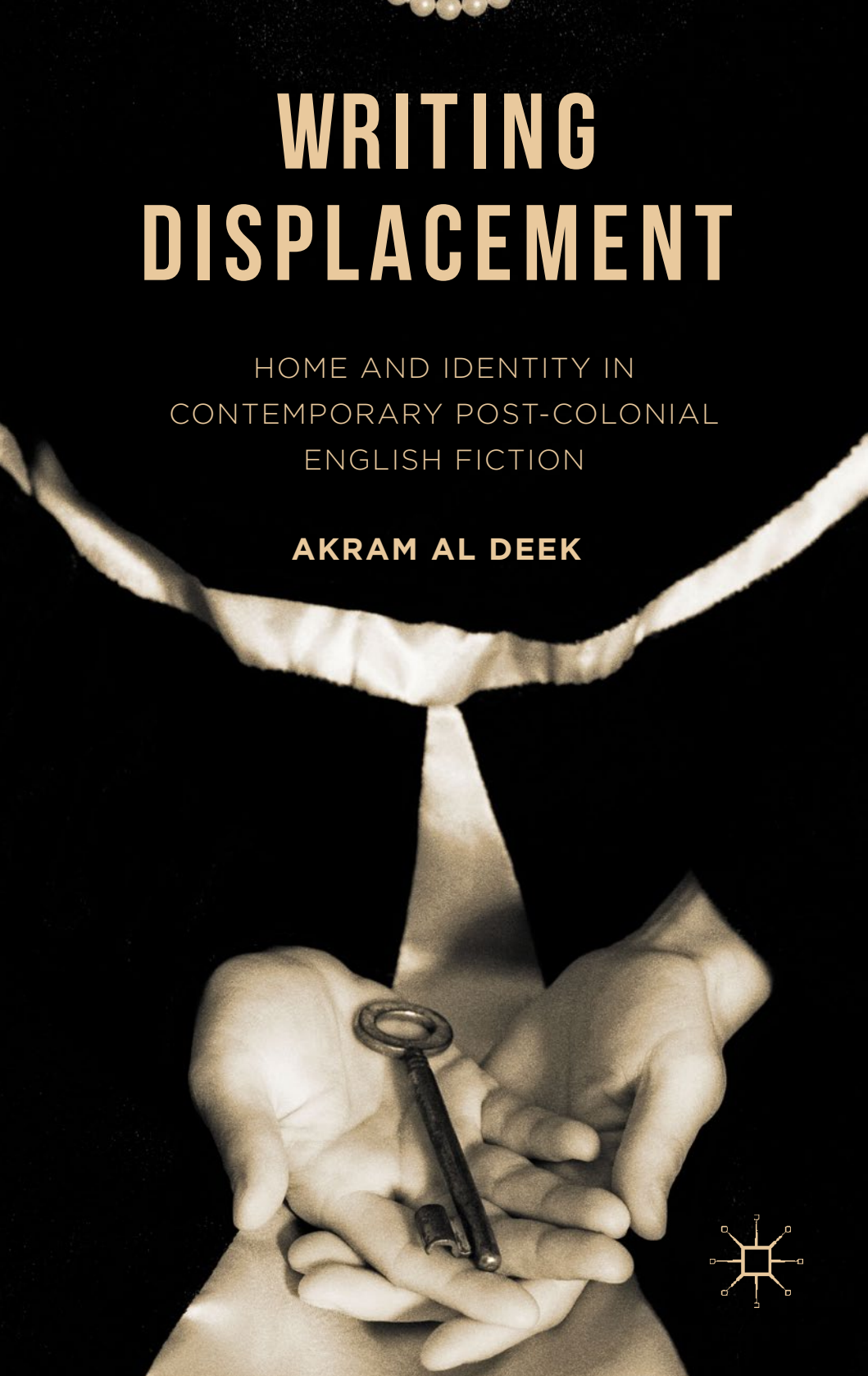


WRITING DISPLACEMENT

HOME AND IDENTITY IN
CONTEMPORARY POST-COLONIAL
ENGLISH FICTION

AKRAM AL DEEK



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To my newly born nephew, in the hope this will speak to your generation.
Welcome home, welcome to exile you little displacee!

