



Rethinking British Diaspora: The Question Of Home And Identity Construction In Caryl Phillips' In The Falling Snow (2009)

إعادة التفكير في المغتربين البريطانيين : مسألة الوطن وبناء الهوية في رواية

كارل فيليبس (2009) *in the fallingsnow*

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Abstract -

In the realm of diaspora, a lot has been said concerning identity construction. Within the diaspora studies, the issue of identity has been a topic of debate due to the imperious acknowledgment of an earlier 'elsewhere' and the degree of attachment to the erstwhile culture. Many questions have been put forward to reach the very meaning of identity when it is foregrounded and contextualized within the struggles of universality and essentialism. Among the raised questions the one which leads to the search for the sense of identity and structure of being when the local and the international are juxtaposed. These do not seem to be the only questions. There are, in fact, other questions which deal with the proclivity for honoring 'home' that would make of the Diasporic person a perpetual changing

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person called the “chameleon”, and deal with the possibility of orchestrating a single and homogenous opus apart from colliding voices. Apart from the calls for breaking off with the national ties and cultural artifacts that characterized the diaspora accounts, at any given point, diaspora communities seem to inherit certain cultural institutions and traditions that are definitive for their existence. Caryl Phillips’ *In the Falling Snow* (2009) questions the different momentums that hinge on diaspora populace and their endeavor while constructing their identities, through offering a critique to the issues of integration, assimilation, acculturation and adjustment that keep reiterating diaspora communities. One is supposed to check how does home operate and serve as an analytical category of identity, how the conundrums of home could open up inscrutable chasms between the international and the local , and the possibility of finding the self, though fortuitously, thinking about the different spectrums of inclusion/exclusion and the assertion of rights within the recipient land.

Keywords-

British Diaspora, Home, Identity, International, Local

ملخص-

في إطار دراسات الشتات، تعتبر مسألة الهوية موضوعا مثيرا للمناقشة بسبب كل من الإقرار المطلق بالانتماء للوطن الأم من جهة والارتباط الشديد بالثقافة السابقة من جهة أخرى. لقد طرحت العديد من التساؤلات للوصول الى معنى الهوية لاسيما في خضم الصراع اللامتناهي بين العالمية والأصولية، و من بينها البحث عن الهوية وبنية الوجود عندما يتقاطع المحلي و الدولي. قد لا يكون هذا التساؤل الوحيد فالميل نحو الوطن الأم قد يجعل من المغترب شخصا دائم التغيير متسائلا حول امكانية وجود قطعة موسيقية متجانسة في حين وجود أصوات مختلفة ومتضاربة أحيانا. وعلى الرغم من التداعيات المطالبة بالانفصال عن الروابط الوطنية والثقافية التي تميز المغتربين عن غيرهم، غير أن هذه الفئة قد تحفظ ببعض المورثات والتقاليد الثقافية المحددة لوجودها. يقدم الكاتب كارل فيليبس من خلال روايته المعنونة "*In the Falling Snow*" بعض التعقيدات التي تواجه المغتربين أثناء بناء هوياتهم من خلال تقديم نقد لقضايا الاندماج ، الاستيعاب الثقافي، والتبادل فيما يخص هذه الفئة. قد يقتضي هذا الأمر بالتحري ما ان كان الوطن الأم يعمل كفئة تحليلية للهوية أم يخلق

فجوة غامضة في رحلة العثور على الذات في خضم التفكير في ثنائية الانتماء/الاستبعاد
والمطالبة بالحقوق في أرض الاغتراب.

الكلمات المفتاحية-

الشتات ببريطانيا، الوطن الأم، الهوية، العالمي، المحلي

1. Introduction

Identity narratives constitute a critical space in the last decades mainly within the context of diaspora. The contemporary preoccupations concerning identity may refer to the encroachments of the original culture with the culture of the host country. The movement to the diaspora is not a simple movement that entails the process of moving from one territory to another. Rather, it is a movement where ideas, perceptions, interests, desires and perspectives are transferable as well. The global age celebrates the process of thinking through the borders of nations and cultures. Therefore, it is legitimate to say that each nation, nowadays, is having a Diasporic group somewhere in the world. Through the annals of history and ever since the emergence of migration, the queries like where to belong, who to trust, and most importantly where to claim the cultural filiations are persistent questions regarding identity construction. The qualm concerning identity for Diasporic populace can be justified by their desire to overcome the conundrums created by the intersection between two colliding cultures and origins. The quest for locating epistemic connections between the lands left behind and the host land remains detrimental chiefly with the presence of the obstinate desire and feelings of commitment and nostalgia to one's roots and origins.

