

CHAPTER TWO
NEGOTIATING DISPLACEMENT: BETWEEN
SETTLEMENT AND CULTURAL MEMORY

At beginning of the twenty-first century we identify four existing forms of displacement as the lived experience of the immigrant, the refugee, the exile, the expatriate, and the migrant: physical/spatial displacement, cultural displacement, psychological/affective displacement, and intellectual displacement. Each form of displacement is not exclusive. (Anderson and Lee 11)

Displacement is...linked to the construction of new identities and new cultural or ethnic communities within the new nation-state in which the group has resettled. In...the creation of the new identity or a new community, what do displaced members maintain, reject, replace, or reinvent to create a new whole? (Ong qtd in Anderson and Lee 12)

The concept of transnationalism describes the practice among immigrants of establishing and maintaining kinship, economic, cultural, and political networks across national boundaries, and the creation of multiple sites of “home”. (Schiller, et al. Anderson and Lee 9)

The aim of this chapter is to examine the problems of displacement—both geographical and cultural—which migrants have to face in the new country in Caribbean American fiction. While displacement of home and all things familiar follow migration to a new place, the cultural differences of language, customs and beliefs often pose serious challenges for the migrant trying to settle down and make a new beginning. The receptiveness amongst people of the host country towards the migrants is often determined by degrees of similarity and difference in their cultures. It in turn contributes to intellectual and affective displacement or problems surrounding both. It will try to examine how several factors of settlement and adjustment continue to trouble the life of the migrant in the new land, America. Along with this, it will focus on the troubles faced by people of Caribbean origin as they look for a means of income and place of residence in an America often unheeding or even hostile to their predicament.

Caribbean American fiction, especially the work of woman writers, deals with the lives of the migrants from the Caribbean and the dilemmas they face in America. The works of Paule Marshall, Edwidge Danticat, Iris Gomez and Angie Cruz focus on issues and stories of migration. If one talks of individual migrant, the other talks of group or the whole family migrating. Not only the geographical shift but culture too is a determinant in

this regard. The novelists try to show how culture determines space in the migrant. Caribbean American writing is rooted in the culture of the Caribbean islands even as it shows signs of American influence.

As pointed out by Anderson, displacement following migration to a new country is experienced by the migrants in physical/spatial, cultural, psychological and intellectual terms. Loss of home leads to other kinds of loss as the migrants look for new spaces in the host land. The culture shock of language differences, customs and social values, available occupations and resources open up a plethora of dilemmas and problems for the migrants. While the primary needs of residential place and work take precedence over others, the feeling of dislocation persists for quite some time.

Displacement forces the individual to recognize the present along with the ties to the past. As pointed out by Deek, memory plays a key role in the sense of displacement:

Displacement is always transformed...through memory. For memory is a kind of a resurrection from the past, an anthology of snapshots whose arbitrariness has a particular sensation about remembering. Between the original experience and the hallowed remembrance of it, fragments of existence are withdrawn from the time of the past. (*Writing Displacement* 45)

It follows that selective acts of remembering and construction of memories which are arbitrary can lead to individuals neglecting vital parts which would have created a different picture. This may contribute to idealized pictures of the past which influence a sense of dislocation in the unsettled present. Deek further points out that:

Because displacement is characteristically about temporariness, it also demands improvisation on everyday's new beginnings. Favoring flexibility over stability, multiplicity over singularity, displacement becomes a state of mind that neither places or passports, nor returns or homelands can ever contain. The status of the displaced is always complicated. (*Writing Displacement* 28)

Displacement may lead to new beginnings and more flexibility once the change is accepted. Sometimes displacement opens up new options or possibilities for the migrant, almost challenging him or her to look beyond the familiar or the common. It encourages

the individual or family to be more receptive and accommodating, not just in terms of jobs and facilities but also in terms of acculturation.

This chapter tries to examine the following hypotheses:

- that displacement leads to a loss of identity/status
- that displacement leads to psychological problems for the migrants
- that displacement affects different age groups differently
- that displacement leads to a sense of in-betweenness
- that displacement is triggered by idealized memories

In this chapter, interrogations of home and space, of cultural and emotional displacement are studied with reference to Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), Edwidge Danticat's *Behind the Mountain* (2002), Iris Gomez's *Try to Remember* (2010) and Angie Cruz's *Dominicana* (2019). Their characters, especially the women portray a strong sense of displacement. In the narratives of these writers the sense of an 'elsewhere' remains for the migrant to look out for. As pointed out by Boyce Davies, this space is expected to operate "outside of the logic of oppression and domination. It poses itself as... 'an elsewhere' that is fundamentally at the heart of Afro-Diaspora creativity" (*Caribbean Spaces* 77-78). Neither belonging to any state and always experiencing the migrant status is what the said works focus on. The characters yearn for a home, a space which neither their own land nor America can offer, in this case the 'elsewhere' of Boyce Davies' contention. To some extent it exists "practically and conceptually" (*Caribbean Spaces* 78). This third space which they desire till the end cannot be turned into reality. The social, economic, political, racial, cultural and geographic life of this world remains beyond them. Their life as marginalised migrants remains the only possible reality till the end. Also, the ambivalence regarding the concept of 'home' does not allow them to live a carefree life.

The conflict between 'home' and 'residence' is never resolved in their lives. Their oppression in their homeland, is followed by other practical problems of settlement in America. The migration narratives in the fiction of Paule Marshall, Edwidge Danticat, Iris Gomez and Angie Cruz will be examined to address these issues. The characters' uncertain subjectivity and experiences in both the countries bring out the problems of displacement (both physical and cultural) and adjustment in the new place. Though several concerns

regarding basic requirements in the new place have to be addressed, leading the migrants to draw comparisons with what they left behind, the writers hint at the complicated dynamics regarding home and what they left behind and also why they had to or chose to migrate.

All these novelists use major women/female characters in their fiction to articulate their problems. This opens up a new discourse of the women examining their experiences through their own modes of viewing. They not only have to negotiate pressures of colonialism, poverty and patriarchy as they recall their experiences in the Caribbean, they also have to face fresh rounds of racism and sexism in the U.S.A. It is also observed through the above-mentioned texts that the character(s) reason behind their migration is much more than a mere search for upward mobility. In most cases it is determined by the political or economic or educational need to shift to a new land.

Abandoning home and construction of a new home in a new space poses enough challenges for the migrants. Paule Marshall's Selina Boyce, Edwidge Danticat's Celiane, Gomez's Gabriela, Cruz's Ana Cancion and other characters explicitly voice such struggle in their new settlement. To give themselves a new life they migrate to America, and are often left wondering if America is able to give them what they look for, and if not, then is it America's failure or the migrants' inability to cope up with the new space. This chapter aims to look into these ambiguous issues as presented in the novels mentioned above.

1

Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, is about a group of Barbadian immigrants who migrated to Brooklyn, New York and settle in one of the brownstone apartments lined in a row around 1939. The novel presents a family named the Boyce, amongst a group of Barbadian/Caribbean immigrants in America of that time. Also, Paule Marshall gives special attention to the character of Selina Boyce, one of the daughters of the immigrant couple, Deighton Boyce and Silla Boyce and how she emerges to create a separate space for herself, that is neither Caribbean nor American, at the end of the story.

