People's Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Hassiba Benbouali University-Chlef

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English

Diaspora, Identity, and Technology in selected American Novels: Radiant Fugitives by Nawaaz Ahmed and Brown Girls by Daphne Palasi Andreades

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English for the Fulfilment & the Requirement of the

Degree of Doctorate in American Literature

Presented by: Radhia Meddahi

Jury Members

Dr. ChaalHouaria	(MCA)	University of Chlef	President
Dr. FethiaBraik	(MCA)	University of Chlef	Supervisor
Dr. Naimi Nabila	(MCA)	ENS Oran	External Examiner
Prof. Djaafri Yasmine	(MCA)	University of Mostaganem	External Examiner
Dr. Meharet Sarah	(MCA)	University of Chlef	Internal Examiner
Dr. Hadj Henni Imane	(MCA)	University of Chlef	Internal Examiner

Dedications

In loving memory of my dear father ***Naserddine Meddahi*** .

O Allah, forgive him, and have mercy on him.

For my cherished mother ***Amina Baatouche****.*

O Allah, fill her days with happiness and blessings.

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to Allah, the Almighty, for granting me strength, and perseverance.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my esteemed supervisor, Dr. FethiaBraik, whose invaluable guidance, expertise, kindness, patience and support have been instrumental in releasing this dissertation. She is an ideal supervisor.

I am also deeply grateful to the acclaimed members of my dissertation committee for graciously accepting to devote their precious time and expertise towards the evaluation and improvement of this work.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the Department of English, the Faculty of Foreign Languages, and the TICELET Laboratory at the University of Chlef, Algeria for encouragement and resources.

I am deeply appreciative to Professor Marie Liénard-Yeterian from the University of Côte d'Azur in Nice, France, and Professor Fathi Bourmeche from the University of Sfax, Tunisia, for their kindness, insightful feedback, remarks, and guidance.

Finally, while I made every effort, I acknowledge that there may be mistakes or limitations within the work.

Abstract

Because it is a melting pot of diverse ethnicities and cultures, America's story with Diaspora became an attractive topic for academic discussions. This paper seeks to position itself in the discourse by providing its own analysis and understanding of the diasporic paradigm in America and its connection with identity and technology. The study examines several ideas related to the scattering such as family and home, by critically analyzing two recent American novels: *Radiant Fugitives* by Nawaaz Ahmed (2021) and *Brown Girls* by Daphne Palasi Andreades (2022). To illuminate the diasporic framework and its content in both novels, the research invests on Diaspora criticism, contemporary data and literary samples. It thoroughly analyzes textual pieces of evidence from the cases of the study, an approach that gives the research its qualitative analytical nature. The present work aims to define Diaspora, and to scrutinize characters' diasporic experiences from multiple personal and professional angles. It also explores how scattering influences identity and the application of varied technologies. Therefore, it presumes that Diaspora is the dominant force in characters' lives, the molder of their identities and the conductor of their technology usages. The research reveals that diasporic journey touches many facets of characters' lives, and even complicates them. Their self-conceptions and life experiences are reflections of this complicated experience. The research sheds light on the characters' interaction with gadgets, travel tech, websites and application in relation to Diaspora. Accordingly, it contributes to the inspections about Diaspora by explaining and acknowledging its complexities, contradictions and imprints. Moreover, since it examines two 2020s literary works, it provides updated insights. By the end, the dissertation offers an inclusive definition of Diaspora and its effects by determining it as a circuitous phenomenon due to its challenging patterns.

Key Words: Diaspora – Identity – Technology – Diasporic Literary Criticism- the U.S.

ملخص

نظراً لكون الشتات في أمريكا نقطة اندماج لمختلف الثقافات والأعراق، أصبحت مسألة محورية جذابة للنقاشات الأكاديمية وبالتالي يتموقع هذا البحث في خضم هذه النقاشات ساعيا إلى فهم وإعطاء تحليل للنموذج الشتاتي في أمريكا وعلاقته بالهوية والتكنولوجيا. بناء على ذلك، تتفحص هاته المذكرة عدة أفكار ومفاهيم شتاتية على شاكلة العائلة والموطن. وهذا من خلال التحليل النقدي لروايتين أمريكيتين معاصرتين الهاربون المتلألئون (2022) للكاتب نواز أحمد, و الفتيات البنيات (2021) للكاتبة دافني بالاسي أندريدس. من أجل تسليط الضوء على مسألة الشتات في الروايتين، اعتمد البحث على النقد الأدبي المتعلق بالشتات بالإضافة إلى البيانات المعاصرة والنماذج الأدبية، إذ يحلل ويتفحص دلائل نصية من الأعمال المذكورة في إطار تخليلي نوعي، وتتمحور الأهداف الأساسية لهذا البحث حول تعريف الشتات ودراسة تجارب الشخصيات الشتاتية من زوايا متعددة وتأثيرها على الهوية والتطبيق التكنولوجي. تفترض هذه الدراسة أن تجربة الشتات هي القوة المحورية في حياة الشخصيات والمصمم الأساسي لشخصياتهم والموجه لاستخداماتهم التكنولوجية. في الأخير يكشف هذا البحث أن الشتات يمس عديد الجوانب الحياتية، بل ويزيد من تعقيدها، وهذه الحالة يمكن التماسها من خلال تجاربهم العديدة في الروايتين المذكورتين. يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على تفاعل الشخصيات مع الأدوات والمواقع الإلكترونية والتطبيقات المتعلقة بالشتات هذه الدراسة تساهم في إثراء المجال الأكاديمي المتعلق بتعريف تجارب الشتات وتأكيد تعقيداته وتناقضاته وتأثيراته القوية من خلال تحليل روايتين معاصرتين.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الشتات- الهوية- التكنولوجيا - النقد الأدبي الشتاتي- الولايات المتحدة الامريكية

Résumé

Étant donné que la diaspora aux États-Unis est un point de convergence pour diverses cultures et ethnies, la question est devenue un sujet central et attractif pour les débats académiques. Ainsi, ce travail se positionne au cœur de ces discussions, cherchant à comprendre et analyser le modèle diasporique aux États-Unis ainsi que sa relation avec l'identité et la technologie. Sur cette base, cette thèse examine plusieurs idées et concepts diasporiques, notamment ceux de la famille et du foyer. Cela se fait à travers une analyse critique de deux romans américains contemporains : Les Fugitifs Radieux (2022) de Nawaaz Ahmed, et Les Filles Brunes (2021) de Daphne Palasi Andreades. Afin de mettre en lumière la question de la diaspora dans ces deux romans, la recherche s'appuie sur des outils de critique diasporique, ainsi que sur des données contemporaines et des exemples littéraires. Elle analyse minutieusement des indices textuels extraits des œuvres étudiées dans un cadre interprétatif qualitatif. Les objectifs principaux de ce travail consistent à définir la diaspora et à étudier les expériences diasporiques des personnages sous divers angles, en examinant leur influence sur l'identité et l'usage technologique. Cette étude présuppose que l'expérience diasporique constitue la force centrale dans la vie des personnages, le facteur déterminant de leurs identités et le guide de leurs usages technologiques. En fin de compte, cette recherche révèle que la diaspora touche de nombreux aspects de la vie des personnages, voire les complexifie, une réalité que l'on peut observer à travers leurs multiples expériences dans les deux romans mentionnés. Enfin, Cette étude explore l'interaction des personnages avec la technologie diasporique, enrichissant l’analyse académique en soulignant ses complexités, contradictions et impacts à travers deux romans contemporains.

Mots-clés : Diaspora - Identité - Technologie - Critique littéraire diasporique- U.S.A

Table of Contents

4. CHAPTER FOUR: Technology in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

General Introduction

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the past, earth's surface was a single landmass. Then, through geological processes, it fractured and dispersed across the ocean's surface. This fragmentation and movement gave rise to the continents known today. Similarly, humans, like their planet, have formed families and tribes that have spread and disperesed worldwide. The processes of: breaking, scattering, immigration, movement, dispersal, and Diaspora have shaped both the planet and its inhabitants. Diasporas are outcomes of humans' scattering.

Displacement has played a significant role in fates and histories of individuals and societies. The background of this phenomenon is traced back to ancient times, with examples associated with some populations. Before the Common Era (BCE) the Jewish Diaspora, for instance, occurred following the Babylonian conquest, while the Phoenician Diaspora was a consequence of trade and colonialism. The Greek Diaspora, on the other hand, resulted from colonization. However, these migrations gained recognition and became subjects of inquiry many centuries later. They gradually came to be seen as examples among many others worldwide, each with a story, an influence, a context, and a cause.

The Greeks did not only give an early example of scattering but they also gave it a name. Diaspora which is grounded in the Greek words "speiro" meaning "to sow" and "dia" meaning "over" is now the definition of the scattering or the dispersal of a people across different territories (Shuval 42). It becomes a subject of scrutiny due to the significant impact it leaves. When people scatter and disperse, they influence their host lands and homelands. This effect necessitates careful study and analysis, particularly as it intersects with social and political activism, cultural enrichment, economic contributions, and the establishment of transnational

networks. Diaspora exists in various domains, so studies and discussions about it joined multiple disciplines including politics, economics, and literature.

With scholars such as William Safran (born 1930), Robin Cohen (born 1944), Avtar Brah (born 1944), Pnina Werbner (born 1944), James Clifford (born 1945) among many others, academic research on Diaspora has evolved into an inquisitive pursuit. Experts in the field now explore the scattering of people and the events preceding and following such movement. The domain of Diaspora studies gained significant momentum in the late 20th century, and researchers started to identify with it. Moreover, it has grown into an interdisciplinary area of inquiry, owing to the integral involvement of diasporic communities in various aspects of their bidirectional existence. Earlier, it was associated with exile, nostalgia, loss, pain and few communities but since the 1990s the field of study has progressed into a more inclusive and expansive discipline with a kaleidoscope of narratives and factual information.

One domain that diasporans became an integral part of is literature. Diasporic academic studies intertwined with creative exploration of this phenomenon, so diasporic literature emerged. Diasporic writers and scholars disambiguate expatriation's complicated layers through fictional and factual discussions and portrayals. Within this literary manifestation, diasporic individuals take the stage as main characters, while Diaspora itself becomes a prominent theme. Examples of novels include Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), *The Namesake* (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) by Kiran Desai, *We Need New Names* (2013) by No Violet Bulawayo and more. The emergence of this literary direction necessitated the development of literary criticism that analyzes it, much

like previous literary orientations such as postcolonial literature and literary criticism.

The recurring dislocation and its audible outcomes, coupled with the increasing scholarly and literary investigations and expositions, have played a role in selecting this research topic. Furthermore, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict erupted in February 2022, led to a mass exodus of people fleeing the war, created new Diasporas, and inspired the topic. The current disrupted world is the main motive for pursuing this research. In a trembling world that moves its inhabitants, pens should move to write.

Disruptions caused widespread displacement of migrant populations across countries. Yet, this research specifically focuses on the United States of America, the nation of immigrants and the land of dreamers. The Diversity Visa Lottery program and the allures that America offers contributed to an increase in diasporic populations. Moreover, this literary study concentrates on contemporary American novels to provide current perspectives, analyses, interpretations, and applications. This research delivers updated insights by examining characters and elements within novels that resonate with present-day Diasporas. Consequently, this critical analytical research assists the ongoing scholarly discussion in diasporic studies.

The critical analytical aspects of the study designate the methodology that comprises the selection of textual evidences, analyzing and interpreting them under the lens of Diaspora. This entails a close reading to the writings, selection of quotes, critical analysis of the diasporic elements found within them such as the notion of home, as well as the identification of concepts pertaining to identity such as clothes. To add, the critical analysis also read every technological click such as an email or a

phone call with reference to Diaspora. Likewise, the research explores the portrayal of characters, narrative techniques, and symbolic representations within the novels to gain a deeper understanding of how Diaspora is depicted and can be interpreted.

As the scattering is the overarching experience in both novels and therefore the umbrella concept of the dissertation, Diaspora theory is the lighthouse of this work. Postcolonial theory arose to elucidate the choices and experiences of characters after decolonization. In the same vein, literary critics who examine diasporic characters enable readers to understand the profound impact of displacement on entire lives, generations, and countries through Diaspora theory. Diasporic theorists and critics explicate narratives that link Diaspora with exile and nostalgia, or with prosperity and emergence. It studies characters' behaviors and choices, with Diaspora as a central theme, alongside other concepts that are addressed in this research such as activism, family, and generational relationships. The analysis employs Diaspora as an interpretive ground, with an iterative process of critical analysis and interpretation for the quotes. This method ensures unbiased and evidence-based breakdown of data that can be replicated by other researchers who explore contemporary American novels within the diasporic scheme.

The theory and the critical analysis are implemented on two contemporary diasporic American novels: *Radiant Fugitives* by Nawaaz Ahmed, published in 2021, and *Brown Girls* by Daphne Palasi Andreades, published in 2022. *Radiant Fugitives* was a finalist for the 2022 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction and the Edmund White Debut Fiction Award from Publishing Triangle. *Brown Girls* was selected as a New York Times Editors' Choice and an Indies Next Pick. Additionally, it was shortlisted for the New American Voices Award.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The choice of *Radiant Fugitives* lies in its exploration of Diaspora, identity, and the utilization of technology. The novel discusses characters' experiences from diverse backgrounds, including Indians, Irish, and African Diasporas. These characters follow different careers such as medicine, believe in varied political agendas such as the opposition of American- Iraqi war and engage in diverse social affiliations such as interracial marriages. The versatile representation provides a foundation for examining the complexities of diasporic experiences.

On the other hand, *Brown Girls* was chosen due to its depiction of a multitude of characters and the narrative's use of the plural personal pronoun "we" to denote shared situations. The novel encompasses the diverse backgrounds of dark-skinned girls from South Asian, African, and South American countries. It portrays life in America with immigrant parents and brown and white lovers. This inclusive depiction envelops experiences, families, and generations. Furthermore, both novels possess contemporaneity and currentness, as they had yet to be discussed or addressed by critics at the time of their release, and the start of this research. By nominating them, the analysis does not re-tackle, re-explore, re-examine, or re-analyze but contributes to the field with additional analysis.

The primary objective of the dissertation targeting the two recent added works is to demystify the factors that have a reciprocal relationship with Diaspora and to define it. Additionally, the research aims to examine how characters' identities are impacted by their diasporic backgrounds and to interpret using technological tools with Diaspora serving as radar. The research pursues elucidating, simplifying, interpreting and discussing the variables of the study by illustrating from the novels. It is important to note that the dissertation does not serve

comparative purposes but rather it intends to contextualize the selected works within the broader literary context of Diaspora and to position the research and the analysis within the realm of Diaspora's literary studies by relying on two works.

Since this dissertation explores three key concepts within the two pieces of writing, the structure necessitates four distinct chapters; one for the foundation and three for the analysis. The initial chapter reviews Diaspora through scholarly research and literary works from the 1980 to the 2020s. It also probes into the meaning of identity and its portrayal in contemporary American diasporic literature and the role of technology for diasporic individuals and literary characters. This chapter establishes the theoretical and conceptual base of the paper with the readings it offers.

The subsequent part consists of three chapters dedicated to the application of diasporic critical analysis. The second chapter focuses on Diaspora in *Radiant Fugitives* by Nawaaz Ahmed and *Brown Girls* by Daphne Palasi Andreades. The third chapter explores the theme of identity in both works, while the fourth chapter examines the characters' interactions with technology. Each analysis incorporates broken down quotes from the literary works and scholarly discussions.

The present study strives to answer the overall question of what definition of Diaspora can be retrieved from contemporary American novels? It also poses specific questions about how do the selected characters perceptive and experience Diaspora? How do they deal with their identities? And how do they harness different technological devices regarding their diasporic backgrounds? These questions and the dissertation’s approach can be replicable because they are situated within the growing context of dispersed communities in a globalized, perturbed world.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In this world Diaspora experiences shape individual identities, while technology provides platforms and tools for choices and identities to be expressed and redefined in a transnational context. The novels' reputation and the core concepts under examination—Diaspora experience, diasporic identity, and interaction with technology—give rise to certain assumptions. It can be hypothesized that Diaspora is complex, undefined and challenging to live and even to be understood. In *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls* Diaspora, it profoundly and enduringly impacts characters. It is a transformative experience that influences multiple aspects of their lives including families, offspring, perceptions, choices, manners, and thoughts. Besides, it engenders complexities in their identities. Additionally, the novels are expected to present diverse Diaspora related applications of technological tools. It is possible to find numerous communication, research, display, and travel technologies in both novels.

Briefly, it can be stated that the examined novels *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls* echo the lack of consensually affirmed definition for Diaspora. The texts illuminate its complex, multilayered and impactful presence in characters' experiences, identities and technology utilization.

Chapter One: Previous Readings on Diaspora, Identity and Technology

Contents

CHAPTER ONE

"For the first time since I submitted the manuscript, I feel a deep wash of shame. This isn't my history, my heritage. This isn't my community. I am an outsider, basking in their love under false pretences." (RF Kuang, Nine)

1.1 Introduction

The decision to go into a diasporic journey and to leave one's country is often preceded by extensive preliminary research on the experiences of people living in the chosen direction. Similarly, researchers cannot begin their papers without examining existing data, theories, and literature. After conducting this examination, they establish the direction for their final research.

In diasporic studies, this preceding research should cover various aspects of Diaspora, such as the phenomenon itself, diasporic identity, and other related concepts. The requisites of the 21st century include technology as an integral element for diasporic individuals and, consequently, for diasporic writers and specialists.

From the above, this introductory chapter aims to provide a theoretical crux by exploring the themes of Diaspora, identity, and the usage of technology by diasporans in contemporary American literature. It summarizes the preliminary research phase that should be undertaken on the path towards the core of the research.

The sign posts of this phase are the various perspectives and approaches of scholars in the field, such as Paul Gilroy, William Safran, Robin

Cohen, Avtar Brah and many others. Literary examples support the explanatory, expository nature of this chapter that is why it is called previous readings.

1.2.1 The Epistemology of Diaspora

Matching with the multitude of definitions, the term Diaspora itself does not have a single basis. It derives from the Greek verb “diaspeirein”, which means to scatter or disperse. Originally, Diaspora referred to the dispersion of seeds or the scattering of a population (Slama and Heiss 240). Over history, it has been associated with the dispersal of Jews.

In modern literature, the phenomenon encompasses the movement and migration of people (Wan and Tira 12). Historically, it refers to the dispersal of Jews during the Babylonian Exile in 586 B.C.E., which included the establishment of Jewish settlements outside Palestine (Sindhuja 115). The term “Galut” is used to describe Jewish scattering, but various historical events have led to the formation of other scattered groups, including emigrants, exiles, and refugees (Malar 113).

The term thus carries associations with both Greek and Jewish individuals, signaling different perspectives within this field. It was an academically and historically variegated phenomenon with an emotional weight and an ability to evolve into an independent field.

1.2.2 Understanding Diaspora

Due to the emergence of numerous diasporic communities, Diaspora criticism has become a prevalent subject. As Sudesh Mishra (born 1962) puts it: "It has turned into a vibrant culture industry without becoming in any way definite." (172). The concept of Diaspora encompasses various notions such as identity,

ethnicity, citizenship, exile, clash of generations, sexuality, home and belonging, and religions, to name just a few. These concepts, which are grounded in real-life experiences, contribute to the perception of Diaspora as a burdensome quest (Mersal1587).

The term itself signifies dispersion, scattering, and the spreading of people. Visually, Diasporic nations can be likened to a pearl necklace torn apart by internal or external factors, with the pearls scattering to different places. Diaspora is not only a reaction and a condition but also a conscious decision. To better comprehend dispersion, it is vital to understand which communities are referred to as Diasporas, namely the pearlsof the necklace.

According to William Safran (born 1930), Diasporas are communities that have left their motherland but maintain strong connections through memories of native lands (17). The Palestinian Diaspora, which resulted from the Israeli invasion in 1948, exemplifies such a group, where shared experiences and common perspectives and nostalgic memories contribute to a sense of unity and mobilization among the disjointed members.

Certain citizens within Diaspora face marginalization in their host societies and, in response, they establish their own cultural and social foundations. The African Diaspora in America serves as an illustration of this category, as its members form cultural clusters.

Another category within Diaspora consists of those who live with the possibility and the desire of return to motherlands (Safran 18). Many Diasporic communities maintain a strong sense of connection with their homeland, grounded

in their memories, thoughts, and feelings. This connection embodies a significant aspect of Diasporic identity.

Some groups voluntarily leave their countries to escape violence, seeking refuge in other lands (Safran 19). The Ukrainian Diaspora, which has fled from Russians since 2022, exemplifies how people relocate to escape conflict and persecution.

Additionally, there are Diasporic individuals who assimilate into their host countries. America, for instance, serves as fertile ground for this kind of Diaspora, where even prominent figures in its history are descendants of assimilated Diasporas. F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940), for example, is part of the large Irish Diaspora in America (Anish 8). Nevertheless, even after being assimilated into the host land, there is a remaining desire to reconnect with ancestors as if Diaspora consist of various branches (Mavroudi 1310).

This branching out can take many forms, as certain Diasporic communities showcase creative features with art to communicate their identity. The Caribbean Diaspora, for instance, is known for its creative expressions, particularly through the cultural presence of Reggae music in America (Ballengee and Baksh 8). This range of Diasporic groups has gradually attracted Diasporic scholars with different conjectures.

1.2.3 Scholarly Exploration for Diaspora

It is true that until 1990, the concept of dispersion and its related concepts received limited attention in ethnic and migration studies. This realization was brought to light by William Safran (born 1930), and it sparked revolutionary

discussions about Diasporic studies. Safran's early studies became the foundation of this thematic classification.

Safran proposed that the essential components of Diaspora include the scattering of expatriates to two peripheral destinations. These communities are characterized by the preservation of memory, a vision of homeland, a constant sense of alienation within the host society, and the potential of return. Communities that meet these criteria are considered ideal examples of Diaspora for him.

Safran's focus on the Jewish Diaspora as a case study showed perspectives grounded in victimization and trauma. To expand on this centralized nostalgic exploration, Robin Cohen's work comes into play.

Cohen (born 1944) argues that displacement is transformative; it transforms living experiences and connections between nations. In other words, Diaspora is a multidirectional force that contributes to the development of contemporary civilizations. It can bring positivity rather than just trauma and victimization. Cohen suggests that Diaspora offers the possibility of a distinctive, creative, and enriching life in tolerant host societies. Diaspora is becoming one of the buzzwords of the postmodern age, and one of the driving forces behind the progress of the world.

To enhance the understanding of this force, Khachig Tölölyan (born 1944) fixates on the concept of Transnationalism to demonstrate Diasporic people’s ability to transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. Similar to multinational corporations, the transnational phenomenon subsumes diversity and interconnectedness in a globalized world where people interact despite distances and boarders.

CHAPTER ONE

As a segment of people outside their native land, Diaspora becomes a part of the holistic global interactive dynamics. Khachig Tölölyan (Born 1944) also acknowledges the contested nature of the term, as it shares meanings with a larger semantic domain like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile, overseas communities, and ethnic communities. This semantic sphere facilitates a widened understanding of Diaspora within the context of transnationalism.

Avtar Brah (born 1944) asserts that Diasporic communities maintain a connection to their 'home' country through distant memory and myth. She adds that Borders of Diaspora are flexible and re-constructible. The crossing of borders and the movement of cultures associate Diaspora with an indefinite identity that is also flexible and re-constructible (217).

Brah insists that the identity of the Diasporic community is not fixed or pre-given but is constituted within the crucible of everyday life. The term crucible implies a transformative process and challenges, interactions, and realities of daily diasporic experiences. It spotlights the diverse and pluralistic nature of Diaspora.

Pnina Werbner (born 1944) conceptualizes fission and fusion as the main features of Diaspora, which she sees as a chaordic transnationalism. Werbner expands her analysis by asserting that Diaspora is fragmented, similar to Brah's crucible Diaspora. For example, the Palestinian Diaspora emerged from conflict; it is fragmented due to the different waves of displacement to various countries.

Fusion is observed in the efforts to maintain a cohesive Palestinian identity despite the physical dispersion (121). By studying Muslims in Manchester, Werbner suggests that Diaspora is a place that is both a non-place, and a multiplicity of

places, marked by differences. It emerges chaordically, without centralized structures. One Diaspora can exist in many places.

James Clifford (born 1945) aligns with Tölölyan and Cohen's positive viewpoints on Diaspora and adds that it is a dynamic and interconnected concept, as evidenced by his studies on the Armenian Diaspora. His research covers various aspects, including politics, cultures, economics, and religions (156). His term "entangled" suggests that these different facets of Diaspora are interconnected and interwoven. Dispersion is not only physical, but it also encompasses the dissemination of principles and beliefs. To prove, the Indian-American Diaspora embraces a variety of religious beliefs such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, and others. Their places of worship, cultural centers, and community events contribute to the understanding and practice of these religious principles within Diaspora, which is because of this richness entangled.

To discuss the nostalgic, entangled, and dynamic nature of Diaspora, James Clifford (born 1945) describes it as "Travelling Cultures" (168). This statement encapsulates the idea that cultures are not static entities confined to specific locations but are rather dynamic, fluid, deterritorialized, and in motion with Diasporas. It points outs the processes of cultural exchange and hybridity, where adaptation occurs through the interaction and intersection of different cultures. In other words, Clifford knows the importance of recognizing the agency and creativity of Diasporic cohort. He argues that these communities are not passive victims of globalization and migration, but active participants in the construction and the transformation of cultural identities.

Nina Glick Schiller (born 1945) also challenges static and nation-centric views of Diaspora. She supports the notion of a transnational social field and the movements that occur within the phenomenon. Her work features the dynamic interaction between individuals and institutions across borders and also cosmopolitanism. For Glick Schiller, Diaspora is influential, provocative, and interactive with a role of shaping social and global structures (112).

Her research on the Haitian Diaspora, showcases connectivity between homelands and host lands. Moreover, by resisting inferiority in the host country, individuals shape the way they are discerned and even challenge existing power dynamics. For example, when Haitians in America come together to discuss strategies to resist racism, they embody the active, influential, and dynamic role of immigrants in their host countries.

The active and influential nature of Diaspora does not negate its complex characteristics. Floya Anthias (born 1945) acknowledges that Diaspora is a rigorous manifold concept that extends beyond ethnicities. Specifically, for Anthias, Diaspora represents an elaborate social condition (25). Upon closer examination, she argues that while Diaspora focuses on transnational processes and commonalities, it often relies on an ethnicity-based approach and the concept of 'origin' in constructing identity and solidarity. This not only overlooks trans-ethnic commonalities and relationships but also neglects critical considerations of gender and class differences. Diaspora is replete with challenges that warrant thorough study, and ethnicity is inseparable from it.

Yet, contemporary Diaspora heightens the existence of trans-ethnic relations and intersecting divisions, exemplified in interethnic marriages and ethnically

diverse workplaces. Therefore, according to Floya Anthias, the discourse on Diaspora should address these dilemmas.

Close to Floya's examination and concern for Diasporic ethnic challenges, Rainer Bauböck (born 1953) casts light on the dynamic nature of Diaspora, describing it as an evolving concept. Bauböck argues that Diaspora defies a centralized community structure, and rejects unity. Instead, in his definitions, he employs words like non-hierarchical, uncontrolled grassroots movement, unified, unmade, and decentralized.

As Bauböck notes: "Diaspora is seen here as a category of practice that can reorient existing self-identification of the relevant groups." (86) this idea of reorientation signifies a decentralized and evolving Diaspora that reflects the interconnected world of the 21st century. Within this framework, Diaspora is conceptualized as a category of practice capable of reshaping self-identification. It transcends fixed identities and definitions, and reorients how groups perceive themselves.

The reorientation of self-identification often reflects a nomadic mindset, where individuals embrace fluidity and adaptability. Rosi Braidotti (born 1954) proposes the concept of Nomadic Theory in relation to Diaspora. Through her exploration, she aligns with Bauböck's patterns of identity and describes human experiences, including transnationalism and transcontinental scattering, as non-unitary and unfixed. According to Braidotti, Diaspora is in a constant state of flux, always changing and becoming.

CHAPTER ONE

Braidotti's notion of Nomadism suggests that individuals are continually defining and redefining themselves. Her Nomadic Theory partakes with differences. The boundlessness and diversity within Diaspora prompt Rosi Braidotti to state: "Once the centrality of anthropos is challenged, a number of boundaries between 'Man' and his others go tumbling down, in a cascade effect that opens up unexpected perspectives." (166). With this statement, she confronts the traditional human-centric view and enriches the deconstruction of established boundaries and hierarchies. In Braidotti's nomadic framework, Diaspora is subjective and fluid.

On the other hand, Paul Gilroy's (born 1956) conceptualization, Diaspora centres around kinship and pluralism, prioritizing ethnic collective efforts over a return to homelands (112). According to Gilroy, Diaspora necessitates the reestablishment of ethnic bonds in the host land. In other words, Diasporic unity is beyond homelands.

For example, the black Diaspora nurtures connections among dispersed black communities worldwide since race serves as a tool for survival, resistance, and coalition. Once individuals embrace a Diasporic identity, Gilroy argues that they should transcend specific territories and fixed notions of belonging to home land. He exemplifies this concept through the artistic expression of African Americans. Connections can be made anywhere.

The emergence of Jazz serves as an example of the kinship within the African American Diaspora. This music embodies the cultural, social, and historical dimensions of Diaspora and illustrates how scattering functions as a tool for communication, solidarity, and ethnic identity.

Gilroy's perspective, which places ethnicity at the centre of Diaspora, diverges from Rogers Brubaker's (born 1956) view that Diaspora is a multifarious platform full of endeavours. Brubaker advocates for viewing Diaspora as a dynamic category of practice, a maintenance project, a claim, and a stance, rather than a fixed bounded group. To summarize his standpoint, Brubaker states: "We should not, as analysts, prejudge the outcome of such struggles by imposing groupness through definitional fiat. We should seek, rather, to bring the struggles themselves into focus, without presupposing that they will eventuate in bounded groups." (19).

Brubaker cautions against assuming that Diasporic communities will take a particular form. Instead, he encourages approaching the study of Diaspora with an open and flexible mindset, without preconceptions or assumptions.

Groupness can be observed in the shared identity, cultural ties, and common experiences. Groups share a set of characteristics or traits that distinguish them from others. This approach can be useful for understanding and analyzing social phenomena, but it can also be limiting and oversimplifying, as it overlooks the diversity of individual experiences, challenges and perspectives within a given group; Diaspora is heterogeneous.

Vijay Mishra (born 1957) offers a thought-provoking exploration of Diaspora, placing distinct the prevalence of essentialized narratives within dispersed communities. According to him, the essence of Diaspora revolves around the concept of narratives. Mishra perceives all Diasporas as sharing a common sentiment of unhappiness yet he observes that each Diaspora is unhappy in its own way.

CHAPTER ONE

Within a framework of displacements, Diasporic individuals are haunted by a sense of exile and nostalgia. Due to this pain, Mishra speculates that: "Diasporas can now recreate their own fantasy structures of homeland even as they live elsewhere." (8). When he speaks of Diasporic individuals recreating their own "fantasy structures of homeland" he acknowledges the complex nature of migration and longing. Diaspora creates an essentialized narrative of unhappiness that can be transformed into a longing for imaginative homelands. An experience that can be lived by first and other generations.

In the context of unhappiness, Rey Chow (born 1957) conceptualizes the idea of primitive passion and return. This engraved passion is a dynamic of identity that sets Diasporas as minorities, akin to primitive tribes seeking settlement, attachment, and stability (65).

Chow explores the paradoxical nature of minority individuals who, in their pursuit of self-affirmation, may succumb to the powers that subjugate them—the power of the majority in the host land. She argues that fragile Diasporic communities often surrender to stereotypes. The desire for self-affirmation antagonistic with subjugation is exemplified when minorities reinforce or undermine societal judgments through their behaviours. This paradoxical dynamic defines Diasporas as primitive individuals seeking meaning and acceptance.

Far from viewing Diaspora as a primitive subjugated minority, Steven Vertovec (born 1957) regards Diasporans as self-identified ethnic groups originating from specific places, dispersed globally due to voluntary or forced migration. Global Diasporas are not a new phenomenon; rather, they have historically played significant roles in various times and locations. Within these specific Diasporas,

influential trading, religious institutions, cultural practices, political movements, and connections evolved.

The term Diaspora as explored by Steven Vertovec, is used today to articulate any population considered as deterritorialized or transnational and also influential. These populations, characterized by their growing prevalence, numbers, and self-awareness, often play significant roles in constructing national narratives, regional alliances, and global political economies. While Rey Chow sees their quest for recognition, Vertovec sees theirs as influential presence.

Within this influence, immigrant debates now encompass not just xenophobia but also a phenomenon labelled as Diasporophobia a fear not only of the immigrants but also of their enduring presence and impact.

As Diaspora is influential, Madeleine Demetriou (born 1960) introduces the concept of New Breeding as a reflective counterpart to Diaspora. This concept signifies the emergence of novel entities from cultural roots in the context of globalization and cultural fusion. It promises numerous implications for identity and belonging, and challenges traditional understandings by introducing new breeds that destabilize fixed notions. Demetriou finds these new breeds to be successful and powerful and sometimes hybrid.

The strength of these breeds lies in their distinctiveness, shaped not only by their ethnicity but also by their ability to go through the realms of cultures and multiple locations. The dual loyalty to their homeland and host land, grants them a distinctive perspective and role (21).

CHAPTER ONE

While the strength of Diasporic groups stems from their ability to traverse cultural and identity spheres, the definition of Diaspora itself remains a topic of dispute among scholars. Martin Sökefeld (born 1964) argues that the term Diaspora is broad and subjected to particular definitions that are disputed (265). Yet, he contributes to the dispute by correlating Diaspora with mobilization. Sökefeld views Diasporas as a unique development within ethnic groups that need mobilization (267). Contrary to the notion that Diaspora is a natural consequence of migration, Sökefeld posits that specific processes of mobilization must occur for a Diaspora to emerge. Diaspora is a result of mobilization.

Drawing inspiration from social sciences, Sökefeld suggests analyzing Diaspora through the basis of collective mobilization and social movements. He proposes defining Diasporas as historically contingent, socially mobilized transnational communities. For example, African American Diaspora members take part in mobilization to address social and racial injustices through movements and committees. This mobilization solidifies the position of Diasporans in the host land.

Analogously, Dmitri Bondarenko (born 1968) accents the importance of Diasporans establishing a robust presence in their host country, both culturally and politically. His Diaspora formula is double-sided, shining a spotlight on both the original and host lands. Bondarenko simplifies this concept by stating:

> Under 'Diaspora' we mean not just a set of persons but a network community that serves as a means of both more successful adaptation in the accepting society and original identity support, and owes to numerous and various visible and invisible threads among its members, forming something like an ex-territorial status within a wider society. (442).

Diasporans' mobilization and presence can facilitate a successful adaptation in the accepting society. By forming networks and connections with others, members of Diasporic communities can access valuable resources, support, and guidance that can help them with the challenges of migration and settlement.

At the same time, Diaspora encompasses a network characterized by both visible and invisible connections among its members. This network serves dual purposes: to facilitate a more successful adaptation and to provide support for their original identity and country. The phrase "ex-territorial status" suggests that Diaspora through its grid, forms a sort of "territory within a territory" or a distinct status within the broader society. Diaspora in this understanding is a dual network and a state.

For example, people and groups with roots in Asian nations comprise the Asian American Diaspora. These communities maintain close ties to their home nations. They participate in various political, social, and cultural events while also being fully assimilated into American society; they have benefits in the ex-territorial status. But they are not the only ones in America.

1.2.4. Diasporic Communities and Nation States in the USA

A variety of factors contribute to the magnetism of the United States for Diasporic communities. The country emerges as a captivating canvas painted by the brushstrokes of diverse migrants and immigrants. Much like a cultural buffet, America beckons individuals from other countries, enticing them with the promise of assorted flavors and unparalleled opportunities. The American Dream is not just a notion; it is a magnetic force that invites dreamers, adventurers, and seekers.

CHAPTER ONE

Scattered people make America a grand mosaic of accents, traditions, and ambitions. In this land of Diasporas, the pursuit of happiness takes on subjective meanings. Economic, political, and social causes attract new citizens who prove beneficial both for America and themselves (Sequeira et al. 385).

Over centuries, waves of immigrants have settled in America. In the contemporary era, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 marked a pivotal moment in the history of the US Diaspora. It abolished quotas based on national origin and enabled the entry of more South Asian migrants (Chen et al. 7).

Among America's numerous Diasporic populations, the South Asian and African Diasporas stand out. The South Asian Diaspora comprises individuals from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, India, and many others (Parisi et al. 7). These communities maintain their own cultural vestiges and make substantial contributions in various fields, including technology, medicine, academia, entrepreneurship, and art.

After this abolition, cultural diversity thrived. From cuisine to music, dance, and different skills, the trace of various Diasporas is evident. For instance, the enduring impact of the Hispanic Diaspora can be seen in the celebration of Cinco de Mayo in America with Latin American cuisine.

Barack Obama’s presidency (January 20, 2009 – January 20, 2017) stands as a testament to the impact of diasporic leadership. As a descendant of the African Diaspora, Obama not only shattered racial barriers but also exemplified the potential for individuals from Diasporic backgrounds to rise to the highest echelons of power in America.

Another reason that makes Diaspora in America a coveted topic is the contribution to the American economy. The Taiwanese Diaspora, for instance, has played a pivotal role in the technology sector, with entrepreneurs like Jerry Yang, the co-founder of Yahoo. This case demonstrates how Diaspora can lead to innovation and economic growth.

Social activism is another significant role of Diaspora. Cesar Chavez, a Mexican-American, spearheaded the United Farm Workers (UFW). Through a series of marches, strikes, and boycotts starting in 1962, he achieved remarkable advancements for hundreds of thousands of immigrant farm workers in America, including dignity, respect, equitable wages, medical coverage, pension benefits, and living conditions.

Diasporas are an aspect of the US identity. This effect is pervasive in social involvement, political leadership, economic contributions, cultural variety, and scientific breakthroughs (Sanderson et al. 8).

It is worth noting that the impact of these varied Diasporic communities begins from their locations and nation states in American soil. Even Obama grew up in a Diasporic zone, Honolulu, in Hawaii, which is packed with Asians and Africans.

Honolulu is not the only diasporic zone within America. Diasporic communities have created distinct populations, where they can preserve their cultural identities, establish ties with each other, and begin making contributions to American society. To illustrate this reality, Chinatown stands as a testament to the Chinese community's cohesion, preservation of traditions, language, and also presence. Similarly, neighbourhoods like Queens in New York City have transformed into an integrative hubof cultures from countries such as India, China,

Korea, Mexico, Colombia, Jamaica, and others. These Diasporic enclaves enable various Diasporic groups to coexist and contribute to American life.

It is important to note that after leaving the space of the Diasporic community, every member may encounter distinct experiences and develop subjective Diasporic standpoints.

1.2.5. Diasporic Experience in America

Diaspora in America is a versatile experience. It entails a wide range of events and opinions. It exposes Diasporans to contrasting outcomes, circumstances, and emotions. They may face assimilation, loyalty to their homeland, experience voluntary or forced dispersion, participate in political activism, exhibit differing attitudes towards American values, clash with each other, and also confront racism.

1.2.5.1 Assimilation or Homeland Loyalty

On one side of this enigmatic experience lies the cherished idea of America, while on the other side, there is struggle. Within America's Diasporic populations, a continuous bewilderment exists regarding the balance between integration into American society and allegiance to the motherland.

Some people seek to fully assimilate into American society, learning the language, habits, and values of their new home. Others maintain strong ties with their original country. For example, second-generation Africans become African-Americans as they melt into Americanization, which is synonymous with assimilation (Rumbaut 82).

Arab American youth, lacking fluency in Arabic, are viewed as overly American by their families; they are consumed by assimilation (El-Haj 8). The latter

can take many forms, such as adopting English as the primary language in all conversations, even at home.

To provide more examples of this contradiction, some Chinese immigrants accept American values while preserving their Chinese history through organizations, language schools, and cultural festivals. Individuals from other backgrounds prioritize retaining their cultural traditions and religious beliefs to maintain a distinct identity. For instance, some Indians celebrate the Tyagaraja Festival as a way to rejoice their native identity in America (Hansen 160). By organizing and participating in events like the Tyagaraja Festival, the Indian Diaspora not only encourages a sense of collectiveness and belonging but also contributes to the cultural diversity in the United States. This annual festival, held every January in Cleveland, Ohio, enhances the cultural presence of the Diaspora (Brown 3, 6). While assimilation or preservation can be a choice, the initiation of the Diasporic journey can be forced.

1.2.5.2 Voluntary or Forced Diaspora

People make decisions about moving, leaving or remaining in America. Stéphane Dufoix (born 1970) expands this perception by recognizing that pandemics, trade, enslavement, and tourism all contribute to the establishment of Diasporic communities (215).

The transatlantic slave trade, which occurred during the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, serves as an example of forced migration to America. Millions of Africans were brought to the Americas as slaves, forcibly removed from their countries of origin and transported across the Atlantic. These slaves formed the Afro-American Diaspora.

On the other hand, there is voluntary Diaspora to America. It refers to the migration of individuals or communities who choose to move from their home country to a new destination. In the context of Diaspora in America, numerous examples exist of people who chose to move to America, such as Elon Musk.

In 1988, having acquired Canadian citizenship, Musk voluntarily departed from South Africa due to his unwillingness to participate in the Apartheid through mandatory military service. He later pursued the economic prospects offered in the United States. When Diasporas voluntarily leave their countries of origin and settle in the United States, they develop an interest in the nation's social and political affairs and participate in them.

1.2.5.3 Engagements in Politics

Diasporic populations in America are immersed in politics and civic life. Some individuals participate in the democratic process through activities such as voting, campaigning for policy changes, delivering political speeches, and writing.

To illustrate this point, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (born 1977), is a Nigerian author and activist who lives in America, and joins the political discourse as a Diasporic black woman. In addition to her literary works, which include six books along with numerous short stories and essays published in outlets like The New Yorker, Adichie has gained prominence as a poised activist and speaker following the viral success of her two TEDx talks (Rahaman and Arora 4448). Particularly her 2012 talk titled *We Should All Be Feminists* left a lasting impact on popular. Adichie exemplifies activism and the ability to challenge prevailing rhetoric.

