People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Kasdi Merbah University- Ouargla
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctorate
Major: English Language and Literature

Title

The British Contemporary Diasporic Spaces:

The Quest for Home and Identity in some Writings of Caryl Phillips, Amala Olukemi & Helen Oyeyemi

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Academic year: 2020/2021

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Dedication

This work is wholeheartedly dedicated to all the valued people who assisted me and never left my side.

To the late memory of my grandmother whose lifelong support, encouragements, and prayers fuelled my personal endeavour towards learning.

To my treasured parents who have always been the source of inspiration and gave me the strength not to give up whenever the chance seems unfeasible. Their emotional and spiritual support has constantly incited me into sticking to my objectives.

To my siblings, who repetitively assisted me with moral and physical backing; certainly without their help, I may never have had the chance to accomplish this thesis.

To my friend Fadia whose enlightening and encouraging words abetted me, especially at the most difficult moments when the end seemed illusory.

Acknowledgements

First of all, all the praises and appreciations are to Allah the Merciful, the Ever-Giving, and the Compassionate for everything.

I am strongly indebted to several people who helped me all the way through the period when I was writing my thesis. In fact, the process of writing was a fatiguing journey that would not have been possible without the assistance of many people. First and foremost, I owe my deep gratitude and appreciation to my research supervisor Professor Halimi Mohammed Seghir for his guidance, support and genuine remarks. He, par excellence, conveyed the adventurer’s spirit as regards research in general and literature in particular. Modestly, this thesis would not have been finalised without his tenacious backing. For that, I can say that I consider it a privilege to have worked under his supervision.

I would like to thank as well the members of the Jury, namely Professor Touria DRID, University of Ouargla, Dr. Hind HANAFI, University of Ouargla, Professor Nassima KAID, University of Sidi Bel Abbès, Dr. Ahmed BASHAR, University of Biskra, and Dr. Mourad TOUATI, University of M’sila, for devoting time and effort to read and examine this work in spite of their full schedules.

Abstract

Abstract

Identity within the context of diaspora has always been rife with the feelings of bitterness and bewilderment that feature the lives of most diasporas due to the acknowledgement of the original land and the feelings of belonging nowhere. The principal concern of this thesis is to scrutinise the quest for identity and home in Black British diaspora writings. The mayhem of identity and the craving to create a home at the frontiers of other nations have been approached through the analysis of Caryl Phillips' *The Lost Child* (2015), Olukemi Amala's *Under an Emerald Sky* (2011) and Helen Oyeyemi's *The Opposite House* (2007). The authors have been selected on the basis of their mania for the narratives of home and roots-tracing despite the call for border-banning. In all the selected literary oeuvres, the writers have projected their interest to create a new cosmos wherein they can amalgamate their original culture and that of the recipient land. Adding to the dilemma of being positioned at marginal spaces, the authors point at how home and the painful memories of the past could excavate indecipherable craters for diaspora beings, and could be the main reason for the dearth of having practical conjectures as regards to identity. Mindful of the multifaceted nature of diaspora and the deficiency of any postulation apropos identity, the novelists create a cacophony of narratives with polycentric and diverse prototypes to fit into the diasporic position. In doing so, they neither deny the pronouncement of the homeland nor neglect the recipient one. Somewhat, they equate both realms and culture as equal partners. The novels analysed in this thesis visibly elucidate that past memories, home-desiring, and being positioned 'somewhere' are the repositories that diaspora beings can refer to sense and rescue the self.

Keywords: Diasporic spaces, Home, Marginality, Belonging, Identity Construction

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General Introduction

General Introduction

The issue of identity constitutes a considerable space in diaspora narratives due to the alertness of acknowledging an erstwhile land. Moreover, the persistent preoccupations regarding identity and self-understanding are caused by the encroachments between the inherited cultural artefacts and the culture of the recipient land. Thus, understanding the quest for an identity in a space that theoretically calls for breaking off with the national ties and appeals for transnational ones turns out to be an encounter that diaspora authors have taken on.

Alert to the prominence of identity and the perpetual necessity to relate it to the natal home and the cultural changes in the recipient land, diaspora writers attempt to create textual spaces to chronicle the journey in the diaspora with the burden of a missing motherland. One is supposed to point to the diaspora experience without neglecting the process of migrancy per se, considering that the latter is not a physical move only. Rather, it is a shift of perceptions, interests, and primacies. Differently put, the levels of attachment, the desire to adjust and integrate into the new culture keep reiterating the diaspora mind, in consort with the conundrums of home that keep opening up unfathomable chasms between the national and the international. Such mayhem, however, reflects the extent to which identity and self-sensing can be important issues for diaspora communities.

Caryl Phillips, Helen Oyeyemi, and Amala Olukemi, in their literary works, locate the calamity of, perhaps the most critical issue for diasporas, on account of identity. In conjunction with their consecration to transcribing concerns related to the experience of Blacks in Britain, they create an arena wherein diaspora identities are being creatively negotiated. One might assume that these novelists, through their literary oeuvres, attempt to talk about the axiomatic disparity between British and diaspora subjects. Or, they probably endeavour to portray how diaspora subjects adjust to the new contours of identity that are imposed by the recipient society. Nonetheless, readers can notice that these authors mapped the importance of place-making in constructing one's identity. In other words, they charted how diaspora's liminal and marginal spaces turned to be a site of resistance wherein these subjects start to pronounce their difference.

Questions related to belonging and allegiances could not probably be taken seriously, particularly for those who live on the edge of nations. Based on the postulation that diaspora communities are always on the 'move'; thus, the reluctance about where to fit and what to trust could never be symptomatic of identity crisis for diasporas. Irrefutably, less has been said on this issue as far as diaspora is concerned with fluidity and multiple allegiances. Despite being defined, in principle, as a locus of mobility, yet the desire to be fixed in space and time is indispensable if someone wants to sense his/her belonging somewhere and subsequently sensing the self.

Though territoriality and the fixedness of borders have become anachronistic conceptions; yet, even in the face of the outmoded perception of border-monopoly, diaspora populace still insist on the territorial boundedness to frame their identities. Though for diaspora groups the attachment to a fixed place and grounding identity into one community remain extraneous, the ideology of territoriality and place-making still captures their minds in spite of their transnational connections.

Ever since the creation of the notion of diaspora, it raises a myriad of questions regarding belonging, place-making, and identity. A plethora of writers such as Caryl Phillips, Andrea Levy, Helen Oyeyemi, Olukemi Amala , Monika Ali, Zadie Smith, to name but a few, raise important queries such as where to belong , what culture to embrace and what identity to construct. This thesis probes whether place-making can affect one's sense of identity. Otherwise stated, it attempts to examine how baseless and homeless territorially people conceive their identities and what sort of identity they can create. In dealing with diaspora, it has become necessary to revisit space, considering it an analytical category that is attentively related to identity. Issues related to multiple spaces of filiations, though not all individuals relish the same levels of mobility, should always be addressed with the memories people construct within a given place. The argument is that human beings tend to develop their sense of being in relation to the place they inhabit. Subsequently, this complex system of belonging is subverted when marginalised beings claim their allegiances to multiple places, yet they belong to none.

Thinking through the borders of diaspora implies the deliberate credence in the multiple connections that cross and transverse particularity and the boundaries of the nation-state. In other words, it is about thinking through the binarism of global/native. Being connected to different spaces that are competing and antagonistic ones made identity construction a perplexity. However, if the sense of attachment to a specific place is of great importance in the process of identification, the shared memories of rootedness play a considerable role in defining diaspora identities. Therefore, self-considering and knowing who we are could be strongly related to the memories we share with others. In other words, past memories are the database that one can go to rescue the self.

Drawing on the importance of the memories on one's self-understanding, one has to point to the significance of home, both in its literal and imaginary connotations, as one of the initial parameters of identity. The pronouncement of home for diasporas can be understood if we see it as a pictogram of security and familiarity against the unknown, a thing that generally pivots over the diaspora’s mind. However, it is worth noting that the diaspora has certain particularities, among which is the attachment to a home that is beyond the established borders of the inhabited terrain.

The intensification of the ideology of clear-cut borders that characterised the global millennium has immeasurably endowed new meanings to the conception of home. Home has always been conceived as an emblem of familiarity and security to which certain group with shared experiences can claim their allegiances. It is noteworthy that ‘homeland orientation’ could be one of the reasons behind the tremulousness and the sense of inadequacy that most diaspora beings have taken on. It should be acknowledged that one of the implications of sensing home in the host-land is the polarisation that is stepped up by the country of settlement from the one hand, besides the strain of home-making at the frontiers of other nations.

The thesis in the main argues that diaspora beings have been impressively inattentive with the quest for identity due to the impossibility of acknowledging the different mechanisms that would bring a crystal image of their identities. Even though there is an enticement to interpret the endorsed attachment to the primordial land; nonetheless, the diasporic condition is particular, taking into account that the experience of displacement per se is a constitutive and enriching part of their ontological being. As mentioned hitherto, the main concern of this thesis is to examine the different mechanisms of identity construction in the sphere of diaspora. In this sense, many questions could be set forward:

- To what extent the quest for identity determine the diasporic ‘space’?
- How can place-making affect the conceptualisations of identity?

- What connotation/s would identity have when it is foregrounded with the discussions of culture and the conflicting memories of home in consort with cultural diversity?
- To what extent identity and home could be analogous?

What could be suggested at this level is that diaspora subjects, irrespective of their different backgrounds, are trying to create a space of their own; subsequently, they are reshaping the British identity as the latter is equated to the nation's boundedness. Unarguably, such diversity redefines and more accurately destabilises Britain's geographical and cultural frontiers and could create chasms between the mainstream society and the so-called 'outsiders'. Most notably, the diasporic populations are carving out a space that is typically a space of resistance to represent their cultures. This is seen as a step towards defying the cultural repertoires and the prevailing ideas concerning cultural polarisation and authenticity, which is eventually qualified as a serious threat to the metropolitan culture.

It is worth noting that identity and the quest for home have come to the front ground and acquired growing salience within the context of diaspora studies to negotiate the geographical, historical and cultural constraints, in addition to the trajectories of identity. Nevertheless, one should not deny the fact that many studies have been conducted to pin down how identities have been constructed within the sphere of cultural supremacy and authenticity. In *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996), Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay offer critical insights into the predicament of identity. The book deals with the twists in approaching identity, mainly within the ambivalent state of belonging nowhere. Likewise, Stuart Hall provides a vanguard study to diaspora writings questioning the very essence of identity formation. In his book *Critical*

Dialogues in Cultural Studies, Hall negotiates the concerns that have constituted a large part of the discourse of 'post-coloniality' like race, identity, cultural globalisation and the formation of the nation-state. Most importantly, he interrogates the consequences that postmodernism had on issues like race, identity and culture.

Similarly, Avtar Brah, in her book *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (1996) tills the inter-relationship between race, ethnicity and gender. The author maps the questions of 'diversity', 'commonality', 'border' and 'home' in relation to diaspora. Brah envisions that the concepts of diaspora and border should be played out to include all humans in any given location, mainly in the intersection with the axes of power, gender, and race. For Brah, the notion of diaspora is inclusive and commonly related to the notion of home. In this regard, she advocates that the native might feel dispersed as far as he does not feel home. Therefore, in constructing diaspora identities, one should link the self to several borders and accept the possibility of desiring home other than the original one. In a similar vein, Brinda Mehta as well provides a theoretical and empirical study to provide a necessary framework to the discipline of diaspora. Mehta in her oeuvre, *Notions of Identity, Diaspora, and Gender in Caribbean Women's Writing (*2009), questions migration, identity, and créolization through a diasporic gaze. Though Mehta focuses on Caribbean writings, yet she points to the problems encountered in the diaspora and the tensions that occur between the past and the ambiguities of the present, especially in terms of identity and gender concerns.

The main objective of this work is to answer questions prompted concerning home, identity, and culture in the diaspora. More specifically, it aims to analyse the context of bewilderment and acrimony that shapes the life of diasporas of different backgrounds in Britain. It is, however, important to unveil the animosity of the verticality of the British society, which is not, in fact, transparent through the writing of the majority of the British writers. More specifically, it attempts to defy the enduring dogmas that existed as early as the Elizabethan period and which have long been occulted by the control, indirectly, imposed by the nature of the English society and aristocracy. Expressed differently, this work galvanises the different challenges and incitements facing the British community to salvage its national identity in the face of mobility and the large-scale linkages.

To this aim, three diaspora authors have been selected. Among many celebrated diaspora authors in Britain, Caryl Phillips, Helen Oyeyemi and Amala Olukemi have been chosen due to their positive consideration of identity. Adding to their disinterest in the sceptical attitudes to the host-land and their assertive attention to diaspora identity, these authors have voiced their interest in critical issues related to identity, namely: belonging, filiation, and the power of memory in identity-making. These writers have created a cacophony of narratives, making their texts hybrid places wherein distinct experiences of displacement, uprooted-ness, cultural structures, and multiple histories can meet and interact without being antagonistic to each other. In other words, Phillips, Oyeyemi, and Olukemi, through their characters, map how diaspora beings could sense their worldly loci in an era that is characterised by the contestation, if not to say refraction, of values and tenets.

As noted previously, the current thesis turns around one of the critical issues for diasporas, which is identity, in three selected novels, namely: Caryl Phillips's *The Lost Child* (2015), Amala Olukemi's *Under an Emerald Sky* (2011), and Helen Oyeyemi's *The Opposite House* (2007). The selected novels were chosen on the basis that these authors, in spite of their different geographical and cultural filiations, stress that identity construction is dependent upon the ability of the individuals to make sense of the self in relation to the reality around in order to engage in a more plaint world. Though the diasporic logic encourages the idea of living in spaces that are barren from the announcements of a given culture or identity; nonetheless, these novelists insist on the centrality of past tracing in understanding the double nature of diasporas.

The reconnection with the land of origin, Africa, has provided an emblematic ground in the construction of identity for the characters in the novels under discussion. Insomuch as most Black British writers want to project the stories that have been hitherto doomed to silence and just have been told, they want to project the hyphenated nature of Black British identity. Admittedly, Caryl Phillips, Helen Oyeyemi, and Olukemi Amala provide intriguing scopes by means of taking up complex issues in their works prior to the issue of self-identification from different orientations and perspectives. These writers are seen as historiographers owing that they re-write history, question it, and challenge the binary oppositions /dichotomies of: (‘Us’ Vs. ‘Them’, ‘Centre’ Vs. ‘Margin’, ‘Homeland’ Vs. ‘Forged’) and challenge the existing juxtaposed values of power structures.

Along with the objectives cited heretofore, a historical explanation and interpretation seem important as far as these authors are concerned on the one hand. Besides, the historical interpretation appears important to clarify the feasible, existing intersection between historical, political, and social milieus of diaspora writers. This cross-road of thoughts determines the dimension which seems essential to the displacements of the narratives of the margins (Black writers) to the centre (British Canon) and vice versa since they have succeeded to create a space among the writers (as Black British writers). By the same token, a cultural framework seems to be central while approaching these works given that the objective of this work is to understand the cultural background of Caryl Phillips, Helen Oyeyemi, and Olukemi Amala intended for understanding the intersection between their cultural displacement and their quest for identity in relation to diaspora.

This work could be structurally divided into two main parts: context and analysis. The first two chapters may fall under the heading of context. The first chapter, however, introduces the conceptual apparatus of displacement and some reflections on diaspora in Britain. Moreover, it offers some insights vis-à-vis the proliferation and the hype concerning the reputed newness apropos diaspora. Specifically, it embraces an overview regarding migration into Britain to provide a basis for comprehending space-making and the various trends and identities that are forming Britain of today. Likewise, the second chapter offers some conceptualisations pertaining to identity production from the perspective of diaspora. This chapter questions whether or not recognition and acceptance of a given ethnic group (in pays d'accueil) can be resolute for individuals heading to identity construction. The subsequent part, the analytical one, uncovers the various political, social, cultural and historical infrastructures that the novelists have taken on to shape the identity of their characters. Hence, this section is intended to elicit the possible parallels and variances in visions and interpretations of identity in different contexts. Also, it includes the implications of identity in the works tackled.

However, the third chapter highlights the experiences of detachment and deportation from the natal land in Phillips' writings, specifically *The Lost Child*. It covers the chains that he establishes between worlds and landscapes for his characters. Likewise, it projects Phillips' qualm regarding home given that Britain , for Phillips and his characters, does not resemble 'home' that is , purportedly, welcoming and safe. To put it another way, it examines whether or not identity could be ingrained in one's history, seeing that Phillips considers that there is something endemic, historical loss, which is always recaptured. The fourth chapter is dedicated to analysing Amala Olukemi's *Under an Emerald Sky* (2011) to discover the different paradigms that Amala believes to be constituent of diaspora identities. Additionally, it maps Amala's genuine creativity in creating a tapestry to enable her characters to cope with the feeling of bewilderment due to desiring home at the juncture of spaces. Finally, the chapter etches Amala's tendency to make those forgotten aspects of the African-self visible as the latter is supposed to blend into the recipient land. Interestingly, she stresses the centrality of African methodology, which has provided an emblematic force in constructing African identity even for the diaspora beings. The last chapter, nonetheless, is dedicated to the analysis of Helen Oyeyemi's *The Opposite House* (2007). It points to Oyeyemi's lapse over cultures and geographies heading for the construction of a hybrid identity that is forged in-between spaces. This chapter evaluates her venture to bind the European and African prototypes to represent the double vision that Black British Diasporas need to embrace. In so doing, she creates a cacophony of narratives to aid her characters overlap the schisms that exist between the occidental and the African realms.

Chapter One: Mapping Diasporic Spaces: Reflections on Diaspora in Britain

Introduction

The narratives of diaspora have constituted a large space of debate within social sciences and humanities. The current discussions regarding diaspora are increasingly subsidising to understand the fluctuating relationships between space, time, and place in relation to belonging, cultural affiliations, dispersion, and identity construction, mainly with the current trepidations of mobility and ‘boundary maintenance’. The extant conceptualisations of diaspora focus, initially, on the importance of fluidity and the disruption of, the hypothetically, fixed boundaries of identity, community and nation-state. While heading for this metamorphosis to take place, the challenge to disclose the tension between homeland and host-land is always being played out due to the centrality of desiring ‘home’.

Some inherited conceptualisations apropos diaspora have resulted in a context infected with opposing views concerning diaspora. Despite the calls for deterritorialisation under the banners of globalisation, the old disputes of categorising the nation-state as an integrated and organic entity remain patent. Generally, diasporas are defined as communities that are no longer restricted to a certain territory but often related to a certain terrain that is, potentially, called ‘homeland’. The latter acts as a symbolic anchor for the diaspora populace, who have some common and demarcated stories and interests. These perceptions of unity and collectivism, whether imaginary or real that swing upon the diaspora’s imagination, help in having some sense of personal and group identity, chiefly with the current debates concerning space and location.

The recent engagements with diaspora came into being within the nuanced context of space discussions due to the boundaries of space and time that started to be gradually transgressed and blurred. As a result, space within the current debates started to bend from its fixed and static boundaries to porous and malleable ones. Henceforth, diaspora depends profoundly on the malleability of space and the deconstruction of the confines of the nation-state and identities.

The process of boundaries' erosion itself is not that springy, providing that it is always permeated with power relations and the politics of inclusion /exclusion. Though diaspora consciousness opens up a rift between bounded and unboundedness, there seems to be much work regarding diaspora as it is always preoccupied with the narratives of space. Hypothetically, the prognosis concerning the existing lines between diaspora and space remains conspicuous for our existential grounds. Probably, we can abide by Valentine's idea in pertaining to the sacred relationship between space and diaspora that is indebted to the question of positionality. He asserts, "Throughout our everyday lives, we constantly negotiate space, positioning ourselves physically, socially, morally, politically and metaphorically in relation to others" (Valentine, 1999, p.57).

That being the case, the interrogation to be raised is whether diasporas negotiate their identities and collectivities cross or within the boundaries of nations. To phrase the question more precisely, what is the relationship between diaspora and spaces, taking into account that, on the one hand, the entirety of space remains to fluctuate, on the other hand, diaspora weighs down so profoundly by its impositions of crossing the created borders between spaces and locations. However, is it legitimate to speak of diasporic spaces where no 'actual space' or specific space has been created? Or, probably, it is adequate and relevant to talk about the transitions from one space to another.

This chapter seeks to problematise and rethink diasporic spaces. To this aim, the chapter introduces the notion of diaspora. It offers a critique to the proliferation of diaspora that seems to risk its insular usage to refer to a certain category to be a vacant signifier. Moreover, this chapter provides some insights concerning the formation of the diaspora in Britain as it elucidates the transformation of Britain's ex-colonial possessions from imperial subjects to diasporic communities. This search is formed by the idea of questioning the extent to which England , as a metropolitan centre, could be still actively involved in the projects of subjects-making through the projection of '*Othering*' and exoticism in the post-war era.

The appeal and attraction to create cosmopolitan nations has increasingly attracted the British populace's interests as the 'romanticised ideas' of 'particularity' started to be viewed as slippery ground, mainly within the global era. However, it is tempting to ask whether introducing the notion of diaspora inevitably means changing the principles of nationhood and whether diaspora risks the nation's social and cultural uniformity.

The post-war era epitomises the movement of Britain's imperial subjects to the metropolitan centre. The movement from the imperial periphery, however, marked the birth of a new diasporic community implanted into a system of privilege by assigning them to be citizens of the so-called 'Mother Country'. This movement, par excellence, was considered as a privilege and honour, mainly when the British Nationality Act of 1984[1] was passed to ensure the right of Britain's ex-colonial possession of citizenship.

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[1] The British Nationality Act of 1948 is an act that was initiated to make a novel vision regarding British citizenship and nationality. By this act, Britain's ex-colonial possessions started to have the right to abode the supposedly called 'Mother Country'. Though the Belfour Declaration of 1926, systematically granted independence to Britain's Dominions, yet this act reveals the common allegiances to the 'British crown' from the one hand, as it reveals the level of sophistication that the British were moving toward from the other hand. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/11-12/56/enacted

On the other hand, the emigration across the Atlantic to Britain was sought to help the nations and societies annihilated by wars in general, as it echoes the imperial desire to administrate Britain’s subject populace and territories after the decolonisation era. Therefore, this chapter attempts to engage in a more sustained debate to explore the nature of diaspora, mainly in an imperial nation. Furthermore, it aims to reassess the hype about the reputed novelty regarding today’s diaspora’s conditions, as it points to diaspora’s identificatory patterns and dynamics of diaspora.

I.1. En route for Theorising Diaspora

Diaspora is a prolific subject of contemporary academic enquiry. To a large extent, understanding diaspora is an arduous journey that demands a deep and full understanding to afford theoretical conceptualisation, as it keeps being contested and proliferated over the years. For Helmreich, diaspora is a Greek word meaning ‘dispersion’ originally used in the rabbinical writings to describe the Jews community (Helmreich, 1992, p. 245). Then, the notion was proliferated to describe all people who are dispersed from a centre and put on the perimeter. Thus, diasporas are groups of scattered people whose cultures, views and values are confirmed in the process; nonetheless, grouped as one community that is having common historical, cultural, religious, national, and ethnic bonds. In this claim, it is viewed “Diaspora suggests a dislocation from the nation-state or geographical location, origin, and relocation in one or more nation-states, territories, and countries” (Braziel and Mannur, 2003, p. 01). Therefore, diaspora celebrates deterritorialisation though territoriality itself has become an archaic conception with slippery grounds due to the impossibility of relocating to several locations without remembering the original points of departure and dispersal.

Many efforts have been afforded to elucidate the notion of diaspora to provide a theoretical explanation as the notion itself suggests mutability and changeability. Despite all the claims suggesting the fluidity of diasporic ethnic groups, the rigidity of claiming attachment and material ties to the ‘homeland’ remain contested. While the diaspora happens to adhere to several locations, the axiomatic link with the past history and the sense of attachment to the original landscape continue to shape life of diasporas. Many commentators stressed the importance of the cut-cross process; James Clifford, by contrast, warns of this romanticised vision concerning diaspora stressing on the surplus of remembering home and the desire to return back, proposing:

> Diasporas usually presuppose longer distances and a separation more like exile: a constitutive taboo on return, or its postponement to a remote future. Diasporas also connect multiple communities of a dispersed population. Systematic border crossings may be a part of this interconnection, but multilocale diaspora cultures are not necessarily defined by a specific geopolitical boundary (Clifford, 1994, p. 246)

Accordingly, the scenarios of separation, whether this migration was desirable or forced, prevail over the discourse of diaspora. Moreover, for Clifford diaspora populace maintain certain feelings of groupness and attachment due to the shared feelings of the traumatic experiences of dispersion and banishment. Clifford opines that the romanticised vision of a putative ancestral homeland and a sense of commitment to its restoration are the logical consequences that gain a surplus approbation. Such individuals, to a certain degree, are not disposed to trust the shard history of dispersion, alienation within the recipient land, the mythical memories of the homeland, nor have the desire for an eventual return. This probably could be apparent due to the impossibility of finding rigid definitions of home and belonging in an age of unsettled affiliations and identities. In short, it could be estimated that the fatality or the degree of homelands' orientations are interconnected to the degrees of inclusion and exclusion within host communities.

Instead of defining diaspora per se, it seems pertinent to enumerate the nature of the presence of diasporas in the host lands or the kind of relationships they maintain with their ancestral homelands. But rather, the most prolific way is to provide a theoretical framework to suggest taxonomies with a special care to the novel and universal formations of our times. Moreover, comprehending diaspora necessarily means comprehending that diaspora debuts not from the moment of arrival to the recipient land, but rather when this group starts to be aware of its status within the new location and having the feeling of disposition to the ancestral land.

Consequently, another key insight to diaspora is to see it not in terms of neatly confined units since it tends to be at odds. It is in the words of Stuart Hall and Arjuan Appadurai, " shaped by the dialectic of continuity and change, tradition and disjuncture, the extension and prolongation of inherited cultural backgrounds on the one hand, and ruptures and innovations stemming from life in the new setting on the other"(Qtd by Juan Flores, *The Diaspora Strikes Back* , 2009, p.25). In reading the lines cited above, we realise that the discourse of diaspora is a discourse that appeals for plurality; nonetheless, we need to have some reflections on the context of these communities and at what stage did the process of diasporisation unfold and come into being. Perhaps, it is essential to talk about the typologies of diaspora. Robin Cohen's *Global Diaspora* (1997) made distinctions between "victim diaspora" (like Jewish, African and Armenian), "labour and imperial diasporas" (Indian and British), "trade diasporas"

(Chinese and Lebanese), and “cultural diasporas” (Caribbean). This demarcation or the engagement with the topologies of diasporas would guide us in comprehending when/where and under which circumstances these communities were shaped.

An additional defining category of diaspora is its existence against the norms of the nation-state. Diaspora is, axiomatically, characterised by the experiences of subordination and marginality rather than empowerment. In this claim, Clifford regards diasporas as “dispersed networks of people who share common historical experiences of dispossession, displacement, and adaptation” (Clifford, 1994, p.309). Interestingly, the asymmetries of being socially disempowered within the new settings and the desire to create home away from home seem to sustain the diasporic orbit.

What we need to pay attention to, concerning diaspora, is the reciprocity between diaspora communities and their country of origin. William Safran, in his article entitled “Diasporas in Modern Society” (1991), prefers the term ‘transnational communities’ arguing that the intensity of desiring home will not bridge the gap of the two poles for diasporas, as it gives birth to a unique arena where the demographic and cultural structures are regrouped and reshaped. Therefore, transnational communities ‘shake up’ the hierarchies of all diasporas, including the host country and home country compatibly. In other words, Alejandro Portes argues, “the rise of transnational communities represents the most novel facet of contemporary immigration” (2001, p.04)

Apart from the contemporary global language that unshackles human beings from the nation-state’s borders, diasporas still retain certain elements of their original culture and identity. The repetitive idea of reconnecting with the primordial roots and home is a definitive part of diasporas settings. The vexed enquiry of home and nostalgia perhaps reminds them of belonging to an elsewhere territory. McLeod suggests that home provides us with a sense of orientation and belonging, claiming:

> As an *idea* it stands for shelter, stability, security and comfort (although actual experiences of home may well fail to deliver these promises). To be "at home" is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves (2000, p. 201)

Though the images constructed around home remain fractured, mythical, and mere clichés, yet it seems that these memories help diasporas exist and, most importantly, unite all subjects within one principal narrative. On that account, it is suggested that "home becomes primarily a mental construct built from the incomplete odds and ends of memory that survive from the past. It exists in a fractured, discontinuous relationship with the present" (McLeod, 2000, p. 211). To a large extent, diaspora, managed to challenge the codification of home, place and even identity. In this venue, it is probably relevant to quote Ashcroft, who maintains:

> Diasporic writing, in its crossing of borders, opens up the horizon of place. What does "home" mean in the disrupted world of colonial space? How can "home" become the transformative habitation of boundaries? For certainly that *unheimlichkeit,* that "unhousedness" or "uncanniness" which characterises much colonial displacement, is a primary force of disruption in postcolonial life. Can it also be a source of liberation? The phenomenon of diaspora, with its exemplary model of dislocation and displacement, begins the answer to this question (Ashcroft et al., 1989, p. 218)

Therefore, the peculiar persistence of codification of certain borders seemed to be challenged and applauded by the postcolonial setting. Nevertheless, there is a rudimentary analogue we need to mention at this level. The postcolonial context has put certain codifications into interrogation, leading to the feelings of apostasy and having no background where to take umbrage.

Another decisive point related to the context of diaspora is the feeling of attachment to 'one group' that most diasporas have. They imagine themselves as one group whose history, cultural traditions, and affiliations are encountered. Clifford suggests that the feelings of hope and loss help in building up the diaspora populace. These feelings, however, can help diasporic communities live in the settled communities and yet retain a sense of identity. Moreover, diasporas consciousness of liability of race and ethnicity allows them to initiate a discourse on human rights.

I.2. Remediating Diaspora in the UK: From Imperial Subjects to Diasporic Communities

The integration of inimical subjects into the UK, in the post-war era, brought postulations of antagonism as far as we are dealing with the creation of new 'ethnic groups'. From the beginning of its elaboration, ethnicity entails opposition in its layers, as envisioned by MacClancy, who opines that "ethnicity has been one concerned with opposition, on the nature of difference between antagonistic groups" (1996, p. 9). Nonetheless, studies pertinent to ethnicity remain under vigorous scrutiny, mainly when the two ethnic groups are bound together with a long history of antagonism. The deterritorialisation of Britain's ex-colonial subjects, who are initially considered as the ‘other’, from their ‘trans-local’ territories into the ‘metropolis’ enlarged the spectrum of research into the field of diaspora studies.

The movement from Britain’s ex-colonial territories to an ‘avant-garde’ nation added a new perspective to the discourse of diaspora regarding the pivotal issues of race, ethnicity, agency, and identity construction. It is worth pointing that space and movements are affected by one’s identity; conversely, identities are metamorphosed and transformed by/through movements of diverse spaces and locations. Throughout history, Britain and its colonies have always been regarded as two opposite poles; nonetheless, the intersection of two juxtaposed realms in the era of cross-fertilisation would urge us to wonder whether there would be a co-existence between these diverse cosmos. Or, whether we need to record some of the central normative qualities of superiority and inferiority as far as we are dealing with two diverse ethnic groups.

The emigration to an avant-garde nation has been regarded as an oblique delimitation since the movement from one geographical terrain into another signifies the modality of monopoly and sovereignty over the territory that could be exercised through the politics of citizenship. The traditional framing of the nation-state insists on citizenship that is equated to identity, which are both seen as symbols of belonging to a single polity. This claim, however, started to be irrelevant for immigrants who are granted the right of citizenship, yet there seems to be no equation between citizenship and identity. The arrival of Blacks and Asians into Britain in the period following decolonisation and independence happen to challenge the frame of citizenship; subsequently identity, which is genuinely rooted in the political conceptualisations of the territory and is a property of those who are originally rooted into the territory rights.

The newcomers challenged the hierarchy system that administrated the world for centuries. Thereupon, the arrival of the newcomers defies " the essentialist interpretations of identity and bounded communities, as well as assumptions about stable and ever present hierarchies that have indiscriminately defined social relations, politics and culture for more than a century (e.g. social and geographical divisions, meanings of citizenship, key elements of identity)" (Myria Georgiou, 2006, p.04). As such, it is applicable to comment that the arrival of those immigrants challenged the 'power geometry' by bringing elements of change into the political, social, and cultural structures. The British people started to lose control over their spatial territory. Therefore, struggles of inclusion/exclusion, powerful/ subordinate, and those who are the familiar powerful and the stranger subordinate unfold over the practices and ideologies of these ethnic groups.

The extensive emphasis on constructing home and space where to claim allegiance strengthens the desire to reinvent close personal relations that are probably more penetrating than those in the country of origin. The sphere of alienation gives rise to the sense of solidarity, affinity, and possibly a new form of community due to the shared locality and experiences of dispersion. The feelings of affinity are imaginary construction adopted to survive the diasporic milieu, "the ability to image what is not there and to keep hold of that "image" (Amin and Thriff, 2002, p. 114). It is worth noting that the strong connections between the locals from within the nation-state endangered the singularity of ownership of that space as it challenged its ideological polarisation.

Accordingly, this endorses the tensions between the ethnic communities and the nation. The latter still desires to keep its sovereignty over the normative parameters of its nation. One of the consequences of the diverse repertoires that seem to shake the national and local boundedness was the anti-immigration legislations entrenched to destabilise the British Nationality Act of 1948, which banned the boundaries between England and its ex-colonial belongings. These hysteric appeasements were played out when acts were passed to bar the future rights of entry enjoyed by citizens of the UK and its colonies. This idea is further elucidated in the following lines: “If it were to be decided that legislation to control the entry into the United Kingdom of British subjects from overseas should be introduced […] how any such control would be justified to parliament and to the public, and to the Commonwealth countries concerned.” (Cabinet Paper, 1956).

Regardless of the promises and the bright global-spanning economy that most immigrants dreamt of fulfilling in the avant-garde nations, the binary logic and boundary-making of the nation-state keep permeating over the process of nation-building. The centrality of a binary is believed to be a sort of identification and a framing paradigm of national identity. In this regard, Simone de Beauvoir notes, “the category of the ‘Other’ is [thought to be] as primordial as consciousness itself” (1949, p.15). These pejorative perturbations and disempowering differentiations is a reaction to the long-distance nationalism that people of migrant backgrounds seem to share. (Anderson, 1994, p. 326)

Confronting the transformations of the global millennium made difference celebration a necessity rather than legitimacy. Accordingly, the arguments calling for the creation of cosmopolitan nations, where the ‘Other’ is appreciated, have become increasingly salient. Likewise, the British people started to desire the ‘unfamiliar cultural encounters’ (Ley, 2004, p. 159).

The emigration of Britain's ex-colonial subjects does not strictly result in a global narrative. Still, it points to the very possibility of such a narrative because Britain starts to be constructed as a diasporic space. In other words, while it aims at bringing Britain and its ex-colonial possessions under increasingly integrated processes, it also provides the basis for interrogating the possibility of dynamic cultural syncretism, which has underpinned those processes and perspectives of globalisation. As well, it sets a podium for the recognition of the cultural differences in a country that has always called for uniformity. More conspicuously, this process acts as the 'raw material' that initiated the black communities in Britain and elsewhere, as it attests that cultures like histories and identities are dialogic. Following this line of thought, Paul Gilroy envisions:

> Black Britain defines itself crucially as part of a diaspora. Its unique cultures draw inspiration from those developed by black populations elsewhere. In particular, the culture and politics of black America and the Caribbean have become raw materials for creative processes which redefine what it means to be black, adapting it to distinctively British experiences and meanings. Black culture is actively made and re-made. (1991, p.157)

In this claim, it is of paramount importance to cite Gilroy, who envisions that "culture does not develop along ethnically absolute lines but in complex, dynamic patterns of syncretism" (p. 13). This will lead us to the conceptualisation that cultures are defined, and subject to changes by/across the encounters with other cultures. Thus, it cannot be neatly enclosed within the local geographical structures of the nation-state. That is to say, as far as immigrants continue to spill beyond the physical precincts of their nation-states, this underscores that their identities and cultures are dialogic and in continuous processes of transformation.

In some accounts, it is clear that there are certain politics of subjectivity as regards diaspora subjects. The politics of subjectivity remain hard to deny because power relations seem to be consistent motifs running through the subjects' lives in their lands and elsewhere. Moreover, this systematic subjectivity, whether based on gender, race, class or other paradigms, are reliant on power relations within which people are meant to be positioned. In many ways, this system of exclusion and subjectivity is exceedingly essential in understanding the relationship between the self and the other that is constantly struggling with the realisation that this 'other' lies essentially within us.

On the surface, it seems that the existence of Britain's ex-colonial subjects cannot be understood out of the politics of exclusion; it is about separating Britain from subjects. This accords with Locan's vision, who points that subjects are always defined in terms of "the phallus, master discourse" (1972, p. 03). In a similar vein, Michael Keith elucidates that there exist new politics of cultural difference which are grounded in the place wherein one speaks. For Keith, the politics of spatiality "cannot be measured within a straightforward metric of correspondent truth" (1993, p.8). To clarify further, the politics of spatiality are never apparent beneath which lies categories such as race, class and even gender.

The implicit separation between Britain and its subjects probably refers to the Eurocentric and racial bias. The engagement with the '*Other*' explains why diasporas are inclined to create a 'surrogate home'. In view of that, Hannerz points that dealing with diaspora requires a radical break from the historical precedents of ethnic absolutism. Diaspora, however, is characterised by its opening up to the world though the world remains circumscribed culturally.

I.3. Scripting Diaspora and the Question of Créole

Talking about diaspora means coming across the term creole, a term used to refer to the cultural formation of the Caribbeans who have a mixture of origins (African, European, indigenous and other lineages). Interestingly, this term is currently extricated from its acuity and restricted usage to refer to the Caribbean and African-Diasporic groups and is inserted into the contemporary massive migration into the metropolis in the post-colonial era. The movement of Britain's ex-colonial subjects to Great Britain in the post-war period added a new dimension to diaspora's studies. In this regard, Stuart Hall contends, "the experience of the new communities from the postcolonial world who have migrated to the centre of the metropolises of the West … has given new conceptual life to the concept of Diaspora" (2002, p.190). Therefore, these communities are 'twice diasporised' due to their up-rootedness from their indigenous cultures under the colonial doctrine and their transnational movement in the postcolonial era, resulting in a cultural fusion and hybridisation in the diasporic setting. However, the movement to the transnational spaces results in creating new cultural forms and nuanced apparatus for understanding the process of acculturation. Probably "Créolization" added a new dimension to diaspora studies as it stresses the particularity of the 'local' or the 'particular' in the face of universality and globalisation. Or, "creole" is a reference to contemporary British Diaspora as it makes a reference to the African groundings.

Within the growing velocity of knowledge and individuals' mobility that features the globalised era, ideas like community and ethnic belonging are abruptly challenged by the pivotal forces of globalisation. As a result, identities and communities are all sharply brought into question. When Caribbeans, Africans, and South Asians started to settle in Britain in the Post-war era, a lot of enquiries related to race rose. On the one hand, those immigrants were most likely sought after to rebuild the economy after the Second World War; contrariwise, the British community was caught on the alerts of the dilemma of preserving their nation-state (Spencer, 1997). This dilemma would refer to the new ethic community that started to establish itself within the mainstream culture. Differently put, this perennial concern refers to the strike of producing communities that are producers of new cultures, which are mostly implicated by power and social relations.

However, it is indispensable to point out that the experience of diasporic subjects stemming from imperial peripheries could not be understood solely from a diasporic gaze or the vantage point of diaspora. Rather, it is strictly linked to the relationship between these two extreme poles. In other words, the imperial context has a discursive power in shaping the new language of race and ethnic communities. These ethnic communities, however, develop a tactical engagement in which they assert their difference from the mainstream society; by doing so, they insist on constructing opposing attitudes to the dominant universalism, a strategy of ‘essentialism’. At this point, we may hypothesise that the immigrants coming from the former colonies to the imperial metropolis become the frontiers of infinite sources; thus, offering new vantage perspectives to the issue of race.

The engagement of Black subjects into the imperial centre is coupled with the radical view that these subjects have always been at the edge of two different cultures and two different cosmos. They exist in a densely created space where being attached to a community is only a strategic settling of the always-open quest for identity (Hall, 1996, p.17). Therefore, the sense of belonging to one community is not embroidery of people who happen to share the same history and roots, but rather it includes individuals with ever-changing projects and affiliations. Therefore, it is important to note that Créolization tends to solve a world featured with mobility and intergroup encroachments as today's world obeys the logic of more-than-one.

I.4. Towards Creating Transnational Communities Within Diaspora Context

Apart from the palpable claims apropos the creation of transnational communities due to the prospect of having multiple localities in the global era, anomalies are to occur insofar as community and home tend to be bounded. Transnationalism, however, permeates to perceive these entities as being in process and adjustment. To phase it into a question, how can the conceptualisations of home and community work out within the context of diaspora or within the discursive forces of border-spanning? To some commentators, transnational communities could be defined as 'fractured' agents who operate easily in different cultural worlds (Rouse, 1991, p. 8); others, nonetheless, view them as 'long-distance nationalists' whose engrossment in the politics of cultural essentialism and nationalism is translucent (Anderson, 1992, quoted by Glick Schiller et al., 2002, p. 21). Hence, the multiple affiliations and essentialism seem problematic or created obfuscated spheres, mainly for communities of different generations. Transnational communities mean having dual lives and maintaining sacred ties with the original homeland; nevertheless, this seems extraneous for individuals who do not feel 'homely' in their state of origin.

More adequately, transnationalism epitomises those who celebrate their belonging to different worlds, yet yearning to have international networks with their relatives abroad. This encapsulates the contrast amongst fixed and flexible borders and between what is international and what is local. Suffice it to discern that transnational stands for the fixedness of roots that might cause certain problems for diasporas, mainly when we are dealing with different generations and different cultural experiences. Overwhelmed with the discount of fixedness, Pnina Werbner sustains the openness of cosmopolitanism with regard to the cross-cultural knowledge rather than transnationalism. She explains that cosmopolitans can interact with people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, but they claim their belonging to a different ethnic group. Therefore, cosmopolitan communities have a command and management over knowledge and experience to focus on their presence or absenteeism.

Werbner has articulated a constructive understanding of identity formation in respect of diaspora as she affirms that transnational communities, in general, have a sense of community and hold a collective memory of ‘homeland’, if not to say, having the desire to return home. Possibly, even under the sceneries of transnationality, the cultural apparatuses continue to deploy and disturb the lives of the subject, who are on the move. That is not to say that the transnational communities cannot accommodate the fluctuations that its global subjects may prompt or need. Still, it suggests that the closure of the national spans is far from certitude (Malkki, 1992, p 32). Henceforth, it seems clear that transnationalism adjusts the concomitant bonds with people and nations, as it calls into interrogations the true meanings of the nation-state. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson advocate, “Something like a transnational public sphere has certainly rendered any strictly bounded sense of community or locality obsolete. At the same time, it has enabled the creation of forms of solidarity and identity that do not rest on an appropriation of space where contiguity and face-to-face contact are paramount” (1997, p.37). Broadly speaking, the ‘new patriotisms’, thus, seem to have certain commitments to both territories in the face of nationalism, nostalgia, and the obstinate desire to deal with the erstwhile homelands.

There have been considerable discussions among sociologists and anthropologists concerning transnationalism as it challenges the nation-state. Theoretically, understanding identity is inevitably related to recognising the ‘dynamic nexus’ between identities and borders. In this context, Yosef Lapid supports this idea in the following lines:

> Processes of collective identity formation invariably involve complex bordering issues. Likewise, acts of bordering (i.e., the inscription, crossing, removal, transformation, multiplication and/or diversification of borders) invariably carry momentous ramifications for political ordering at all levels of analysis. Processes of identity, border and order construction are therefore mutually self-constituting. Borders, for instance, are in many ways inseparable from the identities they help demarcate or individuate. Likewise, they are also inseparable from orders constituted to a large extent via such acts of individuation and segmentation. Thus, in any specific case, if we want to study problems associated with any one of our three concepts, we can richly benefit from also considering the other two. (2001, p. 07)

Accordingly, we may arrive at the point that identity is assumed to describe people who are believed to be adjoining a territory, delineated with borders. Within these borders, there are laws that reinforce a specific social and political order of a system that is quite different from the orders outside the shores of this territory. This predominant structure underpins a sense of collective identity that is initially reproduced through an inherited system of narratives, institutions, assumptions, and prospects of civility that seem to regulate individuals within the borders of the territory.

Indeed, to be attentive to what has been mentioned previously, we would observe the indispensable relationship between identities, borders and order though the current modalities of transnationalism assail the established borders and over-ruling orders. Furthermore, this explains the feelings of resentment towards diaspora subjects who appear “to disturb the sense of bounded-ness” (Heisler, 2001, p.229). Heisler envisions that transnational subjects tend to attenuate national sovereignty, monumental order, and the host land’s common identity. This idea is plainly summarised as follows:

> The ability to change countries of residence with relative ease and the possibility of reversing the move can vitiate the need to make lasting identitive commitments. Identities can thus be partial, intermittent, and reversible in the modern Western democratic state. Order no longer depends on unalloyed loyalty stemming from immutable national identity – identity for which there is no plausible or legitimate alternative. Countries’ borders are not seen as coextensive with a comprehensive political community. (Heisler, 2001, p. 236)

In this respect, the upsurge of transnationalism raises contentious disputes concerning the state’s order, cohesiveness and the prototypes of belonging. Relatedly, David Fitzgerald points out, “transnational migrants often live in a country in which they do not claim citizenship and claim citizenship in a country in which they do not live. Alternatively, they may claim membership in multiple polities in which they may be residents, part-time residents, or absentees” (2000, p. 10). Such trends, however, may cause clashes between nationalism and counter-nationalism, providing that the transnational subjects might be involved in their original country's political affairs, which is considered a source of identity. On this point, it is claimed that "the country of origin becomes a source of identity and the country of residence a source of right [...] the result is a confusion between rights and identity, culture and politics, states and nations" (Kastoryano, 2002, p.160). Regardless of the global flows of border-spanning and de-territorialisation, nations tend to expel aliens and maintain their borders. Fitzgeral estimates, "territoriality continues to define the state even as its citizens cross state borders" (2000, p 29).

Among the issues raised in this context is the view that transnational subjects weaken and jeopardise the nation-state by transforming its model. Having dual citizenship means having a pair of 'packages' of rights and obligations. This does not imply the denial of the nation-state's existence but rather contributing to its fundamental structure of the related nexus of identity, border, and order. Thereby, nations are gradually shifting into political apparatuses encompassing plural authorities, multiple identities, and different orders virtually free from the containment of borders. (Beck, 2002, p.17)

In brief, transnationalism indeed opens up new spaces where multiple differences are more noticeable and proximate. But, even so, transnationalism remains, undeniably, an apocryphal reality as far as the orientations of transnationalism are unstable across time and spaces. Or, probably our gratuitous usage of the term creates a kind of dismay, as it designates dispersion and destabilises both the state of origin and the recipient one from one hand, and reflects the complications that the process of human mobility might entail from another hand. Even more, we need a robust theorisation as far as the concept, its usage, and implications are concerned.

I.5. Critical Perspectives on Diasporic Transnational Spaces: Encounters on Cosmopolitanism and Localism

Critical theorisations of diaspora, far from the implications it entails, suggest that diasporas and their cultures are transnational and local. Diasporas are critically dependent on dialogue, balance, multi-sidedness and fractions of the lands they inhabit. Thus, they are not seen as the benevolent or radical agents that are apt to bring social changes to the state-centred logic of the land settled, nor the provenance terrain. But, very possibly, diasporas populate various fields where ideas, actualities, political and cultural imaginaries from different nodes meet.

The postmodern ethos is characterised by its openness to transformation and human mobility. Therefore, it is pertinent to see the world as a space where all people are connected while remaining distinct instead of perceiving it as a world of nations. In this regard, it is reasonable to follow Zygmunt Bauman's contention, who predicts "Today, every society is just a collection of diasporas. People join the societies to which they are loyal and pay their taxes, but at the same time, they do not want to give up their identity. The connection between where you live and identity has been broken" (Zygmunt, 2016)

Diaspora studies have always shown interest in localism and nation-state due to the troubled nature of diasporas who have always been indebted with what we can call 'long-distance' nationalism (Anderson, 1998, p.326). Diaspora cosmopolitanism encounters the dual constitution of diaspora between homeland orientations versus host-land orientations and local versus cosmopolitanism. It is legitimate to point out that the engagement with cosmopolitanism is not a choice but rather a reality that swings upon the narratives of diaspora. Cosmopolitanism refers to our openness , if not to say, the recognition of our presence within/across nations and our recognition of our rights and other people's rights that might be the same or different to ours . Cosmopolitanism, to a certain degree, captures diaspora conditions that could be described as: "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underline these expectations" (Taylor, 2004, p.23)

Hence, it is apparent that Taylor stresses the imaginary images and perceptions that diasporas have, which are essential for their existential being. The essential thing, in this context, is the plurality and collectivity of these imaginary perceptions that can incorporate diaspora's diversity. The significance of the diasporic imaginaries lies in organising diasporas and helping them with the process of identification. Whatever the topologies or definitions of diaspora might be even with the fuzzy lines between cosmopolitanism and locality, diaspora resembles an imaginary continuum where the self and the other exist.

Cosmopolitanism is, undoubtedly, omnipresent for diaspora's populace, yet locality remains an essential locus of production. To say it differently, it provides an adequate context where diasporas can make sense of polyphonic experiences that structure the transnational space. Locality, therefore, acts as a material or a symbolic reality of the trappings of the original locus. We may find it prolific to designate that diaspora does not engender multiple displacements from localities, but a forging of multiple connections to a myriad of places. It reverberates with this coincident connectivity hitherto distance. The new relationship between the self and others creates imaginary re-framed identities characterised by their loyalty and commitments to the ‘collective identities’ in spite of the unclear directions. Therefore, it is estimated that the manifold situated-ness of diasporas engenders the sentiments of having common grounds. Most interestingly, it is potential to point to the willingness of these individuals to share in the local nation-state projects as far as the resident nation is no longer the settled locus uniquely. Nevertheless, it could encompass the qualities of home and security.

It is of paramount importance to pinpoint the varying degrees of the interrelationship between individual/migrant’s trajectories of settlement and the nation-state. Into the bargain, the desirability of reconnecting origins and the aptitude to create communal interests in nation-state building may develop in the same way but diverges across time and space (Bayat, 2009 qtd by Martijn Oosterbaan). Such differences, hence, would signify the variety of affability and the inclination to build local and international connections within the cosmopolitan environmentalism. Conversely, it could highlight the extent to which the settled land considers them as ‘locals’ or ‘ethnically strangers’. Moreover, it underpins how the state’s institutions can sustain diverse cultures within which diasporic cosmopolitan cultures are reproduced and articulated.