Over the past decades, the notion of diaspora has evolved drastically from its cynical and restricted usage to describe the Jewish community to a more ubiquitous usage to refer to any group living outside the shores of its homeland. Recently, it is applied to all communities that exhibit a sort of cultural and political cohesion in the countries in which they are resident now. The appropriation of the concept diaspora has put identity into question as far as it has become clear that these ethnic groups cannot assimilate in the host land without being deployed with the omnipresence of the erstwhile homeland. In other words, identity starts to lose its acuity as it moves from its analogy of being homogenous and discreet to a more flexible vision that entails a set of markers that the individual subscribes to identify himself and the group he belongs to. Nevertheless, identity discloses some obscurity in the sense that there is a refutation of these markers. Some might include culture, historical artifacts, genetics and even environmental markers as constituent elements that subscribe identity. It is eloquent, however, to mention that even the statelessness of diaspora community can be considered as a marker of identity formation. The exclusion from the hierarchy of the mainstream group, thus, is no longer seen as a process of disempowerment to this group, as it is a category or a manifestation of that identity. Therefore, these markers are never unitary; rather, they are contingent and arbitrary like identities themselves which are, to a certain amount, fluid and contestable.

A plethora of diaspora writers projected the contours of identity formation focusing on diaspora's cultural imposition due to the existing borders established by communities and cultures. Caryl

Phillips is among the writers to discard some insights concerning diaspora's resilience to crave for new multiple cultural avenues. Caryl's narratives move from the intuitive attack to marginality and imposition, that could be imposed and practiced by the mainstream community, to a plea in which he favors the examination of one's identity with reference to one's ancestral origins that is indispensable in comprehending the current cultural malaise and reification.

Cary Phillips' stories unfold the struggle of characters that are de-territorialized, as he questions whether thinking about the original home can foster one's restlessness and betrayal to the recipient country that is supposed to be called 'home'. The feelings of bewilderment can be explained by the feelings of double-agency that most exiled have. They see issues in terms of what is left behind back home and what is present in the new one. In other words, most issues and ideas are, always, "counter-posed" (Said, 1993, pp. 3-4). Yet, having a contrapuntal reading to Phillips's oeuvres might elucidate his hypnotic vision concerning tracing roots and desiring home without being overly consumed by the counter-position that might occur when here and there, home and the forged are positioned together.

In the Falling Snow projects life of immigrants in Post-war era. In this work, Caryl Phillip interrogates the engagements of immigrants, of different generations, into transnational spaces. Moreover, the work questions their initiative to move into new special locations and how the latter can sustain their global engagements and filiations. Though the work traces the immigrants' life in Great Britain and how they are ensnared by the mainstream culture; nonetheless, Phillips, through the polyphonic voices he employed and the rotation of narration, debarred

his characters from having rigid , restrictive, and obstructive views vis-à-vis the mainstream society.

2. The Chattel of Home in Phillips' *In the Falling Snow*: The Seditious Role of Home Retention

For those who left their home, questions like where do you come from and to which culture do you belong might have innumerable rehearsed answers due to the double consciousness of belonging to several cultures that exiled people might have. There is always a strong connection between the past memories and the present. The past is always the glorious moments that one may look at to comprehend the lived moment. It is the thing that hovers over one's silence and aids the individual in comprehending how s/he came to be her/himself and inhabiting the land that s/he calls 'home'. It is no wonder then, that diaspora experience inflammatory tensions between the memories of the place of origin and the predicaments of the places of residence.

In the Falling Snow is a work that offers a critique to the seditious role of home over the process of self-identification where the narratives open with intermingling suppositions the British have vis-à-vis the existence of immigrants in their land. Phillips says:

He is walking in one of those leafy suburbs of London where the presence of a man like him still attracts curious half-glances. His jacket and tie encourage a few of the passers-by to relax a little, but he can see that others are actively suppressing the urge to cross the road; it is painfully clear that, as far as some people are

concerned, he simply doesn't belong in this part of the city (2009, p. 03).