Considering a speculative possibility, as someone born in Nigeria, if Adichie were to become a mother, she may have distinct views compared to her American-born children. If she frequently mentions Nigeria in her speeches, her children may perceive their motherland as a distant nostalgia or even a forgotten place. This scenario leads to disputes and differing perspectives among generations.

1.2.5.4 The First and the Successive Generations

The experiences of first-generation immigrants differ from those who were born in America. First-generation immigrants face challenges in assimilating to a new culture while maintaining their ethnocultural origins. To succeed, they must overcome language barriers, racism, acculturation difficulties, and academic and economic pressures. On the other hand, individuals born in America have a hybrid identity that combines elements of their culture with American ideals, habits, and experiences.

For example, first-generation immigrants from Jamaica, Haiti, or Trinidad hold their countries and ethnic backgrounds in high esteem. In this vein, younger individuals are often seen as Americans without strong ethnic ties (Guluma 3). Intergenerational gaps within the American Diaspora can arise due to conflicts between parents and their children. The tensions that occur between different Diasporic generations are inherent to the Diaspora experience, but external factors also contribute to these antagonisms.

1.2.5.5 Experiencing Racism

Racism has been a source of torment for America's Diasporas across all generations. Communities such as Asian Americans, African Americans, and Latino

Diasporas have faced challenges including xenophobia, bigotry, and various forms of racism.

Racial injustice persists, and the case of George Floyd's death due to police brutality serves as a modern example of racism that Diasporans continue to confront (Schwartz 52). As of 2023, a significant proportion of individuals surveyed in the United States 38%, reported significant personal concerns about race. While America may be seen as a welcoming land, it also poses threats to non-white individuals (U.S. Race Relations Worrying 2023 | Statista).

In light of these realities, communities in America reflect cultural adaptation. They live through various challenges, attitudes, and experiences within Diaspora. Understanding and appreciating this oscillating history can promote greater empathy and inspire literary creativity that harnesses Diaspora as a central theme.

1.2.6. Contemporary American Literature about Diaspora

Appreciating the role of Contemporary American Diasporic literature in decoding the dispersion of people is paramount. Diasporic authors utilize their perspectives much like scholars.

Characters in Diasporic novels mirror realities and types of Diasporas (Huang 134). When reading a Diasporic novel, readers can encounter characters that are alienated and connected to their homelands, corresponding to William Safran's associative approach that explores themes of memory, alienation, and Diaspora, while other characters can embrace America and prove other scholars' views. This

means that diasporic literature is like a huge mirror placed above the framework of Diaspora.

1.2.6.1 Historical Background of Contemporary American Literature

In a country that serves as a nexus of cultures and ethnicities, there is a need to study immigration and to write about it. Diaspora is gaining updated importance for writers due to its numerous cases and its socioeconomic framework.

The roots of contemporary Diasporic literature can be traced back to the 20th century, when concepts such as Third World Literature, Postcolonial Literature, and Commonwealth Literature emerged, inspiring migration and Diasporic themes. The 1960s witnessed a progressing infatuation in Diaspora studies and immigration-related works, coinciding with large-scale resettlements and refugee movements after the independence of many countries (Heredia 167). Postcolonial literature dictates the exploration of Diasporic themes, including identity, hybridity, and cultural displacement.

The acceleration of globalization in the 1990s shaped Diasporic literature. It brought attention to voices from African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American Diasporic groups. In the 21st century, contemporary Diasporic literature is still flourishing with experiences of global migration. Japanese American Diasporic writings, for example, are known for discussing themes such as void, emptiness, hybridity, deconstruction, destabilization, tension, reinvention, and nothingness, similar to American literature (Lane 1-4). Julie Otsuka's novel *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011), exemplifies the thriving contemporary writings that strengthen the narratives of the American Diaspora. As Otsuka writes: "We forgot about Buddha. We forgot about God. We developed a coldness inside us that still

has not thawed. I fear my soul has died. We stopped writing home to our mothers. We lost weight and grew thin. We stopped bleeding. We stopped dreaming. We stopped wanting." (34).

Otsuka's account, in general, and this passage deciphers the experiences of Japanese women who ventured to America to marry men they had not meet and just to escape the hardships they faced in Japan. But, their Diasporic life in America proves disheartening, with difficult husbands and various challenges. This passage encapsulates the psychological and emotional implications of displacement.

Forgetting about Buddha and God suggests a loss of spiritual connection and the original cultural identity as a consequence of immigration. This is just one example among the many American Diasporic novels that attest to the growing attention given to this path.

The ongoing contributions from writers of various Diasporic backgrounds continue to direct the canon of Diasporic literature, with writers motivated by distinct factors.

1.2.6.2 Motives of Contemporary American Diasporic Writers

There are various motivations behind choosing to write about Diaspora. Writers draw inspiration from their personal experiences as immigrants or members of Diasporic cohort and use their stories to explore numerous themes. Their aim is to represent marginalization, challenges, stereotypes, identity issues, cultural dimensions, and to give voice to Diasporas within socioeconomic and political contexts.

Each year, Diasporic novels are written in America by writers from varied ethnic backgrounds. Reading these works offers not only a glimpse into people's diffusion but also into traditions, customs, and mental states. As a result of this wide range of motives and frames of references, Diaspora becomes an object of inquiry and a field of scholarship in literary criticism.

1.2.7. Literary Theory of Diaspora Criticism

Diasporic literary criticism reveals realities about literary figures that have dispersed from their places of origin and formed fellowships in foreign lands. This critical approach examines the interconnectedness of culture, identity, and displacement. By touching the threads of Diaspora, this critical approach elucidates the production of Diasporic literature and all its ingredients. It also addresses any questions that arise about the work.

The literary analysis of Diasporic literature can be approached in a systematic and comprehensive manner. It empowers exploration and deconstruction of elements related to Diaspora, the experiences of characters, and the broader themes within the novel. It is important to acknowledge that terms such as ethnicity, citizenship, exile, nationalism, postcolonialism, transnationalism, and identity are integral in describing Diaspora and can be integrated to provide answers to questions such as:

- How is language used to express diasporic experiences?
- How do different generations within diasporic communities experience and interpret their diasporic identities?
- How do issues of power, domination, and resistance manifest in diasporic literature?

- How do diasporic writers depict the blending of cultures and the creation of hybrid identities?

Early Diaspora literary critics like Vijay Mishra, Stuart Hall, and Avtar Brah have contributed to the field by answering these questions and analyzing themes of cultural dislocation and identity formation. Mishra's work often focuses on novels such as V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* and Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses.* Hall's ideas on identity and Diaspora are applied to texts like Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* while Brah's concept of "Diaspora space" is explored through works like Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*. These critics have deepened humanity's empathy and understanding of how literature reflects and shapes the experiences of diasporic communities.

Every contemporary American Diasporic novel has the potential to provoke questions and to provide answers that contribute to the multiform and interconnected canvas of Diaspora, identity, technology and other concepts.

1.2.8 Contemporary Diasporic American Novels

To pave the way for this study's targeted works, and to demonstrate the images that Diasporic novels add and address, it is safe to discuss how the theme of Diaspora and its subthemes are tackled in some contemporary American novels while also recognizing early examples.

One of the earliest and most influential diasporic American novels is *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter*(1853) by William Wells Brown. It addresses themes of slavery, race, and identity. Following this, *Our Nig* by Harriet E. Wilson (1859), is considered the first novel published by an African American woman in North

America. It explores race, class, and gender through the story of a mixed-race girl in the North. Additionally, *Iola Leroy* by Frances E.W. Harper (1892) tackles issues of race and identity in the post-Civil War United States, with a mixed-race woman who becomes an advocate for her community.

Immigrant experiences, the quest for cultural identity, and the pursuit of the American Dream are explored within American novels since these early writings. In these narratives, readers find diasporic workers, families, and both the marginalized and powerful individuals. These novels reveal the resilience exhibited by individuals in their search for a sense of belonging. Then, scholarly discourse surrounding Diaspora enriches understanding.

1.2.8.1 Diasporic Concepts in Contemporary American Novels

Diaspora writings, like all forms of literature, touch upon humanitarian themes that transcend cultural and traditional boundaries. It is worth remembering that as scholars' views about Diaspora are varied and sometimes contradicted writings about it are not confined to one tone or subject matter. For example, Diaspora as a melancholic phenomenon is reflected in concepts of identity, home, alienation, in-betweenness, hybridity, nostalgia, generations, family, racism and discrimination, mimicry, coexistence, and multiculturalism, as well as sexuality.

Diasporic literature also explores resilience, identity, love, happy moments, cultural expression, and accomplishment. By embracing these varied concepts, writings offer a multi-dimensional portrayal of the Diasporic experience.

1.2.8.2 The Concepts of Home and Alienation

The concept of home is complicated, especially in the age of globalization and multiculturalism. In this epoch of rapid evolution, home is multidimensional, fluid, changeable, unstable, and even temporary. The idea of a fixed home no longer exists; it has been replaced by a transportable home. That is why; characters in Diasporic novels are always working towards finding or creating a home. For Diasporans, geography does not define home, but their emotions. Some find home in their original land, others find home in the host land, some embrace having two homes, while others are homeless.

The mixed feelings of belonging and longing are commonly tackled in contemporary American Diasporic novels, such as *The Namesake* (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri. The protagonist, Ashima, is portrayed as someone who constantly: "Calculates the Indian time...on her watch, (on which) American seconds tick." (Lahiri 4). Through the small act of setting her watch to Indian time, Ashima, who moved to America with her husband, attempts to make a connection with her motherland, which continues to be her home. Although physically in America, her time remains Indian.

An analysis of this act reveals the struggles of adapting and creating a home in America (Kara 1217). *The Namesake* exemplifies the concept of home through Ashima's actions and her strong attachment to India.

Furthermore, being in an unfamiliar environment can evoke feelings of estrangement and alienation. This is a common experience when they arrive in the host land or encounter new cultures, mindsets, and social conventions. Alienation can serve as a defence mechanism to avoid the anxiety of dissociation. It can also

occur within Diaspora members, as they may alienate themselves from their environment to prevent accusations of betraying their origins. Full assimilation can also lead to self-alienation from diasporans (Sitepu 1-2).

Instances of alienation are chronicled in novels, including *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) by Kiran Desai, which serves as another demonstration from the extensive repertoire of American Diasporic literature. The novel portrays Biju, who changes jobs as "a fugitive on the run, no papers." (Desai 3). Using the lens of displacement and the quest for belonging, Biju's journey is characterized by alienation. Commenting on this quote and Biju's alienated route, it is stated:

> Biju lands in America as an undocumented worker to be exploited. He takes on various blue-collar jobs one after another, facing more and more exploitation with no one to rescue him. By the end of the novel, the dream with which he moves to America remains unfulfilled forever. Moreover, he faces stone faces, loneliness, alienation, and despondency. (Hasanth 20).

Biju's displacement from India to the United States brings him a sense of instability like a lonely fugitive. A Diasporan's melancholy can lead to confusion.

1.2.8.3 The Concepts of in-betweeness

The confusion arises from being caught between two countries. It embodies duality, as characters in Diasporic novels contend with issues of identity, economics, and ethnicity of two regions. These notions are often hybrid in nature. Characters exist both inside and outside their host land, experiencing both fantasies and fears. They reside in a state of flux, oscillating between assimilation and

dissociation, without a fixed position. The theme of in-betweenness reveals the divergent paths and dual realities experienced by Diasporic individuals (Warren 04).

Diasporic literary works explore the characters' experiences of blending languages, cultures, and identities. They embody Homi Bhabha's concept of the "Third Space" which is the emergence of new hybrid perspectives and positions through cultural interactions, adaptation, integration, and the blending of practices and beliefs. Cultural exchange and clashes play a significant role in shaping the characters' evolving notions of self (Bhabha 211). Within these narratives, characters confront multiculturalism, as well as the tensions and the confusions arising from their hybrid identities.

The confusion is not exclusive to *The Namesake* and *The Inheritance of Loss* Darling in *We Need New Names* (2013) by No Violet Bulawayo shares this space with numerous other literary Diasporic characters. Darling explicitly states: In order to do this right, we need new names [American names]. I am Dr. Bullet, she is beautiful, and you are Dr. Roz, he is tall." (58). Later on, she claims: "Time dissolves like we are in a movie scene and I have entered the telephone and travelled through the lines to go home. I've never left, I'm ten again." (138).

The quote speaks to the characters' adoption of new identities through the acquisition of American names. Dr. Bullet and Dr. Roz assume these names as part of their assimilation into American culture, while still retaining elements of their original Zimbabwean selves. Darling, as a confused Diasporan caught between America and Zimbabwe is discussed: "What emerges in these ambivalent crossroads is a shattering sense of placelessness in the migrants." (Mavengano and Hove 12).

She is hybrid, existing in the middle, between ambivalent or uncertain circumstances about her identity.

1.2.8.4 The Concept of Identity

Diasporic novels uncover identity crises of immigrants due to encounters, diverse cultures, confusing homes and the state of in-betweeness. Studying identity is fraught with difficulties as it encompasses not only crises but also the preservation, transformation, and hybridization. Characters deal with preservation and the transformative processes. (Lam 5).

In one of the literary cases, Jende in *Behold the Dreamers* (2016) by Imbolo Mbue goes through a transformative process which is shown in his words: "You do not come from a family with a name, forget it. That is just how it is, sir. Someone like me, what can I ever become in a country like Cameroon? I came from nothing. No name. No money. My father is a poor man. Cameroon has nothing." (37). Jende expresses a profound sense of disconnection from his homeland, Cameroon, and a struggle with identity and belonging in the context of Diaspora.

Jende's lamentation reflects the broader identity crisis with feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty. But even within his identity reframing, he envisions scenes from his original homeland like many characters.

1.2.8.5 Memory and Nostalgia

Diasporic characters go through various phases and experiences, and images from the past serve as a common motif for them. Memory and nostalgia play significant roles in Diasporic literature. Nostalgic moments and a yearning for the native land are experienced by Diasporans when the host land fails to replicate the

familiar atmosphere of the motherland (Tan and Teoh 2). Cultural signs such as clothing, jewellery, or music have the power to transport individuals back to their roots.

Ashima, Biju, Darling, and Jende, as well as characters like Yehya, remember their native lands while living in America. In *Mornings in Jenin* (2006) by Susan Abulhawa, Yehya recollects a long chain of memories, reflecting on the stolen heritage of forty generations:

> Yehya tallied forty generations of living, now stolen. Forty generations of childbirth and funerals, weddings and dance, prayer and scraped knees. [...] Forty generations with their imprinted memories, secrets, and scandals. All carried away by the notion of entitlement of another people, who would settle in the vacancy and proclaim it all. (35).

Yehya as a displaced Palestinian longs for his homeland. Narrating stories to his granddaughter Amel while living in America, these memories are imbued with a sense of longing and yearning for a home that no longer exists physically but remains alive in his mind. A discussion about memory in *Mornings in Jenin* suggests that these experiences shape Amel's identity as a Palestinian; memory is indispensable to understand the novel (Salam 6). As Diasporans, Amel and her grandfather are entangled with the memory of their ancestral land. The intergenerational connection between Amel and her grandfather within the Diasporic framework adds weight to contemporary Diasporic American literature. There is always a bridge between past and present generations.

1.2.8.6 Generations and Family

Diasporic literature voices the contrasting experiences and perspectives of different generations. The first generation with their lived memories and conservative values are in a challenge with assimilation and racial prejudice.

Subsequent generations display varying levels of attachment to their ancestral origins and may embrace their citizenship in the host country. Being born in America means flexibility with Americanization. Consequently, Diasporic writings are rich with intrigue when envisaging tensions and misunderstandings (Repič4).

Family serves as a central theme in Diasporic American literature, as it showcases viewpoints on cultural preservation and assimilation among family members. The generational gaps or clashes between parents and children are recurring motifs that infuse these literary works with authentic depth. Through familial relationships, literature captures the resilience and the role of family in times of displacement and dislocation. One such literary work that punctuates Diaspora family members from start to finish is *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) by Amy Tan. In one passage, the mother expresses her frustration with her daughter's perceived lack of commitment to Chinese traditional familial obligations: "A daughter can promise to come to dinner, but if she has a headache, if she has a traffic jam, if she wants to watch a favourite movie on TV, she no longer has a promise." (42).

Here, the mother laments her daughter's failure to adhere to Chinese principles, despite being in America. Within the Diaspora context and the

cosmopolitan American society, there is pressure to sustain traditional cultural values, yet the mother blames herself for not imparting them:

> I taught her how American circumstances work... but I couldn't teach her about Chinese character. How to obey your parents and listen to your mother's mind. How not to show your own thoughts, to put your feelings behind your face so you could take advantage of hidden opportunities. Why easy things are not worth pursuing. How to know your own worth and polish it, never flashing it around like a cheap ring. Why Chinese thinking is best. (289).

The mother is disappointed in her perceived inability to instil traditional Chinese values and principles in her daughter. The statement that "Chinese thinking is best" suggests a belief in the superiority of Chinese culture and values. Be that as it may, her daughter's upbringing in America has led to full assimilation. As one of the earliest popular contemporary novels, *The Joy Luck Club* undergoes literary scrutiny with a focus on mother-daughter relationship within Diasporic contexts:

> *The Joy Luck Club* (1993) reflects the Diaspora experiences of Chinese immigrant women and recounts intergenerational tensions between Chinese mothers and their American-born Chinese daughters. It also reflects the struggles, dilemmas, and conflicts in the search for identity and self-development among Chinese and Chinese American women. (Chen 34).

This comment captures the intergenerational tension and dilemmas portrayed in the novel. Diaspora in America entails various dilemmas, ranging from familial and intergenerational conflicts to racism and discrimination.

1.2.8.7 The Concept of Racism and Discrimination

Similar to postcolonial literature, Diasporic writers explore the dichotomy between the colonized and the colonizer, where newcomers with dark features and distinct accents are often perceived as remnants of potential slavery. The enduring legacy of colonization perpetuates fear of the unfamiliar, and leads to racism and aggression (Ilyas 107).

Within Diasporic novels, characters from diverse backgrounds encounter racism in various forms, such as verbal discrimination, intolerance, attacks on their places of worship, mistreatment, exclusion, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. Authors expose the unjust prejudices, oppressive atmospheres, and the challenges faced by Diasporas.

In Teju Cole's novel *Open City* (2011), the protagonist Julius, a Nigerian immigrant and a high-achieving student at Columbia Presbyterian, experiences direct racial bias. This is exemplified when two Americans casually address him with the words: "Hey mister... Wassup?" (Cole 31)

This example from the novel serves as a reminder that even accomplished individuals like Julius are not immune to racist encounters in America because of their dark features (Varvogli 20). It intensifies the persistent nature of racism and challenges the notion that success or education can shield individuals from stereotypes and discrimination. Through the lens of Diasporic literature, these instances reflect the ongoing struggle against racism.

1.2.8.8 Adapting with the American Life

Contemporary American Diasporic literature tackles paradoxical issues about significant life choices. These narratives explore the conflict between preserving one's cultural legacy and embracing the prevailing culture. Their identity is connected either to the conservative Diasporic gatherings or to the cosmopolitan American population. Within these literary discussions on belonging, characters that immerse themselves in the fabric of American society often experience economic and social advantages, as well as a sense of psychological tranquillity.

An example of this can be seen in Cristina García's novel *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992), in which Lourdes, a Cuban character, becomes a supporter of American capitalism. Despite being Cuban, Lourdes rejects any connection to Cuba, stating: "She wants no part of Cuba, no part of its wretched carnival floats creaking with lies, no part of Cuba at all, which Lourdes claims never possessed her." (García 73). As the owner of a successful chain of bakeries in New York City, Lourdes is disconnected from her native land and she embraced America as her new home.

It is worth noting that Diasporic literature showcases ethnic packs in America. For instance, *Dreaming in Cuban* focuses on the experiences of Cuban people, *The Joy Luck Club* explores the Chinese Diaspora, *Open City* demonstrates the lives of Nigerians, *Behold the Dreamers* is around Cameroonians, *We Need New Names* portrays the experiences of Zimbabweans, and *The Namesake* reifies the struggles of Indians. This ethnic variety within Diaspora inhabitants calls out the cultural heterogeneity in the United States.

1.2.8.9 The Concepts of Coexistence and Multiculturalism

The interrelated themes found in Diasporic literature elucidate the significance and the influence of living within cosmopolitan societies. These narratives acknowledge Diasporic communities, with their unique cultures, languages, and religions, and prioritize coexistence as a means to keep peace and stability. Coexistence goes beyond mere existence; it requires bridging differences in a peaceful inclusive manner (Ruiz 212). Diasporic novels illustrate the benefits of coexistence in the face of multicultural challenges, as it promotes individualistic identities, freedom of choice, and the eradication of racism.

Multiculturalism is the mosaic of cultures and ethnicities that contribute to the host country (Sitepu22). It encompasses conflicts, acceptance, and tolerance. Diversity of cultures celebrates the richness of societies with preserving one's culture alongside integration. In reality, reading Diasporic stories concedes readers to live the journey through numerous cultures coexisting in America. One example of this is evident in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (2016) where Chinese folklore is explored: "...she fanned out her dragon claws and riffled her red sequin scales and unfolded her coiling green stripes...like the dragons living in temple eaves, my mother looked down on plain people who were lonely and afraid." (Kingston 67).

Dragons are significant symbolism in Chinese mythology, while the "plain people" represent the American population. The displacement of a culture leads to the creation of mixed cultures. The fusion of these elements enriches the multicultural fabric of the narrative (Ahmedova and Mukhammadova29). Reading the novel lea to meeting up with diverse cultural elements even dragons.

1.2.8.10 The Concept of Intersectionality

Intersectionality contributes in molding Diasporic experience in America. Within Diasporic communities, individuals cope with many aspects of their identity, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, political orientation, and religion. These intersections give rise to distinct experiences, challenges, and opportunities that defy traditional categorizations and challenge one-dimensional definitions.

Diasporic life is a result of the accumulation of various social, economic, political, and racial effects. Novels featuring Diasporic characters exemplify the intersecting elements, as seen in another exemplification from in *Behold the Dreamers* (2016) by Imbolo Mbue:

> Clark and his friends up there, they don't have any reason to be nervous. When it's time to lay off people, do you think they're the ones who'll be going? No, honey, it'll be us, the little people... Everyone's gossiping, talking about stock prices going down, profits going down, all kinds of stinky things happening in the boardroom, but the top guys won't tell us squat. (Mbue, 50).

This quote enunciates the intersection of Diasporic experience with various social dimensions. Through the character of Jende Jonga, a Cameroonian migrant residing in Harlem, the novel explores the intersection of economic life and class. Jende finds it difficult to comprehend his newfound fortune when he secures a position as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards. Economic diasporic life is shaped by factors such as access to employment, income inequality, and socioeconomic status. Jende's reference to himself as "one of the little people" reflects a sense of social

identity tied to belonging to a marginalized or disempowered group (Omotayo and Awogu-Maduagwu 63).

The occupational life of Diasporic individuals often intersect with other aspects, including race, ethnicity, and even art. Still, it is important to note that the intersections within Diasporic American novels extend beyond economic and social statuses.

Due to this diversity, Diaspora literature can be extensively analysed. Each thematic category providing a distinct perspective on the experience and the identity that is associated with it. That is to say, class is an experience within Diaspora, but it can be read as a manifestation or a factor or an influence for identity. The latter can be tied to every aspect in the experience and also it can stand alone.

1.3. Diasporic Identity

Diasporic literary criticism is a vital discipline that examines the experiences, agency, and identities of Diasporic groups. At its core, this field explores the complexities of Diasporic identity.

To elucidate, Diaspora refers to the scattering of a population from its original homeland, and diasporic identity is the evolved construct that fabricates the experiences, agency, and societal roles of these Diasporic populations (Brah 96).

In this context, Diasporic literary criticism offers insights into Diasporic identity. By scrutinizing the construction, negotiation, and enactment of Diasporic identity in literary works and scholarly research, readers can enhance their understanding (Bhatia 260).

CHAPTER ONE

Previously, cultural identity was often viewed as a fixed and objectified concept crafted by anthropological and historical perspectives. This notion positioned culture and identity as static markers of specific ethnic and racial groups, perpetuated by authorities. Contemporary perspectives challenge this view, with the fluid nature of identity and the adversity of such rigid portrayals. Authorities from various fields propagate cultural and medical discourses defined and situated groups (Clifford 97).

But, Stuart Hall, (born 1929) argues that Diasporic identity is not fixed or essentialist but rather constructed through processes of hybridity. He resolves the significance of the ever-changing nature of Diasporic identities, with the reciprocal influences of history, culture, and social context (292).

Additionally, Paul Gilroy (born 1956), who focuses on the Black Atlantic and the intersections of race, culture, and identity, sees Diasporic identity as a complex formation that challenges conventional notions of belonging and national identity (278). Cultural and political connections emerge across Diaspora members and make them defy dominant narratives.

Avtar Brah (1944) explores the experiences of Diasporic communities and how gender intersects with identity. Brah demonstrates the importance of understanding Diasporic identities as multi-pronged (50) to acknowledge the ways in which gender influences and shapes these identities. Gender can change when boarders change.

Vijay Mishra (born 1957), an analyst of Diasporic societies, examines the ways in which they shape their identities through artistic expressions (12). Mishra puts forth the idea that Diasporic identity is anchored in the concept of the hyphen.

To illustrate, this concept considers an individual of Indian descent residing in the United States. They may choose to self-identify as Indian-American acknowledging both their American citizenship and their Indian origins. The hyphen that separates Indian from American serves as a visual representation of the dual cultural ties that are integral to their identity.

The hyphen in Diasporic identity symbolizes connections and dialogues between the homeland, the adopted nation-state, and the possibilities that arise within this identity (13). The hyphen is a symbol of different aspects, amplifying the hybrid and border-crossing experiences of individuals. This multidimensionality challenges the notion of following a singular direction.

Homi K. Bhabha (born 1904), a postcolonial theorist, argues that Diasporic identities are inherently hybrid, characterized by the blending of different cultural, social, and historical influences (39). Bhabha brings out the ambivalence and in-betweenness that often define Diasporic subjectivity.

Ambivalence refers to the conflicting emotions or identities that arise when encountering a dominant culture. Hybridity, on the other hand, represents the blending of cultures. Bhabha sees hybridity as a source of resistance, creativity, and power. Blending cultures can result in the synthesis of concepts, practices, and traditions from different backgrounds. Art, music, and other creative expressions can come from this confluence.

Hybridity in America has birthed numerous innovations and continues to validate its significance. For instance, originating in African American and Latino neighbourhoods in New York City during the 1970s, hip-hop has grown into a global phenomenon, drawing inspiration from a myriad of cultural traditions. It

serves as a symbol of hybridity and ethnolinguistic backgrounds (Sarkar and Allen 118).

Apart from the recognized figures in the realm of Diasporic studies, there are eminent scholars who have focused on the notion of identity. Inderpal Grewal stands out as a feminist scholar who has examined Diasporic identity through the framework of transnational feminism. Her work is written about the entanglement of gender, sexuality, and globalization with Diasporic experiences. Grewal draws focus on the ways in which Diasporic enclaves stand with multiple identities and associations against conventional fixed nationhood and belonging (665).

Néstor García Canclini, (born 1939), examines Diasporic identity from a transnational perspective. His work explores how Diasporic cohorts deal with matters of citizenship, belonging, and cultural exchange within the contemporary globalized context of Diaspora. Canclini elevates the fluidity and complexity of Diasporic identities. It is worth noting that for him, political mobility can also be a part of the manifestation and formation of Diasporic identities (90).

To expand the discussions within Diasporic research, a significant focus lies on the process of assimilation, which serves as a fundamental aspect of many identity cases. One of the challenges faced by Diasporic communities is the preservation of their culture while also assimilating into their host societies. In the context of Diaspora, assimilation refers to the process by which individuals or groups adopt the cultural norms, values, and practices of the host society, often at the expense of their original cultural identity. This presents assimilation as a choice

in Diasporic novels. Identity is not fixed or predetermined but is shaped through various factors and possibilities beyond biological aspects.

1.3.1 Possibilities and Factors of Identity Formation

Because Diasporic identity refers to the sense of self in an experience of displacement, it evolves from many factors, circumstances and biological affinities. The American context provides a fertile ground for the formation and the evolution of Diasporic identities with versatile factors and possibilities.

1.3.1.1 The Factor of Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is a fundamental aspect of the American experience. The United States is a nation built by immigrants from all corners of the world, and diverse cultures are ingrained in the identity of its inhabitants. Diasporic individuals in America have the opportunity to celebrate their ancestral traditions while also adopting elements of American culture and other cultures that came with immigration waves. They participate in a process of cultural hybridity and diversity that creates and blends identities.

To illustrate this possibility, Jhumpa Lahiri portrays the experiences of Indian Diaspora in her works, such as *The Namesake* (2003). Her characters often steer through balancing their Indian nativity with their American identity and more: "it bears a satisfying resemblance to Nikolai, the first name of the Russian Gogol." (Lahiri 56). The fact that Gogol is a child of the Indian Diaspora born in America and his name is Russian appends a further stratum to his identity (Goswami and Kumari 4).

This confluence of identities reflects the multicultural nature of Diasporic existence. The multicultural aspect of Gogol's identity is one among many. keeping an eye on the same novel, he preferred American norms from Indian or Russian or others like many young A Diasporans.

1.3.1.2 The Factor of Assimilation and Hybridity

Assimilation is another possibility that shapes Diasporic identity in America. Many Diasporans prefer to integrate into American society while preserving fragments of their cultural roots. This process of assimilation often involves acquiring fluency in the English language, adopting American customs and values, becoming part of American institutions, and appreciating America. Assimilation offers Diasporic individuals the chance to be recognized as fully American citizens.

To illustrate this choice, assimilation is often exemplified through interethnic and interracial marriages, where individuals from different cultural backgrounds form relationships and create families that blend customs. Assimilation and the idea of being part of the salad bowl is an option (Mukherjee and Pattnaik27). It contributes to the fusion of cultural practices and identities. This option is portrayed in *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) by Kiran Desai:

> Biju at the Baby Bistro. Above, the restaurant was French, but below in the kitchen it was Mexican and Indian. And when a Paki was hired, it became Mexican, Indian, Pakistani. Biju at Le Colonial for the authentic colonial experience. On top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native. Colombian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian, Gambian. On to the Stars and Stripes Diner. All American flag on top, all

> Guatemalan flag below. Plus one Indian flag when Biju arrived. There was a whole world in the basement kitchens of New York, but Biju was ill-equipped for it. (Desai 29).

In this context, assimilation and Diasporic identity are conspicuously explored in New York City. The juxtaposition of different cultural identities within the same space reflects the process of assimilation, where immigrants often adapt to the dominant culture.

Biju struggles to maintain his cultural identity in a foreign environment. In a discussion about the novel, it is noted that: "Biju's sense of self and his cultural awareness are under pressure to westernize." (Kondali 109). To interpret, the flags represent the layers of identities that individuals carry and encounter. In order to secure his place and survive in the many cultures, Biju temporarily suspends some of his own cultural tenets. As an Indian working in such a cosmopolitan restaurant, he accepts serving steak of meat that is a dietary taboo. The flags in the novels being hanged in American walls also signify the tight relationship between American history and transnational movement.

Here it is worth underlining that discussing a factor or possibility in relation to experiences involves referring to the continuity or the recurrence of a specific event, sensation, or situation. In the context of identity, that same factor pertains to the aspects that remain over time, and contribute to a person's sense of self.

While assimilation is an integral dimension of diasporic experiences, examining the hybrid nature of diasporic identities provides further insight into the complex social, cultural, political, and economic processes that Diasporas undergo in America. Because of immigration and cultural variety in the US, hybrid diasporic identities are relevant in this

country. In this sense, hybridity is the synthesizing of several cultural identities. For instance, in the case of Asian American Diasporas, the social, political, and economic forces have formed the lives of diasporans. Historical legacies of racism, colonialism, and imperialism influence the hybrid identities. Language hurdles, cultural disparities, belongingness and discrimination are a few examples of these experiences. People feel dislocated and alienated from both their home land and host land.

Increased human mobility brought about by globalisation led to the dissemination of concepts and elements that influence people's identities (Nguyen 70). People started to prioritise their individuality over adhering to a common group identity but at the same time this can be a reason for racism. Standing outside their groups or any group make diasporic identity a combination of many factors. Literature allows readers to gaze at the construction of diasporic identities. For instance, characters experience cultural displacement and blending in Amy Tan's novel *The Joy Luck Club* (1989):

> Mama. Mama, We all murmur, as if she is among us. My sister look at me, proudly. “Meimeijandale,” says one sister proudly to the other. “Little sister has grown up.” I look at their faces again and I see no trace of my mother in them. Yet they still look familiar. And now I also see what part of me is Chinese. It is so obvious. It is my family it is in our blood. After all these years, it can finally be let go (Tan 305).

In this part, Jing-Mei Woo was said to possess two identities, or a hybrid persona. Her parents immigrated to the United States from China, and she was born and reared there. As a young lady, she is uncertain about her identity, whether it is American or Chinese. In the novel, Jing-Mei Woo's character exhibits

three traits of hybridity (Novitasari et al. 347). She was first unable to distinguish between her previous and present self. Secondly, she did not know who she was exactly, therefore she felt uncomfortable. Thirdly, she encountered a composite identity in which she was two people: Jing-Mei Woo's identity was a blend of Chinese and American culture.

In Diasporic American novels, writers often utilize Diasporic identity as a point of departure, a central theme, and a plot point about experiences, challenges, and successes of individuals living between cultures and geographical borders.

1.3.1.3 The Factor of Transnational Connections

Transnational connections shape identity of Diasporic individuals in America. Thanks to technological advancements and greater freedoms, maintaining ties with countries of origin and other nations has become easier. These connections enable the preservation of cultural traditions, languages, and a sense of belonging to the homeland. They also endorse Diasporic individuals to expand their perspectives beyond their home and host countries. Transnational connections serve as a link between various aspects of Diasporic identity (Lum et al. 187)

The impact of these connections is evident in the lives of Diasporic characters in literature, as exemplified by Darling in *We Need New Names* (2013) by NoViolet Bulawayo. Darling believes that moving to America will solve her problems in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, upon arriving in America, the challenges of acculturation awaken longing to Paradise. As one of Darling's friends, Stina, puts it: "leaving your country is like dying, and when you come back you are like a lost ghost returning to earth, roaming around with a missing gaze in your eyes." (Bulawayo 162).

Darling's belief outlines the transnational nature of migration. People often cross-national borders in search of better economic prospects, education, or political stability. Nonetheless, the experience of transnational migration is not a one-way journey; it involves ongoing connections and interactions.

In Darling's case, her Diasporic identity, shaped by her experiences in both Paradise and America, is a product of transnationalism. She extends beyond the confines of national borders. These identities are often forged through movement, interaction, and negotiation of across cultural contexts. This is evident in various Diasporic literary approaches to the novel, such as the one stating that: "a reparative reading of *We Need New Names* and *Zebra Crossing* that promotes vernacular cosmopolitanism—a reference to a transnational world." (Stobie 527). Darling's experiences and identity exemplify the consolidation of transnationalism and crossing boundaries.

1.3.1.4 The Factor of Social and Political Activism

Activism plays a significant role in shaping the identity of the American Diaspora. Following the transnational connections, activism emerges as a response to the common difficulties faced by Diasporic elements, such as discrimination, stereotyping, and marginalization. In order to address these challenges, individuals come together to form groups, coalitions, political parties, and enrol in activities like marches and elections to advocate for their rights. This proactive devotion not only shapes the views and identities of Diasporic individuals but also influences societal behaviours and policies.

The novel *Mornings in Jenin* (2006) by Susan Abulhawa exemplifies the presence of Diasporic beliefs and the impact of activism on the characters.

Abulhawa writes: "But in our camp, his story was everyone's story, a single tale of dispossession, of being stripped to the bones of one's humanity, of being dumped like rubbish into refugee camps unfit for rats." (Abulhawa78). Through the interconnectedness of Diasporic identity and activism, the novel gives attention to the experiences of Amal, a Palestinian refugee studying in the United States.

Amal's story represents the collective narrative of dispossession and dehumanization faced by many Palestinians. Her journey from being a refugee in Palestine to obtaining a scholarship to study in the United States demonstrates the potential for Diasporans to utilize their experiences and privileges to advocate for the rights of their communities. Despite the physical distance from their homeland, Diasporans are driven by activism that connects them to their roots and motivates them to defend concerns of the homeland (Abu-Shomar 130).Bytaking part in activism, Diasporic individuals assert their identity and contribute to the ongoing transformation that can touch other sensitive aspects of their essence such as religious and sexual practices.

1.3.1.5 The Factors of Religion and Sexual Orientation

Religion and sexuality are two significant factors that intersect within the formation of Diasporic identity in America and both are related to tension and harmony. Displaced population often tailor their religious beliefs and practices in relation to their sexual orientations or gender identities. This intersection gives rise to diverse range of experiences as individuals negotiate their religious and cultural roots while embracing their sexual or gender identities, especially when faced with the weight of religious norms.

CHAPTER ONE

Individuals may struggle to find acceptance and affirmation within a religion that views homosexuality as taboo. Interfamilial clashes are common in American Diaspora due to this factor. The possibilities waiting for future Diasporas, the choices they need to make are pivotal scenes in Diasporic literature, such as in the novel *Open City* (2011) by Teju Cole:

> But I believe, also, in the divine principle. There are those things that Islam can offer our thinking. Do you know Averroës? Not all Western thought comes from the West alone. Islam is not a religion; it is a way of life that has something to offer to our political system. I say all this not to make myself the representative of Islam. Actually, I am a bad Muslim, you see, but one day I will return to my practice. At the moment I don't practice very well. (Cole 112)

The passage reveals Farouq's relationship with his religious and Diasporic identity. He posits that Islam offers valuable insights to his thinking and alludes to the intellectual contributions of figures like Averroës, implying that Islamic thought has modified Western intellectual traditions. This intensifies the transcultural exchange of ideas within the Diasporic experience.

The admission of being a "bad Muslim" demonstrates Farouq's self-awareness and acknowledges the challenges he faces in practicing his faith while living in Diaspora. Religion and sexuality construct other challenges for Diasporans, and a single novel can address both religion and sex as features of Diasporic identity, as seen in *Open City*:

> The afternoon was a surprise—a surprise for the tourist, at the clearly expressed, if largely wordless, interest she began to pick up

> from [Julius], and surprise for [Julius], too at her large gray-green eyes, their sad intelligence, their intense and entirely unanticipated sexual allure. The afternoon had taken on the character of a dream, a dream that now extended to her hand touching [his] back lightly, for a moment, as [he] moved the umbrella so that it covered her fully. (Cole 109–10)

Julius, a Nigerian-German psychiatrist living in New York City, encounters a young white tourist. As they spend the afternoon together exploring the city, Julius becomes aware of her sexual allure, and the two share a moment of intimate connection as she touches Julius's back lightly. Their mutual attraction transcends these cultural differences. This is a commentary on the subject of Diasporic people's sexual identity exploration and expression away from their homelands' rituals and parameters. Julius's sexual encounters are among the elements that shape his Diasporic identity, and this is just a glimpse of his experience (Aghoghovwia 21).

1.3.1.6 The Factor of Preservation

Diasporic groups can be defined by their status as ethnic groups that left their ancestral lands and adapt to new identities circumstances while preserving their distinct cultural traits (Parladir and Özkan 106). This preservation of homeland identity they carried from home is crucial for members of a Diaspora, as it allows them to maintain their connection to their cultural roots and also to be unique. Preservation is particularly important in the American context, where the dominant culture can often be overwhelming and assimilatory.

Preservation can take many forms, such as the maintenance of cultural practices, the teaching of native languages, and the celebration of traditional holidays and festivals.

Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* (2003) provides an example of the importance of preservation in diasporic identity: “Ashima does not want her for a daughter-in-law. She had been startled that Maxine had addressed her as Ashima and her husband as Ashoke” (Lahiri, 166). Ashima, a woman from India who has been living in America for thirty years, is offended when an American-born girl addresses her by her first name, rather than using a more formal title. This demonstrates Ashima's attachment to her roots and her reluctance to fully accept her adopted country. In India, it is generally considered respectful to address elders using appropriate honorific titles rather than calling them by their names directly.

The preservation of identity can provide a foundation for the exploration and expression of hybridity, as individuals and communities draw on their cultural traditions to create new forms of identity and expression.

While identity remains important, other themes have emerged, including technology. Whether technology plays a significant role in the narrative or not, it has become an essential element in Diasporic writing that cannot be overlooked.

1.4 Understanding Technology in the Context of Diaspora

Historically, the formation of Diasporic identity has been influenced by socioeconomic factors. Regardless, contemporary Diasporans face an additional factor that shapes their lives and identity: technology. In today's world, technology has become an inseparable part of humans’ lives, permeating various aspects of

society and transforming the way they live, work, communicate, and interact. Its role in shaping Diasporic identity cannot be ignored.

According to Kapur Devesh (266), the rapid extension and declining cost of modern travel and communication technology, particularly the Internet, have significantly impacted migration. In the context of Diasporic life, technology offers new opportunities for connection, communication, and the preservation of cultures. Through platforms like social media and video conferencing, Diasporans can maintain a sense of belonging and unity with their communities across borders. They can share stories, traditions, and experiences, for a sense of unity and solidarity. Technology facilitated access to information and resources.

Yet, it is important to acknowledge that technology also presents challenges for Diasporans. The constant connectivity and exposure can lead to a sense of displacement or disconnection from one's cultural stems. The overwhelming amount of information and the pressure to assimilate into mainstream culture can create tensions within the Diasporic experience. Striking a balance between embracing technological advancements and preserving cultural identity becomes an aspect of Diasporic life in the digital age.

1.4.1 Types of Technologies for Diasporans

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized communication and access to information. It encompasses a wide range of technologies, including the internet, web technologies, computers, laptops, smartphones, and social media platforms. These technological advancements have transformed contemporary life.