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PLACING DISPLACEMENT: AN INTRODUCTION

I

Using cultural and literary theory and contemporary metropolitan post-Second World War postcolonial fictions, the concept of displacement is revisited here allowing for an affirmation of the specificity and beginnings of displaced writers' identities and for a reassertion of the significance of their starting points meanwhile resisting, precluding, and falling into the dangers of cultural and mental ghettoization and defensive and/or vulgar nationalism. Burdened with colonial history and being "out of place," writings by displaced writers with their hyphenated identities have altered the literature of England in its language and cultural identity. This has promoted the rediscovery, as in the Freudian psychoanalytic context, of materials that have been repressed or "pushed aside" in cultural translation, but which surely continue to cause trouble and restlessness in the perpetual journey of displacement.

Displacement also troubles the ideas of citizenship and national belonging and offers to the noncitizen the freedom to be "out of place," out of the familiar and status quo, which opens doors for cultural translation and filtration. Displacement falls therefore somewhere between nationalism (Oedipal, rigid, imposed, created, and closed) and nomadology (anti-Oedipal, open, flexible, creative, and free), allowing critical and aesthetic distance and balancing the central authority between past and present, tradition and modernity, by translating (between) them. Revisiting displacement is a study that produces therefore an oscillation between the two at will. Displacement as it is understood here celebrates multiplicity and hybridity/syncretism without falling into the anti-memory and history-free, spatially attenuated, free-floating, aloof, and ontologically rootless concept of nomadism, or the nomadic rhizome. In revisiting the concept of displacement, this study is skeptical of nomadology's total and complete transcendence of national and Oedipalized territorial frameworks.

Displacement is not therefore ghettoized in Freud's Oedipal territory, nor is it free-floating and attenuated in nomadic deterritorialization. Revisiting displacement recognizes the importance of starting points and beginnings¹ without sliding into nomadology's aloofness.

This study spans across a time frame that starts with Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* in 1956, to 2003 which is marked by Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, which manifests, to a certain qualified extent, a new ethnicity: black British. The two generations discussed here, the Windrush Generation (1956–1976) and the so-called Masala Fish Generation (1976–2003), with its army of displaced migrant writers, mark a shifting boundary that problematizes the frontier of the modern nation-state and engenders a synthesis of cultures and a peaceful celebration of living in the potential radiance of Babylon. This celebration, however, is often precluded by racism and vulgar nationalism among other obstacles.

The structure of this generational division suggested here traces different shifts in the uninterrupted emphasis on beginnings, the different representations of home, and the politics of identity and their changing interrelationship with place and memory; it also reveals the changing nature of the representations and politics of home and identity through a contemporary study of metropolitan english² fiction. This study eventually concludes that in both generations the specificity of identity and beginnings is always present and recognized not as a moment of departure only but also as an inventive resource from which perpetual displacements feed an incoherent identity in flux. Although location or locale in this book is kept from being reduced to a mere geographical place on the geopolitical map of the world, locality is always present in the fictions analyzed here. Whether imaginatively constructed or nostalgically romanticized through memories, beginnings are always referenced, referred to, and frequently deferred from. Multiple identities therefore may seem to be directionless; nevertheless, they are not without a concept of home, nor are they forgetful or without history.

This project also concludes that an access to historic memory is always significantly important because it provides the context for politically fruitful invention. Thus, it attempts to semantically expand the concept of displacement by contextualizing it through personal understanding of its nature as it has emerged and emanated from my Palestinian experience of exilic dispersions. The Colonized Territories of Palestine are hence foregrounded here as an example, particularly as represented in the works of Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish,

because, first, of the current and ongoing strife for self-determination under Israeli colonialism; second, because of the Palestinians' enduring struggle in preserving memory and thus the nation; and lastly for Palestine's historical and regional association with the semantic as well as the alienating and dislocating nature of the concept of displacement, or *Nuzool* (evacuation in Arabic), subsequent to the Catastrophe of 1948. And although the Palestinians' historic circumstance and color of skin is different compared to the Indians or Pakistanis, the Indians of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora and the West Indians, they all share a history of oppression as postcolonial subjects whose so-called homes become artificial and imaginary constructs and whose identities are still burdened with a British colonial history, ongoing racist discriminations, and a persistent, troubling national identification. The Palestinian example is also invoked here because it mirrors other struggling national groups; it is invoked here because it represents a momentous example of postcolonial nationalism and emerging national consciousness,³ the importance of preserving memory and thus the nation, melancholic nostalgia, and a changing conception of identity over sixty or so years of life under siege and in exilic displacements.