The opening sentences explicitly disclose the laden implications of life in the UK. These implications are brought equally by both the feelings of detachment and resentment that are imposed by the mainstream community and the feeling of belonging to elsewhere that Keith and most immigrants have. The feeling of estrangement that Keith used to have is by no means intended to reflect the state of paranoia he had due to his inability to function as a father and a husband as well. For Keith, all of the problems are stemming from his failure to function in a non-welcoming environment. This psychological state of mind that Keith and most immigrants share is portrayed as "his generation of kids, who were born in England and who had no memory of any kind of tropical life before England, were clearly trying hard to make a space for themselves in a not always welcoming country (p. 41).

The author of *In the Falling Snow*, through his narratives focuses on the enigma of home defining and the nostalgia to trace origins. Remembering home is an active process that helps the individual comprehending the world around him. This metaphorical journey is not a journey to discover the idealized past that is waiting to be discovered, nor it is sort of an emission from the unpleasant reality; it hovers, in fact, over the depositories of fact that are radical in one's journey of self-discovery. In this claim, Gayle Green envisions that people's plea for the past stems from their desire to change the present. She further distinguishes between nostalgia and remembering. She asserts that claiming "nostalgia" is the desire to return home, for

“‘to remember is to bring to mind’ or ‘think of again,’ ‘to be mindful of’, ‘to recollect’. Both ‘remembering’ and ‘recollecting’ suggest a connecting, assembling, a bringing together of things in relation to one another.” (Quoted in McDermott, 2002, p. 391). Therefore, the movement back and forward alerts one’s sense of presence and future as well.

Accordingly, the absence of home is among the struggles that Phillips’ characters are prone to. The enigma of returning home remains indispensable of their day by day struggle. In this sense, McDermott says that “when we long for the past, we long to what might have been as well as what was; it is only by incorporating such longing into our narratives that we can suspend the past and ultimately change its meaning in the present” (2002, pp. 405-406). Returning home might not provide individuals with clear answers to their queries which may, as well, remain unreciprocated. Yet tracing roots and looking back at what has been left behind remains prolific. The projection of the traumatic memories, in the work of Caryl Phillip, has been proliferated by the end of work when Earl decided to talk about his dejected existence in Britain insisting on his son to send him back home “I want to go home, Keith. I don’t mean to some stupid English house. I mean home. Home, home.’ His father stares up at him. ‘You understanding what I mean? I’m not from here” (Phillips, 2009, p. 269). What could be noticed here is that Earl for the first time managed to move from his hypnotism and inertia to help his son, Keith, understands the power of the past that strongly resonates in our voices.

The inconsistency of diaspora is shaped by/through multi-locality and the deep investment in the homeland. Cary Phillips insists on answering the question whether honoring home means the deliberate rejection of the values of the inhabited terrain. Or, probably those miscellaneous imperatives are necessary for dispersed populace who might share the same sentiments and assert their difference from the mainstream culture which is a sort of identification as well. It is interesting to note that Keith insisted on telling his son, Laurie, how different they are from the others in spite of the generational differences between them.

It is worth noting that *In the Falling Snow's* narratives float over diaspora individuals of African descent. More specifically, it points to the three protagonists' different experiences in the diaspora namely Earl, a man of Caribbean origins who landed in England by the Post-war era with great expectations. Unlike Earl, Keith was born in England but not having any tropical life before England. And Keith's biracial son, Laurie, who allegorizes the brashness of the third generation that seems to be unbothered and less troubled with the cultural allegiances. It is necessary to note that Caryl's narratives gravitate around these three characters as it crystalizes their perception of home. Keith, in several occasions, wanted to familiarize his son with the external world thinking that being a biracial would trouble him. The author unveils his character's (Keith) psychological portrait as follows:

He resists the urge to continue his history lecture, which is of course a veiled attempt to persuade Laurie that this is his city too. And then it occurs to him that it

is possible that his son already knows this, and that there is no reason for him to acquaint Laurie with what he already possesses. His son is probably quite at home with the Tower of London and the Palace of Westminster and Waterloo station and St Paul's Cathedral, all of which are clearly visible from this vantage point (Phillips,p. 163)

Not astoundingly, the three characters are having different standpoints vis-à-vis home. While the Caribbean resembles and signifies home for Earl, it remains just an imaginary, an illusory and an imagery construct for Keith. The latter has never visited it before, but shows a great sense of willingness to do it with his son Laurie. Consequently, he suggests having a trip to the Caribbean. Laurie, however, was surprised why his father would have suggested the Caribbean specifically shrugging:

‘The Caribbean?’ Laurie pushes a particularly large piece of pizza into his mouth, and he speaks through the food as he chews. ‘Why there?’