Transportation technology has played a pivotal role in facilitating efficient and rapid movement of goods, services, and people. In fact, Diaspora occurs with the assistance of technology. The advancements in transportation have extended networks, connected distant communities, and promoted cultural exchange and migration (Oltmann and Espinoza-Vasquez 10).

Internet and web technologies, along with computers, laptops, smartphones, and social media platforms, have altered the ways in which people share, think, connect, and access information. These technological developments have reshaped contemporary life, including the Diasporic experience. It is worth noting that diasporans' use of technology can have implications (Lodigiani47).

1.4.2 The Usages of Technology for Diasporans

Technology plays a vital role in facilitating transnational connections and preserving Diasporic identity through various means, such as national television and transnational broadcasting (Aksoy and Robins 20). Notably, its impact goes beyond a mere attachment to the homeland. It is fair to assert that technology empowers Diasporans, and contributes to their well-being and development. In particular, phones and social media platforms have revolutionized the way Diasporans communicate with their families, friends in home countries, as well as with people in the host land.

Through calls, messaging, and social media interactions, Diasporans create a bridge that overcomes the constraints of distances. Moreover, technology provides Diasporans with access to cultural content and resources to preserve their native cultures. Online platforms and digital tools in general offer avenues for participating

in cultural events, accessing traditional music, films, and literature to sustain a sense of belonging, nostalgia, and collaborations and coexistence.

Community building and networking are other valuable utilities of technology for Diasporans. It strengthens Diaspora via the sharing of experiences, seeking support, organizing cultural, social, or religious events, and participating in activism. This stimulates solidarity, collaborations, and integration (Yu and Sun 19). Utilizing technology, Diasporans can access information that relates to their experiences.

Technology provides Diasporans with instant access to news, updates, and information about their home and host countries, including news about the lives of other Diasporans in the same territory, political news and cultural elements that aid in their assimilation. This access to information enhances their awareness, openness and empowerment.

Empowerment and civic involvement are key aspects of technology's impact on Diasporans. Technology fortifies diasporans to participate in political and social issues, both in their host countries and their home countries. Online platforms offer spaces for Diasporans to voice their opinions, participate in discussions, support causes, and mobilize for advocacy or activism related to their homeland.

Despite the predominant focus in academia on the procedures of connectivity and Diaspora, cultural technologies such as television, computers, and CDs are linked to the Diasporic experience. These technologies serve as conduits for displaying content from the host or home country, which takes on a unique significance when viewed through the lens of Diaspora.

Everyday actions, such as watching news from the host or home country on television, listening to music on a CD player, or even using a car or plane to meet fellow Diasporans, add layers of meaning to these technological tools. Activities like going to the cinema to watch a film can be subjects of study for Diaspora scholars.

It is essential to consider how individuals' roots and their current context steer their technological literacy, both in reality and in Diasporic novels. Every action, no matter how minor or commonplace, should be scrutinized and interpreted through the lens of Diaspora. Recognizing the significance of interpreting the use of technology by Diasporic individuals in literature becomes imperative.

1.4.3. Technology in Diasporic American literature

Literary criticism questions and evaluates written works and observes the interactions between Diasporic characters and technology. This approach involves deconstructing the text to uncover the portrayal of different technologies such as information, communication, transportation technology, and consumer electronics. It is possible to trace the influence of technology on Diasporic characters, narratives, relationships, displacement, identity, and even the structure of novels that are not science fiction (Kaur and Sahib 12).

These narratives are about the impact of information communication technology on mobility and connections. Equally significant, these literary works acknowledge the influence of the internet and technological means, foregrounding how they shape Diasporans' decisions, perspectives, and identity. By examining technologies, transportation, cultural technology, and online platforms, contemporary Diasporic American literature illuminates the role of technology in Diaspora.

By interrogating these aspects, it becomes possible to grasp the representation of technology in Diasporic novels and to gain insights into its implications for identity, power dynamics and culture. It is important to note that in many Diasporic novels, technology does not take centre stage as the primary focus, the primary theme, or pivotal plot point, unlike in science fiction. Technology is not innately intertwined with Diasporic writings in the same way that the theme of identity is consistently explored in Diasporic novel. It is the responsibility of the critic to uncover and examine even the subtle or minor references to technology within these narratives. Consequently, the novels under consideration serve as examples that signal the distinction between a person using technology and a Diasporic person using technology.

This exploration becomes significant when considering characters as Diasporans rather than ordinary individuals: “Diasporas resort to technology to cope with the often-traumatic sense of dislocation and minimize the overwhelming sense of insecurity in an alien cultural environment.” (Haque, 48). By identifying and analysing the presence of technology in Diasporic novels, critics can illuminate significant details.

In the repertoire of contemporary American Diasporic novels, the following explicitly provides technological elements: “Because neither set of grandparents has a working telephone, their only link to home is by telegram.” (Lahiri chapter 02). This line from Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) provides a commentary on the relationship between technology, Diaspora, and communication. The phrase "their only link to home is by telegram" indicates bridging the physical and cultural distance between the characters in America and their homeland India. The fact that

the grandparents in India do not have a working telephone, while the characters in America do, denotes technological disparity and the role of technology for communication.

In another contemporary American Diasporic novel, technological tools connect another aspect of Diasporas: "APRIL ARRIVED IN 1983. On its eighteenth day, the month of flowers saw the harvesting of the bile that had been sown in Lebanon. Fire was vomited from the bowels of revenge, injustice, and yes, history, sending plumes of smoke onto every turned-on television screen." (Abulhawa, THIRTY-FIVE The Month of Flowers 1983).

This passage from *Mornings in Jenin* by Susan Abulhawa describes the beginning of the 1982 Lebanon War, which had a profound impact on Palestinian Diasporic communities worldwide. The lines portray the role of television as a mediating technology. The smoke from the war being "sent...onto every turned-on television screen" suggests that technology, specifically television is a medium to witness violence and trauma from a distance. It becomes a display technology that enables Diasporans to see what concerns them from afar.

The passage proposes that screens can serve as a means of resistance and solidarity. They can establish connections with one another and with the broader movement for Palestinian self-determination. This shared experience across national borders cultivates a sense of collective identity and shared purpose with the assistance of technology.

The articulation of technology as a tool for forging connections and cultivating solidarity manifests its potential to empower Diasporas in their pursuit of social and political change. It underlines the role of technology in facilitating

communication, mobilization, and the dissemination of information. In this way, technology becomes a catalyst for unity and shared purpose among Diasporic communities.

This theme showcases the ways in which technology can link Diasporans with social justice. And it is also used to show the transnational movements of Diasporans: “Like a failing bus labouring through the sky, the Gulf Air plane seemed barely to be managing, though most of the passengers felt immediately comfortable with this lack of oomph. Oh yes, they were going home.” (Desai Forty-five).

The connection between Diaspora and technology in this passage from *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) by Kiran Desai is evident. The passage describes the experience of Diasporans on a Gulf Air plane as they return home after a long period of absence. The metaphor of a "failing bus" used to manifest the vulnerability of Diasporic communities.

Simultaneously, the passage also punctuates the role of technology in mediating and shaping these experiences. The ability of the passengers to travel across vast distances in a short period of time is an image of how technology has facilitated the movement of people, ideas, and goods. The novel shows transnationalism, which is intertwined with transportation technology.

The juxtaposition of the struggling plane and the passengers' sense of comfort reveal the resilience and adaptability of immigrants. Despite the challenges they face, technology serves as a bridge between homeland and dual identities.

Similarly, this passage from *We Need New Names* (2013) by NoViolet Bulawayo provides a contrast between Darling's experiences of poverty and deprivation in Zimbabwe and her access to technology and material resources in the United States:

> Ma'am, I'm terribly sorry we're having these—difficulties. But we have a website that you can ord— the girl on the phone starts, her voice suddenly lifting. You can tell that she is pleased with the fact that she has thought of the website, that things are going to work out after all. I am relieved as well, and I start thinking maybe I should run upstairs and grab my MacBook for Aunt Fostalina to use. I get up from the couch. (Bulawayo, 88)

The significance lies in Darling's aunt's ability to use a website to order food, a luxury made possible because they are in America. Being part of Diaspora in America becomes a privilege and advantage due to the access to technology that is unavailable in Zimbabwe. If darling as an African Diasporan in America can access technology and live a better life, Jende's case is different:

> What's that supposed—" The BlackBerry on the desk buzzed. Clark quickly picked it up. "What does that mean?" he asked, looking down at the phone. "It means Employment Authorization Document, sir," Jende replied, shifting in his seat. Clark neither responded nor gestured. He kept his head down, his eyes on the smartphone, his soft-looking fingers jumping all over the keypad, lithely and speedily—up, left, right, down. (Mbue, 12).

This passage from *Behold the Dreamers* (2016) by Imbolo Mbue serves as an intersection between technology and Diaspora. It portrays a moment of tension between Clark, a wealthy American executive, and Jende, a Ghanaian diasporan seeking employment authorization in the United States. The presence of the BlackBerry Smartphone, symbolizing Clark's professional success and social privilege, stands in contrast to Jende's precarious immigration status and economic struggles. The focus on Clark's preoccupation with the smartphone during a conversation about Jende's job prospects stresses on the ways in which technology can act as a barrier to genuine human connection. In this instance, the Smartphone serves as a barrier between the Diasporan and the host. Moreover, within the same novel, technology takes on another form:

> I thought so, my brother. I thought she was. But who knows how those bastards at Immigration really think? We give them a story and hope they believe it. But some of them are wicked people, very wicked. Some people in this country don't want people like me and you here." "What is going to happen to me now? Are they going to arrest me and force me inside a plane? Will I get a chance to say goodbye … (Mbue, 52)

This passage investigates the intersection of technology and Diaspora within the novel. It captures the fear and anxiety experienced by Jende, the Ghanaian immigrant, as he confronts the looming threat of deportation from the United States. The plane as a symbol of his fate settles the role of transportation technology in shaping his destiny. The reference to "those bastards at Immigration" and the belief

that some individuals in the country do not welcome people like Jende intensify the sense of alienation and exclusion. The plane is a potential means of forced removal.

The exploration of technology in Diasporic novels not only demonstrates its merit as a powerful tool that configures the experiences, connections, and the identity of individuals, but also symbolizes the challenges and disparities faced by immigrants. From *The Namesake* to *We Need New Names*, *Mornings in Jenin* and *Behold the Dreamers*, technology serves as a means of bridging physical distances, adding complexities, and strengthening cultural ties. These narratives also acknowledge the limitations of technology, calling to mind the disparities and obstacles faced by immigrants in their access to and utilization of technology.

1.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this explanatory and expository reading provides a dive into the versatile nature of Diaspora, drawing from the perspectives of scholars and the exhibitions of novelists. It probes the many constituents that shape Diaspora, including possibilities, identity, homeland, and host land. Moreover, technology in the hands of Diasporans carries a meaning beyond being a mere digital tool.

Building upon this reading, the present research aims to expand the existing knowledge by focusing on the intersecting themes of Diaspora, identity, and technology in selected contemporary American Diasporic novels. By examining recent works that have garnered recognition but have yet to be fully explored, this study seeks to validate or challenge scholars' viewpoints and previous literary representations of Diaspora, identity, and technology.

CHAPTER ONE

Just as Diasporans encounter inner conflicts and a chorus of opinions regarding their choice of destination and life, this research stands at a crossroads between the aforementioned scholars and novelists in the field of Diaspora. It tries to locate itself and to define contemporary humans' scattering.

Chapter Two

Diaspora in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Contents

> The danger lies in forgetting what we had. The flow between generations becomes a trickle, grandchildren tape-recording grandparents' memories on special occasions perhaps-no casual storytelling jogged by daily life, there being no shared daily life what with migrations, exiles, diasporas, rendings, the search for work. Or there is a shared daily life riddled with holes of silence. (Adrienne Rich, Ch. 11)

2.1 Introduction

Diasporic novels feature the repercussions of Diaspora in characters' lives. Whether ancestors, parents or descendants have experienced scattering from their native lands, this formative experience leaves a profound and lasting impact on their lives. Diaspora casts its shadow on all aspects of existence, a fact that is evident in the examined cases of study: *Radiant Fugitives*, an American diasporic novel by Nawaaz Ahmed, published in 2021, and *Brown Girls*, another American diasporic novel by Daphne Palasi Andreades, published in 2022. Written by diasporic individuals in the Star-Spangled Nation, they provide contemporary perspectives about the scattering and its outcomes.

Even the titles echo the perspectives; "Radiant" suggests the inner beauty and strength of the characters, despite the challenges they face. “Fugitives” refers to the characters' sense of being displaced. “Brown Girls” emphasizes the shared experience of these young women. While they are individuals with unique personalities and backgrounds, they are also connected by their shared identity as women of colour.

Ergo, this chapter aims to explore, critically analyze and comprehend the realities and experiences under the shadow of Diaspora in the appointed novels. These works disclose characters' external relationships with the sense of belonging, home and in- between, their families, different cultural influences, and society.

2.2 The concept of Home in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

In diasporic novels like *Radiant Fugitives* the relationship between diasporans and their homeland is depicted through diverse characters' perspectives. Some characters are attached to their original home, while others embrace America as their new home. Within this paradox of attachment, there is a prevailing sense of loss as they are hanged between their current home and their ethnic home. Hence, in the novel, home plays a pivotal role in characters' diasporic experience. The following quote serves as an illustration from the book:

> But no! The floor under her has vaporized. She's hovering over the city of San Francisco, whose trees and houses and streets and hills are shimmering under her, awash in a fiery light she hadn't noticed until now, as though the city were burning and its flaming tongues were leaping toward her, threatening to swallow her up. The scorching flames of the guilt and remorse of mothers, daughters, sisters, unable to love or incapable of protecting those they hold dear.... This is Jahannam, she thinks, this is how it feels to burn in hell. (Ahmed, 2003-2008, 28)

Taheera, the youngest daughter of Nafeesa, embodies a blend of traditionalism and conservatism due to her Islamic and Indian background, unlike her sister, Seema. Taheera has also excelled as a doctor in America. Alongside her

professional achievements, she is a devoted mother to her two children, Arshad and Amina.

While she observes the city from above, its vibrant trees, houses, and streets suddenly radiate with an intense light that had previously eluded her. This imagery of a city "shimmering under her" symbolizes the inner conflict within Tahera. This state magnifies her feelings of disconnection and her struggle to fully embrace her American home. Concurrently, the flames of San Francisco "threatening to swallow her up" reveal that Tahera feels estranged and lacks protection and a sense of belonging. By comparing her surroundings to "Jahannam" which means hell in Arabic, Tahera expresses discontent with her current situation. Through this portrayal, the quote encapsulates Tahera's complex sentiments and doubts about America as a safe home.

Out of the three women, Nafeesa and Seema, Tahera is not the only one who experiences this quivering of home. The following passage about the mother, Nafeesa who left India to follow her daughters in America, is an illustration: "That sliver extends all the way west, wrapping itself around the globe and merging into that other ocean by your homeland's feet. You're transported in an instant to Kanyakumari, to that tip of India's peninsula where three bodies of water meet. (Ahmed, 2010, 22)

Here, the imagery of "that sliver extends all the way west" shows the connection between the homeland and Nafeesa's current location in America. Pointing out the sea and its blending with her country's coastlines represents a reunion she can experience by crossing the ocean and being "instantaneously transported to Kanyakumari" a coastal Indian city. This stimulates a longing for the

homeland, and the woman's strong connection to her roots while standing on the Golden Gate Bridge in America. Despite the physical separation by the ocean, she still maintains a bond with India, in contrast to her daughter Seema, who has formed a sort of home in America:

> Half-Tamil, half-Black" Seema corrects. "Her mother's from Chennai and her father's from Jamaica." She explains to Tahera that she knows San Francisco's district attorney through her friend Divya and has been advising her campaign for state attorney general on public relations issues. The race is very close. In fact, Obama is in San Francisco that very evening to drum up funds and support for the midterm elections. (Ahmed, One, 2010,9)

Seema's discussion with her sister Tahera about the attorney Kamala Harris who embodies the junction of diasporic communities "Half-Tamil, half-Black" is captured in this exchange. Seema is proud in highlighting the attorney's background, since Harris's mother's origin is in Chennai and her father's roots is in Jamaica. This portrayal not only showcases the diverse and interconnected nature of the Diaspora but also suggests a sense of belonging to a home in America, a sense of familiarity and ease.

Seema's involvement in the campaign for state attorney and her affiliation with a friend named Divya, who knows San Francisco's district attorney, reflect her active engagement within the American context. She is participating in the construction of her chosen home. By mentioning Obama's presence in San Francisco to rally support for the midterm elections, the quote proves the significance of diasporans' contributions to American society and their role in shaping its politics.

Seema "enjoyed" and supported two diasporic leaders, to signify her devotion to America as her chosen home.

Analyzing the selected passages from *Radiant Fugitives* reveals the versatile nature of the diasporic experience and its connection to the concept of home. Seema, Tahera, and Nafeesa's interactions with home, as a social and cultural context, support Rogers Brubaker's recognition of Diaspora's heterogeneity that should not be oversimplified (Brubaker 12).

As understood by William Safran, Diaspora involves carrying memories of home everywhere (Safran 5). Safran's perspective sheds light on how migrants maintain connections with their home nations while creating a place in host countries. On the other hand, Paul Gilroy extends Diaspora beyond the concept of home and essentialist notions (112). Regarding this, characters in *Brown Girls* juxtaposed relations with the notion of home are addressed in various passages, such as the following:

> In the Motherland (Fatherland?), our speech is filled with holes. We do not remember the words for many objects. Some of us flush with embarrassment when we must speak, humiliated by our ineptitude, our jumbled, strangely pronounced words. Some of us must rely on translators, human (our cousins) and nonhuman (apps on our smartphones). *What do you mean you never learned the language?* is a question we are constantly asked. *You're practically mute and deaf here!* Harsh as it is, it's true, and we hang our heads." (Palasi Andreades, PART FIVE/ A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND)

The passage portrays the complex relationship between the characters and their Motherland (Fatherland). It signifies the struggle faced by diasporic individuals when they return to their original homeland. Patrimonial estates for the group of girls was not significant during their stay in America; its language and culture were not something to learn.

The phrase "our speech is filled with holes" suggests a sense of disconnection and incompleteness in their ability to communicate fluently in the language of their Motherland. "Strangely pronounced" is a language deficiency that leads to embarrassment and humiliation. Being comfortable with English signifies being comfortable in their current country, America.

The phrase "You're practically mute and deaf here!" emphasizes the disconnection experienced by Diasporic individuals when they are in their Motherland. The contrast between their cultural heritage and current linguistic struggles intensifies the disconnection from their original homelands. The passage highlights the complexities of diasporic effects, with the emotional and linguistic challenges individuals face when they return to their cultural homeland. Essentially, home for people is where they are comfortable and the girls are only comfortable in America but surprisingly the author adds:

> Despite the discomfort they feel in their homelands, there is a feeling of familiarity and attachment as indicated in these words: "WE LOAD OUR SUITCASES WITH gifts for our loved ones back home. *Home*—New York. And yet, some of us feel a newfound kinship to these lands." (Palasi Andreades, THE THINGS WE CARRY)

The act of loading suitcases "WITH gifts" for loved ones and the girls saying "back home" convey a sense of duty and affection toward ancestral lands. Conversely, addressing New York as "home" heralds the convoluted nature of belonging for diasporic individuals in America.

The mixed feelings of the girls' correlate the novel with Pnina Werbner's "multiplicity of places" (900). It can be seen that there is a duality of attachment for the girls. The characters have emotional connections to different places. They go back and forth between their original lands and then return to New York voluntarily. The return to America does not attest to the stability of home as exemplified later: "We leave, we leave, we leave. We always leave. It is in our blood to leave. But perhaps it's also in our blood to return. Why did we ever believe home could only be one place? When existing in these bodies means holding many worlds within us.…. (Palasi Andreades, PART FIVE/THE THINGS WE CARRY)

The repetition of the phrase "We leave, we leave, we leave. We always leave" confirms the state of departure and movement within Diaspora. Movement becomes a pattern in their lives, As Avtar Brah infers about Diaspora being about internal and external movement (217). However, the statement, "But perhaps it's also in our blood to return" introduces a contrasting desire to return to roots. It reflects the complex relationship diasporic individuals have with their ancestral homelands.

The girls from different African, south Asian, and American countries are American by birth but recognize that they hold "many worlds" within themselves. A longing to return is also a companion in their journey. Furthermore, the many worlds, being the many homes, encapsulate duplicities as a home for them is not one

place. Like Janus's faces, the brown girls look in two directions while standing between possibilities and homes. America is a home or just a place to wander.

In her analysis of *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri, Shrimoyee Chattopadhyay arrives at a similar resolution about diasporic characters and the concept of home. For example, Ashoke, one of the central characters in the novel, has become well-settled in America, taking classes at MIT and embracing his new life and home. However, his wife, Ashima, still feels like home is not in America. For her, India, particularly Calcutta, is "an extraordinary place, definitively a home, while America is just a host country." (42).

This tension between India and America, between the homeland and the host country, is reflected in the experiences of Nafeesa and her daughters, and the brown girls and their mothers. These varied types of conflicts are among the reasons that make diasporic people distinguished and alone.

2.3 The Concept of Alienation in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

In *Radiant Fugitives*, the three women - Nafeesa and her daughters Seema and Tahera - experience various forms of scattering, which manifest physically, emotionally, and socially. They are dispersed from their native homeland, separated from one another emotionally, and fragmented within the cultural fabric of America. The state of being scattered causes the alienation and the isolation of characters:

> "She remains outspoken about her sentiments despite alienating many of her American friends—even Fiaz, who, while decrying the Bush Doctrine of preemptive strikes, supports getting rid of the tyrant and, now that the war has been launched, desires a quick,

> successful end to it: "Thank God I'm not an American citizen," Seema says. "I would not be able to live with the hypocrisy." (Ahmed, TWO, 2003- 2008, 7,)

Seema, one of the three women in the novel, embodies the blend of cultural perspectives. Despite her love for America and its openness and spirit, Seema experiences a sense of alienation from American society due to being "outspoken" about her views.

Seema expresses her disapproval of the Bush Doctrine and her refusal to support the war in Iraq. Her beliefs highlight resilience as a diasporan and the alienation from American society reflects the tensions and conflicts between cultural norms and expectations. Despite her feelings of alienation, Seema remains committed to her beliefs and values.

The Diasporic experience of Seema's mother also encapsulated isolation and alienation, an older woman who finds herself in America to join her daughters: "What are you to do? You are alone, thousands of miles from anything you're familiar with, with no idea how the world works here, no knowledge of its rules and protocols. Whom to call?" (Ahmed, THREE, 2010)

Throughout the novel, Nafeesa experiences a sense of alienation and dislocation, evident in the quote where she expresses her feelings of isolation and disorientation. The estrangement that Nafeesa experiences, as evidenced by her alienation, results from being physically and culturally removed from her familiar surroundings, including her native language and cultural practices, such as the acquainted protocols.

This sense of isolation and dislocation is heightened because she is "thousands of miles" away from anything familiar. Nafeesa's experiences of alienation and even regret reflect the challenges and complexities of cultural locations. She struggles to connect with the new land and finds herself alienated and unable to build relationships and connections.

When people have difficulties blending in with the dominant culture around them, this can lead to cultural alienation (Baqar et al. 327). Cultural estrangement is caused by immigration, dislocation, and displacement. Alienation is an important theme as it can have detrimental effects on characters. The consequences are identifiable to the person as well as to the community, and this is the case with the *Brown Girls*: "Brown girls, grown girls, brown girls. We have never felt more alone. Some white boys, confused by our sudden outburst, recoil, take a step back." (Palasi Andreades, EVERYTHING WE EVER WANTED)

The phrase "Brown girls, grown girls, brown girls. We have never felt more alone" indicates the sense of isolation and loneliness that can arise from being a member of a marginalized group in a predominantly white society. The girls' preference for white boys over brown boys and their absorption into American life can be seen as a manifestation of the diasporic experience. The desire to join the dominant culture can lead to a complex relationship with the homeland and the host land, as the girls may feel caught between two cultures.

The fact that they are between the brown world and the white world makes them alienated when they are with white American boys they love. Despite their love for these boys, the girls still feel a sense of dislocation and disconnection due to their diasporic background. This sense of estrangement can be harrowing, as it highlights how Diaspora and alienation can leave lasting marks as proposed by

William Safran(25). The brown girls' mothers also feel alienated from America as if Diaspora puts individuals automatically in an isolated corner from the host society: "We fall asleep and wake beside them in apartments they share with four other women. When they rise, we are startled to feel their ambition and excitement, paired with equal amounts of homesickness and loneliness that radiates from their bodies." (Palasi Andreades, OUR NOT-REFLECTIONS)

The phrase "When they rise, we are startled to feel their ambition and excitement" reinforces the complex nature of the diasporic experience. The ambition and excitement of the immigrant mothers reflect their desire to build a new life in a new country and to create new opportunities for themselves and their families.

At the same time, the phrase "equal amounts of homesickness and loneliness that radiate from their bodies" shows the sense of alienation that these women feel. The term "homesickness" suggests a longing for the familiar sights, sounds, and experiences, while the term "loneliness" suggests a more profound sense of disconnection and isolation. The mothers came to America out of ambitions but felt a powerful alienation that their daughters could sense by lying next to them.

At the same time, the pronoun "we" suggests a sense of identification and empathy between the brown daughters and their alienated diasporic mothers. Diasporic experience can create connections and bonds between individuals with a common cultural background. For the girls, alienation is a residue of Diaspora, and for the mothers it is companion.

Vijay Mishra has referred to this phenomenon as the “impossible mourning” which is characterized by a profound and inescapable sense of alienation (14). This mourning is "impossible" because the subject is unable to escape the primal loss of stability and belonging.

2.4 The Concept of In-betweenness in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

In the novel *Radiant Fugitives*, Diaspora is portrayed as a state of In-betweenness for characters, where they exist neither entirely in their native lands nor completely in their adoptive country; a state that makes their alienation more profound. This liminal space shapes their diasporic reality, experiences, and perceptions in a hybrid, transcultural, and sometimes perplexing mode. According to Khachig Tölölyan, Diaspora encompasses attachment and detachment, belonging and exclusion, stability and change (4). The thrust and entice happen in an intermediate state which is shown in the following passage: "Nafeesa's slight figure in a green saree and white sneakers, pink sweater and blue shawl, a combination completely deficient in color coordination. (Ahmed, 2010 ,17)

The contrasting elements of Nafeesa's dressing, specifically her green saree, a traditional Indian item of clothing, white sneakers, pink sweater, and blue shawl, serve as a representation of the in-betweenness experienced by diasporic individuals between their homeland, India, and their adopted home, America. As Bakirathi Marti considers that: "clothing as a vehicle for the performance of ethnic identity." (117) the lack of color coordination in her clothing symbolizes the complex blending of cultural influences within her diasporic self.

The saree represents her connection to her Indian roots and serves as a visual marker of her cultural upbringing. On the other hand, including Western pieces such as sneakers and a sweater reflects her assimilation into American society. The blue shawl signifies bridging these two worlds, as blue is often associated with calmness and stability. Nafeesa's outfit becomes a metaphor for hybridity, in-betweenness, and fluidity, and her daughter Seema manifested the same state but through language:

> When the children greet her with “Assalamu Alaikum, Seema Aunty,” Seema is taken aback by how easily the response, “Alaikum Assalam,” rolls off her tongue. She remembers using only the first half of the greeting as a child toward her elders, never the response. Moreover, here she is, responding to the children so naturally. She senses a collapse in time: for the moment, she is both adult and child, both here in San Francisco and back in Chennai. (Ahmed, 2010,26)

Seema responds to the children's greeting "Assalamu Alaikum" with a similar Arabic and Islamic greeting "Alaikum Assalam" which signifies in-betweenness especially when considering her westernized unconventional life. With her nieces Arshad and Amina, Seema reflects on her childhood, where she would only use the first half of the Arabic Islamic greeting towards elders, never the complete response.

However, now, she naturally responds to the children and reconnects with her cultural and linguistic roots despite her inclination to American behavioral patterns. The juxtaposition of her familiarity with the Americanized English greeting and her ability to effortlessly speak Arabic insinuate the complex interconnection between Diaspora, India, and America. Moreover, “she senses a collapse in time: for the moment, she is both adult and child, both here in San Francisco and back in Chennai” thus, she seems to be in blurred boundaries between past and present, homeland and hosting home. Through this exploration of language and feelings, Seema is in the middle. Likewise, her sister Tahera finds herself in an in- between situation, which is displayed in the following passage:

> By the rigidity of her faith and practices, isn't Tahera opening her family to charges of fundamentalism, especially at a time when America has good reason to be suspicious of fundamentalists? Isn't Tahera making it harder for her children to succeed in America by not teaching them the skills they will need to flourish in its culture? If not for herself, she should at least think of her children. This is the lesson to take from the events in Irvine. (Ahmed,2003- 2008,25)

Diaspora as state of in-betweenness is illuminated through Tahera's struggle to balance her faith and practices with the expectations of American society. Her dogmatism in religion raises concerns about potential "charges of fundamentalism", but the question about her children's ability to thrive in American culture suggests the pressure to succeed in America.

This conflict reflects the multi-dimensional space where diasporic individuals stand. The children are between the need to connect or disconnect, and their mother is between the duty to teach preserving or discarding. The question is what is the aim, preserving the native norms or succeeding in America with any price? This position is common among diasporans.

In their interpretation of the space in- between, Nonki Motahane and Rodwell Makombe analyze how Darling, the main character of *We Need New Names* by NoViolet Bulawayo, lives in a transnational space in- between. Throughout the novel, Darling, a transnational heroine, confronts the daunting task of (re)negotiating the meanings of her life. Therefore, Motahane and Makombe state: "Transnationals are "[in] continuous dialogic interaction between […] their different environments." (262).

Forthwith, Tahera and her children are not different from the grandmother; people in this zone are all having dialogic interactions: "Awaiting my arrival in San Francisco: Seema, my mother, and Nafeesa, my grandmother, who came all the way from Chennai, India, to be by her daughter's side, defying her husband Naeemullah's wishes." (Ahmed,2010 ,1)

The concept of Diaspora and the experience of in-betweenness are evident through the grandmother's journey from India to America. So "defying" her husband's wishes and joining her daughters in San Francisco signifies a transition from her homeland to the new diasporic context. By leaving behind her husband, she manifests the emotional and physical in-betweenness experienced by many diasporic individuals.

Coming "all the way from Chennai" and arriving in San Francesco is an act of leaving, but throughout the novel, India is with Nafeesa. The quote captures a state of in-betweenness, with the grandmother being torn between her homeland, her new life in America, and her husband and daughters. Nafeesa is not alone in the in-between space; she is with Arshad, Amina, and even her unborn grandson. The unborn child of Seema, who is the narrator of the novel can sense the bewildering atmosphere: "I take it all in, hungrily, greedily: Nafeesa's remorse, Tahera's fears, Bill's disillusionment. Arshad's anguish, Seema's optimism. America's turmoil. As if I need to inhale this world into the very cells of my body, every element of it simultaneously, before I can bring myself to take a single breath of its air." (Ahmed,2003- 2008,17)

The unborn narrator captures the essence of Diaspora, the coordination between America and India, and the psychological space of in-betweenness experienced by Diasporans. He is between "remorse" "fears" "disillusionment"

“anguish” “optimism” and “turmoil” taking in the emotions of Nafeesa, Tahera, Bill, Arshad, Seema, and America. Mentioning America, his birth land, and the presence of both Indian and African characters unpack the liminal space where the narrator exists.

Being born into this web of emotions and experiences signifies the challenges and richness relating to Dmitri Bondarenko's description of Diaspora’s interconnectedness (03), and Avtar Brah’s concept of “Diaspora Space” (217). The exploration of that space in- between with the interconnectedness of its dimensions continues with the brown girls.

With the selected parts from the novel, the first quote depicts uncertainty, the second depicts cultural representation, and the third examines pride. Starting with the first illustration about in- betweenness, PalasiAndreades writes: "Some threaten to put bars on our windows, or send us back to India, the Philippines, Mexico, Jamaica, Ghana, the Dominican Republic. Some of them are merely bluffing, while others are serious." (NIGHT, Palasi Andreades)

The quote portrays a situation where the girls' fate hangs between two possibilities: returning to their native lands, "India, the Philippines, Mexico, Jamaica, Ghana, and the Dominican Republic" or staying in America. Their parents, who are the first generation of Diaspora, speak extensively about their home countries. Using the word "threaten" is a connotation for the girls' preference to stay in America. Using the word "NIGHT" to name the chapter creates a sense of darkness and unknownness in proportion to in-betweenness. The uncertainties follow them even in other houses, such as the houses of the white boys they like. The girls are between the brown world and the white world:

> During our dinner of grass-fed meats and oven-roasted vegetables purchased from farmers markets and imported cheeses from lands we hope to travel to one day—white boys and their families have already been, of course—we suddenly become Ambassadors of Third World Nations. Their fathers and mothers ask: *What do you think is the root cause of poverty in your country? Excuse me, your parents' country. What are the ways the dictatorship—oh, it is awful.—might fold? What do you think of NAFTA*? (Palasi Andreades, EVERYTHING WE EVER WANTED)

The girls are reminded by the white boys' parents that they are in a state of in-betweenness. The quote portrays a dinner scene with a meal consisting of "grass-fed meats and oven-roasted vegetables" These culinary choices reflect a particular lifestyle and access to goods in the Western American world. The contradiction between these aspects and the girls' backgrounds from African, South American, and South Asian countries is an image of standing between two different worlds. The girls suddenly become "Ambassadors of Third World Nations"

The question posed by the white hosts "What do you think is the root cause of poverty in your country? Excuse me, your parents' country" places the brown gusts in an uncomfortable position, between their personal experiences and the expectations placed upon them as representatives of their stereotyped as poor motherlands. Similarly, their mothers come across situations in which they are in a midway position, such as the time they walk in Queens neighborhood, which is like a nation-state for them:

"When our mothers are homesick, they discover their favorite foods in a neighborhood not far from them in Queens, called Jackson Heights. They are utterly

relieved to find familiar foods, not to mention another place that teems with immigrants like them, that they nearly cry." (Palasi Andreades, SEVENTEEN OUR NOT REFLECTIONS)

In this situation, the focus is on the mothers who experience "homesickness" and the relief they feel when discovering their favorite foods in the "neighborhood of Jackson Heights" in Queens. The quote brings to the fore the emotional significance of food for diasporic individuals, particularly the mothers who are missing the cuisine from their homelands. According to Halloran: "Diasporans find a means of self-authentication through their culinary choices, as these choices become imbued with the power of heritability." (113), and that is what the mothers do when they find familiar food; they are between America and the food which is a bridge with their homelands. Finding familiar foods in Jackson Heights relieves the mothers, implying that native land is in their memory. Souvenirs float to the surface of Diasporic characters' lives.

2.5 Memory and Nostalgia in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Memory and Diaspora are interconnected in novels. As communities dispersed from their homeland, they can yearn for the past. In essence, James Clifford views Diaspora as a complex socio-cultural entity, encompassing nostalgia, multiethnic interactions (255). To illustrate, Seema's memory is activated in this passage:

"Seema rarely cooks Indian food, or any other cuisine. The spices and provisions in her well-stocked cabinets are a concession to her mother's visit, purchased at the Indian store the week of Nafeesa's arrival. Everything she can remember from her mother's kitchen: rice and dal; chili, coriander, cumin, turmeric; cardamom, clove, cinnamon; tamarind. (Ahmed,2010,3)

The quote captures Seema as a diasporan in America, separated from her native culture and homeland. Despite Seema's skepticism toward India and her native culture, as she "rarely cooks Indian food" her mother's visit triggers a recollection of her roots and memories from her mother's kitchen. This phenomenon is common among diasporic individuals when they reconnect with elements from their homeland or encounter someone from their culture after a long time.

"Everything she can remember" such experiences arouse strong emotions and memories associated with the past. In this context, food becomes a medium through which memory is preserved and triggered. Chennai and all the places she visited guard places in Seema's memory:

> Do you have to?" A sense of loss sweeps over her now, as she imagines their home stripped bare. She has moved a lot in her forty years. From Chennai to Oxford, to New York, to San Francisco, to Boston, then back to San Francisco. Moreover, within these cities so many dwellings she so briefly called home, only to pack everything up in neat little boxes and move again. She's become an expert at that. (Ahmed, prelude, 3)

The description "home stripped bare" symbolizes the awakening of memories. Seema's frequent relocations from Chennai to Oxford, New York, San Francisco, and Boston transmit the transnational nature of her Diasporic experience, traversing between India and various cities. Despite the contradictions, Tahera, like her sister Seema, is visited by nostalgia several times in the novel, for example: "It reminds Tahera of the Saturday mornings in Chennai after Seema left for college, when she was allowed into the kitchen to help her mother. She falls back easily into

her old role of assistant, deferring to her mother on the quantity of spices to add, how long to stir, when to cover the pot." (Ahmed, 2010,14)

Tahera remembers her childhood in Chennai as she assists her mother in the kitchen. She is triggered by a wave of nostalgia and longing for her cultural roots. The Saturday mornings spent helping her mother after her sister's departure from college hold a special significance. Tahera falls in what Payel Pal calls in the analysis of *Mornings in Jenin's* "bittersweet memories of the homeland." (57). This scene encapsulates the interchange between Diaspora, memory, and nostalgia as Tahera connects to her Indian heritage in America.

The passages provide a glimpse into the reminiscent nature of Diaspora. Themes of memory and nostalgia draw upon William Safran's notion of Diaspora as a vessel for memories and myths (55). In the second illustration, the mother was present, and her figure in the novel was prominent to highlight the relationship between the Diaspora, family, generations and memory.

Varied parts from the novel *Brown Girls* appraise the experiences of Diaspora in America through the reminiscences of characters about incidents and people from their past. As they grow up, the girls' past becomes a treasured packet of adventures in Queens and overlapping events that blend homeland with host land. The following snippets indicate their memory and nostalgia as diasporans:

> One of us, Rachael, says: In our junior year of college—she was at FIT, and I was at City—she invited me to this festival that her student film was featured in. You know, the one that won the award? I remember she wore this dress with tiny beads embroidered on black mesh. She looked so confident and stylish when she stood

> onstage and accepted her prize. At the after-party, swear to God, there were so many rich kids. I knew they were loaded by the way they carried themselves. And I wasn't wrong—they told me about their apartments in the Village, their films financed by trust funds. When Trish won, I was so damn proud of her. (Palasi Andreades, TRISH)

In the shadows of memory and Diaspora in America, the speaker, Rachael, ponders about a specific event during the brown girls' junior years, where her friend Trish's film was featured in a festival and won an award. The description of Trish's confident and stylish appearance and the rich kids and their privileged lifestyles show a contrast between their current reality as grown women and their memories of youth.

It is worth remarking that they became successful brown women as who made headways from Diaspora, poverty, youth, dreams, and elemental lifestyle. The festival and Trish's successful student film catalyzes remembering the past. The subsequent section shows their memories from their motherlands:

> We'd felt brave boarding airplanes, confident and excited throughout our flights, but when we finally arrive in our ancestral lands, these feelings evaporate. When we set foot in the countries our families always referred to as *home*, we're overcome with the realization that we only know these places in theory: a patchwork of memories, family stories, old photographs, Facebook research on cousins we'd forgotten, news articles, and Hollywood movies where all grit is, in fact, scrubbed clean. (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

Palasi Andreades's characters encounter a shift in their emotions upon arriving in their "ancestral lands". This shift creates a disconnection between their expectations and the reality they encounter. The phrase "we only know these places in theory" marks the characters' limited knowledge and understanding of their ancestral lands. Their familiarity is based on a "patchwork of memories, family stories, old photographs, Facebook research on cousins we had forgotten, news articles, and Hollywood movies." This suggests that their connection to their origins is mediated through various sources and memory is one of them. Memory serves as the primary link between the girls and their ancestral lands:

> We are twenty-four, twenty-nine, thirty-two, thirty-five, forty-one, but sixteen at heart. We've left our lips unvarnished. Let them see it all, we think. We are not here to impress. They arrive. How did we forget how beautiful they are? We do our best to memorize their movements, the way they gaze at us, the sound of their laughter. We loved them when we were young—some of us realize our feelings have never faded. We drink them in. Burn them into our memories; we might not see them again after tonight. (Palasi Andreades, BROWN& BROWN MEANS)

The grown brown women revisit their past relationships with boys from their own racial backgrounds. The opening line, "We are twenty-four, twenty-nine, thirty-two, thirty-five, forty-one, but sixteen at heart" establishes the theme of memory and the enduring impact of teenage experiences. Despite the passage of time and the maturity that comes with adulthood, these brown women still carry within them the emotions and memories of their younger selves.

The phrase "We've left our lips unvarnished. Let them see it all, we think. We are not here to impress" suggests that, as grown women, they approach these encounters with a sense of authenticity and vulnerability. They are willing to reveal their true selves and memories without pretense or masks. This choice emphasizes the significance of these memories in their lives.

Memories are a lasting element in the diasporic experience." We do our best to memorize their movements, the way they gaze at us, the sound of their laughter." Here, memorization becomes a way for the women to cherish and preserve these encounters. Memory is seen as an active process.

All characters share the aspect of memory and nostalgia, whether they are mothers or daughters, they all have memories related to Diaspora. However, their experience of Diaspora is different from generation to another.

2.6 Generations and family in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Diasporic works answer questions about generations and family. These stories examine the disputes and complexities that arise between families over time because of Diaspora. Seema in the novel does not share a thing with her father which made her diasporic journey like labyrinthine as Nawaaz Ahmed writes: “Consider this: Tahera has not seen Nafeesa and Seema together for nearly sixteen years. Seema, after all, was cast out of their family by their father.” (Ahmed, 2010, 1)

The fact that Nafeesa has not seen her daughters Tahera and Seema together for “nearly sixteen years” spotlights tensions within a Diasporic family. The father cast out Seema because of challenging the conservative Indian norms with her liberating thoughts and sexual preferences. This answers how this Diaspora was formed, as Seema’s disagreement with her father pushed her to migrate.