The very description of the brownstone apartments draws attention to the change in space from the Caribbean fields to the urban spaces of Brooklyn, New York. They

were a line of same red-brown coloured houses in an unbroken line down the long Brooklyn Street:

[A]ll draped in ivy as though mourning. Their sombre facades, indifferent to the summer's heat and passion, faced a park while their backs reared dark against the sky....Yet they all shared the same brown monotony. All seemed doomed by the confusion in their design. (*Brown Girl* 7-8)

These houses were built by the Dutch-English and Scotch-Irish and for a long time the Whites resided there. But from 1939 onwards when all the Whites moved away, the West Indians started moving in. Now no longer like the earlier days, the brownstones still stood for better living spaces though some had fallen into disrepair:

The West Indians, especially the Barbadians who had never owned anything perhaps but a few acres in a poor land, loved the houses...as they had the land on their obscure islands. (8)

But to Selina the house was warm and alive in its own way. She tried to feel the house and imagine the way the earlier resident lived there.

The residents, mainly the women had to face some heckling from White children who witnessed the Black migrants occupying houses once owned by the Whites. "Sometimes the white...laughed at their blackness and shouted 'nigger,' but the Barbadian women sucked their teeth, dismissing them" (14). These women were determined to work their way up the social ladder and were focused on "the 'few raw- mout pennies' at the end of the day which would eventually 'buy house'" (ibid). Amongst them some have work under some steady madams and some had to wait on the corners with their aprons and working shoes on. They even brought with them thrown away clothes from the Jews which Silla gives Selina to wear. Selina hates wearing them thinking about the child to whom they might have belonged.

Selina's father Deighton Boyce has a totally different outlook. He loves Barbados and wants to go back to his place. He says, "Barbados is poor-poor but sweet enough. That's why I going back" (ibid). He plans to earn some decent money in America and return with that to his own land and with that he plans to have a house like the whites, "A

house to end all house!” (15). The Brownstone seems to him more a source of trouble than profit. The house and its interiors “seemed a strange unfeeling world which continually challenged him to deal with it, to impose himself somehow on its whiteness” (23), while Silla, his wife seemed to enjoy it. This difference in accepting the new American standards later resulted in a big gap between the husband and wife. It was also further fuelled when Silla decides for a permanent settlement in America and Deighton thinks of the opposite, “His wife stood easily amid the whiteness, at the sink, in the relaxed, unself-conscious pose of someone alone” (23). Also, when the news of a sudden fortune fell on Deighton, a land measuring almost two acres left by his sister in Barbados, stretched the already developing gap between the couple. Deighton delighted at the news, decides to go back to Barbados and get himself settled there with his family. Whereas, Silla considers it a good asset, which could be sold and “the money would be the down payment on this house” which she wanted to buy (31).

Even one Seifert Yearwood tried to convince Deighton Boyce to think of residing permanently in New York:

But, Boyce [y]ou might not get the chance again to own such a swell house with all those good furnitures the white people left, [r]emember...when we first came here in 1920 we was all living in those cold-water dumps in South Brooklyn...“The white people thought they was gon keep us there but they din know what a Bajan does give. We here now and when they run we gon be right behind them.” (36-37)

Despite his friend’s striking the note of reality to Deighton and the utter harsh reality they had undergone, he was not convinced about staying back in New York. Rather than running after the pleasures of America and being a part of it, or keeping low always in front of the Whites, Deighton decides to go back. Though it was he himself who once decided to earn a living in America with his family and leave Barbados forever, after facing the harsh realities of New York he thinks of returning.

In contrast, Silla has her reasons for not wanting her family to return to Barbados. In one instance of the novel, an infuriated Silla tells her daughter, Selina the reason as to why she chooses America over Barbados: “I was in the Third Class. You know what that is?” She goes on to explain as she recalls “the sun on her back and the whip cutting her legs” while she worked as a child (42):

The Third Class is a set of little children picking grass in a cane field from the time God sun rise in his heaven till it set. With some woman called a Driver to ash yuh tail in licks if yuh dare look up. Yes, working harder than a man at the age of ten..." (ibid)

Silla clearly has reasons for refusing to go back to Barbados to that life of hardship. She does not want her daughters to face the same. To her, a repetition of the old life would ruin her family's future.

Despite her mother's angry recollection of the forced child labour she endured, the daughter has her own ideas:

It seemed to Selina that her father carried those gay days in his irresponsible smile, while the mother's formidable aspect was the culmination of all that she had suffered. This was no more than an impression, quickly lost in the haze of impressions that was her mind at ten. But it was there, fixed forever. (43)

Selina is caught up between her parents' opposing views. Silla wants to sell the piece of land and with that money settle permanently in New York, whereas Deighton wishes to keep his land and return to Barbados. Silla always wants to rise above her Black status. Though she cannot overcome her racial status, she tries every means possible to level herself to some extent with the Whites. Also, Silla tries to convince her daughter and her friends not to be called an ignorant Black woman by any means. Selina realizes the power of her mother's words as she stands up to voice the suffering of a community at the hands of unscrupulous plantation managers.

Silla tells her friend Iris about Barbados:

"Iris, you know what it is to work hard and still never make a head-way? That's Bimshire. One crop. People having to work for next skin to nothing. The white people treating we like slaves still and we taking it. The rum shop and the church join together to keep we pacify and in ignorance. That's Barbados." (60)

She cannot get over the poverty and suffering the people have to put up with:

“It’s a terrible thing to know that you gon be poor all yuh life, no matter how hard you work. You does stop trying after a time. People does see you so and call you lazy. But it ain laziness. It just that you does give up. You does kind of die inside...” (ibid)

Her words are potent enough to fill her daughter’s imagination as Selina feels the power behind them like “living things” (ibid). Silla tries everything possible to live up to the level of the Whites. She also tries to convince her daughter do the same. Fully convinced in her own way, Silla tries to instill every bit of Americanism in her daughter. She wants Selina to emulate her ways of life unlike Deighton’s. Barbados to her does not count anymore.

She tells Selina that:

“I tell yuh, to make your way in this world you got to dirty more than yuh hands sometime ...” She paused, reflecting, “[T]his is the machine age and it’s the God truth. You got to learn to run these machine to live. But some these Bajan here still don understand that... Suggie and yuh father and them so that still ain got a penny to their name...” (87)

She wants Selina to understand the reality of life in America and in Barbados and also how she should cope with the present circumstances.

Deighton and Silla have their own ways of returning and not returning to Barbados and also acceptance and denial of American standards and way of life. Their memories of their erstwhile homeland differ and Silla cannot dismiss the physical pressures and abuse she had to experience as a child in Barbados. Despite the setbacks and problems faced in Brooklyn, Silla is clear about not returning to Barbados to tackle new problems. Her husband’s desertion makes her more resilient as she struggles to fend for herself and her daughter in New York. She also takes it upon herself to encourage and empower fellow Caribbean American women into believing in their own culture and way of life. While the husband decides to break loose and search for a different spacethat of a religious society, all members of the family are seen negotiating displacement intheir individual ways. Silla manages to hang on to her way of life with the help of a jobat a defence factory but Selina who has so far been caught between the views of her warring parents, decides to look for a space for herself. She realizes that she has to move out of her mother’s

house and her range if she is to discover herself. In the end her mother accepts that it would be hard for two strong willed women to be together and allows her to go. For Selina, a way out of the pressures of displacement and lack of stability was to strike out on an unknown course.