What do you mean “why there?” Your grandparents come from there. Are you saying you are interested? (p. 126)

The reader notices that Keith is stressing on the importance of knowing where one comes from. By contrast, Laurie fails to comprehend why his father would call erstwhile land ‘home’. Notwithstanding, this spiritual journey to the ancestral land seems to be less striking to Laurie who allegorizes the openness to multi-locality that third generation immigrant are disposed to. Phillips is

trying to render through these narratives his perception of diaspora which could be seen through difference and discontinuity. Readers may not fail to comprehend Keith's tendency to talk about the rifts of separation unlike his son Laurie who focuses more on seamlessness. To put it in different words, Phillips, through selecting divergent characters, wants to talk about the Diasporic experience as being structured via opponent taxonomies amongst which endurance and discontinuity, difference and continuity.

Remarkably, the reconciliation of home for Diasporas is retroactively blurred in spite of the absence of conformity regarding home. The latter is contested due to the politics of 'returning home' that seem to encroach upon the geographical borders of the inhabited terrain. Thus, home has become entropy due to its different strains.

3. The archetype of Identity within the Diasporic Sphere

It is almost noteworthy to underline that the narratives of identity have never been translucent mainly when it is projected within the shadows of diaspora. The intricacies that arise while constructing identity for Diasporas might emerge due to rise of nationalism in the host land, the feelings of exoticism and exclusion, rehabilitation and the remedy for the original land and culture. The search for identity, therefore, is among the struggles that shape our world today; it is in the words of Frantz Fanon "a passionate research [...] directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others." (1968, p. 37). Hence, the inclination of the past and

its ramification on the present, amongst hitherto marginalized people, acclimatizes them along their struggle to define the self and others as well.

In reading *In the Falling Snow*, the reader may notice how identity is a catalyst for characters who inhabit two different worlds. The encounter of two different groups may intensify the problem of self-identification due to the lamentation of homeland and belonging to somewhere in the world. *In the Falling Snow* eschews the rigid conceptions of identity as being a pre-given prototype and stresses on the double-consciousness and double-orientation of diaspora communities. As the story discloses, the reader becomes aware of Keith's identity profile which happens to oppose national identity as this character focuses on the transitions that diaspora communities face in the host-land and the contradictions that accompany this transition with regard identity. The novel epitomizes identity with regard the discourses of history and culture.

More adequately, the prototype of identity is built upon two axes; similarity and continuity from the one hand, difference and rupture from the hand. Though there might be a dyad between these trajectories, yet there is a dialogic relationship between them. Carly's main character fails to adjust due to the absence of cultural filiations. Identity to a certain extent means the ability to tell the story of the self. Nick Stevenson stumbles upon this idea claiming "...to be able to tell a story about the self and related communities. An identity is like a narrative that has to be constantly retold and reformulated in the light of new circumstances" (2006, p. 278). This reveals the endurance and profundity of the issue of knowing what to say about yourself and

your ancestors in the profound search of identity. It is not surprisingly, thus, to see both Earl and Keith, in spite of the generational gap between them, insisting on the lamentation of history.

Perhaps, being positioned or in-context is what Keith and Earl are trying to accomplish. In this context, it is viewed “there is no such thing as an individual, only an individual-in-context, individual as a component of place, defined by place” (Neil Evernden, 1996, p. 102). The contextualization of the self within a definite place helps in identifying the self, this probably justifies Keith’s interminable struggle to familiarize and reassure hisson, Laurie, with the external world. Such feelings would not take a postulation without the dyad of attachment and detachment that endorses Keith’s ‘Claustrophobic’ position (Phillips, p. 328).