II

Reading about displacement in contemporary post-Second World War literary theory and criticism, a few studies have featured or thoroughly emphasized the concept of displacement in their debates and discussions. The concept of displacement has not been circulated widely enough within literary and cultural studies either. It has not, for example, been semantically expanded or defined. Some studies have discussed the concept of displacement in relation to gender and/or sexuality, cinema and/or music, within the context of one or two writers, or in relation to one specific geographical location over a particular historic time. This project, however, revisits and resuscitates the concept of displacement as it, expands it semantically, and produces an extensive analysis that adds to the already existent body of critical work.

In recent years, studies that have tackled the concept of displacement within the context of literary theory and contemporary British fiction, or post-Second World War literary writings in English seem to have started by using the concept in the Routledge edition of *The Empire Writes Back* in 1989. In "Place and Displacement," the editors highlight the fact that both place and displacement are "major

features of post-colonial literatures” (Ashcroft *et al.*: 2002: 8); in their brief introductory section, the focus is being laid on the importance of language and its articulation in relation to place. Another work that recognizes the concept of displacement as an exilic narrative in literary studies is a compilation of essays also published by Routledge in 1994, entitled *Travellers’ Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement*. The essays investigate experiences of traveling, tourism, exile, and expatriation; and yet none of the articles adopts or discusses the concept in the book’s title, displacement, in depth. All the writers’ concerns seem to be exploring narratives of displacement without thoroughly discussing the dynamism of the concept and its politics. Their concern is rather focused on the future of traveling in a world whose boundaries are constantly shifting. Accentuating the concept of tourism and the tourist identity, displacement then is only mentioned when violent images of war, drought, and ethnic cleansing are brought into the narrative. Evidently, displacement is associated with Cambodia, Palestine, Kurdistan, and Bosnia among other devastated countries. Displacement therefore is granted a negative implication, which will be revisited and reversed in this book. And although traveling is presented as a mode of dwelling, there seems to be no distinction between “travel writing” as such and “traveling for pleasure.”

In his writings on culture and literary criticism, Edward Said, who, it is worth noting, is a Palestinian exile and an American intellectual, also uses the term with an unsurprising emphasis on the metaphor of “exile” as in “exilic displacement” in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) and in *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994). In the latter, he states that, “[f]or the intellectual an exilic displacement means being liberated from the usual career, in which ‘doing well’ and following in time-honored footsteps are the main milestones” (Said: 1994b: 46). Homi Bhabha, again, a Parsee-Indian displaced intellectual in London, defines the term in *The Location of Culture* (1994), among other various definitions, as “the fragmented and schizophrenic decentring of the self,” indicating displacement’s hybrid/syncretic, dual, and bipolar nature and its continuous deferral (Bhabha: 2005; 1994: 310). A similar indication is carried in another study entitled *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question* (1994), a compilation of essays aiming to, collectively and individually, “grasp its multivalent complexity” since “the plural of the title of the volume indicates the multiple resonances of displacement [as] both point of departure and site of inquiry” (Bammer: 1994: xiii). The work, however, focuses on linguistic displacement and is framed