2

Edwidge Danticat's *Behind the Mountains* is another story of an immigrant to America. Written in the form of a diary, here Danticat characterizes her female immigrant Celiane Esperance and her family from Beau Jour, Haiti to Brooklyn, New York. The novel narrates the story of Celiane along with her mother and brother migrating to New York to stay away from the political turmoil that was going on in Haiti and get united with their father, Victor in New York.

It also speaks of the innocent Celiane's mind, how she longs to go back to Haiti and finds it difficult to adjust to the new life in New York. Also, the novel shows how Celiane's brother, Moy falls prey to American ways of life and the difficulties faced by her parent's to earn a living.

Celiane's father was the first one amongst the four of them to migrate first to New York and then after a bit of settlement he called for them. It was during his absence that Celiane, her mother who is referred to in the text as 'Manman' and Moy had to suffer a lot. If on one side there was the political turmoil going on due to the upcoming election on the other side, people use to tease, especially Moy as to why he is required to work in the fields when his father is working in the States. With these difficulties they migrated to New York from Haiti. But New York never appeased them.

Apart from these, there is Celiane who pours out beautifully in her diary her heart and sentiments attached to the present situation of theirs and her feelings for her father. She tries to imagine in her own little ways her father's work and life in New York:

Even though Papa send us pictures regularly, it is hard to imagine what he looks like in his everyday life, in the place where he works, in the house where he lives. I am even more worried now that I will not know what to say to Papa when I see him again. (*Behind* 16)

The young Celiane yearns for her father. Her father wanted a safe place for them because during those days Haiti too was not free from any natural or political uprisings.

But for little Celiane it was difficult to bear the separation from her father:

I keep thinking about Papa. When he was here... after working in the fields, he would stand in the yard with Moy and me... Papa finally left for New York because he was worried that one year things would become too difficult to bear: A cyclone or hurricane would hit, or the crops would fail and we would have nothing at all. (20)

She cherishes the moments she spent with her father when he was home. Also, she understood that he was away only to create a safe place for them in New York, if situation turns worse in Haiti. But with time and age, Celiane starts loving Port-au-Prince. She confesses in her diary, "I am beginning to like Port-au-Prince" (30).

On the other hand, Tante Rose, who is an aunt to Celiane and a nurse, lives in the city, is quite opposite to Celiane's father:

Unlike Papa, Tante Rose is not interested in leaving Haiti. She has her work, which she likes very much, and she enjoys her house, which she had built piece by piece, room by room over many years. (29)

Every migrated character has a story of his or her migration. Not everybody wants to migrate to New York. In her case she migrated from the village, Beau Jour to the Port-au-Prince city. Need and desire to excel and some peace, though not guaranteed results in place change sometimes. If she opted for the city in Haiti, Victor opted for New York.

To mention, the bomb blast episode prior to the election where Celiane and her mother almost lost their lives on their return journey from Tante Rose left a deep mark in her life. She could never erase this fiery memory from her mind. At one part she says that:

"I wish the people who throw the bombs at the buses could see that not only do they hurt the bodies of people like Maman and me, they wound our souls, too." (50)

This episode created fear in the mind of little Celiane. The troubled political condition in

Haiti is may be one of the reasons why Victor wanted to take them to New York. Though Haiti was very close to Celiane's heart, yet such incidents affects and scares her.

Separation and distance affected Celiane a lot. The fact of being away from her father for five long years and now leaving her aunt Tante Rose and Granme Melina and Granpe Nozial equally outweighs her grief as a young girl. Life seemed different to her in her village in Beau Jour, in the city of Port-au-Prince and then in America. Overcome with different emotions and experiences, Celiane becomes a serious individual. She worries about being apart from her father and fears she would become a stranger to him even as she feels sad about leaving her grandparents and aunt back in Haiti. Poor Celiane unable to balance between both finally decides to go to her father. Migration has really affected the bonding of the family Celiane so much desired.

Even in America they have their own norms. Celiane's father cannot come to Haiti or else he will lose his position there. From a little girl's point of view America looked like a prison to her:

Was America a prison that once you entered you were never allowed to leave?
Would we be "legal" when we got there? (77)

Upon their arrival in New York, the world appealed to them in a different way. They unconsciously started comparing their homeland, Haiti with New York. The beauty, splendor, etc. of New York is totally the opposite to that of Haiti and "It made the world seem unbalanced somehow" (93).

With newness all around, Celiane looked forward to some sort of a challenge to define or place herself in the American soil. "I felt as though I was looking both of my new home as well as for myself" (108). Again though in the outer front Americapromised equality and peace amongst its residents, the colour discrimination was always there.

On one hand, Celiane relishes President George W. Bush addressing the people that:

America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above interests and teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these principles. Every citizen must uphold them. And every immigrant, by embracing these ideals makes our

country more, not less, American. (121)

Still, both she and her brother Moy had to face racial discrimination at school. Though she and Moy were speaking in the same language even in America, yet they feel avoided somewhere. More than mixing with the culture it was the difference that the people created in their minds. Settlement or rather a peaceful and hassle free stay was not to be easily earned in America. There is always the gap that the Whites create amongst them and the Blacks. Even,

[A]fter Haiti gained its independence in 1804, the United States refused to acknowledge Haiti, because it was thought that a free black republic would encourage American slaves to revolt against their masters. (144)

As such they were never accepted and allowed a normal stay in America which might trigger in slave revolutions in America.

Edwidge Danticat in a simplified way crafts this small and beautiful story of the Esperances and how they had to deal with the new settlement in New York and also leaving their Caribbean roots. Though both Haiti and New York offered them obstructions in life, finally they decided for New York with Haiti in their heart. Opportunities and some sort of subdued status were agreeable to them since it would provide them with a means of livelihood. They decide to put their skills together to produce something: Celiane would write and Moy would illustrate or she would create a text for his paintings. Together they will have stories to tell.

3

Iris Gomez's *Try to Remember* deals with the problems faced by a migrant family in Miami, Florida, through their father, Roberto La Paz's inability to hold onto any job. He holds a green card but because of language problems, he gets increasingly frustrated and delusional about his prospects till the children realize that their father is sick. The mother refuses to get medical help or even allow anybody to talk about it. Consequently, the three children, Gabrielita, Manolo and Pablo, aged fifteen, fourteen and thirteen, bear the brunt of their father's demands, his rage and his violence. Gabi, the eldest, is expected to type out for her father, answers to job advertisements in the newspapers as well as crazy letters

bearing her father's hair-brained schemes about oil refining. The volume of letters keeps increasing till Gabi is asked to type sections from encyclopedias in support of her father's schemes. It all goes on because the mother Evangelina wants to keep her husband's mental health a secret.