Conformity, the absence of stories related to the selfhood, and commemoration are among the predictable patterns that hinge on diaspora narratives. The endeavor to trace origins does not stem from the desire to find the self only, but to find stories about the self and others with whom we share some sense of history. This probably elucidates Earl’s strongest desire to tell Keith about his family back home in the West Indies. Remarkably, Earl’s stories embrace the irrational choices that most immigrants had concerning abandoning their lives back home; moreover, he tried to vindicate the traumatic experiences after landing in England. He points:

Man, England, is good, but you soon going to find out that England ain’t easy. Sometimes I just can’t believe that people back home selling tools, and furniture , and borrowing money , an putting themselves in big debts, and

all for this, to come to a place where people eat on the street out of a piece of newspapers full of chips and vinegar . People mashing up their lives for this? A West Indian can't afford to be sensitive and decent in a country like this? (Phillips, p. 293)

The passage heightens the lamenting atmosphere that made of England relapses into a land of great despair and astonishment. Accordingly, Earl wants to convey how people back home have no conscience or an idea about the possible scenarios that could process in the host-land, as it could reflect the feelings of shame and guilt for abandoning the homeland. Earl's desire to recall his memories is not rhetorically impressive, but to help his son Keith shape some fragments; thus, reconstructing stories apropos the personhood and people with whom he might share the same ancestral stories.

Identity, however, to some commentators is articulated and constructed with certain narratives. It is always within representation and not that closed totality. In other words, identity is seen through the rubrics of representation or constituted within 'representational discourse' (Mumby, 1997). *In the Falling Snow* is a concrete example that elucidates the idea that there is interplay between identity and the historical contexts where we are positioned and located. Or, to say it differently one's identity is interconnected with one's image according to the others. Keith insists on helping his son refining his image in order not to feel the exotic other. He divulges "keep control, son. Keep it together. There are enough people out there trying to knock you out of your stride. Trust me; you don't need to be helping them" (Phillips, p. 125). Probably, what could be inferred here is the sense of

having the shared history of dispersal and alienation in the host land that Keith wants to share with his son. Though Laurie does not share the same views with his father and fails to comprehend his father's inertia, yet one can fathom that Keith wants to point to the collective past and experience that could be considered as a form of cultural empowerment for Diasporas.

Collective memory and shared experiences help Diasporas band together to create imaginary communities in the host land. The attentiveness of sharing a collective Diasporic identity is necessary as far as it provides the community with the sense of identification and position within the representational discourses. The sense of collective identity emerges due to the politics of exclusion and racism in the host land. Being blocked out of the national identity lifts the desire to find roots and a ground to stand. Caryl Phillips patently touches on Stuart Hall's view of identity as being a matter of becoming as well as being (Hall, 1990, p. 225). What is rather observed is Keith's deliberate doggedness to trace roots to find a sense to the lived moment. Though his son, Laurie, cannot comprehend the reason behind his father's assertion on his difference from the others because he feels British and he never feels marginalized, yet Keith decides to make his son comprehend where is he from and where is he at. In this vein, Stuart Hall envisions that Diasporic identities "are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (1990, p. 236).

It is of an utmost importance, therefore, to take the manifold identifications into account whenever we are addressing the identifying patterns of Diaspora identities. Comprehending the nexus

between the new culture and the erstwhile culture is perilous due to the double perspective that diaspora have concerning their identities. Phillips's novel records the struggles of Diaspora communities in the UK, as it points to the experiences of characters whose experiences are counter-posed to each other with regard their identities and their vision to the recipient land. In this view, one might infer Phillips's desire to underscore the multiplicity of visions and perceptions that diaspora populace have concerning their identities. Moreover, it reflects the resilience of the characters via exposing the readers to different cultural avenues. Earl, to a large extent, seems to be the character who wants to assimilate into the host culture without showing any kind of fossilization towards the former one. He points "if we want to make good we should shut up and listen" (Phillips, 2009, p. 270); he further amplifies:

What you must do is play the stranger because it make them feel better; play the part of the stranger and nod and smile when they ask you if you know what is a toilet, or if you ever see running water coming from a tap. Look upon their foolishness like a game you winning and the stupid people don't even know that you busy winning and the stupid people don't even know that you busy scoring points off their ignorance. Play the damn stranger and you can win in England and maybe you don't run crazy (Phillips, p.271)

This passage reflects Earl's persistent yen for survival; moreover, it points to the substantial angst that shapes a typical Diasporic being. In other words, the propulsions to be accepted from the mainstream

culture forced Earl and most Diasporas, principally the first generation, having the idea of risking their culture and history heading for acceptance and adjustment to the new culture. Though Earl's life in England is not frantic or effervescent as he expected it to be "even before I get off the boat England deliver a big shock to my system" (Phillips, p. 269); nonetheless, he fully understands the importance of the cultural cryptograms in shaping one's identity. Conversely, passing the stories he inherited from his communal experience to his son Keith, would immensely help him prop up to find sense to his existence in England.