by two fictional works only. A similar theme is expressed throughout a subsequent compilation of essays in *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity* (1996), where the writings demonstrate “a constant shuttling between reversal and displacement; they track resistances that are both or at once arboreal and rhizomic, sometimes nomadic and sometimes sedentary” (Lavie and Swedenburg: 2001: 13). This particular study defines identity as “an infinite interplay of possibilities and flavors of the mouth” (Ibid: 3). It also encourages the establishment of a multicultural community where “[e]veryone came equally ‘different,’ despite specific histories of oppressing or being oppressed” (Ibid). While this study suggests considering identity as an open possibility, celebrates the hybrid figure as decentering products of master codes, and encourages multicultural mingling and racial equality, its “shuttling” between rhizomic and nomadic points and arboreal and sedentary points seems to slip more into nomadology and a celebration of a free-floating world. Culture, for example, in the context of that study is “a multicoloured, free-floating mosaic, its pieces constantly in flux, its boundaries infinitely porous” (Ibid). Words such as rhizomic, free-floating, shuttling, and nomadic reoccur more often than their opposites. It is clearly stated, however, that the essays in that volume “wish to stake out a terrain that calls for, yet paradoxically refuses, boundaries, a borderzone between identity-as-essence and identity-as-conjuncture” (Lavie and Swedenburg: 2001: 13). Although poor in its literary references, and although its thesis of “shuttling” back and forth and its oscillation between two points seems to slip into the aloof, anti-memory, history-free, and spatially attenuated nomadic rhizome, Lavie’s work contains a significant set of contributions to the field of cultural theory and the politics of identity.

Elsewhere, and resembling his professional and personal identity as a second-generation Afro-Caribbean British writer, Caryl Phillips’s *A New World Order* (2001) is divided into four units: the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, and Britain. Written as an anthology, the concept of displacement is optimistically and expectantly enlisted under the Caribbean section as *The Gift* of displacement (my italics). Listing the concept under a Caribbean section is no coincident, however, simply because “the Caribbean artist is better prepared for migration than most” (Phillips: 2001: 131). The division and multiplicity of locations in the book also suggest a multiplicity of displacements Phillips has gone through, psychologically, culturally, and geographically, and which he considers to be celebrated as a gift as opposed to be lamented as melancholic instabilities.

In this book, I write to answer some questions, in the process asking some more than with which I started:

What does it mean to be displaced? What is displacement? How does displacement alter one's being? How does it resuscitate one's becoming? What is the difference between exile, traveling and, say, expatriation? How can displacement be melancholic and/or celebratory? How thin is the line between nationalism and racism? How imaginary are our homelands? Are we nomads and belong no-where? Or do we always have central gravitation now-here? How does memory and nostalgia intensify our exilic displacement? How much of the past is shadow? Is the Palestinian exile uprooted or unrooted? Is s/he homeless or homesick? What is home? Which is harder: to forget or to remember? How much of language is alienating and how much is informative? If return is irredeemably irreconcilable, "where do birds fly after the last sky?"⁴ How do you rewrite displacement?

Motivated not only by my own displacements⁵ but also by the lack of answers on displacement, I rewrite my own displacements, highlighting the local experience of Palestinian exile in a postcolonial, global context, expanding the concept of displacement semantically, focalizing specific characterizations of an extensive body of metropolitan literatures written in English, investigating the changing politics of identity, emphasizing celebration of beginnings across 47 years of writing fiction, memoirs, and (semi-)autobiographies, two generations of displaced writers, and various representations of home, making it therefore the more significantly dynamic.

III

In a conversation with Salman Rushdie, Edward Said states the following: "Whether in the Arab world or elsewhere, twentieth-century mass society has destroyed identity in so powerful a way that it is worth a great deal to keep this specificity alive" (Rushdie: 1991: 183). This project draws on this idea of keeping the specificity of identity alive and not allowing it to dissolve into the aloofness of nomadology, transnationalism, or total dislocation. Displacement, as it is described and understood here, oscillates between Freud's Oedipal territoriality and what Deleuze and Guattari call the nomadic rhizome. It therefore challenges the claim that nomadology can freely transcend national and territorial frameworks as well as the fact that human beings, nomads or otherwise, can be free of history and/or of memory. This notion of displacement falls therefore somewhere between nationalism (Oedipal, rigid, imposed, created, and closed)

and nomadology (anti-Oedipal, open, flexible, creative, and free), allowing for a critical and aesthetic distance, and balancing the central authority between past and present, tradition and modernity, by translating (between) them. The revisiting of displacement here simultaneously proposes an argument for viewing it as an oscillation between the two which also promotes cultural translation. From this perspective displacement can be understood as a celebration of multiplicity and hybridity/syncretism, but one that does not lead into the anti-memory, history-free, spatially attenuated, free-floating, aloof, and ontologically rootless characteristics implied by the concept of nomadology. This will be discussed further in the opening section of Chapter 1.

