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New Paths in Black British Literature. Global Trajectories towards “Home”

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Sommario

Il mio progetto di ricerca *New Paths in Black British Literature. Global Trajectories towards "Home"* si occupa di analizzare lo spostamento dei tradizionali concetti di "home" e "migration" verso le nozioni di "homecoming" e "reverse migration" nell'ambito della Black British Literature.

Subito dopo la fine del secondo conflitto mondiale, molti autori provenienti dalle ex colonie inglesi si sono infatti ritrovati a dover vivere e lavorare nella scomoda posizione di migranti in Inghilterra, a stretto contatto con gli ex colonizzatori. Partendo da questo contesto ho costruito l'ossatura del mio progetto fino a svilupparlo nella direzione più idonea, ovvero verso lo studio non solo delle esperienze migratorie e della loro rappresentazione nella letteratura Black British, ma soprattutto del fenomeno di *return migration*, fino a spingermi a teorizzare la possibilità di una *reverse migration*, che spinga gli ex colonizzatori inglesi a stabilirsi definitivamente nelle loro ex colonie, in particolare in India. Pertanto la mia tesi si propone di rileggere la posizione dei cosiddetti soggetti "subalterni" attraverso la letteratura della migrazione, soprattutto nel passaggio da una generazione all'altra di scrittori: il focus è sui flussi e i fenomeni migratori contemporanei e sulla relazione tra la loro rappresentazione in letteratura e i recenti sviluppi nel campo degli studi sulla globalizzazione e sulle diaspore. La chiave di lettura utilizzata per analizzare i romanzi di Naipaul, Selvon, Phillips, Chaudhuri, Desai, Moggach e Dyer, tra gli altri, è dunque fornita dalle tre aree tematiche attraverso cui il progetto si snoda: Black British literature, Global Studies, e Migration and Diaspora Studies costituiscono infatti il background teorico per esaminare i romanzi scelti attraverso i fenomeni globali che negli ultimi decenni hanno cambiato le relazioni di potere tra Ovest e Est del mondo, i cosiddetti centro e periferia. L'accento viene inoltre posto su come questo assetto teorico abbia influenzato la prospettiva concreta, o solo immaginata, di un possibile "ritorno" in patria da parte degli scrittori migranti provenienti da ex colonie quali India, Pakistan e l'area caraibica. Scopo finale della tesi è dunque quello di dimostrare l'interrelazione esistente tra i nuovi assetti mondiali e lo studio della letteratura, soprattutto nell'analisi dei sogni e delle speranze di tornare

a “casa”, così come nella ricerca e nell’ampliamento del concetto stesso di “home”, degli scrittori Black British.

La tesi è suddivisa in cinque capitoli. Il primo capitolo è un’introduzione ai concetti teorici alla base del progetto, dalla definizione di *migration* e *diaspora*, a quella di *return* e *reverse migration*, passando per il cosiddetto *spatial turn* che ha caratterizzato gli studi letterari degli ultimi anni. Nel secondo capitolo inizia l’analisi dei romanzi attraverso l’osservazione delle caratteristiche del fenomeno di *return migration* nella prima generazione di migranti, con un focus sui concetti di *transnational community* e *identity* in *The Mimic Men* (Naipaul 1967), *The Sleepless Summer* (Dennis 1989), *Moses Migrating* (Selvon 1983), e *A State of Independence* (Phillips 1986) per l’area caraibica, e in *The Inheritance of Loss* (Desai 2006), *Return to India: an immigrant memoir* (Narayan 2012), *A New World* (Chaudhuri 2000), e *Maps for Lost Lovers* (Aslam 2004) per l’area asiatica. Nel terzo capitolo l’analisi di questi stessi testi continua basandosi sui concetti di *space*, *city*, *home* e *homeland*. Nel quarto capitolo si conferma la rilevanza delle tematiche affrontate nelle precedenti sezioni, ma in questo caso dal punto di vista della seconda generazione, i cui portavoce sono Arinta Srivastava (*Looking for Maya*, 1999), Andrea Levy (*Fruit of the Lemon*, 2000), Hardeep Kholi (*Indian Takeaway*, 2008), e Tariq Mehmood (*While there is Light*, 2003). Infine, nell’ultimo capitolo si intende proporre un cambio di prospettiva verso l’idea di *reverse migration*, una sorta di migrazione al contrario che porta i migranti inglesi a stabilirsi in India, come descritto in *These Foolish Things* (Moggach, 2004), *Jeff in Venice*, *Death in Varanasi* (Dyer, 2009), e *Becoming Mrs Kumar* (Saville Gupta, 2013). Quest’ultima sezione rappresenta il *turning point* dell’intero progetto, in quanto propone un approccio innovativo a quelli che sono gli attuali rapporti tra la madrepatria inglese e il suo ex impero, sempre più desideroso di affrancarsi dal passato coloniale.

Abstract

My PhD thesis *New Paths in Black British Literature. Global Trajectories towards "Home"* deals with the current shift of the traditional concepts of "home" and "migration" towards the notions of "homecoming" and "reverse migration" in Black British literature.

Indeed, the evolution of postcolonial studies and the recent development of a transnational approach in literary studies (Jay 2010) have led to a renewed interest towards the subaltern voices, especially in relation to the phenomena of migration and diaspora as they have been depicted by Black British authors. Starting from Gayatri Spivak's assertion that "Today the 'subaltern' must be rethought" (Spivak 2000), the aim of my PhD thesis is to reconsider the image of "subaltern people" in Black British literature through the investigation of the effects of globalization on the literary and personal experiences of Caribbean and South Asian migrants of first and second generation. In particular, my focus will be on the phenomenon of "return migration", according to which diasporic subjects decide to leave the UK and come back to their ancestral homelands. From this perspective, I will analyse the different narrative devices used by those postcolonial authors who have depicted stories of return of the first generation – V. S. Naipaul, Sam Selvon, Dennis Ferdinand, Caryl Phillips, Kiran Desai, Shoba Narayan, Amit Chaudhuri, and Nadeem Aslam – as well as the more recent accounts of Tariq Mehmood, Andrea Levy, Atima Srivastava, and Hardeep Kohli for the second generation. I will focus on some precise topics: migrants' communal search for a community of belonging in both the adoptive and the original country; their relationship with the new notions of space and place, as well as with the new global metropolises; and the reconfiguration of the concepts of home and homeland, with the resulting desire of homecoming. These topics will be approached through a trans-disciplinary methodology which includes a series of discursive formations, such as Migration and Diaspora Studies, and Global Studies. Starting from this theoretical perspective, I will consider how Europe has been "provincialized" (Chakrabarty 2000) in Black British works - also in relation to the recent sociological shifts - by focusing on the migrants' desire to return home, and

finally suggesting a new tendency, according to which migrant flows are reversing towards East. In this light, I will propose the definition of “reverse migration” to indicate English people who decide to migrate to the former British colonies, especially to India. The theorization of this new tendency will be supported by the analysis of some novels which reveal the “reversed” migration’s stories of their white British characters.

The dissertation is structured into five chapters. The first section is a preliminary chapter which introduces the theoretical background by analysing the different notions of migration and diaspora, community and citizenship, space and place, and home and homeland from the return and reverse migrants’ perspective. The second section deals with the experiences of first-generation migrants of Caribbean and South-Asian origins. In particular, the focus will be on how literature has firstly considered migrants’ idea of community and their identity developments in V. S. Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* (1967), Ferdinand Dennis’s *The Sleepless Summer* (1989), *Moses Migrating* (1983) by Sam Selvon, and *A State of Independence* (1986) by Caryl Phillips, as well as in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), Shoba Narayan’s *Return to India: an immigrant memoir* (2012), Chaudhuri’s *A New World* (2000), and *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) by Nadeem Aslam. The third chapter faces the questions of the new global spatiality and the subsequent return to the Caribbean and India in the same novels. The fourth chapter goes in depth into these topics by examining the second generation’s feelings and anxieties. The section focuses on the back-journeys of both Caribbean and South-Asian children of former colonised people who, however, see their ancestral homeland as a distant place. This is the case of Tariq Mehmood’s *While there is Light* (2003) and Arinta Srivastava’s *Looking for Maya* (1999), but also of Andrea Levy’s *Fruit of the Lemon* (2000) and Hardeep Kholi’s *Indian Takeaway* (2008). The last section considers the contemporary seeds of a global challenge embodied by the phenomenon of reverse migration. “White” British people migrating to India are the protagonists of Deborah Moggach’s *These Foolish Things* (2004), Geoff Dyer’s *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi* (2009), and *Becoming Mrs Kumar* (2013) by Heather Saville Gupta. These last works are central points of discussion for my thesis, since they emphasise the

impact of the recent global phenomena also on the field of English literature, thus suggesting a post-postcolonial approach.

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Introduction

1. The postcolonial context we live in

In 1988, in her foundational essay *Can the subaltern speak?*, Gayatri Spivak called into question the problem of the western construction of the “Other”, wondering if postcolonial subjects had the possibility to express themselves escaping from the logic of colonialism. Her conclusion was not optimistic since she affirmed that “the subaltern cannot speak” (Spivak 1994: 105), at least without the mediation of the European colonial gaze.

In fact, the racial and mental stereotypes imposed by the English mother-country have allowed to build an image of England as a perfect socio-political place (Blake, Gandhi, Thomas 2001: 2), at the expense of its colonies which started to look at it as a model and an ideal of “home”, thus contributing to shaping stereotypes about the superiority of England. This situation and the hope for a better future pushed many colonized people to migrate to the former mother-country at the end of World War II. This was the beginning of the era of the great migrations, signed by the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948, as well as by the myth of Great Britain as it was depicted by many writers of the so-called Postcolonial literature.

Thus, migration is the condition in which former colonized people have lived since the 1950s, and Black British literature is the context through which they have narrated their experiences. By leaving their homelands and families in order to move to the UK and start a new life in their British mother-country, many South Asian, African, and Caribbean people have struggled to come to terms with several complications, such as the plague of racism or the deracination, and the conflict between their cultural traditions and the customs of their new country. Nonetheless, postcolonial authors ultimately managed to give voice to their dreams and experiences, also by focusing on communities in the UK which recall Benedict Anderson’s idea of *Imagined Communities* (1994). Anderson’s notion was based on the fundamental importance of novels and newspapers as the two

basic forms to represent the modern imagined communities since the XVIII century (Anderson 1994: 25). Therefore, the imagined community is wherever a literary construct manages to take root, as the *Caribbean Voices* of Sam Selvon, George Lamming, and many others did in the 1950s, speaking in the famous radiophonic program which signed the beginning of their career (Looker 1996: 8).

The British reaction to this big flow of immigrants from Asia, Africa, and West Indies has been quite violent and discriminating: fights, riots and mobs against migrants were the norm especially in the 1970s and 1980s. The government as well approved a series of acts designated to dishearten immigration and to homogenize migrants under the “black” label, a category which had the function to represent non-white people as outsiders, that is illegitimate and alien to the nation. In this light, “black” people were seen as an invading force which threatened the British way of life, while the concept of race became a mutable social construction (Dawson 2007: 19). As a result, the word “black” started to be considered as a homogenizing or “umbrella” term which depicts any non-white person, without taking into consideration the disparate nationalities and “roots” of different generations of migrants or the ambivalent position of migrants’ children who were born in the UK.

Stuart Hall has been one of the first scholars who theorized the necessity of the “black” community to be represented in a different way, especially through a shift of its own cultural and literary production in order to challenge also a monolithic representation of national identity. In his ground-breaking essay *New Ethnicities* (1988), he underlines the “end of the innocent notion of the essential black subject” (Hall 1995: 202), claiming for the recognition of “black” as a politically and culturally constructed category, and questioning the hegemony of the white ideological constructs. From this moment, the tension between black and white started to be a political issue, and had significant consequences at the level of the literary and linguistic representation of Blackness in Britain because it contested the image of the black subject

as a mouthpiece, a ventriloquist for an entire social category which is seen to be ‘typified’ by its representative. [...] Where minority subjects are framed and contained by the monologic terms of ‘majority discourse’, the fixity of boundary

relations between centre and margin, universal and particular, returns the speaking subject to the ideologically appointed place of the stereotype—that ‘all black people are the same’. (Procter 2000: 279-280)

This dissertation intends to follow in this perspective, by rejecting the fixity which characterized the racial debate in the past and highlighting the peculiarities of the different multifaceted communities of migrant people who have been living in England from the 1950s to nowadays.

By acknowledging that the migrant condition is the common denominator which has distinguished the Black British experience since the 1950s, my purpose is to reread the position of subaltern people through the voices of different generations of diasporic communities, investigating their narrative representations of personal or fictional experiences of migration, migrants’ feelings and emotions. My approach to this highly debated topic will be mediated by the investigation of a particular kind of migration, that is return migration. Migrants’ dream of homecoming will be therefore the focus through which I will examine the communities and the links to the space and the concepts of home and homeland in a contemporary migrant global context.

2. General topics and focus

Despite their differences, I decided to analyse both South Asian and Caribbean migrants as the two most important flows of migration to Britain in the last century. Moreover, I decided to compare them in order to deeply highlight the processes and dynamics involved in a migrant movement: through the reading of novels which depict both the South Asian and the Caribbean context it becomes patently clear that these different migrants’ experiences are the two sides of the same coin, and that considering the former without the latter would have been incomplete and not exhaustive. Moreover, I think that a cross-national comparison makes evident that cultural elements are insufficient to explain the social and global aspects which stand at the basis of the examined literary works, and it allows to incorporate them into a theoretical framework which includes also

global and sociological migration studies.

This kind of approach permits to examine how postcolonial authors from the former colonies have portrayed England, with a focus on the current diaspora and migrant phenomena and on the effects of globalization on the literary and personal journeys of diasporic writers. In this light, I suggest a line of investigation which examines both the notion of return migration and, at the same time, highlights a recent tendency towards what I perceive as an authentic British reverse migration to East. What I would like to demonstrate is how the global challenges of the XXI century are affecting the balances between western and eastern world, moving our conventional perception of “centre” towards the former colonies. So, considering that literature is one of the most powerful tools that people can use in order to interpret and understand social changes, I will investigate some significant Black British works, as well as three English authors’ novels, in order to demonstrate and explain such changes through a comparative perspective.

Moreover, the evolution of postcolonial studies in the last thirty years and the development of a transnational approach in literary studies (Jay 2010) have led to a different way of seeing and studying subaltern voices, as well as to a changed global approach, especially in relation to the phenomena of migration and diaspora as they have been depicted by Black British authors. In a recent essay, Spivak affirmed that “Today the ‘subaltern’ must be rethought” (Spivak 2000: 326); so, in this light, I will cope with a precise theoretical framework which collocates my project at the crossroads of different discursive formations, such as Global studies, Migration and Diaspora studies, and Postcolonial and Black British literature. Through the analysis of the selected novels, I will show how the concept of World literature has been reinvigorated by the connection between literature and globalization and “how literary tradition should be described and institutionally engaged, gradually moving away from conventional organization along national or regional lines towards a more joined-up international or global view” (Gupta 2009: 136-137). This shift from a national perspective towards a transnational viewpoint has been fundamental also for the formation of an updated postcolonial theory which helps literature to traverse all kinds of boundaries (Gupta 2009: 145).

This study of literature in global terms (Damrosch 2003: 25) calls into question Global studies, whose transnational and interdisciplinary nature makes them the perfect subtext for this work. This is because, although many aspects of contemporary globalization are based on European colonial precedents, most Global studies scholars do not accept uncritically the western privileged patterns of economic, political and cultural globalization. Some scholars even avoid using the term “globalization” to describe their field of study, as it is sometimes used to imply the promotion of a Western-dominated hegemonic project. This rejection is proposed also by Dipesh Chakrabarty in his *Provincializing Europe* (2000), one of the first works which tried to explore how the political experience of the XXI century could be renewed and rethought from the margins of the periphery. In this context, literature plays a relevant role as a fundamental instrument of investigation of the contemporary world balances, especially considering the relations of power established after World War II between Occident and Orient – the so-called centre and periphery. Nowadays, India and other former European colonies are, in fact, rapidly improving their social, economic and politic systems. Even though Chakrabarty claims that “The project of provincializing “Europe” refers to a history that does not yet exist” (Chakrabarty 2000: 42), today it is possible to affirm that the time is ripe for this kind of theoretical proposal since the two “moves” required by Chakrabarty could be now achieved.

The project of provincializing Europe has to include certain additional moves: first, the recognition that Europe’s acquisition of the adjective “modern” for itself is an integral part of the story of European imperialism within global history; and second, the understanding that this equating of a certain version of Europe with “modernity” is not the work of Europeans alone; third-world nationalisms, as modernizing ideologies par excellence, have been equal partners in the process. (Chakrabarty 2000: 43)

These peculiar ways of thinking about Europe as the centre of the “modern” world is therefore not only the heritage of a colonial and imperial past, but also the result of a passive and collaborative behaviour from the former colonies which took the European nation-states as role models. Nonetheless, in the last decades, the

situation begun to change and some postcolonial nations, like India, are now playing an important role in this process.

Therefore, the study of migration and diaspora from a literary perspective is a sort of natural re-reading of the social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of the actual world system(s), which will lead to a new idea of home(s) with many variants, due to the loss of “permanent, stable, and sanctified homeplaces [...]”. Nevertheless, “the possibility of *a* home, the ultimate peaceful retreat, a this-worldly alternative to social fragmentation and tumultuous travelling continues to resonate” (Markowitz-Anders, Stefansson 2004: 22), and this is evident not only for the generations of migrants who directly experienced diaspora (McLeod 2000) in the past decades, but also for many British people, because of the implications and consequences of globalization. Searching for a “home” nowadays is therefore a primary need also for European citizens, and in this sense postcolonial literature can become a useful instrument of investigation since it manages to portray these quite hidden social phenomena.

3. Some clarifications on the theoretical background for the analysis of Return and Reverse migration

The topic of return migration has not been particularly tackled in the literary context as it has been instead in sociological surveys, hence one of the aims of my dissertation is to fill this gap. As a result, the theoretical background owes much to both sociological investigations on return migration and actual reports of some returnees’ experience. One of the purposes is to trace the same trajectories towards the former colonies drawn by sociological reports in the migrant literary works, thus following a socio-literary methodology which exploits and intersects Postcolonial Studies, Global Studies, Migration Studies, and Black British literature.

First of all, I will refer to all the novels I will examine as “postcolonial” or “post-postcolonial” works, even if they have been written by white English authors, in order to follow Chakrabarty’s project of provincializing the perspective from which we have always seen Europe and the UK, especially in relation to the

evolution of the concept of “spaces of representation” which

are part and parcel of the way we live in the world. We may also seek to represent the way this space is lived through emotions and the imagination. The spatiotemporality of a dream, a fantasy, a hidden longing, a lost memory or even a peculiar thrill as we walk down a street can be given representation through works of art. (Harvey 2006: 8)

In fact, the so-called “spatial turn” in literary studies (Warf, Arias 2009) has emphasized a new way of perceiving the notions of space and place in the Humanities, especially in literature, asserting that “space is a social construction relevant to the understanding of the different histories of human subjects and to the production of cultural phenomena” (Warf, Arias 2009: 1). In this light, the purpose of provincializing the former English mother-country intends to discuss the universal validity of its values and forms of representations, as well as the centrality of its literature, in order to consider if literary representations can transcend places of origin, or if places leave a such considerable impression on literature that they manage to call into question also these purely abstract categories. Chakrabarty returns to this theme by questioning about the role of history and pointing out that “[...] Europe, one could say, has been provincialized by history itself” (Chakrabarty 2000: xvii). The purpose is therefore to relativize the European thought and make it less central, trying to re-read also the postcolonial analytical and critical texts. Thus, the notions of “hybridity”, “mimicry” and “in-between” or “liminal” zone theorized by Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994), as well as the *Imagined Communities* (1994) and the *Imaginary Homelands* (1991) suggested by Benedict Anderson and Salman Rushdie, can be traced in literature and reconsidered in relation to globalization’s theories and the studies on migration with their sociological and cultural effects.

Therefore, this dissertation deals with some fundamental concepts shared by Postcolonial and Migration literature, such as home and homeland, identity and community, space and city, but with a post-postcolonial approach which would like to relativize also the post-colonial conceptualizations. One of the aims is to examine how these traditional concepts can be applied to the current world and

how they could be connected to the new shifts imposed by globalization, by linking the debates on the global cultural effects to Black British literature and to the migrant phenomena depicted by authors of South Asian and Caribbean diasporas.

In this light, Black British literature is a quite confusing term which still offers some problem of classification. As Mark Stein points out,

For a variety of reasons, terms such as post-colonial literature or black British literature are often considered problematic. The heterogeneity of texts so labelled seems to defy the logic of these categories, which also applies to designations such as English literature or British literature. This raises the question whether a group of texts indeed has to be homogenous in order to be considered “a group of texts”—whether English, British, or black British. The question of categorization is always a political one, especially when we consider categories such as English Literature. The political implications of inclusion and exclusion remain. Grouping texts together as black texts, or as women’s writing, or as postcolonial or gay, are acts in history, because such interventions condition the significance and the meaning that texts attain in any given reading. (Stein 2004: xv)

So, giving a conclusive definition of Black British literature is not an easy matter, especially for the heterogeneity of authors and works that it includes.

As for the “black” label, also Black British literature’s history is in fact characterized by a heterogeneous variety of events and protagonists. The first Black British literary scene comprised “writers who were principally concerned with the country they had left behind” (Etienne-Cummings 2007: 347), migrants who were not totally at home in England and whose aim was “to write the humanity of ‘Black’ colonised peoples against the dominant British narrative that immigrants from the colonies were a sort of living virus on the host nation” (347). Hence the second generation has re-conceptualised the term “Black” as an “essentialist, homogenizing term that gave no weight to the experiences of non-Black minority groups” (348), so that the definition of Black British was then extended to include also South Asian people, thus inaugurating the era of a definitive broadening of the term which now includes all non-white individuals.

Kwame Dawes uses a very impressive image in order to explicate the unequal position of Black British authors in British society and in its collective consciousness: in 1815, the cartoonist John Thomas Smith illustrated the famous African London beggar Joseph Johnson with a large and strange hat on his head which was topped by the perfect reproduction of a complete ship. The hat was “an ironic apology to white British society for his [Joseph Johnson] presence as Black man in that country [...] an apology in the sense of an explanation, a rationale for his presence, his existence and his condition” (Dawes 2005: 255). According to Dawes, even Black British writers have to wear their hats on their heads, trying to describe and explain their in-between condition to white British people through their novels and poems; and many of these writers actually went to Britain as migrants, as Joseph Johnson did at the beginning of the XIX century, carrying the weight of their extravagant hats.

Many other scholars tried to give their own definition to Black British literature. Mark Stein, for instance, has individuated three different generations of migrant writers: the first one includes migrants who came to UK as adult in the 1950s and the 1960s; the second one consists of those who migrated as children with their parents in the 1970s; while the third generation covers people born in the UK in the 1980s and the 1990s to “Black” parents (Stein 2004: 98). Dawes as well has proposed a triadic repartition, based on works’ topics; so, he distinguishes the anti-colonial nationalist novelists, the authors who reevaluate their British condition, and those who regard England as home and flee from any notions of another home (Dawes 2005: 260-261).

Aware of the different classifications suggested in the last few years, I personally distinguished a first generation of authors who wrote about the dreams of homecoming and the experiences of migrant people who consciously chose Britain as their new home between the 1950s and the 1980s; a second generation which includes people who were born in the UK and describe their lives and the troubles of growing up in Britain between the 1980s and the 1990s with a special emphasis on their personal idea of their ancestral “home”; and a third group which shows and tries to explain the new trajectories and flows of migration of the last fifteen years with a focus on the concrete English migrant displacements towards

the former colonies. In each of these groups of novels and authors, a peculiar emphasis is given to the notion of return and reverse migration.

Generally speaking, the migrant desire of homecoming is ancestral and well represented by both the first and second generation of migrants; however, the developments and changes of the global economic situation now allow migrants to concretely return home, both permanently or temporarily (King 1986, Markowitz-Anders, Stefansson 2004, Conway Potter 2005 and 2009, Percival 2013). In particular, second-generationers manage to return, thanks to their higher education and stable career position, their new attitude towards transnational experience or because they are pushed by their parents' stories (Conway, Potter 2009: 5). On the other hand, people of the first generation mainly return home for a sense of nostalgia when they retire after years of work in Britain (Conway, Potter, Phillips 2005: 5), even though the motives to migrate and then come back are numerous and can vary from a vast range of possibilities. While the dream of homecoming has always been present in migrants' minds – as the examined novels demonstrate with an actual fulfilment of this dream –, more recent literary works show also examples of white English people who move to the former colonies for different reasons, such as pleasure, retirement or work. The attempt to marginalize the European perspective is in fact well represented also in the English “post-postcolonial” literature of the last fifteen years, which depicts stories of British characters who are looking for a new home in India, in what I define as a sort of British reversal from West to East, or British “reverse migration”.

4. Content and selected works

The thesis firstly follows the migrants' routes depicted by some Black British novelists in order to examine the consequences of global and transnational evolutions and events on migrants' identities, as well as their reactions in relation to their conditions in Britain. Thus, since “for different reasons, ranging from professional choice to political exile, writers from a medley of once-colonized nations have participated in the late twentieth-century condition of migrancy”

(Boehmer 1995: 233), I will take into consideration the works of authors who personally experimented or simply depict the migrant journey with its complications and worries with a sole purpose in their heads: the dream of homecoming. I will focus on the evolution of the traditional postcolonial notions of identity, hybridity, community, space, and city in order to discover how the literary and social image of Black British migrants and the idea of “home” have changed.

Hence, starting from the standpoint which sees postcolonial literature in a less powerful and privileged position than western (English) “canon”, the dissertation insists on the idea that the relations of power among different countries and literary traditions are progressively changing, modifying the balances towards a transnational, multicultural, and cosmopolitan paradigm which privileges the interconnections between Migration studies, Global studies, and Postcolonial literature. Well aware that globalization and postcolonial works ought to be studied together and that the centre-periphery model has to be complicated in relation to back-and-forth flows of people (Jay 2010: 3), I will investigate the assumptions of theorists of globalization and literary scholars who have highlighted the connection between postcolonialism and the global economic, social and cultural phenomena of the last years (Appadurai 1996, Appiah 2006). Moreover, I will demonstrate that globalization has changed and pluralized the concept of “home”, aware that the fragmentation and porousness of borders of the current world system can be discussed also in relation to postmodern and poststructuralist philosophical theories (Jay 2010: 23-28). These considerations will be the starting point for the ultimate investigation of the reverse migration’s novels.

The dissertation is structured into five chapters and aims at highlighting the fundamental desire of homecoming and the ancestral relation to homeland of people who migrated to the UK, as well as the complexity of the idea of home for the second generation, and the recent tendency towards reverse migration of British people.

The first chapter is a preliminary section which introduces the theoretical background by analysing the different notions of migration and diaspora,

community and citizenship, space and place, and home and homeland from the return and reverse migrants' perspective. Indeed, these concepts will be examined in relation to the voices of diasporic writers and their ideas of home(s) described in contemporary Black British literature by following a post-national standpoint, according to which diasporic and migrant people are looking for new forms of identity and home through the return and reverse migration's processes.

The second section deals with the experiences of the first-generation migrants of Caribbean and South Asian origins. In particular, the focus is on how literature has depicted the lives of return migrants, firstly considering their perception of the idea of community and their identity developments in the UK. So, both the celebration and the disillusionment of the migrant experience are well portrayed in V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1967), Ferdinand Dennis's *The Sleepless Summer* (1989), *Moses Migrating* (1983) by Sam Selvon, and *A State of Independence* (1986) by Caryl Phillips, as well as in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), Shoba Narayan's *Return to India: an immigrant memoir* (2012), Chaudhuri's *A New World* (2000), and *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) by Nadeem Aslam. This chapter particularly deals with how notions of migrant identity and community have been approached by the novelists from the 1960s to the 1990s, a period wherein it is not uncommon to glimpse the first signs of a mutable system.

The third chapter faces the questions of the new global spatiality and the subsequent return to the Caribbean and India in the same novels. In this context, the authors have looked back to the troubles and mourning of first-generation characters who desire to come back to their birthplaces. The last novel of the section, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, introduces the clash between first and second generation through the representation of the inevitable conflict between parents and children in a Pakistani family migrated to a non-specified English city.

The fourth chapter goes in depth into this last topic by examining the second generation's feelings and anxieties. This section focuses on the back-journeys of both Caribbean and Indian-Pakistani children of the former colonised people who, however, see their ancestral homeland as a distant place. Their linkage with it is, therefore, quite remote and, in some cases, it inhabits just their deepest

unconscious. This is the case of Tariq Mehmood's *While there is Light* (2003) and Arinta Srivastava's *Looking for Maya* (1999), but also of Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (2000) and Hardeep Kholi's *Indian Takeaway* (2008). Each of these novels deals with the second-generation complications of people who are both actual British citizens and still discriminated migrants. The novels demonstrate that the contrasts between "black" and "white" start to be very much debated in the 1990s and early 2000s-literary and social context, although the seeds of a global challenge are already fixed.

The last section considers these themes through the phenomenon of reverse migration. "White" British people migrating to India are the protagonists of Deborah Moggach's *These Foolish Things* (2004), Geoff Dyer's *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi* (2009), and *Becoming Mrs Kumar* (2013) by Heather Saville Gupta. This group of texts denotes that postcolonial literature has recently widened its boundaries to embrace also the motivations of English people who have decided to move to the former colonies, in what can be defined as a veritable post-postcolonial context. Hence a new scenario of investigation of the current migration flows is offered by the narration of three possible cases of reverse journey: Moggach's *These Foolish Things* is an example of migration after retirement, *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi* depicts the experience of a British journalist enchanted by the intense and vivid atmosphere of the Indian ambivalent city of Varanasi, while Gupta's *Becoming Mrs Kumar* deals with a classical instance of working migration, but in reverse, from London to Mumbai. These three works are central points of discussion for my thesis, since they have been written by three English authors, thus emphasising the impact of the recent global phenomena also on the field of English literature, thus leading to an enlargement of the traditional notion of postcolonial English literature towards a post-postcolonial literature.

As a result, although international migration from the Rest to the West still proliferates, it is not possible to deny the reversed diasporic path. The argumentation will be focused also on the fundamental role of the concept of "home", even in the current condition of post-national and trans-national migration. Indeed, the centrality and the adamant presence of the bond with both

home(s) and homeland(s) will be eventually emphasized.

Each of the key-words which will be introduced and discussed in the first chapter collaborates in the formation of the diasporic identities which are the protagonists of the analysed novels. The theoretical framework will help to clarify the literary/sociological line of investigation, in order to emphasise the common desire of homecoming which characterizes all migrants' identities.