In spite of the generational gap and differences between the different characters in the novel, Phillips wants to decipher the commonality between characters that seem to share the same position of being on the rim or the perimeter of the mainstream realm. The density of marginality, however, varies from one character to another, yet all characters seem to feel emasculated with regards their identities. In contrast to Earl, Keith appears to be less troubled with the locus and England's atmosphere because he rarely feels attached to another locus. Interestingly, when his father talks about 'Home', he starts to mesh his ontological existence in England. He finally comes to filter how the presence of a man like him still puzzles and attracts the English people. In a mocking and disdainful words, Phillips describes the scene as follows: " his jacket and tie encourage a few of the passers-by to relax a little [...] it is painfully clear that , as far as some people are concerned , he simply doesn't belong in this part of the city." (Phillips, p. 03)

Contrary to Earl who feels hostile since his arrival, Keith insists on his attachment to England regardless of the deteriorated bounds to the erstwhile country mainly when he shows his tendency to make his son apprehend that there is a rich culture in need to be reviewed and re-discovered. Keith was keen to create a national culture that could help him and his son exist. Surprisingly, the unfeasibility of creating a national culture is highly noticeable in the novel due to the inconsistency of Keith who fails at comprehending his son. Most importantly, Laurie flops to comprehend his father who is trying to familiarize him with the milieu that he already possesses. Obviously, with comparison to Keith, Laurie is able to create a new space where two different realms can meet and interact without showing partiality towards one culture over the other. Laurie's limberness and flexibility suggest the multiplicity that England is prone to lately which is the thing that both Keith and his wife Annabelle refuse to comprehend. Laurie's refusal to accept his difference suggests his openness, as it reflects his desire to accept the existence of two different discourses without approving the dominant discourse. Possibly, the flexibility and the unconformity of Laurie, who belongs to the third generation, echo that England is increasingly becoming the arena of societal transformation.

Hence, Keith remains trapped in his torpors of bitterness and cynicisms. Readers, therefore, can notice this through the discussion between Keith and Laurie. Keith claims "after all, there are some things that I've been through myself as a black kid growing up in this country and I think I can tell you what I know without it coming over like a sermon" (Phillips, p. 167). Unpredictably, Laurie looks

momentarily embarrassed and wonders where exactly this discussion would lead them saying “ the things Dad , I don’t know if things are the same now as they were when you were my age” (Phillips, p. 167). Unlike Earl and Keith, Laurie is having a neuter vision to the place he belongs to due to the fact that Laurie feels that the British have relinquished their stand of preeminence and supremacy.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to mention that Laurie manages to comprehend that crossing the national boundaries, creating new forms of belonging, and challenging neuter conception vis-à-vis identity are imminent whenever identity is articulated. This idea is best described by Keith who feels how pathetic he seems to his son mainly when he insists on him that he will always be the stranger for the others. He adds: “Laurie, act your age, not your color” (Phillips, p. 168). It is probably worth noting that Keith feels that Britishness and Whiteness are identical. In other words, holding the British citizenship does not necessarily mean that you are British. For Keith, there are a lot of markers that are assumed to be fixed and coherent amongst which race. By contrast, Laurie seems to cut cross these markers telling his father that he is ought to be respected and regarded as British regardless of his color commenting: “it is not about discrimination and stuff [...] it’s got a lot to do with respect. You can’t let people just large it up in your face and disrespect you” (Phillips, 2009, p. 167). The contradiction between young and old generations with regard national identity can explain that identify markers are never unitary or homogenous, but are in transformation. This probably rationalizes Keith’s desire to maintain strong allegiances to the ‘Caribbean’. To say it differently, this outlines the idea that being British does not

necessarily mean ignoring their cultural heritage. Therefore, the predicaments of desiring another place to belong to does not automatically prioritize one over the other as far as territoriality is progressively becoming an outdated delineation.