The experience of displacement does not belittle the role of the present (culture, affiliation, now and here, the acquired, the creative, the new and changing). On the contrary, past and present act in tandem in the displaced's articulation of identity. Ideally, a postcolonial identity is that which survives the nostalgic, magnetic pulling of the past and the seductive, mimetic pushing of the present, and, most importantly, translates between them. As Salman Rushdie notes, the word translation "comes, etymologically, from the Latin for 'bearing across'. Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained" (Rushdie: 1991: 17). An identity should resiliently take what Stuart Hall calls a "cultural turn." Hall defines a cultural turn as one that "is neither an ending nor a reversal; the process continues in the direction in which it was travelling before, but with a critical break, a deflection" (Hall: 2001: 9).

Hall's concept of a cultural turn suggests two main things. One, it suggests that everything starts somewhere and has what he calls a "pre-identity" (Ibid: 36); in other words, identity does not emerge from nowhere for there is no identity that is self-sufficient or whole within itself. Two, it suggests that an identity does not have to abandon a past, or a tradition; it can rather simultaneously build on and break from it in dialogic fluctuation. It does not restore a past, but rather takes a turn from it. For to be locked up in the attic of the past (there and then, created, filiation, nature, the traditional, familiar and familial) is to miss the opportunities the present has to offer; it is to miss what comes after the break, after the turn. In other words, to be locked up in the attic of the past and tradition is to live with(in) what Rushdie calls a "ghetto mentality." To be mentally ghettoized is to "forget that there is a world beyond the community to which

we belong, to confine ourselves within narrowly defined cultural frontiers” (Rushdie: 1991: 19). This will be discussed further in the first section of Chapter 2.

This revisiting of displacement however allows for an analysis of the different shifting arenas within which the routes of displacement progress and develop: geographical, cultural, linguistic, and psychological, tackling in the process major difficulties such as racism and ghettoizing, vulgar nationalism. This will also be discussed further in the second section of Chapter 2.

Revisiting displacement explores different visions and versions of home and hence multiple rerouted identities across a span of time from 1956 to 2003. In fact, this time frame covers a large variety of displaced generations: namely the Windrush Generation,⁶ students on scholarships, females through arranged marriages and family reunions, sons and daughters of the Windrush Generation, those brought at a very early age and remained in England, those who are the product of one English parent and a non-English parent, and those who were born and bred in England to non-English parents. The selected writers in this study do not necessarily represent each group; nevertheless, they reflect the various permutations of the politics of home and identity of their time. Condensed here into two generations to facilitate an examination of displacement in the context of the politics of home and identity, these writers include what is known as the Windrush Generation (1956–1976), discussed in detail in Chapter 3, and what is described here as the double-caste “Masala Fish”⁷ Generation (1976–2003) in Chapter 4 and the conclusion.

The writers tackled in these two groups are either students (e.g., Farrukh Dhondy, Salman Rushdie, and V. S. Naipaul), or were brought along with their families at a very early age (e.g., Monica Ali, Timothy Mo, and Caryl Phillips), or were double-caste, born and bred English (e.g., Hanif Kureishi and Zadie Smith). They, or their parents, all came from metropolitan cities such as Trinidad, Mumbai/Bombay, or Hong Kong and resettled in London. Although this “army of metaphors” as Bhabha calls them has had different ways of representing home and identity, they all write about and are stimulated by displacement. While the Windrush Generation is an already established category (Sam Selvon, George Lamming, V. S. Naipaul, and although she was not on the same SS Empire Windrush ship, Jean Rhys), what is described here as a Masala Fish Generation had to be envisaged as comprehensively as possible. Writings by the Windrush Generation diminished significantly during the mid-1970s, during which time Farrukh Dhondy emerged and wrote about a new

subject matter: the young, second-generation immigrants of the time. In addition, and while Salman Rushdie contrasted East and West and introduced magic realism throughout the 1980s, Timothy Mo addressed the Chinese immigrant living in England, Hanif Kureishi introduced a new ethnicity during the 1990s, Caryl Phillips took and followed on the steps of Lamming and Selvon, while Zadie Smith and Monica Ali injected the scenery with a fresh image of a multi-generational and multicultural London at the end of the twentieth century and post-9/11, respectively. Although Mo differs from other “ex-colonial” writers such as Dhondy and Rushdie, he is still a part of “a multi-cultural but incoherent Britain” (Wong: 2000: 12) brought about by the forces of globalization. Mo’s presence as a non-English writer also coincides with literary production which was at the time moving toward a multicultural society and a celebration of cultural diversity.