1. The transnational and the spatial turn in literary studies: the creation of new global spaces and the adamant presence of the ancestral homelands in migrant communities

But the homeland is partly invented, existing only in the imagination of the deterritorialized groups, and it can sometimes become so fantastic and one-sided that it provides the fuel for new ethnic conflicts
(A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 1996, 49)

In 1996, in his essay *Modernity at Large*, Arjun Appadurai described the possibility of the creation of a cosmopolitan and deterritorialized world system. According to his innovative networking model, the role of concepts such as homeland, community and space had to definitively and drastically vary, as a consequence of the changes in the international balances which had generated different movements of people after the end of World War II. In this light, also the approach to the culture and literature produced by these new forms of societies had to change towards a transnational perspective. Other recent studies, such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000), Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (2004), Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), Suman Gupta's *Globalization and Literature* (2009), and Paul Jay's *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (2010), have underlined the need of a decentralized perspective, even in the field of cultural and literary studies. In particular, Appadurai has stressed the importance of contextualizing the study of culture. In this light, culture can acquire different meanings in different periods, thus creating a multiplicity of definitions which should indicate that we live in a peculiar "postblurring [state], in which ecumenism has – happily in my opinion – given way to sharp debates about the word, the world, and the relationship between them" (Appadurai 1996: 51). From this "postblurred" perspective, "it is crucial to

note that the high ground has been seized by English literature (as a discipline) in particular and by literary studies in general”, and “the hijack of culture by the literary studies [has generated] internal debates about texts and anti-texts, reference and structure, theory and practice” (Appadurai 1996: 51). This new approach has given way to an innovative manner of studying the relationship between word and world, creating a sort of ethnographic and transnational view in which the role of imagination and fantasy in the social life is fundamental. In other words, “fantasy is now a social practice” even if “this is not a cheerful observation. [...] others whose lot is harsh no longer see their lives as mere outcomes of the givenness of things, but often as the ironic compromise between what they could imagine and what social life will permit” (Appadurai 1996: 54). The new power given to imagination is linked to images, notions and portrays of migrant lives which come from elsewhere, and for this reason, they need transnational and global tools to be depicted; however, Appadurai also seeks to underline the often unequal character of these kinds of representation due to the unfair living conditions which still characterize the social strata.

This approach can be easily connected to postcolonial literary narrations, one of the few literary contexts which can concretely push the reader to react through the author’s creation of new social maps. Actually, postcolonial literature does “write the cultures”, especially when the idea of culture is linked to the contemporary world’s displacement and disorientation, well depicted in the experiences of migrant people. Culture and literature assume, therefore, the role of mouthpiece of the notion of difference, distancing themselves from a local and static point of view, and giving voice to those who are universally recognized as “different”.

In this light, migration literature is able to criticize the contemporary world system and its unbalanced networks of power whereas, at the same time, it creates new forms of identities and it incites people to react against the social injustices and old forms of colonial apparatus which still exist in modern societies. Indeed, after the end of the British Empire, British cultural industry has tried to make and maintain an English tradition and “English space” through the idea of *Englishness*. This is the reason why it is still quite difficult to talk about a healthy form of multiculturalism in the UK, although it is also worth noting that the new

tendencies towards the definition and the study of transnational movements and diasporas have enhanced the situation.

The present chapter aims to analyse the different notions of migration and diaspora, community and citizenship, space and place starting from this perspective, trying to understand how these concepts have changed the voices of migrant writers and their ideas of home and homeland described in the contemporary Black British literature. In particular, it is interesting to note that nowadays the diasporic challenges, as well as the importance given to multiculturalism in literary studies, are widespread phenomena because “in the postnational world that we see emerging, diaspora runs with, and not against, the grain of identity, movement, and reproduction” (Appadurai 1996: 171). This post-national world has become a reality in which diasporic and migrant people are looking for a new idea of identity and home, and this matter of fact is pushing them towards return migration. Indeed, although international migration still proliferates, nowadays people do not want to definitively abandon the bond with their homelands, also considering the different kinds of migration processes they experienced. This is the reason why this chapter starts with a definition and a clarification of the different forms of diaspora and migration which will be later analysed in depth in the selected novels.

1.1. Diaspora and Migration: social spaces of identity construction in a multicultural system

The postcolonial migration's age has transformed the processes of cultural and identity formation from a global perspective since, nowadays, few modern nations can affirm to be ethnically homogenous. In fact, people have started to consider the possibility to live in places which are different from where they were born (Appadurai 1996: 6). They move for many reasons, such as to find a work and new opportunities for themselves and their lives, or because of shortages of food, but also for pleasure, or a long-term holiday. In this way, they create new forms of communities or neighbourhoods which can be defined as “translocality” (192). Migration and diaspora are the two main processes which contribute to establish

and create these different forms of locality. These particular forms of displacements have coincided with the crisis of modernity and the transition to a post-modern and post-colonial society. In this context, migration and diaspora played quite a fundamental role, since they marked the passage from a national to a transnational reality, although they are also quite ambiguous terms which need to be distinguished. A number of scholars have already tried to define them, trying to summarize all the nuances and implications of meaning of these two very complex concepts. The main problem is the vast amount of inferences and thoughts they involve, from the notions of ethnicity, community and transnational movement, to the issues of race, culture, and religion.

In this perspective, according to McLeod, migration and diaspora are directly connected, although they are not the same (McLeod 2000: 236); diaspora in fact “has come to signify *generally* the movement and relocation of groups of different kinds of peoples throughout the world”, and its main characteristic is “an acceptance of an inescapable link with their past migration history and a sense of co-ethnicity with others of a similar background” (237). Therefore, in this light, diaspora communities gain a peculiar meaning connected to migration history, even though they also present a capital difference from migrant communities because not all diaspora people have directly experienced migration.

James Clifford as well has suggested his personal definition of diaspora, in relation to

decolonization, increased migration, global communications, and transport [...] Diasporic populations do not come from elsewhere in the same way that ‘immigrants’ do. In assimilationist national ideologies [...] immigrants may experience loss and nostalgia, but only en route to a whole new home in a new place. Such ideologies are designed to integrate immigrants, not people in diasporas. [The national narrative] cannot assimilate groups that maintain important allegiances and practical connections to a homeland or a dispersed community located elsewhere. (Clifford 1997: 250)

Hence, according to Clifford, the main difference between migration and diaspora is based on the persistent relationship with the ancestral homeland which is more

evident in diasporic communities than in migrant people who, instead, are more likely to establish a new home in the host country. Moreover, diasporic identities are considered composed communities, which include also people who have not directly experienced migration, but who share a communal sense of the same history and belonging to the same social group.

Considering the inferences on the notion of identity implied in both diaspora and migration, diasporic communities can be seen as *liminal spaces*, using Homi Bhabha's well-known definition (1994). In this light, diasporic people are characterized by hybrid identities, as they live in a sort of "in-betweenness" or "Third Space" where they can construct themselves by calling into question the issues of home, belonging, place and space. According to Bhabha, hybridity is the prime mode of being in the world, and "it is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meanings and the symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (Bhabha 1994: 37). The absence of any form of fixity is in fact the fundamental characteristic of any postcolonial and diasporic identity, which can be certainly described also with the Freudian term *Umheimliche*, that is the "unhomely", a term which involves a spatial relocation of both the concepts of world and people who live in it. Diasporic people's identity is particularly insecure because of these characteristics of *in-betweenness* and uncertainty in a world where the concepts of "impure", "mongrel" and "hybrid" are not yet completely accepted. According to Paul Gilroy, diasporic people do not have *roots*, rather they must continually look for *routes* which take them to many places. This same metaphor is well explained also in Kobena Mercer's words when, tapping Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "rhizome", he affirms that

displacing the search for roots implies turning away from the arborescent structure of dichotomous thinking, and grafting instead on the rhizomatic movement of a centred thinking, which multiplies connections between things that have absolutely nothing to do with each other. [...] In place of the search for a fixed origin, [...] rhizomatic thinking invites research for routes out of the common predicaments we share here and now, not just as black Briton, but also as black Europeans to boot. (Mercer 2000: 292)

Furthermore, according to Thayyalnayaki, another dichotomic definition assigns to diasporic identities the ambiguous status of both refugee and ambassador since they both look for protection and they desire to transmit their own culture, while migration is also promoted by globalization and the consequent growth of multinational firms and means of transport (Thayyalnayaki 2008: 1). One of the most important sociological and cultural aspects of globalization is, therefore, the creation of transnational communities, which “can extend previous face-to-face communities based on kinship, neighbourhoods or workplaces into far-flung virtual communities, which communicate at a distance” (Castles 2003: 30). This peculiar situation, which is generally referred to populations that live in different geographical spaces maintaining a social relation and a feeling of reciprocity with home (Gowricharn 2006: 5), can create stable relationships that are the results of the solidarity and empathy among immigrants and their families. Moreover, generally speaking, the difference between migration and diaspora can be traced in their contrasting value, as the former has a more sociological character, while the latter has a cultural connotation, even if they are both related to the problem of racism: both migrants and diasporic people are perceived as those who do not belong to the country where they live, especially when the differences of cultures and traditions between the community of departure and the community of arrival are insurmountable. This situation does not rely on a problem of biological “race” but on a notion of space/place which means that, according to common belief, people would have to stay in their “own place”: this is the first reason which might explicate why local governments have always encouraged migrants to return to their ethnic homelands (Tsuda 2009: 27). This racial connotation has always embodied a deep plague in migration and diaspora’s history, especially because it makes “prediction about people’s character, abilities of behaviour on the basis of socially constructed markers of difference” (Castles 2003: 35). This process of racialization is typical of all the capitalist and postmodern societies, and it is a tangible element also in Great Britain. Indeed, the recent processes of neo-liberalism have exasperated this situation by giving an aggressive character to the already self-asserting concept of national identity (Gold, Nawyn 2013: 232).

The relationship between spatial definitions and identity is at the core of the

recent diaspora theories, as a – maybe forced – relocation of migrants and diasporic people also due to the recent global developments implies. Indeed, changes in the global relations of power among different areas of the world have promoted new routes of migration, as well as new migrants' flows which have altered also the idea of home, thus creating global citizens potentially deprived of a real and secure place where living. However, as Bhabha puts it, "To be unhomed, is not to be homeless" (Bhabha 1994: 9), and this assumption creates a quite unstable situation which stands at the base of the paradigmatic postcolonial condition. Diasporic identities can only try to come to terms with this position, accepting it by creating new "spaces" and new "homes"; the meaning and the sociological and literary value of these theoretical concepts will be analysed in depth in the next paragraphs through the case studies given by the novels, however, it is possible to anticipate that the notions of migration and diaspora have been deeply influenced by the spatial turn which took place in the last years. This peculiar turn has affected also the perception of what "homeland" and "home" mean, as well as the formation of diasporic identities and communities. In this light, migrant and diasporic displacements are perceived as a "global space of flows" (Warf, Arias 2009: 4), with different linkages among places which imply a multiple dimension of identity.

By contrast, the notions of "place" and "space" can be also considered as counterpoint to globalism and diaspora, a fact that, according to Dirlik, could be the main responsible for a supposed migrants' rejection of their ancestral origins and identities. This perspective seems to find a correspondence in the concrete sociological reports and investigation about migration, since the concept of hybridity which identifies these people is seen as an element of "destabilization", as Dirlik points out (Dirlik 2002: 103). On the other hand, in my opinion, hybridity should be the fundamental characteristic which helps migrant and diasporic people to accept themselves and to create a new form of identity erected on the idea of multiculturalism. Indeed, although the position towards it is still ambivalent and many countries still reject the idea of a real multicultural, and therefore totally hybrid, society (Gowricharn 2006: 223), insisting on the importance of the defence of multiculturalism is a central question in order to

avoid the prejudices which usually depict it as a synonym for conflicts or ethnic disorders, rather than the realm of hybridity and tolerance.

The perspective from which academic and literary scholars see the postmodern and postcolonial society has already changed in order to give way to the recognition of plurality and difference. Elleke Boehmer, for instance, talks about the shift of attention from the “ambivalent colonial space, to exploring the creative, but also unstable and ambivalent interstices and interfaces of metropolitan cultures” (Waugh 2006: 356), even though she also recognizes the ambivalent role played by postcolonialism, which can support only the kind of multiculturalism invoked by multinationals and neo-liberal governments for their expansionist desires (357). In order to understand literature’s role in the spread and defence of multiculturalism, Stefano Harney brings up Gayatri Spivak’s words:

the text [in] the sense we use it, is not just books. It refers to the possibility that every socio-political, psycho-sexual phenomenon is organized by, woven by many, many strands that are discontinuous, that come from way off, that carry their histories within them, and that are no within our control. (Harney 1996: 3)

It is for its deeply connoted transdisciplinary character and for its capacity to investigate the stories and the more intimate aspects of every situation that literature can be used as the perfect tool to examine the migrant and multicultural phenomena, even though different scholars have different approaches to the same theoretical aspects. In this sense, Eleonor Byrne has emphasized the recent developments in postcolonial diasporic literary theory, questioning if this kind of criticism has or has not reached a sort of impasse (Byrne 2008: 19). In particular, Byrne underlines “the emergence of a strain of melancholic postcolonial” (19), also in the field of diaspora studies, connected to Paul Gilroy’s definition of the English (post)modern condition in his *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (2004). In his essay, Gilroy points out a substantial inability of the nation to face the consequences of the end of colonialism and its new multicultural society: the postcolonial theorist does not hide his pessimism about the possibility to live in a totally cosmopolitan and multicultural world, as well as the utopian

and naïf vision of dwelling convivially with difference, because of global inequalities and generally spread conflicts (Gilroy 2004: 5). However, from this perspective, diaspora is seen as the essential element of the new global character of contemporary Britain and, as Gilroy describes it, it is perceived as a hopeful issue which does not provoke melancholia to black Britons. So, in this light, diaspora is a healthy form of considering loss or change for the black community, as well as a way to relate to migrant movements and displacements.

John McLeod deeply criticizes this position, especially in relation to the sense of hope that Gilroy attributes to some specific black identities' forms of representation, such as street music (McLeod 2008: 6). McLeod's position may be compared to Dirlik's assertion about a general tendency to cultural reification typical of the modern multicultural societies. Dirlik affirms that,

The anti-assimilationist mood (expressed most fervently in liberal "multiculturalism") itself has contributed in no small measure to such cultural reification by a metonymic reduction of the culture of the Other to "representative" ethnographic elements or texts divorced from all social and historical context that may then serve purposes of self-representation by the diasporic population or self-congratulatory consumption in the carnivals of the society at large. (Dirlik 2002: 97)

From this perspective, diasporic identities in their reification do not overcome English racial prejudices, and this situation is even amplified by the passage from a national to a transnational standpoint. This means that migrants' constant relationship with their ancestral homelands implies the creation of a sort of spatial continuum where cultural peculiarities, as well as prejudices, can easily pass from a nation to another, linking the "centre" of the world to its "periphery". In this way, the notion of multiculturalism is questioned at a global level, challenging the already unstable global balances which are tested by the migration and diaspora phenomena, and diasporic culture can become a marker of exclusion which goes against the notion of cultural pluralism. Therefore, each country of immigration should re-examine its understandings of what belonging to a transnational society means, taking into consideration that monocultural or homogenous nations can no longer resist.

That said, I think that equating migrants and diasporic people's condition is more appropriate in this context, as I think that they share the same cultural connotations. A proper explanation of current diasporic movements has to deal with the transnational and ethnic characteristics of migration, since diasporic people share a huge number of traditions and customs, as well as a variety of myths and memories, and they develop a deep sense of empathy and solidarity between each other or with groups with similar characteristics, as migrants do.

The transnational and global character of migration implies that the social, economic and political issues that migrants have to face in their foster countries cross nations' borders, reaching also migrants' countries of origin. It is because of this strong relationship with the ancestral homeland that one of the most important myth shared by any diasporic community is the myth of returning, a desire which is directly grounded in migrants' ethnic consciousness. As a result, it is possible and recommended to consider both diaspora and migration as social forms, type of consciousness and modes of cultural production (Vertovec 2000: 142), and this is the perspective through which I will analyse the two most important flows of migration and diasporic communities which chose Britain as their adopted country after World War II, that is South Asian and Caribbean diaspora.

1.1.1. South Asian and Caribbean diasporas: first and second-generation perspectives

Indian diaspora – the most common form of South Asian migration – is a quite remote phenomenon which started before the end of British colonialism; its characteristics depend on different factors, such as the areas of migration, the number of migrants, and the reaction of the host country among others. Generally speaking, it can be divided into four different flows: the first and the eldest form of Indian migration is linked to trade and business reasons during the colonial era; the second one is connected to the Indentured Labourers who were forced to migrate to the plantations during the XIX century, contributing to the creation of Indian communities in the Caribbean; the third movement includes those who migrated from India after World War II; the fourth flow of migration ultimately

regards Indians who moved from the Caribbean or Africa, so it includes people who left a first host country for another, especially for Netherlands, Canada and the UK (Oonk 2007: 11-12). The present dissertation focuses on the third typology of this mosaic of Indians abroad, in particular on the experiences of those who lived as first or second generation of migrants in Britain after the end of colonialism.

In this context, in 1948, also the Indian prime minister Nehru tried to give his personal definition and a first answer to Indian migrants' quest for recognition, so that he affirmed:

Now, these Indians abroad, what are they? Indian citizens? [...] It is a difficult question. This house gets mixed up. It wants to treat them as Indians, and with the same breath it wants a complete franchise for them in the countries where they are living. Of course the two things do not go together. (Lall 2003: 126)

So, giving a clear definition to the question of diasporic identities was a difficult matter also at the beginning of Independence, and the subsequent creation of stable Indian communities in the UK, which gave birth to the second generation of migrants, has been another element of instability for Indian identity.

From the 1950s, a huge number of Indians have arrived in the UK to find better living conditions, even though they just filled gaps in the lower orders of the British labour market. Since the beginning, their purpose was to reach a conspicuous economic target in order to save enough money to go back to India; on the other hand, the second generation has later achieved a different position in the English labour market, accomplishing also some lead roles in British firms. Therefore, comparing the different attitudes and behaviours of these two categories of diasporic people is fundamental, especially because their relation to the UK and their reactions to British habits have been quite different.

Actually, the second-generation Indians in Britain have recently been described as "Indobrit", that is

Second-generation Indians born and/or brought up in the UK [who] are products of the East and West and their lives combine both with ease. There is no conflict in

terms of their identity, they are the fortunate ones who *enjoy the best of both worlds*, as well as multiple identities that are fluid and dialogic. Never again to be defined as “the halfway generation”, “between two cultures”, “immigrants” or members of a “diaspora”. These individuals are the post-diasporic generation, *creating their own world in the only homeland they have – Britain*. [my emphasis] (Oonk 2007: 203)

This attempt at theorizing a post-diasporic generation which perfectly fits in the British system may be a risky solution, especially because the idea of “enjoying the best of the two worlds” denies in a certain sense the assumption which claims that they have an “only homeland”. The problem is that both first and second generation should have the chance of freely self-identifying far from strict categorizations which are likely to deny their hybridity. Moreover, it is not possible to negate the importance of the mutual exchange of cultural elements which takes place between England and India in this typical transnational context, as well as the relation and the affection that migrants have for the relatives who still live in the country of origin and for their homeland. This is the reason why migrants of both first and second generation need to come back “home”, although in many cases Indians themselves do not accept diasporic returnees, since they are perceived as a sort of “twisted outcasts [...]”. When they come back to India, it is seen to be solely for the purpose of profit, not for the gain of the country” (Lall 2003: 133), a fact that highlights the presence of a certain feeling of “national” superiority among those who were born and raised in India compared to diasporic Indians. This situation certainly complicates the question of an Indian identity formation because transnational family boundaries can sometimes create a tension between different sides of the same identity.

The familial linkages were fundamental also at the beginning of the Indian diasporic movement to Britain. The first generation of migrants was characterized by young South-Asians who, according to their different ethnics, had different desires and perspectives: the young Gujarati Hindus and Sikhs came to the UK to find a job and convene their families, while the Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims were still in an earlier stage of the migrant process, being young single men who came to Britain to study or find an occupation and a wife (Robinson 1990: 274). Their cultural shock was really intense: as the Indian writer Prafulla

Mohanti points out, life in India was in fact really different from that in Britain,

I was born and brought up in the village of Nanpur in Odisha, Eastern India. In my childhood Nanpur was totally isolated. There were no proper roads, only mud paths, no electricity, no gas, no radio or television. There were no clocks or watches and I measured time by looking at the sun. [...] My village didn't have a school and I walked four miles every day to attend one in the next village. After matriculation I went to Cuttack to study science at Ravenshaw. I wanted to be a doctor to help my village but couldn't get into the medical school. By chance I saw an advertisement to study architecture in Bombay. I applied without knowing what an architect was. I sent some of my drawings and I was accepted. There was a small scholarship attached to it. That changed my life. (Mohanti)

Mohanti's direct experience of first-generation migrant started when, after graduating in Architecture, he went to Britain for further qualifications:

Most of my teachers were trained in Britain and I was told that English Architecture was the best. [...] After two years in London I went to the Northern Industrial city of Leeds to study Town Planning. Leeds was grey and colours became important for me. I painted to communicate with myself. (Mohanti)

The uncoloured atmosphere of England pushed Mohanti to start his creative career as a writer and painter, and his personal experience is well depicted in his novel *Through Brown Eyes* (1985). In his book, he actually describes the gloomy condition of the British landscape, confirming the mournful first impression given by the mother-country to its former "children": "Wherever I looked I could see only grey □ grey buildings, grey churches, and grey skies" (Mohanti 1985: 68). The image of England described by Mohanti's words is, therefore, in contrast with the glorious idea that migrants generally had in mind when they arrived in the UK. Furthermore, the superiority of the British system and society is affirmed only at the beginning of their journeys, especially when it is compared to the Indian inefficiencies. Mohanti, in fact, arrives thinking of "England as a land of daffodils, crocuses, passing showers and floating clouds. Men wore bowler hats

and carried umbrellas, which they seldom opened. There was no poverty and people were honest and fair” (24); unfortunately, he soon understands that his idea is only an illusion which took shape at school in India from the reading of Wordsworth and Herrick (11), an idea which lately crushed against the reality of the British society. From this perspective, it is possible to say that England is transformed into the “Other” in the first-generation migrants’ narrations, since it does not fit in the expectations imposed by the colonial system and is therefore perceived as an alien element. In this way, England soon appears as a hostile land, where black people are not accepted and they are discriminated like Irish, children and dogs in the advertisement for housing (35), a fact which makes Mohanti feel like an “Untouchable” (67).

On the other hand, his Indian fellows are jealous of his experience in England, so the question of identity is treated from different perspectives in the novel: it is not only linked to migrants’ integration in the UK but also to the cultural gap established between those who move and those who stay in Asia. From this perspective, Mohanti is considered as an alien in both nations, even though his personal perception is completely different since he affirms, instead, that he feels at home both in England and in India,

But I only feel at home in India and England. When I am in England I want to go back to India and when I am in India I want to return to England. But as soon as I arrive at London Airport I am made to feel an outsider when the immigration officer checks my passport and asks, “Do you live here?” But London provides me with a solitude and isolation necessary for my work. I have learned to live alone with myself in a dream surrounded by violence and racial tension. As I paint, write, arrange exhibitions, meet friends, go to theatres and cinemas, and from time to time watch a little television, I become involved with life in England. (208)

Mohanti’s words confirm the presence of an ambivalent feeling in migrant writers’ identity, by underlining a condition which seems a sort of reversed version of Coetzee’s definition of “unsettled settlers” (Coetzee 1988: 8) which describes the unresolved tension between England and its colonies after World War II.

The characteristics of South Asian migration changed during the 1970s and

the 1980s. This period has been marked by an intense social and political change in Britain: the transmission of citizenship to the second generation is the fundamental novelty of the period, although this crucial step did not change the “white” perception towards Black British people. Indeed, they were still depicted as criminals and muggers, creating a sort of moral panic towards them (Kim 2015: 12). As a result, also second-generationers have to deal with the problem of discrimination and racism, as well as with the instabilities due to their in-between identities. The social conflicts between white people and the so-called “Desi”¹, as well as the resurgence of the anxieties around the incompatibility between cultures, have led to the current crisis of British multiculturalism, while the internal differences of class and religion among the South Asian community have marginalized some groups by furthering others (Kim 2015: 33). Moreover, second-generationers are considered “internal others”, a term which marks the existence of a still racialized perception and gives them an even more hybrid connotation, torn between a partial integration into the British society and a still strong perception of their “Othering”. As a reaction to this situation, these young people are trying to construct their own spaces in specific places in the UK, so that, from a diasporic perspective, it is possible to say that they are trying to redraw their own boundaries of “Desi” in order to solve their fears.

Hanif Kureishi is one of the best and most famous examples of second-generation writers and his personal experience is described in his well-known essay *The Rainbow Sign* (1986). From the episode of the school teacher who showed him pictures of Indian peasants in mud hunts in order to explain Kureishi’s origin (Kureishi 1986: 3), to the remembrance of Powell’s speeches which helped to construct the image of “Pakis” as “dirty, ignorant and less than human” in the British collective consciousness (7), Kureishi narrates his doubts and the interior dilemmas of a second-generation boy who could not tolerate being himself. In order to escape from this situation, young Kureishi looks for some bedrocks in the

¹ The term “Desi” derives from a Sanskrit word used to describe the South Asian identities of migrants in contemporary Britain, and it refers also to British Asian music, literature and films. It literally means “of the homeland”; in this sense, anyone with Asian ancestry can be considered as a “Desi” (Kim 2015: 34).

mythical protagonists of the black cause: “As I planned my escape I read Baldwin all the time, I read Richard Wright and I admired Muhammad Ali” (7). However, he soon realizes that it is not possible to escape from fanaticism following other forms of intolerance; it is for this reason that his experience of returnee in Pakistan is a failure, a fiasco through which he understands that he has to live in England and try to come to terms with his hybrid identity if he wants to solve his interior disorientation.

The Indian condition is similar to the Caribbean one, although Caribbean migration is an even more complex subject to deal with, especially because Caribbean people are the product of a previous form of diaspora which basically derives from slavery and indentured labour. Generally speaking, everybody in the Caribbean comes from somewhere else, thus the Caribbean society is characterized by a myriad of ethnic groups, such as Blacks, East Indians, Chinese people, Jews, former colonial whites, and Arabs, and it is for this reason that it lacks a strong social and political identity. As a consequence, migration scholars often see Caribbean immigrant societies as a point of arrival, and not of departure, although the cultural patchwork which derives from this variety of ethnicities does not help to create a complete social kinship. Also from a linguistic and a literary point of view, the Caribbean identity can be considered as a veritable hybrid element (Griffith 2001: 35) in which the concept of “difference” is seen as a central issue to summarize all the problematic elements which compose the Caribbean scenario. Indeed, taking into consideration that social relations are not so determinant in this area since “transnationalism has become broader and cannot be restricted to social relationships” (Gowricharn 2006: 9), a distinctive Caribbean diasporic identity can be discerned by giving a central role to the notion of difference, also according to Stuart Hall who claims that,

The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of “identity” which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (Hall 1990: 235)

Hence, starting from these considerations, Caribbean diasporic people can be defined as truly hybrid identities, like the Indian ones; moreover, another element which connects Indian and Caribbean experience is their common misfortune in England, as they both had to accept unskilled jobs or to face unemployment when they arrived in the UK, while they had also to deal with the problem of discrimination and to fight against racial stereotypes. Nonetheless, it is not possible to affirm that this kind of migrations were “forced” in the sociological sense of the term since, for instance, migrating was in any case considered a preferred option for many Caribbean migrants (Thomas-Hope 1992: 89). So, the common migration’s difficulties did not change the intention to migrate, especially if the potential migrants had some relatives in the UK.

Also for the Caribbean diaspora in the UK, it is possible to distinguish three different migratory movements: the first period is from the middle of the XIX century to World War II; the second one is the post-war until the 1960s; finally, the third moment is from the 1960s until nowadays. In each of these periods, like for South Asian migrants, the transnational familial linkages were fundamental: the relationships with the original house and homeland have always been really strong (Chamberlain 1998: 202), thus maintaining the option of returning a valid chance for the future, especially because their living conditions in Britain, and particularly in London, were not so good. During the post-war period, even the most vulnerable households with children actually had to live in city blocks or poor flats on the ground floor (212) and, although the reconstruction required a vast amount of labour forces, much of which obtained from the Caribbean, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962 tightened the regulations of immigration, preventing the arrival of Caribbean workers. Nonetheless, the migrant pressure on the UK kept on a high level, as it is well testified by a 1967-article by G. C. K. Peach, in which the author underlines the motivations of the Caribbean diaspora. In his article, he affirms that “Poverty, population growth, and population pressure in the West Indies were permissive conditions: demand for labour in Britain was decisive and dynamic” (Peach 1967: 36), thus demonstrating how the even more miserable living conditions in the Caribbean could influence Britain’s appeal, pushing many people to migrate. Moreover, also the increased priority

given to education in the Caribbean islands during the 1950s improved migration, as well as the fact that the value of the same job was multiplied in Britain. So, as Caribbean societies became increasingly part of the global transnational labour market, migration flourished.

This situation is well exemplified in a myriad of works by Caribbean novelists of the first generation, such as Oscar Dathorne, George Lamming, Sam Selvon, Andrew Salkey, and Beryl Gilroy. In particular, Selvon's Moses's trilogy composed by *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), *Moses Ascending* (1975), and *Moses Migrating* (1983) depicts the experiences and misfortunes of a group of Trinidadian migrants in London from the 1950s to the 1970s. While the third part of Moses's adventures will be examined in depth in the second and third chapter as one of the first examples of return migration depicted in postcolonial literature, the first two books of the trilogy narrate the lives and troubles of Moses and his Trinidadian fellows in London, dealing with the same discrimination and problems faced by Mohanti and many other migrants of the first wave. Selvon himself had to face the same issues, such as the plague of racism, the sense of alienation and inferiority felt in front of the majesty of the city of London, and the loneliness of both his body and spirit.

At the beginning of the *The Lonely Londoners*, Selvon portrays the same gloomy atmosphere that Mohanti has found when he arrived in Leeds in *Through Brown Eyes*: "One grim winter evening, when it had a kind of unrealness about London, with a fog sleeping restlessly over the city and the lights showing in the blur as if is not London at all but some strange place on another planet, Moses Aloetta hop on a number 46 bus [...]" (Selvon TLL 2006: 1). The sense of "unrealness" and detachment felt in London is therefore the same for both Caribbean and South Asian migrants, and the situation does not change in *Moses Ascending*, where Selvon ironically depicts the characteristics of black people's life in the UK, in particular the "good fortune" of black menial workers:

The alarms of all the black people in Brit'n are timed to ring before the rest of the population. It is their destiny to be up and about at the crack o'dawn. In these days of pollution and environment, he is very lucky, for he can breathe the freshest air of the new day before anybody else [...] The first flake of snow in winter falls on a black

man. The first ray of sunlight in summer falls on a black man. The first yellow leaf in the autumn falls on a black man. The first crocus in the spring is seen by a black man and he hearkens to the cuckoo long before them other people what write to the newspapers to say they was the first [...] The population masses believe that racial violence going to erupt because he is being continuously and continually oppressed and kept down. Not so. It is true that racial violence is going to erupt, but not for that reason. What going to happen is one of these days the white man going to realise that the black man has it cushy [...] (Selvon MA 1984: 5-9).

The problem of black people's exploitation was, therefore, definitely still present in the 1970s, thus confirming the grim fate of most of immigrants in the UK.

In the last decades, however, the growth of an even more interconnected and global system allowed to imagine further and different forms of migrations, as well as to perceive the national experience as a past occurrence, and to accept a sort of English "indigenization" of the diasporic Caribbean communities. As already mentioned, the interconnection between *routes* and *roots* is cardinal in the process of diaspora, and in the case of the Caribbean migration it assumes a significant meaning, as it is deeply linked to the notion of creolization, a typical Caribbean phenomenon of social cohesion (Gowricharn 2006: 10) which, in this case, is moved abroad in a global process, creating creolized and mixed Caribbean societies in the UK.