The novel opens with Gabi praying that her father gets a job: "*A father shouldn't have to depend on a kid to fix his letters.... Please, someone, take pity on him. Give him a job*" (Try to 10). With her father breathing down her neck, she has to sit at the typewriter for hours, unraveling his jumbled English and equally mixed-up ideas. As soon as she reaches home from school her father expects her to do the typing/scribing for him. As she does the typing, Gabi mulls over the situation, "the turn of events that had gotten me and my family so lost" (11):

Whatever might happen, I'd believed in my parents' dream: that Miami would make up for the long lost warmth, balconies, stars, and fishermen of Cartagena de Indias—the small Caribbean port city where I'd been born. (ibid)

The dream does not last long. Their extended families consisting of uncles and their families lived in Miami. It was expected to make things easier for them. However, two months after their shifting to Miami from Queens, New York, they are told by their mother, that their father had lost his job. Gabi sums up the situation as the beginning of her predicament:

I...got assigned to the Seminole Sentinel classified ads. My job was to stalk each issue with a blue Magic Marker for the elusive GRINDER position that my father needed. And then, after I had circled any ads I could find, I began the sad, confusing Home Mechanics letters I pecked out of the tired Royal typewriter. (ibid)

However, many letters, Gabi typed out, correcting her father's English along the way, nothing positive turns up, to pacify her raging father:

Every day during that week, my father yelled after our postman in angry, rapid-fire Spanish for bringing the mail late, for bringing standardized rejections, or for not bringing anything. My mother and I waited on pins and needles until the poor rattled American mailman had come and gone. (ibid)

Their father's inability to get a job affects his self-esteem as he does not believe in women going out to work. They are told about their father's sacrifices for his younger siblings back home in their Caribbean port city, by their mother.

It takes some time for Gabi to unravel that her father did not have a proper education. From his schemes about oil drilling and refining, they learn that he had served in some capacity at such sites but not with technical expertise of any kind. Gabi realizes that her father's obsessive discussions about oil refining would put off any employer not connected to it. She finds herself "mulling over the jobs my father had held since his airport layoff. How abruptly they'd all ended. My parents hadn't really explained why that contractor stopped calling my father for work either" (32). Her mother's unwillingness to address her husband's angry, almost unhinged behaviour as he thrashes his children without reason, or her belief that it was only frustration, makes Gabi ponder over the possibility that neither of her "parents knew what they were doing anymore" (14).

She understands that "the underlying reason for my father's difficulty finding work was the English language" (12). Added to that, his diffidence about making mistakes in public, makes him tongue tied unlike his wife. His male ego stands in the way:

Despite a tape he listened to religiously, when the time came to answer in public, such as with a stranger asking for directions, my father clammed up, leaving it to me or someone else to respond. I knew it was embarrassing for him to make mistakes. (ibid)

Gabi is left to conclude that her father's upbringing would not permit him to show any weakness:

He wanted the world to see the mettle he was made of. But strength, I'd learned, didn't count when it came to learning a language.... The letters became my first clue that a greater force was testing my father's mettle. (12)

If English is the first hurdle, there appears to be more problems in her father which Gabi feels require serious medical attention. Both the language problem and the inability to get a job, a part of the displacement faced by most migrants weigh heavily on her father's mind. Gabi's father, unlike the usual migrants, is a Green Card holder. However, his irate

disposition threatens not only the family, but also becomes a risk for possible deportation as his fights become public. It draws the attention of the law, and as her father is put on watch for a period, Gabi has to evaluate their situation and the likely reasons for deportation.

Apart from her relatives (uncles-aunts and cousins), they lived in an area full of migrants. The Little Havana for Cuban people in Miami included others from the Caribbean as well:

Nationality mattered less than the fact that we all ate arroz every day and spoke Spanish. Here, in contrast to my parochial school in Queens, I could speak my native language on the playground, in the halls and cafeteria, and even during class if a teacher wasn't paying attention. (20)

Gabi meets people from various Caribbean countries, each carrying their memories and their problems, past and present. She learns that Cubans stand little chance of deportation for political reasons. Not so, the others. Because of a shared language, the migrants form a vibrant community, ready to look out for each other. Despite this community, Gabi's mother does not share her problems with others or look for solutions. Soon the family gets used to web of lies amongst themselves around their father and also outside the home.

When her maternal uncle manages to secure jobs for himself and her father at a shoe factory in Massachusetts, Gabi has huge doubts but is glad to be free of his oppressive presence: "I had trouble enough picturing my uncle suffering amicably with my father in their Massachusetts room, let alone successfully managing my father's temper" (42). Her father's rage over simple things like TV programmes, had taken control of their lives to such an extent that his leaving them for a while appears strange and incredible to them:

That morning over breakfast I relaxed, glad to be done with worrying about my father and all our family problems. As the day progressed, though, his absence grew into a shadow that trailed me through the house....[A] dread of the things you couldn't count on stayed beneath the surface of the words and their comfort. (43-44)

So used are they to their father's looming presence of the last few months that Gabi cannot

be free of the burden she has been carrying even after he leaves for Massachusetts. They enjoy their time at home as if fearing that it would be short lived.

Soon the expected phone conversation between their parents takes place with their mother asking her husband to come home. As Gabi rushes to inform her brothers, they all think of the problems that would bring: “Why doesn’t she let him go?” Manolo complains. As Gabi tries to intervene, both brothers make their feelings clear: “He’s totally crazy, Gabi! Lo-co” (47). Manolo looks at her “like there was something wrong” with her too (ibid). With a word of warning, she goes to speak to their mother about their father’s return. Evangelina initially makes excuses about the cost of living but pinned by Gabi’s questions, she goes on the offensive and snaps: “Are you complaining about your own father?” (49) Tempted as she is, Gabi does not reply:

I had no freedom to be mean. I could only dream of a golden ticket out of this place into some imaginary one, where conflicts wouldn’t barrel down on me like the Greyhound bus heading home from Massachusetts. (ibid)

She knows that the same pressures would return: “the fresh afternoon air couldn’t quell my growing disappointment over the return of my hot-tempered father” (53). Soon as the old routine of checking classified advertisements in the newspaper and typing out applications resume, Gabi notes that “the jobless days continued” (54). Most of the jobs Gabi look up “required special training, licenses, the fluent English my father didn’t speak. More important, they required a person without my father’s difficult temperament” (ibid). When she hints at her father’s temperament, her mother tells her that they were depending on her to find something for him as the alternative was too dreadful to even contemplate.

Evangelina points to the possibilities of deportation and an uncertain life back in their erstwhile homeland:

“We have to find something,” she said, sighing deeply. “In Colombia, we’d end up in some desolate jungle with only a pitiful chance of finding work. And even then, with miserable pay!” Bitterness cracked open more of her fears....What a disgrace! No, mi’ja, that can’t happen to us!” (55)

As Gabi follows her mother’s words, she realizes that she had found her space there in

Miami, her mother reassures her: “Let’s not be ridiculous, Gabriela. Nobody’s going to be deported” (ibid). The spectre of deportation continues to haunt Gabi till she learns that all of them may not be sent back. Working on a school assignment, asking for inward reflection, Gabi observes that her:

[H]ome troubles were too global, with the deportation possibilities. And how could I openly memorialize the ad searching and typing that had become my calvario, as my aunts would say, my cross to bear? Or the sadness of being around my cuckoo father? No, our code of family silence did not permit such inward revelations. (59)

Gabi wonders how her mother expected to keep their problems private or even solve them with something as public and official like deportation (if their father is indicted on criminal charges) looming somewhere in the future.