Recently, states have become locations where people of varying trajectories and interests create a sense of place, at a given time, without substantial ‘essentialisation’ of a given culture. Viewing diaspora through the lens of cosmopolitanism engenders our recognition that people of different backgrounds can encounter communality and mutuality not of the shared experiences of dispersion and alienation but of the inhabited locus. The latter can contribute immensely to the nation-state building, as it can "empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas" (Holston, 1999, p.167 quoted in Pine, 2010).

The desirability to prompt transnational locations, based on the rights of individuals to hospitality in foreign terrains, could be extended back to the Greek philosopher who inaugurates himself to be a "citizen of the world" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 29). Nonetheless, most people have been located somewhere or have lived place-grounded lives. In this regard, it is suggested that "we are asking how the whole human race can regain self-determination in place after centuries of having been disenfranchised by hierarchy and/or centralised power" (Snyder, 1990, p. 42). This stance suggests that place-based localisation assists individuals with renouncing their local identities. Possibly, the challenges of the global age made place-based cultures and histories hard to be attainable due to the interactions between the local and the global.

I.6. Rethinking the Narratives of Space

The narratives of space have acquired critical attention lately due to the close affinity between literature and space. The latter has always taken a huge part in the works of writers. In literature, this concept is regarded as a physical existing created at least by writers as a location where their stories occur. Writers, in general, create their imaginary spaces and transform them into real and physical ones. Nevertheless, the physicality of space has become an anachronistic demarcation due to the linearity between the created borders, or in other words, between what is real and what is imaginary.

Dealing with space has always been problematic, providing that we should distinguish between its literal and metaphorical usage. Space is defined in the oxford dictionary as "the dimensions of height, width and depth within which are things exist".

According to this definition, the concept is perceived according to the objects that inhabit the given space. Therefore, space kept being challenging as long as people are indebted with the questions of spatiality chiefly in the post-modern ethos.

The perception of space has attracted the attention due to the new philosophy of Geocriticism. The latter focuses on the perception of hyperspaces, which can be regarded as a new approach in perceiving the real sense of place. It is worth noting that Robert T. Tally envisions space as an entity with cultural and social aspects. Tally draws his conclusion concerning space, focusing on the ‘literary cartography’, claiming that people are mapping their own perception of space from different angles to map their own social spaces. (Tally, 2014, p.33)

According to Hervé Regnauld, space is problematic as far as people cannot know whether it is infinite or not. He remarks, “we do not know if it [space] moves towards contraction or infinite dilation, we do not know what form it has […] we just know that it has little to do with the psychological experience we have of it, and it calls for more intellect than perception” (1998, p. 34) . Stranded with these struggles of providing an adequate definition to this notion, Henry Lefebvre, in his opus *The Production of Space*, makes a distinction between three modalities of space, *the perceived, the conceived, and the lived space.* The perceived space, however, refers to the tangible practice of space, while the conceived one can be traced back to our representation of that space. As regards the lived space, it is created by the images and symbols we create after the representations we create of the world around us. The problem that postmodern nations may come prone to is whether there is an ancillary between representation and reality. Grounded with the struggles of the linearity between real and what is represented remains one of the unresolved questions in the post-modern milieu; therefore, the analogy between the world as we represent it and the way it is, in reality, seems to be disputed.

Accordingly, space oscillates between reality and representation, but the levels are not discernable. Within the deficiency of rigid hierarchy, space seems to be captured, re-imagined and then represented at desire. In this regard, Hayden White retains that “it does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined; the matter of making sense of it is the same” (Hayden, 1989, p.98). He suggests that the distinction between reality and imagination is no longer that problematic, providing that even the world is conceived to be real and imagined. Thus, even history and culture seem to be under the play of imagination, therefore, re-established.

The problem that may arise is the double vision of space from different perspectives; this reduction stems when the manifestations of the margins started to challenge and question the ethnocentric representation of the world. In this context, Roger Munier claims, “there are almost as many worlds as eyes” (1995, p. 23). When space is under the control of one terrain, it is subject to stereotypes. Thus, space is controlled by the logic of belonging to a certain territory that sanctions and legalises exclusion. In this regard, it could be envisioned that the dominant group will represent its images of space and inset its desirable identity in resistance to the irrevocability of other identities. Therefore, the portrayal of space may not represent the image itself as it represents the images that we would like to represent the most.

I.6.1. Space as a Social Construct

Space turns to be one of the nethermost understood concepts that constituted large space of academic enquiry, mainly when it started to be seen as a social thing rather than a geometrical construct. The debates, working out on the concept of space, have hitherto remained abstruse as space entered the realm of the absolute. Space gradually deflects from its mathematical topologies to what Leonardo da Vinci has described as ‘a mental thing’ (Lefebvre, 1991, p.03). The question to be raised, at this level, is whether these spaces ‘the mental’ and ‘social’ underpin, overlap, and schism one another.

According to Hegel, history gives birth to a space that the state occupies and rules over. History, therefore, realises an archetype that compromises sets of institutions, groups and systems of laws and moralities. Hence, time is fixed within the prudence of space; this certainly reflects the autonomy of historicity. While history is transformed from action to contemplation, time is dominated by repetition and circularity. (Qtd in Lefebvre’s *Production of Space*, p. 21). Congruently, Hegel views space as a ‘production’ and a residue of historical time. Similar to the Hegelian perception of space, Nietzsche points to the primordiality of space which struggles to define itself against the fluctuation of time stating, “I believe in absolute space as the substratum of force: the latter limits and forms” (Nietzsche qtd by Lefebvre, p. 22)

Space possibly is among the things that are mobilised according to its different contexts. It is a means of thought, action and production. On the other hand, Lefebvre views it as: “a means of control, and hence of domination, of power” (Lefebvre, p. 26). Furthermore, he claims that this space subverts from the ones who are trying to have absolute control over it, suggesting that “ the social and political (state) forces which engendered this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely” (p. 26). The question to be raised probably at this level: is whether we can consider this space as abstract or concrete? The answer probably is never forthright as space entails both possibilities. It is, undoubtedly, like knowledge per se that outdoes objectification.

Social space is formed not by a collection of things or collective data, but instead, each society produces its own space. Lefebvre says, "That each society has its own 'spatial practice': it forged its own appropriated space. Therefore, each society offers its own conception of space, its own mode of production; each mode, however, incorporates its own variant forms, values, and norms" (p.30). Hence, social spaces incorporate individual(s) and their social actions. The latter may enable individuals to find tools to analyse this society. Additionally, Lefebvre points:

> A social space to which that society is not identical, and which indeed is its tomb as well as its cradle. This act of creation is, in fact, a *process*. For it to occur it is necessary (and this necessity is precisely what has to be explained) for the society's practical capabilities and sovereign powers to have at their disposal special places: religious and political sites. (p.34)

It should also be hypothesised that since space is produced, we need to deal with history and its construction qua reality. Moreover, the process of production might entail a movement from one space to another which they conceive as a fully accomplished system, a finished entity. In this view, it is claimed: "the transitions between modes of production will reveal that a fresh space is indeed generated during such changes, a space which is planned and organized subsequently" (Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 47). Therefore, the transition from one space to another generates new spaces with new modes of representation.

Hence, it is worth noting that when individuals produce spaces, they create certain codes to interpret reality. What is more, creating a discourse adequate to the code is, thus, substantial to decrypt the reality around us. For Lefebvre, these codes are created in a fixed time; thus, having a determined history. Moreover, he points that these codes are overturned to become what we call ‘knowledge’ and ‘power’; In other words, an institution.

On that account, we may comprehend that these created codes are façades, reversed to be perspectives, to help us not interpret spaces only. But rather understating spaces, living, and producing them. Another vantage point in this regard is the production of space, which is produced by certain individuals and managed or monopolised by others. People who are at the apex of power are the real owners of space, as seen by Lefebvre, who comments: “those who produced space (peasants or artisans) were not the same people as managed it, as used it to organise social production and reproduction; it was the priests, warriors, scribes and princes who possessed what others had produced, who appropriated space and became its fully entitled owners” (p.48).

To a great extent, space is not a fixed entity but it is the thing we keep producing and reproducing. The perception of space was accurately defined in the following lines: “abstract space functions ‘abjectly’ as a set of things/signs and their formal relationships […] it erases distinctions, as much as those which derive from nature and (historical) time as those which originate in the body (age, sex, ethnicity)” (Lefebvre, p. 49). Therefore, space frees individuals from merits of time, age and even ethnicity.

Debarred from the assumption that each society produces its own space, any ‘social being’ that fails to produce its own space will be considered a strange entity. This atypical construction is impotent to escape from the ideological and even cultural demesne. Consequently, this entity will render to the level of desertion; thereby, losing its identity, its power, and its subtle over reality. The question to be raised is what if a given society fails to produce its own space when production has become obscure as much as the notion space sustains. If we consider the case of the diaspora or the communities who do not produce a space of their own, then it is wise to say that they, to a certain amount, may fail at realising their potentials. Therefore, in the case of the diaspora, the diasporic populace are meant to change institutions and political apparatuses when they create their own spaces and, consequently, transforming the pre-given norms and values.

A true transformation, to be radical in character, must show apparent effects on the daily life of the inhabited space. Another cardinal point related to ‘space production’ is the struggles and fractions that happen to occur between different classes. There seems to be reciprocity or a contract between people who belong to the same class or community. In other words, people who inhabit the same space have consensuses according to which they act; in this case, however, there would be no fight over who should inhabit or occupy a certain spot as far as this location seems to be an uncomplicated arena. By contrast, individuals who do not belong to a certain class will make the inhabited area a setting of struggle.

Once more, space becomes a substantial topic of study when touching on critical topics related to cultures and identities. Viewed from this vantage point, we may denote that individuals, who have difficulty in generating space, may run the risk of aborting their existential grounds. It is probably relevant here to quote Lefebvre, who foresees:

> It is in space, on a worldwide scale, that each idea of ‘value’ acquires or loses its distinctiveness through confrontation with the other values and ideas that it encounters there. Moreover, and more importantly, groups, classes or fractions of classes cannot constitute themselves, or recognize one another, as ‘subjects’ unless they generate (or produce) a space. Ideas,

> representations or values which do not succeed in marking their mark on space (pp. 416-17)

No one can deny that each state produces its own space wherein a unified and homogeneous society is formed. The state, therefore, assigns institutions to balance the power between fractions of classes and to endorse the interests of certain minorities, mainly of different values and affiliations. In this regard, we may take Lefebvre's idea into account, which points " it [space] appears homogenous; and indeed it serves those forces which make a *tabula rasa* of whatever stands in their way, of whatever threatens them- in short , of differences" (Lefebvre, p.285). Within the context of this anthology, space is perceived as an arena where individuals are arranged according to certain hierarchies wherein the integration of some is stipulated and the exclusion of others is postulated as well. Therefore, it is relevant to say that there are beneficiaries of space as there are those who are deprived of it according to their relationship to that space. Probably, this is credited to the properties and norms of that space per se.

Conceivably, another imperial view with regard to space is the considerations of the temporal, social, and political contexts. Lefebvre points to the impossibility of situating things, objects, realities, or even languages without understanding society and its temporal and spatial settings. He adds that even statements do not reflect the linguistic context solely, but rather they replicate a referential context to the society. He illustrates this idea by giving an example of the city claiming that "it [city] is mapped space and graduate time" (Lefebvre, *La vie Quotidienne dans le Monde Moderne*, p.155)

Consequently, space could be seen as a locus of struggle, taking into consideration that space is produced means that this production itself could be a locus of tension and violence. Perhaps, today’s struggles are inscribed in space more than ever before, wherein space has become another commodity. Moreover, there are certain factors that could regulate the process of production itself, such as natural and social forces. In this context, Lefebvre argues, “productive forces permit those who dispose of them to control space and even to produce it. This productive capacity extends to the whole of the earth’s space, and beyond. Natural space is destroyed and transformed into a social product by an ensemble of techniques, particularly physics and information science.” (La *survie de Capitalisme*, p. 80).

Taking a more critical approach, Lefebvre viewed space in three different ways, as perceived, conceived and lived: L’espace perçu, conçu, vécu. The first category is a physical, real space, the one that is created and used. The second category is the space of savoir; it embraces knowledge, logic, strategies (maps, mathematics). In other words, it is the space that is imagined or mentally constructed. The third one, however, is the space that is produced and modified over time, the space of cognisance. (Lefebvre, *Love and Struggle,* p. 25).

I.7. Enfolding on the Renewed Interest in Space

Within the global millennium, the discourse of space has come to the fore. There is a strong agreement that space makes a transformation in cultures and politics. Space, to a certain degree, used to be alienated given that all interest used to be directed to time and history. All of the attention, mainly within the nineteenth century, was directed to history and the accumulation of the past. In other words, time tends to occlude a critical sensibility that prioritises it over space. In this esteem, Foucault comments, “space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, and the immobile. Time, on the contrary was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic" (1980, p. 70). The present-day epoch, however, is considered as the epoch of space where the current polemics oppose the ideologies of time focusing on simultaneity. It is the era of the association of here and there, of side-by-side. Hence, new attention is headed for space as described by Edwards and Usher, who claim "almost to the extent where it now to hegemonically replace time as the key factor to be considered" (Edwards and Usher, 2003). It is worth noting that space was considered a fixed and immobile construct that is unrelated to social relations and identities. To simplify it more, it was framed as: "a container or backcloth within or against which activity took place through time" (Edward and Usher, 2008, p.36).

Now and as a result of the embracement of the local in the global process, space was unchecked from its bounds to be considered universal and abstract. Therefore , there is a shift with space perception where " spatial relations are seen to be no less complex and contradictory than historical processes, and space itself refigured as inhabited and heterogeneous, as a moving cluster of points of intersection for manifold axes of power which cannot be reduced to a unified plane or organised into a single narrative." (Hebdige, 1990, pp. 6-7). The point is not to view time and space as separate entities or question the importance of one over the other. Hence, temporality and speciality are different, but they cannot be conceptualised as the 'absence of the other' (Massey, 1993, p.155). In other words, space and time are inseparable entities and the conceptualisation of space does not necessarily mean our denial of time. On the contrary, Jones et al. (2004) prefer to consider spacing and timing as actions or in process.

The interest in finding a location and the sense of place is, perhaps, a recent problem for those who have always been at the apex of power or have been at the centres of power, but it has been long-standing for others. The steadiness of place often leads to the stability of identity though the insecure boundaries remain problematic or no longer exist at all. Massey predicts, “The boundaries of the place one called home must have dissolved long ago, and the coherence of one’s local culture must long ago have been under threat, in those parts of the world where the majority of its populations live” (1994, p. 165). Thus, the desire to connect to a fixed or bounded place started to be challenging. The latter signifies that space could be a type of place that is considered as a point of encounter of relations.

It might be imagined that the assumption of strangeness and geographical remoteness go hand in hand. Therefore, this valorises our perception of space that is initially based on the local, which is bound to a specific space. In a way or another, this perception was disturbed by the process of globalisation, which brought certain problems such as alienation and anomie to the surface as described by Turner, who foretells: “in the global village all participants are likely to be strangers” (Turner, 1994, p.111). In this stance, we may arrive at the point that there is an equation between space/place and stability. Turner points to the impossibility of fixed borders, which is encouraged by global thinking in which neither the borders of departure nor points of arrival are certain; therefore , globalisation has become a detour, providing that territorial locations remain nodes , as demonstrated in the following words: “ the ethnic absolutism of ‘roots’ metaphors, fixed place, is replaced by mobile ‘route’ metaphors which can lay down a challenge to the fixed identities of “cultural insiderism” (Pile and Thrift, 1995, p.10)

For such reasons, Massey suggests that the trends are towards a world wherein spaces and social relations are constructed in which individuals claim their allegiances to non-place or to spaces that are devoid of the symbolic announcements of a given culture or identity. He advocates:

> Instead of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be the street, or a region or even a continent (Massey, 1994, p.154)

Ironically, in an age where people celebrate mobility and volatility, questions pertinent to space and locating the self in a given place are being evoked. In many ways, the issue of centrality is related to the sense of finding meaning to the world around us. Therefore, the deep engagement with the loss of place is engendered by the desire to find sense and explanations to the external world. It is probably, “not that the world has little or no meaning, but that we should feel the constant need to give it a meaning. In traditional societies, meaning could be taken for granted. Today, we are expected to find a meaning for everything” (Benko, 1997, p.25). The sense of finding geographical locations can be considered as a catalyst for morphing changes, mainly for diaspora individuals. In this context, it is predicted that we draw upon diaspora through Cohen’s estimation, who proclaims:

> For a meaningful identity and a flexible response to burgeoning opportunities, a double facing type of social organization is highly advantageous. Just such an organization exists in the form of a diaspora … [diasporas] have always been in a better position to act as a bridge between the particular and the universal” (Cohen, 1997, p. 170).

This draws upon the attention that the process of space locating is not plainly traceable and could be challenging and contradictory, as the process and the logic of globalisation might entail. The absence of centrality and locationality is not new for certain, but the issue of challenging the pre-given assumptions concerning borders remains perplexing.

The growing enquiry to chart space, positionality and place have come to the fore to open up new discussions to understand the complex issues related to the malleable accumulations of globalisation, social relations, and identities. Hence, being obsessed with space comprehension is a result of the tenets of 'decentred' world. In this claim, Yoshimoto comments, "while national boundaries are increasingly blurred in the new global formation, transnational capitalism has paradoxically given rise to an increasingly obsession with place" (1996, p.107). Interestingly, space margins have been reconfigured and remapped, challenging the notion that space is an inert background, restrained and secure. Shields put it:

> Socio-political constructions ideologically coded into cartographic conventions and reified in socio-cognitive mappings of the world …these serve to exemplify the extent to which we live within the territorialising and boundary-drawing impulse of the imaginary geography of the nation-state …Representation of space such as national air space and 200-mile limit inform an delimit our practical interventions in these spaces. (1997, p.194)

Thus, spaces cannot be understood outside the geographical and political layers of the nation-state. This is to suggest that space is relational as there is intersectionality between territoriality and social relations, specifically within the context of diaspora, which is initially chaotic and multi-directional. Massey points to this idea as follows: "different social groups, and different individuals belonging to numbers of social groups, are located in many different ways in the new organisation of relations over time-space." (Massey, 1994, p.164)

The novel interest in space has deployed the balance of power and provided new power geometries through new mapping and practices so as to cater new conceptualisation that could be relevant to the complex nature and hybrid layers of contemporary spaces. This leads us to the point that diverse groups and cultures can no longer be subsumed within a single universal narrative, nor can be seen as confined; thus, inaugurating what we may label 'politics of location' . The latter was precisely talked about by Brah, who claims "as locationality in contradiction - that is positionality of dispersal; of simultaneous situatedness within gendered spaces of class, racism, ethnicity, sexuality, age; of movement across shifting cultural, religious and linguistic boundaries; of journeys across geographical and psychic borders." (Brah, 1996, p. 204).

If diaspora suggests fluidity and deterritorialisation, what, therefore, can justify the interest in space? Or, in what sense can diaspora be defined as a state of 'rootlessness' where the sense of place and attachment to a single space becomes insecure or no longer exists? These questions somewhat arise from the assumptions that there is relativity between a sense of place, identity, and meaning to our existence. Within the current conditions, most of the hitches related to space might occur due to the difficulty of finding a bounded place called 'home'. This anachronism within the diasporic lexicon sustains a version that 'home' could exist, but its constrained nature is challenged. The narratives of space (imagined or encountered) are ubiquitous in diaspora context to create a space that takes "account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a homeland". (Brah, 1996, p.180)

This is not to deny the claim that the interest in space is impelled and actuated by the assumption that space is grounded on bounded places wherein one can sense the feeling of locality and, subsequently, constructing a stable identity. In a way or another, this traditional perception is being tangled by the process of mutability and mobility. Most likely, the fixedness of boundaries has never been a characteristic of local places, but rather the renewed interest of the contemporary periods in the doctrines of regionality, history, and locality are all attempts to meet the impersonality of modernism. (Robins, 1993, p. 312)

Among the commentators who celebrated the renewed interest in space is Fredric Jameson. He expounds “ I think that it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience , our cultural languages , are today dominated by categories of space rather than categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism” (Jameson, 1991, p.16). This contention suggests that space, in the modern era, is the template from which we sense meaning to our existence. Thus, for Jameson, the individual needs to be charted by the spatial specificity of his positions to uncover the hidden human topography of power. Similarly, Soja shares a common concern regarding space, claiming that space is not acquitted locale to a position, but filled with ideologies. Hence, he argues, “we must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology”(1989, p. 6). Most importantly, Soja maintains that space is impermeable because of its dual vision, either opaque or transparent. The opaqueness of space has focused on space as being a fixed entity. By contrast, the transparency concentrates on space as an abstraction. Soja puts it in such a way “spatiality is reduced as a mental construct alone… social space folds into mental space… and away from materialized social realities” (p. 125). In brief, Jameson envisions space as a template that includes politics and ideologies. Nonetheless, Soja prefers to release space from this geometrical assertion, criticising its attempts to make space a passive and fixed construction.

Probably, all of the initiatives mentioned earlier are irrelevant for those who have no stable place to be called ‘home’. For Hooks, all the speculations previously mentioned entail risks that are relatively political. Instead, he envisages that the place, we are positioned in, is radically important to our perceptions, rights, and ability to challenge the dominant discourse. He refers to this idea demonstrating, “as a radical standpoint, perspective, position, ‘the politics of location’ necessarily calls those of us who would participate in the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of re-vision” (1991, p.15). Therefore, the diasporic context beseeches a spatiality that draws on connections across topographies and yet having a shared experience within one territory. Bhabha comments on this idea asserting, “ the moment of culture caught in an aporetic, contingent position, in-between a plurality of practices that are different and yet must occupy the same space of adjudication and articulation” (1992, p.60). In this stance, it is appropriate to note that the diasporic space would never be the party ground that celebrates plurality at the cost of the particularity of history and culture. Rather, it is a central ground that gathers two extremes. In other words, the spatiality of diaspora is the platform on which transitory and ever-changing lines are re-drawn between the same and the different.

These ever-shifting lines produce a space where identities are articulated within a global context without making it context-specific; nevertheless, it makes communication and syncretism amid the myriad systems an inexorable reality. In short, this space is rhetoric that bonds different spatialisations together irrespective of the politics of exclusion that the geographical communities might denote. In brief, space deployment is crucial to resolve questions related to the possibility of constructing spaces where individuals of different backgrounds and affiliations can form allegiances against power and whether the individuals have to be located with a struggle by some means. Through these, we may go to the point that space helps communities, initially the marginalised, make a kind of investment where they inscribe themselves into new geographies, whether real, imaginary, or symbolic.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we projected a critical theorisation on diaspora studies focusing on issues pertinent to diaspora. The objective was to delineate the diverse theoretical discourses surrounding diaspora, with special attention paid to subjects that are transformed from imperial to diaspora subjects. The aim is not to bring up a new definition of diaspora, but to question how diaspora could exist in a continuum of possible interconnections. Therefore, the itinerary of diaspora may not be that straightforward as it suggests a myriad of cultural fractures. As communities endure to entrench across transnational topographies, diasporas remain connected to nations in complex ways. The multiplicity of platforms and the proximity of connections have radically contributed to reconfiguring the diasporic experiences’ structure.

Diaspora has always been structured around complex experiences of mobility, shifting interests and perceptions, contested affiliations, and disputed identities. These trajectories are impelled by dispersed yet interconnected sets of traditions of the state-centred logic of the settled land and the original one. These complicated tensions and coalitions are purported to "activate political and social imaginaries and accelerate the solidification of binary logics that differentiate the insider from the outsider and the citizen from the migrant" (Radha S. Hegde qtd by Jessica Retis & Rosa Tsagarousianou, 2019, p. 226). Therefore, these intense conceptions of the migrant as an outcast are naturally used to legalise and fortify the exclusionary systems of the nation-state. This explains why most commentators envision that diaspora has a protean structure that proposes malleable frameworks where notions of affiliation, identity, nationalism, and belonging are reshaped and reified.

To understand the trajectories of diaspora, we need to comprehend the nature of the contact zone between nations since individuals form their identities in/by their contact and relations with others. The morphing connection between nations and diaspora is, typically, related to the asymmetries of power that loom over the logic of the nation-state and its typical parameters, namely the national identity and the normative citizenship.

An ample attention is being paid to authenticity with regard to diasporas, a strategy adopted to control the interactions and contacts between zones. The state-centred logic vis-à-vis national belonging is a modality used to delineate the citizens who technically belong to the state and those who should be banned from the national polity. It seems that authenticity is a nebulous concept that needs a robust investigation, especially with the era of commodity/individuals fluidity. The orchestration of authenticity and aura of originality are deeply saturated by the modalities of exclusion/inclusion, hierarchies of power, and the fixed views of cultures and nations. Therefore, the question that we need to pose is not 'what is meant by authenticity'; but 'how is it authentic'? Or, more adequately, how to produce authentic nation-states within the growing velocity of the global era. Since authenticity is enmeshed with the politics and the logic of preserving the nation-station from possible schisms; therefore, authenticity remains unfixed and in process to release notions like belonging and citizenship from their territorial implications.

The augmentation of diaspora complicates the meaning of what is fixed and authentic. Opponent to the settings of globalisation and universal patriotism, the structure of authenticity is being re-examined, questioned, and ultimately reproduced. To a certain degree, diasporic cultures are estimated to be transnational and moveable. Yet, these moveable processes are defined by certain normative parameters that are authentic per se. Thus, diasporic communities create imaginary construct apropos their national belonging and affiliations to maintain abstract values of authenticity imposed by countries of origin and residence.

For too long, the emphasis has been bound for the rigidity of the nation-state and issues related to the assimilation of diasporas into the settled locus. More recently, however, the interest is more rapt to the effects of border crossing between nations of origin and how these remembrances are visibly apparent in the migrant's equation. The relationship is not limited to the nostalgic claims of ancestral origins, generally taking the forms of long-distance nationalism, which plays an active part in forming diaspora identities. Rather, nations revise their connections to the diaspora by engaging their dismantling into their national affairs and projects. Thus, diasporas and countries of origin now are being actively reconnected within a global context. The morphing narratives around diaspora suggest that home and authentic nation-states are all portable commodities that are subjects to constant transformations.

Chapter Two: Mediations on Diaspora Identities

Introduction

Diaspora is increasingly becoming a buzzword that demands a gigantic work to understand its complicated nature. Quite deliberately, the notion of diaspora covers all communities that are dispersed from their original lands. Therefore, the politics of belonging and statelessness can act as an asset or deficit when diaspora communities negotiate their identities. The critical issues that could come into existence when we approach identity can be justified by the incapacity of diaspora communities, which are not standing at the apex of power within the host lands (pays d'accueil) , when they fail to assert their cultures. Admittedly, the dominant culture tends to epitomise itself as a regular and embraces other cultures. Subsequently, other cultures are viewed as subordinate and enduring struggles as they tend to modify, resist its dominion, or possibly make inroads into it.

Accordingly, the debates about cultures and identities can be understood within the power hierarchies. What is more, the intricacies that might arise vis-à-vis identity could be justified by the fact that identities are never unitary. Thus, identity is a conundrum that defies the existing definitions, providing that we are changing from day to day; therefore, even our perception of the 'me' is subject to our experiences. Still, there is something we recognise, though insentiently, in ourselves so that we tend to differentiate between the 'one self' and its 'other'. Thus, there is something deeply rooted within the self and helps the individual recognise the armour of his/her persona.

Nonetheless, the sense of the self could be endangered when the outer conditions start to exacerbate painful experiences. The latter could change the individual's perception of reality and the self, instigating problems at the level of identity. In view of the foregoing, no one might deny that the process of diasporisation could be an enriching experience. Still, the sorrow and painful experiences of estrangement could raise myriad questions about identity.

This chapter is an attempt to scrutinise how the debates around identity have acquired salience within diaspora discourse. This chapter aims to map the general parameters that could structure identity matrix. It tends to question whether the process of exodus always generates an ontological estrangement due to the separation of the self from its 'native place'. Moreover, it scrutinises the consequences of the physical detachment and the rupture between the self and its 'true home'. Furthermore, it questions how home and identity could operate as sites of struggle within the context of diaspora.

Prominently, all of the questions related to identity are refracted. In view of this, this chapter examines the role of home in identity construction. Additionally, it attempts to map how diaspora communities make sense of their worldly loci. Though the current epoch appears absurdly to be the age of displacement and spiritual statelessness, the feelings of nostalgia, melancholy, and never being at home are inseparable. Even more importantly, the will to find a locale remains a priori. This chapter, however, sets some theoretical concerns on identity production from the perspective of diaspora. Hence, this chapter does not dwell on this problematic issue of identity. Instead, it crops up some critical insights as regards the politics of recognition of ethnic groups and how acceptance can be resolute for individuals heading towards identity construction.

II.1. Speculations on Diaspora's Identities

In this global world, millions of people live outside the shores of their homelands. Moreover, it is known that each country has a diaspora community, and each ethnic group had a diaspora someplace in the world. Accordingly, comprehending diaspora's struggle and behaviour within the host lands gained significant attention. Diaspora's today's conflicts came into existence due to the obstinate desire and sentiment of loyalty to the homeland. In this regard, it is maintained: "as it has become increasingly hard to settle and assimilate in the host-land, diasporas are more likely to continue to focus on their erstwhile homeland" (Demmers, 2002, p.88). Therefore, diaspora's endless struggle within the host lands could be justified by their refutation to assimilate within the host community and abandon their pasts. The need to keep the primordial origins seems to be an integrated part of the diaspora's life. Alternatively, Sheffer envisions that even though this ethnic group resides and acts in the host countries but "maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin-their homelands" (Sheffer, 1986, p. 3). Subsequently, diaspora is a multi-layered group that is open to diversity and mobility despite the strong feeling of belonging powered by the yearning to reconnect with the lost connections of the homeland.

Most diasporic communities live in a tension between the fluid cultural spaces of the lived reality that compels the multiplicity of visions from the one hand and the rigid cultural perceptions of space or the prescribed cultural borders they inherited from the other hand. Belonging to a certain category or finding a particular space to assert your identity had been widely associated with the sense of belonging to a specific racial group. Every single group is categorised into a specific culture that is grounded in the culture of the homeland. This culture, however, is the 'Golden Age' to which a group can look back and claim its pride and allegiance.

The current enthrallment in diaspora studies, however, has been triggered by the obscurity and the lack of clarity as to the formation of these communities. The implications surrounding this notion led to political and theoretical objections, providing that not all communities prefer to be identified as diasporic groups. The fashionable allegations in respect of diaspora made it a ‘category of practice’ rather than a ‘descriptive classification’ of a certain group due to the various criteria that define diaspora. In this regard, Brubaker suggests certain constitutive criteria forming diaspora, namely ‘dispersion’, ‘homeland orientation’, and ‘boundary maintenance’ (Brubaker, 2005, p.05). Accordingly, what could be assumed from Brubaker’s vision is the triple affiliation and attachment of diasporas that are meant to claim their belonging to the members who are sharing the same inhabited diasporic space, to diasporic populations around the world, and to the group with whom they share the same point of origin or the same hypothetical homeland. Perhaps, what makes diaspora an obscure experience is its context which is rife with ‘homeland orientation’ and the surplus emphasis on the ‘lateral’ connections. This dislocation or the situation of ‘in-betweenness’ affects their sense of the world around them. Interestingly, this idea is succinctly referred to by Aguiar as “a nervous disposition coupled with a psychic tremulousness or sense of inadequacy in relation to time and place” (2000, p.213).

Following this line of thought, it goes with saying that, in the case of diaspora, one defining and constituent part of identity is, patently, home. Creating patterns of connection across the boundaries of time and space is indispensable for comprehending diaspora experience. The memories of the point of origin or homeland can thus transcend the territorial logic. This lucidly brings to mind Fortier’s vision, which entails that “memory, rather than territory, is the principle ground of identity formation in diaspora culture, where ‘territory’ is decentred and explored into multiple settings” (2005, p.184)

Some inherited conceptions of diaspora have been, noticeably, infected with dispersion. Regardless of the reasons underlying dispersal, whether forced or probably human-induced, it is necessary to note that it remains a constitutive axis of diaspora. In one of her writings entitled *La Survivance, Traduire le Trauma Collectif*, Janine Altounian points that the unfeasibility of finding a place of articulation redoubles the sense of loss (souffre d'un non lieu). (Altounian, 2000, p. 29)

II.1.1.Home, Memory and Identity

The movement from one locale to another accentuates the sense of loss and the desire to claim allegiance to a specific place. At the heart of diaspora, there always lies a plea to connect to a spatially and temporally distant place. The attachment to the 'place of origin' does not necessarily imply the ideology of return to the point of origin, but it is a process of belonging to the past. Though this home is an imagined one, or could not be that homey as it is generally expected, yet it is still remembered, recalled, and longed for through the diasporic imagination. (Anthias 1998, p.577; Baumann 2000, p.327; Clifford 1994, p.310). It is to be noted that the ascriptions of home are not fixed images; rather, they are mere reconstructions refabricated due to the impossibility of having one crystal image of the 'hypothetical home'. Therefore, the issue that could be raised at this level is the layeredness of home in the sense that home for first-generation 'diasporans' could be recalled and remembered via the memories one can construct around his/her home. By contrast, for second-generation 'diasporans' the 'new land' resembles home due to the impossibility of constructing a crystal image around the land of origin that is seen as a fragmented entity.

The encounter of two opponent desires between longing for the 'place of origin' and the craving for a 'place to belong' may intensify the sense of loss, as it suggests the remoteness of diasporas to multiple locations. Therefore, the ambivalent belonging to both here and there can offer a critique to the discourses of ethnicity, nation-state, home and origin, creating fluctuations at the level of identity. Differently put, the experience of living here and relating to a place somewhere creates tension and crisis regarding identity due to the levels of attachment to various locations, yet unable to identify these places as home. This idea is portrayed by Brah as follows “it is quite possible to feel at home in a place and, yet, the experience of social exclusions may inhabit public proclamations of the place as home” (1996, p. 193).

In retrospect, the experiences of later generations differ greatly from their ancestors as far as they have neither experienced the process of migration nor have memories of the time before. Apart from the ambivalent relations to home, the latter seems to be a “subtext of diaspora” (Brah, 1996, p. 190). The questions that might be raised at this level are: why do diasporas focus on the centrality of home? Can the point of departure be a discursive contributor to the conceptions of home? Can home be a place, a space, feelings or experiences and memories one shares with his/her ancestors? Given this array of questions might imply that the notion of home for diasporas remains opaque and creates a state of perplexity seeing that they avow their uniqueness facing the cultural fundamentalism and despotism of the recipient bewilderment, yet the thing that remains crystal is that home remains emic for them. In Bringing to mind diaspora, homeland is always re-valorised and re-called with attraction and fabulation.

The porous nature of diaspora urged diaspora community to create new agendas for identity construction. In the hierarchical ideologies of the ‘West’, what is outlandish always represents the ‘exotic other’ or a repository of fright and concern. The encounter of the margins with the supposedly harmonised and disciplined centres creates qualms, as they might jeopardise and shake the polarities of west/rest, masculine/feminine, black/white, and dominant/subordinate. The question that comes into existence is whether we need to address this polarity whenever identity is being articulated. Can we take difference as a motif that diasporans would like to claim to subsume their visibility within communities that have always pronounced their homogenous natures? Differently put, the fear of difference can be seen as vertigo that could threaten the created boundaries between nations, cultures, and races. Hence, the threat of the dissolution of the 'self' in front of the 'other' is the thing that amplified the irrational attitudes and antagonisms from the part of the 'centres' or recipient lands towards the newcomers to aver and secure their boundaries.

Given this perspective, one might arrive at the point that memory and remembering the lost homeland remains a defining moment for diaspora communities. Memory, thus, is a metaphoric alternative that establishes a 'ground' wherein diaspora identity could be based. It is fitting to point that memory gained tangible relevance when applied to diaspora identities, as they tend to create their identities based on the memories of displacement and belonging. The inaccessibility to find a place to belong and the sense of unreachable origin doubles the sense of loss. Unpredictably, this sense of something missing can transcend the logic of belonging somewhere that is initially metonymic to rupture. Still, it echoes the drift of continuity and the desire to reproduce 'deterritorialised memories' that bind up what is actuated and relocated.

II.2. Identity as a Reverberation of the Past: Identity and the Migration into the Past

Identity within the discourse of diaspora remains ossified and a depository of the historical processes. In other words, identities have been severely impaired and, in some cases, marred by history. In this claim, it is assumed: “each individual is the synthesis not only of existing relations but the history of these relations. He is a précis of the past” (Gramsci, 1971, p.353). Even if there is no immaculate reasoning that could give us the exact archetype of identity, there seems to be a strong connection between identity and one’s history. Therefore, the articulation of identity could not be comprehended out of the context of history. And by the same token, diaspora’s identities could not be articulated without understanding how the western structures have fossilised one’s history and knowledge. The dialogic relationship between history and identity construction urged the postmodern populace to review the constructed images they created around themselves. In other words, identity has become symptomatic when the pre-given assumptions of identities and histories as being fixed and static started to be replaced by the feelings of doubt and incertitude apropos identity and histories.

Diaspora studies probe far deeper attention to the discussion of identity as these communities seem to create new arenas for debate insofar as their cultures and traditions are in process. The movement hither and thither, between here and there and yet not feeling attached to neither places disrupts people’s lives and their identities “almost by definition, that’s to ‘be’ in the postmodern sense is somehow to be an Other: displaced” (Bammer, 1994, P. xii). Within the last decades, the struggle over the state power and border maintenance seems redundant as worldwide movements of people, ideas, and information outflank the nation-state’s borders. Nonetheless, asserting one’s identity and locating the self within the existing histories represent a central reference.

It is not surprising, thus, to see identity having a central discussion lately, providing that people are no longer talking about social classes, especially with the trumpeted ‘death of class’ in the modern epoch, as in somewhat people are more keen to preserve their communities from other populace whose cultures and values are set to be antithesis to theirs. Therefore, the systematic ‘group struggle’ loses its primacy, and the focus dissolves into “race, ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexuality” (Davis, 2000, p. 04)

In this way, it is legitimate to point that the last decades have witnessed a transfer from the social sphere to the cultural one. This metamorphosis destabilises individuals and creates fragments at the level of identities due to the lack of having a crystal image of one’s culture. This idea is best summarised in the following lines “a disintegration of integrated, productivist roles as the subject becomes fragmented through new regimes of consumption and leisure” (Dunn, 2000, p. 115). Accordingly, people are no longer interested in claiming their affiliation to the same social class, but to the same social entity whose members classify and associate themselves together, forming what we might name ‘social identity’. The latter is defined as: “the way that people classify or associate themselves with others in the formation of social groups and collectivities. Identity, in this sense, is a primarily discursive or cultural construct, to be counter-posed to social class as an objective patterning of social inequalities and life chances” (John et al., 2008, p. 06)

II.3. Towards a Re-conceptualisation of Identity

Broadly speaking, identity is not a fixed entity that we can construct via the harness of traditions or to the point of origin that we can refer to have some absolute and valid return. But then, it is the thing that we keep transforming and reconstructing both historically and culturally. Hence, the paradoxical nature of identity made identity a subject to searching critique. While being attentive to the absurdity of identity, one comes across the obfuscation that identity cannot construct itself anew without the specific encounter with histories. Such understanding has been developed by Hall, who points out that "without its various languages, identity would be deprived of the capacity to enunciate, to speak and to act in the world. To locate oneself within a language is to take up its inter-discursive field of meanings" (Hall qtd by Kobena Mercer, 2017, p. 128). Consequently, each identity can assert itself according to a symbolic 'other'. Apart from the farcicality that arises regarding the actuality of the 'other', it seems that this 'other' is a defining parameter that shapes a constitutive part of identity.

II.3.1. Identity as a Historical Product

There is a strong claim that identity is produced within certain historical conditions. That is to say that the past continues to speak to and through us. In this respect, it could be suggested that the past echoes or personifies the point where one can stand to speak out his/her history. Stuart Hall analogises the relationship between the human being and history as 'the child's relationship to the mother'. This past resembles all that is splendid, plenitude and complete. Albeit this tremendous relationship, yet it is, in Lacanian words, established "after break". In other words, our relation to the past is always a vociferous one, as it is narrated by multi-accentuated voices.

Moreover, the accessibility to the past is attained thru the narratives of the past, memory and fantasies. Indeed, it would be adequate to quote Hall, who points, "The past becomes available to us only insofar as it is something *narrated*, and it is also why such narration is itself always constructed partly through memory, desire, fantasy, and myth" (p. 130). Thus, identity is a matter of positioning or locating the self-vis-à-vis the existing narratives of history.

To put it differently, identities are not names we give to the different attributes we inherit around the self. Hitherto, it includes the different discursive conceptions that could locate certain subjects within the ensemble of discourses that are initially structured based on '*Othering*' (Said, 1979, p. 43). Once more, it is no coincidence, then, to see people transcoding the existing discourses and transforming the binaries of the 'self' and its opponent 'Other' to move into a texture of multi-accentual adjustments. Thus, it is not a movement to question assembles of discourses but to enunciate its *différance* at one. Therefore, this movement does not content itself with the old forms of adjustment but rather claiming its credence via difference as describes by Derrida, who prefers to see it as a movement

> [A]ccording to which language, any code or system of referral in general, is constituted historically as a weave of differences. it is because of difference that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called present element is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be articulated by the mark of the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the past[…] not in order to see opposition erase itself but to see what indicates that each of the terms must appear as the difference of the other, as

> the other different and deferred in the economy of the same. (Derrida, 1984, p. 13)

Foregrounding identity with the polarisation of ‘us vs. them’ made identity articulated and pronounced within the rubrics of difference. The diaspora’s pronouncement of difference is imminent to create what we might call ‘national identity’. Though the latter could be imagined, it assures the feelings of sameness and shared experiences. The British compatriot, Enoch Powell, claims: “The life of nations no less than that of men is lived largely in the imagination” (1969, p. 325). Be it imagined or real, national identities encompass the historical events, traditions, and rituals to epitomise a unified story that could be a container or a repertoire for the shared experiences of a given people as they come to position themselves and be positioned by. This ‘created’ story is viewed by Stuart Hall as follows:

> it [story] gives meaning to the nation as a world of meaning that constructs identification precisely because it helps us to see ourselves in the imaginary as somehow sharing in an overarching collective narrative, such that our humdrum, everyday existence comes to be connected with great national destiny that existed prior to us and which will outlive us (p. 138).

Most importantly, the emphasis on traditions, inheritance and shared experiences helps individuals craft their continuity, if not to say existence, to deal effectively with the setbacks of history.

It is worth noting that the variances at the level of upbringings, the cultural backgrounds, ethnic affiliations, and gender made of national identity articulated across and through difference. The creation of one national identity would be possible if it were constructed under the roof of one polity. The homogeneity and unity of the nation-state remain unattainable, or at least could not be made without a great deal of politics of exclusion. Or else, the nation is made up of various disparate cultures that came to be united by the hegemony of one group due to the forcible subordination of others. Unpredictably, this difference is taken as a signifier of unity, considering that all nations are mongrelised and despotised by virtue. On account of that, it is fitting to quote Hall, who predicts that:

> They bear upon them the traces of the particular cultures, traditions, languages and histories by which they were shaped. The difference is that they are not and will never be unified in the old sense, because they are irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures; belong at one and the same time to several 'homes'. (1990, p. 310)

What is highly remarkable in the last decade is that most of the post-imperial or western nation-states, in general, are precipitating identity. The latter, however, is becoming a parallel phenomenon as the idea of one nation with one national identity under one polity was put under erasure. Confronted with the long history of racism and logo-centrism that set people and their cultures on the margins of the supposedly harmonised 'West', still the ensemble's forms of racism have been once again introduced, mainly with the movement of mass migration of the peripheries into the 'Centre' that took place in the post-imperial era. Thus, it is conjectured that we entered a new age where, in the words of Hall, a "Chain of equivalences" namely: race, belonging, ethnicity, culture, and history established new forms of racism. To clarify further, the primordial genetic purity is being increasingly replaced by cultural belonging.

Nonetheless, this does not impasse or eradicate the genetic-physical differences between races that continue to function broadly. Hitherto, it proves to be a cultural indicator rather than a biological one. This vantage point is observed by Gilroy as follows:

> A form of cultural racism which has taken a necessary distance from crude ideas of biological inferiority now seeks to resent an imaginary definition of the nation as a unified cultural community. It constructs and defends an image of national culture, homogeneous in its whiteness yet precarious and perpetually vulnerable to attack from enemies within and without" (Gilroy 1990, p. 75)

The focus on cultural differences in this context is a strategy espoused to protect the boundaries of the nation-state, insofar as the genetic differences proved to be biologically groundless and fell into the play of culture.

II.3.2. Identity as a Social Construction

It is strongly believed that people, in general, assert their identities when they sense their belonging to the same social category or group. This argument would be very useful for diasporas to process with the experience of being on the frontiers of two communities. As an effort to cope with the diasporic milieu, diasporans tend to classify people who bear a resemblance to the self as 'in-group'. By contrast, people who differ from the self are put outside the frontiers of this group (Turner et al., 1987, p. 20). Hogg and Abrams (2000) envision that people tend to place themselves within a structured society and be existent only to other opposing categories. In other words, people cannot sense their identities or existence per se unless they sense their presence as members of one group (in-group) and in contrast to another category.

One of the things that struck regarding diaspora is the formation of identity. Recent observers have lamented that identity becomes more salient when individuals lose their sense of individuality in the group. To a greater degree, the self can function at any moment when it functions within a group. When people categorise the self at a collective level, it becomes depersonalised. This idea is portrayed as follows:

> Depersonalisation, however, is not a loss of individual identity, nor a loss or submergence of the self in the group (as in the concept of de-individuation), nor any kind of regression to a more primitive or unconscious form of identity. It is the change from the personal to the social level of identity, a change in the nature and content of the self-concept corresponding to the functioning of self-perception at a more inclusive level of abstraction (Turner et al., 1987, p. 51)

Turner claims that the collective self takes over as the individual self seems to lose its salience. Probably the individual's status becomes more salient when it functions within a social context. Human beings tend to focus on the importance of social inclusion and belonging along the process of identification. Therefore, it is hypothesised that being included in a social group helps to establish interpersonal bonds as most individuals seek social acceptance and belonging.

Paradoxically, as humans desire belonging and inclusion in a social group, they feel the need to claim their distinctiveness. Albeit, social inclusion entails assimilation under its deposits wherein members of the same category tend to alter the defining characteristics to fit the group's norms; nonetheless, claiming distinctiveness remains one of the defining features of identity construction. The question that could be raised is whether the need for assimilation can come at the expense of differentiation or whether the objective of being distinctive could be maintained at all levels concurrently.

Among the central tenets of assimilation is that it depersonalises the individual, as it augments the feeling of in-group inclusion. Additionally, there is a strong claim that people tend to view their group through a jaundiced lens. Interestingly, members of the in-group tend to create their communities and show strong allegiances, rejecting the out-groups. This conformity leads to mutual understanding among members of the same group, which lessens differentiation. Asch points:

> The individual comes to experience a world that he shares with others. He perceives that the surroundings include him, as well as the others, and that he is in the same relations to the surroundings as the others. He notes that he, as well as the other, is converging upon the same object and responding to its identical properties. Joint action and mutual understanding require the relations of intelligibility and structural simplicity. In these terms the "pull" toward the group becomes understandable (1951, p. 484)

It is apparent, however, that the self loses its meaning when in-group identity takes over. In other words, it appears a bit provocative or oxymoron to describe an individual qua individual when social identity is being interrogated. Nonetheless, no one can refute that social interaction and having a shared heritage/destiny are pivotal to form personal and social identities.

It is, perhaps, eloquent to suggest that there exists a reciprocal relationship between individuality and social interaction, which are the defining parameters for identity. In brief, identity is a horizontal process in which individuality and sharing the same interests, heritage, and destiny with members of the same group are pivotal for identity construction. Maalouf charts this idea as follows:

> Each one of us has two heritages, a “vertical” one that comes to us from our ancestors, our religious community and our popular traditions and a horizontal one transmitted to us by our contemporaries and by the age we live in. It seems to me that the latter is the more influential of the two, and that it becomes more so every day. Yet this fact is not reflected in our perception of ourselves, and the inheritance we invoke most frequently is the vertical one. (2000, p.102)

Constructing what we might call ‘social identity’ means identifying the self within the same group and being able to see things from the group’s perspective. Thus, the core of social identity is the uniformity of perception among the same group members. Such an understanding might lead us to believe that the self is a prototypical in the group (Hogg and Hardie, 1991). Moreover, the sense of attachment, homogeneity, and concurrence are highly intuited among the members of the same category, providing that they take on a group-based identity. Thus, regardless of the differences that might exist between members of the same group, they identify with each other and hold similar views that are in contract with the out-group members. In short, this idea is momentarily viewed as “a set of interrelated individuals, each of whom performs unique but integrated activities, sees things from his or her own perspective, and negotiates the terms of interaction” (Burke et al., 2000, p.228).

Hence, social identity is attributed to the social environment that the individual interacts with. It refers to the individual’s cognizance of his/her membership to a social group. In this network, identity is a collective construction that includes the living habits of a given group. Therefore, it is subject to changes as people keep interacting and engaging with one another. In this regard, it is envisioned that “L’identité [collective]

repose sur le repli de chacun sur sa différence par rapport à l'autre, sur son désir de s'apposer, de se distinguer, d'être soi et s'inscrit dans une intersubjectivité soit vis-à-vis des (in-group) soit vis-à-vis des (out-group) » (Zarate, 1986). What is more important, identity is « l'object d'une lutte continue pour la renaissance et s'exprime par un réengagement continu (Triantaphyllou, 2002, p. 45)

The individual's sense of himself/herself and the world around is formed through the on-going process of interaction with the society he/she inhabits. Moreover, people tend to construct their identities according to other's perceptions of them and their reactions. Therefore, one might suggest that identity is formed based on social relations. Accordingly, for diasporas, interaction is a one-way direction as it is built on power relations and dominance.

Correspondingly, there is a strong claim that the uniformity of perception that the individual might have amongst the group members can affect the view of the self as a prototypical in the group (Hogg and Hardie, 1991, p.179). This uniformity and homogeneity are expressly strong because of the absence of individuality that is initially replaced by the desire to create in-group identities.

Accordingly, identity construction in the diaspora involves the process of negotiating borders. The latter made identity construction having two dimensions, namely political and individual one. Accordingly, diasporas are apt to construct political identities when they aver their collective identities against the mainstream identity. Calhoun (1994) claims, " we can see that … there are a plethora of claims of 'basic' or 'root' or essential identities that stand on different grounds, that cohabit with different political bedfellows, that open (or foreclose) different insights or coalitions or conflicts" (p.19) . At the same time, each individual can claim his/her perception towards the main group (them). The aforementioned idea can create differentiations within the same collectivity, thus bringing identification into question again. In this claim, Gilroy and Hall advocate that there are differences within the sameness and sameness within the differences.