Second-generation migrants are perfect examples of this hybrid and creolized identities, although even for those who were born and bred in the UK the integration is not guaranteed. Indeed, they still have to face problems at school and at work, as well as to deal with the persistent "call" of their Caribbean blood (Conway, Potter, Phillips 2005: 38) and with their gendered and racialized-hybrid identities (69). In particular, Phillips and Potter point out that,

[...] an ingrained knowledge of racial inferiority overshadows and dominates the post-colonial experience of Black people living in Europe. [...] This identity, borne of racial difference, is based on the adoption of a "white mask" of perceived egalitarian identity, and with it, an associated disavowal of blackness. [...] Thus a person's social location is affected and conditioned by hierarchies of class, race,

sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, and, of course, gender. (71)

This can be a good description of the situation of the second-generation migrants, who are a “racially-hybrid, economically and socially disadvantaged group within post-colonial England” (71). As an example, the two scholars cite an interview to a second-generation migrant whose parents are from Barbados:

My identity was mixed up. So I went through life wishing you had the white skin, the blond hair and the blue eyes and the skinny figure. When in reality, no one grounded me to say, “well this is where you are from”. So when I was young, growing up in school, I never considered myself Bajan [from Barbados]. It was only when I was sixteen that I realized that I was black, because at that age, I started going out and competing in the open world with other workers. [...] I was always considered an outsider. (72-73)

The hybrid identity of this generation of migrants is furthered by the fact that they live in a sort of creolized society, which has been constructed by their own Caribbean fellows since the 1950s, in the sense that they have always indirectly experienced the Caribbean culture through their parents while, at the same time, they had to live in the British society, surrounded by British people.

This situation is well depicted in the novels by the second-generation authors of Caribbean origins, such as Leone Ross and Zadie Smith. In Smith’s *White Teeth* (2000), for instance, the Afro-Caribbean young protagonist Irie feels the same sense of discomfort as the real children of Caribbean migrants examined in the sociological reports, a discomfort related not only to her body and her mixed identity, but also to the recognition of her genealogy and inheritance (Tew 2010: 57). In fact, the problem of roots and heritage and of how to maintain and transmit a strong idea of belonging to the young generations is one of the most relevant problem for Caribbean parents.

Literature can exemplify the reality of the South Asian and Caribbean diasporas in the UK and, at the same time, give perfect examples of the formation of migrant communities in London. These communities have a veritable transnational nature which goes over the past categorizations based on the idea of

nation, as well as the notion of “imagined community” theorized by Benedict Anderson in his 1983-famous essay, as we will see in the next paragraph.

1.1.2 The transnational turn in the UK: from nationhood to transnational communities

The migrant and diasporic experience described in the previous paragraph has led to the creation of new kinds of communities in the UK since the 1950s. These migrant communities have deeply changed their features during the decades, so that many postcolonial scholars have tried to define them by taking into consideration different perspectives and different cases.

According to Gowricharn, the current transnational communities can be considered one of the direct products of globalization, “a globalization of, and within, a cultural community” (Gowricharn 2006: 6). Indeed, they are the result of the improvement of the means of transport and of the general welfare conditions and, as Castles points out, they transcend national boundaries, thus leading to multiple forms of belonging. Hence, as transnational corporations are increasing their power thanks to globalization, the only way to react to this situation is including and accepting people with multiple identities by creating new forms of heterogeneous communities (Castles 2003: 45).

The postmodern philosopher Zygmunt Bauman as well does not hesitate to admit that migrants still desire a place to belong to, as well as a stable home which allows them to feel a sense of kinship, association, and inclusion without having the necessity to move away. He also affirms that, in an era in which modernity has tried to destroy every kind of belonging, the ideas of community and tradition, as well as roots, blood, nationality, and the joy of being “chez soi”, are fundamental values which cannot be called into question (Bauman 2005: 258). However, it is crucial to underline that, if on the one hand, the importance of the creation of a sort of “human habitat” (Bauman 2001: 259) is still very present, on the other hand, the nature of this habitat has changed, since the traditional notion of nation-state has been replaced by multicultural and transnational communities constituted by diasporic people. This is the reason why it is important to broaden the notion of

diasporic people also to those who have belonged to a region for generations and have come into contact with direct diasporic experiences; in this way, the new communities can include also people of different nationalities – and, therefore, also British people - which is a typical characteristic of transnational communities. In this way, the concept of nation is converted into a transnational matter, in which a community preserves a special ideological kinship with a supposed place of origin (Appadurai 1996: 172).

However, despite the need to look for a more global concept of nation in the contemporary mosaic of nationalities and flows of people, is it still possible to talk about a kind of “loyalty” to a nation or a nonterritorial transnation (173)? This is a central question because, if on the one hand the recent tendency towards heterogeneity and multiculturalism has apparently been a big success, on the other hand, this same propensity is likely to be substituted in the long term by a repulsion for the same aspects it should support. This is exactly what is happening in the current society, where a high claim for heterogeneity is being replaced by the aversion to strangers and immigrants and by acts of racism and discrimination, as it is well depicted in postcolonial works through the description of marginal immigrant communities, “the uneasy place of the subject who comes to the city for a new life, but finds access to metropolitan identity complicated and often simply impossible” (Warf, Arias 2009: 118). However, although many novels narrate stories of disillusionment and lack of empathy with other migrants in the host country, such as V. S. Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* (1967) and Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) among others, the concept of community is still fundamental in the global context, since there is not a single model of globalization, and different communities in different geographical areas live their own peculiar experience by adopting different solutions. For instance, in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2003), the main character Nasneen manages to find her own way of life in Britain despite the first difficulties by making significant bonds with other women, thus establishing a particular kind of immigrant community, a women community, and demonstrating that subaltern subjects can forge new forms of opportunity through the act of congregation. Therefore, even though many scholars have tried to give their best definition to the current forms of

immigrant communities, I will take into consideration the notion of *community of culture* to describe the transnational communities exemplified in the novels. This concept derives from Clifford's idea of culture as "a body that lives and dies. Culture is enduring, traditional, structural (rather than contingent, syncretic, historical). Culture is a process of ordering, not of disruption" (Clifford 1988: 235). From this perspective, culture can be used to identify different communities because it can be considered a milestone, something fixed and identifiable in every kind of community; moreover, it can be connected to the notion of "ethnos", a biological characteristic in contrast to the discredited notion of race (Baumann 1996: 17).

Furthermore, while Gerd Baumann discusses the cultural and ethnic communities of migrants in Britain by classifying them into five different groups – Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Afro-Caribbeans, and Whites, which stands for Irish (Baumann 1996: 72) – I will consider, instead, two migrant macro-communities, that is the South Asian and the Caribbean communities, as already mentioned. Their characteristics will be examined by considering their different religions, periods of arrival, and the generational clash between different migrant groups, with a particular focus on the novels' description of the different kinds of kinship they established with the places where they live, and especially with the new notion of global space first developed by sociologists and geographers, and then exploited by literature.

1.2 The concepts of space and place: the spatial turn in literary studies

Starting from the considerations exposed in the previous paragraphs, it is already possible to postulate that, in a quite paradoxical way, the more a country presents globalized characteristics, the more it is probable that it hosts pockets of fundamentalism and racism. This phenomenon is in contrast with that of cultural hybridization, although globalization and multiculturalism constitute two sides of the same coin, considering that the presence of immigrants is nurtured by the former – even though native people are not always willing to accept and welcome

them.

It is also possible to compare the fate of migrants and diasporic people to the destiny of those who cannot afford the costs of globalization, people who, using an expression by Zygmunt Bauman, are simply “cut-off” and who react in an aggressive way to this situation; in this way, “urban territory becomes the battlefield of continuous war space” (Bauman 1998: 26), in which different kinds of subaltern people, both English and foreigners, feel marginalized and confined to sorts of ghettos. Bauman’s viewpoint is, therefore, quite pessimistic about a possible concrete creation of stable transnational communities, and the numerous examples of racist and violent reprisals of the last decades seem to prove that he is quite right. In this context, following Bauman’s further considerations, the concept of space has actually lost its restrictive characteristics only for rich people, whereas poor people has to deal with a space which is almost barred. In this way, the inhabitants of the first world live in the “time”, that is an eternal present, while people of the second world live in the “space” which ties the time (Bauman 2005: 346). This would be the reason why migrants feel that they are not welcomed in any place where they stop, and that every place will be inhospitable for them. Moreover, globalization is a phenomenon which tends to support the dreams and desires of the tourists, instead of those of migrant people; in this sense, migrants are parodies of tourists, and it is for this reason that they are not welcomed, because they remind the inhabitants of the western nation-states of their lacks (349). In other words, the global system denies to migrants the same freedom of movement which is at the base of its principles.

This situation is well portrayed also in literature, especially taking into consideration the spatial turn which affected literary studies in the last years. First of all, it is important to say that, in a fundamental paper dated 2004, David Harvey distinguishes three different typologies of space: the absolute, the relative and the relational space. The last definition of relational space is particularly interesting, since it implies that space is composed of relations rather than structures:

[...] There is another sense in which space [...] can be viewed as relative and I choose to

call this relational space - space regarded in the manner of Leibniz, as being contained in objects in the sense that an object can be said to exist only insofar as it contains and represents within itself relationships to other objects. (Harvey 2006: 2)

Thus, contrary to Bauman's position, Harvey affirms that it is impossible to extricate *place* and *time*, since this kind of approach helps to conceptualise political and collective memories by linking the spatial characteristics of such processes to the time when they happen. In this way, the social and political facts of a precise era can be understood only in relational terms, that is by considering and examining them through both time and space. Hence, this conceptual frame allows to reconsider and grapple many aspects of the contemporary political consciousness, such as the concept of identity.

The spatial turn in literary studies starts off by these assumptions, especially for the necessity to answer the question of how different human practices create and make use of different conceptualizations of space (5). In this regard, Harvey cites Henri Lefebvre and his definition of space of representation and space of experience as both part of the way we live in the world, and "the way this space is lived through emotions and the imagination. The spatiotemporality of a dream, a fantasy, a hidden longing, a lost memory or even a peculiar thrill as we walk down a street can be given representation through works of art" (8). In other words, the implementation of a spatial approach in literature considers the way through which it is possible to study the relationship between the material spaces we live in, such as the cities with their public and private places, and people, objects, occurrences, and events which have some linkages with them. From this perspective, Harvey calls into question Lefebvre's conceptualization of the existence of a "right to the city" (13), by considering who has the right to be in a space that is nominally designated as public and what this has to do with how politics is conducted in the public sphere. He also asks:

What happens when we construe that right [...] as a right to change and transform the spaces of the city into a different kind of living environment compatible with quite different social relations by attacking both its material forms as well as dominant discourses of representation? (12)

I will deal with these questions in the next chapters through the analysis of the selected novels, by further considering that a relational conceptualization of space and place has to regard also spatial distinctions like global/local, near/far, inside/outside.

However, why talking about space and place in literature? The answer is given by Pamela Gilbert when she affirms that “spatial relations would reveal to us a complexity and materiality which was being hidden away by narrative. [...] place could be claimed as home, as related to the construction of identity” (Warf, Arias 2009: 103). This means that the notions popularized by the spatial turn could help to analyse in depth the processes which participate in hybrid identities formation, shedding light on the linkages between these peculiar procedures and the role of home and homeland. Hence the introduction of notions such as space and place in relation to the category of time, in addition to the studies of the influence of global phenomena on the transnational and migratory movements, allows to rethink the way through which literary scholars have always approached postcolonial literature. However, in this light, Homi Bhabha warns against the possible negative effect of an overall spatial approach since it can articulate problems of identification by transforming the diasporic aesthetics into an uncanny temporality, that is “the *time* of cultural displacement, and the *space* of the ‘untranslatable’” (Procter 2000: 302). By contrast, Bhabha supports the importance of the migrants’ dream of survival, the act of living on borderlines and, citing Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, how “newness enters the world” (Rushdie 1988: 272), in which newness stands for the migrant condition. In this way, it truly becomes possible to link literature and life, going beyond both the classical temporal dichotomies and the spatial constraints constituted by national boundaries.

Starting from this theoretical framework, it is also possible to read the centre/periphery dichotomy in the light of the recent spatial assumptions. Indeed, in a new spatial literary conceptualization, where space assumes a dominant role whereas the notion of time loses its traditional centrality, the linkage and balances between different areas of the world become even more important, especially if they are used to emphasise what Édouard Glissant calls the “world-chaos”

(Glissant 1998: 66). This specific definition depicts the cultural conflicts, attractions and repulsions among different populations, highlighting the cultural shock of this peculiar world-system. A perfect example of this situation is the Caribbean area, with its clashes and attractions among African, American and European cultures. This peculiar condition cannot be classified as a mere melting-pot, but as a *new space* in which the notion of time loses its intensity, since people live a multiplicity of different times without the oppression of the “predictability” (68), which is instead a typical characteristic of the western societies which used to control the world in the past. Furthermore, Glissant’s theory connects the postcolonial notions of identity, hybridity, and mimicry to the recent shifts imposed by globalization as well as to the new literary notion of place hypothesized by the spatial turn’s theorists. Indeed, place is one of the most important elements in the process of identity creation, since it can influence the living conditions and the character of people. Therefore, according to Glissant, it is important to start from the idea of *place* in order to concretely imagine a global world, where place is not a nation-state with strict and closed borders, but a new imagery and a sort of utopia, while the global world has nothing to do with the modern globalization, but it is a rhizomatic body with no centre/periphery distinctions (110). This definition clearly goes beyond the traditional centre/periphery’s perspective, whilst also the homogenizing forces of the classical idea of globalization are too complex to be explained in such terms. In this light, the term “glocalization” - coined by Roland Robertson in 1995 - better depicts the current process, in which the global is connected to the local in a reciprocal relationship. From this perspective, the local itself becomes one of the central aspects of globalization while, at the same time, the claims for cultural homogeneity lose ground. Moreover, Robertson’s position is based on Balibar’s concept of world-spaces (Balibar 1991), a general theory which considers the local as a micro-manifestation of the global.

In this light, space assumes a fundamental connotation in the field of Global Studies, as well as in the definition of World Literature and in the postcolonial debate about the location of postcolonial authors and their works: therefore, if on the one hand in his *Globalization and Literature* (2009) Suman Gupta points out

that the question of location in postcolonial literature is mainly addressed to the identification of the centres of production of the literary power, on the other hand I wish to suggest another literary perspective on the centre/periphery dichotomy far from the typical opposition which sees the centre as the emblem of the order, while the periphery is the chaotic place par excellence. So, even if Zygmunt Bauman claims that order and chaos are modern twins (Bauman 2005: 321) since they are two inseparable aspects of the same modern global-system, I will take into consideration another position according to which centre and periphery might be reversed in relation to the back-and-forth flows of people which characterize the current global situation. This assumption goes hand in hand with Chakrabarty's suggestion of provincializing Europe, since they both concern the end of historicism, which privileged time over space, and the reaffirmation of space. In brief, what is important is not the place *per se*, but the linkages among places and spaces created by the migrant flows. In this context, the concept of location assumes another meaning since it becomes a matter of production and negotiation, that is a place where people shape their multiple identities, and this is also the function of the current centres and peripheries of the world. The centre/periphery overturning also leads to the mutual exchange of their cultural elements, thus creating a new kind of kinship in which not only does the migrant community adopt the characteristics of the host country, but also the dominant culture tends to import food, films, and also the literature of the discriminated citizens. From this perspective, it is therefore possible to talk about the creation of new global citizens, which is far from the old concept of citizenship based on mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion constructed by the nation-state. This complex process is obviously still in its starting phase, since episodes of racism keep on happening all over the world. However, the future tendency will be to consider space as an including and dynamic element, wherein the power of imagination and literature will play a central role. In this sense, globalization will not create "cultural homogeneity and uniformity, as is often argued" (Nyman 2009: 19), but it will be the tool for the construction of solid transnational networks which will allow reversed forms of flows between centres and peripheries.

The new role of space in literary studies and its linkage to the effects of globalization also supports a new formulation of the traditional postcolonial topics: in this light, the role of the postmodern and postcolonial city significantly changed in the last decades since it has been transformed into the global space par excellence, the metropolis.

1.2.1 The depiction of the global city in the Black British migration: London vs. Indian and Caribbean metropolis

Despite their divergences, migration and diaspora share the same background and an important context of development: the city, which is the point of arrival of all migrants as well as the fertile land for the creation of diasporic identities. As a result, migration and diaspora do not produce only new notions of community and space, but also an innovative city's conception, the *metropolis*.

This new kind of urban agglomerate is not a capital, it *has not* a centre and it *is not* a centre, it is constructed by networks, and it is the premeditated social destination of migrant people (Benvenuti, Ceserani 2012: 101). Moreover, considering that many scholars state that a relation between reality and literary representation actually exists, and it is evident in the interpenetration of these two components – reality and fiction (109) –, it is possible to affirm that the dynamic space, or metropolis, created by postcolonial flows of people can be generated by literature. This does not only mean that literature *reproduces* reality, but that it concretely *forges* new spaces which interact with the reality.

Indeed, in Black British fiction the metropolis is both the space where the stories of migrants and diasporic identities take place and where the perceived, the known, and the lived spaces converge in the in-between space of the postcolonial novel. This position challenges the 1963-Roland Barthes's assumption according to which world and literature are two totally distant continents (102), whereas it shares Pascale Casanova's conceptualization of a sort of international literary space, where literature is characterized by its own specific literary temporality, detached from the historical time (Casanova 2004: 350). The new metropolitan

identities are, in fact, linked to a sort of “cosmopolitan turn”, wherein the individual belongs to “more than one world, but not to one entirely” (Boehmer 1995: 240). The migrant condition is absolutely representative of this paradox because of its “in-between” identity torn between the country of adoption and homeland; at the same time, it also embodies all the problems of living in the difficult conditions of the global metropolis, especially considering the problems of racism and segregation typical of the metropolitan suburbs. In this case, the centre/periphery dichotomy can be exemplified by the duality between the inner-city and the suburbs, according to which migrant and diasporic people have to live in a sort of eternal separation. Nonetheless, “residential segregation is a contradictory phenomenon. [...] [as] it contains element of both other-definition and self-definition” (Castles 2003: 228), so that ethnic neighbourhoods are central elements of the metropolis since they are able to transform the social landscape of the contemporary city all over the world, just as they transformed the image of London after World War II. Indeed, social and economic factors may push migrants into certain delimited areas of the city, or to live in sort of contemporary ghettos in order to rely on families of the same origins; in any case, all these kinds of suburban agglomerates are the product of the global city, and they enrich the urban life and culture.

In this context, London is definitely one of the most significant examples of metropolis and impressive cities of the world. In particular, McLeod discusses if the product of the diasporas of the last sixty years, that is multicultural London, can be considered as a concrete reality or a utopian vision (McLeod 2008), but the answer to this question is far to be reached. Indeed, if at the beginning of the XX century London was the vastest and most powerful metropolis of the world, nowadays it has to share its leadership with some other global and multicultural cities. Its role has changed after the end of colonialism, even though it has managed to maintain a crucial part in the collective consciousness of migrant writers. Their perceptions have changed following the developments and transformations of the city itself and if at the beginning its cosmopolitan face was confined to Soho and the East End (White 2008: 131), from the 1980s onwards any part of the British capital has updated to its multicultural spirit. As John

Clement Ball points out, “as a result of this so-called “New Commonwealth” migration, the metropolis that once possessed a large portion of the world now contains a transnational “world” that is increasingly taking possession of it. [...] The centre in other words has become decentred” (Ball 2004: 4-5). This quotation can be certainly demonstrated also by the recent ascent of the extra-European metropolis, such as the South Asian ones.

South Asian global cities are chaotic cradles on whose development the effects of globalization have had a huge impact, especially when considering the Indian cities’ expansion.

Nehru’s idea of modern India included a strong commitment to improve the social justice and the mobility of the rising Indian metropolis (Amrith 2011: 148), even though the discrepancies between different social groups were and are very common. In spite of the despairs which still characterize part of the population, India has been central to the process of globalization which has deeply changed the collective consciousness about, as well as the landscape of the Indian metropolis.

In his recent essay *India Becoming: A Journey through a Changing Landscape* (2012), the Indian-American author Akash Kapur describes his perception of India after more than a decade in America. He notes that the dusty roads of his youth have been replaced by modern motorways, even though the most significant change is about the new “giddy, exuberant” (Kapur 2012: 5) spirit which animates the land, the new “centre of the world”:

The India of my youth felt cut off, at the edge of modernity. When I boarded that plane in Chennai, trading the heat of coastal South India for the bitter winter of boarding School in Massachusetts, I felt like I was entering the world. Now, twelve years later, India was at the centre of the world. It was India with its resurgent economy, high saving rates, and young educated workforce, that beckoned with the sense of a brighter future [...]. (5)

The change is even more evident in the Indian cities: the colonial metropolises of the past have been substituted by the metropolis of the globalization. Thousands of people migrated to the cities from the countryside, attracted by their

stimulating chaos and a bizarre form of optimism at the crossroads between frustration and hope. Amit Chaudhuri as well underlines these changes by highlighting how Indian cities have been altered by the first global modifications in the 1980s which augmented the glitter, the movement, and the reflected surfaces of the most important Indian metropolises (Chaudhuri 2013: 80). He also explains the strange parable of the Indian cities after globalization, according to which certain cities, such as Calcutta, have lost their imaginative centrality in the literary context, while others have increased their prestige, as happened to Bombay thanks to the support of authors such as Singh and Naipaul (81).

India's economic and political developments have therefore certainly transformed the face of its metropolises; however, it is clear that living in India is not an easy matter even today. During the last decades, behind the easy modernity and consumerism, many problems have pushed people to migrate to western metropolises, so that different generations of South Asian British authors have had to negotiate new identities in the so-called "diasporic cities" like London through mechanisms of invisibility, complicity, and resistance (Bald 1995: 78). Also for those who returned to India, like Chaudhuri, the need of a sort of "recognition" is still a problematic matter, since they feel "something amiss" (Chaudhuri 2013: 94) in the changed city of their childhood.

This condition is familiar also to Caribbean people, even though Caribbean cities' situation is, in a certain sense, quite different.

Caribbean contemporary cities present some important differences from western and Indian metropolises. Indeed, they cannot be defined as real global cities, since they did not participate in the economic developments which derived from the global changes of the current world-system. However, taking into consideration Benvenuti and Ceserani's definition of metropolis, which is based on the urban presence of social and migrant networks, Caribbean towns have to be included in this category because they actively take part in migration flows by being the point of departure and of arrival for many people. Therefore, even though the colonial grandeur of the past is lost, they still epitomise a crucial junction for migrant's trajectories, as well as an interesting destination for migrants' return.

Moreover, when talking about the relationship between migration and the contemporary cities, it is important to note that global processes have placed the condition of migrant people on a similar level to that of tourists, changing also their relationship to the metropolis. In this light, migrant people – just like tourists – are seen as exploiters of the city, and therefore they are perceived in a negative way –, in this case, unlike tourists – by those citizens who feel to “properly” belong to the metropolis, that is by those who have a family which has lived and grown up in the host country for generations.

This problematic dichotomy which opposes migrants and tourists is related to whether migrants have or do not have the right to live in the modern global cities, and it is linked to the question of the so-called “spatial justice” (Warf, Arias 2009: 31) theorized by Edward Soja. This important concept is connected to the rediscovery of Lefebvre’s “right to the city”, and it is linked to the idea of “embedding them [the human rights] in specifically urban spatial contexts and causalities” in order to “reduce spatial inequalities in wealth and well-being and achieve more democratic distribution of power” (Warf, Arias 2009: 32). The right to the city should help, therefore, the construction of global “civil society” movements which should guarantee the same rights to all citizens. Postcolonial analysis of space has underlined these questions by opposing the metropolis to the image of the colonial city; in particular, postcolonial literature can now explain how literature shapes the understanding of space and of its effects on hybridity, heterogeneity, and liminality. Furthermore, if the western city has been historically depicted as the place of culture and civilization, postcolonial metropolis has overturned this situation by showing the weaknesses of both western and eastern human beings, trapped among different dreams and aspirations.

These feelings are depicted by postcolonial migrant authors in their stories of wandering, migration and diaspora which narrate different experiences of displacement; and these works have often called into question the myth of homecoming, a moment which is desired and nursed, but which can lead to both celebration and disillusionment, and in which home and homeland assume a peculiar connotation.

1.3 Home and Homeland: what “being at home” means in the western and eastern worlds

In the contemporary globalized context, the concept of “home” assumes a porous meaning which can indicate different emotional as well as geographical spaces. Indeed, the current idea of home is characterized by global permeable networks which influence migrants’ trajectories and flows of people. In this light, “being at home” in postcolonial terms assumes a distinctive connotation, especially in relation to the diasporic movements, according to which “home” can be identified with different places, such as the English mother-country, the ancestral homeland of the forefathers, or simply that of the childhood.

Globalization has significantly changed and pluralized the concept of “home”; and, in fact, the studies of its consequences on the literary and cultural aspects of both western and eastern societies have been analysed since the early 2000s, in relation to the phenomenon of the fragmentation and porousness of borders of the current world system and to the postmodern and poststructuralist philosophical theories (Jay 2010: 23). In this light, the transnational character also of the contemporary English literature goes beyond the boundaries of the traditional nation-state, so that different Anglophone postcolonial authors, such as Salman Rushdie, Zadie Smith, Caryl Phillips, and many others, can live and write in a myriad of different places and from different perspectives. For this reason, their idea of home is always somewhere else, so that “home” nowadays embodies a loss for the first generation of migrants, and a lack for their children.

The literature of this new world-system can indicate, therefore, an innovative relationship to the concept of homeland, which thus becomes the point of departure to imagine the new post-national identities (Glissant 1998: 84-107). In this light, the traditional nation-states with their physical and ideological boundaries can be substituted by diasporic and transnational networks, helping people to detach themselves from the ghosts of a national territory. However, even though this post-national imaginary could be a possible scenario for the future global system because the idea of nation is definitely fading, the faith in the concept of homeland and the research for a place to call home are still central in

the thoughts and dreams of migrants, and although the notion of fixed identities has been abandoned for the postcolonial idea of hybridity and malleability, some scholars still claim that “individuals have a ‘master’ overarching identity that is fundamentally rooted in a single place” (Conway, Potter, Phillips 2005: 137). Therefore, the concept of home is not dead, but it has changed its perspective trusting on the individual’s ability of finding home in movement, giving rise to a sort of homeless mind which moves away from any notion of fixity (Bender, Winer 2001: 334). Actually, according to Bauman, we are all “off balance” nomads, and we live in a sort of circle in which there is no centre (Bauman 1998: 88), and also globalization has helped to change the concept of home towards this pluralization: migrants have no more one home, but many, and they aspire to write about them as much as to come to terms with their fragmented situation.

Therefore, giving a precise definition of home is not an easy matter, since different migrant people can perceive it in different ways, according to their experiences and backgrounds. It is for this reason that one of the aims of this dissertation is to analyse these experiences through the literary representation, considering how imagination has described and shaped real facts. Indeed, as Salman Rushdie affirms, imagination can definitely “falsify, demean, ridicule, caricature, and wound as effectively as it can clarify, intensify, and unveil” (Rushdie 1991: 143), and migration literature is concretely able to recollect and exploit this immense network of feelings and emotions in order to construct and redefine the world and its boundaries.

Hence, even though the idea of home is definitely fragmented, everyone keeps needing a home, or at least dreaming of it, because the importance of having stable roots prevails on the push to travel and move. It is for this reason that migrant and diasporic people constantly maintain a sort of affection and attachment to a mythical homeland, that is a primordial land wherein coming back. The idea of returning may often be only a mirage, or an unconscious desire, or a vague project with any possibility of being realized; in any case, it is an obsession in migrants’ dreams and thoughts, especially because it can still be considered a mechanism guaranteeing safety and order (Nyman 2009: 47), despite the instability of the current society. Homeland is therefore a composite term

which encapsulates different concepts and places, bringing together journeys and desires, as well as private and social spaces; it is security, comfort and certainty, and it is for these reasons that people desire to come back, even though “the gap between ‘home’ (the culture of origin) and ‘world’ (the culture of adoption) remains unbridged and the boundaries are often conflictual” (Thayyalnayaki 2008: 2), and this is true for both return and reverse migrants.

Starting from these assumptions, I will explore the differences and changes in the notion of “home” and “homeland” in the novels which form my corpus of analysis. They will be examined in relation to the global processes, analysing how the fragmented concept of home influences migration by transforming its characteristics and goals, thus improving the phenomena of return and reverse migration towards Indian and Caribbean cities. The point of departure will be the strong and adamant presence of the ancestral homelands in migrants’ dreams and desires, as well as the occurrence of the concept of “return” in migration’s novels.

1.3.1 Two perspectives on Homecoming: Return and Reverse migration

In *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy assumes that *routes* can take migrants to many places (Gilroy 1993). However, also *roots* can influence people’s search for home, and actually the present dissertation suggests that migrants are looking for something that they can really find only by returning home, or to an idea of home which is the most appropriate for them in the current chaotic world-system.

However, what does “return” mean? In his essay *Clearing a Space* (2008), Amit Chaudhuri describes his desire to return to his Indian motherland, explaining the corrosive but indispensable need for “that particular air I first felt. [...] it’s presumably what drove Suketu Mehta, who moved to New York when he was fourteen, back” (Chaudhuri 2008: 184). The Indian novelist also recognises that “there are enough deterrents, besides the fear of explosion, to prevent people from piling into train compartments or getting onto their cars to make the journeys they do, to and within Bombay” (184); however, there is something magical in the inextricable connection between the “highs” and “lows” of Indian subcontinent

which inevitably attracts those who migrated in the last decades, as well as their children. It could be the comforting feeling of finally being “one of the crowd”, with nothing in the appearance or dress which distinguishes him/her from the Indian crowd (185); so that it is once again all about the importance of feeling part of a community and rediscovering an emotional attachment to the homeland, in spite of the divergences that returnees may experience in cities and regions that they abandoned when they were children or that they have never visited, as in the case of the second generation. Indeed, according to Srinivasan, “return fulfils what is, in some cases, a lifelong desire to recover, revisit, and re-inhabit the past, and yet, it is a moving horizon, an impossible aspiration, which, when attempted, never entirely lives up to its promise” (Srinivasan 2015: 310). From this perspective, migrants can be compared to pilgrims who wish to reach a sacred place following a sort of atavistic desire; indeed, their relationship with the ancestral homelands is very similar to the spiritual connection which links a mystic traveller to his destination thanks to the intimate and personal linkage which characterizes this kind of relationships.

Familial and economic motivations can push migrants to come back in order to find their proper home, although the current tendency to embrace “homelessness” imposed by globalization seems to be in contrast with this constant search for homeland. This paradox is symptomatic of the psychological need, typical of some people who are part of a place but who are not accepted in that place, to find a geographical and emotional area wherein to feel at home. The ancestral homeland of their ancestors is the best place in this sense, even though they have never been there. Therefore, it is possible to theorize the creation of a “homeland myth”, a sort of utopia which helps to tolerate the problems and injustices of the globalized world. It is because of this myth that migrants constantly maintain a strong kinship with their homeland. Mishra explains this phenomenon highlighting that the postcolonial condition makes recognition impossible for migrant people, who see the diasporic space as “a contradictory, often racist and contaminated space” (Mishra 2007: 187). It is to fight the difficulties of living abroad that they tend to replace the ugliness and the problems of their homeland by the idea of a comforting land, without considering if they can fit into it again.