Additionally, it answers a question about the effects of Diaspora. A disjointed family and a mother who cannot see her daughter for a long time are dispersed. This extended period of separation reflects the complexities and psychological strain of Diaspora on familial relationships, as the sisters, despite being in the same diasporic context, they have chosen separate paths. Other parts from the novel even show them fighting: “It’s Tahera flinging herself across the table and grabbing Seema by the arms.” (Ahmed, 2010,5)

The conflict between Tahera and Seema, the two diasporic sisters, takes on deeper connotations when viewed through the lens of Diaspora. Tahera's conservatism and Islamic beliefs clash with Seema's Westernized and American lifestyle. The physical altercation between them becomes more than a typical sibling fight; it symbolizes the complex struggle of adult diasporic sisters who have transformed their values as shown here: “Tahera controls. Seema regrets having given in to her mother’s appeal: “I want to see both my daughters at the same time.” An implicit “one last time” had trailed Nafeesa’s request, and she could not refuse. But Tahera’s fraught presence has now made Seema an exile in her own home.” (Ahmed, ONE 2010, 9)

This quote portrays the dynamics of Diaspora, intergenerational and interfamilial conflict, and the complexities of living in a foreign country. This desire of Nafeesa, the mother, to reunite with her daughters, Tahera’s presence that creates tension and conflict within the household, and Seema, who feels exiled in her own home, are facts that link Diaspora to intergenerational and interfamilial disputes. Through the lens of Diaspora, the mother symbolizes roots, home, and connection. Her desire to bring her daughters together represents a yearning for unity while the sisters represent contradictions.

CHAPTER TWO

Within the possibilities of Diaspora there are two options: leaving or staying. The novel *Brown Girls* exposes these two options, with the group of characters choosing to remain inside the frame of Diaspora despite the challenges they face. After growing up and becoming successful brown diasporic women, the following quote yields the challenges that make generation of Diaspora concerned and the choice of staying questionable:

> Our daughters, who ask us to tell them the story of our lives. But what can we say about being a woman of color in this world? Well, we begin hesitantly. What is it you want to know? Tell us about where you grew up, they say. Tell us about Grandma and Grandpa. Who were your best friends? Who did you love most? (Palasi Andreades, LITTLE FLAMES)

The quote centers on the brown girls' daughters' desire to hear the story of their mothers' lives. The question "What can we say about being a woman of color in this world?" reveals the challenges and complexities that continue to flow among diasporic families and generations. Responding hesitantly to their daughters' curiosity suggests the weights on the shoulders of women of color marked by inequalities and discrimination. It is a pain that a second generation of Diaspora endures, and the third generation wants to know about it.

In as much as the brown girls are now married to white men, their daughters are a new breed within Diaspora. By seeking knowledge about their family's past, the third generation that was born to diasporic mothers can find a place within the diasporic context, they are even related to their diasporic ancestors by their physical appearances as the writer shows: "Our daughters, our daughters. Have our grandmother's wide-as-the-desert cheekbones, our father's thick, expressive

eyebrows, or genes that don't belong to us at all. (Palasi Andreades, LITTLE FLAMES)

The focus here is on the daughters of the brown girls and their inherited physical features. This touches on the continuation of diasporic traces and the transmission of genetic traits across generations. The daughters of the novel's main characters have their grandmother's cheekbones and their father's expressive eyebrows. These inherited features connect to their ancestral roots and diasporic history.

The brown mothers' description of their daughter's cheekbones as "wide-as-the desert cheekbones" eludes vast faces and expansive features that remind them of their South Asian, South American, and African mothers with their very not American features. Again, this proves how complex the issue of race among Diasporans is. The main characters of the novel do not appreciate the traces of diasporic mothers that they see on their daughters, and this symbolizes their trail to escape their background, which is elaborated in the following passage:

> We marvel at our lover's soft body and voice but are not fooled—we know the strength within. You are no daughter to me, some of our parents tell us. You only bring shame. For years, if ever, we do not speak to our parents, nor visit our childhood homes in the dregs of Queens. I wanted grandchildren, our mothers say on the phone. We hear the accusation, the longing in their voices, and we hang up, our hearts pounding. (Palasi Andreades, Jenny)

The focus is on the strained relationship between the brown girls and their parents. This flawed relationship is an outcome of dispersion and living in America, where race is a complex issue and a definition of people's fates. The girls left "the

dregs of Queens" because of their aversion for being tied to their diasporic families with their ethnic heritage. They prefer the world of white people. There is a lack of communication, evident when the girls "hang up" the phone and refuse to visit their childhood homes in Queens.

The will to leave their roots behind, a desire to leave Diaspora not to ancestral lands but to the profound American life arise. From childhood to adulthood, the complicated relationship between immigrant mothers and their American-born daughters is unending:

> WHEN YOU GROW UP, YOU'LL see, our mothers said. As if, one day, we would suddenly understand why they were the way they were in our girlhoods: overly critical, casually cruel, lacking imagination, closeminded. Afraid. We vowed, then, never to become them. For months, which solidify into years, we do not call much. And when we do, we tell our mothers only what they want to hear, what we believe they can handle: Yes, work is going well. Brown girls brown girls brown girls. Who age and wonder, is it time that mellows us and our feelings toward our mothers? That make our memories of them less painful? Come visit, our mothers say on the phone. (Palasi Andreades, OUR NOT-REFLECTIONS)

The girls' aversion to their skin and everything that is associated with it from a very young age attests to a complex issue of hating family and hating oneself. Their rebellious behaviors cause problems with their conservative mothers and the brown girls who wish that they are not brown vow to "never to become" their mothers. This lasting discordant can happen within any family, but when it is under

the shadow of Diaspora, it has other significant interpretations associated with American diasporic freedom.

Using the phrase "brown girls" repeatedly acknowledges the shared experiences and struggles of individuals within similar diasporic communities. Even their relationship with their families is influenced by the scattering. Furthermore, the way white American people treat them is also influenced by Diaspora.

2.7 Racism and Discrimination in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Diasporic communities are different from the majority of white American citizens. As a result, members of various communities, including fictional characters, frequently face varying degrees of racism and discrimination, both subtle and overt. The following passage illustrates this idea:

> Ismail believes that hatred of Obama is being exploited to revive the fear of Muslims and Islam that had appeared to fade slowly in the decade following 9/11. How else to explain the widespread belief that Obama is a Muslim or that Islam is taking over America? Though he'd been excited by Obama winning the presidency, even tantalized by the possibility that Obama's win was a sign of Allah's intentions for America, Ismail has since come to the conclusion that Obama's background is not just a distraction but a setback for Muslims everywhere. Obama, though born to a Muslim and stepson to another, is no Muslim, and despite Obama's many speeches regarding tolerance and respect, Ismail does not expect him to pursue any policy that would put American interests second, especially regarding the Middle East. America will always want more oil and will always support Israel. But what Obama's

> presidency has done is to rally half the country against him, and the American right wing—hardcore Christians and Jews— has seized this opportunity to further its crusade against Islam. (Ahmed, ONE 2010 , 20)

The diasporic husband of Tahera, Ismail's observation that the fear of Muslims and Islam is being revived through the exploitation of Obama's presidency reveals the enduring nature of discrimination faced by the Muslim Diaspora in America as "Muslims and Islam that had appeared to fade slowly in the decade following 9/11".

The disillusionment that Ismail experiences indicates the challenges of belonging in the diasporic context, as even a figure like Obama may not prioritize American Muslims because "Obama, though born to a Muslim and stepson to another, is no Muslim." The persistent suspicion surrounding Obama's religious affiliation reflects the deep-seated Islamophobia and the perception of Islam as a threatening force. Geopolitical facts like "America will always want more oil and will always support Israel." shape the diasporic experience. The collaboration between the American right wing in their crusade against Islam demonstrates discrimination in Islamic Diaspora.

The intolerance that diasporans experience is also demonstrated in the following extract: "Imam Zia first speaks about the vandalism. But emotionlessly, with very few details, without quoting anything scrawled on the walls. He then describes meeting with the police, who he declares have promised to investigate the matter and apprehend the vandals." (Ahmed, 46)

This quote captures Imam Zia's experiences with discrimination, vandalism, and the authorities' response. Imam Zia is responsible for the mosque in Irvin, where

Tahera's family lives (her husband Ismail, her son Arshad, and her daughter Amina). The mosque was attacked, so he speaks "about the vandalism" and recounts his meeting with the police, who "promised to investigate the matter." This portrayal highlights the expectation of accountability and the pursuit of justice.

Threats, danger, and racism are parts of diasporic experience in America. This fact is reflected in several diasporic novels. Among them are *Radiant Fugitives* and *Open City* (2011) by Teju Cole. Julius is constantly targeted by racist comments and stereotypes in NewYork (Chepkwony, Kipkoech Mark, et al 20).

Diasporans in Irvine or diasporans in New York are all discriminated. However, since racism is not disconnected from the scattering, it can be reciprocal between diasporic people: "Your family wants you to marry an Indian—a Muslim. Or—you don't date Black men." She snaps her fingers. "You're right on both counts." He throws down his fork. "You know—Indian women and racism, what's up with that?" (Ahmed, 2,2003- 2008,6)

This is a dialogue between Seema and Bill, her Black American lover and the father of the unborn narrator. They are discussing the complexities of Diaspora and racism within the context of their relationship. Bill's statement, "Your family wants you to marry an Indian—a Muslim. Or—you don't date Black men" reflects cultural expectations and racial prejudices. It marks the tensions that arise within diasporic communities when it comes to romantic relationships and marriage choices.

Bill's response, "You know—Indian women and racism, what's up with that?" expresses his frustration and confusion. This remark draws attention to the internalized racism and prejudice that can exist within diasporic communities.

The dialogue paints a picture of cultural expectations, racial biases, and family pressures. It also points to the potential clashes and misunderstandings that

may arise when individuals from different racial and cultural backgrounds come together. The use of direct speech, such as Seema snapping her fingers and Bill throwing down his fork, conveys the intensity of the conversation and the emotions involved in discussing sensitive topics like race and cultural expectations between diasporans themselves.

America was built on the promise of liberty and opportunity for all, yet the stain of racism toward immigrants continues to mar its history. From the earliest waves of settlers seeking refuge and a new life to those arriving in modern times, prejudice and discrimination have often overshadowed the ideals of inclusivity and diversity that America claims to hold dear.

Pertaining to this, the novel treats racial prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes within the Diaspora by shedding light on the challenges faced by brown girls: “One white woman, when she passes us, pulls her purse closer to her fleshy hip.” (Palasi Andreades, BROWN BOYS)

By putting this image, Daphne Palasi Andreades brings attention to the issue of racial prejudice and stereotyping within the context of Diaspora, as a white woman pulls her purse closer to her hip when passing by brown-skinned people, even if they are Americans.

This act reflects deep-seated bias and perpetuates stereotypes that associate people of color with criminality. Andreades illuminates the persistent discrimination faced by marginalized communities in America, which was discussed as follows:

> Stereotypes have unfairly portrayed individuals or groups of people as inferior, lacking in intellect, tends to criminal behavior, and deserving to receive unequal treatment. These beliefs have been

> perpetuated through many means such, as discriminatory policies, media depictions, and biased narratives. (Hakim and Al-Hafizh 113).

The adversities faced by her brown characters in the land they cherish and challenge their families for are varied, and being stereotyped as criminal is one of them. Racism and discrimination against the brown people in the novel were not in the streets only but even at school:

> We decide against carrying out our scheme because A) Everyone already knows Joseph Justin O'Brien and all his friends are racist, that they *definitely* would've been a part of the KKK (But seriously—does the KKK still exist?), and B) We're terrified of what our parents would do if we got in trouble at school. (Palasi Andreades, DUTIES)

Joseph Justin O'Brien and his friends being labeled as racist "Joseph Justin O'Brien and all his friends are racist" suggests that racism and racial prejudice are prevalent within the social environment. This implies that the brown individuals in the quote are aware of racism and the potential involvement of specific individuals in racially discriminatory organizations like the KKK (Ku Klux Klan).

Stating the KKK raises questions about the persistence of such hate groups and their influence in contemporary society. Being "terrified" and the girls' decision not to proceed with the scheme can be interpreted as a response to the perceived racism of Joseph Justin O'Brien and his friends. It reflects a conscious choice to distance themselves from individuals who hold racist beliefs. This decision may stem from a desire to avoid confrontations or conflicts with racist individuals. Furthermore, the girls lived with being viewed this way until their adulthood and even at their working places:

> We are almost nurses, physical therapists, physician assistants. (Very few of us are doctors in training. Too much school, our mothers had said when some of us timidly asked their permission. Too expensive.) We train at Jamaica Hospital, Elmhurst Hospital, SUNY Downstate. Where addicts, drunks, and people riddled with scabs on their veins do not call us by our names. Where's that Punjabi bitch? I said I didn't want a Black nurse treating me. Get the fuck out of my room. Get me a nurse who speaks English, they say. Not some FUCKING ching-chong. (Palasi Andreades, DUTY)

The quote portrays the experiences of brown girls who are nurses, physical therapists, and physician assistants, training to build their positions in America. Set in the Jamaica Hospital in Queens, New York, the quote sheds light on the racism and discrimination faced by these second-generation diasporans.

The part "Very few of us are doctors in training. Too much school, our mothers had said when some of us timidly asked their permission. Too expensive" deciphers the hardships they face in pursuing higher professions. The choice of training hospitals, such as Jamaica Hospital and Elmhurst Hospital, brings attention to the location and context in which these women are facing racism. The hospitals are located in ethnically diverse neighborhoods, where patients should not harbor racial biases towards the healthcare providers. Despite being born in America and speaking English, brown girls are subjected to racial slurs and derogatory remarks by patients who exhibit prejudices based on ethnic appearance.

The racial prejudice and discrimination they face are evident when patients use offensive language to refer to them. Phrases such as "Where's that Punjabi bitch?" and "Get me a nurse who speaks English, not some FUCKING ching-

chong". The quote highlights the intersection of Diaspora and racism, as these second-generation diasporans face discrimination despite their American upbringing and proficiency in the English language. In addition to the young brown girls, their parents are encircled by racist white Americans, as expressed in the following passage:

> Our fathers and uncles, however, don't talk about their bosses now. Except to mimic their supervisors' voices, consonants crisp and assured. They put extra bass into their voices and switch, of course, to English. *Tell me,* they mime. *Is it true that your people practice voodoo? That your women are gold diggers? That your people eat dog? (Palasi Andreades,... THIRST)*

The white bosses' condescending and derogatory speech towards their diasporic workers, who are brown-skinned and black individuals, symbolizes the themes of Diaspora, racism, discrimination, and stereotypes in America. The bosses' dismissive attitude towards their workers reflects a power dynamic where the diasporic workers are subjected to derogatory and racially charged stereotypes.

The bosses' questions about "voodoo" "gold diggers" and "eating dogs" demonstrate the perpetuation of harmful and dehumanizing stereotypes about the workers' cultures and backgrounds with these sensitive, disrespectful images. The parents of the brown girls resist racism at work. Choosing to endure racism for a job is a face of adapting and voluntary Diaspora.

2.8 Adapting with the American Life in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Diasporas, or communities of people living outside their country of origin, can have a range of attitudes towards their host country. In *Radiant Fugitives,*

characters' choices are often shaped by the desire to belong and to prosper on the grounds of Robin Cohen's postulation that the Diaspora serves as a platform for development. (Cohen 132). This is visualized in the following lines: "Dr. Connelly remarks that Tahera's patients in Irvine are very lucky, and Seema is absurdly gratified, proud of the doctor her sister has become." (Ahmed,2010,51)

In her work, Rey Chow associates Diaspora with silence (65). According to Chow, silence is a tool for the diasporic group to improve their status, existence, influence, and power in the host land; diasporans should act more, and strive more. The quote offers a perspective on the relationship between American Diaspora, spreading their roots, and Tahera's role as an active Diaspora element. Dr. Connelly comments on Tahera's patients in Irvine being "very lucky." Seema, Tahera's sister, feels deep satisfaction and pride.

This portrayal suggests that Tahera, as a diasporan, is a respected and skilled doctor who is not completely estranged from American society but contributes to it, while not necessarily conforming to or mimicking the American lifestyle. Seema is proud of her sister's way because her way of adapting was different as demonstrated here: "All she needs to say is *My father cut me off when I came out as a lesbian*." (Ahmed, TWO 2003- 2008,6)

Seema finds herself drifting away from her homeland principles. Her disclosure, "My father cut me off when I came out as a lesbian" unveils the rupture between her assimilation into America and the expectations of her cultural background as a Muslim Indian. Her story showcases the complexity, adaptation and diversity within diasporic communities. Seema, as an Indian Diasporan, a lesbian from a Muslim background, is also a signal of multiculturalism.

Their mothers are cautious about melting into America's pot, yet the brown girls' embrace of American music and culture creates a sense of belonging. To elucidate, their enthusiastic singing of popular American songs reflects an appreciation for American culture. The following passage emblemizes characters 'adaptability:

> Whitney, ageless, pours through the speakers. *Ohhhhhh, I wanna dance, with somebody!* We love when Biggie plays, and Jay, too. We sing along, without shame. When Kanye, 50, and Snoop drop, we know all the lyrics— a fact we'd usually be embarrassed to admit, but now, we don't give a damn. *Now, I ain'tsayin' she a gold digger, but she ain'tmessin' with no broke—broke—broke—* When Beyoncé and Cardi play, we sing them, too, with gusto. *I don't dance now, I make money moves! Say I don't gotta dance, I make MONEY move.* If we've made it farther than New York, we dance and drink at bars in Berlin, Paris, Bangkok, Cartagena, Lagos. Brown girls brown girls brown girls. Now women. We are twenty-two, thirty-three, thirty-six, nineteen—we stop counting. We are never too young or too old to dance. At clubs, we toss back our heads, laughing, throats exposed and speckled with glitter and sweat. *If you let me, here's what I'll do, I'll take care of you,* Rihanna croons. (Palasi Andreades, SEVENTEEN/ INTERLUDE)

The quote captures the experiences of brown girls who are rooted in Diaspora but have embraced aspects of American culture, mainly through music. Singing along to songs by artists like Kanye West, 50 Cent, Snoop Dogg, Beyoncé,

and Cardi B reflects a form of mimicry and Americanization. By knowing and embracing the lyrics, the girls immerse themselves in a cultural phenomenon and participate in the larger American narratives and waves. Their behaviors can be seen as a way to find acceptance and recognition within American society.

The quote also emphasizes the girls' agency and pride in their musical knowledge. The line "We know all the lyrics—a fact we'd usually be embarrassed to admit, but now, we don't give a damn" proves a shift in attitude. It suggests that they have moved beyond any previous hesitation or shame.

The act of dancing is a symbol of liberation and self-expression for the brown girls. Their laughter signifies a sense of freedom and defiance against the societal conservative expectations of their mothers. Citing different cities in this passage discloses the varied cultures. Girls' knowledge of these cities is a platform to discuss more appreciation to America through depreciation to people they belong to: "Brown boys' dirty sneakers, their unruly hair, the rip in their jeans from running wild through Manhattan when they should've been composed. Decent. We observe these details and brim with disgust." (Palasi Andreades, YOUR OWN KIND)

The phrase "Decent. We observe these details and brim with disgust" indicates a disapproving gaze from the girls to boys who belong to their ethnic group. This aspect of self-directed judgment within Diaspora community reflects a division and preferring the typically American white boys. Despising the brown boys is accompanied by admiring the white boys, as Palasi Andreades writes:

> After dinner, white boys take us to their rooftops overlooking the Empire State Building, the World Trade Center. Note, however: If white boys are not rich and/or WASP-y, if, instead of lawyers and surgeons and financiers and trust-fund inheritors, their parents are

> sales supervisors for corporations or clerks for the city or middle school English teachers (see: *middle class*), or if their parents are construction workers or secretaries (see: *lower-middle class*), the details we observe will be slightly different. (Palasi Andreades, EVERYTHING WE EVER WANTED)

In this scene, the brown girls are on rooftops with white boys after dinner. "The Empire State Building, the World Trade Center" adds a layer of symbolism of the white American privileged world. Despite the different classes, backgrounds, and educations, the diasporic girls idolize the white boys.

They shift from Queen's and unattractive brown boys. The girls' preference and adaption of Americanization align with the choice of Lourde in *Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina García. Lourdes sees Cuba as "mined with sad memories" (24). She welcomes and adopt Americanization despite being a first generation immigrant and despite all the complexities, she owns a bakery in America and there is no way back (McAuliffe 13).

America is an open road with shops displaying homelands and host lands, and this road is crowded with coexisting passengers.

2.9 Coexistence and Multiculturalism in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

The discovery of America led to waves of migration from various parts of the world. This historical context has turned America into a land of diversity, coexistence, and multiculturalism. Additionally, the democratic ideals, emphasis on freedoms, and human rights in the country have attracted multicolored people. Thence, diasporic novels such as *Radiant Fugitives* are culturally diverse, and the following extract demonstrates this: "While waiting for Tahera, Seema has encountered more friends at a campaign booth in Union Square. Three women and a

man—all Americans you think, by their accents, two Black, one White, one Indian—rush to surround Seema as soon as they catch sight of her." (Ahmed, 2010,28)

Seema's encounter with diverse friends exemplifies the essence of Diaspora, multiculturalism, and coexistence in America. As she waits for Tahera, Seema is surrounded by three women and a man, each with distinct accents. Their varied backgrounds "Black, White, and Indian" - underline the multicultural fabric of American society. This interaction signifies the interconnectedness and friendships that can blossom within the Diasporic experience:

> Union Square" is the setting for this encounter, and it symbolizes the inclusive nature of American public spaces where individuals from different ethnicities can come together. The quote showcases how Seema, as a member of Diaspora, has fostered connections with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, one of Seema's friends, Divya is an Asian who envisions diversity and multiculturalism in America, as shown below: "The conversation moves safely away, Divya voluble about the South Asians for Obama group she started last year. Divya's had some success fundraising in the South Bay. (Ahmed, TWO, 2003- 2008, 22)

As an Asian individual, her engagement demonstrates the political activism and multiculturalism. The fact that Divya "had some success" indicates the collective effort of individuals from diverse backgrounds coming together to support a cause. Political engagement is a marker of multiculturalism and coexistence within Diaspora. Many cultures and many voices emerge from Diaspora. Muslim characters are also a confirmation of this:

> The soccer matches have attracted many Muslim men from Irvine and the surrounding towns. Ismail, too, has become a regular at them. Imam Zia is keen to develop the grounds around the Islamic center for sports—a soccer field and volleyball and basketball courts—and to extend the center to include a gym with locker rooms and showers to make the center a place where the youth can congregate, find community and Allah, while having clean fun at the same time. (Ahmed, ONE 2010 /20)

Diaspora emerges from Muslims in Irvine in this context. The presence of soccer matches that "have attracted many Muslim men from Irvine and the surrounding towns" signifies their engagement in communal activities and desire for sense of community and connection.

Imam Zia's vision "to extend the center" reflects the importance of providing a space where the youth can gather, find fellowship, and strengthen their connection to their community and faith. Despite the existence of racist individuals, the quote demonstrates nurturing belonging among diasporic Muslims from diverse backgrounds. This is an example of coexistence and multiculturalism in America because “Coexistence and mutual understanding between the Diaspora and the host society is the norm today.” (Levin 57) In the case of a mosque and Times Square, these locations can be used to emphasize the ways in which Americans and diasporans coexist and interact in contemporary society.

A mosque serves as a symbol of the Muslim community in the United States and a reminder of the religious diversity that exists within the country. Similarly,

Times Square is a symbol of diversity in urban America where ethnicities of diasporans and Americans coexist.

Allied with many diasporic novels, *Brown Girls* is not an exception when it comes to demonstrating multiculturalism's features inside Diaspora or around it. Daphne Palasi Andreades captures the essence of diverse immigrant communities in New York City. The blend of cultures and languages and the resilience and hopefulness are in the novel. The exploration of religious spaces, the various names, and cultural backgrounds in the forthcoming quotes reinforces the assortment of cultures within Diaspora:

> When they land in New York City, circa 1990, they are greeted by a dizzying array of people with all different skin colors speaking various languages that sound like music. They stroll past trash bags piled high on sidewalks and graffitied everything—storefronts, cars, alleyways, brick buildings. But they are not fazed. Their excitement and hopefulness outweigh their fears. They're dying to see the Statue of Liberty, especially Ellis Island, where they heard immigrants like them—people who hailed from countries like Ireland, Italy, Russia, Poland, and many other lands— once passed through. How they journeyed on ships to reach American shores. (Palasi Andreades, SEVENTEEN NOT REFLECTIONS)

The quote begins by holding in a high regard the immigrants' arrival in New York City during the 1990s. This timeframe situates their journey when they are exposed to the vibrancy and diversity of the city: "They are greeted by a dizzying array of people with all different skin colors speaking various languages that sound

like music." People with different skin colors speaking various languages reflect the multicultural patterns of New York City.

Their excitement and hope outweigh their fears to embracing their new lives in America. "They're dying to see the Statue of Liberty, especially Ellis Island" holds symbolic significance. Ellis Island is a historical landmark as the gateway for millions of immigrants seeking opportunities in America. Similarly, the quote illustrates cultural richness and linguistic diversity. It also portrays the immigrants' sense of belonging and the recognition of shared experiences with other groups from countries like Ireland, Italy, Russia, Poland, and more. The cities and the languages are not the only symbols of multiculturalism that Daphne Palasi Andreades uses. She also exploits religions:

> In cathedrals where stained glass windows depict Mother Mary weeping over Jesus and filter in shards of colorful light, in mosques made of yellow brick, ripe with the scent of hard-working feet, in temples where the matches keep snapping in half whenever we try to light a stick of incense, while Buddha with his half-closed, sleepy eyelids smiles down at us. (Palasi Andreades, Jenny)

Multiculturalism within American Diaspora is seen through "cathedrals" with stained glass windows depicting Mother Mary and Jesus, "mosques" made of yellow brick, and "temples" with matches that snap in half when lighting incense. These images showcase the different religious traditions and practices the brown girls encounter in their Diasporic lives.

This quote demonstrates the prosperous religious side of displaced communities that land in America. It acknowledges the coexistence of multiple

religious traditions and practices. It reiterates the capacity for religious pluralism, where different faiths can coexist and contribute to the cultural richness of American diasporic societies. In the same vein, the varied religious and cultural backgrounds of the brown girls are perceptible in their names: "They call us Khadija, Akanksha, Maribeth, Ximena, Breonna, Cherelle, Thanh, Yoon, Ellen. They call us Josie, Rukhsana, Sonia, Odalis, Annabel, Kyra, Jenny, Cindy, Esther." (Palasi Andreades, MUSICAL CHAIRS)

Names for Diaspora such as "Khadija," "Akanksha," "Maribeth," "Ximena," "Breonna," "Cherelle," "Thanh," "Yoon," "Ellen," "Josie," "Rukhsana," "Sonia," "Odalis," "Annabel," "Kyra," "Jenny," "Cindy," and "Esther" represent heterogeneous cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

These names of the brown girls from African, Asian, and South American countries reflect various linguistic traditions and cultural, religious, and geographical origins. Each name carries its significance, history, and connection to specific cultural contexts. Their varied native cities, religious backgrounds, and approaches to America, relations with white boyfriends and conservative mothers, and racist colleagues transact with other factors that supplement the definitions of their dispersal experience.

2.10 Intersection with Art, Religion, Race, Class, and Politics in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Art is the megaphone for the distorted noises of race, class, and politics in the novel with Diaspora as the outlet.

2.10.1 The Intersection of Diaspora and Art in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Art can be an everyday object to pass by while going to both directions of the homeland or the host land. It takes on diverse interpretations and complex forms within Diaspora as a medium of exploring and conveying the diverse identities, struggles, and triumphs of diasporic communities. It can also be used to discern implicit meanings about a diasporic person, as in this situation from Nawaaz Ahmed's novel:

> I don't read poetry anymore," Tahera replies, which is true, if one didn't count the Quran. She has neither the inclination nor the time to waste on frivolous, self-serving indulgences. "It has that poem you loved—There was a naughty boy. Only you changed it to girl whenever you recited it." Seema flips through the book trying to find the poem. Tahera's first impulse is to deny Seema, pretend she doesn't recall. (Ahmed, CHAPTER ONE, 2010 ,17)

This conversation between the sisters Tahera and Seema expounds on the intersection of Diaspora and art. The specific poem "There was a naughty boy" and Seema's recollection of Tahera changing it to a girl during recitations, adds another layer to the discussion. This alludes to the sisters' shared cultural memories and their engagement with creative expression as diasporic individuals.

It speaks to the power of art and literature in shaping identity and providing means of self-expression within the diasporic context. However, Tahera's impulse to deny Seema and pretend she does not recall the poem "Tahera's first impulse is to deny Seema, pretend she doesn't recall" suggests a hesitation or resistance to

revisiting or acknowledging their shared artistic experiences. This reflect the complexities of their diasporic life as Tahera tries to be a conservative Muslim even in America. In the following passage, art continues to play a role in Tahera's complex diasporic experience: "She dips into the book of Keats's poems as she waits for Ismail's call after he's brought the children home from school, hoping to rectify her disaffection from the morning." (Ahmed, THREE, 2010,8)

Tahera adheres to conservative Islamic practices and criticizes her sister for not maintaining religious traditions. However, she secretly indulges in Western literature, specifically Keats's poems, to find solace and connect with a broader cultural sphere. "She dips into the book of Keats's." In other novels with diasporic characters in America this duality exemplifies the complex confrontation with multiple cultures. Art is a bridge for self-expression and exploration. Yet, even with her secret interactions with art, religion transects with Diaspora in Tahera and family's story.

Vijay Mishra probes into the importance of creative groups that celebrate Diaspora in an artistic manner (12). This perspective testifies to the role of art in promoting cultural choices if they are related to home land or host land, as shown below:

> Our public high school is renowned for its visual and performing arts programs, notorious for its three-hour-long auditions, which we'd spent months, if not years, unwittingly preparing for— We've sung in our church's choir, we've taken ballet lessons at the Y three times a week, and have stayed for free art classes offered after school each day. (Palasi Andreades, ART)

Touching on arts underlines the importance of creative expression within the diasporic community. Art often serves as a means of exploring, preserving, changing, or expressing cultures and a tool of empowerment. “Arts programs” “church choir” and “ballet lessons” indicate the intertwining of cultural and artistic experiences. Diasporans can also progress in America by pursuing art as a career, and this is an option that the author delineates:

> Now we specialize in music, dance, drama, visual art, and even technical theater. We spend a minimum of four hours each day—which amounts to twenty hours per week, eighty hours per month, seven hundred and twenty hours per year, and two thousand eight hundred and eighty hours over the course of four years—in art classes. (Palasi Andreades, ART)

Focusing on the experiences of young brown Diasporic girls growing up in America, the quote exhibits the dedication and passion of these girls in exploring and loving various art forms: “music, dance, drama, visual art, and even technical theater.” This enthusiastic pursuit of art and spending “twenty hours per week, eighty hours per month, seven hundred and twenty hours per year, and two thousand eight hundred and eighty hours over four years” is reflective of the diasporic experience in several ways, including self-expression, building careers, nurturing cultural inclusivity, sense of belonging, empowerment, preservation, and innovation of culture, coping mechanism, seeking empathy and understanding. The relationship between art and religion is often symbiotic; hence, Palasi Andreades did not neglect including religion in her novel.

2.10.2 The intersection of Religion and Diaspora in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

The movement across boundaries intersects with religious beliefs. Diasporic communities struggle with maintaining or abandoning home land religion. For some diasporic individuals, religion serves as a steadfast anchor of continuity. Others may choose to adapt and embrace aspects of the religious practices in their host country. This contradiction is manifested in the selected novel:

> And there behind the counter—her heart leaps up: a Muslim! Gray haired and bearded, clearly Middle Eastern, in a fraying prayer cap. Behind him a sticker with an ayat from the Quran, and beside the cash register a photo of the Ka'ba. She'd forgone namaz, had been unable to even touch the Quran today, and must have been craving these visible signs of practiced faith, totally absent from Seema's apartment. (Ahmed, THREE 2010,12)

This manifestation reveals the intersection of religion and Diaspora. Tahera finds solace and joy in encountering visible traces of Islam in America. The presence of a Muslim man behind the counter in a shop "a Muslim! Gray haired and bearded, clearly Middle Eastern, in a fraying prayer cap" along with the Quranic "ayat" sticker and the photo of the "Ka'ba" near the cash register, provoke a sense of connection for Tahera. In her own struggle to practice her faith fully, the absence of these visible signs in her sister Seema's apartment where Islam is not practiced amplifies her longing. Another place where Islam is celebrated, Tahera's house:

> And now that he's old enough, he's thrown himself with equal fervor into his Quran studies and his namaz. He wakes up before

> dawn for fajr with his own alarm, refusing her offers to rouse him, and performs his wadu and is ready to unfurl his janamaz beside his father's without morning fuss, something that Ismail himself is sometimes guilty of. At these moments she can't help feeling proud, but then she also regrets that her one daily intimacy with Ismail is diminished by the boy's presence. (Ahmed, ONE 2010,15)

The quoted passage inspects the intersection of religion and Diaspora in America through the character of Tahera's son, Arshad. As a second-generation diasporic individual, Tahera ensures that her son remains connected to his Islamic values, despite being born in America. Arshad is motivated to continue "his Quran studies and his namaz" (prayer). This portrayal of Arshad as a Diaspora child exemplifies the complication and success of transferring a principle to children of Diaspora. Religion is a choice and a decision that influences diasporic experience, but race is a fate.

As a sub-theme of Diaspora, religion reflects diverse religious beliefs, cultural constructions, and distinct voices. Within Diasporas, various religious practices and traditions coexist:

> What's wrong with you today? our grandmothers ask—some of us are too frightened to pray. It's nothing, Grandma, we say, and squeeze her hand. We wonder if God will accept our prayers. (God, please give me a body I can love. God, please help me have the strength to tell my family. God, please give me wings so I can leave

> this place behind.) If we pray at all. Good "girls, we are good girls. (Palasi Andreades, JENNY)

The opening question, "What's wrong with you today? our grandmothers ask—some of us are too frightened to pray" introduces a sense of internal struggle and conflict within the diasporic community. The grandmothers, who hold strong religious beliefs, express concern for their grandchildren's emotional state. However, some individuals in diffusion may be hesitant or afraid to engage in religious practices for various reasons. The girls are born in the Diaspora but in America.

The response, "It's nothing, Grandma, we say, and squeeze her hand" suggests a desire to protect their grandmothers from inner turmoil. The subsequent lines "God, please help me" reveal the heartfelt prayers. They pray for freedom from their current context that restrains them from penetrating America. The race of the brown girls is a restriction; therefore, they pray to change it. Their relationship with their race is as complex as their relationship with religion:

> We enter soaring cathedrals commissioned by conquistadors, and we genuflect at the altars before statues of Mary and Jesus, who have been placed—we're surprised to see—beside figures of local gods: our favorite is a rascal whose teeth are bared in a growl. Brown girls, brown girls, brown girls who, of all the sights they've seen, love these unexpected fusions most. (Palasi Andreades, HERITAGE / INHERITANCE)

The quote depicts the experiences of brown girls visiting their homeland, where they encounter soaring "cathedrals" commissioned by conquistadors. The girls genuflect at the altars before statues of "Mary and Jesus," but what surprises

them is that these Christian figures are placed alongside figures of "local gods" including a "rascal" god with bared teeth. The girls express their love for these unexpected fusions. In the context of Diaspora, cultural syncretism often occurs as a result of the collision of cultures and religions, and that what happened here with the Diaspora girls. If religions can be changed through the diasporic journey, people's race haunts them all the way.

2.10.3 The Intersection of Diaspora and Race in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Paul Gilroy's perspective links Diaspora with globalization and modernity, imbuing it with pluralistic, non-territorial, and post-nationalistic multicultural connotations (16). From his concepts, Diaspora is a diversity of races that seek identification. This intersection influences experiences and brings issues of racial identity, social integration, cultural preservation, discrimination, and power dynamics that Nawaaz Ahmed did not overlook, as covered in these sentences: "A policeman on a motorbike chases a vandal running in Bill's direction. Bill is convinced that underneath the black attire the vandal is black skinned like him. (Ahmed, TWO, 2003 -2008,1)

The intersection of race and Diaspora in America is portrayed through Seema's husband and the father of the unborn narrator, Bill, a black African-American. He faces racial profiling by a police officer who was investigating the vandalism of Irvine's mosque. This incident underlines the presence of racial biases within American society: "The vandal is black-skinned like him." Bill's experience magnifies the significance of race, and that significance is also manifested in mentioning Obama in the novel:

> Obama is to address the nation the next day, in what is publicized as his first major speech on race, to try to stem the slide in the polls resulting from his relationship with Reverend Wright. The Pittsburgh office, Seema included, gathers that morning to watch the live broadcast. Speaking at a hastily arranged assembly at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, against a backdrop of American flags, Obama begins by reciting the opening words of the Constitution, across the street from where it was drafted and signed. (Ahmed, TWO, 2003- 2008,18)

The intersection of the Diaspora in America and race is pictured in Seema's support for President Obama and the gathering to watch his "speech on race". As an Indian diasporic individual, her support represents the intersection of her cultural background, beliefs, race, and experience. By reciting "the opening words of the Constitution" Obama draws attention to the foundational principles of equality and justice to defend his views about race in America.

Race defines an incident in the life of Bill and an event in the life of Seema. It shapes social interactions, access to resources and opportunities. *Radiant Fugitives* is not the only American contemporary novel that addresses it. To solidify this, Neni in *Behold the Dreamers* by Imbolo Mbue observes that white people and black people as racial and ethnic groups tend to cluster together in social spaces in New York: “White men and women holding hands; black teenagers giggling with one another; white mothers pushing strollers alongside one another; and black women chatting with each other.” (94). shared experience and common drives and emotions push writers to tackle race and make the diasporic experience intersect with it

(Alfanuari, Alfanuari, & Muhammad Al-Hafizh, 727). Seema's choices are made by an intersection of her race and diasporic life and what Neni observes is a reference to racial collective experiences.

Race provokes tension between the novels' characters, for the girls, it is viewed as an obstacle, for their parents, it is viewed as a pride: "Our parents do not answer us, so we try another route. Why can't we date them? we say. *Well, it'd be best if you dated your own kind." (Palasi Andreades, YOUR OWN KIND)*

These lines elicit the intersection between Diaspora and race. It reflects the tension experienced by individuals caught between the desire for personal autonomy and the influence of their parents' desire to preserve cultural and racial boundaries. The girls want "another route" and the notion of "your own kind" that the parents use to tell the girls to choose brown boys for marriage rather than white onesechoe race. By urging their children to date individuals from the same racial or ethnic background, they embody one of the common experiences that happen inside the diasporic community; marrying from the same race.

The phrase "Why can't we date them?" represents the voices of the brown girls who desire white boys. On one hand, dating within one's own racial or ethnic group can offer shared experiences, cultural understanding, and familial acceptance. On the other hand, it can reinforce notions of racial exclusivity, potentially limiting opportunities, and preferences. Akin to this, the intersection of class and Diaspora can also have multiple ramifications: "Golden hair, eyes the color of the sky on a cloudless day, and most important, skin as fair as our mothers' whitening creams. We adore them, these boys who, if we squint, resemble posters of the heartthrobs tacked to our bedroom walls, ones we'd torn from our sisters' magazines." (Palasi Andreades, OTHER BOYS)

Mentioning mothers' "whitening creams" designates the internalized pressure to conform to Western beauty standards. The girls perceive white as an aspiration. The description of the boys they admire centers on Eurocentric features like "golden hair" "eyes the color of the sky" and "fair skin." This highlights the deep-seated belief that integration into American life can only be achieved by associating with the white world. It reflects how the dominant white culture is often seen as a symbol of success and desirability.

The passage also touches on the racialization of desire. The girls' preference for boys is a romanticization of whiteness. It reflects how race is intertwined with their perceptions of attractiveness and love. To add, the white boys are not only attractive, they are also rich.

2.10.4 The Intersection of Diaspora and Class in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

The intersection of Diaspora and class illuminates the relationship between displacement and socioeconomic stratification. Power structures and inequalities can be introduced via this intersection as in the following piece: "Yes, America has finally elected a Black president, but if Seema is to be believed, half of America cannot tolerate being governed by him. Moreover, Seema speaks of protests in Oakland, even at this moment, against the shooting of that poor Black boy by White police officers in a train station." (Ahmed, Three, 2010,10)

As a diasporic writer, Nawaz Ahmed illuminates the intersection of class and Diaspora with disparities and challenges that marginalized communities face. Seema "speaks of protests in Oakland" because her interest in the issue of poor black people around her stemmed not only from the Oklahoma incident. However,

from many other circumstances she witnesses, such as the one addressed in the subsequent writing: "There are some rumors of voting machines not working properly in poor and Black neighborhoods, of people waiting in line for hours to cast their vote, of some voters not being given provisional ballots, but no major disruption materializes. He should be able to breathe easier." (Ahmed, TWO, 2003-2008,23)

Voting machines not working properly in poor and “Black neighborhoods" implies that populations with lower socioeconomic status may face more significant challenges when it comes to exercising their rights, potentially due to systemic inequalities. In this context, the reference to "people waiting in line for hours to cast their vote" can illustrate the obstacles faced by certain individuals who may have limited time to voting. Additionally, "some voters not being given provisional ballots" implies that some individuals from these communities may not have their votes fully counted because of being low class Diasporas. Since the majority of diasporans in America are from marginalized communities such as the African Diaspora that was one day a slave Diaspora, issues of race and class are interconnected with politics even in this novel.