In their Spanish class when they are asked to read their autobiographical assignments, Gabi finds that:

[E]veryone’s story, not just mine, had ended at the border. None of us could return to that time in our past when we’d left Cuba, Colombia, or Venezuela.... We’d all left tías and tíos or a grandfather behind in some patio scented by hibiscus and frangipani, where the mountains or the sea were nevertoo far off. (60)

Thinking back makes her recall with fondness:

[T]he smell of the fritos, the comfort of my own grandfather’s arms, the silver saltwater spray in my face, and the soft susurro of waves that lulled my whole childhood to sleep. (ibid)

That migration is accompanied by a sense of loss, of giving up on the familiar and a snapping of relationships, is something nobody can deny. If the circumstances necessitating leaving one’s country are painful and unavoidable, it does not mean that the migrant would not have something in his past to cherish. Gabi hears of similar things from her friends about their past lives in some other country. Memories and nostalgia remain with a person even after they settle down in their new lives.

Gabi’s father is unable to settle into anything because of obvious cultural problems

which he fails to adjust to. That there is an underlying mental sickness controlling his actions is obvious to most people except his wife and himself. When his brothers fix an appointment with the doctor and come to collect him, he refuses to go, saying there is nothing wrong with him but his financial worries. Her mother takes to mixing sleeping tablets, recommended by her sister-in-law, into her father's food, in the name of vitamins. That makes him sleep for some hours and a little less volatile in temperament. Prior to that, however, Gabi's father shows signs of further derangement:

Colombia, New York, Miami— everywhere and everyone became a bewildering jumble of refineries and people who had stolen his money. It was hard to decipher the subjects of his ranting as I transcribed increasingly illogical letters that had replaced classified ad searches. Never had life seemed more difficult.... (66)

Gabi's father's fixation about oil companies is also related to his work in a refinery in Colombia in the capacity of a surveyor. That memory, after different jobs in the US, resurfaces in a different form in her father's mind. He starts believing that he had worked in the refining of oil, operating machinery in that system. This brings to mind Deek's observation that "[b]etween the original experience and the hallowed remembrance of it, fragments of existence are withdrawn from the time of the past" (*Writing Displacement* 45). Gabi's father had clearly forgotten his actual job at the refinery in Colombia, and nostalgic recall has led him to construct for himself a role in a technical capacity. This fits in with the subsequent diagnosis of schizophrenia in his case. In his case, displacement brings out mental health issues that were not manifest earlier.

Apart from the dangerous kind of rambling by her father, the physical and mental pressure on Gabi is ominous. Her mother allows her daughter to suffer simply because she hopes that deferring admission of reality or even denial will make it disappear. In the meantime, her father becomes more aggressive and violent. Her mother's refusal to get medical help for her husband points to her old fashioned and impractical ways as the children suffer from that neglect:

As people failed to answer his confusing letters, my father had become obsessed with the mail. Now either Mami or I had to make a mad rush to claim it before he did, so that he wouldn't angrily destroy something important, like a legitimate letter from the government. (*Try to* 67)

In fact, when genuine documents in connection with their residence in America need to be filled up, her father refuses to do so, on the pretext that the government owed him a favour and he owed them no inputs. For once, her mother insists that Gabi fills them up and hands them back:

“We just have to do it.” She went on to explain that despite our green card status, in the eyes of the U.S. government we were considered “aliens” and had to report our whereabouts every year. “We could get in trouble just for not turning these in?” I asked, holding up one of the plain white cards. (69)

Her father’s refusal to comply with official requirements which are not exactly demanding draws attention to his lack of responsibility. While her father in his normal moods refuses to allow his wife or daughter to take up some job outside, he thinks little before asking Gabi to pay for the bulk of his stationary. Knowing very well that there was a mortgage to pay for, or a family to provide for, the father appears incapable of doing anything practical like helping out around the house or earning money through odd jobs in the area. Instead, he escapes into a delusional world of getting rich without effort. Normally, his wife appears to tacitly support his crazy conduct, but in the matter of the official papers, she insists that Gabi send off the completed forms. With a lot of trouble, Gabi manages to post those forms.

Later in the evening as she washes the dishes Gabi realizes that they had gotten used to seeing her father as the family saw him:

[T]aking for granted that in addition to his temperamental outbursts and moral extremisms he sometimes acted a little odd. But now it was obvious that his occasional mild eccentricity had turned into persistently illogical, disturbing behavior that was difficult to brush off. (74)

When she draws her mother’s attention to the seriousness of the matter, her mother rebuffs her as usual:

“There’s no such thing as a perfect family. God gave you this life, now you concentrate on helping us resolve our problems. Not on complaining to anybody about our misfortunes.” (ibid)

This kind of fatalism combined with misplaced family pride, makes Gabi even more worried about her parents:

Her reaction frightened me. This went way beyond ordinary immigrant confusion over the everyday things done in this country, such as parents letting kids sleep over at each others' houses or girls leaving home before getting married. It felt scarier, even, than losing our green cards. (75)

Gabi is scared because her mother appears to be caught up in her own beliefs about what is right or wrong, unmindful of her children's genuine concern about their father's mental health. Evangelina does not appear to have much faith in mental health experts or probably considers it a stigma that the family has to bear in silence. While her behaviour is determined by her culture, to Gabi, it is not the result of cultural confusion migrants face in a new country. Nor was it only a matter of lack of understanding between generations. It was a mother willfully refusing to listen to her children about their father's mental health because any kind of admission would be a weakness and a betrayal of her faith.

As their father's public displays of anger continue, Gabi recalls the lawyers' words giving the possible causes for deportation, and wonders what turpitude meant:

As we passively watched our demented father kick and bang, I could only pray silently that he might exhaust himself before doing any physical damage to the door....Is assaulting a door even a crime?...What about making a spectacle of yourself?...What was a "moral turpitude" crime anyway? [N]o one...had bothered to ask... what kind of trouble could jeopardize our right to remain in this country. (80)

She decides to meet the lawyer and be better informed. She did not want her father to create trouble or be arrested and then deported: "My main fear was that he would really hurt someone—and who knew what horrible crisis would follow"? (169) Despite her mother's approach to the problem, Gabi fears that their father might do something with serious consequences. She learns that her father owed the shoe factory owner a lot of money for a piece of broken machinery. Her mother had kept that a secret from Gabi. As she thinks of the pressures building up, she starts wondering about her own mental health. She asks herself "What good would it do to save myself from deportation if I

couldn't keep my own mind from disintegrating"? (118)

Her brother Manolo is unhappy about their mother giving their father sleeping pills and asks: "How does she know that stuff doesn't make the old man worse?" (175). Although Gabi convinces her brother that the delusions apart, their father's behaviour had been quiet, she cannot overlook the fact that they were all caught up in lies and deceit: "The ground-up sleeping pills were an anti-truth serum. Instead of confessing the truth, my father was forced to sleepwalk in our land of make-believe" (176). She examines the deceits they had surrounded themselves with:

Make-believe number one: the "vitamins." Make-believe number two: the lies we fabricated around things that might upset him, like Mami's job. Make-believe number three: the incessant typing and retyping of illusory words that lulled him into faith that his delusions were real. We were poisoning him with antitruths. Why? Because it was easier than dealing with his temper, with its consequences. (176)

Gabi realizes that they had resorted to lies out of fear for his temper as well as to protect him from facing the truth about his mental illness. At the best of times, their father's ego demanded that they see things his way. His mixed-up job applications and other letters were part of the comfort zone he had created for himself in denial of his joblessness. The ruling feeling here is fear from a person they did not want to disturb in case it triggered uncontrollable behaviour.