Albeit that the contextual conditions are commonly different, yet the experience of the diaspora, who are standing on the rim of cultures and nations can still be best described in Fanon’s words that visualises:

> every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality- finds itself face to face with the language of civilising nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonised is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country’s cultural standards (Fanon, 1952, p.18)

At this point, the banished adopts the master’s picture of him/herself as being an inferior entity.

II.3.3. Identity Between the Discourse of Diaspora and the Politics of the Nation-state

The process of diasporisation and the creation of aperture spaces are progressively becoming symptomatic of the global disjuncture. The process of dispersal, whether intended or unintended, is set upon the logic of cultural differences; therefore, creating antagonisms within the created boundaries of the nation-state. It is of considerable importance to point to the labyrinth of the culture of origin that keeps stumbling upon diaspora’s lives. Moreover, identities within the discourse of diaspora are constructed on the basis of difference due to the absence of a one-dimensional line; therefore, the making of the diaspora beings is always positioned within the binary racialised discourse that is created upon race, ethnicity, and cultural variances. They are in the view of Salman Rushdie the "translated" subjects whose cultures, views, and values are interpreted across borders. (Salman, 1991, p. 17)

Theoretically, inhabiting different worlds and dwelling in more than one culture made of home created in multiple world spaces. As a matter of fact, the traces of different worlds, histories and cultures made of the narratives of belonging refuse to submit to coherence; hence, making identity always a multifaceted entity in a fragmentary game whose constructive associates are never unitary or coherent. With regard to the diaspora's context, one has to indicate that the process of holding two different poles together creating de novo terrain urges diaspora subjects to think differently rather than thinking extensively about fundamentalism and prioritising one culture over the other. This idea could be carried out in the light of what the theorist Stuart Hall points, "Move into the future through a symbolic detour through the past. [This] produces new subjects who bear the traces of the specific discourses which not only formed them but enable them to produce themselves anew and differently." (1993, p. 362)

Diaspora is, potentially, a location for thinking beyond the claims of the nation-state. It necessitates our recognition that the allegiance to non-territoriality comes first. Diaspora, thus, holds the potential of thinking beyond the absolute norms of the nation-state and, consequently, the rigid normative parameters of identity. San Juan envisions, "Contemporary cultural studies posit the demise of the nation as an unquestioned assumption, almost a doctrinal point of departure." (2001, p. 52). Given that, debating the boundaries of the nation-state remains a suggestive lacuna for species that proliferate on cultural differences. Furthermore, Juan adds a prolific critique commenting that the locality of diaspora as a site that can afford space for reinventing new identities that are “free from naturalised categories but not from ‘borders, state apparatuses, and other worldly imperatives” (2001, p. 60)

Diaspora identities are produced on the frontier; therefore, they always involve the logic of more than one. Supporting this line of thought, one might arrive at the point that the discordant cultures and the fragmented histories create new identities that do not signify a stable core of the self. The argument of the theorist Hall seems to be very pressing; he views identity along these lines: “identity does not signal that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change; the bit of the self which remains always-already ‘ the same’, identical to itself across time” (Hall, 1990, p.03). For Hall, the idea of the pre-given assumptions that one might construct around oneself appears profitless. Moreover, he is not at ease with the put regarding the theorisation of identity as being identical across time. Thus, identities are subject to radical changes and are mostly produced across differences, and in most cases, antagonistic discourses and positions.

Living in diasporic spaces means being conscious that identities are negotiated within the different discourses of history and comprehending how the self was being positioned along/across histories for they are always constructed within the different modalities of power. Given this line of thought, one might suggest that identities are produced through difference bearing in mind that the world has always been structured into different poles. This, however, brings about the fundamental recognition that the self is found and defined in accordance with its relation to the ‘Other’. Trusting this argument means that identities are functional when they act as points of identification;

thus, they can embrace or render other subjects outside their established margins. In his publication, *New Reflections on The Revolution of Our Time,* Laclau arrives to acknowledge that the construction of social identities is an enactment of power. He further summarises this idea as:

> If… objectivity manages to partially affirm itself it is only by representing that which threatens it. Derrida has shown how an identity's constitution is always based on excluding something and establishing violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles-man/women, etc. What is peculiar of the second term is thus reduced to the function of an accident as opposed to the essentiality of the first. It is the same with the black-white relationship, in which white, of course, is equivalent to human being. 'Woman' and 'black' are thus 'marks' (i.e. marked terms) in contrast to the unmarked term of 'man' and 'white' (Laclau, 1990, p. 33)

Consequently, identities gain their meaning if they are positioned against the 'symbolic order'. Therefore, people can sense their identities when they can sense their attachment to a specific place to find meaning to their representation regardless of the antagonisms this might bring. Michael Pêchaux's critique of this idea has become a watershed. However, Heath put Pêchaux's arguments as:

> individuals are constituted as subjects through the discursive formation, a process of subjection in which the individual is defined as subject to the discursive formation in a structure of misrecognition…Interpellation names the mechanism of this structure of misrecognition, effectively the term of the subject in the discursive and the ideological, the point of their correspondence (1981, pp. 101-2)

Most importantly, the desire to summon places and the plea for understanding how subjects are positioned are always open, incomplete, and interrupted by loss, division and rupture. This perhaps could be applied to the case of diasporas who are striving all the time to connect to a place somewhere, which is basically considered ‘home’. This connection to the natal or original homeland is compared to a child’s relationship with his/her mother. This maternal relationship, to a certain degree, guarantees and assures reality. This idea is best described by Lacan, who puts it as follows: “the child seeing her as a ‘reference point… not his ego ideal but his ideal ego’” (1977, p. 257).

One of the implications of identity is the power of the repeatedly reconstruction image of the body. For Michael Foucault, the body is shaped and reshaped by history. The latter can destruct the body due to the intersection of a series of practices. Accepting this view means that the body becomes pliable. Foucault (1984) assumes the same perspective suggesting, “nothing in man- not even his body- is sufficiently stable to serve as a basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men” (p.63). What could be denoted from this idea is that the body could not be regarded as a true or valid referent to comprehend the individual. Or, probably, the body is a signifier of distortion, providing that it is a subject of historical changes. It is, in the words of Foucault, “the signifier of the condensation of subjectivities in the individual”. (p.63)

There is a strong claim that the self is produced as an object within a racially polarised world. Therefore, it is wise to denote that identity remains a ‘fictive unity’ that is subjected to power. This leads us to the point that identities should be unrestrained because they are hypothetically blemished as far as we discuss the speculations of identification.

> In this sense, identifications belong to the imaginary; they are phantasmatic efforts of alignment, loyalty, ambiguous and cross-corporeal cohabitations, they unsettle the I, they are sedimentation of the 'we' in the constitution of any I, the structuring present of alterity in the very formulation of the I. Identifications are never fully and finally made; they are incessantly reconstituted, and, as such, are subject to the volatile logic of iterability. They are that which is constantly marshalled, consolidated, retrenched, contested and, on occasion, compelled to give way. (Butler, 1993, p. 105)

Based on the argument extended above, we can point to the fluidity of identification. The latter is a direct contributor to identities that are contested and always in process. Following this line of thought might lead us to the enquiry of how identities are constructed within the distinctive logic of positioning the self.

II.3.4. Identity and Conglomerate Notions of Home

The cultural identity for the diaspora population is built upon the sense of belonging to two distinct spaces, specifically the inhabited location and the ancestral homeland. Therefore, the sense of reminiscence and having a place to claim your allegiance becomes inherent within diaspora identities. In this bargain, the endorsed preservation of links with the original homeland restrains the sense of space granted to the diaspora's community within the new land. Hence, the tension between these two oppositional spaces can be problematic when one cannot readjust one place or claim his/her belonging without being completely consumed by it. Therefore, the qualms about where to belong are more than prospective.

Moving away from the inhabited land’s sanctioned and rigid cultural rehabilitation does not completely suggest the deliberate rejection of its values. Nonetheless, the adherence to the traditional and ancestral origins suggests the desire to question the validity of pure traditions as irrelevant to life in the diaspora. Hence, diaspora’s entrapment with the impossibility of confined spaces is problematic as the word diaspora suggests fluidity and heterogeneity. In this claim, Stuart Hall points, “Diaspora is not defined by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity” (1990, p.235).

While home, disputably, remains at the heart of the diaspora process, this sphere of meaning has been thought about in a new and infuriating dimension. In particular, home as a concrete entity with a geographical reference has changed drastically along with the other forms of attachment, belonging, and natal connections. Notwithstanding, the exposure to multi-dimensional precariousness brings to light the potential ambiguities of home. In other words, home is not perceived as an entity, but it is imbued with different meanings. The latter, however, can shape diasporic relations with people and places likewise, as it explains the (dis)engagement from the place of origin.

The meanings of home and natal connections vary radically in the context of multiple host lands because of its association with other categories such as race, nationalism, and the eccentric characteristics of the state wherein specific diaspora functions. The process of diasporisation, to a certain amount, transforms the rigid meanings of territory into homeland and people with whom we share the same experiences into a nation. Differently put, home is no longer a fixed terrain, but it is created by people when they are conscious of themselves as being a part/belong to the same homeland. Paradoxically, the recognition of belonging to the same location, self-identification, and nation-making may happen in the inhabited territory, as it emerges among kin who live extra-territorially. Perchance, it could be suggested that the lamentations of home escalate when national identity is being endangered. Therefore, the plea for a homeland is unrelenting because of the precariousness of national identity in the diaspora.

The accountability to belong to more than one location necessitates the imperative acknowledgement to belong to a place ‘elsewhere’. Interestingly, diaspora subjects may ask questions like what happens when we speak in various registers? Is the project of honouring home means severely the rejection of the values of the inhabited home? All of these inquiries or this enterprise is born out of the exposure to multifarious imperatives. The binarism between the lost connections and the lived moments, here and there, inland and outland for diaspora subjects is based on the discontinuity between the different locations. It is to be noted that the structure or formulation of absolute notions of ethnicity and nation was sifted when owning a territory or settling in land for a long time was no longer an assurance of belonging. Differently put, the lucid grounds of ethnicity started to be re-established due to the multivocality of belonging.

Cogently, diaspora does not challenge the norms of belonging, but it refutes the epitome of a homogenous and lucid nation. The facet of creating one nation with one community is a fantasy that has ground in the diaspora milieu. Moreover, this conceptualisation was exposed even more when diaspora subjects started to be viewed as the ‘parasitic other’. Most notably, diaspora liquefies identity outside its normative claims to be linked to a specific territory. Though non-territoriality released identity from its primary prerogative to a particular region, diaspora populace still share the orotundity of belonging to one nation, though imaginary, might be claimed.

The aforementioned remark can potentially lead us to the view that identity has no affiliation to a specific nation-state or a certain claim of belonging. Nonetheless, diaspora identity is problematic as diaspora itself disrupts the claims of nation-states building. Salman Sayyid's idea is insightful for understanding this point; he envisions:

> The diaspora is not the other of the nation simply because it is constructed from the antithetical elements of nation; it is, rather, an anti-nation since it interrupts the closure of nation. The existence of a diaspora prevents the closure of the nation, since a diaspora is by definition also located within another nation (2000, p. 42)

Conversely, questioning the historical barren within the diasporic narratives has always been played out of the desire to reconnect the place of origin with the inhabited territory. Therefore, diaspora location is a space of the hyphen that recalls universality and plurality. Nonetheless, the perilous limits of tracing connections that diaspora subjects find themselves prone to refer to their reluctance to move beyond the borders of the past history.

The sanctity of home and the chasms between homeland cultures and the recipient one seem dubious within the diasporic conditions. The process of dynamicity is tormented by several implications amongst which the penchant to reaffirm fixed or preceding cultures. It is fitting to comment that, to a greater or lesser extent, the pastiche between the 'host' and 'arrivee' cultures can create malaise that is hard to sustain due to the assertions of centrality and coherence by the host culture. Nonetheless, the moribund of fixity and essentiality of cultures started to be reworked out in favour of hybridity. The latter, however, could add a novel perspective within the emerging cultures. In this context, it is envisioned that "the emerging culture of hybridity, forged among the overlapping African, Asian and Caribbean diasporas, that constitute our common home, must be seen as crucial efforts to answer the possibility and necessity of creating a new 'culture' so that you can live" (Kobena Mercer, 1994, pp.3-4).

The complexities and anxieties that may appear at stake could come into being because of the untainted purities. Gilroy, in this sense, points out, "the idea of hybridity, of intermixture, presupposes two anterior purities... I think there is not purity; there isn't any anterior purity…that's why I try not to use the word hybrid…cultural production is not like mixing cocktails." (1994, pp. 54-5)

Therefore, being in the diaspora does not mean being deprived of the cherished geographical space wherein the self can claim its belonging. Somewhat, it is a sort of detachment from a cultural context within which identity is articulated. The degree of attachment to the native culture rubs the fear of losing one's identity and extinction, as it invigorates the instinct of survival. Following Said's words, one can describe diaspora as "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (2000, p. 173). Hence, diaspora experience probably exposes the broken promises of the mobile/multiple identities sought to be one of the markers of the global millennium that embraces border crossing and flexibility. In other words, probably the issue of diversity and fluidity is camouflage or on the warpath activity that the diaspora populace tends to embrace to overcome the complexities of being in-between two worlds. Or, it is a policy that would assure them firmness. In this vein, Young points out "today's self-proclaimed and dispossession but of a new stability, self-assurance and quietism." (1995, p. 04). Admittedly, these liminal spaces are theorised as schismatic spaces where marginalised entities can take tactical positions to claim their resistance to the hegemonies of the mainstream society.

Diasporas are constantly struggling to define the ‘self’ owing to their multiple attachments to various places. Yet, they fail to sense their attachment to neither the native land nor the recipient one. It is generally believed that individuals tend to claim and sense their identities when they manage to claim their rootedness to a specific place. It is prudent in this claim to quote Malkki, who envisions “people are often thought of, and think of themselves, as being rooted in place and as deriving their identity from that rootedness. The roots in question here are not just any kind of roots; very often they are specifically arborescent in form.” (1992, p. 27)

Accordingly, identities cannot be understood as being anchored or intently positioned into specific places. But rather, identity, according to Thrift, is “polyphonic, that is, plural working in many discursive registers, many spaces, many times” (1997, p. 135). Having stated that means that identity accentuates the acknowledgement that it sometimes flees through time and space. Such perspective may lead us to think about the polyphony of identity; even so, there is a strong claim that individuals need to claim their belonging to a unique and homogenous cultural identity (Ommundsen, 2003, p.194). It is apt to clarify that the paradoxical nature of diaspora creates a plea to ‘fit in’ despite the physical re-location. In other words, instead of being defined by territory, identity started to be created through the feelings of having one shared status of alienation from the metropolitan centre and the sentimental gap that something is missing.

Hence, the failure to be attached or belong to one community could be considered as one of the markers of diaspora identities. This possibly gives credence and legitimacy to arrive at the point that place is no longer the enclosed and coherent terrain. Rather, it is a muster point that connects the momentary spatial dyads of local/international and homeland/host land. As noted previously, the impulse to belong to a ‘place’ that symbolises familiarity and quietness remains attached to ‘global citizens’.

Though the experience of deterritorialisation embraces mobility and agility, yet the politics of homemaking and having a grounded place across worlds is something irrefutable for diasporas. The thickness of the locality is described in the following words:

> This is not to romanticise locality, home or family…while we concur with the implication that the equation of near and close and far and distant becomes blurred, we would still maintain that there are limits to this disentangling. There is a continuing significance of ‘everyday territory’ that requires routine presence and practical recurrence. (Bude and Durrschmidt, 2010, p.490)

Thus, it could be concluded that the past becomes present (or is renewed) as a function involved in making up the present-day moment. Perhaps the problem of the diaspora populace is the stress on the past over becoming (le devenir).

II.4. Fragmented identities and Imagined Communities

Constructing identity within the pathology of nationalism that prevailed worldwide by the second half of the twentieth century made of identity construction dementia. Preserving one national identity is increasingly a sort of infantilism within the global millennium, mainly when the nation state’s borders started to be blurred. Within the context of deterritorialisation and the elasticity of boundaries, nationalism began to deflect from its normative definition of awakening nations to inventing them where they do not exist. Renan points to this idea as follows “Or l’essence d’une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses” (Ernest Renan, 1961, p.892). Conventionally speaking, nations were defined by centres and whose borders were porous and indistinct. One must keep in mind that this antique vision of nations started to be blurred even with the continuum of history. Similarly, Gellner makes an analogous point suggesting, “nationalism is not awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist” (1964, p. 169)

The process of diasporisation designates the loss of the hereditary territory and possessing a new one. Virinder Kalra, Raminder Kaur and John Hutnyk view this process as follows “ Deterritorialisation implies staking identity outside ordinary claims to the land […] Many diasporic groups can be called deterritorialised because their collective claims to an identity do not depend on residence on a particular plot of land” (2005, p.32). This deterritorialisation may cause a sense of multiple belongings or non-belonging to a specific place at all. This, to a certain amount, can create deterritorialised identities. Cohen Robin claims “Identities have become deterritorialised and constructed and deconstructed in a flexible and situational way” (p.02). This might have brought forth the idea that diaspora communities, due to the process of push and pull between homeland and host country, give rise to spatial identities which are negotiated at multiple geographical scales. Along the homeland/host land axis, the inclination to posit dualist conceptualisation of identity remains prospective due to the intricate linkages to the homeland destination.

Another remarkable point for diaspora communities is the construction of national affiliation to hereditary land. This imagined home fends off the feeling of estrangement and its ravages. When the atrophic desire to create imagined communities affirms belonging to a certain people and certain land, such a pronouncement asserts the dissolution of the nation-state in/against which diaspora communities are being conceptualised. Proportionately, the significance of home acquires symbolic parlance for people whom Edward Said perceives as "people on loan" and are secure in the faith that 'returning home' remains a possibility.

In theory, the process of diasporisation defies the myth of the nation-state. Moreover, the fragmented and displaced self of the global epoch penetrates the fixed borders of identity and belonging. The feeling of attachment to a place that does not necessarily exist creates a sense of group-ness or 'we-ness', which is central to diasporic consciousness. Thereupon, the promptness in building connections for creating an 'imagined community', within which they can sense their existence as a diasporic group, develops from the necessity to bolster their ontological existence.

Self-identification is among the inquiries people, through the annals of history, failed to answer due to its elusive and rickety nature. The individual could define the self differently because of different situations. Identity is the matrix whose components are never unitary or static. It is, in the words of Zygmunt Bauman, "a jigsaw puzzle in which quite a few bits (and one will never know exactly how many) are missing" (2004, p. 48). Identity problems could be justified by our strong belief in the essentiality and fixedness of its boundaries. The validity of such credence started to be defied when people on the edge of two cultures began to question the essentialism of issues.

One has to admit that the negotiation of identity has reifying propensities with the proviso that it can be bargained with the bogus notions of psychosomatic totality that are echoed through the clichés of identity as being a fixed and stable entity. It seems apparent that it is necessary to deal with and avoid such perils whenever identity is articulated. At this point, it might be helpful to comment that identity is an issue because of its contending representation. One might, at this level, inquire whether or not identity exists before, and one has to discover the self through the reflection on the world around. Or, probably one exists first and then he/she decides how to live afterwards. To certain extents, one has to suggest that both pictures cannot serve in comprehending identity. The first indicates that the individual has no role in constructing his/her identity as the self has no power to alter its character. This point has been widely opposed by Mill, who stresses the role of men in moulding his character, suggesting:

> We cannot, indeed, directly will to be differently from what we are. But neither did those who are supposed to have formed our character directly will that we should be what we are. Their will had no direct power except over their own actions. They made us what they did make us, by willing not the end , but the requisite means; and we , when our habits are not too inveterate, can, by similarly willing the requisite means, make ourselves different… we are exactly as capable of making our own character , if we will, as others are making it for us. (Mill, *A system of Logic*, 1974, pp.842-3)

Similarly, the second line of thought suggests that identity is only created, and there is nothing out of which identity can be constructed. Avoiding such peril necessitates the confirmation that the self is not given to us, but rather it is something that the individual creates based on his/her experiences and retorts to the world around. In this regard, Charles Taylor aptly suggests “I can define my identity only against the background of things that matter. But to bracket out history, nature, society, the demands of solidarity, everything but what I find in myself, would be to eliminate all candidates for what matters” (1991, p. 40). By the same token, Nietzsche sketches this idea claiming that finding out the value of one’s life and self is attained by creating and moulding it out of history’ basis. Thus, the value of the self is worth when the self-construction is seen as creative based on our reaction and responses to the circumstances. This point made the arbitrariness of identity lose its power.

Differently put, identity is a dialogical construction that drafts the individual’s conception of his/her identity based on other people’s understanding of identity quasi. It is probably adequate at this level to quote Shakespeare’s genuine remark, who points “we come into the world mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms” (1599, p.6). In view of that, it is strongly postulated that human beings depend on others for survival, creating a kind of social feelings that are part of the humanity. It is worth quoting Mill, who focuses on the interconnectedness between one’s sense of identity and the social union advocating:

> The social state is at once so natural, so necessary, and so habitual to man, that, except in some unusual circumstances or by the effort of voluntary abstraction, he never conceives himself otherwise than as a member of a body… the deeply-rooted conception which every individual even now has of himself as a social being, tends to make him feel it one of his natural wants that there should be harmony between his feelings and aims and those of his fellow creatures. (1863, p. 32)

Undeniably, Mill stresses the importance of the social dimension of identity not because of the engagement with others. But, to be exact, it is constructed based on some communal conceptions of how a person with a given identity behaves. In other words, it offers scripts of narratives that people can use to tell their stories and shape their lives afterwards.

Undoubtedly, identity is constructed within a social matrix, which entails the different narratives that assist individuals in grasping their being and, subsequently, make sense of others. Alasdair Maclntyre further ensures this idea, proposing "it is because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others" (1984, pp.212-215). Therefore, these narratives are repertoire that each society creates for its members to erect potential narratives as regards the individual identity. The question that could be raised, at this point, is the extent to which one might need these narratives. A possible answer to this inquiry is the likelihood of these narratives to enable an individual to tell a story that adjoins him/her with others. Thus, these narratives will form a kind of arc on which the individual relies in the project of self-making.

Accordingly, identity remains both a terminus aqua, providing that it is not motivated solely by the individual's desire to sense his being and subsequently releasing the self from autocracy. But rather, the encroachment of the outside world that appears to checks the sovereignty of the self makes the individual unable to balance the two desiderata. This, to a certain extent, justifies why working on identity has been received as hefty, as it is proved to be one of the most pious let-downs in recent years due to the rhetoric of multiplicity of the current age.

It is of no wonder, then, to see the inclination about identity as the latter is a multifarious concept since people tend to see identity through different layers. Some tend to see identity in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, geographical origins, and even social categories. None of this, that is to say, would lead us to exclude or not to take culture seriously. On the contrary, the clamour vis-à-vis culture is logical as culture includes customs, traditions, and any other habits needed by man to be identified within a given society. In this respect, Joseph Raz envisions, “one’s culture constitutes one’s identity” (Raz, 1986, p. 54). Moreover, he points that struggles concerning identity are endemic seeing that the antipathy between cultures is unavoidable. To a startling degree, diversity appears to be symptomatic of culture’s enmity as people are faulted with absolutism and monism.

The deletion of variances within social communities is not always an issue that we need to be condemned. Similarly, accepting pluralism and diversity does not, necessarily, promulgate our festivity and the plea for diversity as it interrupts the homogenous facet that covers the hidden operations of power. It is probably adequate to point to Macedo’s account that puts it as follows:

> Not every form of cultural and religious diversity is to be celebrated, and not all forms of what can be labelled ‘marginalisation’ and ‘exclusion’ are to be regretted or apologised for. Profound forms of sameness and convergence should not only be prayed for but planned for without embarrassment. (2000, pp. 181-2)

Accordingly, one might denote that, for Macedo, convergence demands more than we think. Regardless of the importance of diversity, even individuals who are celebrating or heading for diversity may enact some substantial monism. Conversely, no one can neglect the essentiality of diversity. Yet, it cannot command one's loyalty or the judgments he/she can have anent the cultural practices of the other culture.

Additionally, there are some prospects related to the individual's defection from prudence, specifically, when the issue is interconnected with culture. Insofar, certain reasons would urge us to proceed, precautionary, with identity. To a certain degree, there are some luminiferous inlets connected with identity, mainly culture. The latter is the ether that demands profound work when it is contextualised with identity. This turns to make of culture a slippery concept to deal with, but this does not mean that culture is a lexicon that we need to neglect or drop from our dictionary. But, it needs an appropriate frame as people are increasingly talking about the dialogue between closed cultures.

II.5. Encounters on Identity and Culture

Identity and culture are seen as on-going chats, chiefly when we discuss the societal responses to diversity. These complex and vexed debates are strongly affected by national identity, race, gender, ethnicity, and the politic of recognition and acceptance within the nation-state's borders. Interestingly, such disputes revitalise the rationality of the created borders between cultures and identities. Moreover, these debates came into existence when people started to interrogate the threat resultant of the proximity of strangers to other nations. Additionally, it questions whether or not this proximity could threaten mono-culturalism, if it truly exists, or should it be embraced, providing that people are on course for multiculturalism. In *Strange Encounters*, Sara Ahmed avers that "thinking about multiculturalism must begin […] with an understanding that the coherence of the 'we' of the nation is always imaginary and that given this such a 'we' of the nation is always imaginary and that, given this, such a 'we' does not abolish cultural differences, but emerges through it" (2000, p.101). Accordingly, Sara envisions all of the conundrums that appear to refer to the muddled conceptions of diversity that install itself via difference. This idea is further elaborated by Parekh, who points:

> Multicultural societies throw up problems that have no parallel in history. They need to find ways of reconciling the legitimate demands of unity and diversity, achieving political unity without culture uniformity , being inclusive without being assimilationist, cultivating among their citizens a common sense of belonging while respecting their legitimate cultural differences, and cherishing plural cultural identities without weakening the shared and precious identity of shared citizenship (2002, p.343)

What could be inferred from the lines cited above is Parekh's belief that the call for unity is reasonable for cultural reconciliation in an age wherein cultural uniformity proved to be a fabulous conception. Thus, the plea for diversity is legitimate to create a milieu of tolerance and courtesy in multi-diverse cultural societies. However, what should be noted at this level is the issue of identity that started to drain multicultural societies due to the struggles of pronouncing diversity without total assimilation or weakening one's original roots. In other words, identity started to be a major category that destabilises societies that are meant to live with difference. Thus, identity seems to be among the endemic symptoms thrown up or, more specifically, an enmeshment of multiculturalism. Differently stated, identity is ubiquitous and in a constant dispute given that it shapes the human's thoughts and ideas of how he/she should behave and determines how others envision him/her.

It is of no surprise, thus, to see the enchantment of diversity and difference within multicultural societies. Yet, no one can neglect the hologram of home and the desire to create national identities. The pronouncement of national identities is the shackle that binds members of the society together. It allows individuals to locate their stories within the larger community; hence, identification is its *raison d'être* (P. 16).

Following this vista, one might conclude that the normative and traditional parameters that constitute identity such as ethnicity, culture, and nationalism may need a nuanced development. Notwithstanding, we need to talk about the new politics of identity. The latter is multi-dimensional as it binds up what is personal and social, providing that the individual is a member of a universal community. In, *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity*, Appiah defines identity as "a social category, a label we apply to ourselves and to others" (2018, p. 142). This, however, explains the expulsion and contentions vis-à-vis identity because of the politics of recognition. In other words, the tension might arise owing to recognition per se, for those individuals are waiting to be recognised by others. First and foremost, conflicts are entrenched by recognition as it challenges structures that are relatively fixed.

Based on what has been hitherto elaborated, one might arrive at the point that identity is relational in the sense that we tend to construct our identities based on our relationship with others. Or, perhaps, it is more practical to follow Eakin's prodigy vision, which claims: "our own lives never stand free of the lives of others" (1999, p. 159). In other words, humans cannot construct their identities from nothingness; rather, they are formed through interpersonal relations with a given community. Thus, for certain, identity is relational. But then again, it is located in the sense that it is tied to the place we inhabit or the place we belong. Insofar, it seems that identity creating is a thing that is versatile and is constructed across interweaving antagonistic stories and discourses. However, this claim does not signify that personal identities do not exist, but instead identity building is a result of the interaction between what is personal and collective. Additionally, personal freedom, per se, is contextual and relational as well. Thus, people do not predict the cultural and societal practices; instead, they are imposed on them. Henceforth, people do not make choices, but they are levied in the name of the "culture of the community". (Amartya Sen, 2007, p.152).

On account of what has been said, identity exists at the joint of precarious elements of culture, society, and personal requirements wherein the self is produced. It is this identity whose margins are never secure and whose language is never neat. As well, its world is moulded by certain stories and discourses that could be antagonistic to one another. Thus, identity formation is based on the stories we inherited from the community we belong. Most importantly, the ability to tell the story of your people assures that identity could be constructed with certain linearity. To a certain extent, narrating the story of the people who are on the margins of a certain culture tends to be roundabout and circular, creating a situation of perplexity and crisis at the level of identification afterwards. Albeit what has been said, these narratives play a central role to maintain one's identity in the sense that they are considered as narratives of unity, mainly in cross-cultural contexts. Appiah summarises this idea in the following words: "it matters to people that their lives have a certain narrative unity, they want to be able to tell a story of their lives that makes sense" (1994, p. 160).

Hence, the struggle to narrate a story about the self is a struggle to find a place to belong, and subsequently a struggle to define the self per se. In this esteem, Jonathan Rutherford, in his oeuvre *After Identity*, points out "identity begins to lose its meaning and in losing its meaning it ignites a search for new meaning. We struggle to occupy an identity in order to anchor ourselves in the world. It is the phonetics of our belonging. It demands our reflexivity -how we interact with our race, class, gender, age, religion- and it extends the realm of the ethical" (2007, p. 155)

The intricacies that diasporas might face with regard to identity and the incapability to tell a story could be expounded by the fact that they are culturally orphaned. However, this position might release the individual from the confinements and constraints of cultures to begin a process of reinventing and transforming the self. Nonetheless, the idea of releasing the self from culture remains something romantic and quixotic as it could plant the individual in an outlandish milieu. Following this line of thought, it could be proposed that culture and claiming belonging to a certain soil is a magnet-like that keeps anchoring diasporas, who cannot totally release the self from the state's censorship.

There are certain questions that keep echoing, such as: do people stay with the inherited traditions and cultural assumptions to construct their identities or do they select to move away? Simply put, do people identify themselves based on the inherited traditions, or do they choose their identities in terms of their priorities? These queries seem to anchor whenever identity, mainly for people with different affiliations, is being discussed. It has been hitherto argued that individuals are born with certain pre-given assumptions in the sense that they are born with their identities. Even so, individuals cannot sense their identities if they did not select what to be. In other words, identity is the inner voice that commands/speaks to us and shapes the way we act with others.

It seems relevant to say that identity is moulded based on the genetic traits that are reshaped apropos the individual's basic needs. Following this vantage point, it is adequate to follow Appiah's words , who contends: " you have to work with others inside and outside the labelled group in order to reframe them so they fit you better; and you can do that collective work only if you recognise that the results must serve others as well" (Appiah, 2018, p. 217-8). This brings to mind that recognition within a certain group is created as nations themselves are made. Even if the idea of creating nations seems astounding, but nations could be invented as they could be reinvented.

II.6. Diaspora as a Topography of Resistance

In a very crude logic, diaspora has always been mapped with the politics of resistance, providing that people have always been positioned differently in unequal and based power relations. It is generally theorised that spaces of domination are a locus of purification and exclusion. Most importantly, the powerful communities are attentive to creating borders for themselves and others whom they incline to keep outside the created borders. Therefore, diaspora as being a locus for dislocated communities can be considered as a space of resistance. This space, however, is saturated with the politics of inclusion/exclusion and the cracking sounds of belonging to various locations.

Moreover, the desire to resist is strongly connected to the authority that tries to superimpose itself onto physical spaces; thus, making people powerless and have no room for manoeuvre. Resistance, in this case, cannot change people's perception of the external world. But, it is a struggle to produce inner worlds where marginalised people can refute and purify space from control and surveillance.

As all nations are heading for diversity and multiculturalism, Britain with its varying communities, is transforming to a new space that embraces communities regardless of their various histories, background, and experiences. Notwithstanding, this ambivalent situation helped Britain be a vibrant society with its rich diversity created by the drift of its ex-colonial subjects, who transformed it into a ‘meeting place’. It is worth noting that the shift from a nation that has always been protective of its borders to a realm of communities is a controversial issue. It is indispensable to point that the balance between the necessities to treat people equally, despite their differences and the need to keep the social cohesion, remain a blunt choice that Britain is prone to. The question of whether Britain is a nation that is at ease with its internal difference could be an unresolved one. This question is modelled in the following lines:

> Will [Britain] try to turn the clock back, digging in, defending old values and ancient hierarchies, relying on a narrow English-dominated , background-looking definition of the nation? Or will it seize the opportunity to create a more flexible, inclusive, cosmopolitan image of itself? (Parekh, 2000, p.15)

It is noticeable that moving towards cosmopolitanism is among the chanted scenarios in today’s Britain. Therefore, the need to create, as Gilroy prefers to put it, a ‘planetary humanism’ rests the only alternative that could enable Britain to deal , meritoriously, with the abhorrence felt towards the sanctuary-seeking people who formed diaspora communities in Britain. The romanticised vision of building a homogenous/diverse nation without amputating the non-white ethnicities seems to be Britain’s dictum to the emergence of a culturally diverse citizenry. Regardless of the enchanted claims to proceed toward multiculturalism, the politics of fear or the faux-wholesomeness of nations and cultures appear to be reactionary in reverting Britain’s monoculturalism.

Forasmuch as Britain is destined to be ‘a meeting place’ or a location that intersects parcels of spaces, cultures, and connections resulting from of the ‘liquid times’. Nonetheless, it turns to be a place of contact and conflict. In other words, it is a place that can be antagonistic and diverse concurrently. It is worth noting that multiculturalism could be an opponent to Britishness, or at least they are discordant and incompatible with one another. Henceforth, the fear of multiculturalism is a pretext owing to the rethinking of the national identity. Joseph Carnes advocates, “The history of the nation has to be reimagined and recounted in a way that enables citizens of immigrant origin to identity with it” (2015, p.266).

Consequently, the idea of preserving the national identity is a wobble that demands a whimsical approach as far as identity is becoming entangled in two contrasting discourses: the discourse of safeguarding one’s national identity and the discourse of embracing multiculturalism. Hence, the maintenance of one’s national identity has become something ordinary and crucial in defining people’s lives and their relations, and that this ordinary becomes more regular.

The politics of resistance rests a modality in diaspora’s lives, providing that these communities have abandoned a country without gaining a new one, and they lost their nationality without acquiring one in return. It seems apparent that the politics of resistance towards the newcomers has become tantamount or a pyre to the diaspora’s experience. To grapple with others and share the same space, which is initially meant to be for the original populace, entails opposition and hatred towards the immigrants who are trying to transform the nation and, subsequently, challenge and reverting the national identity that is intricately entangled by its fixedness in the broader world.

To a certain amount, diaspora could be seen as a landscape of resistance when the nation preserves its fragmented borders. Britain is no exception when ethnic groups, coming from the commonwealth nations and their descendants, started to challenge its fixed borders and reified ‘Britishness’, claiming it to be an open nationality rather than a closed one. Hence, the integration of diasporic communities into nations is detrimental since it plays havoc with the nation's cohesion and subverts the nation into a robust that cannot deal with diversity with certain easiness.

In point of fact, it could be a bit unforeseen and even provocative to see that nations are made up of ethnic groups whose cultures are dancing around each other. However, such a perspective is a liberal one that remains a mere choice for ethnicities who cannot deliberately face agency and forget that the nation-state is a hive rife with its populace's cultural credentials. This idea is manifested in Amartya Sen's words, who points, "A nation can hardly be seen as a collection of sequestered segments, with citizens being assigned fixed places in predetermined segment" (2007, p. 165). The bitter truth is that, apart from the fetish views of multiculturalism, the fences between racial and ethnic groups are re-established and redrawn because of the failure of the inter-communal dialogue that is initially fostered by hostility and the fiasco to be opened up to diversity.

Accordingly, all of the arguments elaborated so far pivot around the importance of multiculturalism and the necessity of re-establishing new precincts apropos borders-maintenance since establishing social cohesion in culturally diverse nations is proven to be miraculous. Michael Murphy explains this critical issue as follows:

> Multicultural policies promote a form of ethnic ghettoization that encourages the members of different cultural groups to retreat behind the boundaries of their own group-based identities, to focus on what divides them from their fellow citizens rather than on what they have in common (2012, p. 114)

What could be understood from the lines mentioned above is that multiculturalism is often liable for its inequity. It seems that ethnicity tends to get in its way, keeping in mind that people, in the broad spectrum, tend to give a priority to the shared values, cultures, and the ancestral home. Most prominently, one has to be alert that the diversity among and within one group made it difficult to achieve social cohesion or live parallel lives without any antagonisms.

Additionally, it is worth pointing that the attentiveness of these groups is moved out from the ethnically intense areas to form what we might label ‘collective identities’. The latter, however, can strengthen the solidarity amongst the members of this group as it helps to polarise the culture of the ‘dominant’ group; nonetheless, this ethnicity could create sharp distinctions and oppositions amongst closed identities. In brief, diaspora experience is bound up to the conundrums of inclusion and exclusion even within members of the same group due to power structures. And the lines between the two spectrums need to be chatted, given that the strain between inclusion-exclusion is a quandary that hinges on the stories of diaspora.

It is worth pointing that the enigmas of inclusion and exclusion within the sphere of the diaspora are bound to power, agency, and the sense of commitment to one’s ancestral land felt by diasporas. The feelings of being connected to a certain cultural background that virtually exists outside the frontiers of the inhabited state structures the diaspora’s lives and provides them with a sense of roots and identity. In other words, it creates a point of reference they can refer to when they are barred from the boundaries of the inhabited location (Parekh, 2006, p. 150). Most importantly, the wobble of losing a reference, the feeling of being culturally drifted, or the lack of grounding destabilises diaspora’s being. Hence, the incommensurability between being ‘a cultural alien’ and the desire to be a ‘citizen of the world’ creates a dilemma that is proved to be a prolepsis to diaspora experience.

Accordingly, it is appropriate to note that humans cannot be detached from their cultural grounds. Thus, the politics of exclusion from a given culture could be traced back to the cultural agency to another culture that is, in the main, considered opponent and antagonistic to the target culture, albeit the cherished claims of multiculturalism. Parekh has enunciated a constructive comment around the issue of multiculturalism, claiming:

> For the multiculturalist, we are human beings but also cultural beings, born and raised within and shaped by a thick culture, which we can no doubt revise and even reject but only by embracing some other culture. […] by engaging in a critically sympathetic dialogue with other cultures, it [the culture] comes to appreciate its own strengths and limitations, becomes conscious of what is distinctive to it as well as what it shares in common with them, and enjoys the opportunity to enrich itself by judiciously borrowing from them what it finds attractive and can easily assimilate. (2002, p. 141)

The intercultural dialogue for cosmopolitan communities could be productive when the boundaries between nations, whether imaginary or cultural, are opened up. Hence, ethnic groups within the diaspora are not seen solely as human beings but rather as cultural reps of their communities. This, to a certain degree, is explained by the filial and cultural ties these groups manage to maintain. But, preferably, it is value pivoting on Steven Vetrovec’s remark, which points to the failure of the intercultural dialogue on account of the exclusion of certain ethnicities from the places of encounter. To borrow

Vetrovec's term, it is seen as 'corridors of dissociation' (2015, p. 224). Thus, the created barriers that are initially established between cultures are socio-spatial ones. In other words, they are socially produced by communities that show their reluctance and inaptitude to head for multiculturalism to preserve their spaces from alien encounters.

II.7. Diaspora Promiscuities

In its most recent connotation, diaspora, as being at the edge of production appears as a category that permits the diasporised to deny the emergent forms of cultural identity to create new models due to the cultural exchange. The assertion of culture and identity are illustrious because of the process of trans-valuing the cultural differences. It is probably adequate to suggest that the lure of cultural purity had always hypnotised people, or probably the diasporised being clearly recognises the importance of syncretism without the existence of anterior purity. So, it is in the words of Gilroy:

> Whether the process of mixture is presented as fatal or redemptive, we must be prepared to give up the illusion that cultural and ethnic purity has ever existed let alone provided a foundation for civil society. The absence of an adequate conceptual and critical language is undermined and complicated by the absurd charge that attempts to employ the concept of hybridity are completely undone by the active residues of that term's articulation within the technical vocabularies of nineteenth-century racial science. (1995, p. 09)

The passage above denotes the truism of hybridity as ethnic limpidness and purity of race and cultures proved to be one of the fantasies created by nations to preserve their borders. It is, possibly, the memorandum of hybridity that reassures the jamboree of pluralism and defies any fixed values. Thus, the extreme fixedness and purity are not revealed to exist, but rather these are, first and foremost, pretexts created by the nation-state credentials. At any rate, the proviso to move beyond the singularity that has characterised the traditions of nation-state building to a more lucid vision that calls for the expiry of borders has acquired a saliency. The latter, however, offers an alibi to the stipulation of building new communities that are increasingly heading for universality.

It is legitimate to point that the interaction between people of various cultural and ethnic groups will lead to an intercultural dialogue between ethnic groups regardless of their cultural differences. The conversation between these groups is tangible as it makes interaction easier and with less friction. Appiah puts it in the following words:

> conversations across boundaries of identity-whether national, religious , or something else-begin with the sort of imaginative engagement you get when you read a novel or watch a movie or attend to a work of art that speaks from some place other than your own. So I am using the word ‘conversation’ not only for literal talk but also as a metaphor for engagement with the experience and the ideas of others. And I stress the role of the imagination here because the encounters, properly conducted, are valuable in themselves. Conversation doesn’t have to lead to consensus about anything, especially not values; it’s enough that it helps people get used to one another. (2007, p. 85)

Admittedly, Appiah is stressing the centrality and focalisation of the dialogue between cultures and ethnic groups. At the same time, however, it is imperative to note that the intercultural dialogue could be multi-marooned and dissimilar as it includes elements of different kinds. Moreover, the recognition of other cultures as being equal conversational partners remains a mere possibility. The intercultural dialogue, therefore, is not a verbal interaction that aims at fostering a mutual understanding between the different individuals, but it is a dialogue that operates at many levels to open up cultures to engage in dialogues. To elucidate this idea further, it is desirable to take Uberoi's vision, which comprises "Intercultural dialogue introduces communities to the limits of their beliefs and practices and helps to illuminate the need to reform them" (Uberoi and Modood, 2015, p. 08). Accordingly, this dialogue halts the cultural bound containers by setting off the different values, assumptions, and lifestyles and putting them into question.

Conclusion

By the middle of the twentieth century, the question of identity started to be a matter. Previously, few talked about identity in relation to race, ethnicity, class, and nationality, considering it utterly personal and particular. Progressively, people started to see identity in terms of the shared experiences and values with others. In other words, identity started to matter when we questioned other people's perceptions and what they call upon us. Hence, it could be functional when our inner voice calls for a crystal image of who we are and how others view us. Identity in this context is not chosen or imposed on us, but we decide what to be to some extent. Put another way, identity is sensed only when others get a grip on us, as they shape the way we see ourselves and others. The rigid perception of identity as a pre-given or fixed entity could explain the hitches as to identity.

The last decades witnessed the emergence of a cluster of values related to the relationship between an individual and others and the intercultural contact between people irrespective of the habitual variances that grip the narratives of the cultural attachments. As well, identity started to be treasured according to the place of its bearers within the hierarchies of power. Accordingly, minorities within a metropolitan centre cannot sense their identities without the rubrics of recognition and acceptance. Conceivably, societies understand and organise their lives differently, and most importantly, they see their cultures and identities as monism so that their culture is true and all other cultures fall short of it.

It is eloquent to mention that today's global milieu embraces the dialogue across cultures and geographical locations at local and international levels. The aptitude to converse across differences without prioritising the filial, cultural, and ancestral bonds, regardless of its polyvalent nature, is prescribed in an interconnected world. The centrality of the intercultural dialogues between cultures and ethnic groups is bifocal inasmuch as it alludes to the mutual understating and focuses on both the minority's and majority's values and perspectives. Thus, this intercultural dialogue is compromise-like that aids each contestant to see the issues from the other's viewpoint from the one hand and address, thoughtfully, the different reasons for skirmishes between different ethnic groups.

On many levels and in different ways, the intercultural dialogue could be considered something lofty imposed by the ethos of globalisation. But it is important to note that the ability to converse with people of different cultural backgrounds can familiarise communities with the restrains of their antecedent rehearses to more laisser-faire ideas where people can get used to each other without being tense to protect their cultural and national bequests. It is probably alerting to talk about the intercultural dialogue in diaspora discourse due to the forms of interaction between the major culture and other ethnic minorities. This encounter, nonetheless, leads to a crisis at the level of identification that could be explained by resistance from the mainstream society and the levels of allegiance and attachment to an erstwhile culture.

The preoccupation with identity for diasporas is a detour that is metonymic to the unsuccessful dialogue between the self and its other. Diaspora identity is a parable on the risks of identity as being personal and a pre-given entity. It is possible to propose that being in the world is strictly bound to how others view and treat the self. Accordingly, identity construction depends on the individual’s ability to make sense of the self in relation to others. In short, the discourse of diaspora is a scenario that wrenches individuals out of the rigid presupposition with regard to nations and cultures to engage us in a more pliant world that is renovating itself.

Chapter Three: Homelessness, Estrangement and Fragmented Identities in Phillips' *The Lost Child* (2015)

> *Without historical remembrance there would be no beauty, so that we are led to the position of being required to assert the authority of either nature or history, of space or time, but their confluence, the assertion that one needs the other. This requires as well that our concept of natural beauty change as well with time.* (Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 1970)
>
> *History provides arguments and incentives for self-identification and group cohesion*. (Hroch, 2010)
>
> *I had learnt that in a situation in which history is distorted, the literature of a people often becomes it history, its writers keepers of the past, present, future. In this situation a writer can infuse a people with a sense of their own unique identity and spiritually kindle the fire of resistance*. (Phillips, *The European Tribe*, 1987)

Introduction

One of the apparent tropes in contemporary writing of British authors is the engagement of the colonial archives with Britain's changing nature due to the clashes between cultures and races. However, such engagement is abruptly shaped by the dialogue and the encounter of two worlds that of the 'metropolis', that is represented by the British Canon and its 'ex-colonial' subjects, who are trying to revise and rewrite the lost histories; thus, claiming the presence of those lost and invisible children of the empire whose presence/absence starts to stamping ground in contemporary British fiction. Caryl Phillips is among the British writers who gather up broken pieces of history and try to reinstate the "shattered histories" (Antilles, 1998, p. 69).

Phillips' *The Lost Child* condemns the obliviousness concerning the transatlantic slave trade, as it spots light on the marginalisation of the "dark others" in today's Britain. Moreover, the novel projects the struggle of characters with abandonment, loss, and denial and whose stories have been rendered absent from the endorsed history, yet are entwined into the British narratives in Phillips' works. Remarkably, the novel revolves around three different stories: the story of Monica Jackson and the troubles she encountered with her mixed-race sons, the story of the unnamed biracial boy begotten by Earnshaw, and the story that Phillip imagined regarding Emily on her deathbed. Noteworthy, Phillips efficaciously brings these different stories with different characters from different cultural backgrounds; nonetheless, none of the characters is faced with the choice between the two adversary cultures. Or rather, all of them are faced with the ambivalent situation of being part of Britain and yet not of it.

This chapter is an attempt to analyse the experience of detachment and deportation from the native land and how it affects one's journey of self-identification. *The Lost Child* (2015) effectively bridges the gap between the British world and the Caribbean as Phillips calls for adopting British stories routed towards transforming the British identity. Apart from the net of chains he creates between worlds and geographical puts, Phillips points to the bewilderment his characters faced due to the centrality of the past and memory that kept to be recaptured. This chapter, therefore, is envisioned to pursue the debate raised regarding home and whether Britain can still bear a resemblance to a home that is supposed to be safe and welcoming. More accurately, the objective here is to examine the extent to which one's sense of identity could be entrenched in one's history. This chapter, in specific, examines Phillip's treatment of the relationship between identity and one's conception of home that could lead to a constructive undertaking of the self.

III.1. Breaking the Silence in Phillips' *The Lost Child*: Something Endemic Recaptured

The Lost child (2015) combines the historical forfeiture when individuals lost connection between two different worlds. The novel sets into conversation the English realm, represented by Philips's inclusion of Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, and writings of the Caribbean and its dispersions. Phillips's work, *The Lost Child*, recounts the encounter between eighteenth century's Britain and the Black Atlantic that led to the emergence of the Caribbean in England. In view of that, the novel is an investment in the unvoiced orphans, outcasts and lost children of the empire. Most importantly, it recounts the stories of the disjointed families. Moreover, it condemns the obliviousness of the transatlantic slave trade, for the novel opens up with the journey that is described as: "On her journey to the Indies it was the rats that had inspired the greatest fear, for they fed with conviction and grew huge and profited handsomely from their passage" (Phillips, 2015, p.5).

The novel, therefore, opens up with the journey of the anonymous character with her seven-years-child and points to the different difficulties they faced while they are seeking their own space in a hitherto colonial world. Phillips describes the hostility that his character felt along her journey as follows "she deeply resents the fact that these people look pitifully upon her son, whom she has ruined by the example of her own indolent misery. Their foolish tongues used to ask her: Can the boy speak English? Can he dress hair? Is he sober? Is he fit to wait upon a gentleman?" (p.6)

Regardless of the different themes elaborated in the novel under discussion, one should not miss Phillips's proclivity to map the experiences of those who had been dispersed. At the very beginning of the novel, Philips charts the hardships of those deported from the Black Atlantic to England. For, as a matter of fact, Phillips points how Liverpool and Leeds, which were the most energetic participants in the slave trade, turned to be places where profits and loss are more important than human lives.

The aforesaid idea is best elaborated when the nameless character felt bereft and failed to re-establish the self in employment, providing that no one can employ a lady with a child. The character depicts the idea along with the following words "Mother and child were now little more than a burdensome secret, and although her benefactor continued to press money upon her, it was manifest that he was growing progressively detached."(p.11).The quoted lines signify the importance of the material gain that initially eviscerates the ethical accountability of the landlords. Interestingly, this idea is carried out in the penultimate section of the novel to describe the business with Antigua. Phillips portrayed this idea via the portrait of Joseph's children who failed to conceal their frustration because of their father's looming absence "of course, the children had often been told that their father had little choice but to conduct dealings in Liverpool with men whose hearts were hard like stone, and whose Christian charity went no further than the looking glass" (p.243)

Like any other nineteenth-century literary production such as *Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, and Wide Sargasso Sea, The Lost Child* negotiates the burden secret of the slave trade. This idea was described as a "burdensome secret" resulting from the relationship between the English landlords and their slaves. Phillips represents this idea as a drain when he referred to the unnamed former slave abandoned on the ports of Liverpool and her Earnshaw (Phillips, p.11).