The social dynamics in the novel are manifested when the brown girls interact with wealthy white Americans. The girls from Queen's impoverished neighborhoods find themselves in situations where they must politely correct misconceptions about their countries of origin. These small but significant misunderstandings reflect a broader struggle faced by people from diasporic backgrounds. The author, in the following situations, puts people from different worlds, ethnicities, and classes in one frame:

> No matter their class, politely correct them when they interchange Singapore for the Philippines, Colombia for the Dominican Republic, Haiti for Jamaica. They go on, *I don't understand why it's frowned upon these days to build a wall at the border of Mexico—I mean, there ARE legal ways of coming to this country*. They say, *Are not your parents frustrated by those illegals getting a free pass, breaking the law*? (Palasi Andreades, EVERYTHING WE EVER WANTED)

The wealthy hosts demonstrate their privilege by discussing issues of verdict and immigration, exemplified by the comment about building a wall at "the border of Mexico". This remark suggests a lack of empathy or understanding of the struggles that many people from diasporic backgrounds face. Moreover, the reference to "legal ways of coming to this country" implies the socio-economic divisions and the lack of awareness about people who seek opportunities.

Besides this, the chapter title, "EVERYTHING WE EVER WANTED" can be seen as a sarcastic remark about the situation. It suggests that the brown girls' visit to the houses of rich white Americans was initially perceived as an opportunity to achieve the American Dream or access a better life with the white boys they prefer. However, the reality they encounter exposes the cultural misunderstandings and class disparities within a predominantly white and privileged society. In order to capture Diaspora from both its poles, the intersection of class and scattering is discussed by Palasi Andreades in another way. Despite being in a lower class in the States of America, the brown girls and their immigrant parents are considered rich for their families in the ancestral land:

> We carry letters handwritten by relatives who had asked us to deliver them to family members in the States. Dear Auntie, these letters begin; I graduated summa cum laude this year. Thank you for funding my college education…They read, As you may already know, my youngest son, your nephew, passed away of dengue fever. If you could please send money for the funeral, we'd be most grateful…They read, Our elder brother will be undergoing an operation next month. Could you send funds for his surgery and medication? (Palasi Andreades, THE THINGS WE CARRY)

This fragment articulates the intersection of Diaspora and the sub-theme of class through the girls' experiences visiting their root countries (South American, Asian, and African countries) while living in the United States. The quote presents a confluence of economic disparities arising from the diasporic framework.

The girls and their families in America are seen as poor in comparison to the white, affluent population. However, when viewed by their families in the motherland, they are perceived as rich immigrants. This contrast highlights how economic status can be relative, and the girls' position as diasporic individuals creates a unique perception of wealth and poverty.

The girls are asked to take on the role of financial intermediaries: "If you could please send money for the funeral, we'd be most grateful…They read, Our elder brother will be undergoing an operation next month. Could you send funds for his surgery and medication?" Families left in the maternal soil seek help from their American relatives to fund various crucial needs.

This unshrouds how Diaspora and class intersect, as diasporic individuals act as financial support systems for their big families in their motherlands. Diasporans'

financial help designates a sense of duty, belonging, and caring that expands to political matters related to people of their own kind.

2.10.5 The Intersection of Diaspora and Politics in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Martin Sökefeld argues that Diaspora formation requires a mobilization process influenced by factors such as politics (25). Darling's Diasporic journey in *We Need New Names* started due to many reasons and political instability in Zimbabwe. An independent country that was falling apart because of political disillusionment pushed Darling to move to America. The intersection of the scattering and politics is deep and multidirectional as political states can create Diaspora or influence it.

Synchronized with this, political decisions regarding immigration, citizenship, and social equality shape the experiences of diasporic individuals in *Radiant Fugitives*. Diasporic characters such as Divya engage in political activism for representation and social justice, as pointed out below:

> Three years ago, Divya started South Asians for Obama, and she's distinguished herself since as one of his top bundlers in San Francisco, adroit at hitting up Silicon Valley's South Asian entrepreneurs and newly minted engineer millionaires for big donations. She catches sight of Seema. Excusing herself, she leads Seema to her office. (Ahmed, ONE, 2010,9)

The intersection of Diaspora in America and politics is approached through the character of Divya, an Asian Diasporan who participates in a campaign for President Barrack Obama. Divya "started South Asians for Obama" and her role as

one of his top San Francisco fundraisers demonstrate diasporic communities' political agency and influence within American politics.

By targeting "Silicon Valley's South Asian entrepreneurs" and wealthy engineers, Divya showcases the intersection of Diaspora, economic success, and political engagement. Leading Seema to her office suggests a shared sense of community and the importance of networking and mobilizing among diasporans from diverse ethnicities. They both portray diasporic communities in America who participate in politics, contribute to campaigns, and use their weight to adduce. In addition to Divya, the reciprocal influence between diverse backgrounds and political systems is in Seema's successive thoughts:

> But the ruling would definitely be used by the Republicans in the next elections—declaring it the end of marriage and civil society—to scare conservative America into turning out to reelect Bush. Once again, the need of a privileged few would trump the necessity of protecting the rest of the world from disastrous policies. The world wouldn't be able to survive another four years of Bush, who despite the chaos in Iraq, could claim victory: mid-December, the U.S. forces succeed in capturing a bedraggled Saddam Hussein, hiding in a spider hole on a deserted farm. If Bush smirks occasionally during the news conference announcing Saddam's capture, she can't really fault him, though it does stoke her fire to deny him further successes. (Ahmed, TWO, 2003- 2008,8)

The focus on political dynamics and their intersection with the diasporic experience is evident. The "Republicans" use of a rule to secure votes in the upcoming elections reinforces the political strategies to mobilize support. The quote

also touches upon privilege and its influence on policy-making and global consequences.

The reference to the “privileged few” speaks to the power dynamics and the impact they can have on diasporic communities and the broader global context. Additionally, the remark "the world wouldn't be able to survive another four years of Bush" provides a glimpse into the political climate and its effect on diasporic individuals.

Through their actions and perspectives, the novel's characters exemplify diasporans' engagement in the political scene of America. Inside the nation's borders, they advocate freedoms and equality and disapprove of agendas such as the one mentioned below:

> But some of us, who have been our parents' translators our entire lives —at parent-teacher conferences, banks, supermarkets—know how to communicate fluently. We discuss politics with our uncles and aunties. They ask questions about the wall the current U.S. president wants to build, and is it true that Muslims are barred from entering the country, and what about the caravan of refugees fleeing gang violence at the border? We discuss all the ways the Land of the Free, under the present administration, currently "welcomes" its newcomers. (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

The questions posed by uncles and aunties about the "wall", "Muslims are barred", "the caravan of refugees", and "the border" demonstrate the close engagement with political issues that impact the lives of diasporic individuals, their families, and their communities.

The passage shows how political decisions make the "Land of the Free" unwelcoming. Using quotation marks around "welcomes" suggests a critical perspective, indicating that the rhetoric of inclusivity and freedom may not always align with the reality. The host country's legislative climate and policies affect diasporans and shape their experiences and fate. Politics draw the fate of diasporans:

> We gain recognition for our work. How does it feel to have achieved SO MUCH as a Woman of Color in your field? What does Your Community think of your work? (Are you their hero, villain, savior?) What do you make of the state of [fill in the blank] in the U.S. with regard to your art, your research? Of racism, immigration, the newly elected president, formerly a businessman and reality TV star—Do you know he's from Queens, too? We stiffen. We are determined to keep our responses apolitical, lest we offend. We are afraid to bite the hand that feeds us. Because we are the good immigrant daughters. (Palasi Andreades, HYPER / VISIBLE / IN / VISIBLE)

The intersection of politics and Diaspora is evident again in the interaction between the brown diasporic girls and the white, wealthy Americans. The girls, being "women of Color" are cautious and sarcastic. They choose to avoid speaking about their true political beliefs regarding Donald Trump and other sensitive issues to prevent potential judgment and backlash. The question "(Are you their hero, villain, savior?)" reflects the burden of representation many diasporic individuals experience.

As representatives of their communities, they may feel the weight of expectations and the fear of inadvertently. The girls' reluctance and saying, "We are afraid to bite the hand that feeds us. Because we are the good immigrant daughters" speaks the challenges of being diasporic in a foreign land.

2.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter digs into the lives of the radiant fugitives and the brown girls by touching on the remarkable events and emotions that defined their journey as diasporans. The characters underwent specific experiences influenced by their diasporic past, as if destiny had tied them to the shadows of displacement and their ancestral roots. For Nafeesa and her daughters, Tahera and Seema, and for the group of brown girls whose parents scattered, the inescapable palette of Diaspora colored every aspect of their existence. Nevertheless, one aspect stood out among all others – their struggle with identity, akin to the myriad choices and opportunities that surround them.

Chapter Three

Identity in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Contents

"The function of art is avowedly to disturb, displace, stir consciousness and trigger awareness." (Marie Liénard-Yeterian, 219)

3.1 Introduction

In the busy avenue of Diaspora the most prominent encounter happens between diasporans and their identity. It is a recurrent theme in diasporic literature. Elements like home, memory, conflicts among diasporic families and generations, and racism can be defined through characters' relationship with their identities. The sense of the self is the internal compass of their reactions, decisions, values and emotions. Diasporans' approach to dealing with the emotional baggage associated with the scattering is contingent upon their sense of self. Therefore, this chapter functions as a prism through which diasporic identity is explored, along with the factors that shape it, and the factors that are shaped by it. These comprise cultural diversity, which springs from the varied identities of immigrants.

3.2 Factors and possibilities of diasporic identity in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

In *Radiant Fugitives* by Nawaaz Ahmed, Diasporic identity is influenced by an array of factors that shape it and are influenced by it in an interchangeable relationship. These factors include cultural diversity, assimilation, transnational connections, social and political activism, intersectionality, religion, sexual orientation, and hybridity. The number of ingredients that change the substances of diasporic identity proves that it is not a fixed body. While exploring Diaspora "There is a circuitous route and no homecoming." (Raj 94).

3.2.1 The Factor of Cultural Diversity in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

As a beginning, the conjunction of cultures is a pertinent identity factor. Individuals hail from diverse origins and converge to interlock with America's many traditions, convictions, and rituals (Khorakiwala 15). In the pages of *Radiant Fugitives*, characters are immersed in a rich vessel of cultures, an emersion that leaves an indelible mark on the core of who they are. This fact is displayed in the following passage: "And along the way, Bill and Seema become lovers, get married, and move in together into a house on the top of a hill, with spectacular views of a peninsular city and sparkling bay, visible when the fog permits." (Ahmed, 2003-2008, 15)

Bill, a Black African, and Seema, an Indian, are far from their countries of origin and are building their lives in the United States. Their convergence with their distinct races in America symbolizes the shared experiences of migration, adaptation, and the forging of new identities in a foreign land. A black man and an Indian woman "become lovers, get married" is a testament to the interconnected nature of diasporas. The quote stresses the merging of cultures, values, and traditions through love and marriage despite cultural and ethnic differences.

"A house on the top of the hill" is a metaphor for the culturally different aspirations and ambitions in the new world. Positioned above a "peninsular city and sparkling bay" the house stands as a symbol of aspiration to seize chances in America as a culturally and ethnically diverse couple of diasporans. It symbolizes a space where Bill and Seema can build a shared future by blending their individual

histories, dreams and diverse ethnicities. The distant house on the top encloses the distinct diasporic identity.

The house that entails “visible when the fog permits” is a complex symbol of identity in America, which is elusive and difficult to understand. The fog means that the essence of the diasporic couple inside that distant house is mysterious. A multiethnic marriage between diasporans in America caught in the fog is a metaphor for disconnection and ambiguity.

The yet-to-be-born son of the polyethnic couple, who also serves as the storyteller, encapsulates the diversity of diasporic identity. Born in America to parents from Indian and Black African backgrounds, the child will face the challenge of multiple cultural identities. He will face the fog.

His identity will be shaped by his ethnically different parents, the heritage of forced black African Diaspora and Indian voluntary Diaspora, and the American environment. The diasporic identity of the couple, their upcoming baby, and other diasporans is in touch with the diverse cultural beliefs and affiliations tied to Diaspora. A single culture is never a reality in contemporary American literature(Grewal 666) and multiculturalism is never given one passage in novels. The author adds:“The dinner forgotten, the argument escalates so swiftly that Bill is blindsided. How could he suggest that gay marriages and interracial marriages are not exactly equivalent? She flings quotes at him from landmark Supreme Court decisions—Sharp v. Perez, Loving v. Virginia— she’s evidently read up on them.” (Ahmed 2003- 2008, 20)

The scene revolves around a heated argument between Bill and Seema over the equivalence of "gay marriages and interracial marriages". Mentioning

Supreme Court decisions, such as "Sharp v. Perez" and "Loving v. Virginia" legal cases in the U.S centered on interracial couples who were arrested due to the ban on interracial marriages in 1967, underlines the legal and social struggles faced by marginalized communities in America, including those from different diasporic backgrounds.

The dispute between Bill and Seema mirrors the clash of their distinct cultural insights and different self-perceptions. Seema believes that banning gay marriage is as wrong as banning interracial marriage because both are "equivalent" and are identities that should be respected. Their contrasting opinions regarding the parity between gay and interracial marriages symbolize the clashing identities. A diversity that does not only touch social and legal matters around character's identities but also their political identities: “I had high hopes. And you’d think I’d have learned a lesson from that, but no.” A quick smile and a shrug. “But Kamala is half-Indian, and a woman.” (Ahmed 2010, 11)

The attorney Kamala Harris, who is "half-Indian and a woman" marks the convergence of her identity and the challenges she may face as a political figure. In her path as a woman with both Indian and American identity, Kamala Harris encounters challenges regarding advocating for marginalized groups. Diasporic identity plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences and perspectives of political leaders like her.

As a person of an Indian background, she is connected to her diasporic root, which influences her policy choices and advocacy for issues related to the Indian-American community and other diasporic groups. In other words, her distinct identity can float to the bowl's surface.

Kamala Harris is not the only diasporic active individual whose identity reflects diversity; the novel presents another diasporan who participates in the cultural orchestra:

> Farah Miss is Amina's favorite teacher. Farah Miss is young, tall, wise, kind, and always pretty in her light-colored hijabs and jilbabs—cream, lavender, rose. Allah will punish the bad men, Farah Miss explained. Two angels are writing down everything a person does, one sitting on the right shoulder, Raqeeb, who writes down all good deeds, and one sitting on the left shoulder, Atheed, who writes down all bad deeds. (Ahmed, 2010, 26)

Amina, the daughter of Tahara, often thinks about Farah Miss, the teacher she likes the most and who is "always pretty in her light-colored hijabs and jilbabs". She is a youthful and sagacious Indian Muslim. The passage features the importance of cultural diversity in shaping Amina's identity as a child of Indian Muslim parents born in America. In this case, Amina's parents migrated from India to America, and her birth and upbringing in the United States contribute to her unique diasporic identity.

Growing up in a multicultural society, Amina is around the influences of her Indian background, Islamic teachings by Farah, whom she loves, and the American environment. Amina symbolizes a blended identity and pluralism.

Seema, Bill, Kamala Harris, Amina, and Farah miss, with their diverse ethnic, political, and religious identities, contribute to the multicultural sphere of America and play a role in each other's diasporic identity. By doing that, there is a dialogue of many identity formation factors. In America where Diaspora exists,

multiculturalism exists, and diasporans cannot form their identities alone, in a closed space with a closed mind while living in such a country.

In the work *Brown Girls* by Daphne Palasi Andreades, every character has a function of interweaving the threads of cultures and identities. From Nadira's headscarf to Michaela's playful replication of French accents, these characters evince the multilayered ways in which their diasporic identities are molded by their origins, cultural mosaic, and the prosperous socio-cultural milieu in America. For example, in the novel, Sophie's gossip and flirtation, juxtaposed with Mae's respect toward educators because of the diverse cultures:

> Nadira is Pakistani and wears a headscarf, which drapes elegantly beneath her neck, except for when she's playing handball and she knots the fabric, tight, under her chin. Anjali is Guyanese, and her braid looks like a thick rope that lays heavy against her back, curly baby hairs tamed by coconut oil. Michaela is Haitian and likes to mimic her parents' French accents on the school bus (Take zee twash out! she says, as we clutch our sides in laughter), and Naz's family is from the Ivory Coast—I mean, we're practically cousins, she says to Michaela. Our teachers snap at Sophie to STOP TALKING NOW, but call her Mae's name. Sophie, who is Filipino, clamps a hand over her big-ass mouth, which is never closed—she loves to gossip and flirt with the boys we call "Spanish"—while Mae, who is Chinese and polite to teachers. (Palasi Andeades, MUSICAL CHIARS)

First, the character of "Nadira", a "Pakistani" girl wearing a "headscarf", accentuates the visibility of religious and cultural practices in the diasporic experience. Given that "she Knotts the fabric tight under her chin" while playing handball suggests adapting and negotiating different cultural norms, the image is a Hijab and playing on the American ground.

"Anjali" who is "Guyanese," symbolizes the presence of Afro-Caribbeans within Diaspora. Her "braid looks like a thick rope" is a marker of her cultural and ethnic identity. "Michaela", being "Haitian", showcases the influence of language and accents in shaping diasporic identity because she "likes to mimic her parents' French accents". Her playful imitation of her parents' French accents demonstrates the symbiosis between language and cultural belonging. It also points to the significance of linguistic diversity within diasporic communities.

The family of "Naz" is from the "Ivory Coast", and her assertion of being "practically cousins" with Michaela exemplifies the sense of diversity and interconnectedness that often exists among different diasporic groups.

The behavior of "Sophie", being "Filipino", and gossiping with the boys called "Spanish," showcases the complexities of identity formation within Diaspora due to the varied interactions. "Mae", the "Chinese" character who is polite to teachers, reflects the polyphonic nature of diasporic identities.

Each one of these brown girls has a different root. Therefore, they find themselves in a culturally diverse environment, which, in the short or long term, influences diasporic identity. The plural in the novel's title and the use of coral "we" in the narration is inclusive of diasporic girls from assorted ancestries; varied are

identities are addressed, Palasi Andreades repeated this idea several times in the novel:

> US (INCLUDING, BUT not limited to: Zainab, Nadine, Eva, Danielle, Odalis, Ellen, Sophie, and Aiza) travel from our homes—hidden, peripheral—to Lincoln Square, where, each day, we shuffle past the graceful stone buildings of the New York City Ballet, the Philharmonic, the Met Opera, and Juilliard to make our first classes at 8:05 a.m. (Palasi Andreades, ART)

In this section, characters' names from diverse backgrounds, such as "Zainab", "Nadine", "Eva", "Danielle", "Odalis", "Ellen", "Sophie", and "Aiza", reinforce the presence of multiculturalism within the group, which is composed of girls from Diasporic backgrounds. The phrase "travel from our homes—hidden, peripheral—to Lincoln Square" suggests that these characters come from different neighbourhoods or areas and meet in a culturally heterogeneous environment that constructs their identities.

The girls are from diverse lands in a land that surrounds them with other ethnicities. They are from diverse cultural backgrounds, like many diasporic characters in American novels. Multiculturalism is a form of richness associated with diasporic novels (Vanisree 772):

> We make our way through the day, until slowly, glancing around, it dawns on us that everyone we interact with—our coworkers (white), our bosses (white), our neighbours (white), our friends from yoga (white), the families who lounged around us on vacation (white), our ex-lovers (primarily white) and our current ones (white), the baristas

> (white), our dogwalkers (white), and even our goddamn manicurists (white) —are all white. (PalasiAndreades, AMNESIA)

The repetitive word "white" emphasizes the characters' social circles, work environments, and daily interactions—America's diversity is proved by brown and white people living together.

The use of phrases such as "glancing around" and "dawns on us" indicates that the characters have become accustomed to their surroundings; they are aware of diversity in their social and professional spheres because they differ from the majority. The inclusion of "even our goddamn manicurists (white)" suggests that characters find themselves interfacing with white people everywhere, which means that cultural diversity surrounds diasporic communities and conduce to their identity's ingredients. They are children of the Diaspora; thus, the allure and the force of the American dream pulled their identity towards assimilation.

3.2.2 The Factor of Assimilation in *Radiant Fugitives and Brown Girls*

Discussing some concepts such as assimilation in relation to diasporic experience and assimilation in diasporic identity separately allows for a detailed exploration of how individuals and communities form or keep or change their identities. Looking at the experience shows the process of adaptation to a new environment, emphasizing external factors such as the host society's policies, social attitudes, and community structures that influence how diasporic individuals assimilate. For example, Seema assimilated because according to American norms she can be a lesbian. In contrast, assimilation in diasporic identity examines the impact of assimilation on self-perception and collective identity. It also discovers how individuals reconcile their heritage with new cultural contexts. This aspect

considers the internal dynamics of identity formation and the long-term implications for future generations, including cultural retention and community cohesion.

Assimilation is another crucial aspect of diasporic identity, wherein individuals live with the host land culture and the legacy of their homeland. The diasporic experience in America is full of cultural and identity conundrums.

Characters in *Radiant Fugitives* experience varying degrees of assimilation, ranging from professional to cultural and political assimilation. As a demonstration, wine for a Muslim diasporan is a sign of fusion. This is apparent in the following line about Seema: "The living room is dark; the kitchen and dining room beyond are an orange glow. A bottle of red wine stands open on the dining table next to two empty glasses. My yet-to-be father Bill is not downstairs—the air is too still, the light too steady." (Ahmed, Prelude, 2)

The presence of the open "bottle of red wine" and the "two empty glasses" next to it suggests that Seema has assimilated to some extent into American culture. Internally she believes she can drink wine. Alcohol consumption is an everyday social activity in many Western societies, and consuming it signifies a degree of assimilation into the American lifestyle.

Seema's sense of self, framed by the blend of her Indian Muslim culture and her encounters in the United States, showcases integration and fluidity, which is part of diasporic identity. She can drink wine publically and put it on the shelves of her house. Expressing this side of her identity is a freedom that she enjoys, as shown below:"She enjoys her freedoms here, including being out and proud, and cannot conceive what her life would be like in Iraq under Saddam or even in India." (Ahmed,2003- 2008, part 6)

Assimilation is a subject matter in Diaspora because "It involves the assimilation of immigrants' minds and ways of thinking into their new cultures, as well as the effects this has on their minds." (Qasim et al. 148), Seema's thoughts on freedom mark the impact of living in a country that values individualism and liberties.

The character's experience as part of the Diaspora in America reflects the journey of leaving her country of origin, India, to settle in a new land with different cultural norms and values. Diaspora involves physical displacement and emotional and psychological adaptation to a new environment. Furthermore, the degree of freedom affects identities in America; thus, she enjoys thatand she express her identity openly.

The quote pushes forward the idea that the host country's values of individual freedom and acceptance of diverse identities create an environment where she can be "out and proud." The quote also elevates the contrasting experiences between her life and assimilation in America and the potential realities of living in Iraq under Saddam Hussein's regime or in India, where an identity could be restricted (Byman 50). Seema thinks that if she was in Iraq or India, her freedom would not be accessible.

Seema decided to migrate to America, where she could embrace the lifestyle of her preference. This new way of life signifies her fusion and assimilation into American culture. Her assimilation and fusion into America expands to contain all aspects of her identity, including her political identity, which controls her choices and perspectives. A point that Nawaz Ahmed addresses:

> She has rehearsed her story of the self, taking naturally to the technique the Obama camp has promoted as a means to convey personal values and build connections to potential volunteers and voters, by appealing to emotion through the story of her life and why she feels called to volunteer. She declaims about being a Hussein in America, a Muslim, an object of suspicion and derision, an outsider who has to prove herself loyal all the time. A win for Obama—the skinny kid with a funny name, with a Hussein in it as well!—would mean there is a place for her, and every outsider like her, in America. Her story resonates among the immigrants and the new arrivals to San Francisco, appeals to its liberal and progressive base. (Ahmed,2003- 2008, 17)

The character's use of storytelling "her story of the self to convey personal values and build connections to potential volunteers and voters."aligns with the process of assimilation. Seema assumes that her story is a piece that fits with the story of America. Given this framework, her narrative depicts her journey as a "Hussein in America" and as Muslim, to reflect her efforts to operate the complexities of assimilation.

This focalizes awareness of her identity and desire for acceptance in American society. She wants to be an accepted Hussein by proving her "loyalty". Seema's identity contains traces of her background with elements of progression.The election of Barack Obama, the "skinny kid with a funny name" who also has "Hussein" in his name, demonstrates that individuals from diverse backgrounds can succeed and find a place in American society. For Seema, Obama's victory is a

possibility of acceptance and assimilation. Equally important to her political identity, her Islamic identity is reconfigured: “She hasn’t celebrated Eid in almost two decades. The last time was before she went to England, before everything went wrong.” (Ahmed 2003 -2008, 16)

Over "almost two decades", Seema's choice to disregard Eid reflects her process of assimilation. The phrase "before everything went wrong" brings on board pivotal life moments that have interrupted Seema's link to her cultural origins. Before Seema's departure from India, everything took a wrong turn when her family ostracized her due to her lesbian identity. Such personal struggles and problems can be solved through assimilation in a new, liberating country where people can do whatever they want. (Drummond 34).

Seema spent time in England studying, then moved to the United States of America, and not rejoicing Eid for such a long time implies a form of cultural adaptation and fusion with Western norms. She has had to adapt to new customs and traditions that detached her from her past self. Under the same light, Seema is not the only diasporic character who indulges in assimilation and adopts new identity practices; her friend Fiaz goes through the same path:“She remarks, in an offhand manner, “Did you know Fiaz is a homosexual? Is that the sort of American culture you want your grandchildren to be exposed to?” (Ahmed, 2010, 25)

Fiaz being a "homosexual" accentuates the complexities of identity within a diasporic context. Fiaz's identity as a member of a Muslim family contradicts his sexual orientation. This paradox brings to the forefront the clash of cultural values, freedom and expectations. The question is a teasing by Tahera to the mother, Nafeesa, who thought Fiaz could be a husband to her daughter Seema.

The remark about American culture and Fiaz's homosexuality stirs up worries about the future of grandchildren's complete assimilation. In this quote, Tahera is speaking to Nafeesa about the destiny of Seema's unborn child and the risk of encountering Muslim people like Fiaz; such people are risky for identity. It also suggests that assimilation can lead to tensions when inner choices become practices that conflict with ethnic norms, as Fiaz's assimilation is accepted in America but rejected by Islam.

As their journey continues, the brown girls' preferences become as a tale of assimilation emanating from mainstream American culture. Their choices become the emblem of their identities; a coral-coloured lip gloss and an eagle-adorned T-shirt manifest their embrace of American motifs; what they think become visual. Embracing national holidays can serve as a means of integration and assimilation: “We are thirteen. We amble through all four floors, but don’t buy much. A coral-coloured lip gloss, a T-shirt from the clearance rack printed with an eagle and an American flag because Gabby’s favourite holiday is the Fourth of July.” (Palasi Andreades, GIRLS LIKE YOU)

The girls buying T-shirts with "an eagle and an American flag" showcases the influence of mainstream American culture on their preferences and consumer choices. The fact that "Gabby's favourite holiday is the Fourth of July" indicates her fondness for American culture and celebration.

Appreciating American culture showcases how Diaspora offspring adopt components from an alternate culture in a diverse environment. Gabby's identification with the Fourth of July also signifies her desire to belong and to be accepted as an American. The girls continue showing an inclination to America:

> One aunt gives us manicures every Sunday. Another squirts poopcolored henna onto our palms, sketches lotus flowers. One cousin lets us listen to her collection of country CDs—Dolly, Shania, the Dixie Chicks— her most prized possessions. Wide open spaces! we sing along. Another cousin lends us her romance novel, the lone paperback that sits atop her dresser, after we beg her. We'd glimpsed its cover of a woman clinging to a man's bare, muscled chest. The image excites us. Were-create it by standing in front of fans to mimic that hair-blowing-in-the-wind effect. We top it off with our best lovesick expressions. Until we grow bored of pretending to be these women. We sprinkle salt onto slugs instead. (Palasi Andreades, DUTIES)

Henna, lotus flower sketches, and country music CDs like Dolly Parton, Shania Twain, and the Dixie Chicks are cultural markers of diverse roots in the zone where the Diaspora casts its shadow, but the girls are drawn to American Western symbols.

Remarkedly, "Country CDs—Dolly, Shania, the Dixie Chicks" is a romance novel with a "woman clinging to a man's bare, muscled chest" Characters' excitement and attempts to recreate the image depict the influence of mainstream American media on their inner world.

This scene features identity configuration. The characters' journey of exploring their identities through various cultural expressions, such as celebrities, showcases the dynamic and evolving nature of identity in a multicultural society, and their preferences denote the direction of their identity branch. Even later on in

the novel, when they become teenagers, assimilation impelled them: “We become fluent in the language of our colonizers. Our English, impeccable. Our mother tongues, if we were taught them at all, become atrophied muscles, half remembered melodies.” (Palasi Andreads,ART)

The manifold cultures within America find expression through various channels, with language emerging as a prominent avenue "fluent in the language of our colonizers". English language in America intersects with diverse languages brought by individuals relocating to the country, with distinct cultures and languages. Consequently, the vitality of these languages endures or diminishes over successive diasporic generations via assimilation.

The description of their English as "impeccable" showcases the brown girls' mastery of the dominant language, essential for participating in various spheres and to form their identity. This proficiency in English is often a result of their adaptation and assimilation into the dominant culture. Their mother tongues becoming "atrophied muscles, half-remembered melodies" reflect the consequences of language displacement.

As they focus on learning and using English, their proficiency in their mother tongues gradually diminishes, and they struggle to fully express themselves in their native languages. This means that their native linguistic identity is altered. Fusing with American spirit, the brown girls surpass their linguistic identity and reach other attitudes, as Palasi Andreades writes: “We must try hard not to bust out laughing when they belt out national anthems to countries that aren’t the U.S.” (Palasi Andreades, THIRST)

In this quote, the characters find themselves in a situation where they attend events where other countries' national anthems are being played, and they feel the urge to laugh. They suppress this reaction, while secretly disrespecting and laughing at "national anthems to countries that are not the U.S".

The concept of assimilation and Americanization plays a significant role in understanding this quote. This preference is driven by various factors such as economic opportunities, political stability, a sense of belonging and assimilation. Here, Daphne Palasi Andreades apprehends assimilation, Americanization, and the swinging diasporic identities. In addition to glimpses from their childhood and teenage years, the novel continues to pinpoints their assimilation as grown women: “No. We are three thousand miles away in New York City. We are in Boston, Philly, D.C., and other East Coast locales. We have not gone far. We are two years out of college—American girls with American degrees …. In short, we are so wrapped up in ourselves.” (Palasi Andreades, TRISH)

"American girls with American degrees" echoes their educational and professional assimilation in the U.S. This quote touches on self-absorption and introspection. The characters are depicted as being "wrapped up in ourselves" with a focus on their internal experiences while assimilating.

This section of the story portrays the multifarious nature of diasporic identity. It shows how individuals from Diaspora are simultaneously part of America. They fuse, and embrace the opportunities and challenges of American citizenship. Another element that wraps Diasporans is the transcultural connection.

3.2.3 The Factor of Transcultural Connection in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

The prefix' trans' in transculturalism implies the act of crossing, which is integral to Diasporic experience from its earliest stages. Therefore, diasporic contemporary American novels impart the breaking down of boundaries where "Diaspora experiences, histories, and cultures meet, merge, and, with varying intensity, engage." (Nwanyanwu 387) These transcultural connections are overlapping in the novel:

> The store has an international section too. There are no books from India, but Nafeesa finds a shelf with a smattering of books from England. “Look, they have the entire Faraway Tree series.” These are the books her daughters read repeatedly—about three siblings who find magical lands at the top of a tall tree reaching into the clouds—before they moved on to more mature fare. There are still shelves in their home in Chennai lined with books they’d devoured during their school years, even if the lending libraries they’d frequented had one by one disappeared.” (Ahmed, 2010, 17)

The presence of "books from India" and a shelf of "books from England" in "an international section" from a store reflects transculturalism in the diasporic experience of Nafeesa and her family. Books from many countries indicate the existence of transnational connections within Diaspora. It reflects the ongoing cultural ties, exchanges, and influences. The books act as a bridge between cultures, as they traverse boundaries and mark a distinct presence in diasporans' lives.

Nafeesa's discovery of books from England shows how different cultural influences crisscross in diasporic identity formation. *The Faraway Tree* series from England symbolises shared experiences between Nafeesa and her daughters as she sees "books her daughters read repeatedly". Indian and English books in America being discovered by a Diasporan typifies transcultural encounters. She thinks and her thoughts are manipulated by the transnational movement of herself and the books, again movement proves to be a vital element in human's life. *The Faraway Tree* books are not the only sign of transculturalism in the identity progress of characters:

> They grew up on books from England—beginning with Enid Blyton's adventures, before progressing into the world of Charles Dickens and Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters, then Thomas Hardy and George Eliot, Byron and Shelley and Keats. All their father's influence. You have a BA in Urdu literature and would have continued with an MPhil, or even a PhD, if you hadn't married my grandfather. His love of everything English easily drowned your own love for a language that was "Only good for love poetry," as your husband put it after marrying you, though he didn't deny it was your recitation of Urdu ghazals the evening he came bride-seeking that had so captivated him. (Ahmed, 2010,22)

The quote depicts the way transcultural connections are vital in forming characters' identities. Since Tahera and Seema grew up on books from England, they have been exposed to the literature of another country.

English language is a part of the diasporic experience of the family and referencing to “Charles Dickens and Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters, then Thomas Hardy and George Eliot, Byron and Shelley and Keats.” indicates the richness of their literary exposure and English language that reached their homeland before they left it.

A worth mentioning point is that characters' mother is interested in Urdu literature, and their father loves English literature. This means that growing up in this cross-cultural setting, Seema and Tahera were exposed to diverse cultural shades from a young age. This exposition set the foundation for the multiple layers of their identity.

Trasnculturalism continues to appear in the life of the novel's three main characters, Seema, Tahera and their mother, Nafessa, as it is symbolized by books and other diasporic characters as well, such as Seema's friend Leigh:

> Leigh has never had to worry about her family’s acceptance. Her Irish father is a very lapsed Catholic and her Chinese mother an indifferent Presbyterian, both professors at Berkeley and both supportive of her decision to come out in high school. Seema has always maintained she’s not bothered by Islam’s strictures against their relationship: Those crazy mullahs, they’ve nothing better to do. But these two women still seem to control Seema after all these years out. (Ahmed, 2010, part50)

In this quote, Leigh's family's acceptance of her identity as a lesbian contrast with Seema's ongoing struggle with her family's traditional values as

Muslims. The passage explores the complexities of diasporic identity and the confluence between transculturaliasm, and family acceptance.

Leigh's experience with her "Irish father" and "Chinese mother", both supportive of her coming out in high school because they are in the stage of “trans-”, exemplifies an aspect of diasporic identity formation. Diaspora can create a unique environment where individuals and families adapt to new cultural norms and become more open to diverse identities (Hien 7). Christianity, Irish traditions and Chinese customs reject homosexuality; conversely, Leigh's parents live a transcultural experience that insinuates changes and "lapses" in their beliefs and legacies. In Leigh's case, her family's acceptance has contributed to her sense of belonging to American openness and diversity because of the prefix “trans”.

The dissected sections form the novel enshrouds distinct visual representations such as white-walled castles, palm trees and pristine shores, skyscrapers and plastic-strewn beaches. This following portrayal serves as a representation of America's colonial origins and the cross-territorial aspect of diasporic identity:

> Here is the white walled castle, constructed like a fortress, bordering the cerulean sea, and here are its dungeons where men, women, and children were forced into ships that traveled across the Atlantic, then sold as slaves in Britain, France, the Americas, their colonies. Here are the registers where people were forced to change their names to Spanish, English, French, Dutch ones. Santos, Díaz, James, Roberts, Moreau, Laurent, Janssen. Here are the churches where natives were told to convert. (Palasi Andreades, HERITAGE / INHERITANCE)

The author describes the historical context of Diaspora in America with the imagery of a "white walled castle" as a fortress along a cerulean sea. This imagery represents the colonial origins of America and the lines of transculturalism in the history book of America.

The quote carries on renaming and assimilation or transculturalism. People who were enslaved were forced to adopt names from their colonizers, Spanish, English, French, and Dutch names such as "Santos, Díaz, James, Roberts, Moreau, Laurent, and Janssen". This manifests the erasure of their original identities and the imposition of new ones as a slave Diaspora.

This image can be compared to the image of the brown girls who construct their identity according to American norms. The intercultural linkages observed within these characters symbolize the manners whereby individuals from diverse origins, notwithstanding their pasts, discover new perspectives and identities through displacement.

Transcultural stamp in the identity of the girls does not come from past migrations of people who might be related to them only, but it is also an aspect within their own experience: “In these countries, we expect palm trees but are met with gleaming skyscrapers. We expect pristine beaches like the photos that populate Instagram feeds and travel blogs and subway ads but discover shores littered with plastic bags and warning signs.” (Palasi Andreades, TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

The reference to "palm trees" and "pristine beaches" conjures up idyllic images often associated with travel and the homelands. These images, often perpetuated by media and social platforms, are ingrained in the imagination of individuals with connections to other lands. Though, the reality —of "gleaming

skyscrapers" and "shores littered with plastic bags and warning signs"—paints a more complex picture.

This contrast between expectation and reality signifies the incomprehensibility of the diasporic experience. It illuminates the gap between the romanticized vision of the homeland and the practical, often less glamorous reality the brown girls encounter upon their transnational visit. Doubt is a maker of identity and this experience puts doubt inside the girls, doubts and disappointment and skepticism.

The encounter with modernity ("gleaming skyscrapers") and the reality of environmental degradation ("shores littered with plastic bags") reflect the collision of tradition and progress. The brown girls' identity is rooted in their ancestral lands, yet it is also shaped by their experiences in Diaspora and the ever-changing world. Ultimately, this passage exhibits identity and intercultural affiliations encountered by young women of color after undertaking a transcultural experience. Diaspora is an occasion of exchange and encounter that shape self-perceptions. now the girls will see themselves and their ancestral lands in specific ways.

The daughters of immigrant families from South American, African, and South Asian countries meet with factors that touch the thread, tying them to the pillar of the Diaspora. Despite being tied to Diaspora, the scattered individuals are active; the threads are not stable.

3.2.5. Social and Political Activism in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

In the pages of diasporic novels like *Radiant Fugitives*, characters might indulge in social and political activism, pleading for the causes of their diasporic

communities in the pursuit of rights. It is worth noting that, the section on diasporic experience focuses on how diasporic individuals engage in activism as a response to their experiences in a new environment, and mobilization. While, the section on diasporic identity addresses how activism shapes the identities of individuals and communities. This activism is a crucial part of their experience and identity (Khan 30), as it empowers them to assert their place in the new society: “It was Seema who initiated the scrapes they got into, who created a scene if she didn’t get what she wanted, who finally ran away from home.” (Ahmed, 2010, 18)

Seema is invested in social activism through her actions; she uses her agency and identity to define her path and also this chosen identity. The quote implies that Seema is not content with her assigned restricted role within her family and cultural community. She takes the initiative and "ran away from home" which means that her identity serves her Diaspora; an active identity that will appear in a future diasporic identity. She "created a scene" indicating her assertive nature and willingness to challenge societal norms and expectations.

Seema's decision to leave her Muslim family suggests her quest for self-expression and self-discovery. By seeking opportunities in Western countries, including America, she aspires to find an environment that encourages individuality and free identity. Via this social activism, she can expand her identity beyond the constraints of her cultural upbringing. To be precise, and to add, her activism and the defense of her essence survive in Diaspora: “She’s secretly glad that the question of marriage couldn’t arise in the near future, since same-sex marriages in California were overturned two years ago by Proposition 8.” (Ahmed,2010,36)

The passage deals with diasporic individuals, particularly those with specific sexual orientations. These parts from the novel meet Avtar Brah's ideas on the attachment of gender with diasporic identity (50). Seema is glad about a 2008 California Supreme Court ruling that had legalized same-sex marriage in the state. She left her family and home to seek these rulings, a free identity, and continues her pursuit Driven by her identity choices and active voice:

> Seema rants to Bill: How is she to celebrate while America turns a blind eye to the pain and suffering of the Brown peoples it has invaded illegally and is dooming itself to four more years of a war criminal? The CIA had finally admitted, just the week before, that there had been no imminent threat from Saddam's WMDs. How could queer America justify rejoicing at what is simply fuller participation in the imperialistic American Dream, while Iraq is rapidly sinking into further chaos." (Ahmed, part12,2013- 2008)

Seema's activism is influenced by her Indian background and her experiences as a diasporic individual. Her mention of "Brown peoples" points to her concern for communities of colour like her, who face the consequences of American actions abroad.

She criticizes American imperialism and the consequences of the country's actions abroad, particularly in Iraq. Her concern about "complete involvement in the imperialistic American Dream", the "suffering", and "chaos" in Iraq puts the spotlight on her empathy for those affected by American foreign policy decisions.

This attitude meditates her vital ethical considerations and commitment to social justice as a form of her essence and inner voice. Her activism is driven by a

sense of responsibility and belonging to the brown people. Because activism means awareness and decision-making, her activism, which is driven by her identity takes over her life decisions:

> The newlyweds have agreed that Seema should quit her current job and work for the Obama campaign. Bill will continue at the health insurance company he'd joined and will maintain their finances and benefits while volunteering on the side, at least until the fortunes of the campaign became more apparent. (Ahmed,2003- 2008, part17)

Seema's decision to "work for the Obama campaign" exemplifies the active participation of diasporic individuals in American politics as an inventible part of the contemporary diasporic journey. Identity also influences Seema's decision to work for the Obama campaign as an Indian Diasporan. Her support for the campaign aligns with the candidate's values and policies that resonate with her own beliefs and aspirations. Even her black American husband, Bill, participates in "volunteering."

Activism for diasporans in America is a platform to express their identities. Their activism singles out diasporans' desire to contribute to American agendas that relate to their ethnic, political diasporic, and sexual identities.

The novel speaks of the complex and often fraught relationship between diasporic communities and the dominant culture. Generally, diasporic identities are shaped by "racially charged contexts and an oppressive political rhetoric." (Bhatia et al. 261). The convergence of power and oppression is apparent in the meeting of the brown girls with the parents of the white boys they love:

> We are determined to keep our responses apolitical, lest we offend. We are afraid to bite the hand that feeds us. Because we are the good immigrant daughters, the oh-so-hard-working ones, the paragons of the American Dream, aren't we? (But for what? For whom?) Nobody asks about the work itself. We are so visible we have become invisible. Odd that in this moment we dreamt of, we are faceless. (Palasi Andreades, HYPER / VISIBLE / IN / VISIBLE)

The reference to being "the good immigrant daughters" and "the oh-so-hard-working ones" brings out how diasporic communities are often expected to conform to certain stereotypes in order to be accepted and valued within the dominant culture. This pressure to perform a particular identity can alter diasporic identity.