As Gabi and her brothers try to avoid their father's rage, they try to figure out ways of leaving home as soon as they grew up. She had thought that their "father would stay the way he was—that the only change would come in each of us taking our turn to leave" (233). Their faith is severely tested when they find their father trying to choke the life out of their mother, and the youngest Pablo strikes him to save her. After that, the three teenagers realize that their father's crazy behaviour was no longer a laughingmatter or merely a painful embarrassment as normally they bore the brunt of his rages. Their mother, however, thinks that if she can make her husband take his medicine regularly, things would improve. She also calls his sister from Colombia to come and help look after him. It is while the aunt Consuelo is staying with him that one day their father turns his fists on Gabi and it is the aunt who throws herself in the middle to save her. Gabi cannot

forgive her father for pummeling her after all the work she did for him and the house, nor her mother for not getting medical help for him. As she doses herself with aspirin to lessen the pain Gabi feels overwhelmed:

I felt so tired, like I really did want to die. It was better to be mad. Mad at my mother, mad at my father. Who was worse? She'd let things get out of hand. It was her fault he was so crazy. She was weak, inept. She'd drugged him. Lied to him. Now, she wouldn't stand up for me when it mattered. (269)

Gabi cannot accept her father's propensity for violence, however, crazy or frustrated he might be. She knows that "in my own crazy heart I believed that he'd hurt me on purpose" (ibid). She finally pours out everything to her friend Fatima:

"Isn't there someone who could talk to him?"

"It's not a talking thing, Fátima. He's—crazy." (ibid)

As she narrates their plight, Gabi feels the relief from speaking to someone who was intelligent and sympathetic enough to understand the matter.

Gabi tells Fatima of the sorry complications that mired their lives:

"It was awful, Fátima, like he was possessed or something. See, he has these delusions, on top of the temper. He thinks we're gonna get millions of dollars from the government, and that everyone's trying to keep him from collecting the money. And I'm...all the time fearing that he's going to get arrested and lose his green card...." (ibid)

Combined with her fears for her father's mental health is the fear of deportation. Her mother had made that clear—that they were all in it together. While denying her husband's abnormal conduct, Gabi's mother is firm in her belief that they would not get deported. Gabi, after speaking to the lawyer is convinced that instead of taking things for granted, they would have to work hard to keep their father out of the clutches of the law, to avoid deportation. Hence each time her father presents a sample of his violent, unhinged conduct, Gabi worries on behalf of her family, her brothers and herself. The siblings had got used to the American way of life and the shadow of deportation for something they could control

or at least, address, continued to haunt her at all times.

Thus, Gomez in this novel shows how the shadows of displacement continue to trouble migrants of all categories, even green card holders and their children, who grow up knowing that laws are different for immigrants.

4

Angie Cruz's *Dominicana* deals with the experiences in New York of some migrants—the Ruiz brothers—from the Dominican Republic who manages to chalk out a living by working at multiple jobs. These brothers have their papers and have been in the U.S.A. for several years. However, they do not lose touch with their people in the Dominican Republic and maintain some business interests there through one brother who remains there. On one of the visits, Juan Ruiz marries Ana, a young Dominican girl, and takes her to live with him in New York by forging her age on the official documents. The novel is about Ana's experiences as she struggles with the language, her marriage to a much older man who does not hesitate to beat her, and life in a small apartment she is not allowed to leave initially. Her early struggle, her resistance, her injuries and finally her resilience lies at the heart of the novel.

Ana agrees to marry Juan Ruiz who is thirty-two to her fifteen years, under family pressure. Her older sister, Teresa, asks her not to marry him but Ana tells her that “when one's hungry no bread is too hard to eat. I have no choice” (*Dominicana* 39). While her brothers are excited about New York, her sister continues to be wary: “Over there you'll have no one, Teresa says. No family. No one to protect you” (40). Ana silently acknowledges what her sister says: “But even she knows this marriage is bigger than me. Juan is the ticket for all of us to eventually go to America (41). Even though Ana tells herself “I'll demand what I need from Juan, for myself and my family. I will make myself indispensable” (44), she finds that Juan is not quite tractable in New York.

Before Ana leaves her island, her mother advises her to toughen up and learn from others. Ana, who was attending school at the time of her marriage, loved calculations and hoped to train as an accountant at least. But poverty forces her parents to agree to this marriage which is also a negotiation for them. The Ruiz brothers would intine build on a piece of land owned by Ana's parents for commercial use. Both parties hope to gain

from this. Ana's mother is hopeful that she will attend some school in New York in her free time. She tells her:

You go to America and pretend you don't care about what he and his brothers are talking about, but you listen carefully and take notes. He comes from a family of hard workers, good men, entrepreneurs. We can learn from them....They are detailed people. Organized people. People with intelligence. (30)

Her words indicate her expectations from her in-laws as well as from her daughter. She also reminds her daughter to take care of her husband's needs:

You...clean his house and cook him the kind of food that will make him return home every night. Never let him walk out of the house with a wrinkled shirt. Remind him to shave and cut his hair. Clip his nails so women know he's well taken care of. (ibid)

Not only is Ana advised to do all the housework, she is also asked to make sure that her husband does not forget their needs:

Demand he send us money. Demand he take care of you. Make sure you sneak some money for yourself on the side. Women have necessities. And whatever you do, stay strong. (ibid)

Ana's marriage is expected to not just settle her future but her family's as well. The mother wants monthly dole outs as well as money in future for some of them to come to the U.S.A. as documented immigrants. Even before she can settle down in New York, the demands for money come.