Remembering the history of the slave trade is necessary as the madness of slavery continues to infect the lives of the Caribbean populace and their far-flung diasporas. Moreover, the retention of the past is deeply connected to the feelings of estrangement resultant from the truancy of the solid archives of history. Following this vista, it is adequate to follow Dionne Brand's idea that points out "We forget who we were. Nothing is changing; it is just that we are forgetting. All the centuries past may be one long sleep" (*At the Full and Change of the Moon,* 1999, p. 234). Hence, it is apparent that the process of slavery remains endemic, or people are probably alert to the long shadows of history. It is in the words of Phillips, "where history is so physically present, yet so glaringly absent from people's consciousness" (*The Atlantic Sound,* 2000, p. 93).

Interestingly, Phillips stresses the idea of the troubled self because of the lost past in his novel when Ben, the son of Monica Johnson, expresses his disguise when he jetton the letters and the postcards he received from his mother. "After she died, Ben threw out all of her letters and postcards to him. He also got rid of the newspaper clippings about finding Tommy, and the articles to do with the trial of Derek Evans." (*The Lost Child*, p.202). Though the material records or the archives left by Ben's mother were purged, the past's traumatic experiences kept haunting Ben's life. This idea is demonstrated in the chapter "Childhood" that projects Ben's tragic life due to remembering the painful memories from his childhood. Philips undoubtedly projects how Ben's mother and her chronic depression affect him enormously. Ben mentions, " When I opened my eyes, I could hear Mam crying, but I didn't know what to do. I was the eldest, but I didn't have any answers for this situation. ..I was nearly seven and trying to be responsible" (p.141)

It is worth mentioning that Rhys and Condé projected the encounter between 'centre' and 'margin', stressing or focusing more on the Caribbean perspective; Phillips, however, interwove his characters between two different worlds and cultures without extremely regarding Britain as the 'other place'. Hence, Phillips' characters are not prone to the choice of selecting the Caribbean culture over the British one. Rather, they are in an ambivalent situation where they are "of and not of" the inhabited terrain (Phillips, *A New World Order*, 2001, p.4). The novel, thus, is juxtaposition to the stories of Rhys and Condé besides the projection of the recent history of multiracial Britain. This, to a large extent, explains the reason behind the different tales recounted by Philips. In doing so, the novel is an orchestration of manifold filaments given that it includes the story of Monica Johnson and her mixed-raced sons, the story of the unnamed former slave and her boy who is fathered by Earnshaw, and the story that Phillips imaged vis-à-vis Emily Bronte on her deathbed.

Olosuga in *Black and British* prophesies that recapturing the past and the ancestral stories is believed to be one of the ways in which black people and their white allies plea to secure a future for the nation. Even so, both characters in the studied novel, Tommy and Ben, expressed the desire of their mother to disguise the past. Ben foreshadows this idea as: "Tommy eventually discovered, the idea of talking about family in general was completely off the agenda as far as their mother was concerned." (*The Lost Child*, p. 196).

Phillips, through his work, wants to stress that history transcends the fractured families and the lost children to include the reclamation of the literary connections that he manages to establish via the inclusion of Bronte and Rhys. In other words, Phillips believes in the power of trap connections, which go beyond the unity of time and events that could be common between one literary work and another. Wendy Smith views *The Lost Child* as “a riff on Bronte’s masterpiece… like a jazz improvisation: Phillips plucks the themes that resonate most deeply with him and transposes them into a polyphonic narrative” (Smith, *The Boston Globe*). The analogy between the jazz music and Phillips writings could be explained by the plurality of narratives. Readers might not fail to notice the polyphonic and rotation of narratives employed by Phillips as he related discordant and unrelated stories together. Most importantly, the stories interwove between past and present by manifold characters that are mostly unheard and whose stories continue to threaten and jeopardise their existence per se.

It is applicable in this context to clarify that most contemporary writings, among which Phillips’ tend to stem upon the unheard stories seeing that these stories were to certain amounts considered non-erudite. Given that, most contemporary authors portray the ambivalent situations of their characters without neglecting to stem upon the historical context as far as they are, hypothetically, making their plots grounds to rethink and rework the power of the past. This idea is further expounded by Linda Hutcheon, who envisions contemporary writings to be: “both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages.”(1988, p.05)

Phillips’ narratives can be considered an investment in the colonial historical archives. His speculation about the historical concerns might be justified by the desire to recount stories from the perspective of those who had never been heard before. Most importantly, unheard individuals have always been represented as being disqualified and whose knowledge is ineffectually conceptual. Consequently, the ideas as mentioned formerly led to the emergence of these small histories or what Legg refers to as "petits récits". The latter, however, consternates the fragility of the historical veracity forasmuch as they mend the discursive cracks of the afar written stories. In this claim, Bhabha comments:

> They have been able to release into this discourse, into the sphere of their concerns, forms of historical contingency, small events, petit récit, a number of what I would call enunciatory sites. So there is a very complex re-writing of what the history of a colonised nation would be, what the history of transformative, anti-colonial moment would be (1993, p. 06)

What could be inferred from the lines quoted above is Bhabha's appraisal of the role and power of the histories. The excavation of history can probably be explained by the inclination to construct identity and ground the self. Following this vista, one might follow Djebar's claim that suggests: «la repossession de l'identité ne peut passer que par l'histoire. Il faut rétablir la dialectique passé-présent" (Djebar, 1997, p.58).

In line with the idea of reworking history and past remembrance, it goes with saying that the inclusion of others' stories is a strategy followed by Phillips to resist what Bhabha refers to as a "sentence of history" that was clearly personified by Ben's dive into past memories irrespective of the pain they entailed. As well, Phillips's pledges with the past could be elucidated in Ladent's words that entail "writing back to [him] self, which might be described as a form of auto-intertextuality" (Ladent, p.85). Interestingly, there is a dialogue between Phillips' characters in which his previous works enriches and deepens his new novel. In this context, Phillips admits that *The Lost Child* is "in conversation with [his] earlier works, but [he is] not quite sure what is going on in the conversation" (Phillips in conversation with Agathocleous).

Plausibly, the resemblance between stories is highly remarkable in Phillips' narratives. Readers may not fail to notice that Phillips' character, Monica, is having some psychological problems that are initially boosted by her incarceration and custody. The latter, however, resembles the imprisonment of his character, Emily, in his work *Cambridge* and is analogous to Rhys' character, Antoinette, in her oeuvre *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Most importantly, both Monica and Antoinette fail to see or recognise themselves. Antoinette says, "There is no looking-glass here" (Rhys, 1966, p. 117) and Monica, similarly, points "there is no mirror in this room" (Phillips, 2015, p. 236). The powerlessness to recognise or see the self suggests their inability to feel the self and its ontological existence.

Conversely, Monica starts to sense her existence when her visibility started to be denounced. Moreover, her revulsion was further extended when she felt her existence in London for the first time due to her pregnancy. This idea is portrayed as follows:

> Londoners nodded and made eye contact when they passed her in the street, and passengers on the bus actually stood up and offered her their seats. Al of a sudden she was visible, and she wasn't sure how she felt about it, but it annoyed her that she could still feel herself blooming, a particular northern flower in an ominously arid southern landscape. (Phillips, p.37)

Remarkably, there is a strong analogy between Rhys' and Phillips' characters. The quintessence between the characters is carried out by Phillip when he referred to the former slave as a "crazy woman" (p.03). Moreover, this state of mind is again echoed in the work when Monica lived in the attic room. The lady was described by Monica "as a crazy lady who lives in the first floor". This troubled self or instability is recurrent in

Philips' novel to portray Monica whose husband tells her that her "mind is full of all sorts of craziness" (p.37).

Phillips' decision to select characters who are mostly unable to sense their existence or suffering from mental disorders reinforces and echoes the fragmented self and the sense of loss in his narratives. But, most importantly, Phillips 'riddle of the lost child' remains eponymous to demarcate the state of being lost or abandoned kids in his novel, an issue that is recurrently repeated in most of his works. To put it differently, Tommy's disappearance in the story remains a conundrum that readers probably fail to solve by the end of the work.

Though conceptions apropos abandonment may vary in scope, some of the common strands that most characters share are desertion. As Tommy and Ben were orphaned from a very early age, the same feeling of desertion and retraction is extended to reach daughters. For instance, readers can notice that not only Julius's daughter "from his first marriage" is abandoned, but Monica and Emily are abandoned as well (p. 33). It is worth noting that Monica was abandoned by virtue as she resists the rigid confines imposed. Most significantly, the dysfunctional relationship between her and her father, who was admittedly benevolent, projects the patriarchal modality.

Undeniably, the patriarchal modality caused certain problems to Monica, who felt inferior and worthless. She told Julius, "I made a mistake, Julius." she paused. "Sometimes it occurs to me that maybe I am not worth loving. I know I've not got the looks, and I am hardly the outgoing, vivacious type" (p. 52). What adds to the intensity of her estrangement and hostility is Julius's attitudes, who comments on her escape claiming "And you think running away with the children is going to help you? You've already run away once. You think you're strong enough to do it again, this time with two children" (p. 53)

The novel recounts different instances of the diasporic phenomenon, considering that it records the life of various characters of different generations by way of pointing at the experience of the slave trade to reach the traumatised experiences of diasporas. The latter, however, is consequential to the process of up-rootedness that is outwardly triggered by the slave regime and the white supremacy at large, leading to a racial bias regardless of the attempts to make Britain a multicultural nation. This racial bias and traumatised experience of the slave trade that was extended to racial segregation urged this populace to be dysfunctional as individuals and parents correspondingly. Monica apologises to Ben for being a dysfunctional mother, saying:

> I am sorry, she said. I supposed I should have kept a closer watch on both of you. Will you forgive me? She looked like all the life had been knocked out of her, and I wanted to say that it wasn't her fault, but I just couldn't get the words out. (p.177)

Debarred from accusing his mother to have the full responsibility behind their estrangement and Tommy's loss, Ben has been severely impaired, and in some cases, defaced and blamed himself, claiming:

> Inside I was angry at her […] I don't know where I got the idea from, but I used to imagine it was fault that Dad had left us both. I couldn't think of anything I'd done wrong, but somehow I just got the sense that I was the problem, and this just made me even more frustrated. (p.152)

Hence, if we consider the lines cited above and take into consideration Albert Memmi's accounts vis-à-vis the ills of colonialism and the slave trade, then we will not miss comprehending that the distancing of the self of characters like Monica, Julius, the unnamed former slave, and even Ben has resulted in distorted perceptions as regards the self and the other. Nonetheless, the embrace or remembrance of the past that most characters petitioned for is seen as an illusory escape; hitherto, it helps preserve the erstwhile past /culture.

Following this line of thought, it goes with saying that this discordance between the present and the past illustrates the discordance between the claims of the plurality of visions and reality on the ground. Readers can notice that Ben, a brown-skinned kid, fails to comprehend why he was offended by Helen and Lester Nisbett, who asked him whether or not he had clues to Pluto Shervington's song. Lester insults him by not saying the truth, commenting:

> He's not telling the truth, you know. You know that, don't you? Helen tried to suppress her giggles, but she wouldn't meet my eyes. Tell me something, why are your lips so fat? And it's like you've got wool on your head instead of hair. And what's that white stuff on your skin? By your elbows. It's all ashylike. Jesus, you look like a fucking burned sausage. Helen burst out laughing, but she still wouldn't meet my eyes. (p. 184)

One possible explanation for Ben's status is his hostility and his constant desire to establish accordance with the external world. This inability to reach a compromise is exposed in Phillips' narrative, where neither the stories told nor the characters hang together. This, subsequently, made the work a "frustrating patchwork novel" (Alex Clark). Possibly, what urged reviewers to consider it a patchwork novel that is primarily an exasperating one is that readers till the end of the oeuvre are not recognisant of where the narrative is heading. Or, more interestingly, it could be suggested that the work is an allegory to Britain's situation, considering that the multiplicity of people and cultures that England is currently heading for made the novel a patchwork one.

III.2. Caryl Phillips Between the Spectres of Memory and History

In the last decades, past remembrance and memory have acquired an immense contemporaneity, chiefly within the discourse of the diaspora. Unexpectedly, today's world is characterised by the interest in history-telling. In this regard, Kerwin Lee Klein points out that we are in the age of "memory industry" (Klein, 2000, p.127). Differently put, today's populace is infatuated with memory, or one can say that it is the age of 'investment' in memory. Even so, taking the spectrum of memory into consideration means that a lot of disciplines are proliferated. Worth pointing at this level is that laterally talking about the investment in memory for Diasporas, one might have some queries in mind, just as: whether we need to talk about memory, location and the politics of belonging. Or, is it always planned to be exclusively interconnected with history?

In an attempt to answer the queries raised previously, one can suggest that to comprehend memory, diaspora, home, and belonging in reference to Phillips's work *The Lost Child*, it is essential to question the interconnectedness between history and memory. The historical bearing is vital in the sense that the story, at hand, revolves around characters who are questioning past events to comprehend their positioned particularity. According to Maurice Halbwachs, history lacks continuity since it gives the impression that everything changes from one event to another and from one period to another (2007, p.142). So, it goes with saying that the interest in history-telling is triggered by the mania to contrast and compare events that seem contradictory or inaccurate to offer a "comprehensive vision of the past" (Halbwachs, 2007, p.143). For

Caryl Phillips, it would be predictable to reach a point where telling history is considered a primary commitment. In this regard, he comments that he is "deeply committed to the notion of 'history' being the fundamental window through which we have to peer in order to see ourselves clearly" (Phillips, 2003).

On the other hand, the interest in memory integrates the historical knowledge and incorporates it with cultural memory. The latter, however, is described by its continuousness that it holds the past and helps the individuals with the shared experiences, keeping their memory active. Along similar lines Pierre Nora, in "Les Lieux de Mémoire", points:

> Memory is life; […] it remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond trying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only affects those facts that suit it […] History, because it is an intellectual and secular production, calls for analysis and criticism […] Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative (Nora, 1989, pp.8-9)

Nora's insights indicate that there is interplay between history and memory. The two should not be conflicting with each other, but rather they are dialectically connected. It is outward; however, that memory cohabits the past. In other words, memory is based on the deposits that the individuals store and that are waiting to be recuperated as residues. Moreover, memory is the shards that are put together to form a clear vision of one's origin and development (Gomille and Stierstorfer, 2003, p.7). Accordingly, memory is 'recherche' rather than a process of 'recuperation'. Following this line of thought, it goes with saying that Phillips' deep interest in memory and desire to illuminate the riddles and predicaments of the past is closely connected and gets at the heart of alienation and estrangement that his characters are prone to.

III.3. The Spectrality of the Past in Phillips's *The Lost Child*

The Lost Child is a novel that initially projects the struggle of individuals trapped in a cycle of spirals from the past that haunt the present. Phillips mirrors their perpetual struggle as they try not to remember these events but to live with them. It is, in the words of David Punter, "an event in the present [that] reminds us of something in the (psychological past), but something which cannot be fully remembered, a past event, or situation, or feeling, which should be locked away or buried but which has emerged to haunt the current scene" (2007, p. 130). Punter's vision, however, matches Phillips' concern as regards the appearance of certain events that remind the self of its non-existence or of not taking part in history. This idea is perfectly demonstrated when the former woman expressed her feeling of not having a place of her own as the title of the chapter, *Separation*, indicates the character's detachment from the place of her origin. The same logic matches Ben's sense of belonging; or rather, non-belonging to a particular space.

Although it seems apparent that most of the characters are lost; nonetheless, Heathcliff is reformed into an epitome of loss and abandonment as he was designed, according to Jackson, to "trace the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" (Rosemary Jackson, 1981, p.2). In view of that, Phillips' attention to conjuring up the character of Heathcliff reflects the silenced victims of the slave trade. Furthermore, Phillip's intertextual reference to other texts signifies his doubt vis-à-vis the question of discourse and authority. He, nonetheless, aligns with the importance of discourse in shaping the historical archives as he believes in the power of authors in filling the voids of history.

In Phillips' fiction, home mostly dithers between the spectrum of the painful past and the quest for a place wherein identity is asserted. In an attempt to restore identity, Monica's husband, Julius Wilson, undertakes a journey back home. This journey, however, is never attained as home itself is a mirage that exists in their wistful memories only. Otherwise stated, Julius is a character who is portrayed as the one who does not feel homey in a land that is supposed to be his home. Moreover, Julius' mood shifts between the one who felt self-pity and self-important as he got involved in anti-racial affairs. Phillips projects him as one of the activists "who claim they struggle to void [people] being beaten up by English teddy boys as part of an on-going problem whose roots lay in colonial exploitation" (*The Lost Child*, p.29). In the plotline of the narrative, Julius ends up returning to his country, leaving Monica and his kids, instigating all the vulnerability and desolation that Monica and her kids suffered from.

On the other hand, as the narrative proceeds, readers will notice that not only Julius was in search of a home, but Heathcliff's journey in searching home seems to be enigmatic. This idea perfectly illustrates the conception of repatriation without a home. When Mr Earnshaw approached home and informed the kid 'we're going home', the boy seemed to be puzzled, and home seemed to be unsympathetic, "the boy looks into the man's face, and again he asks him to please take him to his mother. Home" (p. 259). It is noticeable that this parentless child, who was roaming the landscapes of England without protection and assets, depends on his mother for sustenance as she resembles home and protection. Given this complexity, the feeling of home can be explained by the feeling of estrangement the boy felt in his supposedly home, mainly when Mr Earnshaw encouraged his wife to take the boy as a gift of God though it is dark as if coming from the devil. The boy, nevertheless, is entirely recognisant that he is a gift of God that is ostracised, as demonstrated: "the boy stares now at the man in whose company he has suffered this long ordeal and he can feel his eyes filling with tears" (p.260)

Similarly, Monica's endeavour to look for a place starts when her physical and psychological journey took place after she departed from her home in Northern England, "trying to look for herself" (p.52). Her journey of self-discovery is prompted when her father abandoned her because of her relationship with Julius, a man who "originated in a part of the world where decent standards of behaviour and respect for people's families were obviously alien concepts" (p.22). In addition, Monica's struggle to look for herself is carried out when she left to Leeds, leaving her husband.

It is necessary to point out that the word home is repeated in several parts and sections in the work, mainly when Monica and her sons met her father at the station. Nonetheless, none of them seems to be associated with the place, for the most part her father refers to the kids "as huddled together on the platform like evacuees, and all that was missing were their name tags" (p.54). Thus, the figurine of the evacuees alludes that the place that Monica and her kids reached is mysterious as opposed to home, a place for belonging and reminiscences.

Consequently, like Heathcliff and most characters in Phillips' work, the journey to return home remains incomplete. In line with Gaston Bachelard's argument, a man without a home "would be a dispersed being" (1994, p. 07). Thus, there is a reciprocal connection between the character's liminal position and the lack of finding a home. The characters are portrayed as marginal beings that inhabit places of transfer and want to return home that no longer exists. Differently put, the journey of most characters such as Heathcliff, Julius, Monica and even Ben is haunted by the anticipated but unfulfilled return.

In *The Lost Child*, Phillips poses several questions on the subject of home and the importance of family connections on identity formation. Evidently, the lack of family and community support appears to disquiet Monica, who heavily counts on the help of her community. In addition to the social refusal that Monica suffered from, the space she inhabits turns out to be a place of confinement and imprisonment. After the loss of Tommy, Monica is entrapped in a prison-like hospital. Hence, the claustrophobic feeling of entrapment in an enclosed space is a spatial allegory of Monica's abandonment from her family and community on top.

Phillip creates a labyrinthine narrative as he marooned the grotesque scenes with the uncanny to create new scenarios to make the proximity between the dichotomies a reality. This, however, allegorises the unpredictability he is going to expose his readers to. To typify this idea, one might take the description of the gate into the place called 'Mecca Ballroom', which is "mistaken for a cinema" (Phillips, p. 76) from outside as an illustration, suggesting the unpredictable world that Monica is prone to enter. Similarly, another association between what is anticipated and unpredictable can be denoted from the portrait of Derek Evan, who seems to be "a reasonably handsome, clean-shaven man, and his collar and tie were firmly fastened […] he really didn't seem the type to be out trying to pull birds on a Saturday night" (p. 79). Oddly, this Derek emerges masquerading as Monica's redeemer, only to be the real reason behind her mental breakdown since he was blamed for Tommy's loss, and by doing so, he hastens her death. Hence, Monica lapses the standards of the English community when she got involved with a coloured man, which expelled her to the margins of the community. And, then she moved to the phantasmal world of evil owing to her relationship with Derek to end up trapped in darkness afterwards.

It would have been more proper to point that the marginality and abandonment, which Monica and her kids are disposed to, forced her to accept Derek's redemption. The discrepancy between what she expected from Derek and the reality on the ground led to her feelings of anxiety and disorientation that are clearly expressed by the narrator as follows "Monica couldn't really remember what happened next, for everything began to go fuzzy and she felt a headache setting in" (p. 82).

Accordingly, it is suggestive to point that the lack of spatial reference and the troubled sense of the external world around are deeply connected. The disturbing sense of reality and disorientation led to Monica's centripetal movement from the world around her to entrap herself in her mind. Given this perception, one might arrive at Garcia's vision, who believes in the intersection between the human's perception of reality and his/her sense of space. This idea is clearly demonstrated by Garcia, who predicts: "The human experience of reality is inextricably linked with how the body perceives space, and conversely, of how it perceives itself in space" (Garcia, 2013, p. 19). This is why Phillips' description of Monica's feeling in the Mecca ballroom is applicable. Another analogous description to Tommy's lack of sense of space is being portrayed by Phillips who seems pathetically out of place, as revealed:

> But every one of the thirty boys, who continue to stifle their laughter, feels sure that the queer apparition standing behind the desk has nothing whatsoever to do with their world, […] and it's blatantly obvious to each of them that Tommy Wilson is most definitely a stranger. (Phillips, p. 117)

Such disclosure for the telepathist relationship between Tommy's disorientation and the sense of reality is clearly carried out throughout the novel. The fact of being expelled by the community from the inhabited space seems to affect the psyche of Tommy, who wonders "if he'll be invited to join in" (p. 119).

The work of Phillips is a reminder of how the individual's identity is shaped within a net of family and community connections. What Phillips is trying to portray is the relationship between responsibility and one's sense of identity. Although Monica, Ben, the teachers, the classmates, and the adoptive parents are aware of Tommy's melancholy, and yet they prefer to deter their gaze from the problem, an escape from the burden of guilt as Tommy was perceived as "a queer apparition".

Both Monica and Ben's endeavour to deter from the problem could be explained by their feebleness to make sense of the world around. But, conversely, Tommy prefers to be the mysterious boy who inhabits his world of secrets, suggesting that his silence could never be voiced. Simply put, he prefers to say nothing to Ben regarding the abuses and humiliation at Silverdale Holiday Camp and about his Uncle Derek who "was just using her [Monica] to get to Tommy, for he liked nothing more than to impress kids, and football was his way of doing so" (p.162).

Phillips' rapprochement to space extends his vision that space constitutes of repeated dialogues with the past. This to a certain amount explains the protagonists' circular journeys with the past. Regardless of the frequent repetitions of loss, rejection, confinement, and death that most characters are meant to experience, the lost children seem to share the same ambivalent spectre and thus decide to return to the moors. For instance, Heathcliff returns to the moors, Tommy dies on the moors, and Ben ventures into the moors where he could sense his brother's existence.

Indeed, visiting the moors for Ben is a turning point as he manages to break the "sinister pattern of recurrence" of Tommy's loss as he learns to live with pain (Derrida, 2006, pp.16-17). In several scenes, Ben seems to blame himself for Tommy's disappearance, saying: "I couldn't think of anything I'd done wrong, but somehow I just got the sense that I was the problem, and this just made me even more frustrated" (Phillips, p.152). It is very logical, therefore, to follow Derrida, who says: "it seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some responsibility, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead"(2006, p. xviii). Thus, Ben's pronouncement on responsibility towards Tommy is attained via letting the pain of the painful memories in and learning how to leave with it. Philips describes the physical and psychological portrait of Ben's venture into the moors as: 'He could feel the moors closing in on [him], and for the first time in ages [he] began to feel close to [his] brother" (p. 189). In other words, Ben's bewilderment and disorder caused by dialogue with the painful memories from his childhood seem to dissolve when he embraced the moors.

III.4. The Endurance and Irrevocability of Slavery in Phillips' novel

A significant outgrowth of identity construction within diaspora rests with the polarities of 'black' and 'white', 'margin' and 'centre'. Caryl Phillips, however, attempts to demarcate his stories from the polarity of black vs. white. Through his novel, he points to the different experiences of diasporic communities on top of the shared experiences of slavery, colonialism, and imposed transportation. Gabriele Griffin refers to the oneness of this community as "constitute a homogenous group of people even if they were treated as such" (2003, p. 8). It is eloquent to point that he focuses on the slave trade and its strong connection with what we might call 'the cultural trauma'. The latter is referred to by Jeffery Alexander as a vicious event which scars the lives of the members of the collectivity. Most importantly, this group is overwrought by the memory of that event, and thus their identities are transformed in fundamental and irrevocable ways. Noticeably, readers can notice that the slave trade has been portrayed as an atrocious event whose blemishes drastically transformed how his characters articulate their identities.

Caryl Phillips is among the authors who projected the painful experiences of immigrants in the 1950's and 1960's Britain. He is among the authors who made literature a space wherein such painful experiences can be challenged and transformed. Phillips, via his narratives, gained the reputation of the "cosmopolitan traveller" as James Procter put it (p.185). He tends to write about the preoccupations of his generation, second-generation immigrants, but then again, he is more concerned with imagining the experience of his parents. *The Lost Child* is a narrative that is intensified with pain and discomforts. It recounts the story of an undergraduate student writer, Monika Johnson, and a black student of history, Julius Wilson. The narrative is rife with misunderstanding as Julius becomes involved in the fight for racial equality. Hence, the novel is replete with loss and pain as the marriage dissolves, their eldest son ended up in foster care alone, and his brother Tommy never recurs, not in any predictable discernment.

Phillips' *The Lost Child* is rampant with violence and grief as it offers salvific images with regard Britain's national trouble in the post-war era. The work under discussion converses with Emily Bronte's personage, Collins, who is consigned to otherness via the "the glances, the stares and averted eyes" (Collins, pp.11-12).Thus, Collins feels distanced from the Brontes who seem to fortify the English national identity. Likewise, *The Lost Child* portrays the hellish and irredeemable experience of the slave trade in its preliminary chapters, as it converses with Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* to offer promising insights apropos the healing process without being over-disbursed with the reiterating phase of vengeance. It is worth noting that Bronte's work acts as an unrelenting text that suggests "related histories rather than fixed analogues" (Walkowitz, 2015, pp.128-133). In other words, Phillips' work is a replica of the exploitation and abuse of the slave trade and the infamous stories of migration in the post-war era. What is more, it calls upon the attention to look beyond the rigid historical topography.

The lingering stories such as that of the unnamed former slave and Monica's journey to reach reconciliation with her husband due to his involvement in racial affairs challenge the bequest of liberal historiography. The narrative in Phillip's work challenges the reformist and the British liberal norms due to the inclusiveness of ascendant mobility, as he swifts from one story to another. Phillips' *Crossing the River* focuses on diaspora history through the projection of the story of a mixed son, Greer, who was born in the course of the WWII and reunited with his white mother. In this oeuvre, Phillips moulds the debates just as the narrative is strained on the construction of diaspora identities on the terrain of family.

The thing that probably most readers will notice is Phillips' desire to focus on familiarity rather than giving priority to black resistance. Following this vista, one might arrive at the point that Phillip reifies power as he centres his narrative on white superiority and fails to imagine any site of violation from the part of the black. But, even supposing, it is eloquent to comment that Phillips is having a "different type of project" considering that he focuses on responsibility and familiarity rather than prioritising the outmoded polarity of black versus white. Besides, the story of *Crossing the River* centres on the story of a lost child from a white motherly perspective. *The Lost Child*, however, rotates around Wilson's boys as being the central victimised characters. Therefore, the centrality of the narrative hinges on the two biracial sons who are struggling to survive stigmatisation, exploitation and their parent abandonment. Hence, readers will not fail to notice that the struggle is virtually inattentive as the boys fail to overcome the natural and social bewilderments.

In the same line, Phillips comments that when he starts to jotting on the book, "[H]e realised that what he was really dealing with was his own concern with fractured family" (qtd in Wade, 2015). Thus, regardless of the multiple stories that Phillips recounts, the novel has been dominated with serpentine intentions to unveil the issue of fractured families. Moreover, the author points that there is an analogy between familial fractures and the tectonic plates. In effect, the analogy that Phillips made between the family and the tectonic plates refers to the fact that they are "both firm, yet they can slip" (qtd in Wade, 2015).

The analogy made between *The Lost Child* and *Wuthering Heights* assisted Phillips to introduce the social marginality and inter-subjectivity that characters in both works suffered. In case we probe why Phillips brought such intertextuality, one can follow Tabish Khair's claim, who envisions:

> it is one of the strengths of Wuthering Heights that Heathcliff's terror, coming from 'elsewhere,' is situated in the context of the sublime in the 'English' moors: far from being simply external to the nation/the home, terror (displacement , fear , violence) resides just as much within the nominally 'local'. (Khair, 2006, p.161)

In reflecting on the strength of *Wuthering Heights*, readers can notice the speculations Phillips made apropos Heathcliff's survival with his mother on the docks of Liverpool. Though Heathcliff's mother is never referred to in Bronte's work, Phillips imagines the lady as she crossed the Congo and the West Indies suffering from the trauma of memory. The narrator describes the experience of the lady as follows: "she was unable to prevent her mind from collapsing under the stress of memory. She found herself back on the ship with the captain stirring himself to quick, frenzied spasms, after which she was confined to her corner" (Phillips, p.10)

Phillips, in his novel, never demeans the power of memory. Though readers can easily notice the juxtaposition between the traces of struggle to reach inhabitation and redemption, yet the unnamed character seems to be entrapped and haunted by the experience of entrapment and loss. Commenting on this lady's position, one might arrive at the point that the impotence and the dismissive glances she had from her masters outlined her to be the 'Crazy lady' who ends up admitting her passiveness and apathy. The narrator describes her as "She disturbs no one, but she hears footsteps passing in each direction? She is a woman in debt who can no longer find any willing to employ her at the loom; she is a diminished woman who, before her time, has yielded reluctantly to age and infirmity" (p.3). Furthermore, though Monica Johnson, the white single mother of Phillip's main characters, and her counterpart, the unmade former slave of Heathcliff, are both stemming from different historical contexts, yet they are rendered out of place by either their lovers or landlords and whose children ended up as castaways.

Henceforth, the connection between the two events of the slave trade and post-war Britain replicates the author's desire to reckon with the past. In the line of what has been mentioned beforehand, one might follow Hazel Carby's reflection on this idea pointing at English identity as being: "haunted by and dependent upon the invention of the black other" (2009, p.625). This, to a large extent, justifies Phillip's desire to reckon with the resemblances between Monica and her historical counterpart, the imaginary mother of Heathcliff.

The most inhibiting point with regard to Phillips' dwell or disorientation on account of his shift from the slave trade era, moving to the post-war era, and encumbering in the Second World War reflects his desire to take "critical detours into the past" to make the self-anew (Carby , p. 625). To a certain amount, one can notice that Phillips shares with Carby his assurance that identity goes across the racial encounter signalling that it transcends the hypostasised categories of place, history and race, claiming: "both the particularities and the commonalities in experience and history across and within the colonial boundaries of empire that Manichean divisions and hierarchies of supposed racial difference cannot acknowledge" (Carby, p.626). It is fitting to note that the aforementioned vision can be applied to Phillips's desire to demarcate the extent to which the Johnson Wilson's family formation is initially affected by the painful experience of remembrance of the spatial and spiritual practices that started with the slave trade to stretch the post-war epoch.

By his insistence to make a detour to the past, Phillips possibly believes that the temporal movement from present to past appears to be appealing to adjust the blunders of the past and to consider other options that may facilitate the passage or the route that people on the margin will undertake to move towards the centre. Or, it could be denoted that the dynamicity of place necessitates these temporal shifts to make the self-anew. Accordingly, it goes with quoting Carby, who comments:

> Place itself is dynamic…it is continually reconstituted by how subjects travel and arrive. Perhaps it is not, in fact, only the place that is significant but also the manner of the journey and arrival, the eager waking or manacled stumble, the panicked flight, or forced or voluntary sailing towards and away from each other? (p. 629).

Bearing in mind that location is multi-layered and multi-temporal, *The Lost Child* summons the movement from different worlds with specific attention placed on memory. The remembrance of these painful memories of abuse and violence that meted from the slave trade and stretched to the post-war neo-colonial era is highly reverberated athwart the multiple locations of home.

III.4.1. Phillips' Preoccupation with Slavery

Slavery and its protracted memory have occupied centre-stage in the writings of Caryl Phillips. He persistently re-enters the history of slavery as he envisions the similarities between the slave trade and the Holocaust. Phillips' devotion to the memory of slavery, in almost his oeuvres, could be explained by the fact that the memory of slavery has been virtually obliterated from the Eurocentric history. In this regard, Phillips comments, “ the pillage and rape of modern Africa” and “the transportation of 11 million black people to the Americas” have been condemned deliberate oblivion and erasure in Eurocentric official texts” (p.54). Therefore, Phillips' radical commitment to the Eurocentric narratives and his dialogue with the past asserts the fallacies that mar the Eurocentric portrayal of slavery on the one hand, as it signifies the importance of memory in determining the perception of the self for slaves and their descendants. On the other hand, Phillips' cynicism towards the Eurocentric historical accounts is mightily expressed in the following passage:

> History is also the prison house from which Europeans often speak, and in which they would confine black people. It is a false history, an questioning and totally selfish one, in which whites civilize and discover and the height of sophistication is to sit in a castle with a robe of velvet and a crown dispensing order and justice (Phillips, *The European Tribe,* 1987, pp.121-122)

More precisely, *The Lost Child* traces the fractured lives and identities of slaves initially portrayed through the unnamed former slave, her son, and their successors. Thus, Julius, Ben and Tommy's ‘traumatised' lives are the upshots of forced deportation and dislocation that shaped the lives of slaves and their descendants in today's black diaspora. Following this vista, it goes with quoting Ledent, who educes “spatial ‘criss-crossing', ‘disjointedness' and ‘dispersal through continents and epochs' that have determined the lives of black from the time of slavery to the present” (2002, p. 114).

The character's permanent dispersal and the systematic process of space shifting are lucidly portrayed in the introductory chapter wherein Phillips talks about the miserable hygiene conditions of slaves. The work exposes the untold stories of those who perished and were deprived of their rights of living during the “Atlantic crossing”. Moreover, it projects the fractured lives of children who are forced into irrevocable exile. In other words, Phillips mirrors the darkest episode of the slave trade where parents are jettisoning their children in exchange for money. Phillips portrays the kid of the unnamed former slave as being an impediment “her circumstances declined […] she felt beret of mettle in her increasingly tattered clothes, and shame began to regularly flicker across her face […] She wept bitterly at the thought that she would most likely never re-establish herself in employment.” (Phillips, p.11).

Noticeably, one can deduce that the child is a burdensome secret that the mother wants to hide from the one hand, and probably she blames herself for bringing this kid into existence from the other hand. This idea is plainly expressed in the following words: “My child what have I done to you in this place? Will you ever forgive me?” (Phillips, p. 11).

Irrespective of the painful crossings that the slaves had to endure, it is apparent that the slaves are forced to transit across incongruent worlds as there is no return. The enslaved woman is fully recognisant that her kid’s life is shattered the way boughs are amputated from trees. The following passage provides a further portrayal of her extreme anxiety and despair as she was forced to abandon her kid, who will end up having roots or a homeland to belong to:

> The woman opens her eyes and looks lovingly in the direction of her peaceful child. She taught the boy how to walk, and now she must walk away from him. She must go. A skeleton hung with rags. Another journey, another crossing. (Phillips, p. 12)

The passage above demonstrates the multiple border-crossings the lady endured along her journey. The enforced separation of slaves from their families and homelands creates a spatial fluidity just as it caused a problem at the level of identity. Hence, the narrative thrives in a context of dislocation and a continuous process of border-crossing. This, however, goes in line with the characters' dispossession and loss of solidified ground. Phillips's selections of disjointed places and characters who are mostly dispersed and estranged with the places they inhabit reflect the dislocation they endured as an inexorable part of their exilic lives and identities. Most importantly, the lack of having a fixed place to dwell on and the scarcity of affiliations to different places are lucidly reflected by Ben's ability to move from one place to another.

The proliferation of the narrative from the eighteenth-century to the twentieth century symbolises the identical fate shared by slaves. This idea is projected through the portrayal of the enslaved woman, her son, and their descendants. For Phillips, the former enslaved woman is not a reminder from the remote days of slavery, but rather it offers an explanation for contemporary slavery that impinges upon the diaspora's present lives. It is lucidly expressed that the memory of slavery loiters into Julius, Ben and Tommy as they share the same fate of exile on the one hand. If not, it is articulated through the insistence of Phillips on the circularity of time for his characters that come to own up that the past overlaps the present.

In consequence, Phillip's engagement with slave memory refers to his hyper-awareness of the importance of the past in shaping people's present. Having advanced this opinion as to the 'initial journey' in shaping diaspora's identity, one can report Phillips, who comments:

> I think the people of the Caribbean, whether they live in the Caribbean or outside, are inevitably displaced because they are all the product of the one initial great journey of displacement which was the middle passage, the journey from Africa to the West. So it seems to me to be part of the Diasporan heritage. As a black person in the West, displacement seems to be part of our heritage (1993, p. 52)

The impetus behind slave memory is a matter of concern for Caryl Phillips, for he wants to fathom its mechanism to deal with today's racism. In light of Fred D'Aguiar argument, it is a "Knotted mess that cannot now be undone, only understood" (*The Longest Memory*, 1994, p. 137). Differently put, for Phillips, the future is part of the past that is waiting to happen. Nonetheless, the inclusion of the slave narratives in Phillips' writings seems to obfuscate readers, as it indicates his pessimistic and prophetic view on the issue of race in today's Britain. However, through this juxtaposition, readers would comprehend that the union of black/white is considered a natural connection due to the long history that bound the two races and cosmos together.

The intertextual hints in Phillips' writings and the dialogue with his ancient antecedents are redolent to Phillips' cultural plurality. Furthermore, the orchestration of multiple literary voices in Phillips' *The Lost Child* contributes to his on-going project of re-visioning British identity. In other words, the embodiment of miscellaneous narratives and voices made the text a crossroads wherein several pretexts meet. Interestingly, the different narratives echo into each other in spite of the time distance between the stories.

The preliminary chapter and the last two chapters are framed from Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, where Phillips imagines the young Heathcliff who gets rescued by

Mr Earnshaw as he decides to take him home. The second story revolves around Monica's impediments on account of raising biracial kids in the 1950's and 1960' Britain. The third story, inspirationally, refabricates the reflections of Emily Bronte on her family. Regardless of the time span between the different stories, there seems to be contextual unity amid the different stories since they share the same problems of loss, abandonment and non-belonging to a certain locale. For Ian Baucom, a solid and enduring relationship between place and identity has to be taken into critical attention. He claims "identity endowing property of place" (1999, p. 04)

Though Phillips takes the work of *Wuthering Heights* as a basis for his introductory story, the story he imagines takes another route to create a prequel to the account of *Wuthering Heights*, specifically, when he dwells on Mr Earnshaw's desire to take the kid home. The portrayal of the uncongenial atmosphere that is atrophied with "volcanic anger" (Phillips, p. 257) reflects the troubled relationship between the boy and Mr Earnshaw as the boy feels restless in the moors. This restlessness is insightful to understand the troubled self that is uncertain where and how to belong.

It is necessary, at this level, to remark that the restlessness with the inhabited place is carried out by Phillips when he drew parallelism between the boy's estrangement and Ben's estrangement in modern times. Like other marginalised characters, we read in Phillips' writings, the boy etches certain inconsistency as he mistakes and loses his footing in the moors of Yorkshire , remarking: "between the sky and earth the boy skids and loses his footing" (p.260).

Heathcliff is a character who hides the horrific and uncomfortable truths of British colonial history. Phillips' propensity to include Heathcliff projects his desire to solve the riddle of the character's origin as he re-imagines the character's fate that was left up in the air in the work of *Wuthering Height.* Though the presence of Heathcliff can be considered as a natural consequence of Britain and its long history with slavery, yet the feelings of detestation towards this past looms over the novel. Readers can straightforwardly notice that the presence of Heathcliff at Earnshaw's house is encountered with fraught forasmuch as he is considered something dark, almost as if it is malevolent.

Phillips' delve into the child's troubled childhood and estrangement helped him project the heady gaze of racial arrogance placed in front of the child and Monica, afterwards, as she decides to marry Julius, the one who is from a Caribbean country. Most importantly, the insertion of Heathcliff helps Phillips alluding to Ben and Tommy's troubled childhood due to racial prejudices. This idea is manifestly documented through the description of Tommy's first experience at school. Tommy is exposed to racial prejudices as he looked pathetically out of place, mainly when his belonging to England seemed to be puzzling to the teacher and schoolmates.

> "Well, stand up, young man, and tell us your name and where you are from"
>
> "My name s Tommy Wilson"
>
> "And where are you from, Thomas?"
>
> "I am from England"
>
> His fellow pupils release a volley of scornful cackling that threatens to dwell into hysteria (p. 117)

Like Heathcliff, the starving child, Tommy appears to be perennially in need of extra food, as demonstrated along with the following lines: "It seemed like he was always starving , which didn't make any sense as Mam always wrapped us both some dinner money in pieces of paper and left it for us on the kitchen table"(p. 144). Tommy's perennial hunger symbolises his desire for acceptance and yearning for his father whose absence seemed to get to Tommy "[H]e always wanted to talk about the same thing. How come our dad never came to see us? Didn't he care for us anymore" (p.146). Hence, the parallelism that Phillips creates between Heathcliff and the Wilson children is a crossroads between imperialism and modernism. By layering Heathcliff with Tommy, Phillips genuinely employs an intertextual strand to his work to help the readers visualise the restlessness and alienation that loom over the narratives of Phillips and Bronte.

III.5. *The Lost Child*: the Reciprocity Between Fragmented Narratives and Fragmented Selves

To illustrate the exasperation of Philips' narratives, it is appropriate to talk about the titles that Phillips selected for his chapters. The headings to a certain amount are misleading and do not match the emplotment or plot development. In this claim, Agathocleous points that: "the chapter headings … are like a bildungsroman gone wrong. All the developmental stages are out of sequence" (Agathocleous, 2015).For example, the first section establishes a link between *Wuthering Heights* via the exposition of Heathcliff's dark skin and the reason behind his arrival at Thrushrcoss Grange. The next chapter is entitled "First Love", and fairly reasonable, readers may forestall that this chapter will introduce the denizens of *Wuthering Heights* and the central craving of Bronte. As a replacement for, the narrative, conversely, shifts to Monica's uprising.

It is worth noting that the narrative swifts from different genres and registers that continue to recur. Readers can easily notice a disparity in the narrative wherein the first sections can fall under the traditions of realism that are , unexpectedly, disturbed by the inner monologue, mainly in the section entitled "Alone", in which Monica's madness and marginalisation are revealed to the readers. This disjunction fits the story's formula that exposes the existence of characters between two worlds. In *The Lost Child*, the Character Emily Bronte inhabits two worlds that of her fiction and the world of her family as it is portrayed: "She lives now in two worlds. She understands" (p.112).

Hence, the fracture at the level of the narrative counterparts the subject matter of dislocated and traumatised families and shattered histories in general. The novel hinges upon the established borders between people due to racial and cultural differences. Most importantly, it points to how these established borders between races may cause divisions that are difficult, if not to say impossible, to dismantle. Accordingly, readers may anticipate how these variations affect the psyche of individuals as they fail to converse or establish familial and societal relations. Monica's father, however, is a prototype of these characters who failed to establish familial relationships. Consequently, he refuses to exchange and converse with his wife and blames her for triviality, stating; "He didn't like to consider it too deeply, but in nearly thirty years of marriage his wife had completely failed to introduce a single topic into their table talk that had either surprised or interested him" (p.60). Equally, Monica and her husband lost the mania to converse and debate over critical topics. Phillips further dramatises the failure of these couples to converse along these lines: "they both appeared to have abandoned the ability, or desire, to converse with each other on any topic beyond the minutiae of daily coexistence, which, these days, generally related to the needs of their sons" (p.38).

Irrespective of the fragmented selves, the failure to communicate and the lack of choice that most characters suffer from, Phillips insists on the strong bond that exists between the Caribbean and English. Such bond is echoed through the relationship of Earnshaw and the unnamed “crazy woman” who is the mother of the dark child he claimed later by the end. *The Lost child* accentuates that the relationship between Britain and the Caribbean is outwardly overdue, but it endures to exist due to the blood connection which binds the two races. Further, the mania for rapprochement and reunion is projected through Monica’s father, who has shown a strong desire to conciliate with his daughter. Moreover, he has shown an aptitude to reach out to his grandson after the death of his daughter. Readers can notice this when Phillips comments, “He still has something to offer his own flesh and blood” (p.208).

Among the challenges that *The Lost Child* raises is whether Britain can symbolise home, while making a contact with its borders. Conversely, the shock of being unrecognised can be sensed easily, mainly for mixed-race people. This idea is projected in several sections, mainly through the portrayal of Tommy’s experience in the new all-white school. It is worth noting that he felt alienated or, to be more specific, terrified from the demoralising group glare. Phillips pictures the scene as follows: “Every head in the classroom turns, and thirty pairs of eyes are suddenly trained upon him. He pushes himself back from the desk and climbs to his feet, aware of how bizarre he must look in his oversize school uniform” (p.117). Principally, what adds to his estrangement is how the others were puzzled to know that England is the original home. It is depicted as:

> “And where are you from, Thomas?”
>
> “I am from England.”

It is apparent that the group expected another answer. Or, probably Britain could not embrace the British and people of different races. Phillips points to this hint claiming, "His fellow pupils release a volley of scornful cackling that threatens to swell into hysteria… Mr. Hedges scans the room before once again turning his attention to the new boy. Well, Tomas we were hoping for something a little more specific, but for now 'England will suffice" (p.117).

The central myth of sensing the self beyond the rigid constraints is a fallacy that led to Monica's losing control over the self. Monica realises that all the established walls of partition that have separated her from the others are not broken down; rather, they are reinforced, leading to her dilemma of losing herself. She describes it as follows:

> What is the matter with me? Noting , Julius, except I'm tired, poor, and worried that I don't know how to be myself…I've lost myself, you buffoon, which is pathetic, given how much effort I put into looking out for myself before I met you.(p. 52)

It is apparent that the familial apertures are highly elaborated in Phillips' work. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the precincts of connection are still absent. For example, readers can notice that Monica seems bothered to talk about her parents whenever they are mentioned. This idea is further revealed by Phillips, who points:

> As soon as she opened upon the subject of her father, however, Julius detected anxiety beginning to rise inside her, and she retreated into a silence that quickly became strained and, for a moment, threatened to overwhelm them and poison the atmosphere in his flat (p. 27)

Likewise, the same feeling of anxiety is felt by Monica's children, who failed to construct a clear image of their father. Ben points: "We soon got used to the fact that we didn't have a dad, but it's not like we saw that much of him when we lived in London" (p.141). The pattern of reunification and restoration of these ties remains oblique. This array of connections buttresses the remark made by Kathryn Sutherland, who comments that this oeuvre entices readers "into reading signs and gathering details into patterns that might prove adequate to explain the mystery at the book's heart" (Sutherland, 2015). Following this line of thought, it goes with saying that this failure to reconnect the familial rifts adds to the mystery of the work as readers may notice that the lost children remain the enigma whose parts are never clear. As for the mystery, one might wonder what happens to Tommy and why Monica never attempted to ask about Ben. Or, more strangely, one might probe about the connection between Bronte's Heathcliff and Phillips's lost brown-skinned boy of Monika in 1970's Britain.

Regardless of the analogies and resemblances between Phillips' different narratives and Rhys's work, it seems palpable that they project the legacies of the colonial encounter as they focus on the pathologies of cultural and racial exchanges. Phillips' concern, in the novel under discussion, echoes the decay and dwindling of parents, who failed to take care of their children because of traumatised offspring. The result of this parental transgression led to feelings of forfeiture and estrangement from the part of second-generation children. Quite unexpectedly, the feelings of alienation seem more apparent for those miscegenation who felt 'outsiders' mostly.

The parental defiance that is highly stressed in most Phillips works generally and *In the Lost Child* outwardly could be explained by the fact that they feel out of place. This idea is expressed by Julius who shrugged, "It finally dawned on him that he had no real interest in giving anything to this country that had now been his home for over a dozen years. After all, what had he received in return from these people?" (p.49)

III.6. Identity and the Politics of Place

Phillips' entreaty to the reticent mobility is, thus, not accidental as it portrays the restrictions placed on blacks in the UK from the one hand and the compassionate conventions of patriarchs in England from the other hand. *The Lost Child* is overpoweringly concomitant with the relationship between man and the landscape. Readers can easily notice that the tradition of walking is one of the sets associated with the English traditions; thus, the mobility of non-whites to a certain amount can be considered something that is against the vulnerable. This idea is portrayed by Darby as "Walking has long been experienced by some people as a bastion of 'English-ness' that is as a temporary refuge not only from social and economic changes, but also from the demographic reality of urban England" (Wendy Joy Darby, 2000, p. 245). Hence, the practice of mobility is associated with the landscape that is considered as venue of power and strength. The chapter entitled "*The Journey*" clearly illustrates the practice of power and freedom that is reflected through the character Earnshaw, who walks the miles between home and the anxious commerce of Liverpool to make profitable exchanges in sugar, tobacco, and slaves.

The narrator projects the eccentricity of Earnshaw, who prefers to walk instead of taking a ride in a carriage, claiming: "The fact is, walking affords him the gift of exercise and an opportunity to refresh his mind and achieve a clearer understanding of deeds past and tasks present" (Phillips, pp. 242-43). Consequently, one might conclude that walking is oblique to power, considering that it is a replica of the tenure of land and money. Earnshaw was the only one qualified to rescue the child, his own child, and decides upon his exploitation, pressing him into the navy or taking him home. This depiction echoes the array whereby power is at the hands of those who own the landscape. By contrast, Ben, the biracial son, seems to lose such power providing that the land is not his property.

The nation's mobility seems to be at stake as the nation per se is being jeopardised by the issue of race. Ronald Johnson seems threatened when his daughter, Monika, started to exercise her deliberate resistance to the set of patriarchs. Johnson, however, draws sharp conclusions that the mobility of the young generation is a penetration to the nations' bastions. Surprisingly, the focus on the inability to move could be spotted from Monica's and Julius' failure to make their family an intact unit. It is fitting to point out that Caryl Phillips could be censured for his myopia regarding the issue of race in post-war Britain. On the contrary, one might suggest that Phillips wants to take his writings beyond the traditional clichés of race and racism; still, he desires to make the racial encounter between worlds a starting point to see the world differently rather than making it a terminus.