4. The Possibilities of Cosmopolitan Identities

Having charted some of the markers that feature Diasporic identities, it is possible to draw a critical attention upon cosmopolitan identities. It is worth mentioning that claiming attachment to one place and grounding identity to a single community is inapt to cosmopolitan subjects. Consequently, Diasporic identities are following ‘nonisomorphic paths’ (Appadurai, 1996, p. 37). The mobility of people and cultural relics, acculturations, and the rejection of essentialism are entrenched features that shape Diasporic identities. Within the debates of identity, a lot of markers may act as framework that will help us understand the nature of identity since the process of identification has never been apparent or forthright. Hence, space may act as an essential frame as far as we are dealing with the juxtaposition of different worlds. Dealing with diaspora identities, subsequently, means comprehending space since the latter allows us to study identity with the view of mobility and comprehending the politics of inclusion and exclusion within the Diasporic sphere. In this view Lefebvre envisions that space “links the mental and the cultural, the social and the historical” (2003, p. 209). Thus, space involves multifaceted processes of comprehending, discovering and creating both real and imaginary cosmos where boundedness and essentialism are challenged.

As the earlier discussion suggests, space is one of the central markers of identity in the context of diaspora. Moreover, it allows us adopting cosmopolitan stance with regard identity. Though diaspora accepts plurality and breaks off with the singularity of attachment to one singular space, yet the process itself brings with it number of complications such as the plurality of belonging to different locations. The intensity of plurality may cause certain complexities mainly when the two different places are juxtaposed to each other. *In the Falling Snow* personifies the complexities of mobility. Though the novel deliberately celebrates the transnational affiliations of Phillips' characters that was allegorizes by the characters' free engagements with the metropolitan community, yet the sense of inertia is always present whenever these two different cosmos are juxtaposed to each other. Both Keith and Laurie seem to be indecisive whenever the original home, the Caribbean, was mentioned as being the real home. When Earl started talking about his first days in England and expressing his desire to return back home, Keith momentarily thought about "Mandela Center" (Phillips, p. 268). Similarly, when Keith thought about a trip to the Caribbean as a present to his son, Laurie shrugs why the Caribbean specifically, why not another European country. It is important, therefore, to note that Keith appeared to be the acentric man to his son since he is talking about their belonging to a hostile place that they have never visited or talked about previously. When Keith insists on the Caribbean precisely, his son seems to be impassive and apathetic, yet Keith contends "what's that supposed to mean? You are supposed to know something about where you come from. Or at least be curious. I am not asking you to go and live there

or anything, but at least just take a look. It is the Caribbean, Laurie. How bad can it be?” Laurie answers him “well how come you’ve never been there if it’s so important” (Phillips, p 126)

The change of perspective concerning the place of belonging and the juxtaposition between two opponent places cause problems for diaspora regardless whether these communities successfully manage to cut cross the boundaries of nations or not. Probably, not all entities enjoy the process of mobility itself; this to a large extent justifies Keith’s delay to talk or visit the Caribbean. Or, Keith comes to realize that his sense of being and existence is relatively related to the juxtaposition and interconnectedness of different spaces.

On the other hand, the question of citizenship may take us on a detour due to the complex nature of diaspora’s citizenship. It must suffice at this point that citizenship is resumed in a new alignment. Given this indulgence, one can suggest that understanding the intricacy of citizenship means, instinctively, apprehending identity because of the neat equation between them. There seem to be that citizenship, residency, and belonging form an interconnected matrix where identity can be constructed. Caryl Phillips’s *In the Falling Snow* uncovers the extent to which identity can be constructed on the basis of citizenship. Phillips’ characters mainly Earl reflects on being the one who did/does not fit in; therefore, his presence in England seems to be replicated in spite of being a British citizen. Though he knows both places, unlike the other characters, but feels belonging to neither. This created a kind of destabilization to the secure category of being a British citizen. By contrast, Keith seems to be the ‘familiar stranger’ subject to the British community as far as he was born and raised in

England. The affection to re-connect with a place 'elsewhere' creates a sense of estrangement due to the desire of tracing roots from one hand, and to find responses to the question of what is meant by being a 'British' from the other hand. While there is a temptation to cross the borders of exclusion, polarization, and the primordial borders of nation-state, the problem of identification remains unresolved one. Accordingly, diaspora identity is about 'being global' and not feeling attached to one place. In this regard, Clifford points "Diaspora is about the possibility of gaining 'a sense of attachment elsewhere, to a different temporality and vision, a discrepant modernity" (1997, p. 257). This explains Keith's assertion on his son not to feel attached to England solely, but to reconnect with his original country similarly. Possibly, Keith is recognizant of the fact that diaspora continuity means universality rather than particularity. For him, being a cosmopolitan citizen means interconnecting all what is British and what is particularly related to the Caribbean.