The two groups, therefore, are divided according to subject matter and chronological sequence. Studying the two groups comparatively reveals that this generational division traces different shifts in identity politics and their changing interrelationship with home and place, that is the changing nature of the politics of identity and representations of home in contemporary metropolitan English fiction. This book will conclude that in both generations the specificity of identity is always present and recognized not only as a moment of departure but also of a resourceful past to and in the moment of the now and here.

It is difficult, however, to articulate a generic theory across various migrant generations and to offer answers to what it exactly means to be black *and* British, to pinpoint a displaced writer’s identity, and to isolate a singular conception of what and/or where the question of home resides. Such difficulty is due to the phenomenon of rapid acceleration and the speed of change that impinges upon migration and displacement in the modern context. In a study of *Contemporary British Fiction Since 1970*, for example, Childs states that

[t]he number of works of fiction published each year doubled between 1950 and 1990; currently, about 100 new British novels are released each week. Approximately 130 works of fiction are submitted for the Booker Prize, while around 7000 novels eligible for the prize are published in Britain and the Commonwealth annually.

(Childs: 2005: 3)

Furthermore, Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, observes that, “the last two or three decades have seen more people living across

or between national borders than ever before—on a conservative estimate, 40 million foreign workers, 20 million refugees, 20–25 million internally displaced peoples as a result of famine and civil wars” (Bhabha: 2005: 16). The sheer variety and rapid increase in numbers of people becoming part of transforming diasporic communities thus reflects a growing diversity and pluralism in identities. It has been rightly suggested therefore that all fiction is homesickness and reversely, all homesickness is fiction.⁸

Such unhomely fictions have been chosen here to reflect such homesickness and fictionality; they have also been chosen because they significantly shaped what is suggested to be termed as a postcolonial literary displacement. The adjective postcolonial here, however, does not suggest an exclusive time frame after the Second World War. Hall makes clear, for example, that the prefix “post” in this requires some qualification: “the prefix ‘post’ in post-colonial does not mean ‘after’ in a sequential or chronological sense, as though one phase or epoch or set of practices has ended and an absolutely new one is beginning” (Hall: 2001: 9). It is evident that postcolonialism would have never happened without colonialism or decolonization; postcolonialism therefore is a movement that preceded and continued throughout and developed after. “Post” in postcolonial therefore “refers to the aftermath or the after-flow of a particular configuration” (Ibid). A postcolonial literary displacement, moreover, means that postcolonial writing (literary theory and fiction in the context of this book) displaces the authority, meaning, and reality of the colonial text and offers an-Other reading, “the Other side of the story” as it were; it narrates another experience: an experience that bears the burden of the colonial experience but which also narrates independently after it: displacing it. This postcolonial literary displacement is thus narrated throughout and is demonstrated in two ways: in language and in subject matter: primarily but not exclusively exile, migration, home and identity, memory and nostalgia. Section 3 of Chapter 1 will discuss the disruptive nature of human memory and demonstrate how the displaced’s restless and relentless memory debunks Deleuze and Guattari’s memory-free nomadic rhizome and how memory as well as nostalgia can be celebratory and not exclusively melancholic. It will furthermore show how displacement rather intensifies through memory and nostalgia.

“Whether in linguistics, philosophy, or literary theory, post-colonial theories operate recursively and subversively to dismantle preconstituted assumptions in European theories. The complexities occluded by unitary assumptions of monism and universality are unraveled

by the constant pull of marginality and plurality, so that through displacement, theory is “re-placed” (Ashcroft *et al.*: 2002: 152). A new Empire indeed writes back against the old one, from within the center. In terms of writers’ homes and identities, however, whatever is shifted or changed is not replaced but rather displaced and rerouted in a new experience. In other words, the “there and then” is not replaced by the “here and now.” As Bammer states, “what is displaced—dispersed, deferred, repressed, pushed aside—is, *significantly, still* there: displaced but not replaced, it remains a source of trouble, the shifting ground of signification that makes meaning tremble” (Bammer: 1994: Xiii; my italics).