The phrase "we are so visible we have become invisible" is particularly consequential in the context of diasporic identity. Diasporic communities are often - visible in popular culture and media, yet their experiences and perspectives are often overlooked or marginalized. This invisibility can be particularly requisite for women from diasporic communities, who may face forms of discrimination and marginalization based on their gender, race, and ethnicity. The reference to being "afraid to bite the hand that feeds us" speaks to the power dynamics that shape how diasporas perceive themselves and how they deal with internalized experiences.

Supplementary, the line "We are determined to keep our responses apolitical" transmits that the girls are intentionally avoiding politics in their interactions with the dominant culture represented by the white parents. This decision to remain "apolitical" is driven by a desire to avoid conflict or to be accepted through hiding their political identity. In other conversations, the girls

show their concerns and explicitly uncover their political and social activism, including their broad diasporic identity:

> But some of us, who have been our parents' translators our entire lives —at parent-teacher conferences, banks, supermarkets—know how to communicate fluently. We discuss politics with our uncles and aunties. They ask questions about the wall the current U.S. president wants to build, and is it true that Muslims are barred from entering the country, and what about the caravan of refugees fleeing gang violence at the border? We discuss all the ways the Land of the Free, under the present administration, currently "welcomes" its newcomers. (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

This quote calls out the role of young women from diasporic communities as intermediaries and "translators" between their communities and the dominant culture. They can speak both native and host language, and they can use this fluency to bridge the gap between these two worlds. Language is an integral part of cultural identity, and this linguistic activism contributes to the formation of a collective identity.

The quote also draws out how diasporic communities are affected by and affect political and social issues. The girls discuss politics with their uncles and aunties, and they are knowledgeable about the current political climate in the United States and "questions about the wall the current U.S. president wants to build". They are concerned about issues such as immigration policy, discrimination, and violence in "the Land of the Free".

Being concerned about policies of the host country is an aspect of diasporic identity, as it reflects a sense of belonging and responsibility because "Diaspora is as a shared identity or politics." (Goyal 644). This multitude of experiences proves the interconnectedness of identity. This concern and these questions, for the diasporic identity they indicate solidarity and mobilization and for identity they can dictate how diasporans view themselves.

3.2.6. The Factor of Intersectionality in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Diasporic identity is entangled with intersectionality (PourAli et al. 22). This is linked to the coaction of race, gender, class, and other categories as buds in the growing branch of identity. The encounters of the characters are altered by their identities. At the same time, they alter their identities. Minor buds like culinary can intersect with character's diasporic identity, and this line from the novel is evidence: "Seema rarely cooks Indian food." (Ahmed,2010, 3)

Seema's infrequent preparation of Indian cuisine suggests her cultural adjustment. In the diasporic context, individuals often encounter new cuisines and adopt culinary practices from their host country. She chooses to cut cultural connection.

Seema's culinary choices and "rarely" cooking food from her native land reflect her efforts to embrace new experiences in America. Cooking and traditional culinary practices are often an essential part of cultural identity. In the same vein, her sister Tahera's identity is more correlated to Indian roots and food: "The pungent smell of fenugreek and roasted fennel from her favourite curry makes Tahera's mouth water. Her mother has already served the food, and her plate is heaped with chicken curry and rice and raita." (Ahmed, 2010,4)

The passage showcases how food can be a link to one's culture and native identity, even when living in a new country. This idea emphasizes the intersection of food with diasporic experiences (Sherman 22). Being a Diasporan in the United States, Tahera's association with the aromatic fragrance of fenugreek and toasted fennel in curry symbolizes the preservation of culinary customs that are tied to her roots; holding to one's roots is a form of identity expression: "Curry makes Tahera's mouth water." Maintaining ancestral culture in a new country is one factor that constructs diasporic identity, and Tahera's love for Indian food reflects that. It is noteworthy that her identity interlocks with food and with art as well:

> Tahera ponders the question. Amina is the right age for the series. But magic and pixies and goblins? She has not permitted Arshad the Harry Potter books, which have been hard to ignore, with posters everywhere of the movie series, dark images of grimy kids and wizards and witches brandishing knobbly wands. Ismail is not concerned they'd corrupt Arshad, but he leaves decisions about books and movies to her. "No, they don't read such books," she tells Seema. (Ahmed,2010,17)

As a Muslim from the Indian Diaspora living in the United States, Tahera's circumspection concerning literary and media content she introduces to her children mirrors her intent to safeguard their cultural distinctiveness, ethical principles, and identity. When diasporans' actions align with their values, they strengthen their identity and integrity. In this case, Tahera's identity is in constant struggle and collision.

Tahera "has not permitted Arshad the Harry Potter books." because of "magic and pixies and goblins". Artistic expression's role in forming diasporic identity is evident in this quote. The tension between Western cultural markers, such as popular fantasy literature, and the preservation of cultural values can influence parents' choices for their children's cultural upbringing and future identity; Tahera's belief that "they would corrupt Arshad" indicates protecting her child's identity.

Another similar element that intersects with the formation of diasporic identity is the language of immigrants and diasporans; their way of expressing themselves is a facet of their identity: "Seema's Urdu is poor," he says. "She should be ashamed of herself." He says this in Urdu. Seema swats him but cannot deny the allegation (Ahmed,2010, 22)

Unlike Seema, her friend Fiaz, an Indian, can speak Urdu. The fact that her "Urdu is poor" is a delineation of the linguistic transformation encountered by numerous diasporic individuals while residing in a novel nation. As a diasporic individual, Seema finds herself using English more frequently in her daily interactions which can contribute to the erosion of her native language skills.

Seema's experience with declining Urdu proficiency reflects broader patterns of language transmission within diasporic communities and the intersection of language and identity, as language is an element of identity (Alfaraz69). For some individuals within diasporic communities, not being proficient in their native language can result in language loss and identity change. Proficiency in native language and religion defuse the same outcome when interlaced with diasporic identity: “How could anything composed by a human compare to the glories of Allah’s creation? And Keats claims to be overcome by a mere translation. No

translation of the Quran could affect her the way reading the original does." (Ahmed,2010, 34)

Tahera's reading the original Quran in Arabic points up the significance of language in the diasporic experience. Language plays a crucial role in connecting diasporic individuals to their roots. In the part" no translation of the Quran could affect her the way reading the original does" Tahera's identity is braided with religion. Her religion assists her identity.

Through evocative imagery and introspection, Palasi Andreades crafts a narrative that resonates with the universal themes of identity, belonging, and the ever-evolving nature of cultural intersections that make the girls' diasporic identity like a rhizome with many buds:

> YOU REALLY WANT TO know, we are the color of 7-Eleven root beer. The color of sand at Rockaway Beach when it blisters the bottoms of our feet. Color of soil. Color of the charcoal pencils our sisters use to rim their eyes. Color of grilled hamburger patties. Color of our mother's darkest thread, which she loops through the needle. Color of peanut butter. Of the odd gene that makes us fair and white as snow, like whatsername, is it Snow White? But don't get it twisted—we're still brown. Dark as 7 p.m. dusk, when our mothers switch on lights in empty rooms. Exclaim, Oh! There you are. (Palasi Andreades, BROWN)

The opening line, "If you really want to know, we are the color of 7-Eleven root beer" introduces the theme of race and its various associations with diasporic identity. This encourages readers to conceive the identity of the girls with

brown skin “Color of soil. Color of the charcoal pencils our sisters use to rim their eyes. Color of grilled hamburger patties. Color of our mother’s darkest thread, which she loops through the needle. Color of peanut butter” delineates the varied ethnicities.

This diversity reflects the heterogeneous diasporic community, where a singular "brown" category does not exist. These references to color suggest various cultural elements and potentially different ethnic backgrounds.

Snow White also brings up notions of fairytale narratives and cultural standards of beauty that can influence how individuals perceive their racial identity. The comparison between their complexion and the hour of the day ("Like the twilight of 7 p.m.") propels a visual representation of identity perception.

In terms of intersectionality, the quote brings together race and identity. Colors can represent the connection and diversity within diasporic communities. Similarly, art intersects with both Diaspora and identity evolution, as underlined below: “Funk when our work is misunderstood, deemed insufficient—Not adequately engaging with themes of identity, a bad example for the youth of our community, uninstructive, lacking moral clarity, a poor representation.” (Palasi Andreades,ART)

"Funk" in this context represents a disconnection or discord between the brown girls' artistic endeavors and the expectations or judgments placed upon their work. The phrase "our work is misunderstood, deemed insufficient" indicates the vulnerability of artistic expression and the potential for misinterpretation because it is linked to their identity.

Art under the shadow of Diaspora sought to subsume identity traits that matched their nativity or Americanization. Artistic expression is a reflection of diasporic identity, and because art is a slice from the spiritual manifestation of people, religion should be tackled next in the same context. Art and religion for the diasporic experience are a medium of life and for identity are medium of formation or fusion.

3.2.7. Religious Identity in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

For many individuals and communities in the Diaspora, religion serves as a source of cultural continuity and as a means of connection to their distinct ancestral identity (Setianto 237). Furthermore, religious convictions might undergo adjustment within the framework of a fresh cultural milieu, and that adjustment signals the transformation of identity.

For Tahera, who left India for academic pursuits, her religious identity has no remarkable changes; it remains a marker of her unique identity: “I see her clearly, this substitute, running toward me through a maze of hospital corridors, her hijab fluttering, her jilbab tripping her up, her face flattened and blanched by unforgiving fluorescent light.” (Ahmed,2010, part7)

She is a Muslim woman in a foreign land who endures the diasporic experience entirely. Tahera's attire, consisting of a "hijab" and "jilbab", serves as a visual code of her religious identity. The hijab and jilbab represent her commitment to her faith and her desire to maintain her religion even in a foreign environment.

The fluttering of the hijab and the tripping of the jilbab creates a sense of movement and struggle. It symbolizes the challenges Tahera faces in preserving her

religious identity in a society that may be unfamiliar with or have preconceived notions about Islamic practices. Religion for Tahera is a part of identity and is a tool for exhibiting it, as Nawaz Ahmed narrates:

> As soon as they reach Seema's apartment, Tahera insists her first priority is prayer, her maghrib namaz. It's a refuge she can count on. The ritual of wadu begins to calm her down, the sensation of water on her wrists and elbows, her fingers skimming her hair and down the neck and under the ears. She feels a little more at ease each time she repeats the movements, each gesture small and precise and contained, and completely in her control. After wadu, she spreads her janamaz in one corner of Seema's living room. (Ahmed,2010, part 7)

Tahera's prayer functions as an illustrative portrayal of religion for a diasporan who "insists her first priority is prayer." The passage puts religion as an identity marker; despite the distance from the land that taught Tahera prayer, she still practices her ritual.

Additionally, for her, prayer is a "refuge" and a source of solace. In her diasporic journey, prayer offers a reassuring thread of continuity, linkage to her cultural and religious identity, and a show for it. In the ambiguities of Diaspora, prayer emerges as a constant anchor because of its sacred purpose and inclusion of water.

In the washing ritual, water symbolizes purification and renewal. In the diasporic context, water takes on additional significance as a metaphor for cleansing, adaptability, and the ability to flow and adjust to new environments. Through prayer

within "Seema's living room" her more complex and Americanized sister, Tahera, constructs a sanctified realm for her identity. A designated area for prayer allows her to connect with a spiritual identity. By praying in Seema's house, Tahera is challenging her. Furthermore, the sisters have different religious identities that cause confrontation: “Seema is uneasy. Tahera has, in fact, refused to eat non-halal meat before, during her visit to San Francisco earlier that year, in spring.” (Ahmed, 2010, 3)

Seema's unease with Tahera's refusal to eat non-halal meat reflects the importance of religious practices and cultural identity. For the reason of explanation and interpretation, Aamina Akhtar, in her analysis of American Diaspora in Jhumpa Lahiri's narratives that resonate with this point, she tates that: "The identities of all communities are influenced by factors such as ethnicity, culture, and religion." (240).

Non-halal means something that is disallowed in Islam, and in this situation, accepting it or refusing it becomes an emblem of religious identity for Diasporans who are supposed to be Muslims. Tahera's choice of diet is a form of identity expression that clashes with Seema, who disassociated herself from Islam. Tahera's Islamic identity is enriched by her children, who are also children of America and Diaspora:

> Arshad’s favorite verses from the Quran, a more recent addition, projected onto the ceiling. There’s the ayat Al-Kursi from the surah Al-Baqarah, and the last three surahs from the Quran—Al-Ikhlas, Al-Falaq, and An-Nas. His son’s lips move, as though he’s reciting. “Recite a little louder,” Ismail tells Arshad, although it could wake

> Amina up. Arshad starts out softly, with the surah he’s memorized for the Quran recitation competition in the fundraiser. (Ahmed,2010, 20)

Arshad's persona as a Diaspora-raised individual in the United States, the son of Tahera and Ismail, is sculpted through the prism of his commitment to the Muslim faith and the teachings of the Quran. Arshad's diasporic background intertwines with his spiritual journey.

The projection of Arshad's best Quranic verses "projected" on the ceiling stresses the weight of his faith within the framework of his identity; he has "favorite verses from the Quran". The image symbolizes the projection and the visualization of a facet of his identity. For Muslim Americans in Irvine Arshad, the "surah he is memorized for the Quran recitation competition" reinforces his identity; it is a commitment by a second-generation Diaspora.

This signalizes that, from a young age, Arshad's religious identity is relevant for him as a child of first-generation immigrants. His Islamic upbringing is a sign of his parents' preservation.

The snippets from the novel reflect mosques, churches, God, prayers, identity, and aspirations within the context of Diaspora. The brown girls when asked, they reply: “We’ve sung in our church’s choir.” (Andreades, ART) The phrase "We've sung in our church's choir" encapsulates a sense of shared experience among the brown diasporic girls. Collective participation in the choir implies a sensation of togetherness and interconnection within the Diaspora in the form of a collective religious identity.

The young women of the brown Diaspora manage the reciprocation between their religious affiliations and distinct sense of identity. Religion plays a significant role in both shaping and displaying the identity of diasporic communities. Around the girls, religious identity emerges in the lives of their family members, mainly their brothers:

> O THE LUCKY ONES UR BROTHERS, OUR BROTHERS WHO grow up, too. Who do not like to speak of their pasts. I'm a different person now. From the corners of our eyes, we watch them kneel on prayer mats three times a day, limbs poised toward the sun. We watch them walk to churches down the block, crisp Bibles nestled in back pockets, we wave goodbye as they drive to temples in Flushing, Richmond Hill, where they enter rooms filled with candles and the murmur of chants like voices underwater. What, we wonder, do our brothers confess to their gods? (Andreades, THE LUCKY ONES)

The imageries of the brothers kneeling on prayer mats, attending churches, and visiting temples fixate on their relation with various religious spaces. This reflects the diverse religious practices within Diaspora. They are representing a fusion of ancestral customs and the demands of diasporic life.

The brothers' observation of practising "limbs poised toward the sun" walking to churches with Bibles, and visiting temples depicts their religious identity. These rituals serve as signatures of their cultural identity within the diasporic cadre.

The question "What, we wonder, do our brothers confess to their gods?" opens a window into the internal lives of the brothers. This curiosity stamps the

complexities of faith and identity and the interrelation between public and private selves for diasporic generations. In addition to the internal manifestation of religious identity, this aspect echoes outside the inner world of characters: “Trucks inch through traffic, and a call to prayer from a local mosque sound, Horns blare لا الله الا اللهaround us.” (Andreades, FUTURE TENSE QUEENS)

The expression "the sound of a local mosque heralding a call to prayer" ushers in a moment of spiritual and cultural import. The call to prayer, known as the “Adhan” is a central feature of Islamic values and is often heard in mosques in predominantly Muslim regions.

The utterance "an invocation to prayer resonating from a nearby mosque" enforces a spiritual and cultural moment that adds another layer to the novel besides the church choir.

The use of "Horns blare لا الله الا الله around us" reflects the partnership between cultural sounds, religious call and identity during the girls' visit to their motherlands. The phrase "لا الله الا الله" (lāilāhaillāallāh) translates to "There is no god but Allah" in Arabic, is a central tenet of the Islamic faith. The juxtaposition of this phrase with the blaring horns suggests a convergence of everyday urban life and the cultural and religious aspects that are loud and powerful.

They recognize the aspects of their native religion as a part of their ethnic and religious identity. Recognition is not necessarily an acknowledgement, especially in the case of diasporic people whose identity fluctuates: “We wonder if God will accept our prayers. (God, please give me a body I can love. God, please help me have the strength to tell my family. God, please give me wings so I can leave this place behind.” (Palasi Andreades, JENNY)

The line "We wonder if God will accept our prayers" encapsulates the brown girls' internal contemplation about uncertainties they encounter in their rapport with the divine. This reflects a sense of vulnerability and hope, radiating their profound desire for understanding, acceptance, and change.

Their prayers —"God, please give me a body I can love. God, please help me have the strength to tell my family" address personal and sensitive aspects of their identities. These prayers demonstrate their feelings, encompassing self-love, family dynamics, and the aspiration for freedom and escape.

The reference to "God, please give me wings so I can leave this place behind" metaphorically symbolizes their longing for liberation, transformation, and a departure from their current circumstances. This also indicates the will to grow out of the underground stem resonating with the themes of Diaspora—the idea of leaving one place for another in search of a better life, both physically and metaphorically. The passage like many others, is a reinforcement of the diasporic identities and experiences and it is open to many reflective frameworks.

The choral "we" the writer uses symbolizes the girls' one voice, which speaks of complications, juxtapositions, reinventions, and fluctuations of identities. In spite of the wings, diasporic writers point at individuals whose voices speak to the immigrants about persevering native identities.

3.2.8 Preservation of identity in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Diasporic identity in the United States is a mosaic of cultures, echoes of histories, and threads of traditions. Diasporic experience, marked by displacement and adaptation, creates tension between the desire to assimilate and the need to

sustain ancestral behaviours and beliefs. Preservation is an alternative manifestation of a diasporic identity that is distinct from the cultural majority.

This desire for cultural continuity is manifested through the effort of diasporic characters in *Radiant Fugitives* to preserve and celebrate their native values, rituals, and language. In light of this, passing down the markers of original identity is an element of identity preservation:

> Amina is in a pink dress embroidered with white flowers, a pink sweater, pink-and-white shoes, and a matching pink hijab framing her face and flowing over her shoulders. Arshad trails after them, in blue jeans, a tan fleece pullover, and white Adidas shoes, but on his head today: a white prayer cap. (Ahmed, 2010, 25)

Amina and Arshad's choice of clothes represents the mutualism between Diaspora in America, diasporic identity formation, and cultural preservation within a Muslim family. Amina's dress and "pink hijab" and Arshad's "white prayer cap" reflect their adherence to cultural and religious norms.

The attire chosen by the siblings exemplifies the preservation of their cultures. Amina's pink hijab and traditional dress indicate her commitment to the Muslim identity taught by her parents. Her clothes are not the only sign of growing up in a preserved environment; Amina sings a song from her motherland for her assimilated aunt Seema: “He urges his sister to show Seema, and Amina complies, without a trace of embarrassment or shyness, in a light clear voice. An Urdu song, an old melody from Seema’s childhood!” (Ahmed,25, part 2010)

In this quote, the "Urdu song" sung by Amina becomes a powerful manifestation of diasporic identity and cultural preservation within the context of the Urdu language. Amina's confident rendition of the "old melody" about a rocking horse connects generations, preserves cultural core, and nourishes a sense of belonging within the diasporic community.

As a language, Urdu connects Amina to her roots, family's history and traditions. Amina's confident singing emphasizes her cultural identity and pride. The source of Amina's preservation is mainly her mother, who thinks of preserving the identity of Seema's unborn child: “Also, she’d meant to clarify with Seema the matter of her child’s upbringing in Islam. Tahera cannot agree to anything else.” (Ahmed,2010,24)

The excerpt provides a vision of Seema's soon-to-arrive infant. It emulates the identity of future diasporic children and the safeguarding of first-generation Diasporans' culture. The focus on raising the child in Islam reflects their commitment to their cultural and religious traditions in the diasporic future.

While the child will be born in America, Seema's and Tahera's agreement on "her child's upbringing in Islam" stresses family's role in maintaining cultural continuity by preserving and passing down cultural practices and values. As Tahera makes sure her nephew will preserve the Islamic Indian values, even the marrying choice of Tahera was molded by this tenant:

> How different her life would have been if she hadn’t insisted on marrying Ismail. Even from America, as her father wanted, there were other proposals. But she picked Ismail. “What’s wrong with being a practicing Muslim?” she’d argued. At least she wouldn’t be

> led astray on sinful paths, like Seema. She'd forced you and her father to give in. (Ahmed, 2010, 25)

By marrying a practicing Muslim "insisted on marrying Ismail", Tahera ensures that her cultural and religious identities are upheld in her marital life. By choosing a partner who shares her cultural and religious background, she embraces her native identity and contributes to its preservation. By selecting Ismail as her life companion, Tahera guarantees the continuation of Indian Muslim traditions for her children and future descendants as she assumes "At least she wouldn't be led astray on sinful paths."

Preservation is a decision diasporans make regarding their identity. It can be applied to religion, cultural signs like language, clothes, music, and sexuality, but the latter becomes a controversial angle in diasporic identity, full of tension and contradictions.

The following fragments from the novel impel readers that diasporic identity is not just a personal narrative but a tissue woven with the threads of tradition, adaptation, and the ever-present urge to safeguard the essence of self: "You shall not be a wayward girl, with many lovers. Do not ask about birth control—why would you need birth control? Do not get pregnant. [*] Decent girls do not think about sex." (Palasi Andreades, OUR MOTHERS' COMMANDMENTS)

The directive "You shall not be a wayward girl, with many lovers" speaks to the expectations placed upon the young girls by their first-generation diasporic parents. It mirrors the cultural norms and principles inherited by their

parents from their respective homelands—nations such as Pakistan, Ghana, and Jamaica.

Preservation is a cause of familial clash and a factor of identity formation and expression. The phrase "Do not ask about birth control—why would you need birth control?" indicates the dissonance between generations. The parent's perspective reflects their rootedness in traditional norms, wherein discussing matters related to birth control might be seen as taboo or unnecessary due to their adherence to more conservative ideals.

The injunction "Do not get pregnant" is connected to the parent's concerns about adhering to cultural norms and identity. This command is ingrained in their desire to protect their daughters and preserve their native identity.

The statement "Decent girls do not think about sex" flags up the clash between the preserved traditional cultural norms and evolving attitudes. It demonstrates the parents' attempts to reinforce conservative values while also manifesting the reality that their daughters are growing up in a different cultural context.

This passage features the motif of preservation within diasporic identity. The parents' insistence on adhering to traditional norms unlocks their desire to maintain a sense of continuity. The mothers' preservation continues to be publicized through their behaviors: “Our mothers and aunties, who cover their mouths when they laugh.” (Palasi Andreades, THIRST)

The phrase "our mothers and aunties, who cover their mouths when they laugh" addresses a specific cultural gesture that is not just a physical action. This

conduct bears an emotional connection to ancestral identity and behaviors. This act epitomizes the preservation and dissemination of ethnic tenets from the country of origin in the host land.

Propounding "our mothers and aunties" adds a generational dimension to the preservation of cultural norms. It draws attention to the role of mothers and older women as carriers of tradition, responsible for passing down not just cultural practices but also markers of identity to the next generation. The mothers ' identity is more native than their daughters and the preservation leads to treasuring what comes from motherland: “We carry seashells strung onto threads, decorative pieces for our grandmothers to hang by their bedroom windows.” (Palasi Andreades, THE THINGS WE CARRY)

The phrase "We carry seashells strung onto threads" elicits an image of the brown girls transporting these cultural objects. Seashells often hold significance in various cultures. They are symbols of connection to the sea, nature, and ancestral lands. By bringing these shells from their native lands to America, the girls symbolically bridge the physical gap between their current environment and their ancestral homelands by carrying an emblem of their original identity.

Stinging the seashells onto threads is a visual representation of continuity. The threads serve as a tangible link that binds the girls' experiences in their native lands to their lives in America. This action is possible to be seen as a metaphor for their own identities—woven between different places, times, and cultural legacies like the pearls of a necklace.

The "decorative pieces for our grandmothers to hang by their bedroom windows" add a personal and familial dimension to the act. The grandmothers are

preserving their identity by placing these seashells in their homes. Bringing seashells is a form of cultural preservation that transcends distance and time.

In a globalized world and a vast cosmopolitan country, diasporans are forced into a challenge of preservation (Paul Jacobet al 349), and the girls are a part of that challenge. Albeit, when they are in America, the diasporic daughters lean towards people and items that make all angles of their identities more American, such as their sexual identity, which is expressed with white Americans.

3.2.10. Sexual Identity in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

In the context of the United States, the pair of sexuality and diasporic identity among diasporans constitutes a complex and variegated area. Disclosure of sexual perspective within this diasporic framework augments the level of complexity (Reynolds and Zontini 387). Diasporic experience can empower some to challenge cultural norms and discus sexual orientation and gender identity. In contrast, it may intensify feelings of marginalization and cultural displacement for others. In Ahmed's novel, the concept of sexuality is part of the diasporic identity of characters, mainly Leigh and Seema: "Leigh asks her out on a date. Only later does Seema realize that she accepted because Leigh reminds her of Reshmi, her first teenage crush." (Ahmed,2010, 10)

The interlacing of diasporic identity expression and sexual identity is evident in Seema's decision to go on a "date" with Leigh, who reminds her of her first "teenage crush", Reshmi, and the three of them are women. Seema's decision to go on a date with Leigh reflects the complex interdependency of diasporic identity and sexual identity. Seema's exploration of her feelings for Leigh is influenced by her

cultural background, past experiences, and her understanding of her sexual orientation within the diasporic context.

Seema's decision to date Leigh exposes her drives, identity, and emotions, which are freed in America. The interaction of diasporic experiences and sexual identity provides a tunnel through which Seema traverses her sense of self as a diasporan with a controversial sexual identity:

> Seema’s name pops up, associated with various queer South Asian groups all over the country: Trikone in the Bay Area, SALGA in New York, Masala in Boston. There are photos of Seema with June Jordan, with Urvashi Vaid, with Pratibha Parmar, luminaries Leigh has only read about in class. Seema appears to have volunteered with queer organizations across the country and has even written articles for The Advocate and other queer publications. (Ahmed, 2010, 12)

Seema's expression of her sexual identity within the diasporic context of America is depicted through her involvement with various queer South Asian groups and queer organizations across the country. Seema, who "volunteered with queer organizations across the country" signifies a transformative process in which she breaks away from her home and Muslim family to embrace her sexual identity. Diasporic space is a place for sexual freedom where characters can find themselves in dichotomies and sinful or adulterous life (Karim and Nasir 129). Her journey of self-expression is shaped by both her diasporic background and her sexual identity, each influencing the other in complex ways.

Admiring the white boys physically, the attraction between boys and girls of two different races, and the sexual freedom that America offers can be analyzed under the lens of diasporic literary criticism because they contrast with the backgrounds of the girls. Lines from the novel convey: “We are experts because we’ve peeped through cracks right before our sisters shut their bedroom doors, boyfriends trailing behind them. Our parents are away working their usual twelve-, fourteen-hour shifts.” (Palasi Andreades, BRAS)

The phrase "We are experts because we've peeped through cracks right before our sisters shut their bedroom doors, boyfriends trailing behind them" portrays the girls' voyeuristic experiences, where they witness the intimate moments of their sisters' with their boyfriends. This voyeurism becomes a way for them to enroll with elements of sexuality and relationships that may contrast with the conservative values of their immigrant families.

Parents' extended work hours alludes to the lack of parental surveillance. This creates a space where the girls can explore their own identities and desires without the immediate constraints of family oversight, a symbol of the space that Diaspora provides for certain communities. This freedom contrasts with the restrictive cultural norms of their conservative diasporic families.

They got the chance to liberate their sexual identity because they were scattered from the native-dominated environment of their motherlands. The attraction to white boys rather than brown boys is another aftermath of Diaspora as evinced in the ensuing statement:

> That boy is FI-I-I-I-NE! we say to each other. It’s because he’s got that hair and those eyes! Sigh. I could stare at him all day. We watch

> from afar as these white boys hold hands with the Jessicas and Katelyns and Claires of our grade. While we daydream that it is us they take on their fathers' boats for midnight swims. If only we knew how to swim. Brown girls brown girls brown girls who profess a deep, unshakeable love for these boys who sometimes see them, but mostly don't. (Palasi Andreades, OTHER BOYS)

The junction of diasporic identity, sexual identity, and interracial relationships is evident as the brown girls express their attraction to white American boys. The phrase "That boy is FI-I-I-I-NE! We say to each other" vociferates the girls' admiration for white American boys. This attraction represents a desire to transcend their cultural and racial backgrounds. Describing "hair and those eyes" underlines the physical features that captivate the girls' attention.

The daydream of being taken on their fathers' boats for midnight swims embodies a longing for romantic experiences that might contrast with their conservative upbringing. It hints at a desire for freedom and adventure. In this case, diasporic identity is a moving, evolving branch. Throughout the novel, the girls' identity oscillates, but they spend more time on the white side. Another exemplification goes on: "WHITE BOYS TOUCH OUR skin. Beautiful, they say. Together, we lie on Central Park's springy grass." (Palasi Andreades, EVERYTHING WE EVER WANTED EVENTEEN)

The phrase "WHITE BOYS TOUCH OUR skin" encapsulates a significant moment of physical connection and intimacy between the brown girls and white boys. The touching transcends the confines of race. The emphasis on

"WHITE BOYS" speaks to the specificity of the experience, foregrounding the contrast between their backgrounds and the boys they are commingling with.

Lying "on Central Park's springy grass" paints a picture of a natural open environment. This setting contrasts with the confines of their families' cultural expectations, allowing the girls to explore personal connections more freely; the park symbolises an ample space for identity expansion. The image of lying on the grass represents a space where they can be themselves and craft paths beyond their cultural perimeters. Their connections represent their desire to connect, explore, and find a place outside the boundaries of their immigrant parents. The park's space where they practiced this side of their identity is ample. Even so, America can give diasporans a space for more hybrid identity expressions.

3.2.11. The Factor of Hybridity in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

In the United States, the concept of a hybrid diasporic identity emerges with diverse outcomes (Hakim and Nurhusna 15). This fusion encompasses traditions and values passed down through generations, melding with the forces of American culture. Within this interlinkage, the hybrid diasporic identity takes a stance. Although every element demonstrates hybridity, there are parts of the novel where hybrid identity is lucid: “Is that a Quran? I’ve never known Seema to have one.” (Ahmed, 2010, part 27)

Bill's surprise "Is that a Quran?" at finding Quran in Seema's home portends hybridity, as it is the holly Islamic book. Despite her homosexual activities and premarital sex, and the bottle of wine, there is a Quran in her house. There are traces of her native and Islamic identity, symbolized by the presence of Quran. This

ambiguity in Seema's identity reflects the multi-layered nature of diasporic experiences, where individuals mix various cultural, religious, and personal aspects.

Quran in Seema's home exhibits the fluidity of identity. She exemplifies diasporans who wander through their cultural and religious backgrounds while embracing new experiences and relationships. Seema's identity can be seen as a complex mosaic, where various elements, including her native culture, Islamic beliefs, and non-traditional relationships, converge to shape her hybrid diasporic experiences and sense of self.

While she celebrates her freedom and sexuality after leaving her motherland, Seema criticizes America, a fact that coincides with the Quran in her house: “Thank God I’m not an American citizen,” Seema says. “I wouldn’t be able to live with the hypocrisy.” (Ahmed, 2003- 2008, 7) Her attitude "I'm not an American citizen" criticism of perceived "hypocrisy" indicates an internal struggle in reconciling her diasporic experiences with her beliefs and values. Seema's assessment of American citizenship mirrors the development of her sense of self. Her diasporic perspective and experiences influence her views.

Seema's statement reflects a sense of ambivalence towards American citizenship and raises questions about her sense of belonging. She hints the complexities of diasporic integration while retaining aspects of native identity and assimilating to the American lifestyle as well. Seema's awareness of citizenship as a Diasporan ingrains Néstor García Canclini's explorations of citizenship as a fluid element in diasporic identity (90).

In the novel, there is a noticeable portrayal of hybridity through the character of Fiaz, a Muslim homosexual Diasporan. His following comment

exemplifies the essence of hybridity: "What, no drag queens in sarees?" Fiaz is shocked." (Ahmed,2003- 2008, 21)

In this quote, Fiaz's flabbergasted reply, "What, no drag queens in sarees?" reflects the concept of hybridity. The juxtaposition of drag queens, a prominent symbol of sexual culture, with Sarees, a traditional South Asian garment, exemplifies the blending and the conjunction of cultural elements.

The juxtaposition of drag queens and Sarees represents a process of identity hybridization. The convergence points for diverse cultures that originate from various elements, manifests hybridity within Diaspora (Bařinová 503). Not only is his comment on hybrid phenomena, but Fiaz's identity is also hybrid: "Fiaz is a Muslim, but he's a friend of Seema's, and like Seema, he has probably lapsed in his faith. But, he'd mentioned a mother who prayed at the mosque he took Tahera to on Saturday, and brought up in the United States, he may understand better than Seema and her mother." (Ahmed, 2010, 12)

Fiaz's "Muslim" identity and the fact that he "lapsed in faith" all exemplify the hybrid nature of diasporic identities. His experiences and beliefs demonstrate how diasporic individuals survive their religious background and also a diverse range of perspectives.

Fiaz's disillusionment with his belief system dwells on diverse religious encounters inside the zone of Diaspora. Diasporic individuals question identity and faith due to the influences of the broader society. Fiaz's lapses in faith also reflect the fluidity and the changeability of diasporic identity. He goes to the mosque and takes his mother to pray; he is a gay hybrid diasporic individual.

Unexpectedly, Tahera, the conservative mother, the loyal Diasporan for her original identity, goes into the phase of hybridity in the novel:

> If she had known that Seema had returned to her former ways, she still may have come to San Francisco, for Ammi's sake, but she would have known to hold her distance from Seema. Maybe this day is a warning, that the permissive comforts from her past life, which she'd been slipping back into so easily, are really distractions to her faith she needs to guard against, whatever Ammi may say. If she needs proof of how easy it is to forget the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet, then an account of her visit provides a list of temptations: the non-hala a list of temptations l chicken the very first night, the book of poetry, the steadily impairing association with Seema's friends, Seema's request of guardianship, the music, and tonight's dinner. She's been led to this point, step by step. (Ahmed, 2010, 30)

Tahera's reflections on her return to San Francisco and her interactions with Seema shed light on the intercourse between her hybrid diasporic identity and faith. Her experiences prompt her to contemplate the impact of her past life on her spiritual beliefs. Her dilemma concerning luxuries that divert her from Islam unveils the complexities of identity experience. She is torn between cultural influences, "her past life, which she'd been slipping back into" and the "teachings of Quran and the Prophet" and "a list of temptations". This delineates the involvedness of diasporic core.

Tahera's journey in Diaspora becomes a site of struggle and growth as she interacts with her hybrid identity, which combines diverse clashing elements. The quote hints at tensions between Tahera's past life and her present choices: "non-hala", "poetry", "Seema's friends", "Seema's request of guardianship", "the music", are all in the hands of hybridity.

As Seema's house witnesses hybridity with the gathering of her gay friends, the prayer of her sister the book of Quran and the bottle of wine, it also witnesses the hybridity of the whole diasporic family, the mother and her daughters: "Tahera, don't go," their mother pleads, in Urdu. "Seema, say something." "If she wants to go, let her go," Seema rasps, in English. "I'm not going to stop her. You came to see Ammi. Well, now you have—" (Ahmed, 2010, 32)

Characters' alternating between Urdu and English is a testament to manoeuvring cultural and linguistic spheres. Tahera's mother "pleads in Urdu" to emphasize connection to her native language, while Seema responds in English to reflect her immersion "in English "speaking diasporic environment. The situation is assign of a hybrid Diaspora.

Characters' contrasting languages prove that identity within the diasporic scheme is a blend rather than pure, hybrid rather than unalloyed, multilingual rather than monolingual. Because hybridity in the novel is apparent in clothes, houses, languages, practices, and beliefs, it is also a possibility waiting for Seema's unborn child:

> Tahera turns on him. “At least I am trying to live honestly and quietly, and by my understanding of the Quran. I will be able to answer to our Maker, but will you and Seema?” She pauses as

> though expecting Seema to respond. “Yes, you live very quietly!” Seema bites back with spite. “With your fatwas and your jihads and your suicide bombs. No wonder everyone is afraid of you, even in Irvine.” Tahera pales, pulls her jilbab tighter. “If that’s what you believe, then why did you ask me to be your “Child’s guardian? Why didn’t you ask your lover? Or your best friend? Nobody who shared your liberal values was willing?” Leigh’s hand in Seema’s goes slack. “You asked your sister to be Ishraaq’s guardian?” “Oh, you didn’t know?” Tahera’s laugh is bitterly strident. Ahmed, 2003-2008, 32)

The upcoming baby's identity is going to be influenced by Seema's hybrid diasporic identity and her approach to parenting. The quote raises questions about how Seema's values and identity will be transmitted to her child and how his identity will evolve in the diasporic context.

Seema's criticism of Tahera's beliefs and the questioning of Ishraaq's guardianship showcase the intertwined relation of cultural and religious values even for future diasporic breeds. The conversation between the sisters brings to light the forthcoming puzzlements and uncertainties regarding the identity of future diasporan babies. His aunt's "understanding of the Quran", "fatwas", and "jihads" are interpreted as "suicide bombs" by his mother. His hybrid future is the present for his grandmother:

> You’ve seen today—finally, at the dinner with Seema’s partner and friend—the contours of the life Seema could lead. But you’ve not been given time to grapple with the knowledge; you’ve once again

> been asked to pick sides, this time between the two daughters you'd hoped to bring together as your last act of motherly consideration. The rift you'd come to heal has ripped open wider than it had been before. (Ahmed,2003- 2008, 37)

This depicts diasporic identity and hybridity, particularly in the context of a mother's relationship with her daughters. Nafeesa is trying to persist and absorb the fact that her two daughters have taken on different identities. The mother is caught in the middle and is asked to "pick sides" between them.

The idea of hybridity is particularly relevant here, as the mother embodies the "in-between" space, caught between her cultural background, the new culture, her daughters' differences, and the unknown and mostly hybrid future of her grandson.

The concept of diasporic identity is also central to this quote. Seema's partner and friend represent the new culture that she has embraced. While the mother represents the culture of their origin, she struggles to understand the differences between her and her daughters. The "rift" that has "ripped open wider than it had been before" is a metaphor for the division in the family's identity.

Seema, Tahera, Nafesa, Arshad, Amina, Leigh, and Fiaz are all tied to one pillar: Diaspora whether they are directly tied to it, like Seema and Tahera, or indirectly linked to it, like Ishraq, Amina and Arshad, their cleaving identities are attached to it.

The many worlds, critical tone, western epistemology, fragmentation, irony, the dual perspective of the diasporic girls are all evidence of hybridity as the

following quote declaims: "Some of us are placed in Freshman English Honors, where we learn words, and what a mouthful they are, words like Western Epistemology and The Western Canon. The Pinnacle of Civilization, etcetera, etcetera. But what exactly is The West? Are we The West? Is The West in us?" (Palasi Andreades, WESTERN EPISTEMOLOGY)

The placement of some brown girls in Freshman English Honors symbolizes their immersion in Western educational systems, which introduces them to concepts like "Western Epistemology" and "The Western Canon" This exposure mirrors their involvement in Western academic cultures.

The repetition of "etcetera" reinforces the mosaic hybrid ideas. The girls are part of a state or period in which a society has achieved the highest levels of advancement, progress, and sophistication and so on. The questions about "The West" unmask their internal dialogue about how they fit into the broader cultural context of America, even if they like it.

The questions "Are we The West? Is The West in us?" epitomize the core of their hybrid diasporic identity. These inquiries reflect their introspection regarding how their diverse backgrounds are meeting with their current lives in America. "The West in us" italicizes the idea of cultural fusion, doubts, and inclination.

The brown girls' hybrid experiences and perspectives are a confluence of Pakistani, Nigerian, Mexican and American cultures. This hybridity is demonstrated in their questioning, appreciation and scepticism. This passage aligns with the theme of identity hybridity within Diaspora. The contrasting attitudes of the young girls unwrap their hybrid essence. Furthermore, even their parents' essences release hybridity: “Those men, our families say, are aggressive. They drink too much and

gamble their money away and never come home and who knows where they'll be. They're unreliable, violent. Our parents add, Aren't you scared?" (Palasi Andreades, YOUR OWN KIND)

The statement, "Those men, our families say, are aggressive," encapsulates parents' perceptions about certain individuals in their native countries, as here they are criticizing the brown boys they wanted their girls to love. The word "aggressive" implies judgment.

The description "drink too much and gamble their money away and never come home" corroborates parents' worries about specific behaviors that might lead to adverse outcomes. The characterization of these people as "unreliable, violent" conveys parents' anxiety about the potential negative influences that might affect their girls who were born in America and visit their motherlands.

These concerns stem from a connection to America and a desire to distance themselves from specific elements of their homelands and people from similar ethnic backgrounds. The parents' question, "Aren't you scared?" discloses their genuine concern for their brown daughters.

The reluctance to allow their daughters involvement with particular individuals from the same ethnic background becomes a clear indication of hybridity when contrasted with their previous fear from white boy. This complex situation wherein they advocate for their daughters' affection and marriage within their own cultural group while simultaneously casting negative judgments on individuals from the same race points out contradiction and hybridity.

