. From that day, her son also acquired the double consciousness of being and not being an American. The incident emotionally shocked her: “*janmaghara uhilyai chhodisakera yasai mulukalaaee ghara agaalna pugekaa haamee thuprai gharako na ghaatako anubhava garna baadhyaa bhayau* [Many of us who left our homeland years ago and started to embrace this country as our home were compelled to feel stranded]” (253). The writer feels that American can never be her real home. And even Nepal is not their real home. It is how the feeling of homelessness grows in the diasporans.

Diasporans feel marginalized and discriminated even in their homeland. The people in the homeland take them to be the outsiders who are no longer the members of their immediate community. The writer is treated as guest even in her own home back in Nepal. When her daughter questions about the writer’s position in the family in relation to her brother, she feels

that “*bhaai gharapatee ani ma paahunaa. Bhaai ta shraddhako kartaa ani ma chelibeti* [Brother is the host and I am the guest. Brother is the organizer of the shraddha, and I am his sister]” (179). This feeling of outsider-ness is resulted from her America learnt consciousness. It is her daughter who reminds the writer to realize the position in the society. As a Nepal grown woman, she would not think and feel this way. Her position made not only herself but also her daughter feel sad; and both of them realized their position: “*laingika vibhedako parkhaala ajhai dhalna sakena tara mero mana eka pataka pheri tukriyo ... bagna nasakekaa aansu usakaa [chhoreekaa] aankhaako dilaimaa adie* [The wall of gender discrimination could not crumble yet, but my heart split once again ... the tears that could not flow were seen at the edge of her [daughter’s] eyes]” (179). Their consciousness made them feel so.

The writer’s America grown daughter asks her to involve in the parents’ *shraddha* [death anniversary] ritual. But the writer’s American and Nepali cultural consciousness come into conflict. The Nepali culture has taught her that it is only the son who has the right to conduct the *shraddha* on the occasion of each death anniversary of the parents. But the consciousness of gender equality they have learnt and practiced in the USA incites her to act out gender equality in practice. Her consciousness, and consequently her personality too, is split. But the daughter, who has purely American consciousness, insists the writer on taking part in the ritual. The daughter has no idea of Nepali cultural mores. For her, equality between the brother and sister is more important than the traditional practices. So, the presence of the daughter further complicates the situation.

The writer feels that there is some miscalculation in the Nepali cultural practices in terms of gender equality. For her, now, the Nepali tradition is “*thulo shareeramaa lagaaeko saanguro kapadaa jasto* [like a small size dress put on a big body]” (171). She feels the American outlook to life is wider and more advanced than the Nepali outlook to life and social practices. But at the same time, the writer feels okay with the Nepali culture as it is what she is habituated with. Within a mini second the writer again pines for a Christian style graveyard where she could be close to her parents’ dead body (soil). But the Nepali culture of burning the dead body does not give way for such opportunities. Such pining for both cultural practices shows her split self or the double consciousness.

In such a situation diasporans find themselves split or divided between the homeland and hostland cultures. Such a divided self presents their consciousness of the both societies. Du Bois terms such condition as ‘double consciousness’. Luitel claims that the memoirs sensitively present the writer’s divided mentality that gives the entire book the basic quality of a diasporic creation (15). Such people who carry on the hybrid/double consciousness or the divided self fully belong to none of the cultures and societies. Or put the other way round, when they feel

that they do not completely belong to any of the cultures and societies, they develop the double consciousness that ultimately divides their self.

The writer here loves both the lands. When she returns Nepal spending many years in the USA, she is elated to see the high Himals. Her emotion is attached with them: “*jati paraai thaane pani jati samaya taadhiapani tinai pahaada, tyahaa akaash kati parichit laageko* [However strangers I thought of them and how long I was away from them, these hills, the same sky is so much known to me]” (66). She feels romantic and inquisitive once the plane she is in enters into the Nepali sky. She feels “*pradushita bhae pani mitho laagne haawaa* [though polluted, the air tastes sweet]” (70). The writer’s emotional attachment with the Nepali geography, air and life style does not let her forget the homeland.

In the same way, the writer loves the systems in the hostland. She takes the USA as the land of freedom and opportunities. The social management and public awareness are what she loves the most. She likes the way every citizen there works like a policeman. If they suspect something foul, they call the police and inform about the situation. Law is above a person in the America. She reports about the incidents when the public takes note of any problem with the children. The people who happen to hit other’s vehicles do not try to escape the scene. They help each other not only to be safe from the accident, but also in the total process of getting the insurance amount. In the accident site, the police arrive with ambulance and tow truck for rescue and help. The love of America and the love of Nepal reside together in her mind; and she has the double consciousness: both the Nepali and the American ways of thinking.