The fictionalized writings discussed here in Chapters 3 and 4 are therefore the so-called unhomely fictions,⁹ the (semi-)autobiographical novels, the multiply located chronicles, the centrally metropolitan, doubly conscious narratives, the magically realistic inventions, and the nonlinear accounts of stories of scattering, home, and identity. As aforementioned, the story timeline of this project starts with the father of the folk stories, the East Indian Trinidadian emigrant Sam Selvon and his masterpiece *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) and concludes with Monica Ali’s post-9/11 *Brick Lane*. Other writings across a very vibrantly active 47 years of (re)writing also include Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* and *A House for Mr Biswas*, Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* and her unfinished autobiography *Smile Please*, Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *My Beautiful Laundrette*, Lamming’s *The Emigrants* and *In the Castle of My Skin*, Dhondy’s *Bombay Duck* and *East End at Your Feet*, and Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* and *East, West* to name but a few. These writings are referred to in the title of this book as “contemporary post-colonial english fiction.” The word *english* emphasizes the linguistic characteristics shared by these writers as opposed to its racial and ethnic attributes. The appropriation of English serves the displaced writer’s own purposes and shoulders his postcolonial, exilic experience. This english displaces the traditional and colonial English language because it is dipped in Indian chutney and sweetened with Caribbean sugar; it dances to the rhythms of reggae and bhangra¹⁰; it is wounded by a colonial past and history yet healed by a postcolonial present and continuity. The displaced writer’s english is a postcolonial voice.

Ahmad, in his book *In Theory*, suggests that, in the case of India, for example, “[o]ne cannot reject English now, on the basis of its initially colonial insertion, any more than one can boycott the railways for that same reason” (Ahmad: 2008: 77). English is certainly one of India’s uniting factors, and it has long been assimilated into its

social texture. The fictional works of literature are written in (black) english by Britain's formerly colonized subjects, and their succeeding generations, to reach a wider audience, to contain the displaced's postcolonial experience and to rewrite what was perceived once as the Western discourse of the Other. Finally, the unhomely fictions discussed here are *metropolitan* since the majority of the works of fiction studied here have the formerly imperial headquarters, the currently metropolitan city of London at their heart. London is thus the open space as opposed to the rigid, preimposed hierarchy "back home." Hence, in these works of fiction London functions as a prime setting to and with which Other cultural locations are contrasted, presenting multiple locations that reflect the displaced's identity whose meaning is deferred and which functions through a process of multiple displacements. In this sense, displacement acts as a "counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of revision" (hooks: 1989: 15).

On the other hand, the writers discussed in this book follow in the steps of such foreigners and émigrés as Conrad, James, T. S. Eliot, Pound, Yeats, and Joyce who Eagleton once considered "the most significant writers of twentieth-century English literature" (Eagleton: 1970: 9). Caryl Phillips also echoes Eagleton in that "the most radical innovators of form in English literature," namely Joseph Conrad, T. S. Eliot, Lawrence Durrell, Doris Lessing, and Wilson Harris, "are born outside of Britain." Phillips takes his lead from Eagleton's view "that writers with 'access to alternative cultures and traditions' have an opportunity to respond in a more vigorous manner" (Phillips: 2001: 291). Phillips's concern, however, is this: *what* is it in British society that the foreign writer is responding to? His proposed answer is that the foreign writer functions as a "disrupter" to Britain's promotion of itself "as a homogenous country whose purity is underscored not only by race and class, but, perhaps more importantly, by a sense of continuity. The sentiment is as straightforward as this: we are who we are because we've always been who we are" (Phillips: 2001: 291–92). First generations of displaced writers in England are therefore disrupters of national continuity and of what Phillips calls the "conventional narrative order." Being outsiders, their work always questioned and reinvented the mainstream.