This contradiction divulges the presence of a hybrid identity, as this fusion of perspectives epitomizes how identity is formulated and how individuals respond to it. Contradictions and ironies continue to show up as buds in the rhizomatic branch of the characters' diasporic identity via sarcastic comments: “We are the grateful brown people. Thank you for colonizing our ancestors’ countries, for the wars and dictators! We are so thankful for your civilizing religion and visas! Oh thank you, thank you, thank you. Still, no matter which details you replace, keep the sentiment—that we are outsiders—the same.” (Palasi Andreades, EVERYTHING WE EVER WANTED)

The statement "we are the grateful brown people" establishes the tone of sarcasm. The girls adopt a facetious gratitude to challenge the historical realities of colonization, war, and other oppressive forces that have affected their ancestral countries. By adopting this ironic perspective, they bring attention to the power dynamics and injustices associated with colonial history.

The phrase "Thank you for colonizing our ancestors' countries, for the wars and dictators!" contrasts gratitude and colonialism. This contrast emphasizes the complicatedness of their feelings, and illustrates how their diasporic identity is shaped by the network of historical contradicted events. Veritably, "civilizing religion and visas" touches on the effects of religious and political influences from the West on their ancestral lands. The use of irony here demonstrates the multifunctional nature of these influences. The girls know that their essence is made of many ingredients.

The repetition of "thank you, thank you, thank you" validates the satirical tone of the passage. The final statement, "Still, no matter which details you

replace, keep the sentiment—that we are outsiders—the same" enrobes the central theme of the girls' diasporic identity. The ironic sense of gratitude exhibited by the girls, coupled with their incisive commentary, exemplifies the process of steering their heritage and their present domicile. Sarcasm is a literary device that allows them to convey their layered feelings and perspectives. The girls admired blond singers and dated white boys, but after all, they are aware of the blood that runs in their veins, as written here:

> American—Is that what we are? we slyly ask our cousins, the ones who tour us around and know these lands in ways we never will. Yes, because you were born in the States, they tell us. Or, No, you have Mexican, Filipino, Guyanese, Panamanian, Indian, Haitian, Chinese blood —how could you be anything else? (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

The opening question, "American—Is that what we are?" illuminates the girls' contemplative and skeptical perspective on their identity. This uncertainty reflects their ongoing exploration of how they fit into the American context and their awareness of their identity.

The exchange with their cousins—"Yes, because you were born in the States" or "No, you have [various cultural backgrounds] blood—how could you be anything else?" captures the complexities of diasporic identity. The cousins' responses bring to the fore identity's detailed nature as a product of birthplace and ancestral places.

Incorporating diverse cultural origins within the cousins' response is a depiction of the multiplicity that molds the girls' identity. The girls' interactions with

their cousins transport readers into a negotiation of both their native and American identity. The exchange with the cousins reflects the broader societal discussions and self-explorations that individuals in the Diaspora often perform as an embodiment of hyphenated identity (Mishra13); the hyphen between two words is the diasporans between two worlds.

The repetition of "We leave, we leave, we leave" emphasizes the recurring pattern of movement and migration that characterizes their lives. The line "It is in our blood to leave" connects dispersion and roots. The phrase "But perhaps it's also in our blood to return" authentically embodies their complex identity, which once made them want to laugh at the national anthems of other countries.

The rhetorical question, "Why did we ever believe home could only be one place?" calls attention to the girls' realization that the notion of home is multidimensional. This question challenges the idea of a singular homeland and invites consideration of hybrid belonging, with individuals in- between different identities (Bhabha 39).

The conjure of perspective "When existing in these bodies means holding many worlds within us" is submerged in hybrid identity. This line magnifies their ability to embody diverse cultural elements and carry multiple worlds within themselves. It reflects that their identity is a composite of various influences, experiences, and memories. The girls' inner struggles, uncertainties, and revelations about their own hybrid identities are in the following passage as well: "All of us, instead, learn to make our own worlds. We have come to comprehend that we inhabit many worlds at once." (Palasi Andreades, JENNY)

The phrase "All of us, instead, learn to make our own worlds" reflects the girls' adaptability and resilience in crafting their identities. This phrase suggests that their identity is not solely defined by external influences but also by their active role in shaping their narratives. In other words, they are determined to evolve their identity by taking command, and looking around.

The assertion, "We have come to comprehend that we inhabit many worlds at once" reinforces their awareness of their multifolded identities. This realization foregrounds the girls' recognition of their ability to straddle different cultural realms because they are diasporic.

The concept of "many worlds" implies the coexistence of various cultural, geographical, and social spheres. This mirrors hybridity and bipolar movement between diverse facets and confrontation. Then, "comprehend" connotes a profound understanding that has developed over time. From a literary perspective, this passage showcases how succinct statements can convey insights into identity. Diaspora means going through circuitous routes.

3.3. Conclusion

To finish this chapter, it can be said that identities of Seema, Tahera, Nafeesa, Fiaz, Leigh, Amina, Arshad, Bill, the unborn baby, and the group of Brown Girls and their families contribute to multicultural, yet shapeless America. The stripes in the American flag should not be straight and organized to simulate the state of the states. Simultaneously, characters identities are influenced by the place and the past. This analytical chapter denotes that social and political activism,

diverse avenues of assimilation, artistic creation, culinary, arts, and language offer characters channels through which they project their self-perceptions. Building upon the previous analyses, the concept of diasporic identity is segmented into subparts that are exposed by Nawaaz Ahmed and Daphne Palasi Andreades. The selected quotes explain how preservation, oppositions, ironies, freedoms, sarcasm, hybridity and contradictions make diasporic identity a large, complicated web. The latter is adhesive and while characters try to navigate it, the globalized world throws technological items on them.

Chapter Four

Technology in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Contents

> "Digital media affordances in this sense are just such new configurations that enable, sustain and multiply diasporic encounters through social media platforms, digital devices and infrastructures." (Laura Candidatu& Sandra Ponzanesi,261)

4.1. Introduction

Technology is a cornerstone in the diasporic infrastructure. Displacement and leaving homelands and continents were always cultivated by travel technology such as ships and planes. Now communication and display technology, the internet, and all information technologies and gadgets sew more ties, build more bridges, and add depth to Diasporans' lives. This reality is manifested in the novels under study: *Radiant Fugitives* by Nawaaz Ahmed and *Brown Girls* by Daphne Palasi Andreades.

4.2. Technology and Transnational Relationships in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

For the contemporary American Diaspora, technology serves as a facilitator of transnational connections. It plays a role in the way individuals of varied backgrounds interface with their homelands or other lands. Smartphones, social media platforms, and research tools have surmounted geographical confines and allowed Diasporic communities to cultivate ties and to be in touch with their identities. The scattering is a polydimensional phenomenon, and connection is one of its dimensions.

Technology raises critical questions about identity, home, memory, multicultural relations, and many other themes related to the Diaspora because of its impact on bonds and mindsets. Hence, the exploration of technology is essential to

analyze transnational connections in literature as exemplified here: “Seema had joined Bill on a work trip to Singapore, and they flew to Chennai for the weekend. They met her mother at her aunt’s place one evening.” (Ahmed, One, 2010, 39)

The quote elucidates a web of transnational connections that tie Diaspora and technology. Seema’s father disallows her from entering the family’s house in Chennai, but she and her husband strive to make connections. Bill and Seema represent the African and Indian Diasporas, respectively. Their decision to commence a work trip to “Singapore” and then to “Chennai” for a weekend excursion underpins the transformative role of technology in shaping Diasporic experiences and decisions. The affordances of modern travel technology, such as international flights, permit Bill and Seema to traverse geographical boundaries. This symbolizes technology's ability to bridge the gap between their Diasporic identities, ancestral lands, and other aspects of their life that are inescapably connected to their diasporic side. They can move back and forth between countries.

In this instance, technology is the facilitator of familial connections. It allows for cultural bonds to be preserved as Seema tries to reunite with her family, reaffirming her Indian Diasporic identity while living in America. Later in the novel, Seema's mother travels to America to be with her daughters, and despite being far from her motherland, technology enables her to reconnect with it: “You flip through them, excited. You’ve been searching for these discs for many years, the cassettes you owned not playing anymore. You try to remove the cover of the Noor Jehan CD.” (Ahmed, Three, 2010,15)

Nafeesa's enthusiasm over the “CD” of Indian entertainment from Seema’s friend Fiaz reflects the evocative role of technology in transnational connections and

in bringing the homeland to the host land. Nafeesa's eagerness to explore the contents of “The Noor Jehan CD” articulates the significance of such technological mediums in bridging geographical and cultural divides.

The inability of her older cassettes to play attests to the inevitable technological advancements that mark the Diasporic experience. Uncovering the CD is a meeting with culture by means of technology. Through this act, Nafeesa interacts not only with the music but also with a sense of nostalgia and longing for her homeland.

The CDs, as a form of digital storage technology, serve as a conduit for her to access and relish Indian entertainment culture. Through them, she transcends the physical and temporal distance between her American residence and her Indian home. The CD content that brings Indian culture to the Diasporic Nafeesa can be considered a means of transnational connection.

The novel excavates the impact of technology on Diaspora individuals' perceptions of their ancestral lands, and interaction with their native language with many contradictions and surprises in the plot: “In these countries, we expect palm trees but are met with gleaming skyscrapers. We expect pristine beaches like the photos that populate Instagram feeds and travel blogs and subway ads but discover shores littered with plastic bags and warning signs: polluted water, beach closed.” (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

The quote ruminates the dissonance between the expectations of the brown girls and the reality they encounter when visiting their fatherlands. Photos and records on these Web portals, like Instagram and travel blogs, create elevated

images. This contrast between expectation and reality lifts the impact of technology on the Diasporic girls' perceptions of place.

Broaching "The photos that populate Instagram feeds and travel blogs and subway ads" points at the role of technology in channeling and catalyzing the experiences of Diasporic individuals. It is through these platforms that they reconnect with their roots land, and see it from afar. This technology serves as a bridge that allows Diaspora individuals to maintain a connection with their forebears, even when physically distant. This is an act of transnationalism.

The transcontinental voyage undertaken by the young ladies encompasses the assimilation of various digital apparatuses: "Some of us must rely on translators, human (our cousins) and nonhuman (apps on our smart phones). What do you mean you never learned the language?" (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

The quote enunciates the language drought that Diaspora seeds experience when they visit their homeland. In this case, the brown girls, who were born in America and are more comfortable with English, have not acquired proficiency in the native language of their ancestral land.

The quote discusses the functionality of both human translators (cousins) and nonhuman ones "Nonhuman (apps on our smart phones)". The reliability of translation apps ascertains the role of technology as a facilitator of communication in the Diasporic experience. These apps provide a practical solution for bridging the language gap; they allow the brown girls to connect with their relatives and the local

community. Technology, in the form of translation apps, serves as a means of transnational connection for them.

The reference to both human and nonhuman translators can be a symbol of the detailed nature of displacement. This complexity does not mean that technology is not assistance for well-being in the experience too.

4.3 Technology and Well-Being in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Technology plays a cardinal role in upgrading the lives of Diasporans in America by facilitating connections to their cultural, social, and familial descent and by providing sources of pleasure and entertainment for them as a community with emotional complexities (Hiller and Franz 740). Technology furnishes tools that align with individuals' chosen and enacted personas. For the sake of demonstration, Arshad's spiritual belief criss-crosses with technology:

> Arshad starts out softly, with the surah he's memorized for the Quran recitation competition in the fundraiser, his voice thin and high. As he grows more confident, he grows louder. Arshad has been learning Quran recitation in his Sunday school and plans to memorize the entire Quran. The class is run by Imam Zia, who's complimented Arshad on his progress. Arshad's tajwid has improved remarkably since he started practicing pronunciation accompanying the computer program his mother found for him, which displayed renderings of the correct shape of the mouth and placement of the tongue alongside the corresponding syllables. (Palasi Andreades 2010, 20)

Arshad's improved Tajwid pronunciation of the Quranic text through the use of a "computer program" foregrounds the role of technology in the educational and cultural development of Diasporic individuals. It also draws attention to the agency of mothers like Tahera in using technology to facilitate children's connection to their cultural and religious practices.

In Diaspora, access to resources for learning and practicing specific cultural or religious skills can be limited. Technology builds a bridge that enables individuals like Arshad to absorb and preserve their cultures and religions. In the novel, both Arshad's parents use technology to build a Diasporic child who is attached to his bloodline: "_"Abba," Arshad says, stopping the practice track he'd been listening to on his MP3 player. "It's okay, I'm sure you did very well. It's not about winning." (Palasi Andreades,2010, 30)

Arshad's use of an MP3 player to access the tajwid practice "track" demonstrates how technology again serves as a valuable tool for Diasporic individuals to be involved with their cultural and religious practices. In this case, the "MP3 player" offers a convenient and accessible instrument for Arshad to practice and improve his tajwid. This use contributes to his sense of connection to his cultural identity and therefore his well-being. Technology, through the use of the MP3 player, has enabled Arshad to take part in this practice independently. By extension, Arshad embodies the continuation of cultural traditions within Diaspora through the application of technology.

Children of Diaspora are not the only category whose well-being is enhanced by technology; the following elicitation delineates the future wellness of Bill. A wellbeing that he tries to ensure with the help of technology: "To reassume

the title of father he so cavalierly renounced and become the father he never had. But Seema's number comes up disconnected, and his emails go unanswered. He calls her office, but she always manages to elude him." (Palasi Andreades,2010, 38)

With Bill and Seema's "email" communication, this quote exemplifies the impact of technology on human relationships which is a common theme in contemporary literature. The discord between the Diasporic couple is evident, as Seema deliberately refrains from talking with Bill, who is trying to fulfill his role as the father of their imminent child.

Bill's attempts to establish contact with Seema prove futile, both in person and via various technological means. This technological disconnect is a symbol of the growing emotional chasm. It accentuates the function of technology that fails or succeeds: "A year after Tahera joined her husband in Irvine, their mother gave Seema Tahera's phone number and address, expressing a forlorn wish that the sisters look out for each other." (Palasi Andreades,2003- 2007, part 10)

The quote brings to the fore family bonds within Diaspora. Nafeesa, the mother, is concerned about her daughters, Tahera and Seema, who are separated. Tahera is settled with her husband in Irvine and Seema is in San Francesco.

Nafeesa's action of giving Tahera's "phone number" and address to Seema is a clear example of using technology (in this case, phone and address information) to stimulate and maintain connections and well-being within Diaspora.

The act of Nafeesa giving Seema Tahera's contact information reflects her concern for the well-being of her daughters. She wishes for them to "look out for each other." Technology, in this case, serves as a tool to ensure their safety and

connection. The mother wants her Diasporic daughters to communicate. The quote is not the only one in the novel that underlines technology's function in communication for Diasporans.

The use of technology enhances the lives of Diasporans and gives them a sense of wellbeing (Sharmila and Mohamed Sahul Hameed 135). This is ensured and seen through the novel by providing various facilities, utilities, and layers to their lives: "We listen to the radio. Aaliyah croons, Boy, I been watching you like a hawk in the sky that fly but you were my prey…" (Palasi Andreades, NIGHT)

"The radio" in Palasi Andreades's writing acts as a source of entertainment and connection for the young girls. Music, radio shows, and other forms of media can provide a sense of familiarity and comfort for Diasporans to feel a sense of belonging and wellbeing.

The girls of a non-white ethnic background in the novel live in prosperity through other means of technology: "We catch the subway to West 4th, head to the indie theater, IFC, across the street from McDonald's and a basketball match taking place on the weathered court. Glimpse the sweat on the players' foreheads as they dart and pivot, slam dunk. At IFC, we buy tickets to the Miyazaki films playing marathon-style." (Palasi Andreades, DUTY)

Heading to an indie theater, IFC, to watch Miyazaki films showcases projection technology, which emblematizes entertainment and leisure for Diaspora's granddaughters. Cinema offers an immersive and enjoyable experience. Shared activities and moments of leisure, especially those achieved through technology and entertainment, can strengthen their sense of community and well-being. Technology

has played an integral part in the whole life of the girls. It channels their emotions, and allows them to communicate.

4.4. Technology and Communication in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Technology serves as a conduit of interaction for the American Diaspora. Social media, messaging apps, and video conferencing platforms create spaces for cultural exchange and support networks. To continue, the following statement is about technology under the shadow of Diaspora: “The phone rings. Seema answers, cautioning Leigh that the call is from her mother.” (Palasi Andreades, 2010, 13)

This simple quote encapsulates a complex web of Diasporic experiences, familial connections, and the transformative role of technology in forwarding communication among Diasporans in America with “The Phone Rings”. Seema is with the woman she loves, in a relationship that her mother’s culture and mind cannot accept. Thus, the cautioning of Leigh hints at the importance of these calls as they collide with the aftermaths of Diaspora. Answering “the call” symbolizes communication and care which is delivered through technology again in the novel: “I miss you,” Amina says to Tahera. “Do you miss me?” “I miss you too, Ammu,” Tahera says, blowing a kiss into the phone.” (Palasi Andreades, 2010, 19)

The interaction between Amina in Irvine and her mother Tahera in San Francesco is the writer's way to demonstrate the motif of communication and technology. Tahera, a mother who is with her Diasporic family; her pregnant sister, a mother, her daughter, and Amina, who is with her father and brother Arshad, are all connected through technology. The call underlines the role of technology in maintaining connections. The use of the phone as a medium for communication "a

kiss into the phone" in this context marks how technology becomes the lifeline for Diasporic individuals. It allows them to hear each other's voices, share emotions, and convey affection.

Moreover, the fact that Tahera is at Seema's house in San Francisco while Amina is in Irvine exemplifies the Diasporic experience of being dispersed across various locations within the United States. The idea of technology's role in communication between Diasporans in America continues to be a part of Seema and Bill's relationship: "Seema leaves messages, which he deletes without listening. She emails him insisting he's wrong, she means to bring up the baby alone if he doesn't want to be involved." (Palasi Andreades,2010, 38)

This quote, featuring Seema's "emails" communication with Bill regarding their unborn child, offers a glimpse into the convoluted dynamics of Diasporic relationships and the role of technology in handling these entanglements. Seema's tools to communicate are emails.

In this case, "messages" and email serve as an instrument for Seema to assert her autonomy and intentions regarding the child. This idea reinforces technology's role in Diasporic interpersonal, familial, and emotional fluctuations. The Diasporic couple and technology appear together in the succeeding flashback: "Ammi first demurred but then asked to be put on the speakerphone. "I wish you both a long and happy married life." Then to Bill: "Please take care of my daughter. And Bill took her hands in his and raised them to his lips as if for Ammi to see. "I will." (Ahmed, 2003- 2008,15)

This quote spots a phone call between Nafeesa and her daughter. Ammi's (the mother) request to be put on a “speakerphone” italicizes the job of technology in facilitating communication within Diasporic families.

In this context, the phone call becomes a symbolic bridge between India and America, connecting a mother to her daughter and son-in-law in their new life together as a Diasporic couple. Their usage of technology can be also contemplated from this angle:

> What can he say that he hasn’t said to her in so many emails and messages before? He realizes he must appeal to her mother, get her to continue playing a part. She’d gotten Seema to at least accept his presence. “Mrs. Hussein, I want you to know how sorry I am for behaving so badly toward your daughter. Seema deserves better. She’s the best thing that ever happened to me, and I let her down. (Ahmed,2010, 11)

The proliferation of “emails and messages” in Diasporic life mirrors the broader function of technology in sustaining relationships within Diasporans in America. Bill's reluctance to rely on yet another email or message suggests a desire for more profound, direct, and traditional forms of communication that are elusive in the digital age. Seema and Bill use technology to communicate and to destroy the walls of their tangled relationship. Yet in other parts of the novel, characters use technology to access specific content, not just people.

Technology for diasporans is a software or hardware that can unlock many possibilities. Accordingly, excerpts from the novel renders the role of technology as

a source and as a tool of entertainment, connection, familiarity, comfort, sense of belonging, and communication: “Flying through the streets, we remember an incident from earlier in the week, a memory we’d hoped to repress. During happy hour with our coworkers and bosses, on dates with people we’d met through apps.” (Palasi Andreades, AMNESIA)

The quote records the Diasporic brown girls in their professional environment interacting with coworkers and bosses during "happy hour" and on dates. Social interactions through apps in contemporary literature reflect the realities of modern life. This sub-theme explores how technology and globalization impact human experiences, relationships, and cultural identity.

For Diasporic individuals, technology can serve as a tool for connecting with their peers, bosses, and colleagues, as if technology in this context is a face from the coin of assimilation. While expanding their branches the girls touch American bosses and co-workers through "apps." In other parts of the novel, they use it to communicate with people from their blood: “Some of our brothers simply vanish, and every day we wait for an email, a text.” (Palasi Andreades, THE LUCKY ONES)

This quote explores the theme of Diaspora. It specifically addresses the relationship of the brown girls with their brothers and the role of technology. The brown boys, when unable to settle for a stable, peaceful, healthy life, go down the illegal path, helpless and angry, but their brown sister cares even if their paths unlock better doors.

In Diaspora context, family connections often remain a central aspect of cultural identity and the whole experience, even throughout generations. Waiting for "an email, a text" brings to the forefront the role of technology in this relation. In addition to communicating with bosses, co-workers, and brothers, the girls communicate with their friends: "On the phone with our friends that evening—guess who I saw on the boulevard? Man, he was pathetic! We practice slimming our noses with makeup. We have grown skilled in the art of dissembling." (Palasi Andreades, YOUR OWN KIND)

Contemporary literature excavates the ramifications of self-identity, body image, and the influence of societal norms and media. The girls avoid the "pathetic" brown boys, those with mixed races in Diaspora. Conversely, they idolize white boys, and they speak about them on the phone. Therefore, in this section, the brown girls and their friends admire American beauty standards, and the "phone" is the medium of communication between them about this vital nexus in Diaspora.

Their friends extricate them from their race, and the phone is the rope. The phone here is a technological tool for their self-expression and freedom of communication. Later on, when they grow up, the phone becomes a medium of communication with their mothers as they leave them and chase their aspirations in the wide wilderness of America: "Come visit, our mothers say on the phone." (Palasi Andreades, OUR NOT-REFLECTIONS)

This part of the novel divulges the adult girls building their lives as second-generation Diasporans in America, the role of technology in maintaining connections with their first-generation Diasporic mothers back in Queens. They are successful women with different working careers in luxurious buildings and with

white husbands, but mothers are in the residue of Queens, still worried about their daughters who moved away from their Diasporic inceptions.

The phrase "Come visit, our mothers say on the phone" emphasizes the importance of technology, particularly phones, in sustaining connections between second-generation and first-generation Diasporans. The phone can be seen as a threshold between generations and distances. Concomitantly, the writer sheds light on another threshold in other passages.

4.5 Technology and Access to Cultural Content and Resources in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Through the seamless transmission of art, music, literature, and historical narratives, technology empowers Diasporans to reaffirm their ties to their adopted homeland. It serves the dynamic cultural exchange that enriches not only their lives but also the global cultural mosaic (Randall 15). This digital age has ushered in an era of unprecedented cultural exposition, reception, fusion, and celebration. This point is reattached to Arshad's usage of technology to learn tajwid and to find other content:

> Arshad knows why his father spent the evening outside, monitoring the parking lot. The world he's seen on TV and on the internet is hostile. The nation is at war with them. Even their president, who claims to support them, thinks nothing of ordering drones to drop bombs and kill their people all over the world, under the excuse of fighting terrorism. Arshad has read on various internet sites—at his school library, since browsing is not permitted at home—that

> President Obama has sent more drones than any previous president, including George W. Bush, and has increased the size of American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Arshad imagines with a shudder a missile tearing through the air and their mosque exploding in a blast of light and fire. (Palasi Andreades,2010part 30)

The words typify how technology serves as both a window to the homeland and the disquieting information that can affect migrants. The Internet and television provide information about homelands and conflicts. This accessibility supplies members of the Diaspora with realities. Here, Arshad, the young boy who is a child of Diasporic parents, witnesses the defacement of his city's mosque, an incident that affects his outlook and how he uses technology.

The images of "TV" "internet" and "internet sites" evoke emotional responses. Technology exposes Arshad to political content but in other parts, characters are exposed to cultural content: "The Mughal emperor Akbar in your family's favorite movie. Your family never missed a chance to watch it, either on TV or in a local theatre." (Palasi Andreades, 2010, 41)

Citing the Mughal emperor Akbar as the family's favorite "movie" ruminates the influence of cinema and technology on Diasporic identities and cultures. When Nafeesa is sitting with her daughters Seema and Tahera, finding delightful moments and putting their disputes aside, they use technology as a connecting clasp.

For Diasporic communities, especially those of South Asian descent in America, cinema serves as a significant conduit for maintaining connections to their

cultural lineage and history. The enduring influence of the Akbar movie alludes to the fact that technology fulfills a role in preserving and transmitting culture.

Whether viewed on “TV” or in local theaters, these cinematic experiences become a shared cultural touchstone for Diasporans that transcends geographical boundaries. And because the novel is written in separate nonlinear sections, the next pages reintroduce Arshad's dealings with the internet: “I don’t want you to think about such things,” Ismail says, leading him out of the room, gripping Arshad’s shoulders. “And don’t go looking again on the internet. I want you to forget all about this.” (Ahmed, 2010, 44)

By prohibiting his son Arshad from accessing certain internet content “don’t go looking again on the internet "Ismail reflects the unfathomable relationship between technology and the Muslim American Diaspora. After the attack on Irvin’s Mosque, the young Muslim Diasporic boy is curious to know the history of this clash. Ismail's actions are driven by concerns about the potential impact of internet exposure on Arshad's perception of his Diasporic identity and his place in American society. In earlier interactions, Arshad imagined a missile falling on the mosque in his city.

The act of leading Arshad out of the room and instructing him to forget about the content heightens the role of technology, specifically the internet, as a source of information and influence within Diasporic communities. Ismail protects his son Arshad from detrimental or divisive narratives that can impact his experience as a Muslim in the American Diaspora.

This quote raises important questions about the role of parental guidance and authority in using digital tools within Diasporic families. It emphasizes how Diaspora parents, like Ismail, preserve cultural and religious values while allowing their children to partake in broader society through technology. Ismail's vigilance stems from the enigmatic role of technology in the formation of identity. The interaction between parents and their children with regard to technology resurfaces in the context of Nafeesa and her daughters' experience in America: “Grandmother, you are playing a role tonight. You and your daughters are gathered in the living room watching TV—an Indian reality show.” (Ahmed, 2010, 47)

The gathering of Nafeesa and her daughters in the living room to watch an Indian reality show conveys the themes of technology and Diaspora. She likes doing that to revive the memories of her daughters when they were little girls in India watching television together. Technology, in the form of television, becomes a medium through which Diasporans become engrossed with their cultures. The act of “watching TV” for “an Indian reality show” serves as a cultural lifeline for Nafeesa and her daughters. Television is an apparatus to preserve and celebrate Diasporic identities.

Moreover, the inclusion of the term "Indian reality show" underlines the significance of media and entertainment in Diasporic life. When turning on TV to watch Indian content, the diasporic women enjoy it, but when they turn it on to watch American content, other emotions and attitudes evolve, as Ahmed writes: “But her point is that America cannot be allowed to value the lives of others any less than the lives of its own citizens. For when she watches the TV coverage she sees

only rabid cheerleading from the American newscasters—predominantly White men and women." (Ahmed, 2003- 2008, 7)

This quote italicizes the critical role of technology, specifically "TV coverage" in shaping Diasporic perspectives and attitudes within the American context (Patterson 1092). It foregrounds media as a lens through which Diasporans see and deal with society. In this scenario, television is a primary source of information for the activist Seema, who enjoys being in America and not in another country that does not provide any privileges.

The portrayal of American newscasters as predominantly white men and women elevates the potential influence of media representation on Diasporic attitudes and perceptions. In essence "watching TV" emphasizes the interconnected themes of technology, media, and Diaspora. Seema's usage of TV as a source of information is elaborated upon below: "The lone source she holds on to desperately is Al Jazeera reporting from Baghdad, with its pictures of a city in fiery ruins, of bloodied dead and dying. (Ahmed, 2003- 2008, 7)

The examined quote substantiates a facet of the Diasporic experience where technology helps Diasporans access information; Seema depends on "Al Jazeera's reporting from Baghdad." She watches news about American soldiers in Iraq and Saddam Hussein, therefore The media is Seema's doorway to faraway places. Technology in this novel does not only serve as a doorway for the Diasporic characters; it is also a thread.

Cultural heterogeneity and the shared experiences among the brown Diasporic girls and their appreciation of American symbols after being exposed to them by technological items are demonstrated here: “One aunt gives us manicures every Sunday. Another squirts poopcolored henna onto our palms, sketches lotus flowers. One cousin lets us listen to her collection of country CDs—Dolly, Shania, the Dixie Chicks— her most prized possessions.” (Palasi Andreades, DUTIES)

The communal appreciation for American country music is an indicator of cultural assimilation. The use of “CDs” to listen to American country music exemplifies the role of technology as a means of cultural exploration, expression, and entertainment. Beyond dispute, the girls despise the representations of their primordial culture, including “poopcolored henna” a traditional product. They prefer a western product with western culture.

While CDs may seem outdated compared to digital streaming platforms, they remain an important cultural artifact in this context. CDs represent a tangible connection to music. They allow the girls to curate and share their music preferences that are American rather than African, Asian, or South American. They also plunge into technological means to catch the identifiers of American culture: “We rub a shimmery gold powder onto our cheekbones like they do in YouTube videos, TV commercials, magazines. Here, gimme. I said, GIVE IT TO ME! Never mind that our noses remain wide and flat.” (Palasi Andreades, OPTICAL ILLUSIONS)

In this recount, the girls are immersed in American media culture, exposed to beauty standards and makeup techniques popularized in mainstream American media. They even used make-up colors that fit fairer girls.

The main characters are using “YouTube videos and TV commercials” not only for communication but also for learning and adopting. The girls' makeup techniques learned from online sources reflect their efforts to find their place within mainstream American culture. Screens in the novel remain an integral part of the Diasporic girls' existence.

4.6. Technology as a Means of Networking in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Technology serves as the linchpin for the construction of networks that straddle geographical distances, transcend generational gaps, and accommodate cultural differences. In the age of connectivity, which knows no bounds, digital tools and online platforms have become the cornerstones of Diasporic solidarity and empowerment (Meyer and Wattiaux, 7). Virtual gatherings, social media, and digital forums link individuals, families, friends, and communities across the spectrum of the American Diaspora: “You agree to talk to Seema. Bill thanks you profusely, pressing your hands between his saucer-sized palms. He gives you his phone number, asks you to call him if you have any news, or need any help, anything at all.” (Ahmed, 2010, 37)

In the quoted passage from the novel *Radiant Fugitives*, the exchange of phone numbers between Bill, a Diasporic descendant, and Seema, an Indian Diasporic woman, symbolizes the role of technology in creating and sustaining networks among Diaspora communities in America.

Bill and Seema represent different strands of the American Diaspora. Exchanging phone numbers facilitates cultural exchange between them. Bill's

gesture is not just about an individual connection but also about contributing to a broader network of Diaspora community members. Any communication technology is like a magnate that attracts the pearls of a ripped necklace to each other. In the novel, the pearls are Seema, Tahera, Nafeesa, and Bill:

> Seema weeks to gather the courage to call. The phone was answered by Tahera's husband, and she was forced to wait, ruing the mischance—she'd counted on the tide of surprise to carry the conversation through. When Tahera finally came on the line, her voice was a studied formal monotone: "Assalamu Alaikum?" (Ahmed,2003- 2008, 10)

Seema's struggle to make "the phone" call reflects the emotional incomprehensibility of Diasporic experiences. She is a different Diasporan, open to liberating herself in the American sphere with her sexual and cultural choices. A liberation that causes instability and fragmented communication with her conservative sister. A year after Tahera's arrival in Irvin with her husband she tries to reconnect with her sister. This is a scattering within the Diaspora with technology as a junction. Even their interaction with technology is not just a simple bottom pressing.

The use of the phone as a means of communication is emblematic of technology in Diasporic experiences. In the context of this quote, the phone serves as a lifeline connecting Seema and Tahera across the vast Diaspora. It is through this technological medium that they bridge the emotional, psychological, and physical gaps: Seema, the assimilated free Diaspora, and Tahera, the loyal conservative Diaspora.

One passage from the *Brown Girls* novel, connect Diasporans with ancestral lands. It offers a window into the profound impact of technology, particularly social media platforms like Facebook, on creating networks: “Facebook research on cousins we’d forgotten, news articles, and Hollywood movies where all grit is, in fact, scrubbed clean.” (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

"Facebook research on cousins we'd forgotten" addresses how technology, specifically social media platforms like "Facebook" enables Diasporic individuals to reconnect with their extended family members back in their native countries. This serves as a means of strengthening networks.

With a narrative about Diasporic girls exploring their ancestral lands, social media platforms have revolutionized the way Diaspora communities maintain connections with relatives in their home countries. These platforms provide spaces for sharing updates, photos, messages, knowledge and even activism.

4.7 Technology as a Means of Activism of in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Technology plays a role in the activism of Diasporans in America. It serves as a trigger for mobilization, awareness, and advocacy (Titifanue et al., 35). Social media platforms, blogs, and virtual communities enable members of Diasporic communities to amplify their voices: “Since his arrival two years ago, he has instituted many activities: besides the Friday sermons, there are nightly discussion groups and regular lectures and study sessions. He even maintains a blog on living a life of Islam, answering anonymous questions from the congregation.” (Ahmed, 2010,20)

Imam Zia, a Ph.D. holder in Islamic doctrine who came from Pakistan, is aware of technology's practicality for the Muslim Diaspora in America. Technology is the groundwork of community networking in the novel. The imam's blog aggrandizes the potential of digital platforms. His blog diffuses religious teachings and guidance. Technology here promulgates answers and knowledge for specific communities.

The imam's "blog" designates technology as a vehicle of community organization. Technology bestows the ability to establish connections, acquire knowledge, and propel a sense of belonging and active participation in society:

> The internet is beginning to make its power felt, providing Dean supporters with new tools to connect online. Seema, fueled by a renewed sense of control, throws herself into organizing meet-ups and fundraisers through the summer and fall of 2003, maintaining a blog highlighting Dean's policy positions, and creating posters and presentations to be shared with other volunteer groups around the country. (Ahmed, 2003- 2008, 7)

Applying online platforms "to connect online," notably the internet, to support Dean's political campaign evinces technology's capacity in political activism. Seema the individual within Diaspora community expresses opposition to specific policies, particularly the endorsement of the Iraq War initiated by President George W. Bush and his supporters. Her political activism is motivated by personal convictions, and technology serves as a vital conduit for her beliefs.

Seema's platform exemplifies Diasporans usage of technology to express their political opinions, to advocate for their chosen candidates, and to contribute to the political dialogue: "Seema hopes that the contacts she made while volunteering for Dean will give her an in and lead to a job handling public relations or new media for the campaign." (Ahmed, 2003- 2008, 17)

The utility of media technology in shaping discourse, mobilizing groups, expressing ideas, selecting people, and advocating views is lucid in Seema's actions to "contact" and interact with "media." In the digital age, Diasporans like Seema are increasingly drawing upon their expertise, views, and networks through technology-enabled activism. Withal, technology in the lives of the novel's characters is a track of activism, racism, discrimination, and identities, and this idea is visually represented in the image below:

> While waiting for Jemaal, he makes a list of possible targets, looking them up on his father's computer. When Jemaal arrives, Arshad feels once again the rush of blood through his body, making him light-headed with excitement and apprehension. "Have you seen this?" Jemaal pulls up a video on a website. It features a boy about their age, speaking directly to the camera: "In recent weeks people may have been telling you what to think of us Muslims. (Ahmed, 2010, part 23)

In this excerpt, readers witness the convergence of technology, Diaspora, and activism as Arshad and Jemaal, young Muslim Diasporic individuals in America, apply the power of the internet to prepare their attacks. This is a response to the vandalism of Irvine Mosque.

The act of making a list of potential targets by looking them up on a “computer” visualizes technology as a tool for information gathering and strategic planning within their activism. The internet becomes their gateway to knowledge with “a video on a website". It enables them to access news, identify locations, and formulate their plan of action.

Moreover, the video presented by Jemaal on a website exemplifies how technology amplifies their activism. It allows them to build an attitude towards the American environment and to establish their actions. The video that Jemaal introduced to Arshad can also signify the role of technology in providing novelties to Diasporans. Undoubtedly, novelties are essential to the life of any human, but under the shadow of Diaspora, they have their very own special essence and function.

In the world of "art" the brown diasporic girls are not merely pursuing artistic and creative endeavors; they are actively shaping their careers in various disciplines such as jazz, acting, dance, visual arts, and media. The quote accentuates artistic pursuits, and it signifies technology's role in shaping the girls' careers: “Advanced studio lessons include: Jazz Improv, Stanislavski Technique, Modern Dance, Oil Painting, Anatomy & Figure Drawing, Video Production.” (Palasi Andreades, ART)

The diasporic girls are ambitious and active in various artistic and creative fields and “advanced studio lessons” in jazz improvisation, acting (Stanislavski Technique), dance (Modern Dance), visual arts (Oil Painting and Anatomy & Figure Drawing), and media (“Video Production"). The brown girls are art activists in their schools, and technology has a hand in that. In the modern world, video production often relies on digital tools and technologies, including cameras, editing software,

and online platforms for distribution. These technological tools catalyze artistic expressions for diasporic girls.

While not explicitly mentioned in the quote, the technological skills gained through video production can be a powerful tool for activism. In contemporary society, video and multimedia content are instrumental in raising awareness about social issues, change, and marginalized voices.

This aligns with the broader theme of technology and diasporans as active participants in society. And to be an active citizen, diasporans in America are required to stay well-versed in current events.

4.8. Technology as a Source of News and Updates in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

Technology is a conduit for diasporans in America to remain informed and connected to their native lands, and the world; it is a recurrent theme in a diasporic literature (Bhandari 175). Through digital platforms, online news sources, and social media, technology affords diasporans the ability to access real-time information, breaking news, and updates about people they care about, as in the case of Leigh: “Over the next few years, at random moments, Leigh scours the web for Seema, as she does for her celebrity crushes—“ (Ahmed, 2010, 12)

Leigh's “web” searches for Seema mirror the way diasporic individuals often utilize technology to maintain a sense of connection to their fellow Diaspora members. The half-Chinese, half-Irish Diasporan who loves Seema, the Indian diasporan, technology is joint for her.

As she seeks information about her celebrity crushes, Leigh searches for Seema's updates. Her sporadic searches for Seema suggest a yearning to reestablish a connection, a sentiment often prevalent in Diaspora literature. In a corresponding manner, technology helps Tahera stay plugged in about life in Irvine during her stay in San Francesco with Seema: "I took photos, I'll email them to you later," Ismail says. "The children are eager to talk to you." Thankfully, Amina seems unaffected by the morning's incident. She doesn't even mention the mosque, excited at having spent the entire day with Taghrid Didi at her Najiba Aunty's house." (Ahmed, 2010, 43)

This quote punctuates the role of technology in the diasporic experience of Ismail and his wives, the married couple of Indian origin live in America. Ismail's intention to email photos of the vandalized mosque in Irvine to his wife in San Francisco amplifies the significance of technology as a means of immediate communication and connection for diasporic individuals.

Ismail's use of "email" not only allows him to inform his wife about the vandalism incident but also provides her with visual evidence. Digitalization is making diasporic connection more tangible and immediate. The physical separation does not thwart information sharing, as technology is part of the triangle. Under different conditions, technology enhances the ability of diasporic individuals to stay connected, informed, and emotionally bonded:

> Evening, Irvine: Arshad is alone in his parents' bedroom, browsing search results on his father's desktop. He's engrossed in his task and becomes aware of his father's presence only when Ismail coughs. Startled, Arshad attempts to kill the browser window—he's only

> allowed to use the computer for homework, and only under supervision. (Ahmed, 2010, 44)

This quote from Ahmed's novel captures a significant intersection of Diaspora, technology, and news consumption in the life of Arshad, a child of Diaspora. It merits discussion that Arshad's status as a curious Muslim child of Diaspora is central to this scene. He reaffirms the significance of technology by employing his father's computer's "desktop". Arshad's actions with the "computer" reflect the way Diaspora individuals rely on the internet and "browser window" as their primary source of news and information.

This is particularly relevant when trying to stay updated about events related to their cultural or religious identity. Technology here is the outlet of the diasporic offspring. Since the mosque's ruin, internet has become a key player in Diasporans' choices and behavior: "In April, stories of torture and rape of Iraqi detainees by American soldiers are reported by the national media. The photos emerging from the Abu Ghraib prison horrify: of naked Brown men in barred prison cells and dimly lit corridors (Ahmed, 2003- 2008, 14)

Seema represents a part of the Indian Diaspora in America. Her concerns about what is happening outside America are apparent, and technology is the window from which she glances at the hand prints of her host land in other lands.

Her commitment to knowing about the American invasion of Iraq through "media" technology accentualizes the interconnectedness between Diaspora communities, their host nation, and the realm of technology. In this case, technology, particularly media, serves as a bridge that connects Seema to events in

countries that are similar to India. Seema is concerned about the consequences of American actions in Iraq, potentially due to personal and cultural ties. By searching for news about the American invasion of Iraq through media technology, she can be regarded as an activist without traveling.

In AMNESIA and Our Not Reflections, the narrative paints a picture of how technology serves as a channel for the brown diasporic girls to stay informed about events, particularly in the U.S. Besides, technology is a medium for staying updated about family members: “On the radio: the president’s voice. The newscasters analyzing the latest poisonous thing he said. Flying through the streets, we remember an incident from earlier in the week, a memory we’d hoped to repress.” (Palasi Andreades, AMNESIA)

The use of “the radio” to listen to the president's voice and the analysis of newscasters pinpoint how technology, specifically radio broadcasting, serve as means for diasporic girls to access current news and information about President's statements and policies. The girls here are indulged in American freedom moments on the street in a car listening to the radio. The sound of America is delivered through a technological item.