Nonetheless, there are several reasons to decide to come back: on the one hand, for the desire to show the success achieved abroad or, on the other hand, to escape from a failure; other reasons are holidays, homesickness, tourism, or for the need of a temporary or definitive turning point; one can also be forced to return. All these global movements and the human stories behind them are forms of transnationalism which “have nothing to do with the desire to find somewhere incontrovertible on which to ground identity” (Bender, Winer 2001: 335), which means that migrants’ movements are not aimed at creating stable identities, but they aspire to find a sense of belonging which distinguishes migrants from tourists. From this perspective, migrants are itinerant people who move because they have been pushed to move after being uprooted from their homeland by the powerful and seductive force of the “centre”. The first generation especially experienced this situation, and as a consequence, they wish to maintain a closer relationship with their country of origin through moments of “recreational transnationalism” (Carling, Bivand Erdal 2014: 7). The second generation has, instead, a different approach to the topic of return, as they want to experience life in a completely foreign country in order to avoid that sense of unbelonging and discrimination whom they are victim in the UK. This is possible by following an imagined, nostalgic ethnic affinity with the ancient homeland which is called “forged transnationality” (Tsuda 2009: 25) and which implies the imagination of homelands from afar. Hence, the problem is to observe where migrants feel at home and where and whether they can experience that sense of belonging which leads them to remain in a place and to escape from the frustration of wandering. Nonetheless, one of the possible accidents of the return experience is the social exclusion because returnees are often perceived as foreigners in their own homeland. Actually, their social integration in the ancestral country can be ostracised by their previous life experience abroad, even though homecomings have also positive aspects since this phenomenon of “dediasporization” (Markowitz-Anders, Stefansson 2004: 4) also brings new habits and resources which can be exploited in the returnees’ homeland. In this light, return migration can be seen as a concrete opportunity, which is far from the illusory dream to find a welcoming land frozen in time and a community fully willing to welcome

returnees.

Return movements can be, therefore, quite ambiguous phenomena, torn between the dreams and the nostalgia of home and a sense of loss and delusion for the crashed expectations; nevertheless, the constructive rising and fruitful progress of the former colonies – and especially of India – is an incontrovertible fact (Kapur 2012: 9) which has pushed Indian people to come back. Amit Chaudhuri narrates his personal experience of returnee to Calcutta, explaining his reasons for returning home:

I had several reasons for coming back; some of them emerged without warning in the late nineties, and other had been with me for as long as I could remember. For instance, homesickness. I couldn't recall a time when I hadn't been homesick and lonely in England. [...] To be in India was to be reborn, to experience sunlight, stillness, birdcall, morning, evening, for a limited duration only, to realise it was possible to revisit some of the first experiences of your life as if they were new. [...] I suppose what I mean is – India, for whatever reason, is synonymous to me with life; and you don't love life by weighing its advantages. (Chaudhuri 2013: 71-72)

Chaudhuri here depicts a traditional returnee, who sees the ancestral homeland as the destination and the realization of his dreams of belonging, far from the inhospitable England. The return journey is the result of a process of research, according to which migrants understand that there are no better places in the world, and this heart's choice does not take into consideration the possible disadvantages. This permanent linkage with homeland reflects also a new relation with the Indian city, a modern city as Chaudhuri describes it, even if not in the canonical meaning which stands for “electronic lights, telephone, cars”. Indeed, according to him, “True modernity was born with the aura of inherited decay and life” (75) which means that the Indian city is, therefore, shaped by a “modern” decay which is not linked to a stereotyped idea of timelessness, but it is a sort of rebirth for the city itself and its inhabitants. Moreover, as Srinivasan points out,

If one of New India's promises to its diaspora is that its cities are now legibly “global”—i.e., spaces of efficient capital accumulation, which are hospitable to a

range of cosmopolitan performances—then, certainly, a poignant test of that globality is whether or not the diasporic subject in the West, once referred to as a “brain-drainer,” is able to return and make himself at home in the Indian city. (Srinivasan 2015: 314)

From this perspective, the challenge of return has been seriously taken into consideration by Indian cities, which have tried to organize a warm welcome to their returnees, even though with fleeting chariots. Indeed, “the new Indian city can thus be said to emerge from the equation of the diasporic returnee’s re-encounter with home [...] and the nation’s present relationship to its history and the world” (315), and the result of this combination is an ambiguous place, where the linkages between space and time have been subverted. The main problem is that homeland often asks the returnees for authenticity, that is to prove their real Indianness, and this could be a destabilizing situation for them. The solution is to recognize the returnees’ peculiar position of repatriated who do not belong to any particular social strata and who, for this reason, can mediate between their double identity and the homeland’s society in order to disrupt and re-engage relations in the “decadent” self-alienating city.

The decision to come back is taken also because of the decay of British society in the last years (Chaudhuri 2013: 96); however, this decay is quite different from the Indian one, since it has no mystery or originality. Therefore, although India is not the kind of nation which welcomes its returning sons emotionally and with open arms (147), the condition of life in the UK and the adamant idea of homeland are persuasive elements to decide to return, and this is true for both Indian and Caribbean migrants.

Also for Caribbean people the concept of “home” can be classified as both a symbol of place and belonging and a mechanism of social control. It can be an inherited memory or an imagined place – as it is for the second generation -, as well as a concrete destination – as for the first generation -; nevertheless, it is sure that every diasporic community wishes to return to its homeland, or at least to its dream of homeland. Therefore, return migration is a common phenomenon also in the Caribbean area (Chamberlain 1998: 25): migrants regularly return for restricted periods, and even though they usually do not return permanently, they

try to maintain their relationships with their homeland (202). In this light, also the governments of the Caribbean states developed after the end of colonialism have always encouraged the homecoming of migrants, especially Jamaica (Goulbourne 1999: 158). However, the dream of return is more widespread among the first generation of Caribbean migrants than among the second generation, and this due to the fact that second-generation migrants are more accepted in the UK than their parents, also thanks to the huge number of mixed marriages. Furthermore, old migrants of the first generation decide to come back also because they wish to return their ashes to their homeland (Percival 2013: 9), while the second generation is pushed by a spirit of adventure or because they are in their mid-career or mid-life phases and they are looking for a change (Conway, Potter 2009: 4). This peculiar situation is the reason why Caribbean return migration is characterised by the definitive return of pensioners and the provisional return of young people who wish to maintain and celebrate their parents' heritage, but without undermining their English habits.

Hence first-generation migrants wish to come back to their Caribbean origins when they retire, even though the return is not always easy as they often discover that they behave in a different way from those who have always lived in the Caribbean islands, and in ways that are peculiarly "English". Moreover,

the situation is not helped by the fact that the returnee frequently decides to re-settle in an area some distance from where they had close family connections, thereby realising another aspect of the Caribbean migrant's dreams, that is, self-improvement defined in terms of physical relocation. (Goulbourne 1999: 164)

Therefore, one of the most important aspects of their return is the intention to demonstrate that their experiences in the UK changed in a positive way their personalities and their fortunes, and that they improved in many different ways.

This is the goal which supports them during their difficult years in Britain, and which feeds the "myth of return" or "ideology of return" (Conway, Potter, Phillips 2005: 6), according to which homeland is the place associated with comfort, kinship, food, and abundance: migrants decide to come back by considering this peculiar image of homeland. However, when they arrive they often find problems

to which first and second-generation migrants respond differently according to their different pasts and transnational networks. If, in fact, on the one hand the hardship of living abroad makes homeland a better place where they think they will never be considered as inferior or different (142), on the other hand they can also feel disappointed with their decision to come back because Caribbean and English systems are very different, and their British experience is sometimes underestimated at “home”. Moreover, they may have problems also in (re)constructing a real Caribbean identity, thus realizing that the “myth of homeland” which pushed them to return is often an imaginary force constructed by their expectations about it.

This is the situation of returnees according to the recent studies in migration and sociology; however, the current scholars’ interest towards the blurring of borders and their liminality, as well as towards the aspects of mobility and dwelling, has complicated the notion of return movements, which are no more seen as easy phenomena that simply bring uprooted people back to their familiar and sociocultural habitat (Markowitz-Anders, Stefansson 2004: 8). Return is not a stable process, but a complex and ambiguous operation, thus it cannot be examined following only the traditional parameters of migration and global studies. It is for this reason that my intention is to complicate this paradigm by suggesting the existence of another migrant phenomenon, that is reverse migration.

Although *return* and *reverse* have often been used as synonyms in describing returnees’ flows to home, my suggestion is to distinguish them into two different processes: I will use the term *return* to depict the movements of migrant and diasporic people of first and second generation from the UK towards homeland, while the concept of *reverse* will be used to highlight the travels of English people from the UK to the former colonies. This last term takes cue from the notion of “reverse colonization” which characterized the relationship between the first generation of migrants and England after World War II. Looker explains the origin of this phenomenon through “the nature of the [English] city and its people to relegate the West Indians to an alien otherness, or even to a kind of invisibility” (Looker 1996: 66); consequently, the only way they had to fight this

discrimination was to appropriate the English spaces in order to feel at home in the UK, also by importing their own habits and hijacking English cities. The final act of this peculiar process of integration is a real colonization in reverse which can be compared to European colonialism until World War II: immigrants take on the English spaces and cities by making them their imaginatively and social reality. In this light, reverse colonization is the equivalent, and at the same time, the opposed process of the act of colonialism, as well as reverse migration is the equivalent and the opposite of the migrant phenomenon. Indeed, although the *roots* of these different kinds of diasporic people are quite opposite, their *routes* and trajectories are rather the same, despite the fact that for South Asian and Caribbean migrants the return journey means to come home, while for English travellers the reverse journey is to leave home and settle in a new space. My purpose is to put at the same bracket these contrasting phenomena because, in spite of their differences, they share the same background, and they are the result of the same global processes which characterized the last two decades.

European countries had, in fact, to deal with the twisting of globalization and the turn upside down of the ancient world-system just like formerly colonised areas. The pluralization of the concepts of centre and periphery, as well as the recent increasing instability of the migration process are actually leading to a disappearance of these notions as we know them, so that nowadays it is possible to observe migrants' journeys home and, at the same time, English displacement to the former empire's zones. The spatial turn in both sociological and literary fields has contributed to this process as well by supporting the abandonment of the old notions of boundaries by giving a new and central role to space; the current innovative approach to the concept of space helps, in fact, to go beyond and minimize the barriers of time and historiography which have put Europe and the western world at the centre of the global social-political system.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of reverse migration implicates a peculiar kind of emotional involvement and the migrants' encounter with a particular reality; it does not ask for authenticity because the reverse migrant is a sort of first "pioneer" who moves from the West to the former colonies for the first time. And, even though many European people had already travelled from Europe to India

during the higher expansion of the British Empire in the XVIII and XIX centuries, the situation of reverse migrants is totally different since it is comparable to that of real migrants who move for necessity finding many difficulties and problems.

Even though the motivations for coming back or traveling towards the periphery are numerous and these are quite evident phenomena, scholars and literary critics have relatively ignored them, especially in relation to the representation and narration of postcolonial literature.

The present dissertation wishes to fill this gap starting from the study of the sociological aspects of this widespread phenomenology in order to analyse their literary representation. In particular, by examining the corpus of novels, it seems that the desire of homecoming affects more South Asian migrants than Caribbean people, and that first and second-generation migrants follow different reasons to decide to return to their forefathers' homeland, as sociology has already demonstrated. Hence, I will go in depth into these different motivations from a literary perspective by adapting a typical sociological approach, the comparative method (Gold, Nawyn 2013: 553), to postcolonial literature which has depicted the lives and experiences of return migrants, considering the positive and negative characteristics of this kind of migration. So, both the celebration and the disillusionment of the return experience are well portrayed in South Asian and Caribbean novels, from the first examples given by V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1967) and Sam Selvon's *Moses Migrating* (1983), or *A State of Indipendence* (1986) by Caryl Phillips and *The Sleepless Summer* by Ferdinand Dennis (1989), to the more recent *Looking for Maya* by Arinta Srivastava (1999), Amit Chaudhuri's *A New World* (2000), Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (2000), Tariq Mehmood's *While there is Light* (2003), *Maps for Lost Lovers* by Nadeem Aslam (2004), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), *Indian Takeaway* by Hardeep Kholi (2008), and *Return to India* by Shoba Narayan (2012).

Moreover, literature has highlighted also the motivations of English people who have decided to move to the former colonies, especially to India. A new scenario of investigation of the current migration flows is offered by the narration of three instances of reverse journey which have been caused by reasons of retirement, work, or love. From this perspective, the examples given by Deborah Moggach's

These Foolish Things (2004), Geoff Dyer's *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi* (2010) and Heather Saville Gupta's *Becoming Mrs Kumar* (2013) are central, since they have been written by three English authors who understood the impact of these phenomena also on the field of English literature. This situation would lead to an enlargement of the frame of postcolonial English literature and, in my opinion, it demonstrates that the partition between canonical English and postcolonial works could be outmoded, also because the experiences of the current reverse migrants are not so distant from those of the returnees of first and second generation. I will, in fact, compare different groups, places, times, novelists, and works also to examine how the combinations and intersections among global structures, cultures and institutions can produce specific reactions on the current society and the cultural system, starting from the literary production.

2. The return migration of the first generation: an overview on Caribbean and South Asian migrant identities

One of the most interesting issues of the literary depiction of first-generation return migration is the prevalence of Caribbean accounts over South Asian narrations. In particular, it seems that Caribbean migrants have been feeling the bondage with their ancestral homelands, and therefore homesickness, since the very beginning of migration era, that is since the 1950s. Writers such as Sam Selvon, V. S. Naipaul, Ferdinand Dennis, and Caryl Phillips have portrayed the return of characters who had moved to the UK with the first wave of migration in novels such as *The Mimic Men* (1967), *Moses Migrating* (1983), *The Sleepless Summer* (1989), and *A State of Independence* (1986). The first significant portrayals of return to India, instead, can be dated only to the end of the 1980s. This can be explained by considering that the Indian liberalizing economic reforms started only in 1991, giving birth to the so-called “New India” (Srinivasan 2015: 309), a sort of new state which appealed to its migrant citizens more than it did in the past. The new favourable economic conditions actually pushed the first generation of NRI² to return, while at the same time also the sense of loneliness and nostalgia for home, underlined in the novels, took an important part in this process. Hence, the Indian novelists Kiran Desai, Shoba Narayan, Amit Chaudhuri, and the Pakistani Aslam Nadeem describe migrants’ decisions to return as related to these economic and sentimental reasons, even though (much like their Caribbean colleagues) they also insist on the unsuitability and cultural misunderstanding affecting post World War II multicultural societies in the West. It is still interesting to note, however, that in South Asian authors this kind of discomfort and the consequent desire to return home are perceived and portrayed in books written in the 2000s and looking back to the period between the end of the 1980s and mid-1990s. The first South Asian descriptions of the phenomenon

² The acronym NRI stands for Non Resident Indians, and it is commonly used to designate all Indian citizens who live abroad.

of return migration start, therefore, with works which look backwards to the 1980s and consider the implications of this kind of migration also on the present South Asian identity: Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), Narayan's *Return to India: an immigrant memoir* (2012), Chaudhuri's *A New World* (2000), and Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) actually narrate the diasporic experience and the desire to come back of South Asian migrants who had originally moved to the western world to study or find a job and now recall their past and its consequences on their identities.

The temporal question is quite significant because, although South Asian and Caribbean migrations are simultaneous phenomena which can be both dated back to the 1950s and both these two migrant groups had to suffer the same problems and discomforts, it seems that the dream of homecoming has always been more developed in Caribbean people than in their Indian counterparts, so that imperatives of "return" have characterized the South Asian diaspora only after many years. The above mentioned economical aspect is

only half the story in this latest manifestation of what Aihwa Ong has termed "flexible citizenship," as a sense of familial duty, broadly defined, undergirded the return journeys of all of those who heard India calling, both those raised in diaspora, like Rana Dasgupta, and those who spent their formative years in India, like Amit Chaudhuri. (Srinivasan 2015: 312-313)

The fact that a concrete return movement has taken place so late for South Asian people may demonstrate that Indian and Pakistani migrants' integration in the western societies has been more fruitful than the Caribbean one. Hence, it is not possible to talk about return migration without taking into consideration the different characteristics of the Caribbean and South Asian "settlement" described in the selected texts.

In the next paragraphs, I will analyse the first-generation return starting from the eldest examples given by the Caribbean authors, to the most recent instances which narrate the South Asian experience. In particular, I will examine the features of migrants' life inside their transnational communities and how these kinds of kinships have affected their identity formation, as well as their

relationship with the contemporary notions of space, home, homeland, and the depictions and the intrinsic significance of the western, Caribbean, and Indian cities involved in these migrant processes, in order to understand how all these issues have affected the characteristics of the first generation's return to home.

2.1 Caribbean and South Asian migration of the first generation: the creation of new communities and transnational identities

As already explained in the previous chapter, transnational identities are composite and contradictory issues, and this is also related to a disenchantment with the concept of nation-state in the period of decolonization and to the migrants' tendency to congregate in, and address their loyalty to, other kinds of social groups. It is for these reasons that migrants started to feel solidarity with their co-ethnics abroad since the first migrant flows in the 1950s. The colonial notion of national belonging was replaced in the postcolonial context by concrete constructs with the same value, such as the contemporary cosmopolitan transnational communities. However, also the recent concept of cosmopolitanism, in spite of its ability to cross cultural boundaries and build multiple or hybrid identities, still presents some problems, especially concerning the question of the real value of multiculturalism. In this light, transnationalism still appears "as a revalorization of exclusionary ethnic identity, and transnational communities take on the form of exile diasporas, determined to establish their own nation-states" (Castles 2002: 1158). Hence, transnational communities have led to contradictory and fluctuating identities which make migrants feel constantly disoriented because of their need to find a balance among their participation in host societies, their relationships with homelands, and their links to people of the same community. The situation is even more complicated by the ambivalent value of the notion of community, especially when it is defined as a cross-cultural group in which migrants and "proper" citizens live together in a heterogenous and hybrid space, a mobile world of open societies and communities, in which these same characteristics should not be seen as threatening, but as highly desirable. So, in

this context, the notion of loyalty to one single place cannot be taken into consideration, as it is an icon of old-style nationalism that has little relevance for migrants in such a mobile world (Castles 2002: 1159).

For those who had arrived in England from the former colonies to work or study in the prestigious English universities, integration in this kind of multicultural society – hybrid only in appearance – has been part of a hard process which has involved a double acceptance. Migrants, in fact, had to enter both the city and the university or work environment, trying to be accepted in both these awkward ecosystems without altering their balances. Scholars and sociologists of migration in the late XX century have proposed two different models of migrant experience in order to explain the different characteristics and natures of this phenomenon. In particular, they have defined “the settler model, according to which immigrants gradually integrated into economic and social relations, re-united or formed families and eventually became assimilated into the host society (sometimes over two or three generations)”; and “the temporary migration model, according to which migrant workers stayed in the host country for a limited period, and maintained their affiliation with their country of origin” (1143). These same models can be spotted also in literature and, as far as the Caribbean scenario is concerned, the former model is well described in Sam Selvon’s *Moses Migrating* and Caryl Phillips’s *A State of Independence*, while V.S Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* and *The Sleepless Summer* by Ferdinand Dennis are examples of the latter.

Selvon and Phillips’s works exemplify settler migration because their main characters, Moses Aloetta e Bertram Francis, embody those migrants who thought they had the right to become part of the English society after a period of hard work and loyalty to the English mother-country, without realising that the very idea of “loyalty” to a nation is heavily called into question in a multicultural society like the British one. As Appadurai points out, “While nations might continue to exist, the steady erosion of the capabilities of the nation-state to monopolize loyalty will encourage the spread of national forms that are largely divorced from territorial states” (Appadurai 1996: 169). In this way, “diasporic diversity actually puts loyalty to a nonterritorial transnation first” (173), which means that, in a transnational context, the relevance of transnational communities

is put above all other kind of territorial social constructions. On the other hand, Ralph Singh and Colin Morgan, the protagonists of Naipaul and Dennis's novels, are examples of a temporary migration, which cannot really allow them to become integrated into the English system. Hence, they always feel uncomfortable in their host country and aspire returning home, even though this situation is not always a prelude for a happy homecoming.

2.1.1 The temporary migration model: identity formation and transnational community in the provisional world of Naipaul and Dennis

In Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, the first impact of the protagonist, Ralph Singh, with the new English environment is characterized by a sense of loneliness and excessive secrecy, and the melting pot of different diasporic people in Mr. Shylock's boarding house increases Ralph's sense of displacement, rather than comforting him. His gaze turns from the perfection of snow which covers the streets of London to the "empty room with the mattress on the floor, [...] I felt all the magic of the city go away and had an intimation of the forlornness of the city and of the people who lived in it" (Naipaul 1969: 7). The coexistence of a variety of people from different parts of the world causes problems and issues, rather than a sense of human empathy and, as a result, Ralph feels alone in his empty room in London, thus reflecting the general concerns about multiculturalism typical of that time and of the next decays as well.

The Trinidadian Ralph, the Maltese housekeeper Lien, the girl from Kenia, the smiling Burmese student, the Jewish youth, the Moroccan man, and the young Cockney are part of the multicultural community of the crumbling boarding house of Mr. Shylock, a sort of microcosm which reproduces the same incongruent set of diverse stories of the London migrant scenario. All these people, who come from different geographical areas, live together, but they cannot really communicate; they have "no guide. There was no one to link my present with my past, no one to note my consistencies or inconsistencies" (20). As mimic men, they wear a mask trying to correspond to the image that English people have

about them, and adapting their identities to a sort of pre-imposed role which derives from the colonial legacy. After all, Naipaul's scepticism about the possibility of establishing strong interracial bonds is a leitmotif in his literary production, so that Eugene Goodheart's description of Naipaul as a writer possessing "prejudice" within "clear-sightedness" seems closer to the point. Indeed, the Trinidadian author often includes in his novels' descriptions his previously formed opinions, what Goodheart calls the "prejudices" of Naipaul's "incurable subjectivity" and temperament (Goodheart 1983: 245-246). In this light, it seems that the need to demonstrate his own colonial formation prevails on Naipaul's desire to provide a firm relation to his homeland, or even to his adoptive country and, as a consequence, Naipaul often shows a sort of snobbery in relation to other people, in particular to those of his same "social" and "racial" group (Greenberg 2000: 215). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to consider also that identifying an unambiguous state of belonging for this Indo-Trinidadian writer is not an easy matter. His research for identity is complicated by his Indian origins and it passes through an accurate examination of his complex personal experiences, thus exploiting his own assumption according to which "the Negro problem lies not simply in the attitude of others to the Negro, but in the Negro's attitude to himself" (Naipaul *The Middle Passage* 2001: 78). This ambivalent situation towards his own roots is reflected also in his characterization of *The Mimic Men's* protagonist: Ralph's hybridization due to his in-between condition of both aspirant Englishman and actual Indo-Trinidadian man is a form of impurity, a threat that speeds his refusal to belong to his homeland Isabella because, for him, a hybrid identity lacks authenticity (Phukan 2008: 142). The question is further complicated by his refusal of being part of any kind of community even in London. This double rejection mirrors Ralph's claim for the migrants' right to "self-fashion" (Dhareshwar 1989: 83), that is to personally shape their own identity by refusing the influences of both the colonial past represented by the homeland, and their current "home", that is the former mother-country, which keeps on imposing its own values and rules on those colonized people who decided to live there.

However, Ralph's actual impossibility to achieve his own self-fashioning by

overcoming these same aftermaths – especially the mental and educational residues of colonialism – pushes him towards a need for self-knowledge which is improperly satisfied through an inescapable inconsistency and egoism: “It was up to me to choose my character, and I chose the character that was easiest and most attractive. I was the dandy, the extravagant colonial, indifferent to scholarship” (Naipaul 1969: 20). This condition of mimic man who tries to behave following the stereotypes of the “extravagant colonial”, rather than to fight to establish the real nature of his identity, just highlights Ralph’s confused sense of individualism which overcomes the sense of community: “I doubt whether any action, above a certain level, is ever wholly arbitrary or whimsical or dishonest. I question now whether the personality is manufactured by the vision of others. The personality hangs together. It is one and indivisible” (183). Ralph’s strong awareness according to which his personality is “one and invisible” emphasises the fact that any kind of community, neither in the Caribbean nor in England, could influence or change him and what he is, except himself. As a result, the role of migrant community loses its influence here, since Naipaul himself seems quite sceptic about it.

The same impossibility to construct a real transnational community in the host country is portrayed also in *The Sleepless Summer* by Ferdinand Dennis, especially in the description of the colourful building where the protagonist, Colin Morgan, lives. It is the summer of 1976, and the block is inhabited exclusively by Caribbean people of different nationalities who share the same aura of disillusion and failure: for instance, Marva Baptiste and Mrs. Simms are two St. Lucian women who arrived in Britain full of expectations and enthusiasm, but whose constructive and positive personalities had to deal with the inevitable negative incidents of the migrant experience. Indeed, when Marva had just arrived from St. Lucia she “had the innocent enthusiasms of a new arrival. She used to laugh a lot and exude a simple gaiety”, but then “the laughter, and the singing, and the gaiety stopped. Marva Baptiste slowly, ineluctably, metamorphosed into a scowling, sullen, taciturn woman” (Dennis 1989: 27). The same thing happened to Mrs. Simms: “there was about her an air of profound melancholia, as if she was a person for whom life is one unending series of incomprehensible disappointments.

[...] It was just that she seemed such an unhappy person” (27-28). The two women’s disappointments can be related to the trauma of migration, and to the consequent difficulties and troubles of migrants in a foreign country. After all, “the history of diaspora is a history of trauma which is then written out as impossible mourning” (Mishra 2007: 114), and this condition links every kind of diasporic experience, from the Caribbean to the Indian one. Trauma is a condition of disjunction, separation, and departure that inevitably affects migrant and diasporic journeys, and reporting it is the only tool these people have, in order to exorcize this dramatic event.

In *The Sleepless Summer*, this miserable condition is further depicted by the description of the poverty and the misery of migrants’ houses. In Colin’s flat, the second-hand furniture covered in plastic clothes leaves, however, a place of honour to a tourist map of Jamaica, where “the island was outlined in gold on a black velvet background. Names of major towns and the capital were inscribed in red. A visiting relative had brought it for the house, and Mother had decided that it deserved pride of place” (Dennis 1989: 29). The kinship with their Jamaican roots has, therefore, a relevant place in Colin’s family’s thoughts, although James Procter (2008) has described Dennis as an author ultimately more concerned with *routes* than *roots*, as a result of his personal Caribbean background and the mongrel nature of Caribbean identities. Actually, in *The Sleepless Summer*, he connects different kinds of journeys to the main character’s personal wanderings: Colin’s “nomadic” experience in London, both as a Jamaican immigrant and as a young man who roams the streets of the city with his friends in order to appropriate them, is inevitably influenced by the colonial heritage of his first route from Jamaica to the UK and the consequent migrant experience, as well as by his African roots, and his ancestral route from Africa to the Caribbean. He comes from a family which “entirely seem to have migrated to one place or another” (Dennis 1989: 32), and this sense of up-rootedness, along with the gloominess and impatience of both his boyhood and his migrant condition, flow into his active participation in a project for the migrants’ return to Africa, called the “Black House” and organized by a group of Caribbean young men. This is actually the point of intersection between routes and roots in Colin’s personal voyage: this

group seems to be the ideal point of arrival of his journeys because it apparently answers all his questions about both his ancestral roots and his condition of diasporic person, thus solving his anxieties. In this light, the Black House serves as the perfect transnational community, in which black people from different countries share a common sense of belonging thanks to their ancestral African past. However, this cannot be the only point of contact among diasporic people who desire to understand, and then to escape, from the loneliness of their condition, and this is the reason why the Black House project is bound to fail.

From this perspective, *The Mimic Men* and *The Sleepless Summer* certainly share the same problem, that is how to conciliate the topic of XX century-migration to England with the composite nature of the Caribbean colonial past. In both novels, the protagonists' relationships with England and the Caribbean, as well as their ideas of home and homeland, are complicated by the mongrel nature of their countries of origin, and especially by the slavery past of their Caribbean regions.

In *The Mimic Men*, Naipaul's experience as an Indo-Trinidadian diasporic man who still carries his colonial legacy can be seen as the source of the rage that permeates Ralph's personality. According to Greenberg, this rage is pointed towards "blacks who have been majority and have persecuted Indians (and Chinese) in Africa and Indies", but also towards "the British from whose imperial culture and canonical literature Naipaul feels excluded, despite his Oxford scholarship and education", and the literary work that "he was expected to produce as an intellectual of color" (Greenberg 2000: 219). Naipaul's attitude – and also Ralph's behaviour – is, therefore, particularly attuned to ruin, decay, and failure because of his mongrel origins which left him with too strong an historical sensibility, and with the impression that he will never be accepted in any community, in spite of all his efforts. The effects for this personal confusion can be traced in the already supposed impossibility to accept any form of personal hybridity, as it is reflected in *The Mimic Men*, in the London scenario of the first wave of migration.