Ana is overwhelmed by the size and scale of things in New York as she is given a tour by her brother-in-law, Cesar, and her husband:

I feel ant small among all the skyscrapers. We move through the city slowly, cars lined up, pushing up against each other like dominoes on cardboard. And the people, mummified, carrying so many packages in bright-colored bags, all in a hurry just like Juan, as if they have somewhere urgent to go. (58)

She is also surprised by the crowds and the insularity of the people, the lack of community:

I sit...and wait for Juan. I place the ceramic doll Juan bought me at the airport in Santo Domingo on the table. She wears a blue dress and a yellow sash around her waist. My sweet, hollow Dominicana will keep all my secrets: she has no eyes, no lips, no mouth. (63)

Ana decides to be a passive, accommodating wife with secrets to keep. She knows what she has to do even as she tries to adjust to her new life in the city. The view from their apartment gives her an idea of how things function in New York:

People wait for their turn, cars wait at the stoplight. All the litter is stuffed into trash cans. So much order. Phone booths and blue mailboxes on every other corner. Convenient. Efficient. No green to speak of. Trees naked and gray like the cement of the sidewalks. (64)

She notices the multi-ethnic localities, “the Audubon Ballroom, where the Jews pray, the blacks make trouble, and we can watch movies in Spanish...[T]he German shop that sells sausages. Beside it, the Jewish photo shop. The Cuban everything store” (ibid). With a view of the Audubon Ballroom, she witnesses high up from her window the incidents leading to the killing of Malcolm X which happens inside the building. But as she watches, a dead man is carried out on a stretcher into an ambulance and she learns from news reports on TV that his name was Malcolm X. Their area had acquired publicity of a dubious kind. Much later Ana notices the widow, Betty Shahbaz, laying flowers at the memorial honouring her slain husband regularly. Without understanding the historical significance of the role played by Malcolm X, or the political implications of his assassination, Ana reaches out in spirit to his widow.

She tries to look after her home and feels liberated when she is allowed to go out and buy groceries from neighbourhood shops. Her husband gives her strict instructions before she goes out:

But be careful. Don't talk to strangers. Don't go into any buildings that aren't stores. Don't look the police officers or drug addicts in the eye. Cross the street if necessary. And don't snail about. (86)

Ana takes this opportunity to look around but runs when someone speaks to her from a car. She has to start from scratch as she tries to identify shops and places of interest. Her husband's advice despite his tendency to control her movements does not appear to be unjustified. For a young migrant woman, struggling to communicate, the problems of adjusting and avoiding trouble appear frightening.

Her husband wants her to attend secretarial school while she wants to train as a professional. He assures her: "Nobody's gonna take care of you the way I take care of you. You know that? (71) Although she says yes, she tells herself: "Pretending, pretending. If I pretend enough maybe it'll feel true" (ibid). She knows that she has to earn money to send home to her mother. Juan, her husband, had shown that he could be extremely tight fisted over money. He expects her to take care of herself. She starts earning a little through her sewing skills as she alters the suits sold by her husband. Unknown to him she also bargains with the acquaintances who buys those suits and keeps the margin for herself:

I slip two dollars from the sixty-two dollars Antonio gives me and I fold it inside my ceramic Dominicana....In six weeks I've already saved fifteen dollars to send and calm any worries about me. When Mamá calls she talks and talks....I knew it would be great. You'll spend your life thanking me....You need to make your own money. (93)

Ana needs to send money to her mother not only to meet their demands but also to allay fears of inability to settle down in New York. Every migrant ensures that the people back home do not hear of the struggles he/she has to put up with in the new land. It would be hard to convince them of the problems. Not only do the people think that migration is the pathway to success, they seem to believe in the American Dream from a distance without understanding its cultural implications. In order to maintain the fiction of her life in New York Ana credits the money she sends home, to Juan's generosity.

Soon other troubles catch up with her own problems, as trouble breaks out in the Dominican Republic. They learn of the political unrest in their Dominican homeland. The Ruiz brothers watch developments on TV. Juan decides to go over to the Dominican Republic, as soon as he manages a flight ticket, to sort out some of their business there. He feared that under military control, they would lose ownership of some of their land and assets without proper papers. In the meantime, the demands from her mother for money

are punctured by more requests:

The situation in Dominican Republic is out of control. Everyone's restless. None of the young men will be spared. Can you send for Yohnny? Quick, before he gets himself killed. (81)

Juan leaves on a long trip and leaves his brother Cesar to look after Ana. She grabs this opportunity to explore and experience the city. She starts taking English lessons from the sisters at a rectory next to the church and allows Cesar to be her guide in other things. Ana learns too late, that her mother's fears were not baseless as her younger brother Yohnny is killed in town. He is shot dead by Government forces when he finds himself on the edge of a demonstration, he knew little about. The irony of the whole thing was that he had gone on an errand for his mother. When the violence in her homeland is not reported in the American newspapers, Ana complains to Cesar about their lack of interest about significant events elsewhere. Cesar's response is to urge her to write and make a difference.

With Juan away, Ana has more time to be herself. She also has to live with her fears, not only of theft and violence like ordinary New Yorkers, but the major worry shadowing migrants, of falling foul with the law:

What if immigration grabs me and takes me away like they did the sister of Giselle from El Basement, who went to the police after some guy stole her pocketbook, and somehow they understood she didn't have papers. (184)

As Ana goes about learning the language and picking up cues from practical things she is forced to accept her limitations:

I go into Woolworth and study all the...products. Write down the names and the ingredients so I can later look up the translations. I want to join the people sitting at the counter. The smell of pancakes, hot dogs, and sweet syrup is tempting, but the man behind the counter looks at me as if he doesn't want me there. (192)

She gets the impression that certain kinds of people, of colour and class, are not welcome amongst the moneyed people. She is reminded of being an outsider by the attitude of people she comes across, like the man serving at the food counter. It makes her observe: "So much of the city belongs to other people. Not wanting trouble, I leave" (ibid). Life in

America shows so many facets that it continues to surprise Ana every day. The awareness of being summed up and dismissed persists with her as with other migrant workers.

If Ana meets rejection in some quarters, she finds hope amidst possibility in others through Cesar. He encourages her to try her cooking skills on others by selling food. He tells her “It’s America. You supply, people buy....You start slow by making us lunch. Then you get a cart. Then a store. Then a bunch of stores. Small steps lead to big steps” (203). Ana starts selling lunch packets to Cesar’s colleagues outside their factory and enjoys the profit and the pleasure with which the men enjoy her food. She provides different food items every day. One day however, as she takes the train ride to the factory with her laden baskets, there is nobody except Cesar. He takes her basket and leads her towards the subway stop and when she asks about the men he tells her:

Immigration shut the factory down. Bastards!What

They stormed in but we got out in time. Vicente—you remember Vicente...he

jumped out the window and broke a leg, an arm, it was too chaotic for me to know for sure. The cops got him before I could grab him...

But you have papers. They can’t do anything to you.

Don’t you watch the news? They can do whatever they want. (242)

As Ana tries to absorb all the information Cesar tells her the reason behind the intervention of the immigration authorities, it being payday for the workers. “Those bastards called immigration so they don’t have to pay us. It’s not the first time” (ibid). That brings out the injustice that the migrant workers have to put up with. Not only are they paid less than others, they are also deprived of payment for work done, through connivance of some unscrupulous business owners and the authorities.

In a fit of frustration, Cesar who loses his job at the factory, hits out at a man who stamps on Ana’s hand as she tries to pick up her food packets. This draws the attention of the police and Cesar is arrested although, he is released the next day after his brother Hector goes to the police station with legal help. The fracas at the factory puts paid to their plans to continue with their catering business. She hears from the men about the hostility

they face from African Americans at work and on the streets:

Those blacks are angry, Hector says. But we're angry too, César says.... We're paid less. The police harass and shoot us at will. We want to work and be left alone. To be able to live our lives without watching our backs. But the blacks look at us like, Who invited you to our party? (255)

Their discussion draws attention to the plight of the migrant workers as they face hostility from the authorities and the public, especially those they compete with for jobs. Cesar moves to Boston to work in a garment factory. In the meantime, Ana who is heavily pregnant with her husband's child, tries to go about her work at home. Her husband returns and she learns that he has managed to arrange papers for her mother and youngest brother Lenny to come to New York. She makes arrangements for them and Juan sells the bulk of the suits to another dealer. That leaves her with more space and time to prepare for her mother's visit.