Indeed, *The Lost Child* provides a different image to the issue of mobility as it releases walking from its rigid meaning of masculinity to include the marginalised ones. Readers, possibly, will notice that walking is used metaphorically to signify the ability of characters to reimagine and construct a new image of the self. Characters like Monica and the unnamed former slave, apart from their different racial backgrounds, insist on the power of walking, viewing it as a practice of power and freedom rather than a mode of predation. The narrator describes the intentions of the "crazy woman" to teach her son as follows: "she taught the boy how to walk, and how she must walk away from him. She must go. A skeleton hung with rags. Another journey, another crossing" (p. 12). On the other hand, Monica told Julius, "unlike other mammal, our babies spend far too little time in the womb; They come out helpless and unable to run from predators, and that's just not right …I wouldn't say no an extra three or four months of this if it meant the kid might stand a chance of coming out walking" (p. 37)

Though the idea of commitment to nation-state building is given a small room in Phillips' work; nonetheless, the possibility of returning home to the Caribbean was not given an area to draw in as well. Neither Julius Wilson nor his biracial son, Ben, has shown any desire to return home, yet Ben struggles to overcome helplessness and marginality by a different alternative. It is exceedingly observed that Ben decides to survive the desolate environment through the remembrance of the past. These 'petite sketches' can act as 'auto-topography', as Jennifer A. Gonzalez put it, to invent a new future. Hence, Ben's ability to create bridges between the external world and the self is done through the investment in memory that aids him to overcome the troubles he had since his childhood. Donald Merlin prefers to use the term "externalisation of memory" in which he explains that "individual minds with a certain 'brain-plasticity 'who are able to carry the burden of serving as a link between the external infrastructure of representation and the real world knowledge that only brains seem capable of acquiring" (Donald, 1997, p. 363). Characters, like Ben, help reshape the infrastructure of the painful experiences of the slave trade, deportation, and colonialism through different cultural practices.

Reflecting on the above-mentioned idea, readers can notice that Ben decides to reflect on his experiences of bewilderment and alienation through the use of songs in the chapter entitled "Childhood". Thus, Phillips, through the character of Ben, selects "new patterning" in a formula of a new anthology to represent reality. The deleterious portrayal of these experiences might be plausible if we consider the first section entitled

"Leaning on a Lamp-post" (George Formby, 1937), which is initially patented for its racism against diasporas.

Hence, the injection of such popular songs in this chapter bluntly is symbolic for Ben as it reminds him of the cacophonous array of feelings apropos his childhood. These songs are metaphoric as they project the troubled childhood of both Ben and his lost brother Tommy. This chapter is a projection of Ben's childhood as he recalls the days living on the estate with Monica, saying: "me and Tommy didn't get pocket money or anything like that so nicking records was most likely going to be the only option" (Phillips, p.142). The engagement of Ben into stealing other propriety signifies his untidiness that is hard to be hidden. It is probably eloquent to suggest that self-construction for Ben, to a certain amount, is attained through stolen subjects such as records to portray his material shortage and cultural scarcity.

The feeling of loss and the troubled psyche of Ben does not refer to the traditional prototype of race and ethnicity that the most biracial kids are prone to, but rather these troubles seem to be institutionalised. The latter could be explicable if we contemplate the scene where the state interferes, after Monica's breakdown, by sending the children for temporary adopting. Ben describes this experience as an absolute trepidation in accordance with Mrs Swinson who leaves no room for discussion but only chastisement. Ben attempts to describe how mad she gets when they secretly stay up watching The Beatles instead of being in bed. Ben got mad when the lady threatened them with deprivation and hurled a verbal attack on their mother as being negligent. Ben mirrors Mrs Swinson's violence in the following lines:

> Do you know what I do with dumb, insolent tykes like you two? And then she threatened to put s down in the cellar with the rats and throw away the

> key, and our Tommy started to cry, and I watched her face change shape as she began to laugh…both of you. After all, you don't even know how to wipe around the toilet after you've used it, do you? But I'm not surprised. I mean look at your mother's coat" (p. 152)

With reference to Mrs Swinson's attitudes, one might suggest that the kids would give a sort of credence to rebuffing her violence. In the face of such a diatribe, nonetheless, the boy's resistance was brought to an end when Ben was trying to console Tommy, who seems to be bothered by the idea of being fostered. Ben solaces him, saying: "Mam wasn't well and the doctor said she needed a break She was having a hard time pleasing her boss at the library, and I had a feeling that she lost her job […] we just had to be patient" (p. 152). In the face of such blurred practices exerted on them by Mrs Swinson and Evans, Ben seems to be committed to these painful memories. This commitment is revealed by Ben, who refused to abandon the souvenir or the photograph taken for him and Tommy at Silverdale.

The repercussion of healing is essential for characters to restore balance and find a better place to live. Ben's doggedness on popular music is a thread for endurance across different experiences of painful memories and homes. Ben, through music, is trying to find a room in an ill-disposed environment. The influence of pop music is crucial for Ben providing that it reflects the nature of Ben's identity making as a mixed-race kid in 1970's Britain. This musical affiliation is, thus, vehicle-like for Ben to access the painful memories of personal history. That is, perhaps, why Ben selects songs to echo the painful experiences he had passed through. Along with many other songs, Ben remembers the song by Adam Faith, "The Time Has Come" when he recalls their story of returning to the council flat conceitedly. Ben vividly recalls Tommy's non-response to his find and triviality to music in general, as described in the following words:

> He shrugged and said he was starving and asked what we were having for tea. It seemed that he was always starving, which didn't make any sense as Mam always wrapped us both some dinner money in pieces of paper and left it for us on the kitchen table… I knew we wouldn't be getting a colour telly anytime soon so there was no point in dreaming. About anything (pp.143-44)

Among the predicaments that haunt Ben's memory is the experience of detachment and removal from his home by the van of the social services after Tommy's death. *The Lost Child* does not offer critical insights with respect to Britain's shift towards cosmopolitanism, but it focuses more on how places are reinvented as there is a strong relationship between terror, displacement, and dispossession. It can be noticed that Ben's detour or walking in the English landscape is radical as it could echo his empowerment. Even so, this landscape is metaphorically used as a token that reminds him of loss and grief. Yet, Ben decides to walk on the moors, which is the opposite of the direction he is supposed to go, remarking:

> I stopped by the side of the road and stared at the depressing landscape. Bloody hell, I though, even with a full moon it must be pitch black up here at night. And cold and our Tommy didn't have his duffel coat with him. I shouted, Tommy! I walked a few paces always from the van and looked out into the distance. Tommy! Tommy! But it was no use…I took a few steps onto the actual moorland. There was nobody around, which was just as well, but I really wasn't ready to climb back into the driver's seat and point the

> van south. Not just yet. I wasn't ready to abandon out Tommy again, so I made up my mind to stay put on the moors. Hours passed as I walked for mile after mile, and as the daylight eventually started to fade in the sky, I could feel the moors closing in on me, and for the first time in ages I began to feel close to my brother (p.189)

In more practical standings, the moors that Ben insists on visiting act as a cue to what his mother has considered an outcast, an outcast whose presence is held as a threat that jeopardises the integrity of the English family. Or, the point that Phillips tries to uphold is that "staring back", as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson put it, implies the affective strength and agency that most disempowered subjects are caught in. Possibly, the grip of command and the demand to be beholden is commonly sensed from the part of those who are disempowered.

Still, readers cannot fail to notice that these disempowered subjects suggest that this patriarch embrace is something awry and sinister. In the concluding chapter, "Going Home", Heathcliff responds to Earnshaw's action with agony and fear, begging him not to hurt him, entreating: "The boy stares now at the man in whose company he has suffered this long ordeal, and he can feel his eyes filling with tears, *Please don't hurt me*" (p.160). Similarly, another parallelism is drawn amid Heathcliff and Tommy, who reacts with certain eccentricity towards Derek Evans. Hence, it is fitting to suggest that the children's staring retorts bespeak the irredeemable and the impossibility of reaching a compromise insofar as exploitation is still extant.

It is not surprising, thus, to see the characters travel in search for roots and suffering from identity angst, as in the case of Heathcliff and Ben. This occupancy of multiple origins does not refer to their biracial origins solely, as it refers to the struggle that rises between the centralising autochthonous and the centrifugally multinational identifications. That is why Stuart Hall comes to concede the difficulty of those who are born in Britain and are positioned between two different realms, predicting: “They come from the Caribbean, know that they are Black, know that they are British. They want to speak from all three identities. They are not prepared to give up any one of them” (1991, p. 59)

III.7. Estrangement, Spacelesness and the Poetics of Survival

Phillips, at the heart of his novels, tries to give credence to the geographical movement across oceans. Nonetheless, the character’s angst is never centred on the issue of exploitation, ethnicity or race. But rather, the centrality of the narrative is directed towards the preoccupation of Ben with his psychic and social disturbances. Ben’s life parades his variant identifications as a biracial, lost, fostered, and estranged child. Probably, Phillips desires his readers to go beyond the vicissitudes of race and ethnicity to focus on the shifting of grounds. This tendency clarifies why Phillips refuses to provide closure to his stories in general and the story at hand particularly. The lack of coherence in the narrative is one of the fonts in the narrative enterprise as it concerns the characters who are suffering from the shifting of grounds due to the loss of the previous place and the fear of the new one.

Readers are relocated and repositioned between different stories that start from the slave trade of the early eighteenth-century to England in the 1950s, given Phillips’ desire to stumble upon crossing over and being somewhere else in someone’s place without, possibly, attaining a place. Accordingly, the deep focus on several stories and lives, in outright different locations and temporalities, elucidates the lack of coherence in narratives, as it opens us to the psychological, cultural and social threats resulted from the deportation of the slave trade to migration of the post-war era.

Even though there is a faint reference to the vicissitude of racial abuses in today's England, the core of Phillips' argument is sharpened by the psychological and social disturbances that the characters were prone to irrespective of the issue of race. In support of such a claim, one can notice that Monica, the white English lady, is referred to as the one who is blasé about the brown skin of the man she married. Though readers can notice her discomfort to be around her kids publicly, that is fleetingly alluded to in the work as she seems to be the lady who always has something in mind "[S]he is the one with stuff going in her head" (Phillips, p. 26). As a consequence, Monica's ensuing breakdowns and psychological problems lie beyond the colour line. Even so, they could be traced back to her failure to attain something owed to her relationship with a man who happens to be black. Still, it is remarked that for people with vagaries of sexual relations across the skin borderline, the issue of skin colour and race remain something trivial.

Ben, however, is not the only character whose identity has been disturbed by spatial restlessness. Despite being a white British lady, Monica Johnson undertakes a cyclic journey of disempowerment as she prefers to exile herself from the volition of her father. Both Ben and Monica appear to represent two distinct forms of disempowerment as both characters turn out to be a microcosmic representation of the reality of racial abuses for the former and gender subordination and patriarchal hegemony for the latter.

Phillips' work has always been steeped in exploring belonging, border crossing and identity construction within multiple spatial locations. The process of migration entails transforming the migrant without being overwhelmed with the burden of carrying multiple identities or agency to one terrain. It is quite interesting to note that Phillips centres his story on the importance of multiple identities. Yet, all the subjects are considered to be multiple and contradictory due to their mental and psychological complications, for Phillips wants to investigate the most uncertain aspects of identity.

Caryl Phillips has developed his fiction to postulate a proper connection of different worlds through the stories of 'loss' of those who brought their worlds to another world under coercion, initially of the slave trade. Or, those who came with the expectations of transformative prospects in the post-war era and have eventually proved dreadfully illusory. Regardless of the time distance between the generations, they were connected by the nous of 'exile' in some other land that is taken to be the supposedly 'home'. Phillips' narrative is framed through the dialogue between the British traditions and the traditions of the south that rewrites and reconstructs the British colonial archives. To bind these two worlds, Phillips covers a timeframe that ranges from eighteenth-century Liverpool to the 1950's and 1980's London. This marooned narrative puts the English realm, represented via the narrative of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights,* tête-à-tête with writings from the Caribbean reaching what Walcott refers to as "gathering of broken pieces".

Apart from race, the transatlantic slave trade is another central trait of identity construction for the author who believes that the slave trade chained different geographies together, creating a web of connections to form what we might call a 'matrix' of British-Caribbean networks. Though the slave trade and migration made the presence of mixed-race families in today's England possibility; nonetheless, acknowledging the children descendent from the empire has always been off the colonial narratives.

Consequently, the same proceeding is repeated by Phillips as he insists on how family has always been off the itinerary for characters, mainly for Tommy and Ben, who stated: "the idea of talking about family in general was completely off the agenda" (Phillips, p. 196). Thus, for Phillips, the counter-productive nature of family needs to be reworked not only through the projection of the troubled self of lost children or the stories of 'lostness', but also through the establishment of ties between the literary works as Bronte and Rhys. Accordingly, the mélange of narratives is an indicator and reclamation of the existence of familial ties between Britain and its tropics despite the fact that Phillips' work, *The Lost Child*, creates discordance. Interestingly, it bonds unrelated stories of different historical periods together.

It is worth pointing out that the polyphony of narratives and focus on the importance of family ties has been projected through the characters of Ben and Tommy, who seem to be lost due to the absence of family in their lives. The malaise and the passivity that both Tommy and Ben suffered from can be attributed to the recurring family connections and the painful memories that kept reiterating their lives. Phillips, in an interview with Anita Sethi for *The Independent*, clarifies:

> Everyone in life likes to think that they are moving along a path which is taking them ...away from ignorance and towards experience […]but there are these crossroads in life where you must encounter the past and realize it's not necessarily a straight-line, but circular. Things that you thought you've behind can come back and haunt you. (Phillips, 2009)

Hence, Phillips envisions that migration and border-crossing never certify productive movement providing that it brings the cyclicality of the starting point of one's journey erratically. Thus, the itinerant exile of Ben and Monica becomes a 'journey of lostness' that projects their endless struggle towards empowerment. Like Phillip's other novels, *The Lost child* could be read through the discourse of 'statelessness' viewing its characters as individuals who are trying to survive a journey.

III.8. Bridging the Rifts of Recognition: Towards a Reconciliatory Comprehension of Identity Construction and Diaspora Politics

Regardless of the recent prevailing debates regarding multicultural identities, the ever-existing threat triggered by the division between 'us' and 'them' seems to loiter for a couple of years headlong. The inharmoniousness between tolerance and preserving difference makes building utopian societies a fragile project. Nonetheless, the gestures towards reconciliation and hope can be sensed as Phillips imagined Britain as a new nation with generations from different racial backgrounds. Phillips probably wants to offer a new vision to the country that is "prompted but not preoccupied by racial and cultural specifics" in its 'reimagining of the British nation in Toto, and not primarily for black Britons, within a firmly international frame" (John McLeod, 2010, pp. 48-50). In other words, Philips is mapping a novel environment, a new-fangled England with new spaces created, the one that admits the supposedly humdrum nature of the ripened British Empire with its overseas chattels.

Caryl Phillips' work stresses the process of dehumanisation that Africans had to pass through. This process inexorably causes people of the diaspora to propagate the feeling of loss and estrangement. What sustains Africans' sense of self-discomfort and identity malaise is the absence of recognition. To a certain amount, the individual's understanding of who she/he truly is could be strongly affected by other's recognition, as it is suggested by Charles Taylor, who visualises:

> Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others…a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them as a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves (1994, p.25).

Therefore, self-depreciation is one of the potent parameters of identity construction as Africans' task has become to purge the self from the imposed identity.

Identity and the politics of home creating are among the central themes in Phillips' fictitious works and travelogues as well. In this claim, Phillips points out: "I don't think you need to be a rocket scientist to spot that I am interested in the notion of home" (qtd. by Ledent, p. 198). Phillips' *The Lost Child* focuses initially on the legacies of the Atlantic slave trade since it serves as a mnemonic or a nodal point that narrates the stories of loss, exile and estrangement from one's culture. The sense of loss is heavily stressed in the novel as most of the characters were lost due to the loss of connections or the absence of family and home and, most importantly, the loss of oneself. It is necessary to note that the lack of connection disturbs the characters drastically as they could not establish strong ties with their parents. Readers can notice that Monica has an edgy relationship with her father, who tries to connect with her and achieve no result. Consequently, the loss of connection seems to be apathetic "[…] he simply couldn't get in touch because Monica would never have entertained any sympathy from him" (Phillips, p. 206).

Likewise, Julius fails to establish a solid connection with his wife and children. This inaptitude to play a role could be expounded by the sense of non-belonging to a certain place from the one hand and the desire to achieve a political career back home.

Yet, quite astonishingly, neither Monica nor Julius shows any attentiveness in changing the situation regardless of the opportunities afforded to them.

Additionally, the theme of loss in Phillips' work is chiefly manifested through every character. In other words, the work is a mnemonic to the painful stories that the characters have undergone in their lives. For example, in the excursus chapter, Phillips projects the painful story of a former slave in the West Indian fields, a lover of Earnshaw and the mother of Heathcliff. She is destined to a miserable fate because of the abuses, the violence, and the rape she endured. The unnamed character is victimised because of racism and patriarchy, yet she does not find any support. On the contrary, she is always ridiculed and considered a crazy woman. Her need for protection, however, is strongly questioned despite her incertitude as regards questioning the atrocities she endured. She remarks:

> [S]he wants to tell the man that it hasn't always been like this, truly it hasn't. She wants to tell him, but to what purpose? The man wears a tight smirk of derision, which signals that he imagines himself more ingenious than anyone else, and who is she to argue?" (Phillips, p .03)

In her innumerable encounters with her captors and her master Earnshaw, she is constantly humiliated and deprived from her rights because of her identity as a black woman who belongs to the 'other exotic' world. Interestingly, each time she attempts to criticise the harsh treatment, she remembers the derogatory approach of her captors and master. The woman brings up this point in that manner: "she remembers the restless nights as black as soot listening for the sound of footsteps approaching the door and wondering whether tonight it would be her turn to be covered. But Master never came to her. (A Congo woman, too dark.)" (Phillips, p.04)

The Lost Child is a work that is infected with estrangement and the deprivation of rights. The work projects the crippling conditions of the diaspora context as Philips etches the marginalised lives of characters who suffer from racism. Interestingly, Phillips projects the struggle of his characters to find a place in the world. Commonly considered, the unnamed character seems trapped in her confinement, unlike Monika, who appears to be privileged as she is having another kind of entrapment. And similarly to the anonymous slave, Monica lives under a permanent estrangement and deprivation of rights due to the patriarchy.

A patent deficiency of trust in altering the patriarchal thought is plainly explained by Monica who seems to be depressed as she fails in her plans. Finally, Monica decides to alter and challenge the patriarchal authority of her father by marrying Julius, a man of different racial background. The result is that after she disobeyed her father, Monica became more visible as a mischievous person; she avows: “ I came to you, Julius, because I thought you might be a better kind of man than my father, but you were never really interested, were you? I’ve made a bit of twat of myself, haven’t” (P. 51).

Suffice it to know that unlike Monica, who considers her relationship with Julius as an escape to release the self from the patriarchal hegemony, Julius prefers to see their marriage as a ticket to the other world, the world of white people, as Monica assures his visibility. It is adequate to say that Monica for Julius is considered an opportunity of self-affirmation and social change as she epitomises safety and anchor in England’s cold atmosphere: “he had been in the country for seven years now, but possessing Monica Johnson signalled an arrival” (p. 26). Admittedly, Julius thinks that he successfully finds the proper submissive woman to ensure his visibility in England. He prophesies:

> He couldn't have been happier, for this young English woman seemed to take enthusiastic pleasure in cooking, cleaning, and studying, as though each activity flowed naturally into the next. […] but this Monica Johnson never agitated for more visibility in the relationship, and she appeared to be content to anticipate his desires and protect him from the world" (pp.26-27)

Admittedly, unlike Julius, Monica is not looking for visibility, but rather she is keen to escape from her father's authority. Though Julius seems to be the character that starts to trace his visibility and finding a place to his existence on account of his relationship with Monica; nonetheless, Monica appears to be an immigrant woman as she kept being the woman, who is on the move throughout the novel. At a deeper level, the way Phillips structures his work can be believed to be centred on the diaspora populace. Yet, one can notice that Monica, after leaving her husband, kept moving from one place to another without finding any spatial reference even though the world is supposedly to be hers as she is not practically an immigrant.

To illustrate the idea that loneliness and the feeling of estrangement are deeply anchored to the dramatic past, Phillips suggests that most characters' displacement, doubt and estrangement make them plea for isolation. Phillips throughout the novel shows how ready Ben has been from the start, if not actually trained, to accept loneliness as a 'natural catharsis'. Admittedly, Ben has been portrayed as a victim in an eccentric culture with no promising catharsis to lessen the atrocities of racial abuse. For Phillips, Ben and Tommy's presence seems to upset the rules of domesticity of Mrs Swinson, who complained about the boys' behaviour, asserting:

> Mrs Swinson burst out of the kitchen and started on about how she'd tried to make allowances, but we were dirt, and we bolted our food, and we had no

> manners, and she went on about how she had no time for kids like us who'd been dragged up […] I can't abide women who are all over the shop when it comes to responsibility. On behalf of the blessed council, I seem to spend half my life mopping up the mess people like you made (p. 154).

Practically, Mrs Swinson blatantly expresses her madness at Monica, who dragged up herself in a problem and jeopardised the domesticity of the British life when she decided to marry Julius. Likewise, Ben seems to jeopardise the domesticity of 'Britishness' due to his biracialism. This, however, explains his isolation and estrangement that is further carried out in the rest of the chapters, mainly when Ben was sent to a foster family. With the Gilpin's family, Ben unexpectedly finds himself secluded and loner than ever before, and then he decides to isolate himself. He avers: "Of course, no body explained anything to me: not the copper, not the social worker, not even Mr Gilpin, although it's possible that he was in the dark like me" (p. 176)

One can easily notice that the racial incidents that Ben had passed through left him with no other choice but to adopt isolation postures. The incident he had with Helen and her boyfriend Lester adds to his torment as they insisted on mocking him for his facial features. Moreover, Phillips dramatises Ben's awareness of the racial abuses as a mortal handicap in front of him. The image of the teacher who seems to be uncertain about Ben's capacities can be indicative of the extent to which the biracial populace are still victimised; Ben describes his teacher, saying: "I could tell that he didn't have much faith that I would do the work necessary to give myself a chance, although I was determined to prove him wrong" (p. 182).

Successively, the feelings of insecurity and inferiority were further intensified when the lecturers embarrassed Ben with their questions. He affirms: "I was sure that the three lecturers could see that I was out of my depth, and I decided they were basically taking the piss out of me and couldn't wait for me to leave the room so they could collapse into heaps of laughter" (p. 185). Additionally, Ben points that whatsoever the answer will be to the interviewers, he will never content or gratify them, remarking: "whatever it was that I said in response obviously didn't impress them. All of them did that thing where you nod and make some notes and kind of hum like you're really thinking about what was said, but it's transparent that you're not" (p. 185).

Hence, the racial abuses contributed immensely to Ben's self-isolation who dwells on his painful memories that seem unavoidable to most characters in general and Ben, particularly after Tommy's loss. In view of that, the novel traces the characters' isolation as it maps exploitation and abuse, discrimination and forfeiture. Simply put, the feeling of loss is a leitmotif of the novel, seeing that each character can be considered a 'lost child'. Following this line of thought, it goes with saying that the centrality of loss is admissible due to the changing of the status quo from one hand, as it could be something imposed from the other hand.

Conclusion

Phillips' *The Lost Child* is overtly dedicated to project the domination of one group over the other by placing a huge emphasis on those who have been enslaved, raped, deported and tormented. Regardless of the cold environment and the grips of racism that the work uncovers, Caryl Philips devotes huge attention to the discursive power of the transatlantic slave trade as he lingers into the intersectionality between the distant past of blacks and their diasporas. The juxtaposition of the past with the present indicates the many choruses that keep dwelling over the present.

In accord with what Phillips has been attempting to reveal, he endeavours to provide a perspective on how the antimony of memory and slave trade continues to shape the life of the Caribbean in 1950 and 1960's Britain. In so doing, he does not lament the past, but instead, he draws our attention to the importance of understanding the power of the past in shaping one's existential being. With an intense eye on history, Phillips attempts to draw a parallelism between his characters and other characters to assert his conviction in the power of border crossing.

Conceivably, what Phillips desires to provide us with is that the bewilderment and estrangement that his characters encountered could be traced back to their entrapment in the past. Simply put, Phillips does not criticise his characters' devotion to the culture and history left behind, but rather he plainly believes in the importance of crossing the borders of space and time. In effect, Phillips profoundly has faith in the power of fiction writing considering that it opens up different worlds. In brief, his characters and in spite of the time span and topographical borders consciously converse with each other. Thus, the detours to other literary productions and the polyphony of narratives strongly sponsors Phillips' enduring project of engaging Britain with the Caribbean.

Chapter Four: Identity Construction and Home Desiring at Marginal Spaces in Amala Olukemi's *Under an Emerald Sky* (2011)

> *Today every society is just a collection of diasporas. People join the societies to which they are loyal and pay taxes, but at the same time, they do not want to give up their identity. The connection between where you live and identity has been broken" (*Zygmunt Bauman, 2016)
>
> *It is also a part of morality not to be at home in one's own home*. (Theodor Adorno, 2006)

Introduction

Amala Olukemi displays remarkable themes related to diaspora studies apropos identity construction of Black British children in Britain. She is among the authors who tackle the transformation of the British society due to the influence of what Stein prefers to call 'outsiders within' (Stein, 2004, p. 32). The novel mirrors the life of two immigrant girls who are born five minutes apart in the UK. The story revolves around Yewande's struggle to live in England as her life is engrossed with her Nigerian heritage. However, she manages to reconnect with her past history through her ancestors, unlike Mary, whose life turns around her attempts to gain her mother's love whose major concern was to blend into suburban Britain.

The chapter at hand attempts to project how Amala creates a textual space, a fictional world that is occupied by her words, for creating a narrative stratagem to chronicle her journey in England with the burden of a missing mother country. The absence of the latter, however, creates unbridgeable craters between the self and the homeland. Furthermore, living in a former colonial realm triggers the feelings of alienation and exile within a multi-national territory that calls for multiplicity and often has racist attitudes to exclude immigrants like Amala. Consequently, this chapter is an attempt to answer certain enquiries concerning identity. It endeavours to question how Amala's myth-making suggests a course for Diasporas in today's Britain. What is even more, it interrogates how Amala provides a rich tapestry of options for her characters to form and construct their identities.

Then again, the chapter questions the different paradigms that Amala believes to be constituent of one's identity. She, in other words, tries to shed light on how reality is critical in the process of self-understating. Amala makes her fiction a drive wherein she stresses the importance of blending African traditions in her writing to help her characters figure out the reality around them. Probably, Amala's vision meets Antonio Gramsci's words in which he glorifies the importance of "the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself [2] as a product of the historical process" (1971, p. 324). In effect, Amala has projected this trend and genuine interest in past tracing that is kept to be the central project for her characters.

IV.1. The Poetics of Survival in the Diaspora: the Burden of Writing Home in Marginal spaces

Writers like Olukemi Amala, who inhabits worlds wherein different cultures coexist, are beholden to redress the balance between these cultures and unveil the burden of settling multiple locations. Inasmuch as it is more than a process of shifting grounds of a series of struggles where oppositions like white/black, coloniser/colonised, native/immigrant, canon/counter-discourse are present, but rather it is a process that entails a shared history of slavery, colonialism, and deportation.

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[2] "Know thyself" was the inscription engraved above the gate of the Oracle at Delphi, and became a principle of Socratic philosophy. It is a precept that encourages the search for self-understanding.
https://today.uconn.edu/2018/08/know-thyself-philosophy-self-knowledge/

The African mythology has provided a potent symbolic force in constructing African identity even for the diasporas. The whole question of reconnecting with Africa is a major concern in contemporary writings of Black British Diasporas and has a specific reverberation to the unwritten stories that have just begun to be told. The idea of absent motherlands is blatantly explored in Olukemi Amala's novel *Under an Emerald Sky*. The narrative emphasises how immigrants of African descent are reduced into silence imposed by race, a silence that echoes the reduction of these subjects into 'nobody'. Being the 'Other' triggers the sense of ontological insecurity producing a fragmented personality that is torn between multiple demands of assimilation yet constructing a national identity within a discourse that is rife with multiple absences.

In setting out to etch the forgotten stories of her people, Oyeyemi's novel makes visible those aspects of selfhood when the latter is positioned between the experiences of being an 'outsider' due to the cultural upbringing and an 'insider' as the process of blending into the new recipient culture entails commitment and allegiance. Hence, the rift of separation from the maternal culture is deciphered into a textual space wherein the author depicts the cultural dualism of her characters whose identities rests upon their particularity from the mainstream society and their commonality due to their shared position of belonging to spaces in between or spaces that are at crossroads.

Admittedly, gaining what we might call a sense of 'centeredness' or ground for cultural practices will certainly lead to a sort of transformation of practice in a multicultural society. However, winning a position in England for immigrants is not that candid, as it seems to be, considering that not all characters express their aptitude to assimilate into the new society without postulating their African inheritance. This idea is clearly pronounced by the protagonist's mother, Ola, who describes her hostility in the neighbourhood. In a matter of fact, she deliberately expresses the situation of a black living on the white side of the street as being rife with hatred and envy. She remarks:

> Barring, a multicultural community, carried clear boundaries and no one transgressed them except Ola's family. Odd and black were opposites. Two extremes that were incomprehensible in the eyes of her neighbours but tolerated in the same way that is a sick family dog allowed to dribble and shit on newly washed steps. (Olukemi, 2011, p. 22)

Apart from the abhor felt towards black, the white community seems to identify blacks as one entity regardless of their variable origins. This explains the grimace at the occupants of the adjacent street, who are identified as one entity. Ola explains, "The most visible minority families lived on the A47. This major road didn't even have a proper name and like, a prisoner with only a number for identification, was known to all locally simply by its A road number" (p.22).

Among the themes tackled by Amala is the cultural and geographical in-betweenness experienced by characters of the first and second generations. Though, for most immigrants, boundaries are increasingly becoming banned; nonetheless, boundary maintenance appears to be at odds. Amala, through her novel, projects the enigma of holding one's culture and the characters' obstinate struggle to resist acculturation owing to the different stereotypes used by the dominant society to expel such a community. The protagonist, Yewande, holds the view that there is no power dynamic involved in building friendships between people of different races. Most importantly, for Yewande, the dark skin has never been an obstacle for her as the author claims, "Yewande loved dark skin, *so regal, so African*. Dark skin to her was the biggest turn-on ever" (p. 211)

The problem of black's inferiority appears to plague all characters in the novel. They are confronted with the possibility of being moved to the margins as they allow others to be experts and erudite in their history. This idea is clearly demonstrated by Mrs Johnson who works hard to assimilate within the British society due to the derogatory assumptions vis-à-vis other races. Readers can notice that Mrs Johnson's world is an enigma made by her false interpretation of the underlying truth she is made to believe. In several scenes in the novel, Mrs Johnson expresses her loathing to her daughter, Mary, because of her dark skin as she follows the enslaving thoughts of those who sought racial domination. She appears to blame Mary, who is considered a source of shame, for her appearance and prayed to God not to have children of dark skin again. This idea is expressed as follows: "Mary knew she wasn't pretty but had hoped this didn't matter in her father's eyes. He turned from her, shaking his head. She was ashamed too, realising she was indeed cursed, as her mother had repeated all her life. Only the devil would force me to carry such abominations."(p. 153).

What is more, Mary is threatened with beatings, experiences physical pain and is exposed to silence that lashes her more nastily. Mary's maltreatment can be traced back to her skin colour as her mother considered her a curse. Moreover, Mary describes how her mother was worried that her unborn children would have a dark complexion like Mary's. She remarks:

> John and Peter's light complexions made her mother happy. Mary remembered, before her brothers were born , her mum had worried they would have be dark and so, for more than three months before she got pregnant , forbade her daughter from preparing any food or drink'. 'Just in case', her mum said, avoiding her harsh tones in case they affected the new child's healthy development. Once John and Peter

> came home from the hospital, her mother worried their skin would darken. As a precaution she spoke in tongues every night, begging the Lord to keep her sons beautiful. (p. 80).

By contrast, Yewande and her family seem to pronounce their difference from their white neighbours as their quest for identity was not based on the naïve presumptions erected around their black heritage. Moreover, they attempt to sense their 'Africanity' through the practices of the African rituals and tradition, which is sought to be part of their dignity on top. This idea meets Molefi Kete Asante's vision, who remarks:

> I believe that signs, symbols, rituals and ceremonies are useful for societies, and furthermore, I accept that societies are held together or disintegrated on the basis of symbols. We go to war over symbols, we fight over proper rituals of respect, and we find our lives enriched by the memories of those who have achieved heroic stature by standing for what we stand for …we are victimised in the West by systems of thinking, structures of knowledge, ways of being, that take our Africanity as an indication of inferiority, something to be overcome. I see this position as questioning the humanity and the dignity of African people (Molefi, 2014, p. 105)

The debate as regards to the interaction of symbols, metaphors of myth, and the actual worlds related to the African self are projected as the writer wants to resist the fallacious assumptions constructed around Blacks and Africans. Throughout the novel, Mary heard her mother talking about how Africans are primitive and ungodly, and this is the reason why the missionaries were sent to their home, Africa, to save them. In opposition, Mary has always been attracted to the magazine entitled "*Nigeria Monthly*", for it shows a part of the heritage that she ignores. She remarks: "All her life, she had listened to her mother telling her that she was too African, too black, too primitive and too ungodly" (Olukemi, p.163). Most notably, Mrs Johnson has always taught Mary that white people are the missionaries and the bearers of civilisation who saved Africa. These words, however, are repeatedly poured into Mary's mind: "All things African are primitive and ungodly, that's why the Lord brought missionaries to save us, Mary" (p. 170).

Reading Amala's novel *Under an Emerald Sky*, one can still observe Olukemi's attachment to the African spirituality and deity. It is evidently noticeable that the bulk of drama in most characters' lives could be traced back to their perception of religion. At the very least, religion for diasporas can be seen as part of the cultural system bearing in mind that it is deeply connected with the interactions between different communities and the macro-levels of interaction between structures. In view of that, discussing religion for Black British Diasporas means dealing with religion following two main historical strands, namely colonial and postcolonial perspectives. The centrality of religion in Olukemi's work aids her to reconnect her characters and their natal nation Africa. From the vantage point of Vasquez, religion: "helps immigrants imagine their homelands in diaspora and inscribe their memories and worldviews into the physical landscape and built environment" (2005, p. 238). In effect, readers can easily construe that Mrs Johnson attempts to associate with or crossover the hostile environment she lives in through religion.

Amala has articulated a constructive understanding of religion by considering it an essential pattern of identity. Accordingly, she does frame a single idea regarding the African religion, but rather she discusses the diverse and multiple African religions by considering it a replica of the African identity. On the one hand, the focus on the multiplicity of African religions reflects the diversity of African identity. On the other hand, it reflects the multiple allegiances of diaspora subjects. In this esteem, Levitt points: "religion plays a critical role in identity construction, meaning making, and value formation. Migrants also use religion to create alternative allegiances and places of belonging" (2003, p. 851). Substantially, there can be a debate over the issue of religion and identity as they seem to be not fully apparent or fixed. But certainly, religion for Africans regardless of its wrong assumptions and inaccuracies that civility calls 'myth' remains a constituent part of the African identity.

Readers can easily notice that some characters, mainly Johnson's family, conceive religion as part of their identity. They regard it a substitution to their non-belonging, thus creating a new allegiance in the new milieu. In the same way, Amala highlights the marginality of Mary's mother, Grace Johnson, through projecting her miserable childhood as she was rejected by her father who favours his son, Joseph, because of his features that resemble his white mother. Grace's rejection by her father and then her mother affects her life traumatically as it affects the way she views the issue of black/white. Once again, she was thoroughly shocked when her mother told her that she cannot attend the wedding as she could spoil the view: "her mum looked with soft emerald eyes. ' Ooh, Coco, I'm sorry, I can't have you at my wedding. Uncle Alan's right, you'd spoil the photos being the only coloured girl there. Can't have that. You understand, don't you?" (Olukemi, p. 182). From then onwards, Grace feels that she is not beautiful enough to go to a church wedding and prayed to God to be as beautiful as her mother. She comments:

> White children were everywhere at St Augustus, but also some mixed race ones like herself. However, unlike her, these mixed children ranged in skin colour from banana milkshake to milky coffee. Most had soft ringlets flowing from their hands. Her burnt chocolate skin and head of wool, so reminiscent of the man who had fathered her, marked her out as different and disturbed her (p.182)

There is no doubt that the malaise and hatred towards all that is black on the part of Grace, in Amala's opinion, have been attributed to the feeling of shame that guided her every action.

IV.2. Home and Spatiality in *Under an Emerald Sky*

Home and identity have always been a subject of on-going research as home appears to be a constituent part in shaping identity. In this context, Eyles envisions, "Place …is not only an arena for everyday life ... [it also] also provides meaning to that life. To be attached to a place is seen as a fundamental human need and, particularly as home, as the foundation of ourselves and our identities." (1989, p. 109). Pointedly, places such as home and Cedar Park for the main characters, mainly Mary and Yewande, play an important role in self-development. It can be highly noticed that both characters are attached to this place as it resembles home. Amala is probably trying to point that human's sense of identity is attached to his/her relation to the place he/she resides in lieu of his/her relationships with others.

It is generally assumed that identity is shaped by the distinction we make between the self and others. Amala, however, seems to have a different vision as she agrees with Proshansky, Fabiana, and Kaminoff, who point :" the development of self-identity is not restricted to making distinctions between oneself and significant others, but extends with no less importance to objects and things, and the very spaces and places in which they are found"(1983, p.57) . In other words, one's sense of his/her identity is deeply connected to the conceived cognitions vis-à-vis the inhabited location. Amala's protagonist seems to be conscious of the space she inhabits. Moreover, she is aware of the relationship that existed between England and her natal place, Africa. The narrator comments, "She considered her own status as a black child of the British Empire" (Olukemi, p.229).

Though Yewande seems to be furious whenever her two worlds are colliding; nonetheless, her biological and cultural inferiority appears to fade as she expresses her disguise to these colonial and imperialist cognitions, pronouncing: "Yewande pushed to the back of her mind these wicked men ruled by money and narcissism" (p.230). It is clearly noticeable that what matters for Yewande is not the thought of others as she focuses on the importance of what might relate objects and things with the spaces in which they are found. It is eloquent to refer to Twigger-Ross and Uzzell point, who predicts that place is "inextricably linked to the development and maintenance of continuity of self …all aspects of identity have place related implications" (1996, p. 206)

Admittedly, the cognition of places is appropriated and related to the ideas people invent to reflect their bonding and linkage with these places. Therefore, spaces are personalised as they symbolise our continuity with the past. In this claim, Marcus Cooper envisions space as a "psychic anchor, reminding us of where we came from, of what we once were" (1992, p.89). For according to Cooper, places of the past could remind us of where we come from as they act as a source of estrangement, grief and deprivation. And so, the attachment to the place of the past could be obtained through material reminders of the original place. These reminders, however, are perceived as transfers of the former identity to a new one. Within this context, Mehta and Belk view these reminders as, "transitional objects, when ritually incorporated into the new habitat, may provide an important aid to identity transition" (1991, p.399). In short terms, the things we are attached to can help us decrypt who we were, who we are and who we will be in the future.

In effect, Amala attempts to capture how immigrants of Nigerian origins resident in the UK strategize to adjust into the new habitat and transform their African identity into the new location. The reader can notice that Yewande and her family fully recognise the former place and the connection that bound their natal land with the recipient one. Most importantly, most of the characters made an attempt to transfer the familiar objects that are concomitant with their original home, Africa, to reclaim a sense of identity. This, however, could be deduced from

Yewande and Aina's frustration as they noticed that the African oompa loompas are not coming on TV. They state:

> Almost in union both girls shouted 'NO!' Yewande stared at Aina. She stared at the TV screen. She stared at her own skin, hen back at the screen. 'They're not oompa loompas; Ai! The oompa loompas should look like me, Ai. They should look like us. They're from Africa' (Olukemi, p. 54)

The nostalgia that Yewande and her sister experienced motivates them to obtain material reminders of the place of the past. Both girls thought that oompa loompas are African pygmies who run away from their terrible country and were brought by Mr Wonka to work in his factory. In fact, they are the only workers because of the risk of industrial espionage. The thought that oompa loompas do not have dark skin annoyed the little girls, given that they thought they were the oompa loompas in England. Astonishingly, the characters of the cartoons they watched that night were white-skinned and orange-painted. "She refused to enjoy the rest of the film. Not even the remains of the feast could cajole her from this unspoken" (p.54).

Hence, the analogy that Yewande made between the oompa loompas and Africans demised as she realises that all her cognitions are mythical ones. The annoyance of Yewande allegorises that even the material reminders of home were personalised and appropriated by white people as the oompa loompas were not having dark skin as she thought. Thenceforth, Yewande's doubt about the cognitions regarding her external habitat started to be sensed along with the whole work: "Yewande concentrated hard while Aina read the book again cover to cover, pleased with the new found clarity and conviction in her sister's voice. For the first time listening to the story, Yewande did not laugh."(p.54). Probably, Yewande and Aina's frustration refers to their inability to adjust the familiar objects associated with home to sense their identity; therefore, they fail to connect their present to the past.

Perhaps a more impartial and relevant view of the centrality of the material reminders is further illustrated through Mary's uncles, who brought her a Nigerian outfit on her fourteenth birthday. Mary immediately remembers the *Nigerian Monthly* when she saw the dress and recalls her mother, who sees all things African as primitive and ungodly. But, on the contrary, it is quite interesting to observe Mary's delight to reconnect with all that is African. She comments, "She looked ahead rather than at the floor, which smoothed it even more. She grinned […] as if her body had found its natural home" (p. 171). Amala, thus, never misses the chance to remind her characters and readers on top of the importance of the material reminders of home as they are considered to be a source base that is proficient at shaping one's identity.

Unlike Mary, Yewande is seen as a complex character whose complexity does not prevent her ideas about cultural rejuvenation from being a subject to criticism. Gaining western knowledge and growing up in England do not ensure critical insights with regard to the African realities. Such impracticality of the attained knowledge that Amala plants within her main characters is vital and foundational considering that the western ethos regarding Africa and African is largely premeditated and processed among diaspora communities. Its impetus is found by Yewande's struggle to question the western hierarchal structure, telling her mother that the world around is a set of opinions "everything in life just opinions, yes?" (pp.70-71) .Ironically, it is this desire and the experience of transcending the self and the world that causes her insanity at the end.

Amala works on both mythical and factual lines to display the historical consciousness of her characters. Yewande, or Johnson's family at large, cannot take a positive slant to the situation resulting from the encounter between Britain and Africa. Subsequently, her quest for authentic knowledge is strictly pronounced. It is wise to comment that Yewande pursues to re-enter a fragmented world that holds the original material land, Africa, and the only country she knows, England. This quest, however, is predestined as the distance between the two worlds has become even bigger, and the clash between the two has reached the point of no return.

In this claim, it is traceable to see Yewande's struggle whenever her two worlds are colliding. The distance between her roots envisioned as the source of revitalisation, and her habitat was always injured whenever the shacks between the two worlds were getting grander. Possibly things will be different if Yewande's world did not fall apart when she appropriates the world of the white community.

Indeed, this failure of appropriation between the two worlds is mostly deplorable on the part of her white neighbours that led to her mental breakdown. Yewande proves to be the character who is not seeking to gain unanimous empathy but rather as the one who confronts the challenges she faces. She did not focus on the problems of race that most black immigrants complain of, but one will not fail to see Yewande's openness and readjustment to the recipient culture. Opposing this positive attitude, we note that Yewande moors melancholy for her irremediably world as her vision proved to be helpless. Though Yewande never allows us to feel the failure of her expectations, nonetheless, she never reconsiders the option of questioning the possibility of reconnecting her two adversary worlds.

Undeniably, she seems to be initially delighted at the thought that an invitation to a white friend's house would expand her education. Nonetheless, her excitement is annealed with nervousness and confusion as the positive and negative neutralise each other. Her anxiety is further amplified when Aina told her that white people eat less than blacks. Aina warns her, saying: "Baby Sis, with all your biologicals, you don't know that white people have smaller stomachs than black people…Yeah, and while ours stretch good, theirs are all stiff, that's why they sleep so much like lions after food" (pp.132-133). In effect, the agitation vis-à-vis Monica's invitation, Aina's caveat, and white people's small stomachs and eating demeanours successfully disturbed her tranquil nights and broke her sleep. Further, dissatisfaction and despair seem to characterise her experience at the Williams house, as describes in the following words:

> All the food was cold and the portions were tiny. *Aina and the A47 girls are right*, she said to herself , as her mouth became very dry…this fake food, this joke food caused her heart beat faster, as if offended at the travesty of calling her digestive juices to attention (p.139).

Better yet, the communication with Mrs Williams was already a problem for Yewande. Indeed, she seems to be motivated to react as the thoughts of Monica touched her the whole evening, and she wondered how her friend could have grown up with a mother "from a horror movie" (p.140).

Under such a circumstance, Yewande decides to forget about Aina and the A47 girls' remarks on the subject of white people's eating habits and her eager hands reached for more plantain forgetting about all the holes between her and Monica's family. Yewande thinks that the reluctance to establish channels of communication from both parts leads to misunderstanding. However, she never shows any sign of taking such an attitude. This explains her anger at Monica and the other girls, who pointed at her and shouted: "Sudan! Sudan! Sudan!" (p.141). In point of fact, Yewande failed to comprehend such derogation as she could not comprehend why her friend Monica would call her 'Sudan'. The narrator describes the scene in that way:

> Yewande's toes gripped the inside of her shoes. She smelled her own and the other girls' sweat and adrenalin, feeling like a caged animal before slaughter. The word 'Sudan' did not have a strong meaning, but she was aware from the news that the war there caused starvation and death for many" (p.141)

Yewande, thus, ridicules this situation for no other reason but that refusal to be belittled due to her dark skin.

> She stared into the sea of white children, searching for a black face. A small group of A47 black girls sat by the after fountain. The black girls looked back and shook their heads […] Wande, Monica's mum thought you'd eaten like a starving person, yeah straight up, like you had no manners. She was offended. Told Monica never to invite you around again. (pp.142-3)

Therefore, her friends are trying to stress the created boundaries between the two realms in order to make Yewande comprehend that the refusal to know one's borders and precincts ends in straying toward what is appropriately the world of others. This idea is further extended in the following words: "Just because you're odd, Wande, think you can hang with whitey.' Esther shook her china bumps. 'Nar man, big mistake'" (p. 143)

All the discussions concerning identity construction have been with the social and historical contexts (Damon, 1983, Erikson, 1964, 1965, 1968). Previous accounts with regard to identity have initially focused on the individual embark toward understanding the self and identity in terms of vocational and societal roles played within a community. Nonetheless, the potentiality of religion in shaping one's identity is of great importance. Accordingly, Erikson stresses the importance of religion as an aspect of the socio-historical matrix upon which identity is shaped. Erikson put it in that fashion, arguing: "religion is the oldest and most enduring institution that promotes the emergence of fidelity, the commitment and loyalty to an ideology that emerge upon the successful resolution of the psychosocial crisis of identity formation" (Erikson, 1968)

The deliberate pursuit of spirituality distinguishes Amala from other diaspora writers, as in the present case of Caryl Phillips and Helen Oyeyemi. In the selected novel, one might easily notice the prominence of religion as the author offers a spiritual context upon which her main characters explored issues concerning their identity development. Made in this connection, readers can easily arrive at Yewande's struggle to transcend the self and understand it in relation to others, for the engagement in the process of moving beyond the self provides an opening for the search for meaning and belonging that is central in identity formation (Benson, 1997; Hill et al., 2000). The awareness that is resultant of such a quest can provide ultimate answers to large issues in life. Hence, the focus on spirituality in Amala's oeuvre is due to the connection between the self and the world it belongs to, as envisioned by Lerner, who prefers to see spirituality as "awareness of the fundamental unity of all being and of our connectedness to one another and the universe" (Lerner, 1996, p. 56)

Differently stated, religion can offer a reflective sense of connection that has implications over self-perception. For instance, Mrs Johnson believes that Christian people have a special relationship with God. She insists on teaching her kids that only through belonging to God they can experience themselves. Christianity and belonging to God have always been at the core of Johnson's identity as Mrs Johnson stakes the claim that Christian people are God's chosen people. Throughout the novel, Grace Johnson attempts to identify people as being godly or not. Mary expresses, "her mum called many people ungodly. Mary wonders what ungodly things the Daramola-Draytons did apart from not being Christians and keeping their name. Maybe that was enough, she said to herself" (Phillips, p.82).

Clearly noticeable, Mrs Johnson's sense of belonging is strictly linked to her membership in a community of believers. Most importantly, she believes that being African means being backward and ungodly; thus, following the white enlightened people's religion will help them fix their distorted nature. This idea is clearly demonstrated in Mary's word, who believes that she is doomed to work hard to be accepted by the Lord. Her sufferance, thus, is a sort of repentance and salvation "I have been chosen to suffer. My suffering is for the Lord. I am his servant" (p.79).The magnificence of suffering, for Mary, is clear, but she must repent to get the Lord's favour:

> This is for your own good, Mary. The lord tells me you must work hard because you are flawed and disfigured […] her mother had placed mirrors behind the rose bush to make it appear larger. Mary stared at her flawed reflection, framed by white roses […] Mary's head looked distorted, but it showed her ungodly dark skin and her wide nose. (p.79)

As described previously, understanding oneself as being chosen by God has profound implications over identity construction. Belonging to a religious community may create an environment of support that can foster values and meaning of belonging and identity across generations. If the connectedness of the individual and God is potential and central for self-perception according to some characters, notably Mary and her mother Grace, the awareness of the self in relation to others might be crucial.

The delicate awareness of others often triggers an understanding of the self that is tangled with others. The attentiveness to understanding the self is carried out for Yewande along with the whole work as she strongly believes in the potentiality of questioning the self and its connectedness with others. Amala has created a rich context for her characters, who have a myriad of options for finding a sense of belonging and a sense of self. As Mary has selected the religious context upon which she attempts to create a basis for her identity, Yewande prefers to transcend the self and her relation to others. This can be seen through Yewande's endless enquiries about the nature of issues and the extent to which her cognition with regard to truth is valid. She poses, " why, why are the superheroes white and male, and why are the women and girls always waiting to be saved by him when something bad happens , why mum"; she further asks, " Mum, do white men like all the attention then? Is that why they're superheroes?" (p.89)

Briefly, religion has been considered a potency of restructuring for people of African ancestry in a world that is alien to them. Saturated with the blemishes of marginality and the social biases, readers can notice Yewande's resilient desire to recouple with the world left behind through Olumu. The delight to have Olumu, which connects her with her ancestor, resembles her dual identity that rests upon her particularity as an African immigrant and her commonality with people of African descent, who share the difficulty of belonging to spaces in-between. Interestingly, Amala embarks upon the self-consciousness of her protagonist who tries to question and revise the Euro-centric domination over her culture and assumptions. The protagonist describes her bafflement along these lines, "Why, why are the superheroes white […] do white men like to have all the attention? Is that why they're superheroes?", then she adds: "White men, taking all the attention, Mum makes the soup spoil, turns it sour. Yes, Mum?" (p.89)

The need to revise conventional representations is chiefly momentous for Yewande, whose in-between position brings into existence vociferous questions to her mind such as whose discourse is more reliable and what is the nature of being. However, answering such questions demands the reposition of the familial stories of the natal culture to the canonical ones. Consequently, it may be observed that Yewande, on certain occasions, plays with historical materials through the inter-textualisation of certain events in a cavalier mode to open the door to the mythical stories of her ancestors to come into existence.