After World War II, in fact, despite the beginning of a new postcolonial and postmodern era which should have implied a deeper connection among different

areas of the world, the real value of a multicultural approach to the new global dynamics has been put under judgement, and the prejudices – which one may consider a feature of the colonial past only – have affected also the new decolonized postcolonial system. The English society, therefore, has deprived migrants of the possibility to express their hybrid identity, so that diasporic people like Ralph and Colin have to question their familial heritage by constructing new identities. For Singh, this means changing his name from Ranjit Kripalsingh to the more neutral Ralph Singh in an attempt to mitigate his identity confusion even in Isabella, his land of origin:

My reaction to my incompetence and inadequacy had been not to simplify but to complicate. For instance, I gave my-self a new name. We were Singhs. My father's father's name was Kripal. My father, for purposes of official identification, necessary in that new world he adorned with his aboriginal costume, ran these names together to give himself the surname of Kripalsingh. My own name was Ranjit; and my birth certificate said I was Ranjit Kripalsingh. That gave me two names. [...] I broke Kripalsingh into two, correctly reviving an ancient fracture, as I felt; gave myself the further name of Ralph; and signed myself R. R. K. Singh. At school I was known as Ralph Singh. [...] The truth came out when we were preparing to leave elementary school [...] "Ranjit is my secret name," I said. "It is a custom among Hindus of certain castes. This secret name is my real name but it ought not to be used in public" [...] Such was the explanation I managed [...]. (Naipaul 1969: 93-94)

Ralph splits his name "to revive an ancient fracture", as if he wished to pay homage to his father's departure from India, although the final result is quite the opposite since, in this way, he simply rejects his Indian origins and the name his father gave him, with a clear intention of discarding his real identity. His personal fragmentation recalls the interracial nature of Isabella, his Caribbean homeland:

We went through purely mulatto villages where the people were a baked copper colour, much disfigured by disease. They had big light eyes and kinky red hair. My father described them as Spaniards [...] They permitted no Negroes to settle among them [...] We drove through Carib areas where the people were more Negro than Carib. Ex-slaves, fleeing the plantations, had settled here and intermarried with the

very people who [had been] their great tormentors. (121)

Isabella is described as a conglomeration of different ethnicities; Naipaul's use of boyhood candour and innocence to convey these racial strains is an attempt to mitigate the perception of Isabella's racial problems, even though racial complications are represented also in Ralph's first community of belonging, that is his group of friends. In particular, the racial tensions typical of the Caribbean mongrel society are addressed through the peculiar friendship between the descendent of an aristocratic white family, Deschampsneufs, and "the blackest boy in the school" (136), Eden. Their kinship is based on the fact that the latter is the buffoon of the former, in an unbalanced relationship which recalls the colonial relations of power between black and white people. In fact, Deschampsneufs acts as a benevolent master, whose behaviour can be seen as another heritage of the past influence of his family:

Much was forgiven Deschampsneufs because from the security of his aristocracy he mixed easily with the poorest and crudest boys; [...] He loved, for instance, to put a price on a boy [...] Only he would have been allowed to say, of a boy he didn't like, 'He wouldn't fetch five dollars.' Outrageousness of this sort was required of him. (137)

The racist Caribbean melting-pot is exemplified also by Ralph's friendship with Browne. Their relationship embodies another way for Ralph to learn about slave history, although dealing with the miserable story of poor blacks in the Caribbean is too painful for him. Browne makes him feel like "we walked in a garden of hell, trees, some still without popular names, whose seeds had sometimes been brought to our island in the intestines of slaves" (147). This bitter-sweet feeling makes Singh react in an opposed and quite coward way, so that he behaves with a sort of superiority towards Browne without considering that, because of the racial fragmentation, they all belong to the same "disorder", from which Ralph tries to escape through education and writing. In other words, his "racist" behaviour is another way to deny his own colonial roots. Indeed, also in London, he initially reiterates his aspiration of withdrawing his identity by playing the character of the

charming exotic dandy, thus perseverating in his personal masquerade which hides a deep sense of inadequacy and frustration. Hence, Ralph tries to make order in his life escaping from his Indo-Caribbean origins and from a colonial habitat where everything is confusion and nonsense, even though he will then return to Isabella in order to try to come to terms with his personal chaos.

In *The Sleepless Summer*, Colin has to deal with his hybrid origins as well. He was born in Jamaica and then migrated to England with his family when he was just a child. He has few memories of his childhood in the Caribbean, and this situation complicates his perception of himself, both as a Jamaican and an Englishman, as pointed out by Mr. Charles, an old Jamaican tenant who lives in his same building:

“What you know ‘bout Jamaica, Colin? You is a little Englishman.” He released a rich, ironical laughter. Had someone else said this I might have taken offence. For to be called an Englishman by a Jamaican was, I knew, a form of ridicule, as though the person so addressed was seeking the impossible. But Mr. Charles was my favourite tenant. [...] “I was born in Jamaica,” I reminded him. “Yes, me know. But you come here so young you can’t know much ‘bout it.” “I know a little. Maybe I’ll go back one day.” (Dennis 1989: 35-36)

The typical diasporic identity conflict is represented in Colin’s life since, despite having been in London for most of his life, he and his schoolmates feel a sort of attraction to their homeland, the place where they were born: “But it was our Caribbean past that dominated most of our conversations. They were littered with allusions to, and anecdotes about, the lands of our birth” (38). Their ancestral linkage to their homeland pushes them to recreate an actual Caribbean transnational community in London, that is a group of diasporic people with a strong connection to their origins; this link can be formed even without a long and direct experience of homeland, like in Colin’s case, because it implies the creation of a spatial continuum in which cultural peculiarities can pass from England to the Caribbean, and vice versa, linking the “centre” of the world to its “periphery”. This situation obviously arouses Colin’s desire to go back to Jamaica, or at least to look for a more congenial environment in London, and the Black House seems to

answer to this need, since this former hostel for homeless black teenagers will soon be converted into a cultural centre for black activists – at least in the political intentions of the two Caribbean migrants Ziggy and Max.

This sort of black commune is an attempt to deal with the problems of the Black British experience, a place where being accepted despite the white supremacy. Indeed, a piece of wood hanged above the fireplace says: “This house, built by the whiteman, is now a spiritual sanctuary for the blackman against the iniquities of white mankind” (63) thus symbolizing the boys’ deep perception of the iniquities suffered by black people. This awareness goes beyond their lives and personal stories since it can be connected to the era of slavery and the first African deportation to the New World. In fact, Ziggy asks Colin: “Where are you from before you were born?” (65), a specious question which implies an historic consciousness of their Blackness which Colin does not have or feel:

“Oh, I get you now. I suppose I came from Africa.”

“You suppose.”

“All right, I know we came from Africa. But that was centuries ago.”

“The past is in the present. It never dies,” he said, a note of irritation in his voice.

“What colours do you dream in? [...] we’ve got to know what we are. And we must start with the labels first. To do that we must discard, reject those imposed on us. They insult us and deny our essential beings. Every time we use their labels we’re locking out our spirit, weakening ourselves. We’ve been doing it for so long we don’t even know it. Get me? We’ve become the labels, their creations. [...] We have to start seeing ourselves as black, and all black people come from Africa.” (66-67)

If on the one hand Ziggy seems to own a strong awareness about where he belongs to, Colin’s consciousness about his ancestral roots or identity is not so solid, so he can just see the concrete and material aspects of an African or a Jamaican identity, that is food or clothes: “But we’re not Africans,” I said. “I live next door to an African family. They eat different food, dress differently, speak different even. So you’re not an African. I know” (67). He is completely unaware of the movement of Pan-Africanism from which Ziggy’s assumptions come, although he perceives his main points as something that can fill his sense of

loneliness and fulfil his desire to be part of a social group. After all, Dennis has never been completely persuaded by the usefulness of these political movements (Gunning 2010: 25) as an answer to blacks' ancestral need of belonging. The creation of his Black House and its subsequent failure seem to confirm this position, in spite of Colin's initial enthusiasm for the black cause after his encounter with Ziggy and Max: "I did not feel excluded. In my mind's eye I saw an open door to that mysterious place. I heard Max saying come with us, join us, be one with us; this is where you belong" (Dennis 1989: 69). From this perspective, the central function of the Black House would be to give fixed points to the black transnational community in London, as well as to make migrants feel part of it, thus finding an identity. However, achieving such a goal is not easy. As Gunning claims: "For Dennis, the central burden under which Afro-Caribbeans and Black Britons suffer is the sense of a divided self, brought about by their unique historical experience" (Gunning 2010: 25), and this is quite a thorny question for all black people in Britain, since this burden will only be removed when they will be able to free themselves from the ghosts of the colonial past and to discover their individuality. Black people engagement with, and understanding of, history is fundamental in this context, although "the very possibility of a coherent subject position in the post-slavery era Caribbean is inextricably complicated by this troubled history" (26). The only way to escape from this impasse is trying to come to terms with the Afro-Caribbean historical archive by avoiding insisting on Manichean oppositions, like the black/white dichotomy. Hence, in order to solve their identity problems, black youngsters just have to understand this bind and come to terms with it, like Colin does at the end of the novel,

They [Ziggy and Max] had taught me the positive side of being black, to take pride in that unalterable fact. It was an exercise which required that I know my history, and I had learnt it. [...] But there is another level of my being. There is a me which cannot be reduced to the objective fact of my race, a personality which defines me as an individual, distinguishes me from those immutable characteristics which I share with millions of others around the world. In London that me is repressed, constantly held in check by the city's relentless insistence on my blackness, however defined.

(Dennis 1989: 189)

By recognizing the importance of his own individuality over his blackness, Colin finally manages to remove the “burden” he has always had to carry because of his race (189). He then starts to laugh, but this is the laughter of self-realization (190) through which he understands that he does not need a place like the Black House to define who he is. He also realizes that “the demons of the white world have their black equivalents” (150), so that he changes the inscription above the fireplace: “This house built by man is for the protection of man, against the inhumanity of mankind” (154). Through this significant stance, Dennis points out that, despite their need to create their own transnational communities to hold up with their living conditions in the UK, migrants have to go beyond race and community to find out their individual personalities. In this light, the typical orientalist representation of Blackness based on the old dichotomy between black people as bad characters and white people as the good ones has to be overtaken, since cruelty or goodness can harbour in every human being and the only thing which makes the difference is who you really are.

Dennis’s standpoint is confirmed also by Naipaul, especially through his description of the black politicians’ greed in the new-born state of Isabella. Their insane social climbing and lust for power are a veritable disgrace for the newly independent island, as well as for Ralph Singh, who participate in that exploitation. His point of view is similar to Colin’s:

[...] all that active part of my life [the marriage and the political career] occurred in a sort of parenthesis. I used to feel they were aberrations, whimsical, arbitrary acts which in some way got out of control. But now, with a feeling of waste and regret for opportunities missed, I begin to question this. [...] I question now whether the personality is manufactured by the vision of others. The personality hangs together. It is one and indivisible. (Naipaul 1969: 219)

Ralph questions “whether the personality is manufactured by the vision of others”; through this assumption, Naipaul implies that personality is an individual matter which goes beyond the vision of others, as well as beyond the concepts of

race, identity, or nationality, thus suggesting that also the linkages created by transnational communities could be just a stopgap measure.

After all, the question about the real value of transnationality is still open. For their part, Naipaul and Dennis insist on the individualistic nature of the human being. In their novels, the tendency to underline individuality over community seems to complicate Appadurai's proposal of being loyal to any forms of transnational community (Appadurai 1996: 173), especially considering the strong individualistic character of the contemporary world, as well as the same definition of transnationality which goes against the idea of a single belonging. However, the main enemy of transnationality in Dennis and Naipaul's novels is mimicry, a device through which Ralph and Colin try to rewrite their identity. This attempt, however, as well as the idealistic nature of their aspirations, simply compromises their possibility to create strong transnational bonds, or ties of every kind, because their mimic behaviour operates to confuse their migrants' identity.

Nonetheless, when talking about transnational communities in a postcolonial society, it is also fundamental to consider Bauman's assumptions on the real nature of the concept of belonging, according to which community, tradition, and home are central values which cannot be called into question (Bauman 2005: 258). If Naipaul and Dennis's protagonists do not accept it, Sam Selvon and Caryl Phillips seem to agree with Bauman's considerations by staging the settler model of migration.

2.1.2 The settler model of migration: attempts of rootedness in Selvon and Phillips's novels

In *Moses Migrating*, the first attempt at establishing a sense of belonging in a transnational community is given at the beginning of the narration, through the variegated multicultural scenario described on the ship which is bringing back to their Caribbean islands a huge number of migrants. In this context, the Trinidadian author manages to congregate a number of migrant of different nationalities who share the same experience and the desire of coming home, along with some Englishmen who are going to the Caribbean with recreational aims, in a sort of

revival of the colonial travellers. The typical irony which characterizes Selvon's writing is already evident from the relationship between Moses Aloetta and his roommates on the ship. Indeed, although he shares his cabin with a Dominican and a Trinidadian, he ironically prefers the company of an Englishman, Walter, who is going to Trinidad to work in the oilfields. So, like in the previous novel of Moses's trilogy, *Moses Ascending*, the protagonist keeps preferring white people to his compatriots: in this context, Selvon's great use of irony and his peculiar reinterpretation of mimicry and reverse colonization are fundamental devices which highlight these contradictions and try to alleviate the burdens of migrant experience. This is made evident by the fact that Moses's identity crisis, torn between his Caribbean origin and his English life, is usually characterized by a bitter-sweet humour through which he tries to escape both the plague of exoticism and a damaging otherness (Looker 1996: 1). Selvon's irony actually intends to avoid these harmful colonial stereotypes through an estranging condition, that is Moses's abnegation for Britain, a situation which makes him an atypical migrant of first generation who defends, rather than criticize, the English culture. At the same time, he also wishes to inculcate it in white and black men rather than to impose his Caribbean traditions, in a quite paradoxical situation wherein the Trinidadian man is more British than the Britishers.

So, in the last chapter of Moses's saga, the protagonist's identity seems quite confused and is initially addressed through the perspective of Moses's desire to return to Trinidad. Despite his dream of homecoming, the last years in London have taught him to act and live as an Englishman, so that he actually considers himself as a British man (Selvon 1983: 12). It is for this reason that he does not want to sell his house in London, the symbol of the position he has achieved in the mother-country; he is deeply proud of his property, and selling it would mean taking a step back in his attempt of assimilation into the British system. So, he decides to entrust it to his beloved friend Galahad; moreover, the property of this house makes him even more grateful to England for the incredible occasions it has given to him, and this thought makes him regretful of leaving the UK:

“Immigrants don't only come, old man. They go. But you don't hear about the

departures.” “They go back voluntarily?” I ask, amazed. “Sure. They have their periods of indentureship, or do their stints in the salt mines, then return to the islands.” “I don’t believe you,” I said firmly. “I can’t conceive of anyone stupid like me to leave Brit’n.” (19)

His interior conflict is really painful: he vigorously claims that he is a citizen, a landlord (24), and he anxiously asks himself how England would survive with all its black workers returning to the Caribbean (25). However, his excessive interest and demonstration of love for Britain has the opposite effect, that is making Moses’s departure even more comic, rather than dramatic. Indeed, as Ramchand properly points out, in *Moses Migrating* Selvon’s humour “shifts from comedy with a social purpose to farce, slapstick and ribaldry” (Ramchand 2012: 11). This change has implications in how the novel responds to the changing world: Selvon’s novel acquires a deep social value by trying to think originally of what it means to be a person in the world, what people live for and what principle, creed, or belief should give direction to a life (19). Therefore, the third chapter of Moses’s adventures aims at highlighting people’s need to have something to believe in, and to belong to: Selvon ironically exploits Moses’s hybridity in order to explore this fundamental human necessity.

The author’s intent is assumed also by Moses’s contrived and unnatural behaviour: yet on the ship, Moses erects himself to the position of champion of Englishness, trying to convince the English Walter to change clothes for the ship’s second-class dinner as a real Englishman would do (Selvon 1983: 33). Despite having been in England for almost thirty years, Moses actually still feels a sense of inferiority mixed with awe for white people:

Walter went out. The moment he left Dominica exclaim: “Jesus Christ, what this white man doing down here?” “I hope you’re not racial,” I [Moses] say. “I for one don’t want any trouble down here. He appears a nice block to me.” Dominica sneer: “You only seen him for a few minutes, how the arse you know he nice?” “He’s white,” I explain. (31)

While on the one hand Moses’s roommates are shocked and feel uncomfortable

for the presence of a white man in their second-class cabin because he threatens their sense of kinship and belonging to their community, on the other hand Moses keeps on his English masquerade, demonstrating that Britain “must of blow” (31) his brain. Hence, he defends Walter, and he also tries to impose “his” culture – the British culture – to the other Englishmen.

Moses is so linked to the UK that, once back in Trinidad, he wants to play as Britannia in the carnival, while his white and English friends Jeannie and Bob, who moved to Trinidad with him, would be his servants, in a sort of atypical representation of reverse colonization:

Yes! I can see this impersonation having just the effect I desire of putting Brit’n back in her rightful position as a monetary power. We got me as a penny, and, aha! who else but Jeannie could be appropriate to be my hand-maiden? And who else but Bob to haul me through the streets? Gosh, this whole thing might even strike a blow for Race Relations at the same time, with a black man as Britannia, and two white people as his servants! (137)

In this episode, Moses is pushed by a “genuine” desire of honouring his mother-country which has adopted him for such a long period:

[...] how can she [his Trinidadian girlfriend Doris] understand how much I owe the country that took me in and nursed me all these years? I was hungry and they gave me fish and chips; I was thirsty and they gave me a cuppa; [...]. “I was even awarded a prize once, Tanty, by the National Front, which is the very British they say against black people.” “A prize, Moses?” “Yes, a one-way air ticket to Jamaica. If I had the return fare I would of gone, too.” (138-139)

Selvon’s intention is clearly ironical, and proposes to satirize both the mental colonialism derived from the colonial educational system and the myth of Britain as a superior and welcoming country. The legacy left by these colonial lessons has strongly influenced Moses’s in-betweenness. In particular, his unshakeable belief in his own “Englishness” definitely exemplifies his failed attempt to be part of the British community and to be accepted in the UK, a challenge undertaken without

considering the migrants' problems and mourning already described in *The Lonely Londoners* and *Moses Ascending*:

“How are things in Londontown, Brenda?” I ask. “Grim, boy, grim. They have introduced even more restrictions on black immigration in the short time you have been away. You may not be able to return.” “Don’t classify me among the undesirables like you and Galahad,” I jeer. “I don’t go around creating racial strifes and the demise of the whites. [...] “You whitey-lover,” she sneer, “you anglo-maniac, after they kick you out and send you scurrying back to Trinidad, what do you do?” “I turn the other cheek,” I say, a little confusedly, and didn’t know how to continue. (153-154)

Moses’s confusion reflects his real mongrel identity, symbolized by his search for a place where feeling a sense of belonging. However, as already mentioned, the idea of belonging typical of postcolonial transnationality does not include a single reality or the possibility to belong to a single nation, but it is a composite term which can host different identities and people’s experiences. From this perspective, it is interesting to note that, at the end of the novel, Moses decides to come back to London. This would demonstrate that, in Appadurai’s words, when identities have been generated in a society which is completely dominated by a strong national politics, such as England, they assume cultural differences as a central matter (Appadurai 1996: 189), and this situation would explicate why Moses feels so attached to his English mother-country: Sam Selvon manages to exploit this condition by ironically reversing Moses’s position and giving him the role of the discriminator of his own people. Moses’s decision to come back to England is, therefore, the author’s ironic response and critique to the British migrant system. Moses’s unshakable trust in a possible future in Britain, rather than underlining his believing in life’s opportunities and in the possibility of creating a world of harmony, emphasises Moses’s dislocation, fragmentation and disorder. As Ramchand points out, “To understand the other Selvon of the later works [i.e. *Moses Migrating*] [...] we have to go far back to the passionate believer of the very early works” (Ramchand 2012: 22), so that this Moses can be considered as the result of the global multicultural system which, however, is

bound to deceive people and their hopes.

The idea of community depicted by Naipaul, Dennis, and Selvon is, therefore, quite multifaceted. If V. S. Naipaul and Ferdinand Dennis firstly look for an ideal migrant community, to finally realise that people who experienced a diasporic situation can count just on themselves, Sam Selvon has not completely lost his faith in a world in which black and white people can live together. Although Moses's ups and downs are a strong critique to both the British system and migrants' conduct, which underlines the Trinidadian novelist's scepticism about the possible creation of a stable migrant and transnational community, he still maintains a glimpse of hope for the future of multiculturalism in Britain. Therefore, if on the one hand, sociologists affirm that "migration is part of family and community survival strategies, and is shaped by long-term considerations of security and sustainability" (Castles 2002: 1149) given by families and communities themselves, on the other hand, the novels here analysed demonstrate that the function of these bonds in a transnational context may be not so central, also for the identity formation process. Communities just embody a sort of common myth, or dream, in which migrants believe, without really relying on it. So, at the end of *Moses Migrating*, for instance, Moses does not decide to return to England because he misses his Caribbean community in the UK, but because he feels uncomfortable in his own community of origin and he thinks that he will have another possibility of integration into the British system. He, therefore, embodies those first-generation migrants who have always wished to integrate into economic and social relations, and are eventually assimilated into the host society, despite all the difficulties they have had to bear in Britain. Ralph Singh and Colin Morgan, instead, embody the temporary migration model because they are sorts of nomads who consciously decide to migrate and stay in a country for a limited period, without really relying on the possibility to permanently stay and create a solid community in the UK. The only real attempt to describe a transnational community in London is, Dennis's Black House; however, also this effort miserably fails as a consequence of the incompatibility and the opposite personal interests of its founders.

This disheartening situation is the result of the unsuccessful globalization's

multicultural project: this means that current multicultural societies have failed in their original aim of representing a safe and healthy place of integration and acceptance. Globalization, which was intended to be a democratic phenomenon with its theorization of a global access to the same goods, means of transport, and resources, has revealed its inability in establishing a real equal world, and a comfortable place where people with differences of race, gender, religion, and identity could live. This debacle has led postcolonial authors to react in different ways and through different literary devices, from Selvon's humour and satire, to Naipaul and Dennis's use of a deep introspection, although maintaining the same central aim: the search for home.

Caryl Phillips's *A State of Independence* represents another way to approach the topic of the first-generation migration in the UK. The novel is completely set in the Caribbean, and Phillips makes just some references to the English life of his protagonist, Bertram Francis, over the past 20 years. Nonetheless, the presence of Britain in Bertram's life and thoughts is palpable, as if the former mother-country had absorbed and "colonized" also his mind.

Bertram felt at ease in the UK because England has paradoxically managed to emphasize his sense of freedom: "England just take me over. New things start to happen to me, new people, like I was born again and everything is fresh" (Phillips 1986: 85). According to McLeod, this is due to "the author's knowledge that he [Bertram] cannot articulate the islanders' lives and perspectives on their terms, or assume to access with ease their points of view", so Phillips describes Bertram's position as in-between the Caribbean and the English systems, and the author himself acknowledges this position by "making questionable the expatriate perspective of the island as articulated by Bertram" (McLeod 2012: 118). The relationship with both the UK and his Caribbean homeland is, therefore, called into question in Phillips's novel; in fact, one of the cardinal aims of the novelist is "to write in the face of a late-twentieth-century world that has sought to reduce identity to unpalatable clichés of nationality or race" (Phillips 2001: 6). Caryl Phillips's aim in *A State of Independence* is to escape from these clichés and from an abuse of the concept of independence, while at the same time he exasperates the concept of hybridity by portraying Bertram as a sort of "English West Indian"

(Phillips 1986: 136) unable to detach himself from the British cultural and political hegemony. Like the previous novelists, also Phillips seems, therefore, hesitant about the process of equating identity with national, or even transnational, bonds since he “tries to make cultural institutions responsive to migration without simply reproducing the forms and strategies of the nation” (Walkowitz 2006: 536). In this regard, Bertram’s experience resembles that of Moses in *Moses Migrating*: they both live in a personal imaginary world still anchored to the colonial heritage, while at the same time they also have to deal with the debacle of this same system and of their belief in a single national belonging. It is for this reason that they cannot live neither in the UK, nor in their ancestral homelands. Additionally, Bertram’s experience is connected also to Ralph Singh’s hybridity. Like in *The Mimic Men*, which displays the simultaneous process of identity formation of both Ralph and the Caribbean state of Isabella, also *A State of Independence* actually draws a parallel between the protagonist’s development and the independence of his Caribbean island. However, while Ralph Singh is directly involved into Isabella’s constitution as an independent state, being one of the politicians who tries to rule the new country, Bertram Francis is a returnee who has decided to come back to his newly independent homeland just because his life in England has been a failure, having experienced the impossibility of finding a real economic and emotional independence. In this light, Bertram’s search is aimed at discovering a peaceful place where feeling that sense of community he could not find in the UK, and which was the real fiasco of his English experience. However, he makes a miscalculation because, as Nyman points out, he links his idea of community to that of national identity:

Bertram’s project linking home and nation proves impossible because of his estrangement from the island’s way of life, and the nation’s increased links with the United States, which complicate and render impossible the Fanonian idea of a shared national culture able to function as the basis of independence. (Nyman 2009: 49)

So, Phillips, like Selvon, tries to go beyond the classical idea of nation by searching for, and believing in, the possibility to construct “one harmonious entity” (Phillips 2001: 6) for Black British migrants. However, being part of a

community or a nation-state is not essential to create a harmonious entity; indeed, Bertram's desire of finding his harmony into a national or transnational community is doomed to fail because of the already mentioned collapse of the project of globalization.

The original idea of a free world, in which people, money, and information could flow from one country to another creating new identities, has collapsed due to the processes of neo-colonialism implicated in the decolonized territories and the greed of the "finest minds, the lawyers, the doctors, the odd businessman, who all been overseas to study and come back", people who "are so bored with how easy it is to make money off the back of the people that they getting drunk for kicks" (Phillips 1986: 63). The characteristics of this "new world order" are described also in Phillips's homonymous essays collection:

The old static order in which one people speaks down to another, lesser, people is dead. The colonial, or postcolonial, model has collapsed. In its place we have a new world order in which there will soon be one global conversation with *limited participation open to all, and full participation available to none*. (Phillips 2001: 5; my emphasis)

In this regard, Phillips underlines the narrowness of a global perspective which cannot fulfil its promises of a democratic homogenous participation, and he also denounces the hollowness of identity claims based on a distant colonial (or postcolonial) past by considering that the current world system has changed too much to remain anchored to such simplifications. This situation promotes an even wider transnational approach which goes beyond the same idea of transnational community and affects also Bertram's creation of a new identity. His personal development is mirrored in the situation of St. Kitts itself: they both have been colonised and nurtured by England in the recent past, but now, having claimed their independence, they both have to face the uncertainty of determining what their identity is, what they acquired through colonization, and what they seek to have in the future. Therefore, also in *A State of Independence*, creating a concrete sense of community connected to a stable identity is a hard question for the migrant protagonist, also because of Bertram's indifference and estrangement

towards his own family and island.

Actually, when he arrives at “home”, he has to deal with a series of unpleasant news: his brother has died, his mother has become a sort of eremite, his best friend Jackson is a pro-American politician of the new “independent” government, and the relationship with his ex-girlfriend Patsy is compromised. So, his life in the Caribbean seems to be destined to loneliness and unhappiness, and the sense of desolation and disillusion for his unrealized dreams is concretely tangible in the novel: “Although he had felt a life back home in the country of his birth was worth struggling for, his mother had now made him unsure whether the trial was over” (Phillips 1986: 87). This situation equates his condition to that of migrant people of every age and era, so that his personal struggle with both his community of origin and himself, as well as the consequent trial, are just at the beginning. Moreover, these same problems partially affect also Caryl Phillips’s life. He has actually pointed out:

The second novel, *A State of Independence*, although not autobiographical, followed the emotional contours of my life in that it dealt with the problems of returning to the Caribbean and thinking, they are not sure if I am one of them, and yet feeling that I am not sure if I am one of them either. However, I have certainly not exorcised my feelings about the Caribbean. I have no desire to do so. The reason I write about the Caribbean, is that the Caribbean contains both Europe and Africa, as I do. The Caribbean belongs to both Europe and Africa. (Swift 1992)

According to Phillips, and like in *The Mimic Men* and *The Sleepless Summer*, the kinship with the composite origin of the Caribbean population is a fundamental element when talking about community formation. As Okazaki states, “The desire for a unity achieved through an imaginary ‘reunion’ with the Motherland (Africa) is symptomatic of the challenge to a settled, ‘easy’ identity which this history embodies” (Okazaki 1994: 94). Therefore, for Caribbean people their African roots are a challenge which complicates their identity, also because, according to Phillips, the possibility to find a common home is not entirely realistic: “that’s the tragedy of the immigrant. They change faster than the countries they have left behind and they can never go back and be happy. Yet they can’t be happy in their

adopted countries because it's not home" (Relich 1989). Indeed, he himself has always oscillated between two homes, Britain and the Caribbean:

the inner point of support [...] lies, for me, in both Britain and the Caribbean. [...] And although the price to be paid for continuing to have an attachment to both places is high in terms of emotional, financial, and material cost and the resultant sense of almost permanent displacement, this price is not as high as that which would be demanded from me were I to beat a romantic retreat to the unmarked, unnamed, much-imagined villa in the sun. (Phillips "Living and Writing in the Caribbean: an Experiment", 1989: 49)

In this light, the ability to renegotiate a sense of connection between self and place is, therefore, a survival strategy, according to which migrant emotional, psychological and spiritual integrity is at stake.

From this perspective, the connection to Selvon's standpoint is undeniable; even Phillips recognizes his affinity with the Trinidadian author, as well as "the contradictory tension engendered by Selvon's attraction to and rejection by England" (Kato 2002: 131). Phillips is inspired by this same tension that he has personally experienced: "The literature was shot through with the uncomfortable anxieties of belonging and not belonging and these same anxieties underscored my life" (Phillips 2001: 234). As a result, he needs to actually depict them through his protagonist Bertram, a man torn between a sense of fitting and, at the same time, not fitting in Britain: this strain is one of the most relevant characteristics of literary diasporic identities, and it recalls, in fact, also Ralph Singh and Colin Morgan's dissatisfaction.

Therefore, it is possible to postulate that the four Caribbean protagonists of Naipaul, Dennis, Selvon, and Phillips's novels share the same features. Bertram Francis is a mimic man who has firstly adopted the manners of the colonizer; however, his incapacity to successfully exploit them makes him feel uncomfortable in his ancestral homeland, while at the same time he has been rejected also by the former mother-country, just like Ralph Singh in *The Mimic Men*. Colin Morgan follows the same path, though, unlike the other characters, he eventually manages to come to terms with his hybridity and the failure of his

transnational community by understanding the value of his own individuality. At the same time, also Moses Aloetta has to deal with these problems: like Bertram, he feels a strong connection to his Caribbean homeland, but his experience is ultimately more similar to Ralph's condition for his final bitter-sweet return to Britain. That said, it is also noteworthy that, in *Moses Migrating*, Moses reads Naipaul's novels (Selvon 1983: 47) in a significant intertextual reference which confirms the interconnections and contact points among these authors and their novels.

The books also underline the impact of a new form of imperialism and neo-colonialism on the life conditions in the Caribbean islands. For instance, the hegemonic role of the powerful United States and their political interference is particularly evident in Phillips, especially in the behaviour of Bertram's friend Jackson Clayton. The collusion of one of the ministers of the new local government with the American administration demonstrates the definitive collapse of the Caribbean project of independence, so that Bertram and all the other characters are doubly colonized by the old British hegemony, and by the new American system.

The American influence on the new relations of power among different areas of the world, and consequently on migrant flows, is particularly evident also in the Indian accounts of migration and return of the first generation. Also in this case, as for the Caribbean area, it is possible to recognise the two different models of migration defined by Castles, the settler and the temporary model, although with some peculiarities.

2.1.3 The search for identity in Indian-American transnational migrant communities: the cases of Desai, Narayan, and Chaudhuri's novels

In *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai, the migrant experience is mainly addressed through the story of Biju, an illegal immigrant struggling with other poor men like himself in the cosmopolitan city par excellence, New York. As Paul Jay suggests, in Desai's novel the distinction between local and global tends to

collapse, as it is exemplified by the numerous back and forth between the Indian and American lives of the protagonists (Jay 2010: 119). The idea of transnationalism depicted in the text is, therefore, deeply multifaceted, and it tries to reconnect the experiences of different kinds of first-generation Indian migrants, from the story of the Anglophile judge Jemubhai Patel, who studied in Cambridge in the 1940s, to that of his cook's son Biju in the 1980s. In spite of the temporal distance, the author intends to demonstrate that the condition of migrant life throughout the XX century has been the same; nothing has changed, and the situation is similar in both the UK and the USA. The change of destination has not altered neither the migrant dynamics, nor their position of subordination: the same discrimination suffered by Jemubhai in England in 1939 is perceived also by Biju in New York almost fifty years later. So, while Jemu denounces the inhospitality of white people in Cambridge and the shortage of food (Desai 2006: 38), Biju's humiliations directly start from the USA Embassy in India, where he joins a crowd of Indians scrambling to reach the visa counter:

This was no place for manners and this is how the line was formed [...] Biggest pusher, first place; how self-contented and smiling he was; he dusted himself off, presenting himself with the exquisite manners of a cat. I'm civilized, sir, ready for the U.S., I'm civilized, mam. Biju noticed that his eyes, so alive to the foreigners, looked back at his own countrymen and women, [...] and went dead. (183)

Biju had already tried two times to receive the visa for the USA, and the despair he feels when he looks at his own compatriots who are desperately trying to reach the American promised land is the sign of the misery of all eras' migrants.

