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A Critique of Diaspora and Hybridity as Post-Colonialist Paradigms in Selected Novels by Ahdaf Soueif, Bharati Mukherjee, V.S Naipaul, and Zadie Smith: A Comparative Study

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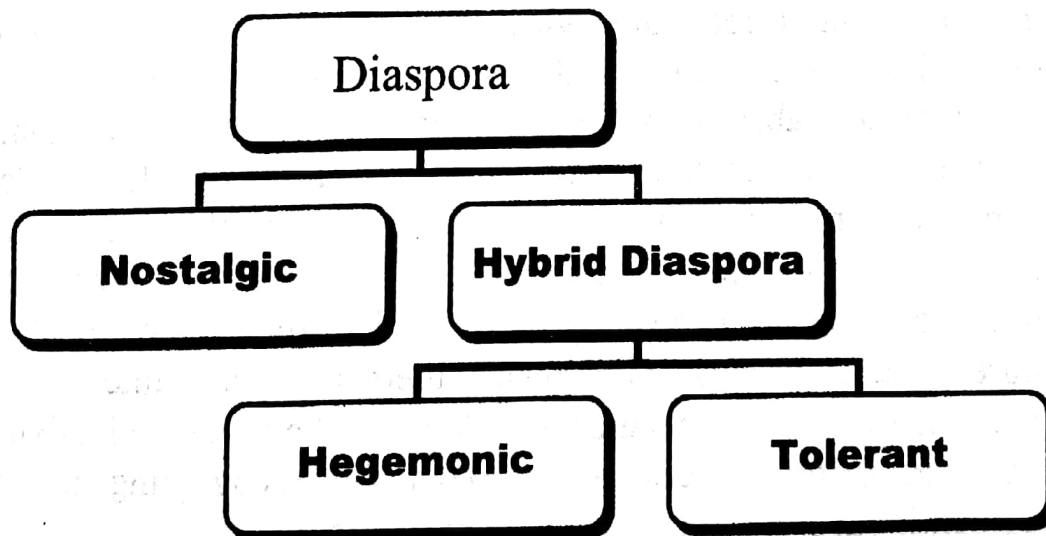
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Summary

In this study, chapter one treats diaspora, and hybridity from a different perspective that is concerned in the overcrowding, and significant implications which both terms carry. Therefore, the following division takes place; diaspora as a nucleus which includes two paradigms called; nostalgic, and hybrid, and from that hybrid diaspora paradigm, tolerant and hegemonic hybridity sub-paradigms flourish. The following figure shows exactly what I mean:



Nostalgic diaspora paradigm designates immigrants who simply depart their homelands, and carry with them a huge amount of suffering, and agony for being distanced from their mother country, and displaced, traumatized, alienated, buried in an alien land. Nostalgic diaspora subject, therefore, is totally convinced that he\she is a stranger who will always seek home, and yearn for it in a strange society. Also in that case, Third World immigrant is someone who is confused about his\her identity which neither becomes attached to his\her far away past, history, culture, and language that are only located in home, nor is capable of adaptation in the new and strange society.

That makes home an essential if not a foundational construct in the consciousness of the alienated immigrant subjects for it orientates immigrants to know the fixed place where they originate from, and the authentic culture, history, and identity that distinguishes, and differentiates them from others in all the world. That is why Third World immigrants recreate a copy, a ghetto-like suburbs in host societies that imitates real home where immigrants can show their independent authenticity by celebrating national festivals, wearing national clothes, and even having their local food. But, home remains an idea that is only dreamed of by the traumatized alienated immigrant for she\he never comes back to the imagined, mythical, and perfect home which includes the lost, and beautiful memories, culture and purity because real home is certainly different, and absolutely torn by social, political and economic problems that murder home's beautiful originality. Also, hybridity, or settling down, and mingling with the other's host culture helps in non return to home. Indeed, return to home does not make sense especially if the idea of "home" itself is unreasonable because historically, there is no absolute original culture, or pure homelands which never have several mixings between different races to the extent that recognizing the very authentic race in such societies is impossible.