Despite such ambivalence, she consoles herself about the life she is able to live in the hostland. She takes her transnational existence as the eliminator of the borders created in the name of geography, religion, cultural practices, languages and social mores. She comments upon the marriage of her first son: “*maanava shabhyataako sabai vishamataa yahaa aaera galata pramaanita bhaeko thiyo* [All inequalities of human civilization have been proved wrong once they have arrived here]” (345). She accepts her son marrying a Swedish girl as the connection of two human souls crossing all walls of division and discriminations. She reports that she was elated in such a unison. This incident indicates the ultimate hope of the diasporans. Their experiences of marginalization and discrimination help them think beyond the border and rise to the level of pure human beings who can see the world of humans, not that of nationals and sects of any type.

Connecting Homeland and Hostland

The diasporans “make a home away from home” (Clifford 302). Such a home making “involves dwelling, maintaining communities, [and] having collective homes” (308) in the hostland. Diasporic home making is an attempt of recreating the home left back. It is also an

attempt to decrease diasporic distance that causes nostalgia as “they are upset mentally and strive to remember and locate themselves in a nostalgic past” (Sujaritha 16). “Through nostalgia they try to escape from the reality of life in the settled land”. It also gives rise to “a sense of alienation” (19). Home making in the diaspora helps them maintain a continuous connection with the homeland.

Gautam’s memoirs show her conscious connection with the homeland in whatever she does and thinks in her new home. During the life of her parents, she was conscious of her roots back home in Dhankuta. She reports that every day, even in most of her dreams, she used to be emotionally with her parents. She used to remember how her father lived and loved her; how her mother’s care and food used to be her favourite back in Nepal. The first ten years that she could not physically meet her parents made the toughest time in her life. She used to spend more money in the telephone calls than they spent in the house rent in the USA. Such a desire to meet the parents results from the love and connection with the root of the diasporans.

Even when she visits Nepal, her first location to visit used to be her parents’ home in Dhankuta. Once when she planned to visit Pokhara before going to Dhankuta, her father’s satire that she has turned into a tourist in Nepal made her cancel the Pokhara tour and directly visit her parents. Such a connection between homeland and hostland is not only maintained by the diasporans, but it is also forced maintained by the family members and relatives left back in the homeland.

The writer uses every opportunity to visit Nepal. She describes two such opportunities. The first was when her son needed to visit a foreign land as a project of his university course, she came to Nepal with him. The second was the similar project of her daughter. Her daughter wanted to study her family connection and physically meet as many relatives as possible in Nepal. So, she came to Nepal. She uses such an opportunity not only to meet her people back in Nepal, but also to expose her children to their root culture and tradition so that they would develop some affinity with the homeland. So, they observe as many rituals and festivals as possible. These incidents show that not only the writer, the first generation migrant, wants to be connected with the homeland; but even her children, the second generation, also has a desire to be connected with the root. Such the consciousness to connect with the homeland is a part of diasporic consciousness.

But the first and the second generations possess different consciousness related to culture. The writer accepts that their children feel more comfortable in the American style life than the writer’s couple feel about the same. The way the two generations think is also different. It is seen in many instances of the writer’s family discussions. One representative example can be their different views on naming a pet. The children want to name the pet after any of the Hindu gods. It is out of respect to the Hindu gods and the children’s desire to stay

connected with their root culture. But the way they take the position of the dog in the family exhibits their different cultural consciousness.

The children think if a human child is named after the name of the god, it is a good practice to name a pet after the name of a god. Because a pet has (should have) the respect equal to that of any other member of the family. But the writer and her husband do not agree with this approach to look at the dog. For them, it is a mere animal that can never be treated as a family member. The writer evaluates their situation: “*chhoraachhoree ra mero maanyataale aarambhamai haameelaaee duee dhribamaa baadyo* [From the very beginning, the children’s and my beliefs divided us into two poles]” (314). The role of the difference between Nepali and American culture regarding pets has caused this difference.

The writer describes how the pets are treated in Nepal and the USA. She remembers that in Nepal the dogs have to stay outside the house waiting for their master to give a small lump of food after they finish their meal. The masters never touch them with lovely hands, instead the pets get the master’s fierce kicks. But in the USA, the pets have special food and they deserve the master’s lap. She is amazed to see the fortune of the newly bought puppy sitting on her son’s lap [“*chhoraako kaakhamaa baseko khairo chhauroko bhaagya dekhera ma aanphai stabdha hunchhu*”] (316). She specifies the difference between her and her children’s relation with the dog: “*Je meraalaagi santaanajastai bhae pani u mero chhoraachooree thienā . Je kukura bhaepani chhoraachhoreekaa laagi u aaphnai saano bhaai thiyo* [Though Jey was like my children, it was not my real children. Though Jey was a dog, for my children it was like their own junior brother]” (322). These differences are the results of their different type of cultural consciousness.