Hence, citizenship with the sphere of diaspora remains a contested one providing that it is no longer related to the nation state or national identity as it is related to de-territorialization. Citizenship is not exclusively connected to the group's recognition and assertion of rights as it is related to the strife of difference. What is essential to explain at hand is how the account of citizenship is viewed differently in spite of the commonality of histories and perspectives within the discussed novel. The characters within the tackled work have shown different accounts to the issue of citizenship regardless of the same locations and belongings. While Earl was doing his best not to risk this 'British' citizenship to assimilate and did his best to not be

blocked out of the metropolis ,Laurie , a third generation immigrant, looks less troubled and seems not to mind losing this right. Earl comments “Lord man, I’m in a place where people give me a form to fill out and then ask me if I can read, and on the bus they prefer to stand rather than sit down next to me. I travel all this way for what? To see England with her pants down and her backside hanging out? But nobody tell me that I must leave for England and cut up my life like this. ” (Phillips, p. 293). what could be inferred at this level, is that Earl is fully recognizant that he is considered as the ‘exotic other’ ; nonetheless, there is a sense of ‘wicked delight’ that could be identified providing that these communities started to threaten the ‘British’ national identity when they started to appeal for one collective fraternity. It is worth adding that Earl’s situation is quite different from both Keith and Laurie who are dangling between two worlds with little, if not to say no, infrastructural grounds or cultural artifacts.

5. Conclusion

Within the sphere of globalization, the language of de-territorialization and border-crossing seem to be prevailing over diaspora narratives. Caryl Phillips, however, raises brilliantly and intuitively critical questions that could provide momentum reflections on Diaspora identities. Phillips through his characters points to how having an identity is problematic providing that identity is not pre-given assumptions and prophecies that one can have, but it refers to the different fragments and images that one can construct around the self .The prophecy that home chattels over diaspora’s identities was

corroborated along Earl and Keith penultimate decisions to reconnect with the erstwhile country. Both characters display a strong desire to reconcile with the original culture, even if this reconciliation keeps them disfranchised. It is not that both of them enjoyed this disfranchisement or coerce, but rather it is a definitive part for their identification and structure of being.

The work under discussion underpins one of the truisms that afford transnational realms amongst which England due to the cut-cross movements that characterized the post-war era; moreover, it questions whether the dualistic model of black/white is a paradigm for debate , as it maps the different contestations that fortify ‘ Britishness’. It is more than plausible to point that race is considered as a marker of identity formation for immigrants. Though there is ‘newness’ in terms of race , but readers can easily notice that immigrants like Earl, Keith , and Laurie are considered as the ‘familiar strangers’ or the ‘enemies within’ , still there is a renewed conception of racism based on the cultural differentialism that acts as basis to the politics of inclusion/exclusion. This generates the view that color is a defining marker of identity in spite of its different interpretations from the part of characters. Thus, the trajectories of identity are themselves fluid and arbitrary and never stable, but rather contingent and contestable. Within the discussed work, readers may find it apparent to notice the different perceptions of identity and the nature of being for characters. Yet, all characters managed to cut-cross the boundaries of histories and locations to create imaginaries spaces where they can deliberately articulate their identities. In other words, particularism starts to risk its

acuity as it becomes progressively a vague epitome due to the intersectionality between the local and transnational byword.

Caryl Phillip expounds the different paradigms that underpin identity construction within the context of diaspora. He genuinely exposes how the historical impulse, the cultural artifact, and race could be rudimentary markers of identity in spite of the current language that calls for the transnational affiliations. Regardless of the surplus proclivity for cosmopolitanism and universality, there seem to be a strong emulation, if not to say, angst to reconnect with the original culture which is definitive in one's journey of self-definition and ontological existence. Hence, Diasporic identities are necessarily hyphenated acknowledging the authoritative of a former 'elsewhere' and what is present at hand. This article argued that diaspora's disentanglement from conformity, nationhood, and community prompts us to rethink deliberately of how difference and sameness would be articulated within the Diasporic sphere.

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