It is worth mentioning that nostalgic diaspora paradigm includes a branch called the female nostalgic paradigm which designates woman's position in the era of colonialism, and post colonialism. Under the umbrella of colonialism, women were seen as preservers of purity, or race for having mothers' role, and that makes them feel dispersed, and scattered between two worlds; their own which is characterized by traditionalism, originality and a rigid patriarchal order, and other colonizer's world which is described as world of modernism, and development. That helpless, and baffled situation of women between First and Third worlds extends to the era which follows the end of colonialism, and makes women who dare to settle down in a foreign , and alien land in "double sense of nostalgic diaspora" for being alienated in home, and outside as well. However, there are immigrant women in that time who endeavour to hybridize with the other once their feet touch host society, and thus become not painly agonized by home loss because home for them forms oppressive heritage, and miserable memories of ignoring.

Double nostalgic diaspora is not merely related to women because it is apparent as well in male, and female ghetto diasporic communities established in the First World where the cracking disjunctures between people who belong to one home, and have religious, ethnic, generational, sexual , and dialectic differences double trauma of immigrants in host society .

Remarkably, there is another strange branch of nostalgic diaspora called the colonizer's nostalgic diaspora. It describes exactly the sense of loss, and strangeness that Third World colonizers have already passed by occupying another country and settling down in an alien cultural context that completely differs from their own.

Nostalgic diaspora paradigm with all its connotations and branches is generally seen as a "failed" experience in which

traumatized immigrant cannot pass his past, and is unable simultaneously to adapt to a new home so that She/he is drawn in a sense of partiality, or half life that hybrid diaspora which is another paradigm that belongs originally to nucleous diaspora could demolish.

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Hybrid diaspora paradigm designates Third world subjects who accept, and cope with threatening danger of impurity, "doubleness", or "inbetweenness", and decide to contact, and mingle with the First metropolitan world societies, and cultures to "reconstruct", and "reproduce", conclusively, whole different new, and collective identity which differs from one person to another . But it is not only responsibility of Third World immigrants to create such identity because it depends mostly on nature of host society which could be hegemonically embracing to have hegemonic hybridity sub-paradigm, or tolerantly welcoming, and accepting of other races to form tolerant hybridity sub- paradigm.

Committing itself to authoritarian, and controlling idea such as "nation state" which is the core of hegemonic hybridity, is what makes super ex- colonizer submit to colonialism's old game which sets "binary opposites" as a strategy that deliberately makes fixed, and categorical oppositions between stranger, and indigenous , subject and object, "orient", and "occident" which create a pretended "universal human character" that initiates in reality fierce social injustice which fabricates two different kinds of people; those who are strong, rational advanced , human like, and proponents of Western democracy, and those who are weak, irrational, less advanced, and parasite like, "terrorists". Thus, alienated, and traumatized immigrants feel an inevitable and endless "hostility" against host societies.

On the contrary, tolerant hybridity requires inspiring, and balanced "bridging", "crossing over", "cultural exchange" "mutual contact" and "authentic communication" between

old master and slave to take place, ignores issues such as "purity", and "Eurocentrism", and replaces fixed, and essentialist "binary opposites" that the Western context of human rights, and democracy creates with new "human context" of "acceptance", and "appropriation", "respect", and "internalization" of one culture with another, conditioned by a protection of originality of each involved culture, minorities have history, and tradition which deserves to equally share the majority's; they have "past" that needs to be located, recalled, and negotiated with the other's culture as well.

If protection of originality is a responsibility of metropolitan host societies, there is still a space left for Third world subjects to fulfill tolerant inclusion which is their endeavours pursue to be accepted as well by majority, minority should be included neither totally to majority nor to Third world roots. Instead, they should be involved in an "interstitial agency" which "recreates" minorities' past to fit the new present that requires only those who enjoy "collective identities", or "unitary subjects".

It is worth noting that however tolerant acceptance of the other communicates, and connects the unlikes, and fixes the defects of categorizing "nation-state" that produces traumatized immigrant, it is not easily fulfilled for it needs social ground that encourages equality.