Quite patently, Yewande seems to run the risk of questioning the collusive arguments created around the nature of being. Yewande and her friend Bisi seem to share the interest in knowing everything about everything. Bisi argues:

> Tell it, Wand…dat fool-ish man, that Charles Darwin, him, transform an environmental adaptation into a hierarchy with him at the top…and us at the bottom, and him create dat word race , and we get destroyed, in-it…Him- Bisi cleared her throat. 'Dat one, dat Charles Darwin. Call himself a great scientist, den him follow (p.223)

Remarkably, one can sense Bisi's awareness of the created pyramid where the white man is placed at the top, and the rest are beneath. The hierarchy of the pyramid is further resurrected and galvanised when the hierarchy of domination is reconstructed due to the presence of the created 'other' who started to be 'visible' to its oppressors. The creation of such a societal order with white men on the top has created multitudes of opaqueness with regard to the nature of mankind for Yewande. Amala brings out this understating as a fracture of what constitutes the African being.

The separatism between the two races has created a qualm for Yewande, who abnegates the pre-given assumption apropos reality. For Yewande, questioning truth is a rich source within which one can understand his/her ontology. In this connection, one might comprehend Yewande's comment over the white girls in the swimming pool. This experience, however, taught her that if she is amongst a group of white girls, she has to watch her back. Yewande told her mother how the white girls stared and giggled and how one of the white girls remarks, "I didn't know you could shine up coal like that" (p.69). Moreover, she told her mother how the blonde girls twisted their heads back and forth as they stared at her and Aina. But instead of being astounded at what happened with the little girls, the mother comments, "Well, sweet, they think they have nicer hair than us. Yes. In their minds they see themselves as the highest standard, as good, as the best." (p.70)

Among the images that reverberate all the way through the text is the white supremacy, which clarifies to Yewande that the order of such a hierarchal system is cynical. However, Yewande never leaves the chance to distrust such a system as she seems to wonder about the nature of issues. The necessity of implementing a positive change towards the issue of race is patently demonstrated through the character Yewande, who told her mother how proud she is with her hair texture and skin colour. She reveals, "But I love my hair, Mum. I would hate hair that moved all the time and got in my food. Mum, their hair gets everywhere, leave a trail they do, a hair trail" (p.70). Evidently, Yewande is taking pride in her skin colour, which, in her understanding, has only hitherto been in the power of white people.

Admittedly, Yewande's thrust to decipher truth is shared by her mother, who has pronounced her ability to challenge the hierarchical order of the western discourse. She remarks:

> 'Remember everything in life just opinions, yes? Those girls have theirs and you have yours.'
>
> She scratched her head. 'Yes, Mum ...we all have different opinions, don't we mum?'
>
> 'Yes, sweet. But some think their opinion is fact, Eh!'(pp.70-71)

In terms of the above lines, one might notice Yewande's doubt whether or not black people have their own right to set forth opinions. More prominently, she asks her mother if different views could be applied to black versus white. All the books she read and the courses of Mrs Russell insist on pouring into her mind that the Western countries civilised Africans and made them wear clothes and live in proper houses. She debriefs, "because it says so in books, doesn't make it right or true. Eh?"(p.99). Ironically, her mother retorts that each group sees truth from one perspective, and thus, abandoning to have a holistic vision of reality, saying:

> 'Mum, one girl said my skin was like coal. She laughed really loud.
>
> Her mum's eyes crinkled at the corners. She spoke, 'Listen well, my child. Some believe their opinion on our skin is truth. Yes… Imagine…each side sees a different view, but each side doesn't see the whole view, yes?" (p.71)

Employing this view, blackness is seen as a mark of inferiority and an indicator of difference. Even though they were blending in, the British still held the view that they were a separate and distinct racial grouping. Thus, it is this blackness that traces in/visibility in the sense of dehumanisation to this racial category. On the other hand, whiteness assures ostensible rights and status. Yewande is probably fully recognisant that the social category precedes the individual, considering that they are born into an already structured society and, thus, sense themselves from the social class to which they belong.

Henceforth, the core of identity is the categorisation of the self and the role it plays in accordance with such a social category. Yewande's mother has already stressed the importance of seeing the issues from the group's perspective, a thing that she tries to teach to her daughters. For her, being part of one group is a core for the construction of social identity on account of the prominence of being a part of a social category regardless of the cracks this might entail. What is more, the conformity of perceptions among the group members is crucial as she taught her daughter that whites' perceptions with regard to blackness are not essentially true, as black people on their part might have certain insights vis-à-vis the white group. In effect, individuals who belong to the same group feel attracted and attached to it even when the group's status is comparatively low. Irrespective of the attitudes that white people have concerning blacks, Yewande expresses her pride and attachment to all that is African "Yewande loved dark skin, *so regal, so African*. Dark skin to her was the biggest turn-on ever" (p. 211)

IV.3. Expanding Traditions and Entrenched Cultures in Amala's Novel

Twining is highly known in the Nigerian demographics and traditions. In the Yoruba traditions, twins are considered heralds of evil and misfortune. Though the selected characters in the chosen novel are not twins, it is clearly noticed that both characters, who are born five minutes apart, will be the harbingers of misfortune as they seem to share the same fate by the end of the novel. Many Nigerians, especially ethnic groups, believe that those who are twinned will have supernatural powers. This belief, however, comes into play in Amala's novel, in which the protagonist talks with her ancestors who aided her to bring horrifying revelations about her past into being.

Moreover, there is a common belief that a person's existence continues after his/her death. This, to a certain extent, justifies the presence of Olumu in Yewande's life that is believed to be an incarnation of her ancestors. Besides, the presence of Olumu is not a metaphor for her lineages, yet it aids her to discover the dismaying revelations about her past, predominantly the death of her father.

As postulated by Bourdillion, the ancestral spirit is regarded as a friendly guardian. These guardians "have power over the lives of their descendants. They are also responsible for bringing the family group together on ritual occasions and ensure that harmony prevails at family level" (1976, p. 227). Conventionally speaking, the connection with ancestral spirits is deeply related to one's prosperity and success in life. Amala's work allegorises the magnitude and the strength of the ancestral spirits in the life of Nigerians. Regardless of the bewilderment the writer has vis-à-vis the power of the ancestral spirits; she never hesitates to speak about the importance of Olumu in the life of her characters. Though the presence of Olumu is a conundrum of embellishment and superstition for some characters or a sort of witchcraft, it is a source of power for others. Yewande, in most of the scenes, expresses her delight to have

Olumu as she feels qualified to listen to the stories of her ancestors. Most importantly, having Olumu creates a sort of envy between the protagonist and her sister, "Olumu *can create envy and betrayal in siste*rs" (Phillips, p.08)

Yewande, like her grandmother, holds the point that having Olumu made them one of the special women in their family. Though the experience of Olumu could be considered flight, it could be decay as described by her grandmother, whose life was traumatised by the disembodied beings who were trapped with their Earth-bounds. The narrator describes it in the following words: "Ola's mum spent her final days linked with her child's energy field, conversing with unborn grandchild's spirit about Earth lessons and discoveries. Her baby kicked less during these times" (p. 08). Hence, the proximate authority of ancestors is strongly projected through the narrator, who expresses: "the dexterity of her ancestors surprised her. Yewande felt like royalty. She patted her stomach in time to the dancing. These images connected her to her story. The warm undulations in her chest persisted and her body felt light" (p. 265). Most importantly, Yewande has been told that only Olumu's teachings are reliable: "Olumu is your greatest teacher, my darling, but reality can be harsh" (p.266). Following this vista, one might suggest that Olumu in Yewande's life acts as the benevolent guardians and bearers of reality.

Having Olumu and dangling between hope and decay for Yewande is not a choice, but rather it is an obligation as she was selected to be the earthly reincarnation of her grandmother, "her real name would be forgotten as she adopted the identity chosen by her new family. The cycle of birth, freedom and rebirth disorientated her" (p.17). Unquestionably, Yewande appears to be the victim of her ancestral traditions as she cannot decide what she wants to be. Apart from the delight she feels whenever Olumu visits her; nonetheless, the burden of Olumu seems to be agonising.

Positioned amid traditions and diasporic conditions could generate counter-narratives to the host land's cultural artefacts and the cultural heritage. Regardless of Yewande's attempts to question both cultures, it seems that the author wants to render her as a repository of the African traditions and experiences in the diaspora. This idea is reflected in Stuart Hall's words, who comments:

> It has come to signify the black community, where these traditions were kept, and whose struggles survive in the persistence of the black experience (the historical experience of black people in the diaspora), of the black aesthetic (the distinctive cultural repertoire out of which popular representations were made), and of the black counter-narratives we have struggle to voice. Here, black popular culture returns to the ground I defined earlier. "Good" black popular culture can pass the test of authenticity the reference to black experience and to black expressivity. These serve as the guarantees in the determination of which black popular culture is right on, and which is not (Hall, What Is this Black in Black Popular Culture, 1993, pp. 110)

Accordingly, all the stories Yewande heard from her ancestors and the stories told from the mainstream community pass the test of authenticity to develop her own conceptual sketches of her native country, Africa, and her diasporic community. In this respect, Yewande's diasporic identity is a combination of her diasporic conditions and her cultural heritage that helped her create a representation of her reality. Yewande's position is pre-eminently described as follows:

> To live in two or more differing cultures and , in the process, to create a transcultural space which permits movements and linkages between the evolving space of origin , entry into the evolving space of destination , connections to other

> spaces , and the everyday praxes of métissage, fusion, negotiation, conflict, and resistance (Harzig, Hoerder, and Gabaccia, 2009, pp. 84-5)

Even though the momentous effect of the ancestral stories can hardly be denied, its authenticity in theorising diaspora identity has always been questioned. Starting with the assumption that most diaspora communities acknowledge the importance of the genetic culture, the characters in the selected novel have different standpoints toward their African heritage. This, nonetheless, could be attributed to the fact that diaspora communities have different traditions as they keep making and remodelling their visions to identity. In this context, Michel Wright envisages:

> [A]truly accurate definition of an African diasporic identity …must somehow simultaneously incorporate the diversity of black identities in the diaspora yet also link all these identities to show that they indeed constitute a diaspora rather than an unconnected aggregate of different peoples linked only in name (2004, p.2)

Though the level of attachment to the natal land varies between diaspora subjects; nonetheless, Africa remains the fixed and authentic point of reference to most characters. Whatever the variances of attachment to this land, even so, Africa seems to be a land that offers clarity and identity that the diaspora milieu fails to afford. Overwhelmed with the idea that Africa resembles the point of reference to the diaspora community, Amala vows her incredulity to the authenticity of Africa through her main character that seems to questions the entire world around her. For, as Amala probably believes that the diaspora evokes a highly active phase of agitations as to identity that needs preliminary work.

In short, identity for Amala is an amalgam of both the African and diasporic worlds. That what always makes it uptight with obscurity as it is hitherto reformed and remade. In this esteem, we cannot debate the characters' entreaty to reconnect with Africa, mainly Yewande who appears to be satisfied whenever she hears her ancestors' voices in spite of the dismaying revelations they seem to bring about her family's past. By the same token, readers cannot adequately dispute Mary's quest to reconnect with her ancestral land. This idea is obviously demonstrated by her reaction when she wears a Nigerian dress expressing that her body finally found its natural home.

Part of what Amala is trying to approximate through Mary's delight to wear a Nigerian outfit is that bodies may act as an archive of history and memory. Further, Mary feels that finally, there exists an outfit that would hide her imperfections. Even more, Mary has always been deluded by her mother that all things African are primitive and bizarre, and she starts to feel the opposite. Rather, she feels beautiful as her body found its natural akin. Hence, being traditionally deficient or imperfect, for Amala, has always been a subject to the question of authenticity. Forcibly, however, the interreligious and intercultural contacts between Africa and its diasporas gave them a new twist.

IV.4. The Language of Diversity: Balancing Christianity and the African Myth

Identity with multicultural and globalised contexts has become intricate due to the plurality of voices that occupied the inhabited landscapes. Like metropolitan spaces, Britain has been transforming into a centre of 'super-diversity'. Such plurality, nonetheless, has put critical questions related to normativity and tolerability into the forefront. Thus, for example, talking about religion across the delineations of the African diaspora arises from the interpretation and the assessment of the colonial contexts, white supremacy and the material artefacts, amongst which religion, that the British Empire deployed. Seen from this vantage point, it is appropriate to suggest that the dialectical struggle between blackness and whiteness in today's Britain is justified by the normative belief of 'pristine whiteness'.

What is interesting to note is the negative fundamental perception that being black is problematic. Living in the diaspora is not about simply following the rules and the normative assumption vis-à-vis critical issues such as race and ethnicity. But rather, it is about the deep-seated ethical positioning of the self within the framework of desiring home, alienation and otherness. Salman Rushdie stumps upon this idea, in his work *Imaginary Homelands*, reflecting:

> The effect of mass migration has been the creation of radically new types of human being: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things; people who have been obliged to define themselves-because they are so defined by others- by their otherness; people in whose deepest selves strange fusions occur, unprecedented unions between what they were and where they find themselves. The migrant suspects reality: having experienced several ways of being, he understands their illusory nature. To see things plainly, you have to cross a frontier. (1991, pp. 124-125)

Salman Rushdie's remark entails the privileged experience of the migratory process. It creates inherent perceptions that allow the diasporic to see the world in a complex manner as the process of crossing the frontiers demands. The point being made here is that alienation and marginality could generate necessary scepticism towards normalisation.

For, it is also a part of morality, for Yewande, not to feel affected by the aphorism that black is pejorative in order to denounce her scepticism and distrust regarding the normativity of truth. Differently said, being a diasporic generates a sense of awareness or 'double consciousness' of seeing the self in opposition and through others. Paradoxically, the sense of strange-hood and fractured reality is a constituent part of the diasporic being. Watching home far off, not being enclosed to it, living in a new habitat, and yet not being part of it made subjects like Yewande a diverse being by default due to the various attachments and identifications.

IV.4.1. Religious Diversity and the Failure to Counter-balance

In its etymological connotation, the concept of religion means 'to bind back 'or 'rebind', which initially refers to the process of reconnection. In other words, religion refers to men's dependence on another Supreme Power to decrypt the world around. Men, therefore, yearn to comprehend some of the world's mysteries, particularly the nature of being, the nature of life and death in reference to a Supreme Being that could explain the veracity of issues. Thus, it, in Anih (1992) and Otto's (1968) conceptualisation, refers to:

> The feeling of awe, dread, mystery, and fascination men experience when confronted with what is holy, uncanny or supernatural. This supernatural being is the president value in the world. The essence of religion lies in the belief in this Supernatural Being, who though may not be seen physically is believed to be existent and imbued with superhuman qualities and quantities" (p. 68)

According to the lines cited above, man's inadequacies and incapability to explain issues in the world around is the real reason behind his acknowledgement of the presence of a Supreme Being. In a related manner, Anih quoting Arnold (1976) envisions religion as ethics in the sense that religion entails morality as it permits us to differentiate between good and evil. From this standpoint, one might suggest that religion could be considered as opium inasmuch as it is an instrument used to becloud man's reasoning ability and prudence. Buttressing further, religion could be instrumental in forging the individual's identity.

In view of that, one might note that there exists a relationship between ethnicity and religion. In effect, people may claim their assimilation to an ethnic group or claim their attachment to a given religion that characterises one's ethnic community. Thus, it is prominent to note that in some instances, religion could be equated to ethnicity since in some cases religion is used as a foundational role in the formation of ethnicity. Though religion could not be that determining factor in identity formation; nonetheless, Amala portrays how religiosity, morals, and values help to expand one's understanding of events and experiences.

On a slightly similar note, Amala finds robust evidence between religious attachment and identity foundation as portrayed through her main characters, precisely Johnson's family. Overall, religion tends to contribute to their identity as they seem to take religiosity as an important constituent. In some instances, readers notice that this family tends to classify people in terms of religiousness. It is worthwhile to note that such a commitment to religion is adopted to adhere to the norms of the white community.

Interestingly, readers can notice that such a group is plotted on the continuum of the norms they inherited from their colonisers. The fidelity and retention of the Christian faith come from the strong belief that the authentic religious practice was that of the former coloniser. Many Africans who have migrated to Britain, nonetheless, have come to the realisation of themselves as Africans who live under the shadows of the British Empire. This is specifically true for Johnson's family, who attempted to classify all Christian practitioners as godly and those who do not follow the Christian faith and maintain the African rituals as ungodly. Moreover, their ideologies with regard to religiosity and race are carried by immigrants through spaces.

The diversity and difference within the same community who belongs to the same cultural system seem to plague most definitions of religion. It is eminent, however, to point to Clifford Geertz's vision that prefers to see religion as:

> A system of symbols which acts to embellish powerful, pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of

> existence an clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods ad motivations seem uniquely realistic (1973, p. 90)

Thus, finding a universal definition of religion probably remains opaque. Most importantly, finding out the nexus between religion and identity requires ample work as religion per se appears to be a specific product of history. It is worthwhile pointing out that religion has been the sole authority of authentic discourse within the colonial age. Differently put, one might arrive at the point that religion has been manipulated by the ones who had been at the apex of power. Thus religion sketched newly created boundaries between nations and communities. It is not surprising, therefore, to see religion as a subject of perpetual struggle as whenever there is power; antagonism is highly predicted.

Echoing this vision, Amala portrays how the mainstream discourses used the pretext of ‘pristine whiteness” to spread their views. Analogously, religion has become a fundamental instrument for boundary-making and remaking; therefore, creating schisms among members of the same ethnic group. Amala creates a space where her characters can negotiate their religious identities. In doing so, she attempts to answer how religious boundaries start to be sharply shattered when they turn to be locations of internal power struggles. It is worthwhile to consider that people tend to see religion as a kind of insurance against the dismay of the unknown in general. Therefore, religion becomes a site of struggle whenever others threaten this security.

Unlike Mary Johnson, who feels secure whenever practising the Christian faith, Yewande insists on the traditions and rituals of Africans. For Mary and her family, being part of the Christian faith and sharing in the rituals and ceremonies of white people is made to sense their unity and belonging to that group. Moreover, a little doubt exists with regard to the missionaries and their civilising mission distinct to the Daramola family, who appears to question reality and hold traditional beliefs about spirituality and worship. Ola, Yewande's mother, remarks:

> Remember, girls, as I've said before, Christianity was practiced in some African countries prior to European invasion so it has some non-European roots, but it's like everything else in life, any practice, religious or otherwise, should be examined and understood before it is owned. Eh, question, question, question, girls, this is the way, yes. (Olukemi, p.115)

The encounter with new social and spatial locations sets into motion a desire to put into question the taken-for-granted ways of thinking. Her common understanding of religion is essentially defined by the existence of tradition and rituals that shape the system of meaning. Evidently, she insists on the importance of holding the African faith through which, for her, people can create a cosmos, a methodical system that gives meaning and a route to people's lives. For Ola, there exists an invisible world which is the home of spiritual beings with functioning powers over the physical world. Interestingly, this involves the idea of a dialogical conversation between human beings and the spiritual worlds. For the Daramola family, the power of the material world is rooted in the spiritual one. For Ola, only a few people are blessed with communication with such spiritual beings as Olumu. She tells her daughters:

> Olumu means you have the opportunity to develop extraordinary skills. Every Olumu Sister is different but please hear, you have the chance to experience life on so many more levels than your sister or me…Remember, Sweet, Olumu shows you many truths, but truth can taste like uncooked bitter leaves. Yes, you might not like what you learn. (p.113)

This provides a major reason for the Daramola family to meddle religion in their lives. Therefore, religion to Ola functions in the deployment of power and knowledge as she sought it to be an alternative source of authority, mainly for those who lost the meaning of their existence. Virtually, Yewande perceives her connection with Olumu as a sort of empowerment, seeing that Olumu attempts to reveal some hidden parts of reality. Regardless of the pain she endures and the bitter truth that Olumu reveals such as her father's death, she feels honoured and privileged due to having such a connection.

Additionally, the revitalisation of the traditional beliefs and the insistence to reconnect with spiritual beings appears to be a tactic employed to interrogate the divine right of white people in bringing the gospel to Africa, as it is employed as a means to accentuate their 'alterity' and unique ethnic identity. Unquestionably, it seems that the movement of people from one location to another is not mere physical travel. Rather, it is a process where some religions, ritual commodities and deities travel as well.

In outlining possible ways to help her daughter understand her diasporic being, Ola attempts to instil her daughter that the injection of African rituals and the connection with the spiritual world might create rupture due to the failure to create a balance between conflicting commitments to different worlds. Most prominently, Ola tells her daughter that even Africans back home did not afford to be effusively conversant with Olumu. She tells her daughter: "Sweet, many people back home, thought Olumu was demonic. They saw anybody who claimed it as evil, women and girls blinded or even killed" (p.114). She further adds, "Yes, having a child like Grandma Abeni, very dangerous for the family, danger from our people and white people. My grandparents felt England would be more forgiving because in any case England expects black people to be a bit weird, eh?" (p.115)

Nothing could probably damage the truth more than the created boundaries between national bounds and ethnic ideologies. In this line, Ola teaches her daughter to question even the African rituals and to avoid the taken-for-granted praxis. Hence, the insistence on examining the impact of the 'European' on self-understanding of religion and the importance of returning to the pre-colonial African practices are decisive due to the intersection between Africans and their Christian colonisers.

The mode of adaptability that the Daramola family is calling for can give some intuitions concerning the new archetypes of religious transformation. The religious transnationalism that Ola is talking about seems consistent with Watts' vision of the change in crescendos of religious experiences. The religious beliefs recede from their normative and cultural facets to incorporate experiential, relational, and personal perspectives (Watts, 2017). The point that Watts appeals to is to stress that people's understanding of objects and issues is likely liable for the issue itself and the experiences associated with it. In line with what Watts has noted, one might comprehend Ola's vision with regard to the wrong assumptions that the European missionaries have meddled with the African traditional beliefs. This idea is blatantly expressed by Ola along those lines:

> Christianity was practiced in some African countries prior to European invasion so it has some non-European roots, but it's like everything else in life, any practice, religious or otherwise, should be examined and understood before it is owned. Eh, question, question, question, girls, this is the way, yes. (Olukemi, p. 115)

Having proposed that people's attachment to the natal location could be protective and critical in defining one's sense of identity, it is possible to argue that people-religion relationships can take a similar form of effective importance. Amala focuses on the contradictions outlined in both stories, either narrated by her African ancestors or white colonisers due to the on-going contestation between those who hold power; therefore, legitimising their regimes of truth, and those who have mythical superstitions. For Amala, the perils of those discourses seem to be unresolved; therefore, the attachment to spiritual beings is as important as the attachment to the land of ancestors.

It has become increasingly important to understand how building transitional religious networks is deeply intertwined with people's movement across spaces. The impetus to reconnect with traditional religious milieus is as important for diasporas as homing desire. Though diaspora subjects seem to be engaged in circuits of cultural exchange, nonetheless, longing for the past and corporeal attachment to the cultural repository may vary enormously from one human to another.

In outlining potential ways of understanding diaspora, it is required to remark that diaspora means an admission of sacrifice to assure continuity across differences. In a nutshell, establishing a life in the diaspora means creating a new beginning that is remunerated with the desire of an ensuing return. In this regard, Michael Lambek (2007) distinguishes two kinds of beginning that could be interconnected: transitive and intransitive. In as much as the former focuses on continuity, intransitive requires the deep theoretical focus on radical change. These beginnings, nonetheless, are both important for understating diaspora struggle as they provide a structure of continuity or cultural candidness within the context of rupture from the past.

In line with what Lambek has suggested, Amala, through her various characters, portrays how they attempt to balance their multiple and conflicting commitments to different worlds differently. Amala marks the impasse that blocks access to maternal culture as some characters selected intransitive beginning in the diaspora neglecting the land left behind, such as Johnson's family who attempts to blend into the British society refuting all that is African. On the other hand, Yewande and her family try to have a transitive debut in the new location via maintaining strong ties with the traditional culture to create new cultural tectonics.

IV.5. The Antimony of Home-Making in the Diaspora: Bringing Africa into London

Under an Emerald Sky unveils the journey of the emplacement in a new country through the projections of everyday attempts at creating a home in a new location. The novel captures the possibility of making the new space a location endowed with the meaning of home. Most importantly, it depicts the different sorts of sacrifice, agencies, and the predicaments they face because of dealing with unanticipated contingencies in the new inhabited terrain. 'Home', 'the natal land', and 'tracing roots' feature daily discourses of diaspora members though the idea of home return could not be that looming. Understanding the range of possibilities that diaspora holds for the newcomers brings to mind Kelley's arguments who believed that diaspora displacement "is never simply a physical movement across space, but also involves transformations in the political , spatial and economic practices through which people are related to place" (2009, p. 26)

A prominent argument concerning the diaspora is homing desire or creating home in the diaspora. For diaspora communities, the homeland compromises the collection of memories of the homeland to balance the feelings of locality and belonging. It is almost certainly annoying, for diasporas to think about the land left behind or how this land might feature in shaping their everyday processes. Yet, the most annoying thing is the failure to recognise the strategies and efforts they could embrace in creating a home in the new land. Therefore, it is worth considering that home-building is an operative construct that aids diasporas in shaping the feeling of being at home and creating a sense of locality. Accordingly, Ghassan Hage, in his seminal work *Home in The Entrails of the West*, points that the feeling of being at home in someone else's home is an effective process that is composed of four strategic feelings. He remarks that these feelings are strategic for the process of building home. The four crucial feelings, for Hage, are the feeling of 'security' that entails the feeling of being a conscious subject in one's land; the feeling of 'familiarity' which is related to one's spatial recognition of that place, the feeling 'community', and the feeling of a 'sense of possibility' where the individual makes sense of possible opportunities for a better life.

Understanding such feelings or the context that Amala creates for her characters to enable them to build a home is better approached when answering some enquiries such as how people produce locality in one's land within the project of rootedness. For, *Under an Emerald Sky* schemes how home building process is deliberately involved with the project of rootedness. As for the Daramola family, this project is crystallised via the spiritual connection with Olumu. This connection, nonetheless, becomes a replica of the cultural repository of African-ness, a connection that is generated to make Africa visible in London and where the cultural commitment to Africa is blatantly pronounced. Though not all diaspora members are involved in this project, Yewande's family epitomises the contingencies of creating a home in the new locality.

Accordingly, the connection with Olumu for Yewande does not crystallise the project of rootedness, but rather it is an attempt to make Africa visible for them. Most importantly, Olumu for Yewande is an appropriate medium to imbue her life with meaning and sense her reality. In Amala's work, the deployment of Olumu fosters the feelings of security that help Yewande to be a wilful subject in England. For her, Olumu resembles security and familiarity. These feelings, however, were heightened when Yewande saw the pictures of her father and some of her family members whom she has never seen beforehand. The photograph of her family appeared on the screen of Dr David. The narrator describes the scene:

> What wow…Olumu? Her eyes were glued to the screen. What's that doing there …wow…far out. This photo had been the last one her dad had taken of the

> extended family…her mum, auntie and grandmother, all wearing traditional Nigerian dress, looked out of place next to the flares and tank top (Olukemi, pp.260-261)

Accordingly, the feeling of familiarity generated through the discussion with Olumu is clearly deployed in the novel. Moreover, she expresses that Olumu is the spirit of awakening and understanding to the world around. Thus, creating a habitat where she can possess maximal knowledge of what everything is for. Yewande, through the photo projected that day, comes to know most of her family members. The event is depicted as follows:

> The next scene showed a screaming baby in crib, whom she knew was her baby. He couldn't have been much older than eighteen months…the next image showed her parents 'wedding. Yewande knew this image from the photos in the lounge and although she had seen it many times, only now did she comprehend the detail. (p. 263)

Remarkably, Yewande's delight to have Olumu arises from the feeling of security and the maximal knowledge of her story and her history. What is more, the projection of the family pictures heightened the sense of security as she comes to recognise the story of the people of her own, arguing: "The dexterity of her ancestors surprised her. Yewande felt like royalty. She patted her stomach in time to the dancing. These images connected her to her story. The warm undulations in her chest persisted and her body felt light" (p.265)

Another feature that portrays Amala's desire to create a home in the diaspora is the centrality and the focus on food as it elicits nostalgia and home desiring. The culinary experiences appear to take Ola to the past drawing on Holtzman's words, "food is well-known to transport people (especially ethnic and diasporic groups to different times and places through triggering 'experience or meaning in reference to the past'" (2006, p. 363). In effect, creating a cuisine in the diaspora is part of asserting one's national identity and home as there seems to be propinquity between one's national identity and food. So, it goes with saying that the creation of the African cuisine for Amala is a process of narrating and imagining the forgotten past.

Restoring the traditional African meals is a defiance act to represent the 'backward Africa' to the British audience. The representation of the traditional meals is an endorsement of their Nigerian heritage. Hence, the desire to create a national cuisine in the context of London reveals how resilience is an avowal to their understanding of the present and the imagination of the future in reference to their past history. Seen from another perspective, the attachment to places could be expressed based on the memory that one constructs and through the social practices that could root someone in a given place. Accordingly, through the insistence on their traditional Nigerian meals, the Daramola family creates a sense of familiarity that is a necessary part in the process of reconfiguring home in the diaspora. Therefore, Ola wants to make Africa and African rituals visible in London through the deployment of food.

Clearly, the traditional Nigerian meals that Ola cooked for her daughters provide intimations of familiarity and cultural security that are the basis of home-building practices. However, it also provides an image of the suspicious gaze that the dominant group had towards the immigrants, for the fear of rejection and the clash amid these groups can be sensed easily as these groups seem to clash whenever they are positioned within the same location. Admittedly, the dominant group seems to taunt these immigrants and their eating habits regularly. This idea is portrayed by Yewande who has been told that she needs to take cautions in front of white people regardless of the intimacy she had with her white friend, Monica. It is portrayed as follows:

> Correct etiquette from *A perfect Guest*, the TV programme for proper manners, told Yewande that unlike with black families, arriving at a meal with empty arms was

> taboo in white families. She thought of the meals at her black friend' homes, where turning up with anything apart from a hungry belly and maybe a drink meant you were suspicious of the cook. (Olukemi, pp. 134-5)

The claim mentioned above clearly demonstrates the differences in the modes of thinking between Yewande and her white neighbours. The negative gaze that white people have regarding blacks seems to be present and did not totally disappear. This, however, is clearly elucidated through Mrs Williams and her daughter, Monica, attitudes re Yewande's eating habits and her eager hands that demanded more plantain and rice, neglecting the correct etiquettes she heard on TV programs. Such unconscious action dragged Yewande in a suspicious gaze at school and the other girls who thought that she was eating like a starving person from Sudan. Yewande's eating habits angered Monica's mother who thought that she was offended and disrespected from Yewande. On the contrary, Yewande thought that turning home hungry will indicate her suspicions towards Mrs Williams' culinary " turning up with anything apart from hungry belly and maybe a drink meant you are suspicious of the cook", Yewande remarks. (p.135)

Interestingly, for female diaspora subjects, the kitchen is a space where these characters can create their cosmos and negotiate their identities. Nonetheless, this enclosed space becomes a gendered site where cultures are negotiated and reproduced via ritual celebrations. In other words, this space has increasingly become a space of identity affirming process (Abarca, 2006, p.10). It is worth considering that the culinary experiences for diasporas divert from its normative specifications to be a location to maintain strong ties with the home left behind. Accordingly, Ola through the kitchen was able to create her own realm of influence. The complex nature of diaspora experience, which varies from the inchoate sentiments of sensing home and the conception of the inhabited spaces, made of the affordability of creating home through food one of the initial components to transcend the cuisine of the other culture to create a new cosmos where diaspora can sense their homes in someone's home.

Being a diasporic subject, being a traveller, is not a mere process of inhabiting someone's own space, but rather it is a complex process that stems from the deep understanding and realisation that something has been left behind and elapsed. The process of moving away and forward could turn into a repellent experience due to the complex nature of departure and leaving home behind. The unfathomable connection to the parameters of home either through traditions or food could be explained by the feeling of alienation that started with the slave trade and continued by the process of migration. The sentiment of losing their African identity is echoed through their insistence on preserving their bearings that are deeply connected to Africa. These 'travelling people' were captured by the feeling that there is no safe place for them to be called 'home', but their survival depends on their perpetual travelling.

In effect, readers can notice easily that food and the connection with the African ancestors, for Yewande, become empowering tools to assert her lost identity. *Under an Emerald Sky* offers a powerful picture on the topic of the perpetual process of travelling that African diasporas went through in today's Britain. Instead of focusing on the point of departure and its resultant arrival, the narrative delves into the recapped embarkations that happen to constitute the normative components of home and homeland. Hence, Amala's character and narrator, Yewande, claims her identity through the African rituals and the connection with her African bearings. Regardless of the fragile connection she comes to establish with her ancestors due to the fractured nature of this connection and her distrust of Olumu; nonetheless, she insists on the power of Olumu.

To comprehend the world around and describe her awkward position within London, she regards Olumu as a source of empowerment. Though Olumu encodes deception for Yewande as Olumu was supposed to reflect the reality of the world around her, she loses her trust as it did not reflect anything regarding her mother's sickness. The narrator interprets this bewilderment in this manner: "her heart raged at Grandma Abeni and her ancestors or revealing her mum's sickness, or even better, using the powers of Olumu to cure her" (p.295). Hitherto, the spiritual world she creates with Olumu affords her a measure of privacy when she can sense her 'African-ness'. It is worth pointing that the locations she comes to inhabit in London are rigid and limited ones. Thus, Yewande finds that creating a new world with Olumu and her African lineages is conducive to her freedom. Differently said, for Yewande, Olumu and the stories recounted by her grandmother are reliable rather than the stories narrated by her white neighbours that seemed ludicrous to her.

IV.6. Amala's Celebration of the Diasporic self in *Under an Emerald Sky*

Under an Emerald Sky plainly scrutinises the myth of origins and how the past leaps forward to reconstitute a diasporic self that is positively grounded in the past, but not ensnared by it. In a verbatim sense, the novel exposes how marginalised and ostracised diasporic subjects have taken the initiative to pronounce their difference. The main character manages to transcend the issue of colour that is considered one of identity markers. Oyeyemi carries out this message when her main character, Yewande, has divulged how such stereotypes and prejudices lose their currency. It is interesting to point to how Yewande attempts to implode such definitions concerning Africans and blacks and denies them when her colleagues at school pointed that all Africans, regardless of their various origins and affiliations, are backward. Hence, embracing the two worlds for Yewande becomes a leitmotif for her to open up new venues for both blackness and whiteness.

Regardless of the fragility of the stories recounted by her ancestors, Yewande is bent on exposing the adverse effects of the monolithic representation of the other race, assuming that the only possible way for communication between two diverse ethnic groups is through discarding one-dimensional view of the supposedly opponent group. To counterbalance the resilient rejection that happens to take place between her two adversary worlds, she forges a new space that reconciles both extremes. The hypnotic metaphor for the encounter between her African and British realms is personified through the world she creates when she appropriated her African and British worlds. This radical contact, which positively transcends the dichotomous and fractured world she inhabits, reflects the positive attitudes that Yewande has towards these two different extremes regardless of how transient and obscure this might be.

Amala's work prompts profound accounts on the bifurcated self in the diaspora. In other words, the novel projects Amala's desire to coalesce differing voices and views through the persona of Yewande, who claims her clear allegiances to both sides. What readers might notice is Amala's assessment of the hitches encountered by Yewande as she attempts to embrace two cultural adherences. As well, Amala's account apropos diaspora fractured identity is represented through Yewande's struggle to counteract her divided identity to attain a better self that is moulded on the 'threshold'. As a result, Amala augments the debate about the diasporic self by crediting it to the degree of flexibility that her main character possesses.

The novelist gestures toward a fluid conception of the diasporic self that is encapsulated through the protagonist's perpetual questions to the pre-given assumptions she inherits vis-à-vis identity. Yewande's craving to represent the troubled nature of the diasporic self and the protracted effects of westernised attitude towards the other races are detrimental for writing pertinent scenarios regarding subaltern identities. This par excellence meets Carolina Ortiz Fernandez, who expresses, "the subalternity is not a coherent and fixed whole, it is also a construction that assumes multiple historical forms" (1999, p.86)

Yewande's plunging into the unfathomable inquiry of the African and western scenarios are restrictively adopted to debunk a more inclusive and hybrid diasporic self rather than constituting a monolithic sight of the self. Readers can easily notice that Amala selects a persona who questions the African scenarios and the western stories to expose the poignant sense of belonging to both worlds and none at the same time. Probably, Yewande has little to say as regards her ancestral land, Africa, and African people, with whom she is meant to identify, and, most importantly, has little to say with regard to the world she inhabits as she is considered the 'familiar stranger'. Nonetheless, all the stories she recounted and heard from Olumu helped shape speculative discussions about her identity.

Amala's approach to the diasporic self is typical as she deeply believes that mapping the self into the world demands a quest for the self beyond the borders of the self and the inhabited location. Thus, the treacherous process of mapping the diasporic self involves different experiences of locations and relocations. This process is clearly expressed in the following lines:

> Lifted from one home and set down in another, these children learn not to attach deeply. Yet despite their resistance to rooting, these children need a sense of belonging, a way to integrate their many cultural selves and find a place in the world. Like all children, they need a secure sense of self, a stable identity. (Faith Eidse & Sichel, 2004, p.1)

Along with the struggle of uprootedness, diaspora subjects, like Yewande, defy identity models due to the dearth of having a concrete place of origin. However, her accounts with multifarious places of origins and belonging reveal that the processes of movement and identity construction come at a price. This, nonetheless, made of home desiring and the sense of belonging pertinent for diaspora beings. In this claim, it is suggested that:

> The usual clues that identify a person don't apply to globally nomadic children. Language, place, family, and community shift for these children with each geographic move. Self-image is slippery; they refuse or are unable to conform to standard definitions of who they are. […] They are composites, bits and pieces added with each relocation, each new cultural influence. Unrooted children absorb fragments of the many cultures they are exposed to and develop kaleidoscope identities. (Eidse and Sichel, p.02)

Following this vista, one might comprehend Yewande's kaleidoscopic nature as she attempts to mix her African origins with the British traditions. Her sense of affinity with people of African descent or people who had similar experiences is adopted to enable her to transcend the cultural differences that often keep her apart from the community she is meant to belong. Simultaneously, her vision suggests new cultural identifications that go beyond the traditional definitions of home, belonging, and identity. Thus, suggesting a new prototype of identity that is less attached to a specific place. Probably, Greg Madison's definition accurately describes Amala's characters that are:

> The existential migrant […] chooses to leave his or her homeland, pushed out by deep questions that can't be answered at home, pulled into the wide world in order to discover what life is. We are living paradoxes. We need to fell at home but have never done so, we need to belong but renounce opportunities for belonging, we venture out into the unknown in order to experience the homecoming that will finally settle us, but doesn't. (Madison, 2010, p. 07)

In this respect, one can observe that neither home nor England succeeds to answer Yewande's questions. Instead, Yewande manages to rewrite the stories of Nigeria and Africa at large through the stories/images she creates with the help of her grandmother and Olumu. In other words, she manages to create a home at the juncture of spaces. Interestingly, she forms bonds with other beings, like her relationship with her white friend Monica, a thing that her mother never comprehends. In so doing, she crafts new pledges that transcend the established cultural barriers that acted out new-fangled types of belonging that fit today's Britain's transitional and transcultural contexts.

Perhaps the idea that Amala tries to project through her main character, Yewande, is the sense of belonging to a given place can be established through the connection between the inner and external worlds. Most diasporas have a fixed definition that identity ought to be connected to a specific place. Thus, the process of movement entails the feelings of pain and rifts of separation between the inner and outer worlds. For Yewande, however, such pain is lesser as she never connects her inner world to a specific outer one. In other words, home for her becomes less a place than a connection she manages to establish when she interacts brilliantly with her external and alternate worlds, Africa and Britain. This, in Amala's vision, necessitates a reassessment of home and belonging that are not tied to a physical location, heading for reconnecting the inner self into the external world. Thus, the conceptualisation of home, belonging, and identity are radically different from the traditional accounts erected upon identity.

Yewande's sense of identity and existence parallels Heidegger's argument, who envisions that the individual's sense of existence stems from the alertness that home and belonging are illusory notions. Hence, the only genuine response to the question of existence is through seeking beyond what is grounded and what is lived. Almost certainly, Yewande's position amid two worlds and the desire to reconcile home suggests that it is part of reality not to feel home as home per se appears to be a mythical solution. In view of that, it is claimed, "And still for some of us the idea is not to be at home, but to be longing for home, forever on the way home. That feeling, that tragic sublime homelessness, is where we feel most alive and where we most belong" (Madison, p. 213).

Yewande's plea to connect somewhere does not reflect her recognizance that home is a physical location that she needs to claim her attachment to, but rather longing for home is part of the process of existence and identification. Further, the connection that takes place amid Yewande's inner world and her outer worlds, and more specifically her African ancestors, are therapeutic as they enable her to tell her own story. Simply put, identity is imbued in one's ability to tell a story, not to the physical attachment to a specific locus. Regardless of the craters and whimsicality of the stories recounted, yet the act of telling one's story helped Yewande compensate for the gap between her inner and external worlds. In this concern, it is envisioned:

> The only permanence is in memory and in the stories they tell… In a nomadic world, telling our stories is one way to establish our place in time, especially when ties to extended family and community becomes tenuous and personal histories may be fragmented by moves […] telling our stories binds us in act of remembrance. (Eidse and Sichel, p. 04)

Seen from another vantage point, the interactions that take place between Yewande's adversary worlds in the diasporic settings open up the frontiers of identity formation into contestation. Therefore, it is axiomatic that Yewande cannot comprehend her diasporic self without acknowledging the coercive power of the past and the stories of her ancestors over identity formation.

Yewande's estrangement in England indicates that diaspora is a process and a discourse through which she made and reshaped the place she belongs. In other words, Yewande deals with her diasporisation and marginality differently. This, nonetheless, reflects her consciousness and her desire to make an investment between 'here' and 'there' and her appraisal of the points 'in-between'. In several scenes, she shifts between her adversary worlds, yet this movement was a kind of voyage that never embraces the prospect of never returning or arriving at one point.

Seen from another prospect, the embodiment of memory in *Under an Emerald Sky* is a sign of survival and a sign of absence/presence. The trace of the African roots is signified through the images of *Olumu* that act as a reminder of the African heritage in addition to the oompa loompas that were supposed to remind them of Africa. Indisputably, the most jarring image is the image of the oompa loompas and the nostalgia that Yewande and her sister felt when they thought that the oompa loompas were coming on TV. In other words, Yewande thinks that they are the African pygmies who represent the wretched situation of Africans that continue to cross the boundaries of Africa. The girls' shock after realising that the oompa loompas are white is not a replica of the colonial practices solely, but rather it represents the past as something crumbling. The novel, however, is about the leftovers of memories that diaspora beings keep carrying around in small boxes into the future.

At varying scales, Amala's emphasis on the scraps of memory is pivotal to cross the spatial and temporal boundaries that exist between her African and British worlds. Through her main character, Yewande, Amala moves across historical periods to reach the liminal zones that her ancestors attempted to inhabit due to the slave trade and the process of deportation from their maternal land to walk across her diasporic situation. The presence of ancestral characters is reincarnated through Olumu and her grandmother who represent the presence of Africa in the novel.

At a deeper level, the articulation of the African traditions and honouring the African cuisine in the novel are immersed in reference to African spirituality to prompt the diaspora beings to maintain the physical and spiritual bonds. Amala, through her authorial presence and the voices of grandmother and *Olumu*, attempts to resuscitate the African culture. Hence, the incarnation of spirituality in Amala's work is chief as it evokes the integration between the physical body and the spirit. In other words, the novel interrogates what it means to be a diasporic being with African heritage and live in a habitat that insists on questioning all that is African, or it attempts to deplore spirituality in the African culture.

Interestingly, Amala attempts to defy the created cultural tenets that insist on the marginality of other races. *Under an Emerald Sky* questions the potentiality of celebrating marginality and living at the borders. Moreover, Amala tries to cross the landscapes looking for what the Anglo-Asian critic Jenny Sharpe refers to as 'ethnographic ear'. Sharpe envisions that the ethnographic listening "exists between and not within cultures…beside every native voice is an ethnographic ear" (1993, p. 20). In effect, Amala tries to demonstrate how her main character endeavours to move across landscapes and cultures, looking for an ethnographic ear. She, nonetheless, plays both the role of the outsider and an insider to unveil the hidden truth regarding both cultures and cosmos, as she feels estranged from both. Yewande's movement across the cultural lines echoes her awareness of the issues of race and ethnicity from a diasporic perspective.

Conclusion

Amala, like most diasporic authors, textualised the experiences of women in the African diaspora as she exposes the inconsistent adherences that featured their cultural cryptograms. More specifically, she enunciates the plurality and multiplicity that shape the diasporic self. In so doing, she discloses her cognisance of what institutes her diasporan being and the different trajectories that define her status. What is more, the connection with the ancestral terrain officiates over her considerations despite the impossibility of the actual return. Yewande's mental breakdown at the end of the novel suggests the giant sufferings that her ancestors had been through, as it echoes her inability to counter-balance her diasporic locus.

Interestingly, the appropriation of the native culture signifies the richness of the African culture on the one hand, as it divulges what has been buried by the treacherous Eurocentric accounts with regard to Africa. In this manner, Amala broadens the diasporic vision as it challenges the traditional considerations with reference to the ancestral culture and the recipient one. Dissimilar to most diasporic representations of the dichotomous alienated self, Yewande is projected as a persona with a third inclusive self. This true self, however, emerges regardless of the divisions.

Amala's novel assesses of the veracity of particular truths and knowledge that underlies raison d'être for certain hegemonic systems and structures. The prototypical strength of the narrative lies in Amala's unapologetic assertion of her resistance to the pre-given structures. Hence, despite the dialectical struggles between the worlds she comes to inhabit, she puts into query the negative images that both communities have vis-à-vis each other. It would be much fairer for the main characters to make the case that we all need to single out the discrepancies that could exist in every single system and structure. Indeed, she puts into contestation that we are all somehow obsessed with the idea of giving plausibility to the white/black dichotomy, for she notices that one's perception of reality is strongly shaped and conditioned by the hegemonic structures. In effect, she attempts to question both systems and interrogates the veracity of the stories retold by her grandmother; even so, she seems to be the only source of knowledge as regards her origins.

The novel under discussion portrays the hardships of the cultural polarity whose members' identity is based on their particularity of being at crossroads. To put it differently, Amala tries to answer a question that haunts most African diasporic beings who interrogate the extent to which things have transformed since the first contact between Africa and Britain. Interestingly, when Yewande saw the pictures of her ancestors, she was metaphorically steeped once more in a past that she cannot relinquish.

Positioned in an acrid milieu, Olukemi makes of her art not written solely for the sake of art, but rather to expose the utility of fiction in depositing some accounts regarding the concerns of the diaspora community in Britain to wrench new identity. The issue that Olukemi attempts to project is the quest for defining the self and the impossibility of having a unified self. In other words, she questions the ontological uncertainty that most characters suffer from due to the nature of their split selves and fragmented personalities in line with the multiple absences of belonging, place of origin, and the authentic self. Accordingly, the multiple ebbs and drifts of home clearly explain the persistent desire that Yewande has concerning calling Africa.

Many accounts have been established regarding diaspora identities and have demonstrated how the main community evidently marginalises diaspora beings despite the calls for border crossing. Most of these traditional tales, however, attempted to address the incongruent concerns of African and Asian diasporas that happen to share the same project of reclaiming the enduring subjectivity and the decolonising contemplation to free the self from the long-existing dogmatism that prioritises the white race. Therefore, diaspora writers of African and Asian origins, who are putatively British citizens, have articulated this subjectivity and brought their vision to portray their oppositional conception of identity, home, and origin. Amala is no exception as she has taken an oppositional stance to be one of the cultural producers to challenge the mainstream culture. It is germane; therefore, to borrow Jacqueline Babo's comment, which best describes the intentions of diaspora writers and female writers specifically:

> Within the last several decades black women have effectively written themselves back into history; they have retrieved their collective past for sustenance and encouragement for present-day protest movements […]Even as the image of docile, obsequious black women remains a popular construction for mainstream cultural producer, the history of black women's activism shows that black women are not the acquiescent martyrs of popular imagination but women who effectively meet the repressive challenges of mainstream society. (Babo, 1995, pp.36-37)

Amala, thus, does not seem to centre her story on the issues of loss or desertion that most diaspora authors attempted to emphasise, but rather she focuses on how her characters are haunted by the desire to live in the in-between times and spaces. In other words, she focuses on the liminal beings who are trying to bring into presence an absent past that is believed to be the main reason that moulded their today's traumatic status. *Under an Emerald Sky* exposes the anxieties of Amala and her distrust of the western accounts constructed around Africa and Africans. Conversely, these biases forced Amala to dive deep into the past that is believed to be a remedial potential for those who have no place of their own in their diasporic locus. In other words, she exposes the enigmas of those who had been subject to the 'effect of history' (Punter, 2007, p. 133). For Amala, an alert and logical understanding of one's history can form a basis for renewed ethos to comprehend one's existential prospect.

Though Amala attempts to pass all stories she heard from both cultures through the test of authenticity, her delving into the past waters her sustained need to claim her belonging to a certain culture and a certain location. This return, nonetheless, offers her a sense of belonging and attachment that redeems her erratic and meaningless wandering. In brief, her plunging into the past does not restrictively avow her desire to claim her African identity solely; hitherto, it reflects her adjustment to different cultures. Most interestingly, it echoes the beauty of fluctuating multifarious cultures.

Chapter Five: Liminal Beings and Fractured Identities in Helen Oyeyemi's *The Opposite House (2007)*

*Home is no longer one place, it is locations. Home is a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. (*Bell Hooks*, Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politic*, 1989)

Introduction

Published in 2007, *The Opposite House* displays a number of remarkable issues related to the experiences of children who are facing the challenges of growing up in another land. *The Opposite House* is a novel that focuses on the protagonists' lives, and purveys the transformation of the British society and culture at large under the novel upshots of post-war migration. Helen Oyeyemi, along with her novels namely *The Icarus Girl* (2005), *The Opposite House* (2007), and *White is for Witching* (2009), dwells on identity construction of Black British children descending from Africa and raised in Britain. The novel maps the tension between localities and cultures that saturates the lives of the children of mixed races. This is unerringly what the author Aminatta Forna has denoted as, "the pattern of sudden departures and unheralded arrivals in new countries that would mark my childhood" (Forna, 2002. p, 103).