The writer expresses her differential concern even in the way the marriages are arranged in the East and the West. Unlike the months-long preparation of children’s marriage in Nepal, she does not have any significant role preparing for her children’s marriage in the USA and Sweden where her children got married. Her daughter, in association with her would be husband, prepared everything for their marriage. So did her son and his girlfriend in Sweden. She feels that her role in the children’s life is shrunk. She comments on the marriage: “*bihe hoina bihe garee kheleko naatakajastai* [not a marriage, but just like a drama on marriage]” (329). She feels: “*saatheeko chhoraako bihemaa pugekobhandaa badhee anubhuti huna sakena* [I could not feel more than attending a friend’s son’s marriage]” (331). But instantly, she accepts all these as the conditions different from that of her homeland. At the same time, her son’s getting married in Hindu style in a Christian country makes her feel proud of the cultural connection and respect. With this, she finds the homeland and hostland are always connected in the life of the diasporans.

Conclusion

Bharati Gautam gives expressions to her diasporic consciousness through her memoirs collected in *Bigata ra Baduli [Past and Hiccups]*. Her consciousness is the result of her experiences as an American Nepali diasporan. She has to be away from her homeland, family, relatives, culture and language. When she strives to live in a new social environment, she undergoes the experiences of marginalization, discrimination, alienation and loss of the past along with the gain of new lifestyle. These experiences make her long for the lost past and console herself with the new achievements in the personal and family levels. As a result, she loves both the homeland and hostland, pines for the homeland culture and adjusts with the hostland one, preserves the homeland language in her mind and uses the hostland language in everyday life practice, and finds her belonging to both places or to no place at all. Such doubleness or the half of the both is termed as diasporic double consciousness or the split self. The memoirs have shown Gautam's position the same. Symbolically, this double-ness or the split self is the feature of Nepali diasporic consciousness.

Works Cited

- Bajgain, Krishna. Prakashkiya [Publisher's Note]. Gautam, Bharati, pp. 7-8.
- Baral, Prabha. "Smritiko Premila Dharohar: *Vigata ra Baduli*." ["Lovely Heritage of Memory: *Past and Hiccups.*"], *Banita*, vol. 60, pp. 37-39.
- Bruce, Dickson D. Jr. "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Idea of Double Consciousness." *American Literature*, June 1992, vol. 64, no. 2, Jun. 1992, pp. 299-309.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2927837>
- Clifford, James. "Diasporas." *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 3, Aug. 1994, pp. 302-338.
[JSTOR http://links.jstor.org/sici?&sici=0886-7356](http://links.jstor.org/sici?&sici=0886-7356)
- De Walt, Patrick S. "Discourse on African American/Black Identity: Engaging the Expanded Nigrescence Theory with a Diasporic Consciousness." *Springer Plus*, vol. 2, issue 233, 2013, pp. 1-10. <http://www.springerplus.com/content/2/1/233>
- Dickens, Danielle D. "Double Consciousness: The Negotiation of the Intersectionality of Identities Among Academically Successful Black Women Department of Psychology." PhD Dissertation, Colorado State University, Summer 2014.
- DuBois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Penguin, 1989.
- Gautam, Bharati. *Vigata ra Baduli [Past and Hiccups]*. Samakalin Literary Academy, 2020.
- Gautam, Mohan Kumar. "Indian Diaspora: Ethnicity and Diasporic Identity." *CARIM-India Research Report* 2013/29, <http://www.india-eu-migration.eu/>

-
- Itzigsohn, José and Karida Brown. “Sociology and the Theory of Double Consciousness: W. E. B. Du Bois’s Phenomenology of Racialized Subjectivity.” *Du Bois Review*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2015, pp. 231–248. doi:10.1017/S1742058X15000107
- Khatri, Arun. “*Vigata ra Baduli Adhyayan Gardaa.*”[“Studying *Past and Hiccups.*”]*Rachana*, issue 169, March 2021, pp. 100-101.
- Luitel, Lila. “*Vigatako Baaduli Laagdaa.*” [Experiencing Hiccups of the Past.”] Gautam, Bharati, pp. 9-16.
- Moore, T. Owens. “A Fanonian Perspective on Double Consciousness.” *Journal of Black Studies*, Jul. 2005, vol. 35, no. 6, July 2005, pp. 751-762.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40034879>
- Pokhrel, Khimananda. “*Vigata ra Baaduliko Mohamaa Phaseki Bharati Gautam.*” [Bharati Gautam: Involved in the Love of Past and Hiccups.”] email, 29 May 2021.
- Shrestha, Basu. “*Vigata ra Badulima Dubulki Lagaauda.*”[“Delving into *Past and Hiccups.*”]*Shivapuri Sandesh*, vol. 27, issue no. 91, Feb-April 2021, pp. 36-40.
- Sujaritha, S. “Transformation of Diaspora Studies: From Discrimination to Identity Formation.” *Lapis Lazuli*, vol. 4, no. 2, Autumn 2014, pp. 16-28.
- Yu, Dan Smyer. “The Logic of Diasporic Selfhood.” *MMG Working Paper 13-15, 2013*, pp. 1-22. www.mmg.mpg.de/workingpapers