Today, it is easy to say that such ground exists because the era of globalization, heterogeneity, plurality, and interrelationships between differences is viewed as the "ideal" or "positive" time when interaction between differences, and the new meaning of "sociality", and "belonging" replace the trauma of home loss, and monocentrism of the majority's culture. That is why, today witnesses a "deconstruction", and "contamination" of the "old dualities", or fixed, and essentialist binarism between dominant, and subordinate, withdrawal of "nation state", a shared

"givenness" in which no one side alone could pretend its responsibility for or the "centrality" in constructing it, and a new reading of history as a "story of loss" that is multiple, and contains diverse experiences to the extent that makes Roman culture inevitably borrows from Latin and Greek.

A new world order then is constructed, and related not only to globalization but to several historical transformation such as the end of imperialism around the world, cold war, and the striking worldly economic revolution of capitalism which categorizes people around the world according to wealth not to ethnic and cultural differences. Also, rapid development in the field of communication such as internet makes people around the world contact easily, instantly and, without interruption, and makes Third World subjects who feel alienation find a way to contact their families, and societies from their bed rooms. Thus, sense of alienation which hits, and traumatizes first generation of immigrants in the ex imperialist host countries is demolished by the second generation, and the generations who follow who could wipe out the trauma of home loss, and rid their old wound as being temporary visitors, and position themselves as part of First World metropolitan societies.

Nonetheless, Third World immigrants are not totally free from past nation state, or Western binarism which naturally exists today because there will be always some kind of "cultural imbalance" between the centre, and periphery cultures which is supported by the pretended slogan of capitalism called "universal oneness" that intends to return the old "imperialist project" in a new form which continues positing the West on the top of the pyramid while the other does not only come at the bottom but also is probably the first to be suspected in committing crimes, and bringing diseases to the metropolitan, and superior cities.

This new version of the old imperialist project is created by globalization. That is why in the new developing economics

of South Korea, and Indonesia, what is called the "national consciousness" of accumulating wealth is priceless now in comparison to "universalism". That makes tolerant, and equal contact between dualities easy to be defeated instead of prospering today. For some people, tolerant acceptance is not only hard to locate today but also it becomes a dream.

As a matter of fact, there is no proof that one single paradigm or sub-paradigm exists solely on the world stage today. Ethics of integration are set side by side with that of differentiation. That is to say tolerant hybridity paradigm exists as hegemonic hybridity paradigm, and nostalgic diaspora paradigm. That makes "nationalism", or authenticity today confused as being either "progressive" power which embraces differences equally with each other or "regressive" that excludes differences, and creates hegemonic hybridity subject, and a ghettoized homeless immigrant or other.

In the following four chapters in that study paradigms of diaspora and hybridity are examined in four novels which are commonly characterized by protagonist's being in a sense of loss, trauma, and alienation for being subaltern who is stereotyped, and categorized by the First World and ex colonizer. Thus, the reader is invited to hold an inevitable comparison between the four narratives especially with the different, and varied names and portrayals that label protagonist's trauma and his/her struggling against it and ability to defeat, or not Western exclusionist ethics to fulfill tolerant, and embracing inclusion.

For instance, in V.S Naipaul's novel *A House for Mr Biswas*, Mohun Biswas, and his family's trauma is not quite different from Iqbal's in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, Biswas, and his children are victimized like Iqbal's by super colonial power which symbolically alienates Biswas, and his children, and ultimately, they could not fulfill complete freedom, while it

racially traumatizes Iqbal's family who could not eventually defeat it.

Biswas is, without hesitation, alienated by his original family who views him as cursed, and vicious person with unnatural physical construction who becomes responsible for his father's death, his sense of alienation continues by moving from one house to another where he has no right in, and by living mostly in the Hanuman House where he is embraced by the colonizing Tulsis, Queen Mrs Tulsi, and boss Seth construct large, strong, dogmatic, commonwealth empire-like, and feudalistic Hindu hierarchy which regularly conducts, overpowers and marginalizes subalterns, or lower members who belong to such family as Biswas, and the husbands of Tulsis' daughters whom the Tulsis consider frequently labourers, and allow with a sense of superiority one room in the Hanuman House to be squeezed in.