The phrase "the latest poisonous thing he said" lends credence to the fact that the diasporic girls are concerned about the impactful rhetoric and policies of the president. Technology, including radio broadcasts and digital news outlets, opens the path for political awareness, openness, expression, and participation among diasporic communities: “We do not call much. And when we do, we tell our mothers only what they want to hear, what we believe they can handle: Yes, work is going well. Yes, the children are great.” (Palasi Andreades, OUR NOT-REFLECTIONS)

The passage exhibits the limited communication between the daughters and their mothers with the expression "we do not call much." This is due to various factors, including busy lives, geographical distance, growing up, and the complicated aftermaths of dispersion. Technology is a sign of the perturbing relationship among Diasporans.

The daughters share with their mothers only "what they want to hear, what we believe they can handle." This implies that they are conscious of their mothers' emotions. Despite the physical separation and the psychological complications, the phone allows the daughters to maintain a link with their mothers. Inarguably, the girls rely on technology to communicate with their families in Queens and with their big families in the motherlands. They also use it for relocating, which is one of the lasting fates of Diasporans.

4.9. Technology as a Means of Travelling in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*

In contemporary literature, the role of travel technology for diasporic people has emerged as a compelling and relevant theme. Under the shadow of Diaspora, travel machinery helps diasporans to displace back and forth from their host land, home lands, and other countries (Toivanen 560), but they do not leave the area of the shadow: “She’d become her agitated twenty-year-old self, come to the Chennai airport to receive Seema, returning for the very first time after leaving for England for her master’s.” (Ahmed, 2010, 2)

Seema's return to Chennai after leaving for England for her master's degree features a Diasporic experience. Seema is a part of the Indian Diaspora in America,

but in her younger years, she studied in England. Tahera here is remembering this episode from her sister's life, which involves negotiating multiple cultural spaces.

This reversion signals travel technology and globalization. By the 21st century, advancements in air travel had made it easier for members of Diaspora to travel between many host countries and their country of origin. Technology for the sisters is expanding the Diaspora. In *Radiant Fugitives* the usage of technology is like the expression of identity. It is also tied to the pillar of Diaspora that does not let loose its thread that holds characters of *Brown Girls* as well.

In "A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)" and "OUR NOT-REFLECTIONS," technology and air travel are central to the diasporic journey. Booking plane tickets symbolizes how modern technology facilitates characters' reconnection with ancestral land: "It's so good to see you, our friends say. How've you been? We do not mention our dreams. When we tell them that we've booked plane tickets to places our families left behind, they screech, You're going back to the motherland?!" (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

Air travel has become a crucial means for diasporic individuals to reconnect with their homelands. The phrase "going back to the motherland" carries significant emotional weight. While analyzing this quote, it is important to consider several facts. The girls are young, the events of the novel are recent, technology is affluent, travel means are available, the girls are second-generation immigrants, and the novel is contemporary. All these elements serve the interrelationship of Diaspora and technology through the "plane".

For many diasporic individuals, visiting their homelands represents a powerful form of reconnection with ground culture. The brown girls are the second generation, but their roots are growing back through the threads of technology. Air travel acts as a bridge to the roots:

> We'd felt brave boarding airplanes, confident and excited throughout our flights, but when we finally arrive in our ancestral lands, these feelings evaporate. When we set foot in the countries our families always referred to as home, we're overcome with the realization that we only know these places in theory: a patchwork of memories, family stories, old photographs, Facebook research on cousins we'd forgotten, news articles, and Hollywood movies where all grit is, in fact, scrubbed clean. (Palasi Andreades, A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND (FATHERLAND?)

The "boarding airplanes" reflect the role of technology, specifically air travel, in enabling journeys to ancestral lands. Airplanes and "flights" provide a means of transportation that can bridge vast geographical distances.

Technology, in this case, contributes to their sense of confidence and excitement. It serves as an instrument for these journeys. This type of technology shapes Diaspora from first to second generation and influences its layers and structure. With the possibilities it offers, traveling means put the first seeds of any diasporic community in a new land, like the case of the brown mothers:

> When we open them, we see our mothers boarding airplanes branded Delta, American Airlines. They are leaving behind former selves in

> countries we will never fully understand. Our mothers' sights are set on the U.S. of A. The Land of Opportunity. Goodbye! Goodbye! they call to their mothers and fathers, their siblings and friends. We hear the triumph, pride, and anticipation in their voices. (Palasi Andreades, OUR NOT-REFLECTIONS)

The passage illuminates the role of technology in the formation of Diaspora. The mothers boarding "airplanes" branded by Delta and American Airlines magnifies how air travel technology played a pivotal role in enabling the initial migration of diasporic individuals to America.

Airplanes and the aviation industry made it possible for diasporans to relocate to the United States. This technological advancement facilitated the beginning of the diasporic journey, marking the first step in the formation of displaced communities in America. The expression "former selves" implies self-transformation and adaptation. Technology was there in the initial point of the scattering.

The mothers saying goodbye to their families with pride, and anticipation indicates the emotional and inspirational aspects of Diaspora. Air travel, not only facilitated physical migration but also enabled aspirations for a better life in the United States.

4.10 Conclusion

Before wrapping up, it is crucial to note that the chapter excavated the few sections in *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls* that mention technology, sections that reveal the various forms of technology under the shadow of Diaspora. The

contemporariness and the Diasporic nature of both novels convey that characters' interactions with technology can always be related to their Diasporic reality and roots. Technology with its diverse forms influences them, exposes facts for them, allows them to connect, displays for them, and carries them forward. Characters use technology to practice their cultures. Through it, they access content related to migration and other boarders, a piece of information, news, music, films, websites, and applications, all to create a better environment for themselves in the Uncle Sam's Land that is sometimes – really – Uncle Sam's and not theirs. They use it to connect with Diasporans, Americans, or their homelands. The displayed quotes from the novels are proves of technology's role as a medium to maneuver spaces of Diaspora. This chapter validates that even novels' minor details, slightly addressed themes, brief discussions, or a few lines can unlock and clarify meanings and realities.

General Conclusion

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Millions of years ago, the American continent broke away from the supercontinent. Centuries later, European ships voyaged and dispersed from their homelands to the Americas. Humans imitated their planet, ushered a new era of history and initiated a mass displacement through trade, slavery, immigration, and colonization. The scattering of the land and the Diaspora of people demonstrate that America and the world known today would not exist without this act of moving and migration. Many realities and narratives that define the contemporary human experience are the outcomes of movement, displacement, scattering, immigration, and Diaspora.

From this premise, the present dissertation aimed to examine Diaspora as a phenomenon, a discourse, and, crucially, a literary concept within two selected contemporary American diasporic novels *Radiant Fugitives* by Ahmed Nawaaz and *Brown Girls* by Daphne Palasi Andreades. The analysis targeted diasporic characters' identity and the way they exploit technology, with Diaspora being the pervasive shadow that permeates all aspects of their lives. It visited and revisited characters and underlined their daily encounters and interactions then attempted to understand their self-perceptions. This approach was practical in reaching the dissertation's results and in reinforcing the understanding of Diaspora.

The elaborated hypotheses addressed Diaspora's persistent, enduring and complex impact on characters' life and identities in both works. However, the hypothesis that was not fully confirmed by the novels was about pervasive presence of technology throughout the narratives. The analysis revealed mixed results.

The investigations of the novels' pages disclosed that characters in *Radiant Fugitives* lived a diasporic journey that placed them in conflicting homes. Besides,

America was portrayed as a hell for the radiant fugitives, an adopted place or a home in- between for the brown girls.

The findings demonstrated the multiplex wide influence of Diaspora. Characters like Nafeesa saw home "quivering". She was mentally transported to her homeland in India, while Seema considered America as a home through political involvement. *Radiant Fugitives'* and *Brown Girls'* diasporic experience created heterogeneous homes and emotions. Feelings of alienation were also discovered through the research, as characters' outspokenness or estrangement led to a sense of isolation. Complementary, characters navigated in-between spaces because of Diaspora, for example they contrasted traditional and Americanized clothes, Arabic and English, and Islamic faith with American expectations. CDs of Dixie Chicks and henna, wine and Quran were detailed evidence of Diaspora's contradictions. First and second-generation immigrants in both novels were torn between America and other coasts. Alternatively, Diaspora brought them racism and discrimination, including the vandalism of their mosques and a white American woman holding her purse close when passing them by.

The data also illuminated various features of diasporic identity. Nadira, a Pakistani girl, tying her scarf, Anjali a Guyanese girl, and Michaela, a Haitian, as well as Naz from Ivory Coast and Sophie from the Philippines were all spotted as samples of diverse identities. There were also signs of assimilation, as the brown girls celebrated the Fourth of July. On the other hand, transculturation was apart from their diasporic identity expression through visits to motherlands and fatherlands, and the carrying of gifts. America is a mosaic and diasporans identities are pieces of it.

Moreover, social and political activism emerged as an important component of their identities with Seema's advocacy for brown and poor people, and her work on political campaigns for Kamala Harris and Barack Obama. The intersectional nature of identity was highlighted, with characters' identity described as having "seven roots of beer". Race was relevant to them as seeds falling and growing in the worlds' diversified patchwork. But the seed is the origin that cannot be changed until it grows.

Religion also came to the fore of identity performance with characters wearing jilbabs and hijabs, teaching their children Islam, while also being in the presence of western symbols. Preservation of cultural identity was explained in this work as traces of native identity can be protected despite the distance. Mothers' efforts to ensure their daughters do not use birth control pills showed that identity can be preserved within Diaspora. This leads to another layer of diasporic identity which is the complex sexual dynamic, with brown girls desiring white boys instead of boys of their own kind. These elements delineated the multidirectional diasporic identity.

The critical analysis unexpectedly discerned few instances when characters interacted with technology, yet every usage was rooted in their diasporic lineage. More precisely, different types of technology facilitated transnational relationships, with Nafeesa in *Radiant Fugitives* using CDs to access content from her homeland. It also impacted individual wellbeing, with characters listening to Quran recitation on MP3 players, as well as loud music on the radio. Technology was also a window to ancestral lands or to Iraqi war news.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The research revealed that technology enabled communication and inter-diasporic connections, as exemplified by Bill, a descendant of the African Diaspora, emailing Seema, an Indian diasporan. It also provided access to cultural content, with characters watching Indian reality shows on TV and listening to American singers.

Furthermore, technology served as a means of networking, with characters contacting family members through Facebook. It was also leveraged for activism, as the diasporic Imam Zia used a blog to share Islamic teachings. Technology kept characters informed with TV providing news that resonated with their own homelands. All these utilities and usages supported characters' existence in America and provided them with facilities.

These results, retrieved from an analytical approach to two new novels, synthesized the formula of the significant contribution to knowledge of this dissertation which can be seen in the analysis and the obtained results from novels that were new by the initiation of the research. However, for the sake of scientific integrity, it merits mentioning that the notions that the diasporic framework revealed from the novels are limited. Therefore, it is recommended to expand the framework and to dissect the two novels or any contemporary diasporic writings in order to find other aspects that the diasporic background of characters influence and relate to.

The limitation is a result of the vast deep print of Diaspora. The research found that the influence of this phenomenon on identity and technology implementation was heterogeneous, multidirectional, and multilayered, with many complexities and elements. This is aligned with the unsettled scholarly and literal discussions around it. Diaspora is not simply a transnational movement, a

progressive force, or a pluralistic experience or any other definition; it is also an impactful weigh on identities and uses of technology. Immigration stirred how characters live. Life is a sea, Diaspora is a high wave.

This situates the research within the broader discourses about America as a nation of traumas, dreams, assimilations, love, clashes, change, and identity crises because contemporary Diaspora is all that. Beyond this, the examined novels can be placed not only among diasporic literature but also into a broader spectrum of novels about life in America.

The dissertation denotes that the shelf of diasporic literature belongs to a large bookcase of ethnic, immigrant, multicultural, social, and conflict literature. Reading, analyzing, and interpreting these representations of diversity and displacement necessitate the amplification and the appreciation of voices and struggles. American literature offered humanity relatable, yet surprising novels like *The Awakening*, *The Great Gatsby*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Kite Runner* and it did not stop with them, it continued addressing unsettled silhouettes with *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls*. The two novels with this tentative analysis are now in the shelf of Diaspora waiting for reading, empathy, understanding and enrichment.

This research's critical analysis of the novels *Radiant Fugitives* and *Brown Girls* conclusively supports an inclusive conceptualization of the scattering - one that encompasses its varied forms, the impacts it leaves on individuals, societies, identities, and technology deployment. Diaspora is a circuitous, dynamic concept, akin to a tornado in its ability to grow, carry, displace, and to leave lasting aftermath. Researchers are called to cope with this circuitous concept and to continue

discovering its fluid forms, its power, the expected and the unexpected objects it carries in a contemporary world that always brings novelties and complexities.

List of References

LIST OF REFERENCES

Books :

- Abulhawa, Susan. Mornings in Jenin. Bloomsbury, 2010.
- Ahmed, Nawaaz. Radiant Fugitives. Catapult, 2021.
- Andreades, Daphne Palasi. Brown Girls. Random House, 2022.
- Anish, Beth O'Leary. "Mary M. Burke, Race, Politics, and Irish America: A Gothic History." (2023): 190-192.
- Anthias, Floya, and Nira Yuval-Davis. Woman-Nation-State. Macmillan, 1989.
- Bauböck, Rainer, and Thomas Faist. *Diaspora and transnationalism: Concepts, theories and methods*. Amsterdam University Press, 2010.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The location of culture*. routledge, 2012.
- Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of diaspora: Contesting identities*. routledge, 2005.
- Bulawayo, NoViolet. We Need New Names. Random House, 2013.
- Chow, Rey. *Writing diaspora: Tactics of intervention in contemporary cultural studies*. Vol. 785. Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Clifford, James, “Diasporas”, Cultural Anthropology, vol. 9, n° 3, 1994. —, Routes : Travel and Ttranslation in the Late Twentieth Century, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Clifford, James. *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Cohen, Robin. "Diasporas and the nation-state: from victims to challengers." *International affairs* 72.3 (1996): 507-520.
- Cole, Teju. Open City. Random House, 2011
- Desai, Kiran. The Inheritance of Loss. Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006
- Dufoix, Stéphane. *Diasporas*. Univ of California Press, 2008.
- García, Cristina. Dreaming in Cuban. Ballantine Books, 1993

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Gilroy, Paul. *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Halloran, Vivian Nun. *The immigrant kitchen: Food, ethnicity, and diaspora*. The Ohio State University Press, 2016.
- Hamid, Mohsin. *The reluctant fundamentalist*. Anchor Canada, 2009.
- Heredia, Juanita. "Transnational US Latino/a Literature: From the 1960s to the Twenty-First Century." *Hispania* 100.5 (2018): 167-172.
- Kuang, R. F. Yellowface. First edition. New York, NY: William Morrow, 2023.
- Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The namesake*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003.
- Malar, V. "Diasporic Consciousness in the Writing of Chitra Banerjee, Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai-A Glimpse." *Language in India* 22.4 (2022).
- Mbue, Imbolo. Behold the Dreamers. Random House, 2016.
- Rich, Adrienne. What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics. W. W. Norton & Company, 2003.
- Safran, William. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, vol. 1 no. 1, 1991, p. 83-99. *Project MUSE*, https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1991.0004.
- Tan, Amy. The Joy Luck Club. Penguin Press, 2012
- Varvogli, Aliki. "Urban Mobility and Race: DinawMengestu's The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears and Teju Cole's Open City." *Studies in American Fiction* 44.2 (2017): 235-257.
- Vertovec, Steven. *Superdiversity: Migration and Social Complexity*. Taylor & Francis, 2022.
-

LIST OF REFERENCES

Articles

- Abu-Shomar, Ayman M. "Diasporic Reconciliations of Politics, Love and Trauma: Susan Abulhawa's Quest for Identity in" Mornings in Jenin"." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 6.2 (2015): 127-136.
- Aghoghovwia, Philip. "Interiority as narrative agency in Teju Cole's Open City." *English Academy Review* 37.2 (2020): 20-33.
- Ahmed, Nabila Rashad. "Aspects of multiculturalism in MohjaKahf's E-mails from Scheherazade." *Egyptian Journal of Linguistics and Translation* 10.1 (2023): 28-58.
- Ahmedova, Shokhida, and KhulkarMukhammadova. "The Concept of Multiculturalism in the Literary Works 'Beloved' by Toni Morrison and 'The Women Warrior' by Maxine Hong Kingston." Foreign Linguistics and Linguodidactics, vol. 2, no. 1, 2024, pp. 28-35.
- Akhtar, Aamina. "Cultural Crossroads and Subaltern Realities in Diasporic Discourse: Exploring the Sense of Belonging in Lahiri and Mistry's Narratives." International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, vol. 9, no. 1, Jan-Feb 2024, pp. 238-245. DOI: 10.22161/ijels.
- Aksoy, Asu, and Kevin Robins. *Banal transnationalism: The difference that television makes*. University of Oxford. Transnational Communities Programme, 2002.
- Alfanuari, Alfanuari, and Muhammad Al-Hafizh. "Immigrants' Difficulties in Pursuing the American Dream Portrayed in ImboloMbue's Behold the Dreamers (2016)." *English Language and Literature* 12.4 (2023): 724-737.
- Alfaraz, Gabriela G. "Framing the diaspora and the homeland: Language ideologies in the Cuban diaspora." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2018.254 (2018): 49-69.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Ballengee, Christopher L., and Darrell Gerohn Baksh. "From indenture to double diaspora: Music, film, and visual art of the Indian Caribbean." *Middle Atlantic Review of Latin American Studies* 4.2 (2020): 2-9.
- Baqar, Ali, et al. "Racial Alienation in Hamid's The Last White Man: A Fanonian Study." Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 12.1 (2024): 322-332.
- Bařinová, Martina. "The Caribbean Diaspora and the Construction of Thirdspace in Josefina Báez's Performative Text Levente no. Yolayorkdominicanyork." *Centers and Peripheries in Romance Language Literatures in the Americas and Africa*. Brill, 2024. 495-510.
- Bhandari, Nagendra Bahadur. "Homi K. Bhabha's Third Space Theory and Cultural Identity Today: A Critical Review." *Prithvi Academic Journal* (2022): 171-181.
- Bhatia, Sunil. "Decolonizing psychology: Power, citizenship and identity." *Psychoanalysis, Self and Context* 15.3 (2020): 257-266.
- Bondarenko, Dmitri M. "Where Post-colonialism Meets Post-socialism: African Migrants in Russia as a New Research Field." In *Experiencing Diversity and Mutuality*, pp. 442-443. 2008.
- Braidotti, Rosi. "Writing as a nomadic subject." *Comparative Critical Studies* 11.2-3 (2014): 163-184.
- Brown, Christia Spears. "American elementary school children's attitudes about immigrants, immigration, and being an American." *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 32.3 (2011): 109-117.
- Brubaker, Rogers. "The'diaspora'diaspora." *Ethnic and racial studies* 28.1 (2005): 1-19.
- Byman, Daniel. "Constructing a democratic Iraq: Challenges and opportunities." *International Security* 28.1 (2003): 47-78.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Canclini, Néstor García. *Consumers and citizens: Globalization and multicultural conflicts*. Vol. 6. U of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Candidatu, Laura, and Sandra Ponzanesi. "Digital diasporas: Staying with the trouble." *Communication, Culture and Critique* 15.2 (2022): 261-268.
- Chattopadhyay, Shrimoyee. "Crossing Border in Search of "Home": Gender and Empowerment in Jhumpa Lahiri's Thee Namesake." *Eger Journal of English Studies* 17 (2017): 41-52.
- Chen, Jacqueline M., Jasmine B. Norman, and Yeseul Nam. "Broadening the stimulus set: Introducing the American multiracial faces database." *Behavior Research Methods* 53 (2021): 371-389.
- Chepkwony, Kipkoech Mark, Nicholas Kamau, and Stephen Mutie. "Re-examining Notions of Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Xenophobia in Postcolonial Africa: A Textual Analysis of Teju Cole's Open City." *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 5.1 (2022): 13-22.
- Clifford, James. "Indigenous articulations." *The contemporary pacific* 13.2 (2001): 467-490.
- Clifford, James. "Taking identity politics seriously:'The contradictory, stony ground...'." *Without guarantees: in honour of Stuart Hall* (2000): 94-112.
- Demetriou, Madeleine. "Towards Post-Nationalism?: Diasporic Identities and the Political Process." (1999).
- Fischer, Nina. "Entangled suffering and disruptive empathy: The Holocaust, the Nakba and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in Susan Abulhawa's Mornings in Jenin." *Memory Studies* 15.4 (2022): 695-712.
- Gilroy, Paul. "27 British Cultural Studies and the Pitfalls of Identity." *Media and cultural studies: Keyworks* (2012): 278.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Goswami, Anita, and Vandna Kumari. "Ethnicity and multiculturalism in Namesake and Interpreter of Maladies." (2023).
- Goyal, Yogita. "We need new diasporas." *American Literary History* 29.4 (2017): 640-663.
- Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. "Global identities: Theorizing transnational studies of sexuality." *GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay studies* 7.4 (2001): 663-679.
- Guluma, Beka. "I'm Not Habesha, I'm Oromo: Immigration, Ethnic Identity, and the Transnationality of Blackness." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* (2023): 23326492231169250.
- Hakim, Arief Rahman, and Siti Deviana Rahma Nurhusna. "Hibridity and Cutural Identity Through Jude as a Syrian character in Warga's Novel Other Words For Home." *Vivid: Journal of Language and Literature* 11.2 (2022): 108-118.
- Hakim, Reyhan Azra, and Muhd Al-Hafizh. "The Struggle of African Americans against Racial Stereotypes Portrayed in Angie Thomas's the Hate U Give (2017)." *English Language and Literature* 13.1 (2024): 12-25.
- Hall, Stuart. "□ Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory*. Routledge, 2015. 392-403.
- Hansen, Kathryn. "Performing Identities: Tyagaraja Music Festivals in North America." *South Asia Research* 16.2 (1996): 155-174.
- Haque, Rezaul. "Uses of (Media) Technology in Constructing Diasporic Home in the Shorter Fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri." *Crossings: A Journal of English Studies* 6 (2015): 47-50.
- Hasanth, D. R. "The Pallid Image of Globalization in Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss." International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, vol. 3, no. 12(3), December 2014.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Hiller, Harry H., and Tara M. Franz. "New ties, old ties and lost ties: the use of the internet in diaspora." *New media & society* 6.6 (2004): 731-752.
- Huang, Liyue. "The Construction of Identity in" the Third Space" Taking Mozasu and Noa in the Novel Pachinko as an Example." *International Journal of Education and Humanities* 5.1 (2022): 134-136.
- Ilyas, Mohammed. "Expatriate Experience and the Fictional World of Diaspora." *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 9.1 (2018): 106-123.
- Jacob, Paul. "Unraveling Borders: Diasporic Identity And The Fluid Self In Olga Tokarczuk's Flights And The Books Of Jacob." *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice* 30.3 (2024): 349-351.
- Kapur, Devesh. "Diasporas and technology transfer." *Journal of Human development* 2.2 (2001): 265-286.
- Kara, Gökçen. "The Postcolonial Immigrant Identities in Jhumpa Lahiri's Novel, The Namesake." *UlakbilgeSosyalBilimlerDergisi* 9.65 (2021): 1213-1228.
- Karim, Asim, and Zakia Nasir. "Multiculturalism and feminist concerns in South Asian diaspora novels." *3L, Language, Linguistics, Literature* 20.3 (2014).
- Kaur, Gurpreet, and Fatehgarh Sahib. "Diversity and Multiplicity of Themes in Don DeLillo's Fiction: Expressing Contemporariness." IJELLH (International Journal of English Language, Literature & Humanities), vol. 1, no. 5, Feb. 2014, pp. 75-82.
- Khan, Aisha. "Material and immaterial bodies: Diaspora studies and the problem of culture, identity, and race." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 19.3 (2015): 29-49.
- Khorakiwala, Muqarram. "A geography of strangeness: transcultural personhood and fractal identity in contemporary South Asian Muslim American Literature." (2022).

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Kondali, Ksenija. "Migration, globalization, and divided identity in Kiran Desai's The inheritance of loss." *Umjetnostriječi: Časopis za znanost o književnosti, izvedbenojumjetnostiifilmu* 62.1 (2018): 101-116.
- Kumar, Yogesh, and Gunjan Sushil. "A Discourse on Diaspora: Exploring Identity and Alienation in Jhumpa Lahiri's Unaccustomed Earth." *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)* 8.2 (2023).
- Lam, Melissa. "Diasporic literature: The politics of identity and language." *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* 21.2 (2011): 309-318.
- Lane, Eric. ""My body is its image, here": Diasporic Identity and the Deconstruction of Binary Division in 21st Century Asian American Poetry." (2022).
- Levin, Z. "The Problem of Multiculturalism and Conflict Potential of the Diaspora." *Russia and the moslem world* 10 (268) (2014): 52-60.
- Liénard-Yeterian, Marie. "Wither the South on Screen: Revisiting Some Recent Releases." *Polish Journal for American Studies* 13 (2019): 207-333.
- Lodigiani 1, Elisabetta. "Diaspora externalities and technology diffusion." *Economie internationale* 3 (2008): 43-64.
- Lum, Brandon, et al. "Diasporas, remittances and state fragility: Assessing the linkages." Diasporas and Transportation of Homeland Conflicts. Routledge, 2024. 178-196.
- Mavengano, Esther, and Muchativugwa L. Hove. "Kaka country: An intertextual reading of national dysfunction in Bulawayo's We Need New Names and Jinga's One Foreigner's Ordeal." *Literator (Potchefstroom. Online)* 40.1 (2019): 1-12.
- Mavroudi, Elizabeth. "Deconstructing diasporic mobilisation at a time of crisis: perspectives from the Palestinian and Greek diasporas." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44.8 (2018): 1309-1324.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- McAuliffe, Samantha L. "Autoethnography and Garcia's Dreaming in Cuban." *CLCWeb* 13.4 (2011).
- Mersal, Iman. "Eliminating Diasporic Identities." *PMLA* 123.5 (2008): 1581-1589.
- Meyer, Jean-Baptiste, and Jean-Paul Wattiaux. "Diaspora knowledge networks: Vanishing doubts and increasing evidence." *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 8.1 (2006): 4-24.
- Mishra, Vijay. "The diasporic imaginary and the Indian Diaspora." (2005).
- Motahane, Nonki, and Rodwell Makombe. "Not at home in the World: The Home, the Unhomely, and Migrancy in NoViolet Bulawayo's we need new names." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 61.3 (2020): 262-273.
- Mukherjee, Anirban, and Binay Kumar Pattnaik. "Assimilation, heterolocalism and ethnic capital: The case of an immigrant Indian community in America." *Sociological Bulletin* 70.1 (2021): 24-41.
- Nguyen Thi. "Cultural adaptation, tradition, and identity of diasporic Vietnamese people: a case study in Silicon Valley, California, USA." *Asian ethnology* 75.2 (2016): 441.
- Nguyen, Thi Tu Anh. "Cultural Continuity and Fragments of Diaspora: A Comparative Study of Identity Construction by Second and Third Generations of Overseas Vietnamese in Northeast Thailand." Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities 10.1 (2023)
- Novitasari, Andhini, DyahSunggingwati, and Indah Sari Lubis. "Jing-mei Woo's Hybrid Identity in Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club Novel." *IlmuBudaya: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya* 2.4 (2018): 347-356.
- Nwanyanwu, Augustine Uka. "Transculturalism, Otherness, Exile, and Identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Americanah." *Matatu* 49.2 (2017): 386-399.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Oltmann, Shannon M., and Fatima Espinoza-Vasquez. "How Social Media Affordances Mediate the Digital Diaspora." The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion 8.2 (2024): 7-28.
- Omotayo, Elizabeth Adesunmbo, and Edith Awogu-Maduagwu. "Africanity and New Afrodiasporans in America: Negotiating New Identity in Bulawayo's and Mbue's Debut Novels." *Science* 2.3 (2021): 60-67.
- Pal, Payel. "Nostalgia, identity, and homeland: Reading the narratives of the diaspora in Susan Abulhawa's fiction." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 57.1 (2021): 47-59.
- Parisi, Domenico, Daniel T. Lichter, and Michael C. Taquino. "The buffering hypothesis: Growing diversity and declining black-white segregation in America's cities, suburbs, and small towns?." *Sociological Science* 2 (2015): 125.
- Parladir, Halil Saim, and Devrim Özkan. "Diaspora studies in social sciences: Modernity, power and identity." *Journal of Süleyman Demirel University Institute of Social Sciences Year* 2.20 (2014).
- Patterson, Rubin. "Transnationalism: diaspora-homeland development." *Social forces* 84.4 (2006): 1891-1907.
- PourAli, Soheyla, Razieh Eslamieh, and Shohreh Chavoshian. "Intersectionality Reading of Caribbean-American In-Transit Female Narratives: Kincaid's Lucy and Nunez'Boundaries." *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* 22.1 (2022).
- Qasim, Naheed, and Najia Asrar Zaidi. "Racial Discrimination in Young Adult Diasporic Fictions: A Critical Analysis." *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review* 8.2 (2024): 148-155.
- Rahaman, Sk Abdul Hasinur, and Richa Arora. "Re-Visioning Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Non-Fictional Works." *resmilitaris* 13.2 (2023): 4443-4449.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Raj, P. Prayer Elmo. "The Concept of Home in Diaspora." *Lapis Lazuli: An International Literary Journal (LLILJ)*, vol. 4, no. 2, Autumn 2014, p. 85. http://pintersociety.com/vol-4-no-2autumn-2014/.
- Randall, Michael TréShawn. *Black American Culture and the Digital Landscape: Modern Heritage Challenges in the 21 st Century*. Diss. Rutgers The State University of New Jersey, School of Graduate Studies, 2023.
- Repič, Jaka. "Violence, Exile, and Homeland in Visual Arts in the Slovenian Diaspora in Argentina." *Arts*. Vol. 12. No. 3. MDPI, 2023.
- Reynolds, Tracey, and Elisabetta Zontini. "Transnational and diasporic youth identities: exploring conceptual themes and future research agendas." *Identities* 23.4 (2016): 379-391.
- Ruiz, Alma Bibon. "Harmony Amid Diversity: Navigating the Possibilities and Challenges of Interfaith Dialogue for Peacebuilding in Chiang Mai, Thailand." *Asia Pacific Journal of Religions and Cultures* 8.1 (2024): 211-228.
- Rumbaut, Rubén G. "Assimilation of immigrants." *James D. Wright (editor-in-chief), International Encyclopedia of the Social &Behavioral Sciences*, 2 (2015): 81-8
- Safran, William, Ajaya Kumar Sahoo, and Brij V. Lal. "Indian diaspora in transnational contexts: Introduction." *Journal of intercultural studies* 29.1 (2008): 1-5.
- Safran, William. "Deconstructing and comparing diasporas." *Diaspora, identity and religion: New directions in theory and research* (2004): 9-29.
- Sanderson, Tyler, Ayesha Khan, and Cambria Ney. "Immigration Policy Over the Past Century." (2022).
- Sarkar, Mela, and Dawn Allen. "Hybrid identities in Quebec hip-hop: Language, territory, and ethnicity in the mix." *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 6.2 (2007): 117-130.

- Schiller, Nina Glick. "Locality, globality and the popularization of a diasporic consciousness: learning from the Haitian case." *Geographies of the Haitian diaspora* 3 (2011).
- Schwartz, Stephan A. "Police brutality and racism in America." *Explore (New York, NY)* 16.5 (2020): 280.
- Sequeira, Sandra, Nathan Nunn, and Nancy Qian. "Immigrants and the Making of America." *The Review of Economic Studies* 87.1 (2020): 382-419.
- Setianto, Yearry Panji. "Mediatization of religion: How the Indonesian Muslim diasporas mediatized Islamic practices." *Journal of Media and Religion* 14.4 (2015): 230-244.
- Sharmila, C., and Mohamed Sahul Hameed. "Diaspora: Exploring the Use of Affordances and Mobile Mediation among Migrants' Social Connectedness." *Migration Letters* 20.5 (2023): 122-144.
- Sherman, Virginia Allen-Terry. *Diaspora and displacement: The evocation of traditions, origins and identity in culinary memoirs, an emerging literary genre*. Diss. Université Grenoble Alpes [2020.....], 2020
- Shuval, Judith T. "Diaspora migration: Definitional ambiguities and a theoretical paradigm." *International migration* 38.5 (2000): 41-56.
- Sindhuja, S. "The Theme of Diaspora in Bharathi Mukherjee's Jasmine and Desirable Daughters." Research Scholar: An International Refereed e-Journal of Literary Explorations, vol. 10, issue II, May 2022.
- Sitepu, Ied Veda Rimrosa. "Studying Multicultularism through Readings of Diasporic Writing: Indonesian Way of Learning Differences and Diversity." (2017): 45-49.
- Slama, Martin, and Johann Heiss. "Comparing Arab Diasporas: Post-9/11 and Historical Perspectives on Hadhrami and Syro-Lebanese Communities in Southeast

Asia and the Americas." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31.2 (2011): 231-250.

- Sökefeld, Martin. "Mobilizing in transnational space: a social movement approach to the formation of diaspora." *Global networks* 6.3 (2006): 265-284.
- Stobie, Cheryl. "Precarity, poverty porn and vernacular cosmopolitanism in NoViolet Bulawayo's We Need New Names and Meg Vandermerwe's Zebra Crossing." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 56.4 (2020): 517-531.
- Titifanue, Jason, et al. "Digital diaspora, reinvigorating Indigenous identity and online activism: social media and the reorientation of Rotuman identity." *Media International Australia* 169.1 (2018): 32-42.
- Toivanen, Anna-Leena. "Aeromobilities of diasporic returnees in Francophone African literatures." *Mobilities* 16.4 (2021): 597-611.
- Tölölyan, Khachig. "Diaspora studies: Past, present and promise." (2012).
- Vanisree, M. "Embracing Intersectionality: Multiculturalism And Diversity In Indian American Diasporic Writing Explored In Amrita Trasi's The Colour Of Our Sky." *Migration Letters* 21.S3 (2024): 770-776.
- Werbner, Pnina. "Theorising complex diasporas: purity and hybridity in the South Asian public sphere in Britain." *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 30.5 (2004): 895-911.
- Yu, Haiqing, and Wanning Sun. "Introduction: Social media and Chinese digital diaspora in Australia." *Media International Australia* 173.1 (2019): 17-21.

LIST OF REFERENCES

Dissertation

- Drummond, Jillian. *Healing Trauma: Diasporic Narratives in the Works of James Baldwin and Steve McQueen*. Diss. Georgetown University, 2023.

Website

- "U.S. Race Relations Worrying 2023 | Statista." *Statista*, 13 Oct. 2023, www.statista.com/statistics/1402769/share-of-americans-who-worry-about-race-relations-us.

Biographies and Summaries

Nawaaz Ahmed's *Radiant Fugitives*

- Nawaaz Ahmed was born in Tamil Nadu, India, 10 December 1986. Before becoming a writer, he worked as a computer scientist, conducting research on search algorithms for Yahoo. He holds an MFA from the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor. His *Radiant Fugitives* was a finalist for the 2022 PEN/Faulkner Award and the Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction, and was longlisted for The Center for Fiction First Novel Prize.

- *Radiant Fugitives* tells the story of an Indian diasporic Muslim family in America with issues of sexuality, religion, and cultural expectations.Seema, is pregnant and seeking reconciliation with her family. Her mother, Nafeesa, comes from India to be with her, hoping to mend the broken relationships before she dies. Tahera, Seema's sister, is a devout Muslim who struggles to accept Seema's lifestyle. The novel explores the complex dynamics between these women as they confront past hurts and try to find common ground in Diaspora. It explores themes of identity, acceptance, forgiveness, and the clash between tradition and modernity. The story is narrated by Seema's unborn child, adding a unique perspective to the narrative.

APPENDICES

Daphne Andreades' *Brown Girls*

- Daphne Palasi Andreades is a young American writer whose debut novel, *Brown Girls* was published in 2022. Born and raised in Queens, New York, Andreades's work often explores themes of Diaspora, immigration, family, and hybrid identities.
- *Brown Girls* by Daphne Palasi Andreades is a coming-of-age novel that tells the story of a group of young diasporic women of color growing up in Queens, New York. It received critical acclaim and was a finalist for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize. The story follows Nadira, Gabby, Naz, Trish, Angelique, and others as they live through childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. They are daughters of immigrants, balancing their cultural heritage with the American culture they are immersed in. The novel explores their friendships, their dreams, their struggles with identity, and the challenges they face as they grow up in a world that often marginalizes them

Glossary

- Fundamentalism refers to a conservative religious or ideological movement characterized by strict adherence to traditional beliefs, doctrines, and practice.
- Barack Obama was elected as the 44th President of the United States in November 2008, becoming the first African American to hold the office. His campaign focused on themes of hope and change, addressing issues like the economy, healthcare, and the Iraq War.
- Cinco de Mayo is commemorated in certain regions of Mexico and the United States.The holiday honors a military triumph that occurred in 1862 against the French forces led by Napoleon III.Specifically, Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Mexican Army's victory over the French Empire at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. This battle was part of the Franco-Mexican War, in which the French had invaded Mexico in an attempt to establish a monarchy under Maximilian I.
- Deterritorialized and transcontinental scattering: Concepts that refer to the spatial and temporal dimensions of Diaspora, which can involve movement across territories.
- Fission and fusion: Concepts that refer to the fragmentation and cohesion that can characterize Diasporic communities. Fission can result from factors such as political conflict, economic inequality, and cultural difference, while fusion can arise from efforts to maintain a shared identity and sense of belonging across distances.

GLOSSARY

- Immigration waves such as the Irish Immigration (1820s-1860s) caused by famine and Vietnamese Immigration (1970s-1980s) caused by the Vietnam War
- In Arabic, the word "ayat" (آيات) is the plural form of "ayah" (آية). It is a term commonly used in the context of the Quran, which is the central religious text of Islam. In this context, an "ayah" refers to a verse or a sign.
- Janamazfrom the Persian/Urdu language, also known as a prayer rug or prayer mat, is a piece of fabric or mat used by Muslims during the performance of Salah (Islamic prayer).
- Jerry Yang partnered with his classmate David Filo to establish the web portal Yahoo in 1995.
- Kamala Harris made history as the first female Vice President of the United States, as well as the first African American and Asian American Vice President. She was elected alongside Joe Biden in the 2020 election.
- Liminal space refers to a transitional or in-between state or space. It is a concept often used in anthropology, psychology, and other fields to describe a threshold or a period of ambiguity and disorientation. In a liminal space, individuals or groups may experience a sense of being "betwixt and between".
- Loving v. Virginia: Loving v. Virginia is a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that was decided in 1967. The case involved Mildred Loving, a Black woman, and Richard Loving, a white man, who were married in Washington, D.C. When they returned to their home state of Virginia, their interracial marriage was considered illegal under Virginia's anti-miscegenation laws. The Lovings were arrested and convicted. The Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, ruled that Virginia's anti-miscegenation laws violated the

Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This ruling effectively struck down all remaining anti-miscegenation laws in the United States, legalizing interracial marriage nationwide.

- Multidirectional force: A concept that refers to the complex and dynamic nature of Diaspora, which can have both positive and negative impacts on individuals, communities, and societies. Diaspora can be a source of creativity, innovation, and cultural exchange, as well as a site of conflict, tension, and inequality.
- Nation state is a place where a majority of inhabitants share common elements such as language or ancestry or culture.
- Nomadic theory: A theoretical framework that emphasizes the fluid and dynamic nature of identity, culture, and power. Nomadic theory can be used to analyze the experiences and practices of Diasporic communities, which often challenge fixed notions of identity, belonging, and territory.
- Primitive passion: A term used to describe the intense desire for attachment and stability that can characterize Diasporic communities. Primitive passion can manifest as a longing for a mythical homeland or a search for recognition and acceptance in the host society.
- Sharp v. Perez: Sharp v. Perez, also known as Perez v. Sharp, is a significant California Supreme Court case that was decided in 1948. It challenged the constitutionality of California's anti-miscegenation law, which prohibited interracial marriages. The case involved Andrea Perez, a Mexican American woman, and Sylvester Davis, an African American man, who sought to marry each other. The court decided that the anti-miscegenation law violated the

equal protection clause of the California Constitution, making California the first state to strike down such a law.

- The 1965 Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. It abolished the national origins quota system, which had previously limited the number of immigrants from specific countries based on their national origin. Instead, it established a new preference system based on family reunification and needed skills. The legislation created the Diversity Visa Lottery Program
- The 1982 Lebanon War, also known as the First Lebanon War, was a military conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), as well as various Lebanese factions. The war began on June 6, 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon with the stated aim of driving the PLO out of the country. The conflict lasted for several months, resulting in significant loss of life and displacement of civilians.
- The Ka'bah, also spelled Kaaba or Ka'bah, is a sacred structure located in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is considered the holiest site in Islam and holds immense religious significance for Muslims around the world.
- The KKK, or the Ku Klux Klan, is a white supremacist organization that originated in the United States in the late 19th century. The KKK has a long history of promoting hate, racism, and violence towards racial and ethnic minorities, particularly African Americans.
- The term "Namaz" is commonly used in South Asian countries, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, to refer to the Islamic prayer. However, it is important to note that "Namaz" is not the original Arabic term for prayer in Islam.The Islamic prayer is called "Salah" in Arabic

GLOSSARY

- The Thyagaraja Aradhana is dedicated to glorify the saint composer Tyagaraja, .
- The U.S. has historically been a leading destination for refugees fleeing persecution, conflict, or violence. The Refugee Act of 1980 formalized the refugee resettlement process, and allows individuals facing persecution to seek asylum in the U.S.
- Transnationalism: A term used to describe the social, economic, and political connections and interactions that transcend national borders. Transnationalism can involve the movement of people, ideas, goods, and services across borders, as well as the development of social networks and identities across locations.
- Victimization and trauma: Concepts that refer to the harm and suffering experienced by individuals or communities as a result of violence, discrimination, or other forms of oppression. These experiences can have lasting effects on physical and mental health, as well as on social and cultural identities.
- Voodoo, also known as Vodou or Vodun, is a religion that originated in West Africa and is most commonly associated with Haiti and its Diaspora.The name "Voodoo" comes from the West African language word "vodun", meaning "spirit" or "deity".
- Wudu is a ritual purification performed by Muslims before Salah (prayer) and touching the Quran. It involves specific actions of washing and cleansing.