Even after his arrival in New York Biju has to face a series of challenges. Since from his entrance into the isolated world of migrants and exiled people in the big metropolis, his dream of a secure future has to actually come up against the harsh reality. Indeed, he works in a restaurant called the *Stars and Stripes Diner*, where there are "All American flag on top, all Guatemalan flag below. Plus one Indian flag when Biju arrived" (21). In this alienating context, he finds a group of migrants from a wide range of countries, establishing his own particular transnational community in the USA. Nonetheless, also Desai exalts the

importance of individuality over community in migrants' lives abroad. So, while Biju is forced to change one restaurant after another, trying to adapt himself to the fragmentation of the migrant condition, he starts to nurture his very Indianness. Despite he still possesses "an awe of white people, who arguably had done India great harm, and a lack of generosity regarding almost everyone else, who had never done a single harmful thing to India" (77), in New York, he also starts to appreciate his homeland and to dream of the peace and comfort of his native village. Therefore, the relevance of transnationality and of ties of solidarity among migrants in the host society is deeply called into question by Desai, who

deftly shuttles between First and Third worlds, illuminating the pain of exile, the ambiguities of Post Colonialism and the blinding desire for a "better life", where one person's wealth means another's poverty. Through the characters, Kiran Desai muses about her conceptualized status of India in the present globalized world, which has been compressed with the insurgence of migration, diaspora and trans-Nationalism. (Rizvi 2014: 16)

From this perspective, the author's intention is to investigate the complexity of the current global world-system by highlighting how the effects of globalization have affected recent migration's waves. This approach is quite different from the perspective used by Caribbean authors to describe the first-generation migration to the UK, since they still primarily focus on the dramatic legacy of British colonialism on the postcolonial hybrid identities, rather than on the consequences of globalization. Instead, postcolonial novels which depict the history of migration from the 1980s onwards have to take into consideration the costs of the new global phenomena on migrant processes because,

After the economic and political shifts following the new economic order and polarizations across continents and since the spread of the recent phenomenon of globalization practically to all societies and nation states, Diaspora experience has assumed newer and vibrant dimensions. The experience of migrancy and Diaspora also engenders various problems and facts of journeys and relocation in new lands e.g. displacement, up-rootedness, discrimination, alienation, marginalization crisis in

identity, cultural conflicts, yearning for home and homeland etc. (Kaur 2008: 8)

These same problems have characterized also the Caribbean migrant condition from the 1950s onwards; however, the globalized mechanisms have exaggerated these difficulties over the decades, causing further complications especially for the most recent generations of diasporic people. This situation is even more evident in the American context where, in fact, instead of celebrating diversity, hybridity, or multiculturalism of its transnational diasporic workers, the inequities among them are further emphasised (Jay 2010: 120). In this light, Biju is a “fugitive on the run”, working in a series of ethnic restaurants with other migrants who share his same degrading situation, a condition which, however, prevents them to understand or sympathise with each other’s problems because of their mutual prejudices:

He remembered what they said about black people at home. Once a man from his village who worked in the city has said: “Be careful of the *hubshi*. Ha ha, in their own country they live like monkeys in the trees. They come to India and become men.” [...] This habit to hate accompanied Biju [...] From other kitchens, he learned what the world thought of Indians: in Tanzania, if they could, they would throw them out like they did in Uganda. In Madagascar, if they could, they would throw them out. In Nigeria, if they could, they throw them out. [...] In Guadalupe—they love us there? No. (Desai 2006: 76-77)

By highlighting stereotypes among different nationalities, Desai confirms that ethnicity and racial prejudices are a universal phenomenon and they persist also among migrants in the globalized American system which, therefore, cannot afford any significant consolation to them (Rizvi 2014: 17). Moreover, the lack of compassion suffered by Indians and black men characterizes also other ethnicities:

Above, the restaurant was French, but below in the kitchen it was Mexican and Indian. And, when a Paki was hired, it was Mexican, Indian, Pakistani [...] On top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native. Colombian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian, Gambian [...] There was a whole world in the basement kitchens of New York. (Desai 2006: 21-22)

Instead of representing a potential value in its diversity, this variegated set of nationalities recollected in the basement of a French restaurant in New York points out the division and hierarchy among migrants in the western societies. In this way, they cannot create a strong transnational community, especially because they are unfamiliar with one another's culture (Jay 2010: 121) and also, they do not want to establish a real connection with each other. So, Biju cannot find comfort neither in his colleagues, nor in his Italian patrons – the owners of the second restaurant where he works; although they share his same migrant condition, they actually look at their employee from the privileged position of holders:

“He smells,” said the owner's wife. “I think I'm allergic to his hair oil.” She had hoped for men from the poorer part of Europe – Bulgarians perhaps, or Czechoslovakians. At least they might have something in common with them like religion and the skin color [...] The owner bought soap and toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo plus conditioner, Q-tips, nail clippers, and most important of all, deodorant, and told Biju he'd pick up some things he might need. [...] “You've tried,” his wife said, [...] “you even *bought* the soap”. (Desai 2006: 48-49)

As a result of this situation, there is no cohesion among diasporic people, in spite of the assumptions of the sociological reports which tend to underline a sort of solidarity at least among people of the same nationality.

In this regard, Biju and his friend Saeed Saeed, a Zanzibarian who lives of expedients, are considered real points of reference by their newly arrived compatriots who wish to find a job in the USA, so that hordes of African and Indian “tribes” (96) arrive at JFK Airport searching for their help:

“*Oh myeeee God!*” Whispering. “Tribes, man, *it's the tribes*. Please God. Tell them I don't work here. *How they get this address!* My mother! I told her, ‘No more!’ [...] In Zanzibar what one person have *he have to share with everyone*, that is *good*, that is *the right way* [...]” (96-98)

In this passage Saeed underlines one of the aspects of the cultural dislocation, that

is the impossibility to transpose all the customs and habits of a culture to another country with different living conditions. In this case, helping their own compatriots is one of the most significant aspects of both Saeed and Biju's cultures – as well as of transnational migration's norms –, but they do not seem to be intentioned to do so, not only for their own poor resources and problems in getting a job in the big city, but also for a sort of egoism, especially in Saeed who fears to lose everything he has acquired by helping entire families (98). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that, in spite of the bad life conditions of migrants in New York, migration is still seen as a better solution than staying at home by poor people from all over the world, also because both Biju and Saeed keep on sending letters to their families in which they lie about their real situation in America, affirming that they have a good job and a decent house.

The reality of their condition is made of a bed in a dirty basement of an abandoned building, and it is in these circumstances that Biju nourishes the desire to return home: “It was horrible what happened to Indians abroad and nobody knew but other Indians abroad [...] His country called him again. He smelled his fate” (138). Memories of home and nostalgia become his best company, especially when he starts to work in an Indian restaurant where he meets the so-called “haalf'n'haf”, “Indian students coming in with American friends, one accent one side of the mouth, another on the other side” (148). Their hybridity is a clear sign of globally shaped identities, and Biju wants to avoid the risk of this condition by returning home. Hence, if on the one hand the customers of the restaurant are part of a privileged caste which seems to perfectly fit the American global habitat, on the other hand Biju embodies the typical disconnected and uprooted migrant, who feels lost in the myriad of routes drawn for him by the fate and needs to “come home” (148). In this light, Desai's aim is to show “the kinds of crises related to personal and cultural identity that come with the increasing mobility of populations as globalization accelerates” (Jay 2010: 125), thus underlining a tendency to “westernization” which recalls the idea of mimicry expressed in the Caribbean novels, even though these two phenomena cannot be considered at the same level. Indeed, while mimicry implies an imitation of the host habits derived from the British colonial educational system, the attempt of westernization

described in *The Inheritance of Loss* does not contemplate a simulation of white people, but the direct insertion and the graduate assimilation of western customs in migrants' lives.

An example of these forms of mental "subjection" is given by the different kind of migration experienced by Biju in 1980s-America and by judge Jemu in 1940s-England. The Anglophile character of the judge is totally opposed to Biju's American malaise and discomfort, despite the fact that they are both diasporic identities, and they have both experienced the difficulties of this condition. So, if Jemu's mimic preservation of English customs also once back in India symbolizes his pride for his English education and his migrant passive experience, on the other hand Biju does not allow the American globalizing system to delete his Indian nature. Their perception of the diasporic experience is, therefore, quite distant, as well as the kind of migration that Desai aims at representing. Although they are both examples of first-generation migrants, Jemu and Biju are too distant in time and space to understand each other's position; so, while the old judge Jemubhai shows a false smugness for his British stay, a journey that few people could afford in 1940s-India, Biju recognises that "immigration, so often presented as a heroic act, could just as easily be the opposite; that it was cowardice that led many to America; fear marked the journey, not bravery [...] Experience the relief of being an unknown transplant to the locals" (Desai 2006: 299). So, if Biju eventually manages to appreciate his migrant journey it is just because it allowed him to rediscover his roots. His standpoint is, therefore, quite opposite to that of the first migrant wave because he lives his diasporic experience as if he was an "unknown transplant" who had "at last been able to acquire a poise" (299). This condition has reinforced his self-confidence and it allows him to overcome the mobility, fragmentation, and fracture of Jemu's unstable identity, who instead "grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him" (40). So, while the judge returned home in 1944 with English habits and clothes, a powder puff to whiten his face, a sense of alienation as if he was "a foreigner in his own country" (29), and the need to repress his Indianness, Biju's return highlights, instead, a "fluid tapestry of transformation" (Jay 2010: 135) which does not aim to construct an authentic standardised Indian identity, nor a false American personality, but to

make him the master of his own destiny again. In this way, Biju's settler migration has become a temporary diaspora, and this is what happens also to Shoba Narayan, who narrates her own experience in *Return to India: an immigrant memoir*.

Here, the topic of migration is addressed through the migrant journey's experience of the author who, in the late 1980s, moved to the USA to study in an American university. Although Narayan and Biju's situations are quite distant, since the Indian writer migrated in the privileged position of an international student and not as an illegal worker, their initial troubles with the American embassy in India have been the same. The embassy is described by Narayan like,

a slumbering volcano, before erupting suddenly when the embassy guard clanged open the gate. Everyone sat up, eyes wide open, hands clutching files that contained papers, passports, bank statements, visa forms, driver's licenses, birth certificates, mutual fund proxies, archival photographs – anything to convince the stern spectacled immigration officer behind the counter that they were upstanding citizens worthy of admission into the United States. (Narayan 2012: 21)

The parallel between Desai's fictional description and the real account reported by Narayan is constructed on the same sense of frustration for obtaining a visa, as well as on the desolation which equate all migrants, from the poor workers to the more fortunate students. For all of them, the idea of leaving India is inspired by the hope to find "better opportunities abroad. What they actually mean is India's complicated caste system that segregates people by birth into Forward Class (FC) and Backward Class (BC), Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST)" (38), and this is the same situation depicted in *The Inheritance of Loss*, where Biju's father resists to the nostalgia for his son by thinking that Biju has achieved a better position in the USA, far from the discrimination of the Indian hierarchical system. Indian people actually wish to escape from this segregating context through migration, although their dream of a better future and of finding a functioning system and honest people is often spoilt as soon as they arrive in the host country. Henceforth their need to establish transnational communities, even though with alternate results.

In *Return to India*, Shoba Narayan depicts the “cacophonous group [of students] speaking different tongues, wearing exotic clothes and eating unusual foods” (63) that she found in Amherst, in Massachusetts, as well as her friends Vicky and Midnight, a couple of Indians who helps her to feel at home in America:

I cooked dinner and spent the evening with them before heading back. Although their apartment was tiny and spartan, it was the closest thing to home for me. [...] On Sundays, we went out for huge all-you-can-eat breakfasts of pancakes and waffles, and spent the afternoon hanging out in Vicky's comforting, spice-scented apartment that turned out to be the ‘home’ for many of the Indian students at Amherst. (66-67)

In spite of their initial criticisms about their homeland, and the consequent desire to study abroad, these young migrants have created a space of aggregation in the foreign land in which they can preserve their Indianness. In fact, after their arrival, they find Americans “intimidating or boring, or both” (78), so that they prefer to spend their free time with their own compatriots. As it is for the protagonists of the Caribbean novels, however, the risk of being absorbed by the host culture and of losing their roots is constantly present, such as in the case of Shoba’s friend Zahid. His Americanization is denounced by the author throughout the text, from the *Dictionary of American Slang* that he buys to improve his speech to his decision to abbreviate his name in Zaid (70), “simply an Indian who was distancing himself from India” (71). This condition can be seen as a reaction to the “traumatic moment” (Mishra 2007: 8) of migration, that is an answer to the loss of homeland through the assimilation of the habits of the new country. However, this kind of loss persists because “there is no substitution for it in the new ‘object of love’ (in the nation-state in the case of diaspora)” (8); so, the correct answer to this migrant mourning is to come to terms with this sense of loss, trying to mix Indian and foreign cultural elements in a healthy form of hybridity. In Narayan’s novel, this is the case of Gyta, an old Indian migrant whose hybrid identity is exemplified through her house, a mix of Indian, African, American, and European pieces of furniture and cultural symbols:

Portraits of the family, in traditional garb, dotted the coffee tables. On the mantel

were souvenirs of the Taj Mahal, African masks and Austrian crystal. A procession of brass elephants marched straight into a German cuckoo clock. On the bar, a small silver Nandi – Lord Shiva’s bull and emblem of purity – calmly took stock of the liquor bottles and wine racks surrounding it, but didn’t seem to take any offense from these symbols of debauchery. (Narayan 2012: 84)

Narayan’s position in favour of multiculturalism and hybridization is expressed by the peaceful conviviality among different cultures in Gyta’s house: this strange collection portrays an exaltation of diversity which implies the acceptance of the persistence of difference located in the in-between (Mishra 2007: 136). Only through such a conceptualization of diversity and transnationalism, “relics from India” and “Nintendo” (Narayan 2012: 84) can coexist without negating each other’s history. This is also Shoba’s initial way of living her American experience: she decides to live with other Indian girls who share her same desire of preserving their roots while, at the same time, she also marries the American lifestyle. It is for this reason that she can eventually freely decide to accept her traditions and an arranged marriage with an Indian boy, Ram, not for this denying her education of independent international student. After all,

the project of multiculturalism must acknowledge that its principles of universalism were themselves ‘particular’ (linked to a specific Western historical formation) and this particularity (now rendered as a universal) is *a particularity that may be located within all particularisms*. (Mishra 2007: 182; my emphasis)

This statement emphasises the role of the single particularisms of any historical formation in the process of multiculturalism, as well as the importance of accepting and incorporating also diversity because “self-enclosed identities that make no reference to what are outside are neither ‘viable’ nor ‘progressive’” (183). So, universality cannot exist apart from the particular, and this is even more true when first-generation migrants have to deal with their children.

For Shoba Narayan, the passage from singlehood to her life of wife and mother is an epiphany suggesting the need to pass on her Indian values and culture to her children (Narayan 2012: 121). In this context, however, it is fundamental to avoid

the opposite risk of Americanization, that is an excessive “Indianization”. Shoba decides, in fact, to enrol her daughter Ranjini on “Camp India”, a cultural association whose purpose is to make a bridge between second-generation migrants and their Indian heritage. In this regard, Shoba and her husband have different standpoints: Shoba’s cooking of traditional Indian food (134) is opposed by Ram’s acknowledgement that Ranjini is American, and that she has the right to exploit her hybrid condition, as well as the best of western culture (130). Hence, her initial forced “Indianization”, strongly sponsored by Shoba, ends up not being the right way of shaping the young girl’s identity because it just pushes her to hate the Indian temple, her name, and her cultural legacy (140-141). Shoba’s decision to make her daughter Indian, and as a consequence to come back “home”, is not, however, a total reject of multiculturalism and hybridization, because even their return to India cannot delete Ranjini’s – and her mother’s – hybridity. Moreover, the author still appreciates and loves America and its metropolises, especially New York (222), although she eventually prefers to put ahead her *roots*, rather than her transnational *routes*, thus embodying the typical temporary migrant.

Amit Chaudhuri’s *A New World* and Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers* deal as well with the problematic relationship between first and second generation, even though from two different standpoints because the former focuses on the topic of return, almost omitting to describe the protagonists’ life in the American host country, while the latter goes in depth into the value of transnational communities in Britain, as it will be shown in the next paragraph.

Chaudhuri’s novel, unlike Desai and Narayan’s works, portrays a pure settler model of migration since his protagonist is completely westernized; his return to Calcutta at the beginning of the 1990s is, in fact, only temporary. Jayojit Chatterjee, an Indian economics professor who migrated to the USA more than ten years before to study in the Midwest, has recently divorced his wife and he travels to India with his son Bonny to spend the summer holidays with his parents. The author’s intention to describe the clash between different generations and different perceptions of the Indian diasporic experience is, therefore, clearly stated since the beginning of the narration: the presence of three generations of Indians allows to approach the topics of migration and return from different points of view

because not all the characters have experienced these themes at the same level. Jayojit's parents do not have a direct practice of migration as they have always lived in India, so they cannot understand the deep disconcert of their "Americanised" son at his arrival in the suffocating Calcutta. They do not have familiarity with him and his western habits, as if his life in the USA had turned him into a stranger for his parents. On the other hand, also Jayojit – who prefers calling himself with the American abbreviation of Joy – lives his relationship with his parents and his homeland in a confused and ambiguous way: he is suspended in a sort of liminal zone among his American life, his Indian legacy, and the late-colonial world which constitutes his father's heritage: "His mind had been formed by his teachers at school and his father's world, which in turn had been shaped by the late-colonial world (although his father had been against Empire) [...]" (Chaudhuri 2000: 78). His choice to study in the USA rather than in the UK may be seen, therefore, as a reaction to the control of his father, who is called "the Admiral" indeed, or better as an attempt at detaching himself from what could remind him of his father. Hence Joy has tried to escape the bonds with both his parents and his country, but he cannot avoid to ultimately reproduce the same relationship with his son: he is no more accustomed to spending time alone with Bonny – who usually lives with his mother – as well as with the Admiral and his wife, whose daily rhythms have become so synchronized as to be completely foreign to their son. Starting from these considerations, passing the long-drawn-out summer hours together turns into a real challenge for them.

A New World is, therefore, a novel of incomprehension and misunderstanding between different generations, and also in this case, like in the other texts, the role of transnationality is underestimated in favour of an investigation of the real value of the personal identity in a global system. In Chaudhuri's work, Joy seems to have forgotten the relevance of his own Indianness since he derides it, and he exploits it only when he needs to look more Indian, and therefore exotic, in front of a western audience. This is how he acquired his American scholarship: his key to success has been citing names of Indian poets he had never read. This expedient has increased the western interest towards him. So, talking with the British Deputy High Commissioner about why Pablo Neruda would be his favourite

author, he states:

‘Had absolutely no idea what I was saying. Told him: “Because he [Pablo Neruda] is both political and sensuous. He reminds me of the Bengali poet Sukanta Bhattacharya.” Can you believe such utter nonsense? I haven’t even read Sukanta’. But believe him they had, and it was he who’d turned down the opportunity to go to Oxford and accepted, instead, a rare scholarship to California. (141)

Joy has the nerve to exploit his roots and the stereotypes about them, and he is rewarded with the possibility to choose between two important western universities. In this way he exploits another cliché, typically Western, which involves the use of any means to reach a goal, so that it is possible to affirm that Joy is the most westernized character of the examined novels, and in fact, in the end, he can definitely affirm that “he’d found himself in America” (141).

So, Jayojit’s case is quite different from the other Indian diasporic accounts, as well as from the Caribbean experiences, because he is a lonely soul who has firmly decided to live his life abroad. His own migrant process does not comprise the creation of a transnational community on which he can definitely rely because his Americanization has preserved him from this need, and this scenario is completely opposite to that of *Maps for Lost Lovers*, a novel where the sense of community is, instead, at the base of the migrant world created by Nadeem Aslam.

2.1.4 An example of extreme transnational ties: Nadeem Aslam’s Pakistani community in Britain

In his novel, Aslam depicts a group of Pakistani migrants in the UK who strongly rely on their small community. According to their strict rules, those who wish to escape from the suffocating control of other members in order to follow the western customs, have to be punished. This is what happens to Jugnu and Chanda, the two lovers of the title, who have to pay with death their desire to live together and love each other without being married. Their fault can appear a venial sin to a western reader, but in the Pakistani transnational community of the little English city of the novel it assumes the shape of a real outrage. Indeed, the diasporic

community described by Aslam shows the typical traits of a transnational group caught between the sense of belonging to an ancestral home and the longing of preserving it at any cost. The murder of Jugnu and Chanda has to be read in this perspective, since it is the final drastic example of an insane exaltation of transnational bonds.

After all, from the 1950s to nowadays a number of migrants from a myriad of different South Asian countries – Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan (Aslam 2004: 29) – have arrived in the not mentioned novel's city, and each of them have tried to impose their own traditions and cultural symbols, starting from the renaming of the city landscape:

Because it was difficult to pronounce the English names, the men who arrived in this town in the 1950s had re-christened everything they saw [...] the various nationalities of the Subcontinent have changed the names according to the specific country they themselves are from. (28-29)

In this struggle for imposing their culture, each community feels strongly tied to its own tradition, as it is the case of the Pakistan family of Jugnu and Chanda. The smell of incense which saturates the house of Shamas, Jugnu's brother, or his wife's traditional dishes are just some examples of the symbols widespread throughout the novel, so that it soon appears evident that "each community maps out its own culture onto the grid of the town regardless of its former meaning" (Lemke 2008: 172), in an attempt of appropriation of the host country typical of a pure transnational community. As a result, the entire plot is constructed on the constant tension between different ways of conceiving life in England by different members of the same community. So, if on the one hand the nonconformist relationship between Jugnu and Chanda reflects a westernized cosmopolitan way of life, in line with 1990s-British context in which they live, on the other hand Shamas and his wife Kaukab embody the traditional couple of Pakistani migrants strongly attached to their values and not willing to integrate in the multicultural scenario in which they live.

Moreover, this situation is further complicated by the contrast between first and second generation. The conservative choice of Shamas and Kaukab is totally

rejected by their children who discard their parents' traditional habits and customs in favour of a western life: this is why the eldest son, Charag, refuses to meet the Pakistani girls that his mother has chosen for him after his divorce from the English Stella, while the youngest, Ujala, decides to go away leaving his family behind.

Shamas and Kaukab's segregation in the narrow space of their community is especially evident in the woman's behaviour. Indeed, she carefully follows Pakistani prescriptions for clothes and food, and she is voluntarily confined in her house: "I don't go there [to the garments shop] often – white people's houses start soon after that street, and even the Pakistanis there are not from our part of Pakistan" (Aslam 2004: 42). Therefore, she seems totally distant from the assimilationist process described by Castles, which involves "to learn the national language and to fully adopt the social and cultural practices of the receiving community. This involves a transfer of allegiance from the place of birth to the new country and the adoption of a new national identity" (Castles 2002: 1155). Kaukab, however, does not desire to be assimilated or to change her identity, and in this sense, she is totally different from the Caribbean protagonists of Naipaul, Selvon, and Phillips, who instead are often victims of an extreme attempt of assimilation. This process has been taking place in the British context since 1945 (1155), and many sociologists have viewed it as an inevitable and necessary process for permanent migrants (Alba and Nee, 1997; Portes et al, 1999). However, not all immigrants are assimilable, as in the case of Kaukab. She actually seems to be scared by the English world around her, and she tries to avoid any contact with white people, in a sort of racism in reverse which may be the result of her sense of inferiority (Lemke 2008: 175) and of the contrasts with other migrant communities.

Therefore, the last hope of creating a real hybrid context in *Maps for Lost Lovers* is assigned to the second generation, and in particular to Kaukab's eldest son Charag, a young artist who tries to combine his English education with his Pakistani heritage through his art. Throughout the novel, he works to a collage of old photographs of migrants through which he wishes to rewrite the history of Britain by highlighting the multi-ethnic character of the British environment and

the emergence of different cultures. The multicultural connotation of his project allows Charag to totally exploit his mixed condition, as well as to turn away from his family and to question their values (Lemke 2008: 182). Indeed, it is only through the second-generation perspective that the role of transnational communities can finally be reevaluated, as it will be explored in the fourth chapter.

2.2 Caribbean and South Asian transnationality: comparing two different perspectives

As seen in the previous paragraphs, the kind of transnationality expressed by South Asian authors is quite dissimilar from the Caribbean standpoints because it tends to give more emphasis to episodes of temporary migration with a less strong linkage to the western host country than to experiences of settler migration, at least from the 1980s onwards.

However, generally speaking, the role of transnational communities in the literary representation is quite different from the real migrant experience examined by sociology because sociologists and novelists concentrate on different aspects of the migrant condition. For instance, the importance of relative attachments in transnational communities' balances reported by sociological surveys³ is almost totally disregarded in the novels: if Bertram Francis, Moses Aloetta, Colin Morgan, and Ralph Singh seem not to care about the family and affective relationships they have left in the Caribbean or have created in England, also Indians' use of the immense potentialities of family transnational bonds is limited. Moreover, the so-called "recreational transnationalism", that is "family holidays and cultural activities that served to maintain an identification with the country of origin" (Carling, Bivand Erdal 2014: 7) are nearly not considered in the literary

³ Carling and Erdal have analysed the return migrants' intentions by underlining the relevance of relative attachments in returnees' plans on the basis of ethnographic research among British-Pakistanis (Carling, Bivand Erdal 2014: 4), while Mary Chamberlain has dedicated a whole monography on the topic of family ties in transnational contexts (see *Family Love in the Diaspora: Migration and the Anglo-Caribbean Experience*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006).

depiction of the first generation, while a clear distinction between transnational communities of diasporic people and the community of law, that is the legitimate national group “evoked and integrally relied on a wider, racially conceived notion of society and nation” (Butterfield 2005: 17), is maintained. The discrepancies between literature and reality are particularly interesting also considering that novels of writers such as Naipaul and Selvon were considered the “truth” of the Caribbean situation and they were used to understand new migrants (Malachi McIntosh 2015). However, despite the inevitable incongruities and different focuses, the literary representation and the history of Caribbean and South Asian migration to the UK still share some features, such as the importance given to the concepts of space and place, where migrants can renegotiate their feelings about themselves and their home(s).

After all, according to Bauman, the fundamental nature of the “human habitat” has been actually changed by multicultural and transnational communities constituted by diasporic people (Bauman 2001: 259). In this perspective, transnational communities acquire a central role in the dynamics of the current cosmopolitan world-system, even though the present investigation of the selected novels has so far demonstrated that the process of identity formation in a diasporic context has usually acknowledged them as disordering issues. The problem is the tendency to generalize the effects of globalization on transnationalism and people’s mobility as if it was a super-ordinate set of forces, without considering the peculiarities of different situations. By contrast, it would be the case to consider the notions of transnational communities as a tangible experience with a variety of possible nuances, according to which family and spatial ties of migrant identities could be resilient elements (Conway, Potter 2005: 266).

At this point, it is interesting to assess whether, from a literary perspective, transnationality and cosmopolitanism have still the same central value that they acquired in the 1990s for the theorists of the global world-system. V. S. Naipaul, for instance, certainly rejects worldly cosmopolitanism. To him, being a citizen of the world is a product of “despair, defeat, and usually ignorance,” the response of a man “who has dropped out, who can’t face the present and can’t face his position in the world” (Naipaul 1982: 7). This position is, therefore, quite

unresolvable since, according to the Trinidadian author, these citizens of the world are rooted only in the self-knowledge of the strands of their background (7).

However, particularism and cosmopolitanism embrace a shifting dynamic in Naipaul's writing whose lack of resolution has resulted in a productive dialectical interaction between these two approaches. Moreover, a dualistic approach persists also in his own world view because he is both an individual of colour and a manifest conservative of the western culture with a hierarchical and transnational sense of standards and social order, including the value of empire (Greenberg 2000: 218). Naipaul's standpoint is carried through by his Ralph Singh, who states that the "malaise of our times" is fixed in a "new world" (Naipaul 1969: 8) condition – as also Phillips later names it – in which colonialism has irreparably damaged the future possibility of communion of once colonized people. In order to restore a sort of balance, it is fundamental that migrants learn to fashion their own identities escaping from the impositions of both the colonial and their personal pasts, as well as from the risk of mimicry. As Dhareshwar claims, "the process of mimicry, the constitution of a certain type of colonial identity, must be understood as a direct response to the exercise of colonial power" (Dhareshwar 1989: 92), and this is true also for the process of dissociating oneself from one's own family and community: now both these conditions should be overturned by fighting the unceasing anxieties that pervade all the examined texts and their protagonists. From this perspective, Caryl Phillips suggests a careful, critical path between the two poles of individuality and community, offering a potentially useful model which is inclined neither to the seductions of celebrating an acritical transnational global equality, nor to the political charms of the usual colonial dynamics (Brown 2013: 106). The risks of both these visions are the reasons why also Bauman warns us against the easy exaltation of globalization and, like Gilroy, he provocatively criticises those who see the contemporary globalized world-system as the solution to all the problems of integration and as the only possible way of establishing a real multicultural model, also because these global approaches paradoxically promote locality, rather than globality (Bauman 1998: 85).

On the other hand, it is impossible to deny that migration and globalization are

inextricably linked to each other by concepts of heterogeneity and transnational movements. As Castles argues, in the age of globalization

It is now widely recognized that cross-border population mobility is inextricably linked to the other flows that constitute globalization, and that migration is one of the key forces of social transformation in the contemporary world. This makes it vital to understand the causes and characteristics of international migration as well as the processes of settlement and societal change that arise from it. (Castles 2002: 1143-1144)

The analysis of the numerous back and forward journeys depicted in the examined novels are connected to this need of investigation. Colin Morgan's voyages among Africa, the Caribbean, and the UK, as well as Ralph Singh, Moses Aloetta, and Bertram Francis's returns to their Caribbean islands are characteristics of a globalised scheme in which Eurocentrism is losing its importance in favour of a global cosmopolitanism which has set shifting contexts for the imaginative reformation of subjectivity across the borders of nation-states. This approach emphasises a positive poststructuralist fragmentation (Jay 2010: 28), since the current cosmopolitanism actually wants to "look beyond cultural and 'identitarian' differences in the interests of fostering a view of identity organized around shared human traits, values, and rights" (61). In this light, contemporary forms of globalization and cosmopolitanism should not disrupt cultural authenticity, but conduct to a sort of "cosmopolitan contamination" (Appiah 2006: 101), that is a healthy form of cultural heterogeneity. However, South Asian novels are quite critical about this position, since they highlight "the homogenizing spirit of globalization [which] espouses non-imperialistic ideologies but it often shadows the basic identity of minorities and induces new modes of marginality in ethnocentric socio-culture fabric" (Rizvi 2014: 18). This situation leads to migrants' desire to return home, even though with changing fortunes. So, if on the one hand, theorists of globalization still claim for the presence of a globalized system which allows the development of an equal and heterogeneous society (Rubdy 2013: 4), on the other hand, the experiences reported by sociologists of migration, as well as those described in the novels, demonstrate that an impartial

and open-minded society is still far to be reached.