Upper hand of the Tulsis, Shama herself considers Hanuman House the only house which is home; any house else which Biswas attempts to have is not Shama's, they are only places to spend time in. That is why she objectifies even her husband Biswas whom she considers, and approves his being only a labourer who has no right to be cared of as a husband, to argue against Tulsis' traditional Hindu "cat in bag" marriage system, or even to threaten Tulsis' life system by a doll's house. Also, naming her children, letting them be employed like servants, tearing into pieces doll's house, kneeling down, and saying sorry is only a right that Shama gives only to the Tulsis.

Thus, children inherit their father's trauma, and sense of decay, and loss. Savi and Anand are rudely treated in Hanuman House like children of a labourer and nothing more; they have no voice, and cannot accept, or reject anything concerning their way of feeding, dressing, or even punishment, they cannot say a word even if their properties are misused. Savi knows that

Hanuman House is not home but she is able to control such agonizing situation more than Anand who realizes that a father like Biswas without a house, or a respectable job is what makes him and his sister settle down in Hanuman House.

All such marginalizing actions against Biswas, and his children makes Hanuman House for them an atmosphere of insecurity, incompleteness, decay, venality and exile, and turns them consequently to be nothing; only visitors, or strangers who never accept that humiliating situation, and refuse to lose their identity so that Biwas decides to revolt against feudalistic Hindu hierarchy of Tulsis . Biswas starts revolution by himself for he pursues a house of his own, and adopts capitalism which gives him the freedom to convert from Hindu Brahmin rituals of Tulsis to a reformist religion that approves modern viewpoints like girl education, and equality between man and woman. Then , Biswas encourages his children who remain most of the time in Hanuman House to revolt against Tulsis' style of life, and to take over their right of choice. Moreover, he attempts to equally raise, or upgrade his children to the rank of Tulsis by gifting Savi, a doll's house which sublimates her from other labourers' children in Tulsis' house, and by not allowing Anand to be like other children who kneel down or say sorry for older people just because they are older.

At the end and after several attempts to have a house which are fated to fail either because of money, or because of natural causes such as storm or fire, Biswas finally owns his house, or independent portion of the land where he becomes free to use, wander and enjoy silence away from the noise of Tulsis. At this moment, he holds reciprocal relations with Tulsis, reunites with his family in one house which they can enjoy non blurred memories , and feels the loyalty of his wife for the first time. But it seems that the new house is not completely perfect , it is pathetic, non ideal , insignificant, debted house which needs repairs and improvements and misses a son whose ingratitude

makes him not the son himself. Simultaneously, capitalist ethics drive Seth, and the husbands who are distanced as well to plunder, and exploit Tulsis' empire till it falls down as they give Mrs Tulsis the right to convert to Catholicism, and Owad with the rest of the sisters the chance to take off their skin, and to distance themselves from their shameful Hindu background.

Like the imperialist, and inclusive Tulsis family which controls the life of Biswas, and his children, and dislocates them, the English society in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* alienates Samad Iqbal, and his children by setting them in a battle between past, and present which brings nothing to them but being traumatized, and hanging on mysteriously between two different worlds, and eventually failing to attach any one of them as well as his children. In other words, Iqbal and his children's trauma lies in their being not totally identified, and fluctuating between being themselves with their Bengali Muslim roots, and culture, or being mutated voiceless shadow, and only nothing, hollow, and unseen subjects for an imperialist controlling culture.

Therefore, Iqbal and his children strive earnestly to be identified first as English but unfortunately the English old colonizer with its long history of colonialism, and present privileged ethnocentrism keeps isolating, disdaining, and contaminating them like tolerated house animal. Samad like other aliens in the English society such as Alsana Begum, Hortense Bowden, and Mad Mary is underestimated, and considered not much qualified to have a prestigious job, or even to leave a space for his Islamic identity to show up through ceremonies. Samad could do nothing against such marginalization but to childishly, and desperately inscribe his name by blood over a wooden bench, and to have a relationship with the white English girl Poppy Jones who appears in climax trauma time of Iqbal so that he could not realize that she truly loves him, and leaves her; it is the time when he becomes aware

that his children are going to face the same disastrous destiny of their father. Also, he insists on preserving all what is related to his Islamic background including his grand father's memory, his original name, and holding on spiritualism of Islam concerning death, sex, and genetics. Creeping to the past world is only a pretention for Samad which could support him to defend himself against that authoritarian English culture which time proves that it won't change, and that it still plays the same old game of colonialism.