From her mother's letter Ana learns that Juan had made a deal with her father for their passage to the U.S.A.: "in exchange for the price of two plane tickets Papá gave Juan another large piece of land" (278). In the meantime, Ana had fallen in love with the gentle Cesar who wanted to take care of her and the baby. She knows that the violent Juan would never let her go. Because of his involvement with her parents, Ana knows that she cannot expect any support from them. "Mamá will never allow it. Her allegiance is to Juan. Our land's future is tied to Juan. And soon, Papá will have to come to New York because he can't stay there alone" (278). Ana realizes that she simply cannot extricate herself from these family members who rely on her. As she returns to their apartment from church she is warned about public anger brewing over something. She notices the tense faces of people waiting outside their homes and becomes conscious of a fellow feeling:

Their anger makes me nervous, but I understand it. To be angry and not have the power to control your life. To not feel safe. To depend on a person who reminds you how they can hurt you, even kill you, at their whim. I understand. (284)

Ana describes the men on the street, but it is clear that her anger is directed at Juan who controls her life and those of her family. Apart from his control, Juan often resorts to physical violence and Ana finds herself locked in a loveless marriage. She also learns of

Juan's long affair with another married woman whom he claims to love in his letters to her.

Her mother is initially overawed with the city but once she settles in, she starts demeaning Ana's efforts in her home. Ana is struck by her meanness, by her unwillingness to blame Juan for his mistreatment of Ana. Finally, Ana gives birth to a daughter in hospital and comes home to recover from a difficult birth as she had to receive stitches for the tears to her body. She finds the house crowded with enthusiastic relatives and friends who do not realize that she needed rest to heal. Juan makes her run errands as does her mother, who should have known better. When Juan's mistress keeps ringing in the middle of all those visitors, Ana shouts at Juan to go down to her and leave them. Juan is embarrassed as is her mother and he lands a few blows on her person. He also smashes her doll on the floor, not realizing that she kept her secret earnings stashed inside. Anna falls down and starts bleeding heavily from the stitches which have burst open. That releases her mother from her 'obligation' to Juan and she literally asks him to keep away from Ana. She then wraps Ana in a bed sheet and carries her to the lift and from there the ambulance crew takes over and takes her to the hospital. As Ana recovers gradually, her mother understands a little of the suffering she had undergone for their sake. When she comes out of hospital Juan keeps his distance and things get a little better for them. However, Ana is determined to study accounting and start a business to improve their lot. She resolves to leave Juan and start a new life with her daughter, her parents and Lenny.

Thus, she manages to learn from the multiple challenges thrown at her by her family, her marriage and her migration to America. Being a bright young girl, she uses her intelligence and the kind advice of others to address and overcome as far as possible, the problems of displacement.

This chapter shows that migrants have to face and negotiate different kinds of displacement in the new country. However, different individuals tackle displacement which is mainly cultural, physical as well as emotional in different ways. Even within families, individual members as in *Brown Girl, Brownstones* are seen reacting in different ways to this problem. For some it is not so much a problem as opening up of options after the initial round of dislocation. Sometimes the memories of past hardship and trauma are so severe that characters like Silla would try anything, legal or illegal to stay on in the

place migrated to. She has no qualms about defrauding her husband and reporting him to the police as an undocumented migrant just to save herself from facing the question of return to Barbados at home. Unlike her however, the daughter wants to pursue her dreams beyond her mother's control and the father, Deighton perishes while trying to avoid the police. Most of the characters in the novels discussed in this chapter find some support from their own Caribbean American community or from some other source like the church or the convent or friends and neighbours. Their grit as they try to grip down and settle in this new place reflects their tenacity and their flexibility as they adjust to various challenging situations. Celiane and Moy in *Behind the Mountains* rally around all the dislocation in their lives to find a path of positivity for their future.

Gabi's family in *Try to Remember* face problems of displacement despite being documented immigrants because of cultural differences and their father's increasing issues of mental health. It is because of cultural problems that their mother would not accept their father's problems as a serious psychiatric illness. Consequently, problems escalate for the family at home and outside through her father's unhinged behavior and they struggle to avoid deportation. Again in this family the three teenage children and the parents adopt different approaches or measures for all displacement related problems. Their father lapses into more and more uncontrolled behavior verging on absolute craziness. While their mother lives in denial of the real problem by dosing her husband with sleeping tablets. Their father's wrath which turns to violence of the children puts a strain on all their young lives. The youngest tries drugs, in fact all three do to some extent but are able to come out of it because of the seriousness of their father's crazy behavior. As the eldest Gabi has to put up with extra pressures from her father, manage her studies and help around at home. When things get bad, she and her brothers all take on odd jobs unknown to their father. Their mother too has to secretly work as a cleaner. This novel shows that the consequences of displacement of the La Paz family centers on their father's inability to find and stick to a steady job. His delusional behavior only adds to their problems. Thus the children do not get much of a chance to enjoy their adolescent years. The novel documents their struggle throughout and their final reprieve when their father is diagnosed as a schizophrenic and is treated accordingly. While the family has to live with their day to day problems, they can at least look forward to some kind of progress once they know their father's problems.

While the La Paz family has to live with displacement problems, *Dominicana*

shows Ana's initial struggle with displacement as she tries to adjust to urban life in Brooklyn from a rural life in the Dominican Republic. In this novel, issues of displacement are faced by multiple characters and addressed in different ways. All migrants documented or otherwise work hard to earn money for their own survival and to send home to their poor relatives. Ana's life follows the trajectory of an experience novel as she is catapulted from life as a school girl to that of a migrant wife at the age of fifteen and a new life in a New York apartment, six storey above the ground. The height of the apartment allows Ana to see things in perspective as she learns of the complexities of everyday life in New York. Her story is that of resilience as she manages to live with her much older violent husband, take care of their home and also his clothes business which he runs from the apartment. Because she is good in figures, Ana manages to save something for herself and when she gets the opportunity earns money by selling food on the streets. Bit by bit she manages to learn English from the sisters in the convent and with the help of a dictionary. Her brother-in-law Cesar encourages her to think and look on herself and this finally helps her to think ahead after coming out of hospital where she had been recovering from the severe beating she had received at the hands of her husband. Ana's story also draws attention to the plight of some of her acquaintances who work at factories but are often not paid by their employers. Her life is surrounded by issues of migration and settlement as she has to look out for her family members who hope to and finally join her in New York. That becomes Ana's rallying point as she decides to train herself in accountancy and begin a business so that in future all her suffering relatives could be brought out of poverty and political turmoil of the Dominican Republic. Thus, the chapter shows that displacement can be difficult even traumatic at times as the migrants have to struggle with language, culture and a means of livelihood. At others, displacement challenges the individuals to test their mettle and survive through constant striving.