The African traditions and beliefs represent a central part in the works of Black British authors, including Oyeyemi. The inclusion of traditions in the writings of Oyeyemi establishes a rich part of magical realism to build a portrait of the mixed-race subjects en route for portraying the hyphenated nature of their Black British identity.

Her emphasis on the dual locations and identities is projected through spirit-doubles or *orishas.* In actual fact, the double is employed metaphorically to project the multiplicity of visions and perspectives that writers like Oyeyemi inhabit in their hybrid spaces. This is what Marina Warner emphasises saying: "the double offers a disturbing and yet familiar set of personae in ways of telling the self; permutations of inner and outer selves catalyse uncanny plots about identity" (Warner, 2004, p.163). Hence for Oyeyemi, there is a connection between supernatural doubles, trauma and identity on account of she interrogates the relationship between women of different generations.

Oyeyemi's lapse over cultures and boundaries reflects her desire to forge an identity that is in-between two worlds. In other words, she mediates the European prototype and Yoruba, making her texts a marginal space where different worlds and individuals from different generations can collide. The incorporation of the Occidental and African traditions in Oyeyemi's texts arbitrates the uncanny effects of doubling that leads to a schism in diaspora's identity in general. The inclusion of the ghostly metaphors that are strongly associated with African traditions can be explained by the sense of ambivalence prompted by the irreconcilable feeling of being different. The aforementioned idea corresponds with Harris Satkunananthan's statement, which entails that the deployment of the supernatural elements is "related not just to a deep-rooted cosmological belief, but also to the ways in which these supernatural elements in the narratives connect with the horror of being 'Other'" (Satkunananthan, 2011, p.44)

V.1. Houses as Sites of Struggle in Oyeyemi's *The Opposite House*

The deployment of the house in Oyeyemi's novels represents the situated-ness between two locations and realities. Hence the collision of Yoruba with the western traditions signifies the creation of new textual spaces that nestle in the fringes of two different cultures, locations and selves. The author, throughout the novel, creates new textual narratives to overlap the schisms between the western and Yoruba traditions. Most importantly, it aids her characters in transgressing the chasms that lie between continents and worlds. *The Opposite House* narrates the story of Maja, a Cuban girl, who lives in London with Aaron in a flat that has a leaking roof (Oyeyemi, 2007, p. 5). The leaking roof becomes a linkage that connects Maja's physical space with her hysteric 'somewherehouse' that burrows between London and Logos. The somewherehouse is portrayed as a location with different doors that lead to different countries. The narrator describes it in that manner:

> Below is a basement pillared with stone. Spiders zigzag their gluey webs all over the chairs. The basement's back wall holds two doors. One door takes Yemaya straight out into London and the ragged hum of a city after dark. The other door opens out onto the striped flag and cooking-smell cheer of that tattered jester, Lagos-always, this door leads to a place that is floridly day (Oyeyemi, 2007, p.1)

The main character's hysteric is a catalyst that reflects her state of paranoia and her psychological breakdown that led her to attack her boyfriend Aaron and accuse her best friend, Amy Eleni, of trying to kill her baby in her womb. Maja's hysteric is caused by the painful experiences of moving from one's place of origin to live in a host country. She blatantly expresses the complexities of rootlessness and the skirmish of identity in a diasporic land. Simply put, her memories of evacuation from her original country, Cuba, remain a blemish as she asserts:

> I was seven years old when we came here. I've come to think that there's an age beyond which it is impossible to lift a child from pervading marinade of an original country, pat them down with a paper napkin and then deep –fry them in another country, another language like hot oil scalding the first language away. I arrived here before that age. (p.12)

Undeniably, the protagonist, Maja, points to the feelings of bewilderment that children may experience outside their original lands as long as their parents decide to leave their homeland countries and throw them in a new hostile culture. Her father, nonetheless, tries to answer his daughter's irritating questions and clarifies how the political mayhem during Castro's revolution pushed them to move to England, announcing:

> It means that you are free. That is what it means. brought you here so that you could live in a place where people who are in government do not affect whether or not you can eat what you want to eat, see films you want to see, read what you want to read. I brought you here so you don't live in a place where politics can actually bust your door down, or make you disappear. Turbulent times, Chabella and I know turbulent times. (p.206)

Accordingly, Maja's parents escaped the political turmoil of Cuba to find themselves in another persecution. The newly situation urged them to carve out an alternate space to sense themselves. Chabella, Maja's mother, decides to escape from the pain of leaving her origins through a new retreat, the Santerian religion. Chabella worships the Santerian gods on an altar in London. The altar for Chabella, however, is perceived to be an alternate space where she can balance her current life in London and the imaginary one of Cuba "her altar is a series of four interlinked shrines, grooved pentagons of painted wood and brass threaded with flowers and rosaries and shells and stones and candles and sauces, all of fidelity's sparse jewellery." (p. 24).

In a similar strain, Maja creates an alternate space with a different name and identity that she truly sensed and intuited as Yemaya Saramagua. The somewherehouse, for Yemaya, becomes an alternate space where her real and illusory worlds blend to form an alternating location with numerous doors that are opened up to different cultures. It is worth pointing out that the world she manages to create was populated with individuals who would never meet in reality. Nonetheless, this imaginary world celebrates ambiguity as there is a room where everybody has the right to create the story he/she desires and thus be understood. By contrast, Maja' father fails to transcend the boundaries of time or space, but conversely, he seems to ridicule and condemn religion and the beliefs of Yoruba, mocking:

> I mean, Maja, thee god or whatever, these beliefs don't transcend time and space: they stretch them unnecessarily; stretch the geography of the world like an elastic band. And you can't do that. You can't erase borders and stride over Spanish into Yoruba like that. You can only pretend that you have. (p. 76)

Admittedly, the ambivalent situation of immigration brought Maja and her father into contrast due to their antagonistic beliefs. They are separated by their opinions vis-à-vis the country they reside, religion, and the desire for home, Cuba. Papi has always been portrayed as the character who adjusts the host land with austere memories of Cuba; by contrast, Maja constantly expresses her strong desire to carry Cuba in her mind. For Maja, Cuba is the land where she can have secure life with her unborn child. The liminal space that Maja inhabits in London pushed her to reconnect with Cuba. In point of fact, the feelings of nostalgia and the desire to reconnect with an erstwhile land are portrayed through the protagonist plea, who claims:

> I need my Cuba memory back, or something just as small, just as rich to replace it; more food for my son, for me. I think I will pretend that I am not from Cuba and neither is my son. The boy and I started a race from that other country, and I got here first.
>
> I walk up the street from Aaron's flat to the travel agent's, and I take time during the journey to stand still and gape at nothing; I don't care who sees – I do it because I need to. If I don't protest my skin will destroy me. (p. 169)

To deal with the situational hitches, Maja sometimes adjusts to the inhabited country by creating redeeming spaces that burrow London and Longs. Quite the reverse, she often thinks that returning to Cuba is an expedient way to deal with the complications she encounters. Astonishingly, Maja's father seems to be puzzled when she informed him about her desire to return to Cuba. He points "If you were asking me about Turkey or Morocco or America or Spain, it would make more sense!" (p. 206). The tension between Cuba and London appears to hover over Maja's mind whenever she fails to comprehend her existence in London.

The feeling of estrangement that Maja experiences in the streets of London is by no means intended to upsurge her hysteric whenever she attempts to remember, assemble and bring together Cuba and England. Maja's deep investment in Cuba stems from her desire to answer where she belongs and comprehend the real reasons that urged her parents to throw her and her brother in a hostile land like England. Her father, however, comments on her desire to visit Cuba saying "Do you think I brought you here for a joke?' he asks me. Do you think that I just brought you over to England for a long holiday?" (p. 205). Apart from her parents' remarks, Cuba keeps hovering over Maja's mind; she shrugs "I'm going, I'm going, I'm going, I don't care what you say… I sound like a person who doesn't think. I am all fingers in my ears and la la la. It's the hysteric doing it, or maybe just me, or maybe all along it's just me" (p. 208)

Though returning to Cuba appears to encroach upon the geographical borders that Maja comes to inhabit despite her attempts to adjust to the recipient land. Surprisingly, Maja discovers that all the hitches she encountered do not refer to London or her inability to reconnect with Cuba. But rather, she realises that her statelessness would come to an end if she looked beyond the borders of nations. The following excerpt exposes Maja's and Tomas' gusto to survive London. She narrates:

> We watch the lanterns scattered around us, the tea-tinted was inside them holding up their flames against all corners. The wind comes, some rain comes, two murders for our light. But the flames stay so we can see each other's faces. I smile because Tomas is smiling. He looks exhausted, cozy, as if he has come in from some long journey and collapsed in front of a fireplace, but the candle flame isn't enough to warm us. What warms us is the way the light stays and stays, dances limbo, touches the bottom of the glass then shimmies up again. (p.259)

Hence, the memories that Maja identifies with regard to Cuba constitute a rich part of her sense of subjectivity that is linked to the black Atlantic slave trade, cultural practices and the rituals she inherits. The plea to connect with her maternal genealogy and the adventure back to the history of the black Atlantic are definitive for the protagonist to comprehend her sense of identity in London.

It is interesting to note that Maja's memories from childhood exist in apertures of magical beings and a concoction between spiritual and physical worlds that reflect the tension at the level of identity. These tensions, however, are garlanded in the character's anxieties due to the tensions between the residual and the emergent worlds she inhabits.

Delineating from diverse worlds, Maja's story revolves around the atypical dilemma of the 'unhomely life' she lives in London. Maja's childhood is penetratingly imagined and erected in mental modes of being as they are projected in worlds of imagination qua imagination to reflect the anguish of subjectivity that diaspora subjects encounter in the host country and to point to the rituals and traditions that are carried across continents regardless of the creeks of difference in perspectives and perceptions antithetically.

Therefore, the conceptual ground in which these stories are implanted and the experiences of uprooted-ness provide a fertile ground wherein childhood is lived simultaneously and strategically. Oyeyemi presents vignettes from childhood as she recognises that childhood represents a phase of sensory cognisance that is critically associated with the process of growing up. Her encounter with childhood memories is crucial to allow her characters to journey from one world to another and construct elastic identities in consideration of diaspora as a space of incoherence, difference and divergence of worlds. It should be pointed out that Oyeyemi does not lament childhood memories, but rather she seems to have given a great deal of importance to these memories and figures through imagination. By doing so, she genuinely opens up "Pandora's box of childhood fears, repressions, social taboos, secrets, neuroses, traumas, and the repository of wishes, dreams, the fantastic, the fabulous, and the transcendent" (Gaylard, 2005, pp. 3-4).

Accordingly, the process of putting the discourse of childhood at the centre of diaspora identity construction is potent and irruptive in developing one's identity. Following this line of thought, one might observe that Oyeyemi embodies childhood as space and time of imagination where her characters are struggling due to the tension that arises from the continual tenures of diverse places and times. It is redolent to point that Oyeyemi's engagement with ghostly figures and Yoruba traditions echoes her desire to empower Yoruba and allow worlds and divergent identities to intermix, and accordingly, releasing identity from its anthropocentric framework. Henceforth, the power of imagination is explored through Maja's ability to switch worlds, spaces and times with certain elasticity. This ability enables Maja to live at the node of different worlds, spaces, times and experiences; therefore, claiming multiple histories, lineages, and identities.

Being at the nexus of divergent worlds and spaces; consequently, being a decentred being made of identity a site of vicious struggle. It could be argued that Maja's angst struggle refers to the impossibility of having a definite space of enunciation. *The Opposite House* renders the split of personality that most characters are exposed to. At varying levels, the racial and ethnic identities clash in consort with the clash of individuality. Simply put, Maja is fully alert to her multiple genealogies and origins as she remarks: "In my blood is a bright chain of transfusion; Spaniards, West Africans, indigenous Cubans, even the Turkos- the Cuban Lebanese" (p.98). The excerpt denotes that Maja is an artefact of a tri-continental history that starts with her descendants who happened to be the slaves of the Cuban sugar plantation and have crisscrossed triangular slavery: Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe.

The reflection on Maja's identity torment is mediated through the pastiche of traditions, rituals and the intermeshing of mythical tales. The meshed stories of the 'somewherehouse' and the juxtaposition of worlds and tales personify the variant lineages that shape the characters' identities. Readers can easily notice that Chabella adulates the European and Afro-Cuban gods to express the mindfulness of her hybrid identity. Moreover, the process of interlacing in/out different worlds heralds diaspora that endorses multiple selves that are the products of the migration of bodies and histories across continents.

Admittedly, the inconsistency of diaspora is shaped by/through the juxtaposition of variant worlds and pastiche of stories. Maja's mother, Chabella, demonstrates this idea through multilingualism as she speaks English, French, Spanish and German and worships Yoruba deities with the reverence of the Roman Catholic faith. These consecrated practices are probably better described in what Appiah refers to as "old gods, new worlds" (1992, p.1). Chabella's worship of the Santeria religion is a metonymy used to reflect the fusion of mythologies and histories, considering it the belief that amalgamates the Yoruba divinities with the Roman Catholic faith.

Specifically, the characters' extant reality is distorted by the myth of spirituality that distorts the chronotope of time and space. The constellation of the spiritual and terrestrial worlds in the 'somewherehouse' reflects the nature of instability that Maja as a diasporic subject inhabits. The 'somewherehouse' turns to be a spatio-temporal location that reflects Maja's sense of instability to belong to a certain world. This house, however, incarnates a home that is neither 'here' nor 'there', which is selected by Oyeyemi intentionally to echo the fragile nature of diasporas and represent the precarious nature of home.

It is no wonder, thus, to claim that diaspora space is a location of creativity where imagination sways between reality and imagination. The assortment of journeys and stories, the convergence at points of disjointedness, and 'homing desire' are all underlined in diaspora writings, including *The Opposite House*. Avtar Brah charts this methodological viewing as:

> Multiple journeys may configure into one journey via a confluence of narratives as it is lived and re-lived, produced and transformed through individual as well as collective memory and re-memory. It is within this confluence of narrativity that 'diasporic community' is differently imagined under different historical circumstances (Avtar, 1996, p.180)

The statement above accentuates the importance of narrative as it becomes a congregate point where diasporic communities find ways of identification in a global terrain irrespective of their variant genealogical links and putative homelands. Hence, imagination is a policy for creating nettings of identification that Appadurai refers to as "diasporic public spheres" (1995, p.22).

Oyeyemi's *The Opposite House* portrays the anxieties lived by diasporas due to the divergence of histories from Cuba, Germany and West Africa as represented by a pastiche of religions and languages. It may be noted that the process of rapprochement demands re-creating contacts that would have never been ostensible to tell stories about the individual and its linkage. This imagined connection seeks to suture fragmented selves as they occupy a hybrid space. Accordingly, the space that the protagonist characters lodge is fractured and demarcated by a multiplicity of margins and choices as they find themselves in an existential predicament facing worlds and locations that are in contrast. Simply put, Maja's ontology, for instance, is shaped by her angst to reconcile her fragmented self since her childhood, for her pedigree itself is peripatetic as it floats over Cuba, West Indies, and London.

For Maja, home is increasingly becoming a mirage. Particularly, the irksome struggle of belonging to several places with several cosmologies contributed immensely to her sense of identity. Though Maja is recognisant of her traveling identity, which is ontological to her existence as a diasporic subject, her persistent travel from one world and another adds to her state of delirium that is portrayed through Maja's fear to tell her mother about the girls she saw in her sleepwalking. She did not inform her parents about her sleepwalking experience as she was afraid that they would not take her seriously. For her parents, Maja's brother, Tomas, is always the serious one "he was serious. Sometimes Papi and Chabella call Tomas 'the London baby'" (Oyeyemi, p.7). In several scenes in the novel, Maja's narrative appears to be like a staccato as she is inclined to deal with mythical and terrestrial worlds. She, nonetheless, prefers to tell her unborn baby about the girls rather than her mother, saying:

> Often the girls were wet, their clothes soaked through even when the weather outside was dry; I communicated to them about my son. I can't remember who told what to whom. But I never said anything to my Mami about the girls- she would have had me exorcised or something. She keeps saying that when it came to being born, I was a difficult one to persuade. She miscarried twice, early in each pregnancy. When she told me about her miscarriages, I felt accused. (p. 8)

The passage above exposes Maja's delirium state as she mollifies the two anonymous girls. To a large extent, the two girls reconcile her unborn sisters, of whom she is supposed to take the blame. Maja's decision not to tell her mother about the girls refers to her fear that this will confirm her mother's exorcism that she is a curse.

V.2. Space-Time Chronotope in Oyeyemi's *The Opposite House*

The Opposite House projects live of immigrants who are caught between mobility and the question of rootedness. The novel puts reality adjacent to myth through the portrayal of an Afro-Cuban family that resides in London with another mythical family in a place called 'somewherehouse', which has different entrances from multiple areas. Oyeyemi, in her story, develops a narrative structure itched in reality and myth to relate it to the experiences of Maja's family, who journeyed between London and Lagos. The story unfolds the tussle of Maja's family who moved from Cuba to London, and also lived in France and Germany. This mélange of identities reproduces a mestizo structure of identities admixed together miscellaneous experiences that crisscross different continents.

The Opposite House is foregrounded within the history of the Atlantic slave trade and its diasporic populaces. Oyeyemi stumbles upon mythology to expose the identity struggle of the main characters due to the complex nature of their history. This complexity, however, is projected via the diversity of myths that affected the narrative structure of the novel in general as described by Cooper, " a mélange of traveling gods, slavery and an American poet, among other mingling myths and mutations" (2009, p. 109). This mélange between European and Yoruba pantheons signifies the coexistence that exists in the 'somewherehouse'. The latter is a spectral chronotope of time and space that merged different continents and epochs together. This mythical space that connects London and Lagos portrays the transitional movement and the diasporic consciousness of an Afro-Cuban family. One cannot fail to see the association of the characters, mainly the protagonist Maja, with the mother, Africa. In other words, Maja as a derivative of the goddess Yemaya, a goddess that symbolises the ocean, embodies mobility and transition that is generally peculiar to the diasporic process.

Oyeyemi's novel deliberately celebrates the mobile and the travelling nature of diaspora consciousness as projected by the characters' mobility. Nonetheless, the story rambles in fragmented texture and mobility, mainly the protagonist Maja who repetitively expresses her biased thought vis-à-vis the tyranny of her movement to London wondering "I was seven years old when I came here. I have come to think that there's an age beyond which it is impossible to lift a child from the pervading marinade of an original country […] then deep-fry them in another country" (Oyeyemi, p.12). There is no doubt that journeying from one culture to another is destructive as it causes tensions and struggles that leads to identity predicaments; nonetheless, this process is a constructive one as these subject start to head for the creation of a 'third space' at the frontiers of the national borders of the inhabited terrain, which might dislocate the homogeneity ascribed by the nation. (Bhabha, 1994)

Irrespective of Maja's fragmented mind, there is a mélange of worlds that reflect her marginal and liminal status. Differently put, a medley of clues gathers her Cuban, African and European histories that are definitive to her epistemological origin. Moreover, the juncture of the continental topographies can be seen through the following passage wherein Maja describes her mother's mobility, claiming:

> Mami sat with me then and told me again, with long pauses as she moved the idea she remembered from German to English. When she prays to the saints for intersection, her Spanish is damaged and slow because she is moving her thoughts from African and back again. (Oyeyemi, p. 12)

Alert to the necessary vision of mobility of diaspora subjects stemming from the process of crossing the national borders of nations, Oyeyemi delves into the slave histories and religions that are often silenced or defined by their syncretism and assimilation. The religious tenor of Maja's family has been portrayed through the Santeria religion that her mother significantly practices. This religion, however, is a collage of the Yoruba faith with Catholicism, as the narrator describes along with the following lines:

> The slaves in Cuba learnt to recognise their gods when they saw ripped white bed sheets, forked scraps of wood, overturned in buckets. These things marked places where mass could be celebrated. If you still knew who you were, you had to keep it a secret; the gods hid among the saints and apostles and nobody perceived them unless they wanted to; it didn't take as much as people had thought for Catholicism and Yoruba to fuse together. The saints intercede for us with God, who must despise us with Olorun who, being a darker side of God, possibly despised us more. A painting of a saint welling holy tears and the story of an Orisha teach you the same thing- if you cry for someone it counts as a prayer. (p. 25)

The passage mirrors the mobility of slaves to adjust to the new religion. Moreover, it depicts the hybrid nature of the Santeria religion, which forms the heart of the Afro-Cuban identities. Hence, Chabella's practice of the Santeria religion is a metonymy of her awareness of her multiple histories from the one hand, as it endows her daughter, Maja, with a transnational forbearing. In other words, the mobility of genealogies, religions, links, references and histories is a reservoir that Oyeyemi uses to construct her narrative that is bewildering due to the fragmented minds of characters to echo Oyeyemi's consciousness of her diasporic standing.

The juxtaposition between the Yoruba deity and Catholicism is a metonymy that reflects the nodal points of Maja's identity-making. In addition to religion that is considered an analytical marker of identity, blackness is a signifier in the discourse of identity-making for people of African descent. In *The Opposite House*, Maja tries to settle her 'blackness' within her mestizo cultural background as an Afro-Cuban raised in London. For Maja, blackness transcends its topographical prognostication, which is Africa, to a more transcontinental ontology as she points:

> I strip to my underwear and study myself in the mirror; it is a bronzed sorrel woman with a net of curly hair who looks black, and she does not look Jamaican or Ghanaian or Kenyan or Sudanese- the only firm thing that is sure is that she is black (p. 98)

Accordingly, it is wise to suggest that Maja's self-reflection is disrupted by her past history as Africa stumbles upon her 'Britishness'. But, most importantly, Maja's vacant present is filled by the memory from her childhood as Cuba keeps being alive, albeit through her disjointed memories. Interestingly, Maja's sense of selfhood seems to be mediated through the process of self-discovery to her past history as she insists on visiting her mother country, Cuba. Thus, childhood is a medium employed by Oyeyemi to question the linearity of history as it keeps lingering in the diasporic mind.

Conversely, the centrality of childhood in Oyeyemi's work is definitive in the process of self-identification. Thus, the stage of childhood is crucial where identity can be negotiated, considering that childhood memories keep redefining identity for diaspora subjects. Following this line of thought, it is eloquent to follow Richard Coe's vision, who thinks that:

> the child who was born, grew up, lived, and died in the same village or hamlet was less able to distance his adult from his immature self than the child who, having passed his early year on some remote farm, estate, or sheep station unidentifiable from the atlas, came later to roam among the great cities and capitals of the world (Coe, 1984, p. 17)

Hence, Oyeyemi's insistence on childhood provides a discourse for interrogating identity formation. The inevitable tensions between local and global, that diasporas are disposed to, make of childhood a site of struggle. The contending narratives of identity, for Maja, make her straddle multiple worlds and places. Most importantly, her identity is negotiated around the diasporic space of imagination that becomes a space of struggle between her African genealogy and the European contact. Consequently, Oyeyemi's experiment with different languages, stories, and myths signifies the elasticity of the Afro-Cuban families, who have migrated their stories, histories, customs and rituals to the cosmopolitan landscape of London.

Oyeyemi's relapse to childhood stories as an archive signifies the utility of childhood to grapple with the character's diasporic as they have migrated from their various lands of childhood. But, on the other hand, the attachment to childhood signifies the manifestations of desires, traumas and the negotiation of 'home'. In other words, it is the point of departure where sensitive memories of loss and gain are occupied. Hence, childhood stories claim a stake in identity formation as they take us to micro-politics of the self. So it is in the words of Foucault (1988) "technologies of the self" as he stresses the importance of the past stories in identity construction. For Foucault, the history of the subject brings him back to micro-levels of identity that constitute the core of identity before its engraving to society. Therefore, childhood offers unscripted accounts with regard to the self, which are pivotal in the process of identity formation. Thus, Oyeyemi projects childhood as a set of ideas used to negotiate the elastic nature of identity.

Though Africa might not resemble home for Oyeyemi as she has an ambivalent relationship with Africa and might not be a descendent of the slave trade; nonetheless, her unsettled identity urges her to call Nigeria 'home'. In this regard, she announces:

> As a Nigerian brought up in Britain, I admit that when it comes to Africa, I just don't get it. I can examine modern Africa for hours, years, my whole life; saw open my head and cram it with rolls of statistics, death rates, birth rates, gross national products, and still now know where it is that I come from, what my country's problems are and have been, and how they can be solved. These aren't the words of somebody who is familiar with the colourful emergencies of Africa, the necessities of trudging to the well an back, swaying under the weight of clean, bucketed water in the absence of the tap variety, or, to borrow Emily Dickinson's phrase in a more pragmatic context "growing accustomed to the dark" with the heaving of an almighty sigh as the electricity is cut off. Again. (Oyeyemi, "Home, Strange Home")

Though Nigeria for Oyeyemi resembles the opaque country whose nature is unfamiliar, yet she paradoxically refers to it as her country. For writers like Oyeyemi, born in Nigeria and raised in England, the intersections between these worlds are always alluring and subtle. This, to a certain degree, explains the difficulty of building a narrative that entwines Africa and its diasporas. Oyeyemi manages to straddle the two different worlds through the mythical characters Yemaya, an allegorical Yoruba deity who aids Maja to bridge the gap between her present world in London and her land of origin, Africa. On the other hand, Yemaya joins the slaves and protects them in their journey as it enables them to make a bridge between Africa and the new destination. In this pertain, the narrator describes Yemaya's accompany to the slaves in this way : "She travelled with them from Yoruba to distant lands, comforting them in the holds of the slave ships that took them far away from their homeland in Africa" (Oyeyemi, 2007, p.10)

Helen Oyeyemi's novel articulates the ancestral spaces and the settlement of different locations critically as she problematises the possibility of re-connecting to the ancestral land. The story divulges the difficulty that the characters, chiefly the protagonist, face in endorsing a homeland that no longer signifies 'home'. The quest for connection somewhere, mainly to the original landscape 'Africa', may take diaspora subjects into the world of their parents through imagination. However, it is worth pointing that apart from floating into the world of imagination, diaspora subjects tend to think about the material reality of their ancestors.

Hence, the centrality of the material culture including food, rituals, traditions, language, and most specifically, the hair texture, tends to be metonymic to their identities and their difference. The intuition of African hair probably acts as a marker that unites all blacks outside Africa against racism. Conferring to Kobena Mercer, "within racism's bipolar codification of human worth, black people's hair has been historically devalued as the most visible stigmata of blackness, second only to skin" (1994, p.101). It is categorically, thus, that Africans consider hair as profoundly linked to identity.

Furthermore, the collective experiences of marginality and collective traumas are often manipulated in diaspora writings. This can be seen, for instance, through the protagonist's erotic reaction towards how the girls treated her better than Dominique forasmuch as they see her to be all veracious, saying: "You are roots" (Oyeyemi, p. 96). Surprisingly, readers will notice that Maja identifies with Dominique, averring:

> I must have seemed stupid to her. I said, 'Huh?' I thought a black girl was a black girl. Why did it come down to a choice between me and Dominique and not any of other girls? Then I got it were both black without coming from the right place. We were the slave girls from Trinidad and Cuba. (p. 97)

The citation above exposes Maja's admission of the marginality that she shares with Dominique. The intense delight to express the collective experiences of marginality divulges the excitement about the cultural difference that most marginalised populace share. Bell Hooks refers to this idea in this fashion "the commodification of Otherness has been so successful and offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling" (2009, p.366).

However, the struggle between the opposing forces is portrayed by Maja, who describes an incident at the school when some girls brought flags out on their countries' independence days. The struggle and the tension between the opponent forces are further carried when a girl, on the Nigerian Independence Day, did an exceptional assembly with fried Nigerian snacks. Maja's best friend, Amy Eleni, comments on the girl's action in an erotic manner, shrugging: "Can I just ask you what you think of this idea: if your parents taught you to be so proud of Nigeria, how come they're over here?" (Oyeyemi, p.96). Conversely, the talk about the Nigerian Independence continues as Ami Eleni laughs enigmatically about people's plea to talk about a country they can scarcely remember. She further writes a note doubting:

> You know what, if you want to talk about your original country, if you want to be serious about it, fine. But you don't need to pretend what you love the place. People need to stop using love of some country that you don't live in an excuse for their inability to shut up about it. (p. 96)

Accordingly, Ami fails at comprehending the reasons that led immigrants to leave their original country to live in a country, select to talk about their homelands, and inject their traditions and rituals into the recipient culture. As a result, to a certain degree, most immigrants feel hostile as they fail to feel like anywhere in the inhabited location. This idea is deliberately expressed in the novel as follows:

> I think that's what happens when you don't belong to a country, though- lines are just lines, and letters are just letters and you can't touch the meaning behind them the way you can when you're home and you look at a map and you see … I didn't expect to know this place. (p.167)

The passage addresses people's intense encounters with mobility just as it addresses the emotions stimulated through interactions with mobile spaces. Thus, the sense of space is always controlled by certain trajectories that give it its shape. Space, for Massey, is "not a matter of lines on a map" (2005, p. 85).

Hence, we can assume that for Maja her experiences and journey in London to a certain degree sketches her perception of London. Though Oyeyemi did not refer to the life of immigrants in England, nonetheless, she floats over the implications of the journey in one's life. Following this set of arguments, it is probably wise to suggest that the painful journeys that the immigrants had in England mould and unveil the way they perceive England. Maja describes this as follows "He [Tomas] draws in a deep breath and says, 'why does it smell so damp in here?' I could tell him about the leak, but instead I say, 'Because it is England'" (Oyeyemi, p. 227)

The materiality of place is central in one's sense of a particular location. In other words, people produce perceptions and meanings to enact the inhabited place. By the same token, Vannini and Taggart point:

> The 'meaning' of your island resides in its very sense of place. It is the shape taken by how you dwell on your island, by the ways you have become socialised to understand and appreciate its sounds, sights, textures, flavours, and scents, by the way inhabitants 'sensibility may differ from others', by the lessons and intuitions they have acquired in adapting to their place, by their orientations to movement, rest, and encounter, their speed, and rhythms. Thus, the life of your island is the sum total of the sensations it gives to rise, the cumulative incorporation of those feelings carved into its soils and shores, and the embodiment of its affective spaces on its dwellers. (2012, p. 236)

Concomitantly, Vannini theorises place-ness as an incipient in the process of mobility. People who are 'mobile' or engaged in mobility are active in the constituents of mobility and are increasingly becoming subjects of this mobility. Following this vista, one might comprehend Maja's failure to feel homey or sense the place she inhabits, asserting: "I didn't expect to know this place" (Oyeyemi, p.167). Undoubtedly, most characters in the selected novel are recognisant of the nexus between the two opponent locations as they are fully aware of the tensions that occur at the heart of the process of mobility. Differently put, most of the central characters are aware that the inhabited place is an archipelago of different and opposing forces. In this interaction, Deleuze points:

> A dualism …existing on the level of knowledge, between the visual and the articulable…which …involves a preliminary distribution operating at the heart of pluralism. If the visible and the articulable elements enter into a due, it is to the extent that their respective forms ...make up two types of multiplicity […] statements exist only in a discursive multiplicity, and visibilities in a non-discursive multiplicity. And these two open up on to a third: a multiplicity of relations between forces [power], a multiplicity …free of any dualizable form (1988, pp. 83-84)

Interestingly, Maja evades this dualism when the nexus between London and Logos meets. The doubt resultant due to the clash between these different spaces and worlds shows that the mobility is moulded and not a pre-given phenomenon that Maja is required to submit. Hence, there is a conterminous mounting alert that more attention needed to be paid to the country left behind from the part of Maja. According to Maja, this awareness seems to be rhizomatic for her basic existence and functionality; however, it seems erratic for her parents. Even so, her parents are striving to survive in London and teaching Maja and Tomas how to be the 'Londoners' who have no memories of Cuba. This idea is expressed by Chabella, who comments indignantly over Thomas's statement that London is so cold. She shrugs: "Has someone cursed the London baby? Someone is sending him strong memories of Cuban weather so that he cannot bear it here" (Oyeyemi, p.58)

Grounded within the paradigm of mobility, Maja's identity is produced disjointedly out of the fragments resulting from the process of travel. It is, thus, necessary to note that Maja believes in the idea that knowing one's place is crucial in constructing one's identity. Knowing Cuba, for Maja, is a knowledge-building project that could assist her in comprehending the land she inhabits. Though all the discussions about Cuba bring discomposure to her parents, who feel that the interfering of Cuba would jeopardise the life they constructed in London. In a compelling account, Maja points:

> When I rework my Cuba, I allow myself to notice that, just to the right of me, Papi's tuxedoed knees are shaking. I understand what I didn't understand then, that he didn't see a path beyond leaving forever, that the country had been ripped up from under him and handed to an 'everyone' far above. And that it was scary; scary to free-fall the way that he knew he was about to, with all chains cut, no land behind him and no solid ground before him (p.46)

Admittedly, Maja yearns not to settle in Cuba, but rather to find disjointed corners and angles with regard to the land that she no longer belongs. This clearly explains Maja's yearn to build a shelter in the opposite house to reflect her ability to move her body across the space that is, to a certain extent, controlled at a variety of scales. The spiritual journey that Maja had in the opposite house and between London and Logos reflects how bodies extend out and embody the landscape, reflecting what Casey refers to as 'co-habitancy' (1993, p. 291) in which the protagonist opens up a latitude of fusion between the centre and margin, and most importantly, between the diasporic and his ancestral land. Most prominently, Maja, through the spiritual journey, comes to understand herself along with her autochthonous connection to Cuba.

Probably, Maja's yearn to visit Cuba stems from her desire to cross the created borders between London and Logos. The movement back and forth reveals how the fixedness of space is a rambling creation where "the establishment of borders […] leads to an ever increasing segmentation and fragmentation of space on almost every level …And this fragmentation brings with it the necessity of crossing, a constant violation of the boundaries it has created" (Noyes, 1992, p. 162). Hence, within the complex milieu of dwelling and movement, Maja's mobility may perhaps bring a subversive function that leads to disjunction viewing that these different spaces are pulled into one another.

When one adheres to Oyeyemi's projection to space mobility, one can still notice the relationship between space and social relations that Oyeyemi tries to suggest. Thus, it would be adequate to suggest that Oyeyemi strongly follows Foucault's vision that entails:

> Space in which we live , which draws out of ourselves , in which the erosion of our lives, out time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light; we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another. (1986, p. 23)

Maja's life is carried out in the light of what Foucault has stated above. Oyeyemi, on many occasions, seems to write her story where her characters inhabit spatial locations that are heterogeneous due to different placement of events, individuals and epochs. This justifies the juxtaposition of diverse sites that are incompatible with each other to sketch reality in spite of its illusory nature. It is suggestive to assume that Oyeyemi's work is a magnanimous ground to Foucault's idea who envisions that the linkage of discordant spaces

> […]may create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory …Or else , on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as our is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. (1986, pp. 25-7)

Indeed, the intersection between her real and imaginary worlds projects her jumbled world as she is born out of two extreme systems that are incompatible with each other. Thus, the space that Maja inhabits is neither a mental construct nor a physical one, but rather it is the space that Lefebvre refers to 'espace vécu' that is truly lived and socially shaped by her multifarious origins.

Readers can easily notice that Maja never shows her allegiances to one spatial location. Most importantly, she has never claimed a commitment to her master identity, which is British, nor have any tendencies to give up on her Cuban origins. In other words, she has always called for the fatal intersection of the two entities though they stand antithetical to each other. More adequately, this explains Maja's convulsive laughter at her mother's comment over her relationship with a white girl, Amy Eleni, who sardonically expresses, "you'll learn that the white girl is never your friend. She only pretends to understand" (Oyeyemi, p. 106). In turn, Maja questions her mother about Brigitte, who systematically works for another system too. Chabella answers, "Brigitte was my teacher. You know that" (p. 106). Thus, though Maja's parents say a little concerning their homeland, Cuba, they seem tense whenever Maja talks about Amy Eleni.

For Maja, a whole story seems to be denied concerning Cuba; Or rather, this land appears to be provocative to her parents. At different incidents, Maja feels that talking about Cuba brings discomfort mainly to her father, who tries to escape from any interrogation related to this land. She alludes to this idea when Aaron asks her father whether or not he missed Cuba "Papi remained silent until Chabella turned it into a discussion of the Che Cola versus Coca-Cola… Papi summed it up as 'tasting like shit. And not even shit that's good for you'" (p.139). Then, unexpectedly, her father answers the question belatedly, telling Aaron: "No, I don't miss Cuba. I'm not sure that I knew what it was when I lived there. I know now from the outside" (p.140). Probably, Papi's silence that Maja fails to comprehend is considered quietude or a benediction that pivots on the hidden stories related to Cuba. Sharing silence, for Papi, almost certainly is a state of repose. This is so because the glimpse vis-à-vis Cuba has forced him to construct what Elif Safak (2010) puts it "mental walls". In what seems perhaps as a declaration of the end of Cuba for Maja's father, on the contrary, she openly calls for her Cuban origin. She condenses the essence of Cuba and praises Cubans, stating:

> Cubans are cheerful, Cubans are resilient, Cubans are collectivist. In my mother's country, I thought, *la lucha* is such people that are not equipped to understand when they are happy. It's a situation-specific kindness from God-Cubans are born lacking; they have no internal 'off' switch, and so it is that they go on and on and on. (p.142)

The pointed passage distends a portrait where Maja tries to explain the bravura portraiture she constructs around Cubans that her father refuses to refer. In so doing, he starts to set into place lots of arguments that define Cuba and its people against the will of Maja and clearly announces the need for blatant desertion of all that is Cuban.

Though Cuba and slavery constitute a rich part of her parents' history, they never seem to cross their paths after their arrival to England. Both Chabella and Papi sought to retain a strand of denial and absolute objectivity with regard to slavery. Maja points:

> The Word 'slave' is a big deal to Chabella and Papi; neither of them can get out from under it. It is blackness in Cuba… Papi tries to systematize it and talk about the destruction of identity and the fragility of personality, but he is scared of the Word. Mami hides inside the Word, finds reveries in it, tries to locate a power that is owed. (Oyeyemi, p.24)

V.3. Rifts of Separation and the Prospect of an Intercultural Dialogue

Maja approaches the problem of identity differently by virtue of her resilient interest in the intercultural dialogue between two different extremes. She, nonetheless, takes the point of departure, which is Cuba, as a significant component of her identity. For Maja, the dialogue within the state borders is not only more basic but also more possible. Furthermore, the centrality of dialogue between cultures and ethnic groups is a path to reach a compromise to come to fruition to help solve problems and conflicts in her diverse multicultural society. This centrality, however, is projected through her engagement with people who, hypothetically, belong to a different system and mapped through the world that she created in the 'somewherehouse' wherein she accepts other cultures as equal partners. Perhaps, Oyeyemi through the selection of her protagonist wants to express her vision of dialogue between cultures and worlds among differences. At the same time, however, it is wise to notice that Maja acutely believes in the centrality of dialogue between different cultures as she stems from two different extremes. Yet, this dialogue is multi-marooned and involves the engagement of different arguments.

Apart from the struggle that Maja faces due to the intercultural dialogue between the two diverse cosmos. Nonetheless, by doing so, she introduces the two communities to the limits and exposes their beliefs and practices into reformation. As the protagonist nudges us to believe in the productivity of the dialogue she creates amid different worlds, whether this dialogue is imaginary or literal that was epitomised through her strong friendship with Amy Eleni, she attains a critical consciousness of a possible dialogue between her British and Cuban worlds. Substantially, she genuinely escapes from her parents' rigid and unproductive thinking, which was deeply invested in the certainty of borders between the two worlds.

Well-appointed with the suggestion that diversity, as Kenan Malik puts it in his work *Multiculturalism and Its Discontents*, is imperious viewing that "it allows us to break out of our culture-bound boxes, by engaging in dialogue and debate by putting different values, beliefs and lifestyles to the test" (2013, p. 95). Congruently, Maja puts the values of the two cultures into examination, stressing the possibility of reaching a compromising as the encounter carries opposition and conflicts under its layers. It is worth remembering that *The Opposite House* has a narrative structure that fits the context to project the fluctuating nature of the story to summon ethnic communities that consist of people who have been in England for years with a different ancestral background and those who are initially British and with no land to refer to. Maja's plural loyalties chart her various attachments and identification that is different from her parents due to the super-diverse nature of the society she inhabits. This brings to mind Steven Vetrovec's claim, who points that " daily social geographies … bring individuals into prosaic encounter with diversity and produce moments of connection across difference" (2015,p. 172). Hence, the circular movement and the conversation across differences are central for Maja to survive the clash between her British and Cuban worlds.

One reason why being in conversation with her parents turns out to be ineffective is Maja's tendency to resort their stereotypical attitudes to all that is not English. However, in several scenes, Maja notices that her parents, like other immigrants, are transparently expressing their affection for all that is English. In contrast to Chabella and Papi, Maja is not interested in playing the role of the English citizen nor wants to become too integrated. However, this state of affairs is further extended and expressed by Maja, who feels like a mismatched being as she fails to see English as a medal. This idea is best described via the conversation between her and Cedelka, who urges her not to teach her daughter Spanish, remarking: "Please don't try to teach my daughter Spanish! Back people ain't meant to speak Spanish!" (Oyeyemi, p. 95). Maja answers jokingly, "Black people ain't meant to speak English, neither, then. Or French Creole", I said using exactly the same tone (p. 95). Armed with this idea, readers may propose that speaking English is a very concrete manner of being in England. This way of being in the world is closely connected with the language one speaks; hence, language is one of the existential mediums that are portrayed through Maja in the following words:

> There is skin, yes. And then, inside that, there is your language, the casual, inherited magic spells that make your skin real… the real language, the words weren't born in us. And unless your skin and your language touch each other without interruption, there is no word strong enough to make you understand that it matters that you live (p.185)

Accordingly, language, for Maja, is one of the defining parameters of self-identification. Though Maja believes in the importance of conversation across differences, nonetheless, she fails to comprehend Cedelka's strong aversion to teaching her daughter Spanish as she claims that Blacks are not supposed to speak it.

Thereupon, Maja finds it disconcerting for others to be multiple. In fact, she feels that both her parents and Cedelka are too limited, for they fail to keep the cultural conversation going on. As Chabella and Papi focus on English only thinking that their Cuban world would be perturbing to their British neighbours, if not to say for them as well; Cedelka, on the other hand, thought that learning Spanish could be messy. In brief, Maja portrays the character who believes in diversity where there is no right world or culture to claim, no monopoly of one over the other, and no language to be seen as reliable in the construction of one's identity. But, instead, she begs for diversity and the intercultural dialogue.

V.4. Towards the Construction of Fluid Identities Within Transnational Ties

The transnational links and the multiplicity of belongings challenge the fixity of identity raised by ethnicity. Drawing on Floya Anthias's point which entails:

> The perception of diasporas as breaking 'the ethnic spectacles' with which the world was previously viewed, may vastly underestimate the continuing attachment to the idea of ethnic and therefore particularistic bonds, to a new reconstructed form of ethnic absolutism (Anthias, 1998, p.567)

Differently said, diasporic communities are expected to operate across the boundaries of ethnic despotism. In the novel under discussion, readers may notice that diasporic groups who originate from Cuba and Nigeria are engaged in maintaining rigid boundaries as they appear to share the same feeling of the 'lost land'. Diaspora, according to Anthias, entails "an notion of essential parent- a father, whose seed is scattered …the original father (land) is a point of reference for the diaspora notion: it is constant reference point that slides into primordiality" (1998, p. 569)

Accordingly, one can observe the degree of commitment to boundaries that diasporas tend to maintain in reference to ethnicity. In some way, these groups may create a small version of a nation within the recipient country where boundaries are re-made. Though talking about ethnicity for diasporas could be incongruous and stimulating considering that the word diaspora per se suggests a multiplicity of nation-states within one state wherein ethnicity is unfeasible. Nonetheless, the dispersed groups seem to have a sort of collective identity. This, however, can be sensed through Maja's straddle between 'here and there' proposing ways of being abroad as she tremendously wants to have access to her maternal land. Thus, the instability of home can be partially accredited to the ability of diasporas to transcend state borders.

The problems that diasporas have with nation-state building can be attributed to loyalty and commitment. The state is supposed to be the central affiliation for those who live within its borders. Therefore, the question of allegiance and attachment is critical for diasporas as they may claim their loyalty to another nation outside the inhabited one. In the words of Benedict Anderson, it is "long distance nationalism" (1998, pp. 58-74). This is exemplified through Maja's and her parents' affiliation to different states. As her parents claim their aggregate affiliation to England, she seems to have the spirit of revivalism that is associated with her concern for her maternal culture. Maja's focus on another place, Cuba, raises certain problems for her parents who, hypothesise that racism had pushed her towards the ideology of revivalism. In view of that, Sivanandan states: "the time was long gone when black people, with an eye to returning home, would put up with repression: they were settlers now. And state racism had pushed them into higher and more militant forms of resistance" (Sivanandan, 1982, p. 20)

V.5. Slavery: A Rejuvenate Memory

The constant engagement with slavery and its lingering memories over diaspora's lives constitutes a rich part in the writings of Black British authors. Likewise, Oyeyemi assertively sticks to slavery which has occupied a dominant stage in her writings. Oyeyemi repetitively retreats to the history of slavery and its long memory which is twisted for the reason that "it is the duty of memory not to forget" (Oguibe, 2001, p. 95). It is no wonder, thus, to see Oyeyemi's textual preoccupation with the history of slavery, the horror of black and white encounters, the dispersion of diaspora, and rootlessness that have moulded the African diaspora identities. Therefore, the traumatic experiences of the slave trade and the pain they suffered from mark their consciousness for entire spans.

Perchance, the painful experiences of slavery and the horror of plantation keep marking its traces in the Cubans' consciousness for entire centuries despite the controversies raised with regard to the abolition of slavery. Still, the investment of Cubans in sugarcane has been earmarked to be injurious as it is reserved to span over the years. This idea is better described by the protagonist, who describes the legacies of the plantation over her mother, commenting:

> Sugar makes Chabella sick too; she doesn't even want to see it. It has to do with year Castro called the Cubans to harvest ten million tons of sugar cane to pay off Cuba's debt to Russia…sugar makes Chabella cry. She hints at other memories, other sugar horrors, ancestral. Since Chabella only bakes

> with sweeteners, Papi sometimes complains that the texture of her *cucuruchos* is different from the ones his mother used to make. But he doesn't complain too loudly or persistently (Oyeyemi, 2007, pp.9-10)

Undeniably, Chabella's imprisonment to the painful experiences of slavery and the horror of plantation sustain to shape her life as Maja deliberately denounces her parents' denial to remember these experiences. Chabella's escape from narrating the crime of slavery and the dismay of the plantation signifies the traumatic legacies of these events that keep radically shaping their identities and determine the lives and perception of the self of their descendants on top.

Though slavery has been rarely referred to in the books of history, films, and documents; nonetheless, the pillage of Africans from their lands and their deportation kept condemning their lives just like the holocaust. Though the two experiences are different from each other, hitherto the two experiences can meet at the point at which Europe shudders with guilt. In other words, the denial of slavery and the painful memories of plantation from the part of the history and Chabella portray the undertow of historical obliviousness and the 'shameful' intercourse of Europe within the slave trade. Hence, Chabella's odium to the memories of the plantation emblematises her inability to cross the ruptures of the Middle Passage.

In effect, diaspora writers have widely discussed the discourse of slavery and its concomitant effects as it is bounded up with their contemporaneous life. In other words, slavery as a point of departure is a condition of existence that shapes their fractured identities. In the same spirit, Achebe points: "it would be foolish to pretend that we have fully recovered from the traumatic effects of our first confrontation with Europe" (1988, p.29). It is of no surprise, thus, to see Oyeyemi projecting Chabella and Papi's fiasco to get out from under it.

Hence, the lingering memory of slavery is echoed through the narrative's structure and the vacillation that Maja creates between different worlds and periods. Through her back and forth movement, Maja plays with time and stories, diving readers into a forgotten world, a world that her parents tried to expunge and neglect. The stretching of narratives from African, Cuba, and London through events, flashbacks, and memories reflect the equal fate of dispersal that slaves and their descent of the twentieth-century share.

Oyeyemi, through her protagonist Maja, desires to juxtapose the experience of slavery with the spatial marginality outlived by Africans in today's Britain. Maja's diasporic repercussions are entrenched by the inseparability of the past from her present, marked by her relentless exilic and inferior position. The memories of slavery and plantation impinge upon Maja's life to connect those who had traversed the river of slavery and their descendants who seem to share the same exilic doom. This circularity, however, is viewed by Oyeyemi as follows: "but if you forget your ancestors, you forget yourself. Isn't it that what it is to run mad, to forget yourself? (p. 38)

The unabated memories of slavery, marginality, and inferiority outlived by diaspora communities in today's Britain obliterate the temporal distance between generations and join the young generations with their deferred hurtful memories. Neither the adjustment into a new space nor the criss-cross movement has brought steadiness or cosiness to immigrants whose despair seems to accrue from the loss of connections and family. On the contrary, the voices from the past that Maja has been troubled with tell about her failure to put the troubled past behind. Additionally, the multiple transfers that her parents experienced and the hope to become a part of England without the feeling that they were not a part do not stop the voices of the past nor bring a cure to their burdened hearts.

Though Chabella is portrayed as an itinerant figure that is ready to be on the move amidst the territories she is made to cross, the cultures she is made to adjust to, and the languages she is forced to speak; even so, she never stops to recite the letters she received from her family in Cuba to her daughter. The following passage provides a further portrayal of Chabella's extreme delight to reconnect with the family she left behind:

> Mami recited letters to me; they were from friends she grown up with, friends who had spread out to grandma, Camaguey and Holguin. There were letters from her cousins in Villa Clara and Pinar del Rio, photographs and notes from her sister in Matanzas reminding her how lucky she was to be abroad, how lucky, *querida*, beloved, not to have to constantly pit yourself against *la lucha*, that struggle for life!...As Mami spoke her alien litany to me, she depressed the centres of each flower with a deft thumb so that each one could host a fire in its heart. Each petal read (pp. 10-11)

The passage records Chabella's enigma to connect with the family she left behind. It also echoes her flop to overlap the loss of which causes her perpetual exile and up-rootedness in spite of the criss-cross movement she was made to have. This, however, disrupts Maja's image of a fixed home. Maja's voyaging across fragmented memories of home and unclear pictures of her ancestors with whom she fails to identify, in the photos sent by her relatives, endorse her exilic space in London.