Like Anand, and Savi in A House for Mr Biswas who inherit their father's sense of loss, Millat is distanced by the English mainstream which refuses the several attempts he is doing to be identified as English, or to be absorbed completely by the English culture won't work; chasing girls, smoking, and even listening to Michael Jackson won't change rules of colonialism which allow him only to be nothing with no voice or identity; only one of the sheep which should walk peacefully in a flock. The Chalfens fail to embrace Millat for that reason; they play role of stereotypically perfect English colonizer all the time who are interested in affording guidance for objectified other like Millat who is not from their point of view originally an English. That is why Joining fundamentalist KEVIN is the only option available for Millat.

Regaining roots is something that Magid refuses originally; and that makes him a unique character by itself for he is not fluctuating between two worlds like Samad, or the wholly fundamentalist brother Millat, Magid decides earlier to cling without resistance to the West by changing his name, and refusing to commit Islamic rituals like Haj. This is probably what makes Samad send him to Bangladesh where Samad thought that Magid would suck up Islamic spiritual values, and get rid of the Western materialistic, and secular ethics. Magid comes back, instead to be one of the loyal men of Western secularism, and continues his earlier attaching to the most

powerful West by sharing Marcus Chalfen future mouse project. What the West makes of Magid resembles exactly what Magid, and Marcus Chalfen experiment over that mouse who is genetically modified and turned from brown to albino mouse to cure cancer cells. It is as if cancer cells is attributed to his being brown, and only taking off his dark skin is what is going to cure him. That is also the trauma of Magid who believes that being completely sucked up by the West, and taking off his skin would cure his being not identified. Both mouse and Magid are controlled by a superior power which drives them to be in a racial phobia ,and to endeavor enthusiastically to peel off their skin, and be one of the majority to reach finally a kind of artificial certainty modeled by Western institution that continues playing God.

As a matter of fact, it is not only the Chalfens who play God, Iqbal's family plays this role simultaneously by their bathing in nostalgia for their roots. That is to say, Samad's sending for Magid to Bangladesh without waiting for his approval, Millat's total refusal to the different English and his non negotiable Islamic fundamentalism, and Magid's rejection of all those who decide to protect their authenticity, and his non compromising secularism make all such characters who are supposed to be more flexible in their contact with the other who has once traumatized them under the name of colonialization, look exactly like their old colonizer. That is what makes Magid and Millat unable to reach a point "in between" at the end of narration for both do not enjoy tolerant embracing or including of the other; both think that he is a God by himself; such God and all other Gods according to Zadie Smith are fated to fail, and the only winner is the one who leaves a space like Archie Jones , Irie and Joshua Chalfen for the other who could pass by their original characteristics, or by the help of others long path of exclusion and hatred .

Love for "common humanity" is the feature which crystallizes Archie Jones's character; he is a man who enjoys multi characteristics which absolutely fights Western ethnocentrism in White Teeth. The most praised characteristic is his being not preoccupied by any ideology, and only interested in flipping a coin, and that makes him always the winner or the hero for Zadie Smith whom by his character she introduces the new tune of Englishness which positively winds up White Teeth by its sense of equality or democracy that magnificently goes beyond identity politics to enable immigrants such as Samad Iqbal, and Clara Bowden to coexist side by side with Jones.

It is Jones who respectably realizes from the very beginning that past is something which is inescapable, and that it is not easy to disconnect from and that is why he is attracted, and married to the Jamaican dark skinned Clara Bowden, and befriended with the Muslim Bengali Samad Iqbal without even noticing their being different, Jones has not allowed himself to murder D.R Sick, or even to commit suicide at "halal" Muslim shop. Also, Jones is the one who frees future mouse at the end and is the one who has been shot to remain an immortal tolerant English icon whom its deep belief in the democratizing common humanity is rewarded by a hybrid English baby of Irie Jones who forms "Eden of England" by making a new generation of English families; the baby's roots go back to a Jamaican English mother, and a Bengali Muslim unknown father, and he is brought up later by a Jewish English father.