In the selected works, therefore, the high claim for heterogeneity and the celebration of cultural and racial diversity sponsored by theorists and sociologists have been replaced by a sense of disillusion and despondency. Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe actually underline the “sadly ambiguous” division of a community into new political nation states (Dabydeen, Wilson-Tagoe 1988: 58), looking for post-Independence strategies of regeneration and reintegration of new kinds of identities. From this perspective, immigrant communities merely are “the uneasy place of the subject who comes to the city for a new life, but finds access to metropolitan identity complicated and often simply impossible” (Warf, Arias 2009: 118). However, it is precisely for this sense of disillusionment and the lack of empathy with the host country – as emerges in *The Mimic Men*, *The Inheritance of Loss*, or *Maps for Lost Lovers* –, or the country of origin – such as in *Moses Migrating* and *A New World* – that the concept of transnational community can ultimately have a sense in the global context, especially if it is considered as a *community of culture*, a concept which derives from Clifford’s idea of culture as “enduring, traditional, structural (rather than contingent, syncretic, historical)”, a process of “ordering, not of disruption” (Clifford 1988: 235). From this point of view, the right question is not *whether*, but *how* cosmopolitan and culturalist models affect the interconnections between globalization and literature, because the transnational turn must have, by definition, “a culturalist orientation” (Jay 2010: 71). The relevance of this kind of approach highlights the role of culture and literature in the investigation of global movements, as well as the intersections between globalization theory and cultural studies. In this light, the emphasis is on culture, rather than on race, so that Caribbean and South Asian communities in the UK can be seen as ordered communities of culture (Chamberlain 1998: 27). From this perspective, it is easy to recognize the centrality of the search for order for postcolonial migrants, as well as their need to hope in strong transnational boundaries. Sharing the same culture can identify same communities since culture is a milestone, something fixed and identifiable in every kind of community in contrast to the discredited notion of race (Bauman 1996: 17). This tendency to culturalism is highlighted also

by Appadurai (Appadurai 1996: 15), and it would help to identify the real function of transnational communities in postcolonial works, that of reimagining “new hybrid identities and cultures” at odds with the idea that “the proliferation of Western styles, products, and tastes under the forces of globalization extinguishes cultural differences” (Jay 2010: 60). However, this faith on the role of culturalism is called into question by literary representation: in the examined novels, every attempt to create this kind of bonds among migrants is actually denied or totally harmful as in *Maps for Lost Lovers*, shaking migrant identities and demonstrating that the only real kinship is that with home.

The same problems arise when considering the concepts of space and place, as well as the current nature of global cities. In the next chapter, I will analyse the kinship that migrants have established with the places where they live, and especially with the new notion of global space first developed by sociologists and geographers of the spatial turn, and then exploited by literature.

3. Perceptions of space and depictions of return in Black British diaspora: Caribbean and South Asian first-generation novels

The ambiguous nature of transnational communities and the ambivalence of their identity formation process analysed in the previous chapter is particularly evident when it is linked to debates on global cities and places. Indeed, the concepts of space and place have highly changed since the middle of the XX century thanks to the new spatial approach theorized by geographers and philosophers such as Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, who have described the social and economic growth of the globalized society through the internal differentiation of global space (Ramsey-Kurtz 2011: xvii).

The relationship between the redefinition of space and globalization has recently been evoked by the so-called “spatial turn” which has highlighted how global phenomena can influence the relationship between migration and place, the perception of the transnational movements, and the tie between globalization and literature. Concerning the latter point, my suggestion is that the perception of space in literature can be linked to the idea that “an object can be said to exist only insofar as it contains and represents within itself relationships to other objects” (Harvey 2006: 2), an assumption which transforms the conceptualization of metaphorical literary spaces into physical spaces. In other words, I am considering the way through which it is possible to study the relationship between the material spaces we live in, such as the cities with their public and private places, and people, objects, occurrences, and events which have some linkages with them. This conceptualization embodies what Lefebvre calls the “lived space”, a combination of concrete space and mental constructions, creative ideas about, and representations of space (Lefebvre 1991: 39). Starting from this theoretical framework, it is possible to define the contemporary “war for space” (Bauman 1998: 26) conducted by subaltern people in the global metropolises as a concrete appropriation of space, and as an expression of the already mentioned pessimism about the possibility of creating transnational communities which would contrast

episodes of discrimination and racism recurrent in western cities.

Moreover, by speaking of the metropolises as both locations and “spaces” in the literary representation, my intention is to approach postcolonial cities – British, Caribbean, and Indian – as concrete spaces which exist just in relation to people who inhabit them and their vicissitudes. After all, the importance of “placing” is certainly a central topic in both the current world-system and in literature; in fact, as Ralph Singh states in *The Mimic Men*, when a man loses his dignity, people do not ask him to die or to leave, but to find a place (Naipaul 1969: 8), and in the Caribbean texts, this central quest is explored to its maximum degree, up to its negation.

3.1 The right to appropriate the Western and Caribbean spaces despite discrimination: Naipaul, Dennis, Selvon, and Phillips’s spatial models

As a typical colonial subject, Naipaul’s Ralph Singh is doubly displaced, and he suffers from alienation and subjugation both in Isabella and in England. However, this situation paradoxically leads him to deny his same necessity of finding a place:

We are people who for one reason or another have withdrawn, from our respective countries, from the city where we find ourselves, from our families. *We have withdrawn from unnecessary responsibility and attachment. We have simplified our lives.* I cannot believe that our establishment is unique. It comforts me to think that in this city [London] alone there must be hundreds and thousands like ourselves. (Naipaul 1969: 247; my emphasis)

Through these words, Ralph clearly demonstrates that he has understood his condition of rootlessness and he accepts it by thinking that he has simplified his life. This belief is, however, just a stopgap measure to alleviate his frustration of diasporic man: his need to find a place frustrates him, so that he receives comfort by the fact that other people in the big city share his same desolation. Actually, the

whole novel is torn between the search for home and its negation, and the consequent attempt to escape from a space, from the nagging, little, although familiar, island of the childhood, or the gloomy atmosphere of London, or else from the suffocating government buildings of Isabella. Singh constantly swings among these different environments, thus representing an in-between condition which is both spatial and psychological, but that resists absorption by any kind of place. In other words, the protagonist “is escaping but does not hope to arrive - he knows there is no great, good place” (Simpson 1984: 577).

Hence, Ralph’s personality is shaped not only by his transnational experience, but also by the landscape he inhabits: in London, for instance, he plays the role of the fascinating dandy who is inspired and supported by the magnificence of the city. The English metropolis shapes his personality like the light “which gave solidity to everything and drew colour out of the heart of objects” (Naipaul 1969: 18); his initial enthusiasm, however, is destroyed by the elusive nature of the city itself. In fact, if the city can be described as a “three-dimensional” space (27), the urban life is “two-dimensional” (19), so that no one could find real happiness, but only a weak imitation of pleasure:

it is only now, as I write, that I see [...] that all the activity of these years, [...] represented a type of withdrawal, and was part of the injury inflicted on me by the too solid three-dimensional city in which I could never feel myself as anything but spectral, disintegrating, pointless, fluid. (51-52)

Ralph accuses the city of having steered his actions and his agency. Indeed, by describing “the centre of the world” with such a pensive and sombre connotation, I think that the author manages to catch the deepest essence of the migrant condition, while at the same time he also highlights the city’s damaging effect on migrants’ personality. Actually, despite Ralph’s declared repulsion for his native Isabella (51), it is London which eventually embodies “an accommodation to a sense of place which, like memory, when grown acute, becomes a source of pain” (52), thus demonstrating the harmful character of the alienating English metropole which gives hospitality to migrants at the cost of their self-composure.

This same process occurs also to his English wife Sandra in relation to Isabella:

she cannot get accustomed to the life in the tropical island because, like Ralph in London, she cannot come to terms with the burden of her personal landscapes and memories. Hence, she does not manage to become part of the space she inhabits, and in fact she feels “a feeling of fear, a simple fear of place, of the absent world” (69), which ultimately destroys her marriage. The house is the only space on the Caribbean island where she can bear to live, starting to appreciate the comfortable nature of the domestic objects around her while, at the same time, she detaches herself from the natural environment. Ralph as well begins to distance himself from the Caribbean landscape; indeed, “having divorced himself from physical and imaginary landscapes, Ralph comes to enjoy his cohabitation with stationery objects, whose every scratch and design, he claims, aid the final aim of his life” (Phukan 2008: 140). So, writing utensils end up embodying the real essence of his identity, by becoming more relevant than his interpersonal relationships. It is for this reason that, while he is in London, he decides to write a memoir, another “object” which can help him to fill the empty space of his hybrid existence. Thus, his authenticity as citizen and migrant becomes indelibly linked to the authenticity of his text, although the writing of his book is an end in itself, a mere recording which would help him to simplify his life.

This simplification does not mean, however, an ordering. In London, Ralph finds an alienating landscape symbolized by the falling snow, in contraposition to the Caribbean element par excellence, the sea. As Phukan points out, in *The Mimic Men* while “the ocean is an annihilating entity, the landscape of snow [is] full of the promise of civilization and order” (139), although, at the end of the novel, they will be both perceived as haunting and alienating landscapes. As a result, Ralph’s first experience of self-alienation in his native Isabella predetermines his consequent unsuitability also in England: from this perspective, both England and Isabella are, therefore, threatening places from which he impatiently waits to be rescued.

The only landscape which encourages Ralph’s sense of belonging is the imaginary scenery of the white pages of his memoir (139); indeed, the writing of the book – and the objects and people he met both in London and Isabella – should have helped Ralph to avoid the responsibility of his own self-fashioning, as well as the

burden of belonging to any community or place. This is because, according to Lefebvre's definition of lived space, migrant condition and the objects which characterize it should overlap, as if objects were sorts of relics which help to describe and simplify migrants' life, in an incessant work in progress. Throughout his narrative, in fact, Ralph comes back to the "rough, narrow table" (Naipaul 1969: 34) in a "far-out suburban hotel" which gives him the "feeling of impermanence" (11) that helps him to write his book. Thus, objects get a relevant position in his life, since they are singled out to describe his condition.

In such a context, the city of London and the island of Isabella acquire the same value: indeed, throughout the narration, they show their similar aspect of alienating spaces. They both embody "the great disorder, the final emptiness" (8); even the great London corresponds to this description, since it passively accepts to host and exploit migrants from all over the world, people who are fighting for the right to have their own space in the big city, "the need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban space, fundamentally shifting control away from capital and the state and toward urban inhabitants" (Purcell 2002: 101-102). Also in his adulthood, Ralph still looks for this right, and for a pure and ordered landscape: however, he does not understand that he will never reach it without accepting his hybridity, thus abandoning the role of mimic man, firstly as a Caribbean student, and then as a cunning politician. In this light, it is possible to affirm that Ralph is not able to "appropriate physical contexts in order to create, here, a space of attachment and rootedness, a space of being" (Dixon, Durrheim 2000: 29), but he keeps on making the errors of the past without connecting his migrant condition to the shifts imposed by globalization. It is for this reason that he cannot fit into the great city of London; moreover, Ralph cannot get accustomed to live in a place where people wish to "keep Britain white", like the Murals, Ralph's second tenant family in London. With this regard, the problem of racism and racial discrimination is the real plague of the globalized city, an appalling component of the contemporary city-life which prevents the realization of Lefebvre's egalitarian urban politics and spatial division.

Ferdinand Dennis has tried to solve the racist problem through the construction of his Black House, a space of social congregation where black

people could escape from the problems and hardships of the migrant condition in the big city. However, like in *The Mimic Men*, the aspiration to find an ordered place where to avoid the risks of a disappointing life fails, as well as the possibility to create a “place-identity”, that is a coherent sense of belonging based on a place-belongingness (29). It is precisely this lack of a stable belonging that prevents Colin from building a social and cultural definition and cognition of place which becomes part of his place-identity; and, as a result, Colin cannot feel at home in the Black House either, nor in any other place he will visit in his life, even though Ziggy and Max’s experiment of creating a space of unity and congregation among the black community has taught him “the positive side of being black, to take pride in that unalterable fact” (Dennis 1989: 189). This is the function of the Black House in opposition to London’s effort to “deny me [Colin] respect for myself and my people” (189): the capital of the empire is actually seen as a restrictive and stifling scenario, where the colour of the skin determines people’s fate. Additionally, as he says, the city “removes me from the real world of political and geographical divisions. It places me in a monochrome, homogenous reality where individuals do not exist” (189-190). These considerations highlight London’s opponent role in a process of self-creation and self-narrative centred on place-person relations; after all, Edward Soja (1989) warns us against analysing places as innocent, depoliticized showgrounds in which people live and act peacefully. From this perspective, Colin’s initial description of London as “a huge playground” (Dennis 1989: 41) and “just an arrangement of roads and buildings, asphalt and bricks, metal and concrete, plastic and glass” (179) seems quite a naïve consideration contradicted by the following descriptions of a landscape of drug-dealers and drug-addicts. So, it is not incidental that, in his final account of the relationship between space and identity, Colin prefers to underline the role of London as a

cold, hostile place. I had not wanted to be brought here. Worse still, I had grown up in a community which, for quite justifiable reasons, suffered from a collective sense of insecurity. For that community, London was nothing but a broken dream, a land of sour milk and bitter honey. (169)

London's unwelcoming atmosphere is, therefore, related to its character of migrants' city, as well as to the heritage of its colonial past which inevitably produces racism. Indeed, the strong white British national identity has always disconnected subaltern groups from any kind of belonging, and this process has had some "spatial" consequences, since any social group started to be associated to a particular environment. This situation is depicted also in Dennis's novel through the association of the black community to the urban territory, a clear demonstration that "the historical association between White Englishness and the rural landscapes [...], perpetuated the idea that Black citizens of England belong in urban areas, notably in the 'degraded' areas of the inner city" (Dixon, Durrheim 2000: 34). Moreover, by considering also that "collective identities are typically fashioned through symbolic contrasts between 'our space' and 'their space', expressed in terms of 'paradigmatic oppositions' such as marginal/central, primitive/civilized or First World/Third World" (34), it is possible to relate the granitic racial discrimination of the British system to spatial politics.

After all, "Keep Britain white" was the slogan not only of the Murals in *The Mimic Men*, but also of the racist campaign started in 1968 with the famous "Rivers of Blood" speech by Enoch Powell. In *The Sleepless Summer*, the consequences of this racist tendency are exemplified by Max and his friend Leon, who talk about "how difficult it was for a black person to walk the streets at night without attracting the police. They recounted their experiences of being stopped and searched for no apparent reason" (Dennis 1989: 83), while Ziggy's professor at university safely affirms that African people hopelessly are inferior beings (139).

Therefore, racism is a convergent issue in all the examined novels, especially considering that the same political structures and institutions in the UK functioned in relation to the notion of race (Butterfield 2005: 1). In this context, the question of space gains a central relevance, since the already mentioned "war for space" is actually nurtured by racism. In fact, the more a country presents globalized characteristics, the more it is likely to host pockets of fundamentalism and racism, and this is quite paradoxical considering that the presence of immigrants is encouraged by globalization.

The references in both Naipaul and Dennis to Powell's politics and to its consequences are to be found also in Selvon and his character Moses Aloetta, although in a completely different way. In *Moses Migrating*, Powell is seen through the point of view of Selvon's irony, and in fact he is described as Moses's "benefactor" (Selvon 1983: 2). Indeed, through his racist campaign, he has kindly provided him with the idea and the concrete possibility to come back home, as Moses itself affirms in a letter addressed to the British politician:

Dear Mr. Powell, though black I am writing you to express my support for your campaigns to keep Brit'n White, as I have been living here for more than twenty years and I have more black enemies than white and I have always tried to integrate successfully in spite of discriminations and prejudices according race. Though I am deciding to return to Trinidad it is grieving me no whit and it is only your kind offer to subsidise such black immigrants as desire to return to their homelands that will make it possible for me. [...] As a proof that I have no ill-feelings or animosity for your sentiments re blacks, and in gratitude for your assistance, if I open a business when I go home I will call it Enoch-aided Enterprises, or some such title that will show what your true feelings are, and not like the newspapers and television that try to defame you. (1-2)

This caustic satire against Powell serves to portray Moses's contrasting feelings towards the country he considers his home, that is Britain: indeed, while on the one hand he exalts the inhospitality of Britain and he seems to be firmly convinced of his decision of leaving the space which nurtured him, on the other hand through this ironic apologia of Powell he also confirms his Anglophile nature.

Powell's campaign against black labourers in Britain is the spark for Moses's return to Trinidad; so, in Selvon's novel as well as in Phillips's *A State of Independence*, the spatial perspective changes because the focus is no more on London, but on the Caribbean landscape.

As a result, in Selvon's text the emphasis on the global city of London is certainly less developed than in his best-known novel *The Lonely Londoners*; however, the relevance of the Caribbean scenario in contrast to the metropolitan landscape is

quite interesting. Both these environments have shaped Moses's identity, even though in different ways. If on the one hand, London has played a central part in his life experience, so that he can truly define himself as a Londoner who, once in Trinidad, is reluctant to step outside the European safe and secure habitat of "de Hilton" (84), on the other hand, the places and objects of his Trinidadian past slowly manage to reconnect him to a familiar space that he thought he had forgotten:

As I wended my way up the hill to John-John that evening – a craggy bit of hillside with brokendown houses where reputedly the worst and poorest elements of the city dwelt, albeit there was a superb view of the harbor on this side and the rolling hinterland on the other– for the first time I begin to feel as if I come back home in truth. (85-86)

Port of Spain's streets and houses with their amount of peculiar stuffs and memories take Moses back to his childhood, thus demonstrating the power and the relevance of the kinship among places, spaces, objects, and people. Therefore, although Poynting claims that Selvon's character has a free and composite spirit which cannot get accustomed to any place (Nasta 1988: 261), I think that, in *Moses Migrating*, Selvon manages to prove that the power of memories in the spatial dynamics can be really influential. Indeed, in a 1978 interview, he argues that in his writing there is always "a sense of place rather than a sense of space. It is hard to find comparable values in those two types of landscape" (73). This assumption is actually noteworthy, as it demonstrates Selvon's standpoint and interest on the spatial question, and it highlights his personal differentiation of the notions of place and space: in this light, the idea of place assumes an increasing importance over that of space, since the former is more related to a familial context than the latter. Hence, for instance, Moses's personal relevance of mauby (Selvon 1983: 90), a Caribbean beverage based on the bark of a northern Caribbean islands' tree, confirms that he did not forget the familiar objects and elements of his own *place*. Therefore, the relevance of memories and of the objects of the past in relation to a specific place is fundamental for Selvon's intention of affirming the importance of roots, as it is further confirmed by the

affectionate description of the beauties of the Trinidadian landscape, with its incomparable blue sky and luxuriant vegetation (120-121).

Additionally, even though Moses is ironically portrayed also as a man of “natural urban manner and temperament” (128), it is during one of the most important events of the Caribbean tradition, that is the Carnival, that his sense of being in the “right place” becomes most evident: “I don’t know what come over me [...] if it was that I was in the midst of my countrymen now, the pulse and the sweat and the smell and the hysterical excitement, but my head was giddy with a kind of irresistible exaltation” (164). Therefore, a particular bond with the ancestral place is certainly denoted also in Selvon’s work, and Moses’s relationship with his changed homeland helps also to consider the implications of a spatial perspective on the topic of the first generation’s return. Indeed, when they come back, return migrants of the first generation often have to deal with an altered landscape and different spatial politics, and this is what happens also to Bertram Francis in *A State of Independence*.

One of the first matters Bertram has to come to terms with when he arrives in his ancestral island is, in fact, the new imperialism carried out by the American government, which has replaced the old British system. In this light, the private aspects of the protagonist’s homecoming are paralleled by the public ones, so that the process of independence of the Caribbean island goes at the same pace with Bertram’s personal growth.

Once back, he has to accustom himself again to the habits of the Caribbean colonial system, as well as to the Caribbean environment:

Bertram listened to the chorus of insects, which he received as a constant roar. It disturbed him that he should have forgotten the pitch and echo of their massed voices, but it just reminded him of just how far he had travelled both in miles and time. (Phillips 1986: 49)

The sounds of nature tell him that his relationship with the Caribbean space has changed, so that he cannot understand neither the natural landscape, nor the new exploitative system of the island. The latter is quite evident in the description of Baytown, the island’s capital, where spatial distinctions reflect different classed

spaces:

Firstly, there were the well-patrolled middle-class estates of the possessors; neat, planned, perfumed, and often affording spectacular views of both the mountains and the sea. And then down by the harbor, and for a few streets in each direction, the low commercial buildings of trade and governments. Finally, there existed a hellish and labyrinth-like entanglement of slums in which lived the dispossessed in their broken-down wooden buildings and under their rusty iron roofs. [...] This area, which resembled the country in its poverty, had always impressed Bertram as the unassembled, peopled, animal, heart of Baytown. (57-58)

The spatial organisation follows the social classification, thus contributing to the creation of a desolating landscape where social differences acquire a central value. In spite of the misery of this description and of its social meaning, however, Bertram still believes that the political and social situation of his homeland could change, and that a shared national identity can still be constructed (50).

However, as already mentioned, combining an egalitarian space of identity construction with a national project in the globalized world-system is a project bound to fail. It is for this reason that Bertram feels out of place or, using Phillips's words in his essay *A New World Order*, both "of, and not of, this place" (Phillips 2001: 1): the Caribbean land has become a space of (reverse) Otherness for him (Nyman 2009: 52), and he himself is a sort of reverse migrant now, as it is evident in his attempt to control his perspiration as if he was a white man in the tropics (Phillips 1986: 86-87). This paradoxical situation embodies Phillips's critique to both Bertram and his birthplace for their juvenile desire of a dubious type of independence: in this context, private and public spaces converge into the same internal dysfunction, allowing the external neo-colonial oppression to interfere with both Bertram's life and the new island's government. Bertram's need of a fixed place, and his desire to find a stable home in his ancestral homeland are, therefore, denied by the new politics of the island; however, this problematic situation confirms the potentiality expressed in the novel to create "a post-space journey where there must be *location as well as dislocation*: a postcolonial narrative that is a negotiation between the postmodern and the

colonial position” (Upstone 2009: 69). This idea of post-space embodies the concept of glocalization, that is a fusion between local and global which “does not mean that all forms of locality are thus substantively homogenized” (Robertson 1995: 31); in *A State of Independence*, in fact, the presence in the Caribbean island of a “glocal” system subject to the American hegemony does not produce a homogenized space. The novel can be read, therefore, as an attempt to demonstrate that hoping in a space of cohesion between local and global is still possible, as it is confirmed by the protagonist’s firm attachment to the local, that is to his house and the objects and places of his past, also after twenty years of global experiences in Britain and despite the obstacles erected by the new American control:

After twenty years he had already discovered that he still felt an attachment to the house, and to the village, and to his mother, but as much as it shocked him to have to admit it, the attachment he felt towards his mother was in no way greater than that he felt towards these other facets of his life he thought England had stripped from his consciousness. (Phillips 1986: 82)

The only comfort that migrants can find throughout their peregrinations, in the midst of alienating and discouraging circumstances, is therefore a close relationship with people, places, and objects of their homeland. This is the final solution to the question of migrants’ identity formation in relation to problems of self and place; and although the price to be paid for continuing to have an attachment to their home is high, migrants cannot repudiate their much-imagined “villa in the sun” (Phillips 1989: 49) that the writer’s pen keeps on sketching out and chasing. Moreover, even though in Phillips’s novel the protagonist’s island has already become part of the global landscape, the idea of a local space which might be called “home” is still central in migrants’ thoughts, as it is further confirmed by sociological surveys (Conway, Potter 2005: 266). So, a recent interest towards a form of “local transnationalism” (Castles 2002: 1159) which sponsors the tiny, familiar ties existing in multicultural societies can be postulated in opposition to the divisions and problems typical of the transnational communities examined in the previous chapter.

Actually, discrimination and multiculturalism are both characteristics of the global city, and as we have seen in novels such as *Maps for Lost Lovers*, discrimination can lead to the creation of closed off communities, while real multiculturalism would stimulate the formation of cosmopolitan communities with benefits in terms of cultural openness and economic opportunities. This last point, however, is not always true. This is particularly evident in the South Asian novels, where the tension between local and global, racism and multiculturalism, is widely depicted in relation to politics of space and place.

3.2 Locality vs. globality, racism vs. multiculturalism, and the first signs of a generational clash: elements of spatial dynamics in the South Asian context

In Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, the dichotomy between local and global is analysed through the relationship between the small village of Kalimpong in the north-eastern part of India, at the core of Himalayas, and the cosmopolitan reality of the USA and the UK. Indeed, the value of these two globalised countries is at the centre of debates also in the remote Indian village, where the old Indian ladies Lola, Noni, and Mrs. Sen use to have heated disputes on the topic. Moreover, the daughters of Lola and Mrs. Sen live in London and New York respectively, and this is another source of contrast between them, as well as an expedient to keep on their quarrels about Britain and America. In this context, Lola and Noni's defence of the UK reflects the typical conduct of the former colonized people who have lived under the British domination and, as a consequence, keep on feeling attached to their old mother-country:

The sisters [Lola and Noni] had always looked down on Mrs. Sen as a low-caliber person. Her inferiority was clear to them long before her daughter settled in a country where the jam said Smuckers instead of "By appointment to Her Majesty the queen," and before she got a job with CNN placing her in direct opposition to Pixie [Lola's daughter] at BBC. This was because Mrs. Sen pronounced potato "POEtatto," and tomato "TOEmatto" [...] Lola: "But you don't find them [Americans] very simple

people?” Mrs. Sen: “No hangs up, na, very friendly.” “But a fake friendliness I’ve heard, hi-bye and no meaning to it.” “Better than English, *ji*, where they laugh at you behind your back –” Perhaps England and America didn’t know they were in a fight to the death, but it was being fought on their behalf, by these two spirited widows of Kalimpong. (Desai 2006: 131)

Lola and Noni’s arguments in favour of Britain demonstrate that the two Indian sisters are still anchored to an old concept of space, and an archaic division of roles among the centre and the periphery of the world, according to which England maintains its colonial hegemony. Hence they do not seem to understand the motivations of young Indians who migrate to the USA and accept the mechanisms of the new spatial and global dynamics which have imposed the American neo-colonialism. The dispute with the Americanophile Mrs. Sen continues with Lola’s blind exaltation of the UK:

“Mun Mun [Mrs. Sen’s daughter] has no hassles in America, nobody cares where you’re from –” “Well, if you’re going to call ignorance freedom! And don’t tell me that nobody cares. Everybody knows,” Lola said bitterly as if actually mattered to her, “how they treat the Negroes. [...] And the kind of patriotism they go in for turns monkey into donkey *phata-phat* – just give them a hot dog on a stick, they begin to wave it at the flag” (131)

Lola’s opinions are full of the classical stereotypes on the Americans, as well as Mrs. Sen’s position against England is fuelled by prejudices against the former mother-country, and these disputes situate the novel in a fluid border zone between the two contested spaces (Jay 2010: 125) where all claims of priority and authenticity of a place over another are useless. These clichéd assertions are also thoroughly ironical being promoted by people that will never really belong to those places, thus highlighting another attempt by the periphery to get closer to the centre, even though despising it.

In this paradoxical fight to affirm the colonial heritage, the importance of objects as memories of familiar places and elements of identity formation is confirmed by Jemu’s English manners and relics, which provoked the admiration of all his

compatriots when he came back from England, including his wife:

She [Jemu's wife] rummaged in the toilet case Jemubhai had brought back from Cambridge and found a jar of green salve, a hairbrush and comb set in silver, a pom-pom with a loop of silk in a round container of powder – and, coming at her exquisitely, her first whiff of lavender. The crisp light scents that rose from his new possessions were all of a foreign place. [...] (Desai 2006: 166)

For Jemubhai's wife these strange objects represent a remote place that she will never visit, a place which she is irresistibly attracted to, but which does not have an identity value for her. On the other hand, Jemu gives them a different meaning: through these objects he actually can recognise himself, or at least the personality that the English educational system forged, and this is the reason why he is so desperate when he cannot find his puff, accusing his family of being “thieving, ignorant people” (168). His own people are so distant from him and from the excellence of his English manners that he feels a real sense of frustration at “home”; so, he sits up on his bed thinking that he is a foreigner in his own country (167) and dreaming of England. With this regard, his identity doubly suffers because he is not only alienated from the centre of his own original cultural identity, but he also finds it difficult to obtain a space in the global English society where he actually “felt barely human at all” (40). So, Jemubhai's position is quite contradictory because he did not feel at home even in the UK, and in fact he did not live a full experience of the English space when he was there, since the shocking impact with discrimination prevented him from fully living his life abroad. He chose to study twelve hours per day, and “he retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. [...] He saw nothing of the English countryside, missed the beauty of carved colleges and churches painted with gold leaf and angels” (39-40). In this way, he did not manage to accustom himself neither to the English landscape, nor to the Indian one.

Biju's condition in New York almost fifty years later reflects this same situation. The American metropole is an alienating space for migrants, where Lefebvre's “right to the city” is totally denied. So, also in this case, even the most elementary aspects of a “spatial justice” are disregarded, especially considering that the

current globalized societies of the western world did not manage to transform the injustices and oppressions of different geographical areas into a “strategic force for mobilizing and organizing innovative forms of spatial praxis aimed explicitly at achieving greater spatial justice and ‘global’ democracy” (Warf, Arias 2009: 32). Indeed, the examined novels depict a world where racism is still the norm, and where the countryside and the cities of the postcolonial nations are still opposed to the modernity of the western metropolises. In *The Inheritance of Loss*, New York is described as a place of cheaters and frauds, a modern and cosmopolitan space where Biju has to live in the basement of a building which belongs to an invisible management company. It is in this desolating environment that he starts to rethink of his village in India, “buried in silver grasses that were taller than a man and made a sound, *shuu shuuuuu, shu shuuu*, as the wind turned them his way and that” (Desai 2006: 102). Like in *A State of Independence*, the sound of home plays a central role because it reawakens Biju’s nostalgia and attachment to India. From this perspective, New York, the global metropole, confirms its role of both oppressing and cathartic space where diasporic identities can rediscover their ancestral need of home. Thus, the migrant city par excellence, with its set of inequalities and injustices, tries to answer to the necessities of its diasporic people by assuming an emancipating function which embraces the freedom of the spirit, while the body is still far from home.

Narayan as well, in *Return to India*, portrays New York as “a city of immigrants” (Narayan 2012: 106), and this condition, rather than developing her sense of being a global citizen, paradoxically prevents her from missing her own culture. From this perspective, her situation resembles that of Biju, although the author also affirms that she loves New York because it is very much like India for its multi-coloured variety of human beings and its vital energy, and for the presence of authentic Indians, that is people who did not lose their Indianness in spite of the challenges and the frustrations of their lives (107). So, these similarities between the Big Apple and India is the reason why the American city has left such a strong impression on her mind:

New York was seminal in changing my view towards America and India. Cities

change people, of course; where you live influences the kind of person you become. It is possible to fall madly in love with a city and yet, feel the first seeds of discontentment about your life? (111).