The detachment from the native land has led to austere space of instability and a dithering of belonging nowhere where characters like Maja, for instance, fails to find a place that she can, indisputably, call home. This impermanence of space ultimately adds to her disunity and apathy. The latter is better described through Papi's comment over Maja's lack of interest, observing:

> You, Maja, you wonder why the people who have to teach you never like you; it is because you sit there looking at them as if you don't believe a word they're saying. That parents' evening when you sat beside me and yawned while your History teacher was praising your mock exam results. If I had been your teacher, at the moment I would have taken a big red pen and drawn a line through the results and said, 'My mistake-she failed. Her problem is a lack of interest.' You are lucky that you have been educated in a country where you're supposed to act uninterested. You're very lucky that you've been educated in a country where it is not necessary to get out. Imagine if the only way you could have a good life was to learn your books! Would you yawn then? No, indeed, you would grin and say, thank you Mr Englishman, please tell me how I may continue to improve. (p. 74)

Foregrounded with a context that is rife with different spaces and stories, Maja opts to construct a new location that replicates her unfixed homes and fluid identities. Additionally, her hectic life endorses her apathy and condemnation of history. The passage above shows Maja's portrayal as a figure that is indifferent with regard to history. In line with that, one might suggest that her indifference towards the lectures of history signifies her uncertainty and distrust of the stories told by her English teachers as she profusely believes in the distortion of truth.

Even more, the horror of the crime committed towards the history of slavery and its dismay fathoms the atrocity and the brutality of Europeans towards the slaves and their descendants who suffered from this up-rootedness. In other words, Maja's yawn, possibly, signifies her historical memory that is deeper and more powerful than her father and teacher can decipher. Or, probably, Maja is hyperaware that the stories recited by her teacher will never typify that the up-rootedness and the fragmentation of the self of blacks, on the whole, are intrinsically rooted in slavery at large. In other words, neither her teacher nor her father would enable her to have a crystal image of her exilic identity, as she fails to sense the true meaning of 'home' due to her disjointed loci of displacement in London.

Interestingly, readers may notice Maja's passivity vis-à-vis the historical accounts delivered by her English teacher as she appears to be indifferent. The dichotomy between sympathy and animosity towards slavery 'holocaust' makes her be an abstruse figure. Truthfully, the protagonist's indifference is further reinforced in several instances related to her people's agony, mainly when Maja gave the impression of the one who cares less about the concerns of her people. In effect, Maja and her friend laughed unfathomably about the Nigerian girl who celebrates the Independence Day of her country at school. Moreover, this act of animosity is repeated when Dominique is accused of being rootless though she discerns that both of them are slave girls coming from Trinidad and Cuba. Yet, she remains passive as always without attempting to clarify further since she is expected to solidify with people of her kind.

Furthermore, the betwixt situation and the perpetual state of alienation may explain the animosity that Oyeyemi's characters went through. Basically, the liminal position of the characters ponders the way they act as they seem to be stuck at the threshold, which resembles security. Throughout the entire narrative, the characters are portrayed as passive figures who seek security without reacting. Papi and Chabella's repetitive escape from Maja's questions with regard to their arrival to England reveals their inner struggle to remain neutral as they fail to convince her that she enjoys a sort of freedom that they didn't enjoy in their maternal country, Cuba. For Maja, her parents appear to be peaceful people who would enjoy staying in their comfort zone without daring to stand up to the oppressive system in their country back home nor fighting for their visibility in London. Maja sardonically comments on her Papi's escape from Cuba as follows:

> He brought Mami and I to London. Papi says he was 'sent abroad by Castro', as if Castro, having singled out the academics and bourgeoisie that he didn't want in his revolution, had first restricted their research possibilities, then leant over and lifted them all airborne with a single puff.(p. 11)

Probably, Chabella's and Papi's disinterest and disregard towards Cuba can be explained by their liminal situation in the new loci as they struggle to belong in London. This, however, explains Chabella's strange reaction to the rape scene. Maja fails to understand her mother's disinterest in reporting the rape scene to the police, wondering whether her mother's English was the real reason or her inoperativeness. In a related move, Maja describes the incident in this way:

> The man and the woman were gone. Nothing and no one moved on the street. I knew that you didn't call the police for jus anything. I was not sure what rape was then…anything like that was serious enough for the police.
>
> 'Mi inglés, mi inglés es tan malo, ellos no me entenderán'

> Mami said, and there were so many tears from her that I couldn't dry them with my hands. She wanted me to understand why she wasn't going to help, but I couldn't understand. (P. 149)

Undeniably, readers will not fail to notice that Maja is hyperaware that her mother cannot endure the entire journey in London. Chabella knows very well that her journey in this land will be long; therefore, getting involved in other problems would jeopardise the life she is trying to establish in the new loci. Thus, alone in the cold streets of London, and to overcome the rape scene, she revives the memories of her home through the voices of the past on the one hand, and through the practice of Santeria religion on the other hand in order to bestow her family with its genealogy.

In the rape scene, Chabella appears to choke Maja from calling the police about the rape scene as she is unable to speak on the phone due to her mastery of Spanish on the one hand, and she fears that her daughter could not divulge the scene from the other hand. Chabella's inability to transmit the scene to the police is a message about what happens when languages cannot travel across borderlands. Conversely, Maja is represented as the character who selects to unveil what is hidden. This, however, explains Maja's attempts to cover her throat all the time to protect her vocal chords that allegorise her desire to voice the unvoiced in several instances. Maja describes her mother's hysteric in the following lines:

> Mami' I said, and I tried, but my fingers couldn't unlock her iron ones. My vision took on black edges, and I began to believe she was going to kill me; she was saying that I was a bad daughter and I didn't know why. She let go of me; I felt down and that was when I first learnt that I needed to protect my throat, my voice, because that was where my hands went first, to the

> circling pain. I croaked, and I vomited hard. Chabella said she was sorry (2007, p. 149)

Liminal beings like Maja and her parents are prevented from having a fixed entity called home. In Maja's situation, the process of crisscrossing and travelling ratifies her liminal situation. In consonance with Turner, marginal beings have nothing "no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, position in a kinship system" (Turner, 1969, p. 95).

To be sure, Maja lives a constant state of marginality which is represented through her mental hysteria and physical unsteadiness. After being the character that is always on the move and has nothing solidified, it is very likely to see Maja losing even her embryonic child. Maja, nonetheless, stays determined to save her baby who signifies her resilience to borders. Keeping her baby is evocative as Oyeyemi places the fate and the life of the baby in the hands of Maja who, in some instances, feels that she cannot survive her exilic location. Ironically, after fighting hard to hold on in the cold environment of England, the plight of 'home' remains prevalent for her survival. Within the same token, she pronounces, "I need my Cuba memory back, or something just as small, just as rich, to replace it; more food for my son, for me. I think I will pretend that I am no from Cuba and neither is my son. The boy and I started a race from that other country, and I got here first." (Oyeyemi, p. 169). Although Maja manages to cross the borders physically, she rests mentally inept to move on.

Differently put, Maja's liminal position is caused by her inaptitude to make a transition as she is mentally stuck between two worlds and two lives. Her mental confinement and hysteric imprisonment emblematise the solace she seeks. Moreover, Maja spends most of her time in Aaron's house that is a 'prison' like which is of her own making. The description of the house may be interpreted as an alienation from society despite her numerous attempts to connect with others. Most importantly, the description of the leak within her room is redolent of the rejuvenated memories of the past forasmuch as they seem to be the only remaining link to her family and her ancestral home.

Oyeyemi's characters move between physical and supernatural worlds. The movement of these entities represents the schisms at the level of their identities. On this point Hillman points that in the underworld " we gain contact with the soul of all that is lost in life and with the souls of the lost […]the transition from the material to psychological perspective often presents dream imagery of sickening and dying"(1979, p.53). Hence, readers can notice that Maja is defined by the space she inhabits whether her Yoruba or European one. In an interview, Oyeyemi comments on this idea, saying: "there are two kinds of real and that each story is the story of the house opposite it. They are like reversals to each other" (Oyeyemi, 2007, par.17).

Suffice it to know that the connection she made between two worlds is a metaphor reflecting the joining between the dominant discourse and its 'Other'. The presence of the 'Other' races within a metropolitan land like Britain may be considered a threat, but above all, it exists as a reversal of the British colonial past. In this claim, Khair comments, "in the moment in which the stranger is truly 'Other', there exists not only the possibility of desire but also that of threat/terror, for above all there exists an alterity which cannot be subsumed simply into negativity or similarity" (Khair, 2009, p.145). Remarkably, that strange other that Khair is talking about happens to be familiar as one's self, which is the case of Maja.

The narrative spans between the Yoruba and the physical realm occupied by Maja and her family. The straddle of the narrative amongst these worlds maps the influence in Maja's life that is varied and intricate due to the clashes between her African religion and Catholicism, not to forget her German culture that was represented through her Afro-Cuban mother. This blend implies in Afro-Cuban, Yoruba and German that all took place in the 'somewherehouse' that is populated by Yemaya Saramagua, a mythical double of Maja within an analogous universe, deepens her sense of double self within this enclosure.

V.6. Living Through Borders: A Cross-cultural Perspective

Nearly all cultures and human beings had been through the movement of transition where humans live through the in-between spaces. These transitions mould our identities and the way we shape our identities. Recently, studying liminal spaces has come to the forefront as the term captures something essential related to the transition situation that most nations are prone to due to the movement of border crossing. When the existing borders amid nations and cultures started to be lifted away and diffuse into an ultimate uncertainty since people began to interrogate the taken-for-granted boundaries, the concept of liminality experienced revitalisation. The concept was introduced by Arnold Van Gennep in his book *Les Rites de Passage* in 1909 as a social category to mark out alterations. This concept delineates from its social categorisation to be a social one. In the same strain, Thomassen comment over liminality, saying that:

> Liminality reminds us of the moment we left our parents' home, that mixture of joy and anxiety, that strange combination of freedom and homelessness; that pleasant but unsettling sensation of infinity and openness

> of possibilities which- at some moment, sooner or later- will start searching for a new frame to settle within. And if it does not, the void will perpetuate, and anxiety with it. (Thomassen, 2014, p. 04)

According to Thomassen, the facets of liminality have to be personal before considering them purely social. On the one hand, the rifts of separation cannot continue to be considered asymmetrical or punitive as the transition process entails disquiet and a movement to the unknown from the one hand, and vigilance to infinity as the process of transition might incorporate. Hence, liminality embroils the experiences of the individual along with the movement of transition. Oyeyemi diagnoses the mixture of feelings of hope and loss that the characters encounter in their liminal spaces on account of the movement of transition they had been through from Cuba to England.

Regardless of the implication of liminality, Oyeyemi projects it as a positive expression of cultural openness. But, conversely, at the heart of triumphant attitudes toward plurality, the misconception of plurality rests on a necessity that must be spelt out. In effect, the movement from one zone to another has always been hazardous as the movement from one cultural context to another is at all times accompanied by specific rituals and traditions of the original zone. In this regard, Van Gennep points out, "Whoever passes from one [zone] to the other finds himself physically and magico-religiously in a special situation for a certain length of time: he wavers between two worlds. It is this situation which I have designated a transition." (1960, p.18).

As can be seen, Oyeyemi tries to project how the neutral zone that diasporic subjects create shrinks gradually up to be a simple threshold where the previous norms and values are being destructed, engendering a void in values. Albeit Oyeyemi's self-identification with the productivity of transition; nonetheless, the anxiety-making aspects of transition needed to be spelt out. Chabella's manic openness to make a transition appears to be highly elucidated, which seems to stand at odds with what she indicates later on. Given the very complex nature of being in liminal worlds, she indignantly comments:

> 'I can stand anything but that; there is so much of me that hasn't survived with all this moving around. Paris. And Humburg.'
>
> 'I put a hand to Chabella's cheek, and she puts her hand over mine.
>
> Do you wish you'd stayed there? You can speak the language…' (p. 42)

Oyeyemi's personages personify the characters that are disassociated with a basis point of origin to the maternal and the host culture. Throughout the narrative, the characters do not appear to be the deterritorialised beings who are roaming unperturbed, but they seem to have discarded all cultural anchorages. In one of the literary criticisms to the novel, it is proposed:

> Recent postcolonial novels explore the cultural bouillabaisse: characters of various national origins, creeds and colours, living in international capital queasily negotiating issues of cultural transition …they feel they are losing a sense of history, but the flux is creating something new (Wellington, para.1)

Thus, the process of transition does not entail a sense of detachment from the original culture only. Yet, it poses the question of how the host country can tolerate cultural differences. It is necessary to point out that the cultural difference may gainsay the bridging of boundaries due to the complexity of attaining genuine equality between the two cultures. The cultural atrophy in Oyeyemi's novel is exposed through Maja's separate narratives that never seem to intersect but echo one another. The inability to compromise between two different cosmos is further extended as the protagonist finds difficulties creating a balance or identifying with her people. In her novel, Oyeyemi gives a little attention to the discourse of blackness as she gives centrality to diversity and the micro divisions it can create based on racist principles.

Oyeyemi gives manic attention to diversity by considering it a knot as it splits groups into finer categories. The danger that Oyeyemi is talking about is of double closure that happens to take place when people stemming from the same category seek to exclude others. In this regard, Kenan Malik suggests:

> Creating principles of difference cannot provide any standards that oblige us to respect the "difference" of others. At best, it invites our indifference to the fate of the Other. At worst it licenses us to hate and abuse those who are different. Why, after all, should we not abuse and hate them? On what basis can they demand our respect or we demand theirs? It is very difficult to support respect for difference without appealing to some universalistic principles of equality or social justice. ("Against multiculturalism" para.7)

Clearly, the passage above denotes Kenan's assertion that sharing the same ethnic affiliations will never assure cohesion in the face of national roots. In effect, her black skin does not imbue her black identity as the girls in school consider her different from Dominique regardless of their shared skin colour. For Maja, being identified as just black is critical to sense who she really is. In all probability, Maja firmly believes that blackness is a diaspora space that operates as a normative paradigm for her visibility and recognition. On this matter, Stuart Hall envisions that what we all need is

> Recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by the

> position…we are all, in that sense, ethnically located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are (1992, p. 446)

Differently put, speaking from a particular point and a particular culture despite the different historical circumstances cannot act as an impediment. But quite the opposite, overcoming the increments created by the dominant regimes of representation is deeply related to blacks' recognition of their shared ethnic identities. For Oyeyemi, the division of blacks such as Aaron, Maja, and Dominique, regardless of their different roots, is an operation that works against the interest of minorities who will lack the solidarity needed to resist the hegemony of the dominant group.

The Opposite House negotiates the prospect of forming a black British diaspora within the discourse of memory and the enigma of home finding. Oyeyemi creates parallel narratives that echo one another bringing into being what Yogita Goyal refers to as "an eclectic genre, where the realist narrative of the nation is interrupted by the romance of diaspora" (2010, p. 09). Maja's realistic account in London is interrupted as the story enters the latitude of marvellous through the stories of the 'somewherehouse'. The shift that Oyeyemi makes into the 'somewherehouse' is an interrogation of the diaspora's endeavour to move across boundaries and the extent to which these subjects can retain or give up their cultural identity to sense themselves. Of this, Taylor prophesies it as:

> A debate in which we open ourselves up to people other than ourselves[…] in a democratic practice which recognizes that it can't embrace everything but it's trying to enable people to live together, without eating one another and without pretending they are the same (Taylor, 2011, Para. 20)

The debate between London's and 'somewherehouse' stories shows the cultural atrophy that is predictable for diasporas. The practice of Santeria for Chabella is a medium to chart her identity. The journey from Cuba, Paris, Hamburg, and London was detrimental as much of her has gone astray. Hence, the practice of Santeria is a tactic to root her identity. This view, however, has been opposed by her husband, who believes that the Yoruba gods and rituals cannot transcend time and space. Moreover, he expands: "You can't erase borders and stride over Spanish into Yoruba like that? You can only pretend that you have" (Oyeyemi, p. 76). Interestingly, the loss of connection is further shared by Aya who eventually finds that "the Lagos door is nailed shut" (p.250). Most importantly, when the Orishas left the "somewherehouse", they forgot who they were.

Thus, this failure to reconnect is evocative of the impracticality of bringing the cultural forms that will remain a part of memory that is needed for repossession. It is wise to borrow Davis's words who comments on this idea quoting Hall, remarking "This reclamation of the past is actually a process of production. It is an imaginative act of discovery, which gives an imaginary coherence to a broken and fragmented sense of identity. Memory, fantasy and myth all conjoin" (Davis, 2004, p. 185). The loss of memory portrayed through Aya's dis-remembrance of the name of gods and Maja's inability to remember Magalys, a girl from Cuba, destroys their present-day reality and identity. Thereupon, Maja comments, "I think I will pretend I am not from Cuba" (Oyeyemi, p.169).

Possibly, Maja's loss of the 'operational past' compelled her to give up on a rich part of cultural identity as Hall suggests, "there can …be no simple 'return' or 'recovery' of the ancestral past which is note re-experienced through the categories of the present" ("New Ethnicities" , p. 448). The deployment of myth in Oyeyemi's novel places the past in the direction of dysfunctionality. Therefore, past exposure at the heart of myth makes it lose its power as a vestige of home. In other words, Oyeyemi blames the dysfunctional past for generating the cultural malaise that Maja encountered in London.

Oyeyemi projects a world where the past and memories of home are not fully abandoned; nonetheless, assimilation to the new world is not utterly embraced. The product is a sceptical picture of metis that shows the obscurity of where to belong. Thus, suggesting that identity is not awaiting recovery from somewhere in the past, but more preferably, it is subject to constant transformation. To be certain, the state in this context varies between the cultural atrophy, assimilation, and the divide between the self and its other. The malaise that Maja suffers from and the charge she compensates in the new location are related to Maja's mental breakdowns and the seclusion she calls for by the end of the novel.

For Oyeyemi, today's multicultural Britain is governed by a discourse of diversity that is a replica of the imperial knowledge of the 'Other'. All diaspora subjects with their variant affiliation are supposed to assimilate and abandon their cultural artefacts, a thing that causes Maja's breakdown and alienation. The desire to disappear stems from her recognition that she inhabits a multicultural location that cares for the distinction of gender in addition to ethnicity and race. She shrieks, "I am going away, not up and out, not inside, I don't know where, just away" (Oyeyemi, p. 231). This longing to unleash everything and collapse in madness is further extended by Aaron, whose solicitousness towards his child was clearly pronounced; thus, reducing her to a mere repository "in his eyes I am a throat working down [soup], I am a shaking hand and a spoon and beyond that his baby" (p. 231). The result of this outlook can be felt when Maja talks about Aaron's inactiveness towards the leak in the ceiling that adds to her deteriorating mental state. Aaron denies Maja's entreaty to call a plumber to fix the ceiling for the reason that he is busy thinking about the prospect of his embryonic child

> He is talking about the birth pain management and in my palm I have my crumped list of [plumbers'] phone numbers from his pocket, the figures so small that they disappear into the crinkles…Aaron has folded and rolled my list of plumbers until it has taken on the hard, round unity of a shell. (p. 253)

Maja's madness results from her cultural atrophy and the voices of the past that she fails to either recognise or stop. As noted previously, this attachment to origins distorts the nature of the diaspora sphere as these subjects are, putatively, supposed to assimilate and integrate. In the face of the rhetoric of integration, she appears to concur with what her grandmother who puts forward that "If you forget your ancestors, you forget yourself. Isn't that what it is to run mad, to forget yourself?" (p.38). All things considered, she ends up entrapped in a fluctuation of rickety identities. In effect, generating citizens to a deteriorated mental state and disenfranchised isolation is a threat resulting from the ideology of diversity.

The attempts to develop a study of identity construction have caused manic debates across the academic spectrum. The principal quarrel that galvanised the different arguments with regard to diaspora identity carries a series of inter-related subjects such as the historical impulses, memory, cultural conventions of the host country, and diversity to name less, all of which have a propensity to disturb the being's sense of identity. Ultimately, what is rehabilitated in the discourse around diaspora identity is the coalescence between the environment wherein people live and the experiences of the cultural manifestations.

Maja's identity is deeply rooted in her perception and sense of place rather than race and ethnicity. In spite of her entreaty to her natal geography, she identifies herself as part of the British community. This identity is disrupted when her classmates talked about 'roots' and the fact that all black girls are called the 'slave girls'. Thenceforth, home remains oblique as the writer places her characters with the harrowing experiences of slavery and the Middle Passage. The search for bearings in relation to home occupies her more and more, as she fails to identify home whenever she looks at the map. The feeling of disappointment to recognise anything related to her Cuba is further amplified when she fails to know the girl's name with whom she plays dominoes. She articulates:

> I need to think- I try to smile and think at the same time. I close my eyes and try to fetch back that lantern-lit night, the singing, and the other girl, rosy Magalys, flailing the air. But now there are gaps ripped through the image and the singing has turned to a mashed, static whine. I want to ask Magalys what she has done to my one whole memory. Instead I say, still smiling, 'That not how it happened, Magalys' (pp.168-169)

Despair and reminiscence are the resulting legacies of displacement that are escorted with fragmentation, restlessness and disorientation that were all enunciated through the protagonist's attempt to collect and accumulate her lost memories. Particularly, the novel is an assessment of the difficulties encountered by those who need to integrate and assimilate into two cultural allegiances and the negotiations of identity that are involved in this process. By the end of the novel, Maja recaps the rifts of the separation from her ancestral land that caused her perplexity, commenting: "I think I will pretend that I am no from Cuba and neither is my son" (p. 169). Ironically, Maja seems to give up on her Cuban inheritance and selects to be part of the British society as she gives up on the idea of visiting Cuba. Still, Maja seems to merge the two as W.E.B. DuBois discerns, "not a dichotomous divided self, but a sort of inclusive third reminiscent where the two selves may merge in a better and true self" (1903, p.03)

Consequently, projecting the traumas of the slave trade, Middle Passage, and their lingering effects result in the characters' attitudes and their shift from victimisation to acceptance. The unstoppable longing to stumble upon the slave past is necessary for the process of salvage and to gain a sense of poise to establish a stable ground in the territory they inhabit. Being on the margin definitely adds to their investigation to verify the stereotypical attitudes they constructed vis-à-vis their maternal cultural and the culture of the host country. Thus, deflating and substituting the hereditary values with nuanced ones that are more inclusive.

Conclusion

Helen Oyeyemi makes her novel a space for mobility where cultures, histories and texts are inter-sectioned. Oyeyemi, through her main character Maja, shows how daily mobility in London can be captured via inventive mappings of reality that are juxtaposed with imagination. Regardless of the characters' mobility, culture has been articulated within the context of dominant discourses wherein the protagonist realises that space is not a container, but naturally mobile. Oyeyemi delves into the flexibility and mobility of spaces and cultures through her character who disbelieves in a totally rigid projection to space. For according to Oyeyemi, Maja's crisis and her accumulating memories with regard to her ancestral lands did not die with her parents' dispersal and movement to England, but rather the enduring epistemologies of the past history kept to glaciate her world. Differently put, for Oyeyemi, diaspora subjects are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch where the real and the imaginary, the centre and the margin can intersect abreast.

This chapter spots light on Oyeyemi's projection to diaspora identities as she dwells on fractured lives and identities within the sphere of diaspora. The fractured self in Oyeyemi's novel is exposed through an eccentric narrative that is staccato like forasmuch as it merges the western tradition with Yoruba. Moreover, this fragmentation is mirrored through the stories that are itched in reality and myth from the one hand, and through the mixture of genres and narration that rotated between Maja, a citizen of today's London, and her ancestors who had been deported from their maternal land, Africa, and transplanted to Cuba. The rotation of narrative abides different continents and periods to fit the unconventional temporal and spatial locations that the characters inhabited.

Helen Oyeyemi's novel *The Opposite House* uproots the figure of Maja from its natal geography and plants it into a diasporic locus. The novel opens up new ways to read the imaginary scenery of African writings within the discourse of diaspora. Thus, she generates a mode of storytelling to fit her protagonist's poignant journey from Africa, Cuba and England. While diaspora authors engage their narratives with the massive canvas of the contemporary era, such as border-crossing, multiculturalism, hybridity and diversity, Oyeyemi's work is haunted by the past, which proceeds as revenant through myth that shifts into realism.

The writer in this novel tackles the beauty and contradictions involved in moulding dynamic identities as it points to the constant cultural and identitarian arbitrations that the characters encountered. In so doing, Oyeyemi points to the conceptualisation of the African diaspora and brings the contribution of Africans in the making of today's Britain into the front. She, precisely, articulates diversity and difference, considering that they shape an alternative structure in fashioning the diasporic community and the self.

Oyeyemi undertakes the enquiry of those hybrid identities by, resolutely, establishing a link between Africa and its descendent Diasporas in England. She projects her hyperawareness of what constitutes her diasporan being and the ineffaceable pattern of Africa through her characters. The deterritorialisation of these characters catechises a massive tendency to explain the foundation of the African diaspora by interrogating the relationship between Africa and its diasporas in Britain. Oyeyemi, however, sets the stage for this interrogation through the myth of return to the natal landscape. The return to the ancestral landscape rheostats her thought and, finally, ends up in the conviction of the impossibility and impracticality of return.

In her revision to the relationship between Africa and Europe in general, Oyeyemi revisits a historical moment, which is slavery. The latter is viewed as a managing threat that each diasporan subject must consider on account of its poignant legacy and its intricacies over identity. Hence, slavery has become a decisive point wherefrom one can understand the incongruent mechanisms of history and its encumbrance that lies at the heart of understanding diaspora's contemporary status. Differently put, it is the tragedy of millions of Africans and their descendants who were uprooted from their natal geographies to be planted into Europe and the new world as merchandise. It is an emblem of everlasting shame, condemnation and delinquency that Europe committed against humanity.

Oyeyemi's depiction of slavery is a leap forward in understanding the diasporic self that is firmly rooted in the past but not entirely entombed by it. The sense of loss is, thus, stunned by the merriment of hybridity that replaced the narrowing and restraining view of culture and identity of the 'Other'. The perception of the other who is marginalised and ostracised has been retreated when the pronouncement of difference started to be taken as a sense of pride rather than shame, providing that the 'other' has taken the initiative to appropriate the dominant culture revelling his/her plurality. The celebration of hybridity in Oyeyemi's novel is echoed through the protagonist's embrace of difference. For Maja, blackness is codified as an identity indicator but not necessarily the most important one as race gradually lost its currency.

Accordingly, Oyeyemi broadens the diasporic vision towards the outmoded perception of borders and nation-state building to endorse a fresh vision to the diasporic being. Interestingly enough, the encounter between blackness and whiteness is another point that Oyeyemi gives huge attention by means of intersecting two different worlds. This beautiful encounter generates a new world, estimated through the 'somewherehouse', to transcend the dichotomies and hitches of race engendering hope apart from the feelings of alienation and sense of loss that the protagonist suffers from.

The Opposite House stimulates an insightful image of the bifurcated diaspora identity through the characters' eagerness to unify conflicting worlds and voices and warring allegiances. The poignant feeling of belonging to both and none places at the same time that most characters suffer from, mainly Maja, seems to consume their identity coincidently with the nostalgic craving for the maternal land. Pursuant to this, the following lines may precisely describe Maja's liminal position and restlessness:

> Growing up global, children often enjoy an expanded worldview but may lack a particular national identity. Though their parents may have strong ties to their home countries, these children often fell as though they are citizens

> of the world and must grow to define home for themselves. They belong everywhere and nowhere –they are "other" wherever they find themselves, and in their search for common ground, they often gravitate towards those whose childhoods have been similarly un-rooted, often affinity in blended cultural groups. (Jungmin Kwon, 2018, p. 1)

Admittedly, Oyeyemi deepens the dispute about diaspora and migration by accrediting it a degree of mobility that is encapsulated by the image of the 'somewherehouse' that merges two diverse cosmos. The contact between her two lands enhances the notion of her identity via asserting its multi-layered nature. Most importantly, it sets off nuances perceptions apropos belonging yet secures the territory of origin.

The mesh of supernatural elements in Oyeyemi's work reflects the tangible reality of the stories she recounts. The coupling of the Yoruba and European ideology is instigated to picture the liminal spaces that are seamless in the Yoruba ideology. In doing so, she manages to nestle a space wherein the past meets the present. Hence, this ontology that is elucidated through Maja's and Aya's reunion in the 'somewherehouse' that comes to nestle different locations and times.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

In this thesis, we have tried to find some possible answers that are pertinent to diaspora, considering it to be a subject of constant transformation. The first part of this work illustrates that diaspora has a protean infrastructure that suggests a malleable framework where identity, nationalism, and belonging are being reshaped and redefined. Following this line of thought, one may arrive at the idea that understanding the trajectories of diaspora , and subsequently the mechanism of diaspora identities; one needs to understand the nature of contact between individuals and nations given that people tend to shape their identities based on their relations and contact with others. The robust investigation regarding diaspora is inflamed because of the state-centred logic and the modality of inclusion/exclusion that are propelled to ban certain groups from the national polity.

In the diaspora context, all of the attention has been immersed by the velocity of the global era, the decay of border maintenance, and the politics of assimilation in the settled terrain. Freshly, the interest is more enthralled with the effects of the apertures of separation and the remnants of the land of origin, which are visibly ostensible in the diaspora’s equation. It seems that there are conversing sets of views. The ones that expose the clear-cut of borders and reject the rigidity and the logic of the nation-state building .Correspondingly, other sets of values treated the ancestral land as a founding tenet for the diaspora beings. Both values seemed rational to certain degrees as the requirements of the global millennium meet the first set of values; nonetheless, no one can deny that the ancestral kinship and having a connection ‘somewhere’ is essential in the sense that each polity is more predisposed to one system that is altered from others.

According to the selected authors, the investment in traditions, myths and homeland metaphors are indicatives to the cultural bearings. The inclusion of traditions and myths, in their literary productions, are precepts of their cultural stances corresponding to the multiple absences of belonging, place of origin, and authentic self. This suggests that diaspora is a plaint world in which there is no place for rigidity and precision, but rather it is a place that is renovating.

As a result of working on diaspora identity, reading diaspora writings remains tense with some misconceptions due to the ambivalent position of these writers. Irrespective of the contradictions that are apparent in the discourse of diaspora, readers will find that authors like Phillips, Amala, and Oyeyemi focus on the kaleidoscopic movements in their respective cultures. In pursuing to validate the presence of their ancestral blood, they retreat to African traditions through their narratives in commemorative and, in most cases, nostalgic sense. Though these novelists are counter to traditions and often question their legitimacy and authenticity. Yet, their exilic point urged them to harmonise these traditions with their modern life in England. Traditions, thus, do not seem to survive the diasporic conditions, but instead, they are institutionalised to make a constituent and rich part of the diasporic mind.

The investment in traditions is problematic given that they are generally predisposed within a cultural arena. The selected novelists attempt to contextualise these traditions to create the egalitarian background they desire. This, however, is portrayed through the characters’ concoction between what is ancestral and what is westernised. In line with that, one can envision that the selected novelists have shown their endeavour to point to the power of memory in space-creating and identity-making. In elucidating their vision concerning the power of memory, they enquire into the purportedly role of memory and home-remembering to rear diaspora in their culture as the surrounding environment appears to be more alien. On all accounts, Caryl Phillips in all his novels from *The Final Passage* to *A View of the Empire at Sunset* examines the irrevocability of the past and memory though they cannot be revocable or changed. The emphasis on past-remembering, specifically the slave trade, in Phillips' writings is necessary for erecting the basic elements for identity. It is only with this historically-grounded identity that African diasporas can understand their existential beings in the face of alien, and in most cases, divergent environs.

It is necessary to note that the importance of the historical consciousness is apparent in the writings of Caryl Phillips as well as Olukemi Amala, and Helen Oyeyemi. According to Caryl Phillips, Diasporas (Africans and Asians) are inherently inept at understanding their diasporic position due to the lack of historical consciousness. For, according to him, the painful experiences of marginality could be filtered through the experience of the slave trade that keeps shaping the existential being of Africans and their diasporas. Simply put, questions like who we are and where we are destined are intensely grounded on who we were once.

Phillips' *The Lost Child* is fecund with violence and pain viewing that the author wants to offer critical accounts regarding Britain's national concern in the post-war era. Moreover, he portrays the incurable experience, slave trade, of his ancestors in the preliminary chapters as he converses with other literary works to give some promising insights apropos the healing process without being blatantly infatuated with vengeance. Interestingly, the analogy between Phillips' work and *Wuthering Heights* suggests the matching contexts that are rampant with displacement, fear, and violence. His desire to reckon with the past and other literary works replicates his craving to take an acute detour into the past to make the self-anew. Phillips's preoccupation with the past and the memory of slavery affirms the canards that mar the Eurocentric portrayal of slavery on the one part, as it denotes the importance of memory in defining and shaping the perception of the self for slaves and their descendants.

In parallel, Olukemi Amala shares with Caryl Phillips the same standpoint as she stresses how the past leaps forward to constitute the diasporic self. In a clear sense, the novelist exposes how issues related to colour, race, and biases are progressively losing their currency as her characters are more attentive towards the communication between diverse groups. In seeking to portray the hypnotic encounter between the African and the British realms, she creates a space where her main character positively transcends her dichotomous worlds to embrace her diverse cultural adherences in the face of the hitches she encountered. The celebration of the fluidity and mobility of the diasporic self is encapsulated through Yewande's perpetual questions to the pre-given assumptions she inherited regarding her African diaspora identity.

Yewande's sense of affinity with people of African descent is adopted to enable her to transcend the cultural differences that often keep her detached from the community to which she belongs. This vision may suggest new modes of cultural filiations beyond the typical definitions of home, belonging, and identity, suggesting a new prototype of identity that is less attached to a specific space. In other words, Yewande believes that the individual's sense of existence stems from the alertness that home and belonging are illusory notions. In seeking to deal with her non-belonging to neither place, she attempts to reconnect her African world, via Olumu and her grandmother, with her British world without the prospect of arriving at one point.

The articulation of the African traditions in *Under an Emerald Sky* and the authorial presence of Olumu and grandmother are central in the story to revive the African culture in a locale that insists on questioning and deploring spirituality in the African culture. In doing so, one can sense the struggle of those at crossroads to look for what the critic Jenny Sharpe alludes to as the ‘ethnographic ear’.

By the same token, Helen Oyeyemi has engaged her narratives with slavery and its protracted effects of rootedness and fracture that have moulded the African diaspora identities. Perhaps the painful experiences of slavery and horror of the plantation have been earmarked to be injuries over the years. Simply put, slavery as a point of departure remains a condition of existence that shapes their fractured identities. Oyeyemi, through her narrative structure and the movement back and forth, dives her readers into a forgotten world, a world that her parents and most dispersed people try to expunge and neglect. By referring to the experience of the slave trade, she wants to juxtapose the spatial marginality outlived by Africans in today’s Britain with their African ancestors. She points to the inseparability of the past form present that marked the relentless exilic and inferior position that African diasporas encountered.

Adjusting to the new space and the criss-cross movement did not bring steadiness to immigrants whose despair seems to accrue due to the loss of connections and family. Though some characters in the selected novels have been portrayed as the itinerant figures that are ready to cross landscapes, adjust to the new culture, and speak the language of the main community; yet, this did not stop the voices from the past and the delight they express when being connected ‘somewhere’. The main characters in the studied novels, namely: Ben, Yewande, and Maja, have shown their mobility and flexibility given that they were always the kind of characters who opposed rigidity and were ready to be on the move; nonetheless, the painful memories of the past history seem to glaciate their worlds.

It is plausible to point out that race, though the latter deflects from its out-dated connotation, remains one the trajectories of identity formation for diaspora subjects, considering that they are viewed as ‘the familiar strangers’. Though the mechanism of identity-making in the sphere of diaspora remains arbitrary and contestable, these novelists attempt to spell out the different archetypes that underpin identity. In the face of the surplus tendency that calls for border-crossing between landscapes, cultures and races, they project how rudimentary the historical consciousness, cultural cryptograms and race could be for identity. Thus, diaspora identity is predictably hyphenated that concedes the pronouncement of a former ‘elsewhere’ land within the ‘pays d’accueil’. It is an arena where ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’ could be articulated no matter how extraneous and tactless this might be.

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Appendices

Appendix A

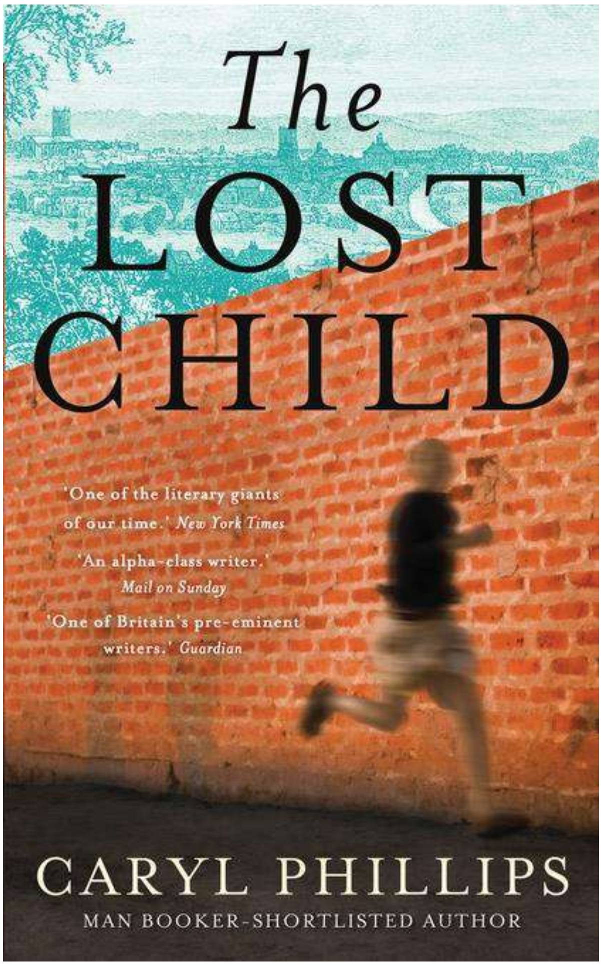
The Biography of Caryl Phillips

Caryl Phillips (born 13 March 1958) is a British African-Caribbean novelist, playwright and essayist. Phillips, or “the Master of Ambiguity” (Ladent, 2005), is a writer of mixed ancestry whose parents migrated to England in the post-war era. Most of his fiction is defined by his interest in exploring the experiences of Diaspora in England. So, it goes with saying that the central ideas for his writing are the exploration of belonging, displacement, identity and memory, which haunt the Diaspora condition. Caryl Phillips claims, “I recognise the place, I feel at home here, but I don’t belong. I am of, and not of, this place” (2001, pp.1-4).

Caryl Phillips devotes most of his writings to first-generation immigrants or the ‘Windrushers’ and their great astonishment in the so-called ‘mother country’. It is worth pointing that he has been widely criticised for writing about the first generation instead of writing about people of his own generation. It is pertinent to mention that it was until his visit to the United States in the late 1970’s that he started to pay attention the racial equality. Influenced by Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* and Richard Wright’s *Native Son*, he produced his dramatic piece entitled *Strange Fruit* (1980), which explores racial ambivalence and the altered attitudes vis-à-vis race. Afterwards, he turned his attention to fiction with the publication of his novel *The Final Passage* that revolves around the Caribbean migration to England. Nearly all his works thoroughly examine the effects of migrancy, deportation and slavery on African diaspora beings. Phillips’ works were shortlisted for a number of awards insomuch as he creates innovative fictional forms through which he bonds the African diaspora via literature.

Appendix B

Synopsis of *The Lost Child (2015*)


The LOST CHILD
'One of the literary giants of our time.' New York Times
'An alpha-class writer.' Mail on Sunday
'One of Britain's pre-eminent writers.' Guardian
CARYL PHILLIPS
MAN BOOKER-SHORTLISTED AUTHOR

The Lost Child (2015) is a far-reaching story of orphans and castaways haunted by histories and painful stories of the past. The novel starts by recounting the story of an enslaved woman who is molested, abused, and then dies, leaving a son behind. Then the narrative jumps to tell the story of a university student, Monica Johnson, who challenges the patriarchal authority of her father and the English traditions at large by marrying Julius, a man of different racial background. Finally, the book delves into the journey of Monica from childhood, puberty, adulthood, marriage, divorce, loss of a son, disillusionment, hospitalisation, mental break down, and, lastly, death.

Following the traditions of J.M Coetzee’s *Foe* and Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Phillips converses with the work of Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*. The novel includes the speculations he made regarding Heathcliff’s survival with his mother on the docks of Liverpool, a thing that is never referred to in Bronte’s work. The ability to juxtapose different stories projects Phillips’ struggle to reach inhabitation and redemption from the one and. Furthermore, it projects his desire to cover the enigmatic stories of the past to expose the dilemmas of the present in order to get at the heart of today’s alienation and exile. In brief, he rotates different lives and stories bound by the past and the struggle to liberate themselves from the painful memories that seem to glaciate their lives.

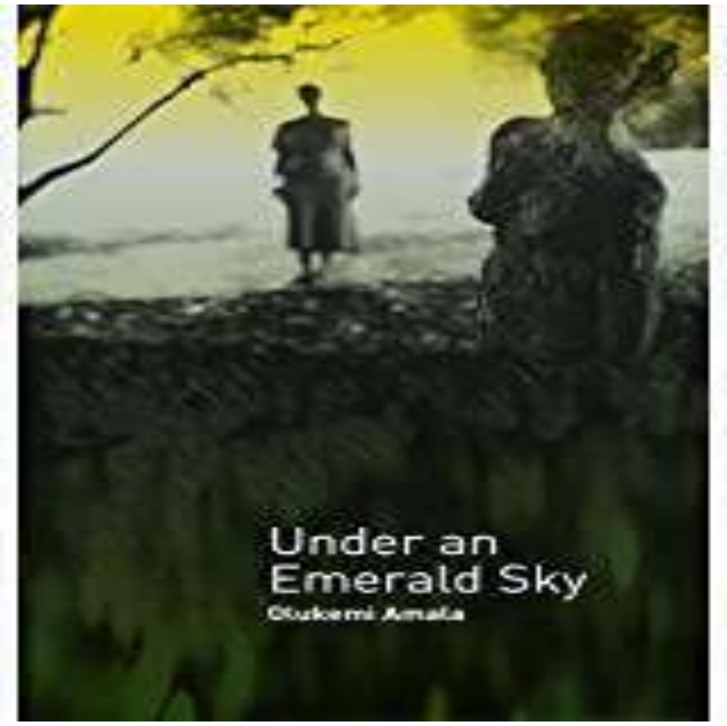
Appendix C

The Biography of Olukemi Amala

Olukemi Amala (born in 1963) is a Black British African (Nigerian) writer. She grew up in London and currently lives in Scotland as she admittedly expresses her affection for nature, coastal atmosphere and space. Amala studied biology and has a master degree in Psychology. She is, at present, working as a psychotherapist in private practice and has been employed in mental health services for more than 20 years. *Under an Emerald Sky* (2011), her debut novel, explores themes related to power vs. tyranny, truth vs. perception since she strongly believes that truth and reality are typically nothing more than mere interpretations. Accordingly, she dedicates her novel to give voice to those who often occupy the margins of reality and struggle to access the world of truth.

Appendix D

Synopsis of *Under an Emerald Sky (2011)*



Under an Emerald Sky (2011) is a story of two babies (Yewande and Mary) who are born five minutes apart in the UK. The novel mirrors the struggle of these girls to live in England as their life is gripped with the Nigerian heritage. Yewande grows with the benediction of communicating with spiritual beings like Olumu that aids her to reveal some hidden parts of truth. The voice of her ancestors is a mixed blessing that raises her spiritual and historical awareness, but brings dismaying exposés about her family's past. By contrast, Mary's struggle revolves around her attempts to gain the love of her mother whose major concern is to abandon all that is African in order to blend into suburban Britain.

Amala, in her novel, attempts to question all that is Western and African. To this aim, she includes the traditional beliefs and insists on connecting with spiritual beings to question the celestial right of white people in bringing the gospel and refinement to Africa. Questioning the African rituals is a tactic employed to examine the impact of the European contact on the self-understanding of Africans. Simply put, she focuses on the irrationalities and invalidities outlined in both stories narrated by her African ancestors and their counterpart colonisers on account of the struggle between those who hold power and those who are oppressed. Or, between those whose regimes of truth and reality are legitimatised, and those whose accounts of truth are merely mythical superstitions.

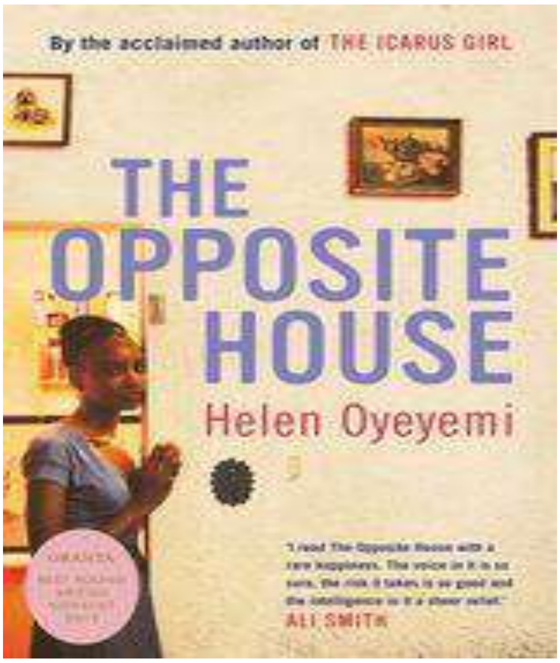
Appendix E

The Biography of Helen Oyeyemi

Helen Oyeyemi (born on December 10th, 1984) is a British novelist and writer of short stories. She was born in Nigeria and settled in London at the age of four. When she was studying her A-levels, she wrote her first novel entitled *Icarus Girl.* The latter recounts the struggle of an eight-year-old girl to counterbalance her British and Nigerian worlds. She is a writer of five novels, plays and a collection of short stories in which she explores the cleft wall between myth and veracity, faith, identity, and self-understanding.

Appendix F

Synopsis of *The Opposite House (2007)*



The Opposite House (2007) is a novel that projects the restlessness and anxiety resulting from the movement of crossing lands and cultures. The story turns around Maja, a singer of a black Cuban family who migrated from the Caribbean to London, and her struggle to negotiate identity and history in an environment that often neglects her presence. Maja is haunted by what she calls ‘her Cuba’ in a divided family that includes a mother who binds Catholicism and Western African Yoruba that deepens Maja’s sense of Cuba, and a father who rails counter to his wife’s delusions.

Oyeyemi interweaves Maja’s tale and Yemaya’s, a Santeria messenger who happens to live in ‘somewherehouse’, a place with two doors: one opened to London, and the other to Logos. The link between the two stories projects the condition of the migrants, who are half-aware about their in-between space, yet there is no firm place where they can stand.

Résumé

L'identité dans le contexte de la diaspora a toujours été marquée par les sentiments d'amertume et de perplexité qui caractérisent la vie de la plupart des diasporas en raison de la reconnaissance de la terre d'origine et du sentiment d'appartenance à nulle part. La principale préoccupation de cette thèse est d'examiner la quête d'identité et de mère partie dans les écrits de la diaspora d'expression anglaise. Le chaos de l'identité et l'envie de créer une mère partie frontières d'autres nations ont été abordés à travers l'analyse de '*L'enfant Perdu'* (2015) de Caryl Phillips, '*Sous un Ciel Emeraude*'(2011) d'Olukemi Amala (2011), ' *La Maison d'en Face*' (2007) d'Helen Oyeyemi. Les auteurs ont été sélectionnés sur la base de leur manie pour les récits de la partie et de la recherche des racines malgré l'appel à l'interdiction des frontières. Dans toutes les œuvres sélectionnées, les écrivains ont projeté leur intérêt à créer un nouveau cosmos où ils peuvent fusionner leur culture d'origine et celle de la terre destinataire. Ajoutant au dilemme d'être positionné dans des espaces marginaux, les auteurs soulignent comment la partie et les souvenirs douloureux du passé pourraient creuser des cratères indéchiffrables pour les êtres de la diaspora, et pourraient être la principale raison du manque d'avoir des conjectures pratiques en matière d'identité. Conscients de la nature multiforme de la diaspora et de l'insuffisance de toute postulation à propos de l'identité, les romanciers créent une cacophonie de récits avec des prototypes polycentriques et divers pour s'adapter à la position diasporique. Ce faisant, ils ne nient pas l'annonce d'une ancienne terre « ailleurs » et ne négligent pas celle qui en est bénéficiaire. Dans une certaine mesure, ils assimilent les domaines et la culture à des partenaires égaux. Les romans analysés dans cette thèse expliquent visiblement que les souvenirs passés, le désir d'être chez soi et le fait d'être positionné « quelque part » sont les référentiels auxquels les êtres de la diaspora peuvent se référer pour ressentir et se sauver eux-mêmes.

Mots Clés : Espaces diasporiques, la Patrie, Marginalité, Appartenance, Construction d'identitaire.

الملخص

لطالما كانت الهوية في أدب الشتات ممزوجة بمشاعر المرارة والحيرة التي تميز حياة معظم المغتربين بسبب الاعتراف بالأرض الأم وعدم الانتماء الى أي مكان . تهدف هذه الأطروحة الى البحث في أمر الهوية والوطن في مؤلفات الشتات البريطاني، تم التعامل مع قضية الهوية والرغبة في إنشاء الوطن على حدود دول الأخرى من خلال تحليل رواية (2015) '*The Lost Child*' لكارل فيليبس، رواية (2011) '*Under an Emerald Sky*' لأوليكيمي أمالا ، ورواية (2007) '*The Opposite House*' لهيلين أوييمي . تم اختيار المؤلفين بسبب انغماسهم بروايات الوطن وتتبع الجذور على الرغم من الرغبة الملحة لعبور الحدود . في جميع الأعمال المختارة أبدى الكُتَّاب اهتمامهم بخلق عالم جديد لدمج ثقافتهم الأصلية وثقافة الأرض المستقبلة. إضافة إلى معضلة التواجد في أماكن هامشية، يشير المؤلفون إلى كيف للوطن وذكريات الماضي المؤلمة التنقيب عن فوهات غير قابلة للتفسير لكائنات الشتات والتي قد تكون السبب الرئيسي لندرة وجود تقديرات عملية متعلقة بالهوية. نظرا للطبيعة المتعددة للشتات وغياب اي افتراض متعلق بالهوية، خلق هؤلاء الكتّاب روايات متنافرة ذات نماذج متعددة المراكز لتناسب وضعية الشتات ، وبذلك فهم لا ينكرون وجود الأرض السابقة او الوطن الأم كما انهم لا يهملون المنطقة المتلقية ايضا. إلى حد ما، فإنهم يساوون بين العالمين والثقافتين كشركاء متساوين. توضح الروايات التي تم تحليلها في هذه الأطروحة بشكل جلي أن الذكريات الماضية والرغبة في خلق الوطن والتموضع في "مكان ما" يعد المخزون الذي يمكن اللجوء اليه للشعور بالنفس واغاثتها .

الكلمات المفتاحية : الشتات ، الوطن الأم ، التهميش ، الانتماء ، بناء الهوية.