Indeed, all those who enjoy tolerance or the ability to make harmless compromises which fits the person's past and present are all rewarded including the offspring of the three families included in White Teeth. Irie Jones and Joshua Chalfen are rewarded by "blossom of hybridity", and by being together and having a new baby to bring up after passing through the disruption of English monocentric binarism. Before being the winner like her father, Irie is ached by a transient sense of

alienation because of her Jamaican physical features which makes her look like a stranger who has no reflection in the English mirror, and makes her urgently engaged by one question which is who she is? And who she should be?. This oftenly what makes her attempt to erase the physical randomness which makes her different from the white mainstream so that, she becomes an "English rose". But, unfortunately she could never be that English copy which she dreams of because nature does not allow her to have that silky hair of the English, and her attempt to have such kind of hair turns her to a woman with dry, and dead hair, it is as if nature itself is against mutation or against taking off someone's skin to be replaced by another. Nonetheless, Irie continues fighting nature fiercely by her disastrous merging with the Chalfens who rudly underestimate her mental capabilities, and let her work as a secretary only because she is alien who is from their point of view has limited mental qualifications . But, it is that racial, and arrogant outlook of the Chalfens which awakes Irie from her anti- nature dreams to pass through another stage of fluctuation between who she is, and who she should be, and unreasonably have sex with both Magid and Millat who from her point of view resemble her more than the Chalfens . Then, she realizes that the ability to embrace the other is not related to the other's being similar to her or not, it is related instead to his ability to accept her being different, and not even noticing it. Irie is lucky enough to have such other ; namely Joshua Chalfen, that person accepts Irie`s difference to the extent that he generously accepts her baby who is not him.

ملخص باللغة العربية

مفهومي الشتات و الإندماج الثقافي في مدرسة ما بعد الكولونيالية:
دراسة نقدية مقارنة في أعمال مختارة لأهداف سويف
و بهارتى موخرجي و ف.س. نايبول و زادي سميث

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة اثنان من أهم المصطلحات في مدرسة ما بعد الكولونيالية ، هما "الشتات" (Diaspora) و "الاندماج الثقافي" (Hybridity) للمهاجرين في المجتمعات المضيفة في الغرب و محاوله تحليل مجموعه من الاعمال الروائية المختارة في ضوء التضمينات او الدلالات المختلفه والمتنوعه التي تحملها هذه المصطلحات. تضم هذه الدراسة خمسة فصول بالاضافه الى الخاتمه التي تعرض اهم ما توصلت اليه الدراسة.

يتناول الفصل الاول إعادة النظر في مصطلحي الشتات و الاندماج الثقافي ليتحول كلاهما من مفردات جامده و قاصره على معاني محدوده إلى مصطلحات تتمتع بالمرونة الكافية لتضم تحت لوائها العديد من التضمينات و الدلالات المختلفه حيث يتسع مصطلح الشتات (Diaspora) بالقدر الكافي ليضم نموذجين من المهاجرين وهم أصحاب الشتات النستولجي او الحنيني للوطن (Nostalgic Diaspora Paradigm) و كذلك هؤلاء الذين استطاعوا الإندماج في المجتمعات المضيفة (Hybrid Diaspora Paradigm) و يتشعب من هذا المنطلق مفهوم الإندماج الثقافي (Hybridity) ليضم نموذجين مكملين من المهاجرين و هم هؤلاء الذين خضعوا للإندماج السلطوي القائم على الهيمنة (Hegemonic Hybridity Sub Paradigm) او الإندماج التسامحي القائم على تقبل الاخر (Tolerant Hybridity Sub Paradigm). وتتناول الفصول التاليه محاوله لتطبيق تلك النماذج في روايه "منزل السيد بسويس" لنايبول، "الاسنان البيضاء" لزادي سميث، "جاسمين" لبهارتى موخرجي و "في عين الشمس" لاهداف سويف.