Eagleton points out, however, that conventional English culture was not able to produce great literary art "of its own impetus" (Eagleton: 1970: 9–10); he focuses therefore primarily on the contribution and general problems raised by the exile and émigré and their disruption. A similar theme is exercised in this study: the new subject

matters of home and identity that the postcolonially displaced writer has problematically and playfully introduced into literatures written in English. Through what Bhabha calls “the transnational dimension of cultural transformation—migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation,” a new history has been written and the British culture is no longer exclusively white, neither is the nation’s identity racially constructed; it is through those who “have suffered the sentence of history—subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement—that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking” (Bhabha: 2005: 246–47), that is, those who engage with culture as an unfinished product and take nothing for granted. Lessons from the migrant, the diasporic, and displaced teach one, therefore, to deny an absolute, monochromatic culture and to reject pre-given and positioned references: that after the gloom of displacement (loss and alienation, change and instability) creativity flourishes. The displaced finds solace in, and is compensated by the dreamlike, poetics of displacement. As Rushdie says, the dream “is part of our very presence. Given the gift of self-consciousness, we can dream versions of ourselves, new selves for old” (Rushdie: 1991: 377–78).

It is also in dreams that Freud finds interpretations of reality. He defines the dream-work (*Traumarbeit*) as consisting of two processes, dream-condensation and dream-displacement, which transforms latent content into manifest content. Thus, Freud defines displacement as a psychic process and associates the concept with change and transvaluation.¹¹ In the Freudian context, displacement is central to the operation of the dream-work: the process by which uncomfortable thoughts and feelings (latent dream-thoughts) are pushed aside to the safer manifest dream-content. Displacement here is not only replacement but it is also translation, for “[d]reams, just like literature, do not usually make explicit statements” (Barry : 2002:98). Literary critics and cultural theorists are therefore interested in Freudian methods of interpretation because dreams and displacements do not say things, but rather they show things. Hence, literature is capable of telling us how the unconscious works; just as in the interpretations of dreams, one must dig beneath the manifest content to understand and find its symbolic core: its latent dream-content.

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* radically critiques Freud’s theory of displacement through a reversal: they reject the notion that it is the unconscious that pressures the conscious; on the contrary, they believe that it is the conscious that pressures the unconscious. For Deleuze and Guattari, the “talking cure” for obstructions to the healthy resolution of the

Oedipus complex and the bringing to consciousness of repressed desires is the problem itself; for this activity is founded upon and perpetuates such Oedipalized territorialities such as church, family, school, nation (and any other institutions and boundaries outside the family), and especially the enlightenment concept of the individualized coherent subject. In other words, the talking cure maintains the status quo in its so-called healing, which is to countenance and promote, like fascism, the repressive forces of the cultural superego. That is why Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus theory is considered, for example, as a fight against fascism: because it deterritorializes fascism and moves authority away from between place (boundary) and self.

Deleuze and Guattari's work on Freud's theory of displacement is indeed revamping for its rejection of Freud's belief that the conscious mind is always overwhelmed by the constant pressure of repressed (libidinal) desires, fantasies, and subliminal feelings and/or perceptions. Such feelings and perceptions derive their energy from primary physical instincts seeking immediate satisfaction and run counter to elements of the mind that is concerned with adaption to an external reality and avoidance of external danger. While Freud sees the unconscious as the repository of repressed, primarily sexual desires and wishes, Deleuze and Guattari do not see the unconscious as such a reservoir, but as a productive process itself.¹²

What Deleuze and Guattari propose as more appropriate for the new world order is "schizoanalysis," which follows the lines of flight of desire as it moves between extremes from the zero point of selfless mechanization to an all-powerful megalomania. Schizoanalysis is put in oppositional and revolutionary contrast to psychoanalysis such that,

the task of schizoanalysis is that of ultimately discovering for every case the nature of the libidinal investments of the social field, their possible internal conflicts, their relationships with the preconscious investments of the same field, their possible conflicts with these—in short the entire interplay of the desiring-machines and the repression of desire. Completing the process and not arresting it, not making it turn about in the void, not assigning it a goal.

(Deleuze and Guattari: 1983: 382)

This rethinking of the Oedipus complex and hence the role of displacement in the context of a "global field of coexistence" (Deleuze and Guattari: 274) in order to discover the lines of flight and escape of desire has been very useful in broadening the scope of a number of different disciplines such as sociology, literary and cultural studies, linguistics, and geography.