This statement has a central function because it underlines the role played by space in migrant identities: spatial dynamics can definitely influence migrants' perception about values and traditions, and in Narayan's case, the environment's vibes are strongly ambivalent, although they will inevitably push her towards India.

Hence, the tension between locality and globality is once again solved in favour of the former, and although the protagonist "would have loved to be a global citizen" (181), she finally chooses to be an Indian mother and woman. One solution, however, does not exclude the other because her identity can be seen as the product of a globalized hybridization which is the result of a particular kind of locality: from this standpoint, diasporic identities retain the sense of "a centre, nation, locality, territory (that is homogeneous, indigenous, 'settled') *from* which communities migrate" (Procter 2003: 14), and to which they return, both physically and mentally. It is for this reason that, although she has spent almost twenty years in the USA, Narayan's subjectivity has been mostly shaped by the Indian influences of the American context, and not by a pure American lifestyle. This is the real kind of multiculturalism Shoba is looking for (Narayan 2012: 182), far from the global inequalities experienced by Biju in Desai's novel. After all, according to Narayan, there are four things that constitute life in any place you go: the personal space, the character of the city, routine, and people (218). All these elements of the American environment paradoxically reconnected her to her Indian homeland because the more a place represents these identity formation's symbols, the more this will become the place of your heart.

However, these considerations are completely overturned in *A New World*, where the protagonist Jayojit has found his personal space and his routine in the Midwest American city where he lives: he is so strongly at ease in the American bourgeois habitat of his university professor's life, that his relationship with homeland and his native city Calcutta has been totally removed to the background in his mind. In this peculiar lifestyle, one can observe the American tendency to

prefer size over substance, act over thought, so that Calcutta is “like an obstacle” for Jayojit (Chaudhuri 2000: 51) because it is a “foreign” place which forces him towards reflection. Indeed, when Jayojit walks through the bustling streets of Calcutta, he finds himself not only caught between clashing memories of India and America, but also between different versions of his life, revisiting lost opportunities. The Indian space plays, therefore, the same role of the American habitat in *The Inheritance of Loss* and *Return to India*: it is a cathartic place where memories of the past come back, as well as a space of articulation which disrupts the characteristics of Jayojit’s American life in a moment of personal crisis when “[...] he’d decided that it [Calcutta] would give him the space for recoument that he thought was necessary now” (51). Therefore, the city provides him with a sort of new identity, a breakeven to the problems of his life. So, despite the strong influence of the USA on Jayojit’s way of thinking and behaving, the need and the relevance of the ancestral space as anchorage is once again confirmed by Chaudhuri, in a novel where immobility and fixity have a predominant role over the typical migrant themes of movement and (dis)placement.

In this context, however, the consequences of globalization on the Indian space appear to be more damaging than in the other texts, because they have generated a global space with homogeneous westernized characteristics: Calcutta’s landscape is rich of “company flats”, and “compact decorated spaces” inhabited by “settlers [who] bring with them the sense of space that belongs to another culture” (101). Also Joy can initially be seen as a settler in his own land, but unlike foreign colonizers, he fights against this kind of colonization, trying to resist to his first need to look for signs of the western hegemony: “He walked on, until he saw three familiar shops in the distance, on the left, on the other side; a provisions store, a fast-food outlet, and a drugstore. He felt not so much a sense of déjà vu as one of ironic, qualified continuity” (51). This continuity with the western environment is not what Jayojit needs in order to come to terms with his own identity, so the entire novel is constructed on Joy’s search along the city’s streets of a pure image of Calcutta in order to re-appropriate the city: it is only after revising and reimagining the past that he can finally feel at ease in his own home and physically re-inhabit it. It is for this reason that he starts to come back home

from his peregrinations through the city with objects which recall his familiarity with the Indian environment:

He came back with two mirrorwork cushion covers, a bedcover for himself, and two small brass birds for his neighbour, a cardiac surgeon. [...] There was a pichwai [a traditional painting], in particular, he'd stood before silently, undecided whether to buy [...] with a Krishna at the centre, surrounded by ten or twenty Krishnas and Radhas. [...] He'd also bought a sari for his mother. (166)

Through these objects, Jayojit is trying to physically appropriate Calcutta; this sort of embodiment with the city is typical of what Sara Ahmed posits in her theorization of migration, according to which migrant and diasporic movements are felt at the level of embodiment and bodies which (re)inhabit space in their quest for homes. She claims that “[w]hat migration narratives involve, then, is a spatial reconfiguration of an embodied self: a transformation of the very skin through which the body is embodied” (Ahmed 1999: 342), and this condition can be actually reached only through a new perception of and a new standpoint on the migrant space. So, Calcutta becomes the space where Joy is able to re-evaluate his identity, and this constant challenge is the reason why the city initially “irritated him” (Chaudhuri 2000: 51): in fact, it is always difficult to face the ghosts of the past, and the return to home forces migrants to do so.

Through his description of the Indian space, Chaudhuri also introduces the question of the clash between first and second generation because, if on the one hand Joy needs to deal with his complex path of belonging and search for roots, on the other hand his little son Bonny does not show the same interest for the Indian city, which is just his grandparents' home for him.

The generational clash is well depicted in *Maps for Lost Lovers*, where migrants' hybrid characterization is denied by Shamas and Kaukab, whereas it is strongly affirmed by their sons.

In Aslam's novel, the kinship between diasporic people and the English space is often conflictual, especially because migrants sturdily seek to employ Lefebvre's right to the city. However, problems appear when “we construe that right [...] as a right to change and transform the spaces of the city into a different kind of living

environment compatible with quite different social relations by attacking both its material forms as well as dominant discourses of representation” (Harvey 2006: 12). Actually, Shamas and Kaukab try to adapt the English city where they live to their own traditions, but through an aggressive behaviour which accentuates the conflict with the English environment rather than looking for a peaceful resolution. In particular, they try to affirm the purity of their culture as a response to the process of cultural translations on the local and global scale which they see as a permanent threat to their traditions (Butt 2008: 156); their aim, however, appears quite utopic since both the global age and the migrant context are characterized by impurity by definition, thus demonstrating that the novel’s first generation is unable to deal with its own condition of displacement and dislocation.

In this context, also the murder of Jugnu and Chanda is seen as a reaction to the conflict with the foreign space surrounding the Pakistani community, as Shamas’s words demonstrate:

“Kaukab, I know, sometimes blames Jugnu and Chanda for what happened. They tried to turn their back on the world, on the world’s trouble, and found themselves stabbed in the back. [...] Do you know this Punjabi couplet? [...] *‘On the one hand, the city surrounding me was easily provoked. On the other, I was curious about ways of dying’*” (Aslam 2004: 290).

The two lovers have challenged the “city surrounding” them, and they had to pay this insult with death; furthermore, even commenting his brother’s murder Shamas refers to the Pakistani culture as a source of absolute truths in opposition to the disordered space and culture they have to deal with in England. Hence the migrant context is depicted as a suffocating environment opposed to the space of freedom embodied by the two lovers. Moreover, in migrants’ English houses, there are not objects which can help them to forge a real hybrid identity, since they have recreated a sort of small Pakistani world, a space of comfort where they feel protected and safe. On the other hand, the house of the westernized Jugnu and Chanda is full of glass-topped cases containing butterflies of every colours, symbols of freedom and desire of autonomy from their overpowering families.

So, migrant and diasporic people described in *Maps for Lost Lovers* are totally dispelled in the English habitat; in this context, the migrant's right to the city is quite abused since the Pakistani community depicted by Aslam totally rejects any form of integration. In this way, however, Pakistani migrants are prevented from living a fully diasporic experience; so, although the tendency to maintain a strong bond with the ancestral culture is typical of all South Asian communities abroad (Jayaram, Yogesh 2004: 48), Aslam's novels goes further by describing a blind exaltation of traditions and a total refusal of the English space. In this context, Pakistani migrants are trying to create a veritable "British Asian city" (McLoughlin, Gould, Kabir 2014) in the UK, in an extreme example of reverse colonization which would reward them from the mourning of their migrant life.

Therefore, talking about the spatial dynamics involved into the Caribbean and South Asian migration, it is noteworthy to consider the different approaches to the western and postcolonial cities and spaces described in the texts. In novels such as *The Mimic Men*, *The Sleepless Summer*, and *Moses Migrating* the protagonists initially try to establish a first contact with the host country, but they soon discover that they are bound to be rejected by it. Their frustrations push them to look for a purer relationship with their homelands, although their years in the UK also complicate their recognition at home, as Phillips has widely shown in *A State of Independence*. During this process, their identities are inevitably influenced by the landscapes and the objects around them, both abroad and at home, and this is true also for the South Asian accounts of migration. In these novels, however, it is also possible to discern a great interest in the global/local tension typical of the last thirty years: the growth of attention in the consequences of globalization is particularly evident in Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, where the spatial dynamics are influenced by a constant swing between West and East, USA and India.

Also the other South Asian authors have underlined this aspect in their novels, even though in different ways: if on the one hand Shoba Narayan and Amit Chaudhuri have depicted westernized identities which slowly rediscover their Indian heritage, on the other hand Nadeem Aslam sought to portray the fundamentalist face and the war for space of Pakistani migrants in the UK,

diasporic people who are far from being integrated into the British context. For all the Caribbean and South Asian novelists, however, it is fundamental to sustain the so-called right to the city, which should affirm “the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos” (Lefebvre 1991: 34). The negation of this right is a typical characteristic of the host societies; all the protagonists have actually experienced a more or less developed condition of rebuff, and this is the reason why, despite the difficulties of the homecoming, they still dream of returning home. Indeed, the selected novels show that there is just a fundamental and undeniable element characterizing the Caribbean and South Asian diasporas, that is the migrants’ bond with their ancestral homeland, and this fact pushes them to come back home.

3.3 “Being at home”: Caribbean and South Asian returns to a mythical homeland

As already mentioned in the first chapter, the idea of “home” is an extremely unstable matter since it is related to many variants, especially when it refers to a possible homecoming.

First-generation migrants usually “retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland, [...] they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return” (Safran 1991: 1). From this perspective, the idea of home turns into an actual legend which is exploited by the diasporic identities, by homeland itself, and by the host societies, and the same thing happens to the myth of homecoming, that is to migrants’ desire to return home after a period of time abroad that may vary in length. Moreover, return can also become a defence mechanism, a way to escape for various reasons from the host country.

However, although the desire to come back home can be so strong to become an obsession, such as in Narayan’s *Return to India* or Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers*, this wish does not prepare migrants to the actual departure for homeland and to

what they will find when they finally come back. Indeed, homecoming is a sort of utopia, a dream which often turns into a nightmare, especially because of the differences between the imagined homeland of the past and the actual homeland of the present.

So, from both a literary and a sociological perspective, the main problem of the return's experience is how to conciliate an imaginary place to a real country. Salman Rushdie tries to explain it in his well-known essay *Imaginary Homelands*, where he affirms that he had tried to make his India "as imaginatively true as I could" (Rushdie 1991: 10). This coexistence between imagination and truth is one of the fundamental issues concerning homecoming. Diasporic returnees have to deal with the broken mirrors of their fragmented memory because "the past is a country from which we have all migrated, [...] but I suggest that the writer who is out-of-country and even out-of-language may experience this loss in an intensified form" (12). So, South Asian migrants and authors, as well as the novels' protagonists, have to deal with a distant past and a foreign present, and the same thing happens also in the Caribbean context, where the 1960s-returnees to Jamaica, for instance, experienced a shock upon return mainly due to the awareness that what they had been dreaming for years about their homeland was not real: when they came back, in fact, they discovered that there was neither work, nor housing for them in their native land (Plaza 2006: 30). So, in order to escape from these delusions, Markowitz and Stefansson suggest to focus not only on the idea of home as a mythic land, but on "how people navigate, make meaningful, and attempt to reconfigure the vexing intersections of three overlapping yet often contradictory phenomena: home, diasporas, and nation-states" (Markowitz, Stefansson 2004: 23). It is only by concentrating on the peculiarities of these return's components that it is possible to define home(land) as a "highly packed signifier that encapsulates a concept and a place and encompasses a feeling born of desire, laced with nostalgia" (23). From this perspective, home can include memories, longings, spatialities, families, and the global/local dichotomy, that is all the identity factors analysed so far.

3.3.1 Circular paths: examples of homecomings in the Caribbean depictions of Naipaul and Dennis

The first depictions of homecoming in the Caribbean literary context have appeared since the 1960s. The need of home has always been so strong for these migrants that also the rootless Ralph Singh wishes to find a place of retirement in his native homeland, “an old cocoa estate, [...] everywhere there would have been the smell of old timber and wax; everywhere the eye would have found pleasure in fashioned wood [...] There is no finer house than an old estate house of the islands” (Naipaul 1969: 32-33). His dream of return is obviously made of all the most pleasant memories of Isabella, a country where the sun always shines, the landscape is lush and verdant, and life is easier:

I would have gone riding in the early morning. The labourers would have been at their undemanding tasks. [...] Words would have been exchanged, about their jobs, their families, the progress of their sons at school. Labourers of the olden time! Not yet ‘the people’! Then back for breakfast to the estate house, where fresh morning cocoa was mingling its aroma with that of old wood. [...] the rest of the morning would have seen me at my desk, slowly patterning the white paper with the blackest of inks; and the late evening too, when there would have been no sound save that of the generating plant [...]. (33-34)

Ralph’s imagined homecoming is full of the colonial memories of an ancestral (white) past that he will never reach. The real return, instead, is far away from this idyllic portray: Singh’s role in the new government of the neo-independent island and his consequent downfall have actually prevented the realization of his dreams of homecoming. His return is, therefore, characterized by the same frustration that he had experienced in England, thus denying his attempt to find a place of belonging and order, an order which actually is more internal than material.

And yet the choice of returning initially seemed to be the right solution, since when he arrived in Isabella with his English wife Sandra, he was dazzled by the sunlight and the freedom which everyone proclaimed (55). Everything is gorgeous and stunning, and Ralph feels innocently “revived”, without feeling the danger of

his imminent extinction (56): indeed, Isabella's colonial heritage is still really solid, so that he soon starts to feel discriminated in his own home, like a migrant in London. This is particularly evident in his relationship with his school friend Deschampsneufs, towards whom Ralph totally perceives the sense of psychological inferiority that the slaves' descendants usually feel towards the masters' descendants (78), the same feeling which pushed him to migrate to London ten years before. After all, his feelings towards his native land have been ambivalent since his childhood, which was characterized by a mix of confusion, loneliness, fantasies, and shame for the poor origin of his father's family. As a consequence, Ralph has started to challenge his affectionate feelings for his country of origin, thus reflecting a typical peculiarity of migrants' experience (Markowitz, Stefansson 2004: 126). In this light, the expectations about homeland do not resemble the real homeland, in the same way in which Isabella does not correspond to Ralph's ideal home: as a result, he has constructed a relationship of love and hatred towards it, a situation in which Isabella is "most unbearable" (Naipaul 1969: 96). Therefore, despite the fact that migrants may create a "home away from homeland" (Markowitz, Stefansson 2004: 125), Ralph does not feel at home either in England, or in Isabella, and this fact explains why he feels branded as different in relation to his own "people" even in his native island (Naipaul 1969: 97), as if he wore the same mask he used to wear during his life in England. However, Ralph can be seen also as a predestined soul, someone who is designed to go away to find his own salvation. From this perspective, Ralph certainly embodies his author's spirit, as well as "his creative isolation, his need to provide his own foundation where most writers find firm ground in relation, however embattled, to their homeland or their adopted country" (Greenberg 2000: 215). Naipaul and his character are, therefore, the two sides of the same coin, since they both cannot settle for a single home, but they are looking for its composite meaning. And, although this position against a single idea of home could derive from the mongrel nature of the Caribbean islands, and in particular from the campaigns of humiliation and demoralization aimed at Indians which took place in Trinidad in the 1940s (Greenberg 2000), I would argue that Ralph's – and Naipaul's – rejection and desire to escape from his Caribbean homeland is

inspired, instead, by a true need of knowledge and of experiencing a different point of view, rather than by a real hate towards his homeland. This is proved by the fact that Ralph's anguish and fear do not disappear in London, thus demonstrating that the sense of unsuitableness is part of Ralph's personality, and it does not derive from his permanence in the Caribbean.

In this regard, the escape from homeland then turns into the desire to come back, as it was predicted on the time of Ralph's departure: "I note that all come back. I tell you boy, this place is a paradise.' That word again. 'I suppose you going to do like all the others and come back with a whitey-pokey'" (Naipaul 1969: 179). Indeed, once in England, Singh eventually desires to come back home in order to "return to a more elemental complexity" (36) because he understands that the real escape is not that from homeland, but from the simplification of a homogenized life in a metropolis like London. It is for this reason that Ralph seeks to escape from England, a place of delusion and dissolution where it is easy to dwindle, a city of fantasy and fairytales (232), where Ralph is physically sick (237), and where his search for order is doomed to fail. The sorrow for his definitive personal failure is also the reason why, at the end of the novel, he decides to finally stay in London, and to personally choose his exile. In this light, his identity is definitively shattered, destroyed by a "horror" (237) which is, however, useful to come to the real knowledge.

His return to Isabella has been, therefore, quite different from what he had imagined. However, he also manages to understand

the contradictions in that dream of the rundown cocoa estate. *It was a dream of the past, and it came at a time when, by creating drama and insecurity, we had destroyed the past.* [...] The commonest type of political ambition is the desire for eviction and succession. But the order to which the colonial politician succeeds is not his order. It is something he is compelled to destroy; destruction comes with his emergence and is a condition of his power. (36; my emphasis)

His dream of the cocoa estate has failed because it was part of his past life, it was the dream of a peaceful withdrawal which cannot be realized; returning home is a more complex matter because first-generation migrants' diasporic identities

cannot remain the same during the migrant journey and, in the case of Ralph Singh, his identity has been deeply changed not only by his life in London, but also by the vicissitudes of his political experience in Isabella. In this context, writing would be an opportunity for Ralph to exorcise this past and come to terms with his own sense of “failure and humiliation” (50) for not having been able to realize his homeland’s dream. However, his double exclusion from both Isabella and London is due to “his refusal, when the phantasy disintegrates, to re-conceptualize and re-negotiate his relationship to the island in a way that would have freed him from the compulsion to repeat, on a different plane, this time political, the phantasy and romance” (Dhareshwar 1989: 80). This refusal has prevented him to actually come to terms with both his hybrid identity and his homeland. Hybridization and the absence of any form of fixity are, in fact, fundamental characteristics of any postcolonial and diasporic identity, and this peculiarity can be connected to the Freudian concept of *Umheimliche*, that is “unhomely”. However, “to be unhomed, is not to be homeless” (Bhabha 1994: 9), and this assumption should lead to a reconsideration of the idea of home in postcolonial literature as a spatial relocation of both the concepts of world and of people who live in it. Therefore, even though Phukan talks of Ralph’s otherness from Isabella and England as a condition of “homelessness” (Phukan 2008: 144), I would argue that Ralph’s position is not that of a homeless, rather than that of an outcast who consciously chooses his diasporic fate.

Starting from this last consideration, it is maybe possible to postulate that postcolonial territories should revitalize and make themselves more attractive for their migrant citizens, in order to push them not only to visit home, but also to stay. In the case of Naipaul’s work, Ralph’s final withdrawal from Isabella is not a negation of the idea of home, but comes from his inability to question the colonial inheritance, as well as from the disastrous island’s condition which prevents him to imagine a future in “our own little bastard world” (Naipaul 1969: 122).

The relationship between the notions of home and homeland and the process of identity formation is addressed in a fertile way also in Ferdinand Dennis. In the 1976-London, the young Colin Morgan dreams about an idea of “home” (Dennis 1989: 9), thus demonstrating a first sign of homesickness and attachment to his

Caribbean homeland. In Dennis's novel, however, the notion of home and the consequent homecoming are complicated by Colin's few experience of his country of origin, Jamaica, as well as by his African heritage. As the old Jamaican migrant Mr. Charles underlines, "You might go back, yes. But a Jamaican is a wandering man. You wouldn't stay" (36), and his assertion is proved by his own experience of returnee who had come back home, and then had decided to return to London (36). His statement also underlines the sense of unfixity and complexity behind the composite nature of Caribbean identities, whose mongrel character muddles the same idea of return. However, despite his own experience and his assertion about the wandering character of Jamaican migrants, he also admits "Ah must bury there, must close my eyes in the shadow of the Blue Mountains" (36), thus accidentally showing his ancestral attachment to his Caribbean homeland.

After all, the question of return is an obsessive issue throughout the novel. Even Colin's parents actually want to return to Jamaica, and they are enthusiastically planning their journey: Colin's mother definitely affirms that their Jamaican town, Portland, is "pretty, it pretty you'd t'ink is Eden itself" (50), while his father declares: "'This country all right when you young,' said Father, 'then you 'ave the strength to fight. [...]', but when you become old and you have 'a little money' and 'a house empty in Jamaica', it is time to come back because 'is our country dat'" (50). The decision of Colin's parents reflects the typical first-generation migrants' behaviour, that is the desire to return home after a life of work and efforts in the UK, while the memory of Jamaica as an "Eden" recalls *The Mimic Men* definition of Isabella as a "paradise" (Naipaul 1969: 179), a veritable heaven that Ralph Singh was not able to appreciate.

Even Colin seems not to enjoy his parents' decision to come back: if on the one hand, he perceives that London is a place of "strangers" (Dennis 1989: 51), on the other hand he cannot actually understand neither his parents' accounts of the Caribbean, nor their idea of home and return. Indeed, Colin's parents are an example of those first-generation returnees who had migrated "maintaining an intention to return" (Conway, Potter 2005: 7), while their son, who was just a child when they arrived in England, cannot share this peculiar set of feelings.

Moreover, Colin's mother asserts that she has never gotten accustomed to London and the factory work (Dennis 1989: 50), as well as she has never taken part in the English society, thus proving that "social/segmented assimilation and absorption into their new metropolitan social milieu is, of course, an emigration option for many, but by no means all" (Conway, Potter 2005: 8). From this perspective, also Colin has never managed to properly enter into the British context, and the Black House is a response to this uncomfortable situation for him and for his fellows, a place where rediscovering black people's ancestral homeland in order to aspire to return there.

Therefore, the characters of *The Sleepless Summer* seek to return home, but they do not know to what kind of home. In this regard, Colin's conceptualization of home is connected to the notion of diaspora as constituted by people who share a sense of a common history (McLeod 2000: 238): "What I really wanted was a home, a place to which I could belong, could participate in its celebratory rituals, its reaffirmations of identity" (Dennis 1989: 187). The search for this kind of home would be actually embodied in the Black House project, as well as in Ziggy's disconnected discourses on the Caribbean and its ancestral African origin; however, Colin cannot feel at home in the Black House because this communitarian project soon turns into the little personal kingdom of Ziggy and Max's egotism (103), a fact which prevents the boy from really sharing his own confused ideals and values.

Colin's desire to return to his ancestral homeland is, however, authentic, even though he does not know where this homeland is. It is for this reason that, after the summer spent with Ziggy and Max, he decides to travel across the world, firstly to Jamaica and then to Africa, thus making Ziggy's disordered aspirations concrete. Colin's example demonstrates that it is only through an actual experience of return that the concept of home can maintain its relevance in "establishing the life-spaces within which transnational people move, make their life decisions, adapt to and/or resist. Home-places provides the anchors for migrant's real world experiences" (Conway, Potter 2005: 266-267), so that returning home means coming full circle by having a complete experience which does not prevent diasporic people from potentially leaving again for another

migrant or diasporic journey, but with a new awareness. In *The Sleepless Summer*, in fact, Colin's diasporic identity is ultimately constructed by his numerous voyages to and away from home:

I now knew what I was running away from in London. My youth had been spent fighting against and searching for a definition of what I am. The city had defined me as a black person, member of an unwanted immigrant community, a people without history, descendants of slaves fit only to do its menial jobs, a lawless people. By continuing my education I had proven the city wrong. Then I had met Ziggy and Max. They had taught me the positive side of being black, to take pride in that unalterable fact. *It was an exercise which required that I know my history, and I had learnt it. Indeed, I had spent the past ten years exploring that past, enriching my understanding of what I am. My stay in Jamaica, my work in Ghana. There is now no doubt in my mind as to what I am.* (Dennis 1989: 189; my emphasis)

At the end of his peregrinations, Colin understands that return simply means looking for your own (hi)story and roots, in order to become a complete person. In other words, “[...] the sense of ‘belonging’ to a ‘home as anchor’ gives migrants the security that enables them to have flexible approaches to livelihood chances and options [...] because it offers a return option as a fall-back strategy” (Conway, Potter 2005: 267). Therefore, if on the one hand his initial decision to return home was basically inspired just by his friends' beliefs about the importance of roots, on the other hand, it is only at the end of his journey that he can finally fully appreciate the deeper meaning of these same concepts and of the idea of home. From this perspective, Colin eventually understands the real value of the homecoming, proving that the lesson of his first mentor Ziggy was not wrong but it needed to be updated: the necessity and the meaning of the return journey can vary from person to person but, at the same time, the act of coming home has a communitarian value which cannot follow the egoistic perspective of a single person. So, Colin's return to Jamaica, and then Africa, can definitely respond to the psychological need, typical of people who are part of a place but who are not totally accepted in that place, to find a geographical and emotional area wherein to feel at home. As a result, the ancestral homeland can function as anchor and

centralizer of common belongings for diasporic people, creating the already mentioned myth of homeland which may correspond or not to migrants' expectations.

3.3.2 A clash between expectations and the reality of return in *Moses Migrating* and *A State of Independence*

In Selvon's work, the topic of return is addressed since the beginning of the novel, when Moses states that he does not remember when the idea of coming home started to hit him because, "It could of been one time of any time when I was down in the dumps, my back aching from bending down to pick up the apples that fall when my cart upset" (Selvon 1983: 1). He soon finds himself involved in the preparations to leave London with his British friends Bob and Jeannie, who are going to Trinidad to live a sort of colonial adventure, an amusing trip which does not have the same symbolical value of Moses's return. Also in this case it is possible to note Selvon's bittersweet irony, according to which Moses would have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of his friends for the journey when he was just "toying" (2) with the idea of coming home. From this perspective, Moses's condition is quite different from the reports of sociological case-studies about return migration in later life. While Bolzman argues that most return immigrants see themselves as guest workers who did not settle permanently abroad and, therefore, resided in the host country with nostalgia for their homeland (Bolzman 2013: 68), Moses has many doubts about leaving the UK and coming back home. He does not follow any of the classical reasons to return home, such as family bonds and social networks, health condition or cultural resources (71), and when his travelling companion Walter asks him, "What about you? Trinidad is your home?" (Selvon 1983: 33), he states: "I came originally from Trinidad, but I have lived in Brit'n for longer than I can remember" (33). So, Moses has lived so long in the UK that he needs the mother-country in order to affirm his own personality (Nasta 1988: 260), and this Anglophile-Moses is Selvon's weapon to satirize not only the English system, but also migrants' perception of themselves and of their

own homelands.

Despite his contradictory feelings, Moses ends up on the ship to Trinidad discussing with Bob about the real nature of Trinidadians “at home”: “‘Would we need any phrasebooks?’ ‘Oh God, Bob,’ I say now. ‘You’ve met a lot of Trinidadians in London.’ ‘But I don’t know what they’re like at home,’” (Selvon 1983: 11). The misgiving of the Englishman Bob highlights one of the most significant differences between migrants and tourists suggested by Zygmunt Bauman, who distinguishes them according to their different approaches to their destination. On the one hand, tourists are the typical customers of the current global system, and they expect to find a world suitable for their money, following the constant belief that they are right and they are going in the right direction (Bauman 1998); on the other hand, migrants have to submit to this condition, and when they come back home, they have to keep on corresponding to tourists’ expectations, as they did in the host countries.

Moses as well has to respond not only to his friends’ prospects, but also to those of his family. His first impact with Trinidad is, in fact, disastrous; he is “tired, irritable, and depressed; I just left my things on the floor and lay down on the bed wondering what the arse I was doing here thousands of miles from my tried and trusted surroundings” (Selvon 1983: 60). Maybe Moses’s fears are originated by the fact that Trinidad is now a foreign land to him, it is not “tried and trusted” like London. Like for Ralph Singh, his homeland is part of a distant past, and the incongruity of his memories are mixed to a sense of present estrangement to generate a perception of alienation in his own country. These feelings of isolation and marginalization are revealed also by some re-entry literature; in particular, it has been underlined how the reintegration process can share similar characteristics with the initial stages of migration, such as loneliness and discrimination (Leavey, Eliacin 2013: 206). This is what happens also to the returnee Moses, whose gap with the “stayees” is clearly evident since his first encounter with Tanty and their conversation about “de-Hilton”:

‘So you staying in de-Hilton?’ I guess she found it hard to believe I was staying in the most expensive hotel in the island. She kept looking across the road as if she was seeing it for the first time. [...] ‘How long you going to stay, Moses? You better get

out of that place' – she indicated the hotel – 'it must be costing you a pound and a crown! That's for the white tourists-them. [...]' (Selvon 1983: 65).

From Tanty's words, it is clear that Moses is perceived as a stranger in Trinidad, someone who seeks to show with ostentation his new economic possibilities due to his English stay, so that he feels really uncomfortable himself, "as if out here by the Savannah I lose my identity and become prey to incidents and accidents" (65). He looks strange to Tanty, and he does not sound Trinidadian to her (66), especially because he wants to behave like a tourist, like his friend Bob. Therefore, he tries to buy all the oranges that Tanty is selling to alleviate her work, without understanding that, in this way, he offends her: "I don't want your money! [...] you come back here on your high-faluting horses and trying to bribe your way into my good graces! Not a word from you all these years [...] and offering me *balbo* money too'" (67). Tanty's reaction and her invective against Moses' English money depict their cultural distance, as well as the general difficulties of reintegration for returnees; in Moses's case, his compatriots soon turn him into a sideshow freak because of his supposed sophistication which does not fit into the Caribbean context. However, just when his distance from Trinidad seems unbridgeable, he starts to re-appreciate his life at home, especially through the re-appropriation of the typical customs of the Trinidadian culture, such as the Carnival. Indeed, it is during this important Caribbean event that his sense of being at home becomes most powerful. His impersonation of Britannia is part of both Moses's heritage and his confused relationship with the concepts of home, homeland, and return: on the one hand, the disguise allows him to be elusive and to survive to his own hybridity, but on the other hand, it also negates him the right to authenticity (Nasta 1988: 262-263). In this light, his ambivalent identity is definitely confirmed because, while he tries to reconstruct his Trinidadian self, he also confusedly mixes his Caribbean heritage with his erroneous perception of both Britain and Trinidad. So, in *Moses Migrating*, Selvon depicts the ambivalent position of those migrants who definitely feel torn between their ancestral homelands and the gratefulness to the mother-country, and for this reason they struggle to find a final definition of their idea of home.

By contrast, Bertram Francis's condition in *A State of Independence* is quite

more defined because he has consciously decided to come back, although “there had been moments in the last twenty years when he felt sure he would never have the courage or the means to set foot once again on his island” (Phillips 1986: 27). Bertram thinks that he could start a new life in his native island (12), even though he has to deal with the underdeveloped way of life of his compatriots. In this regard, the Caribbean territory is described as still anchored to a past which seems to laugh at Bertram, like the old Ford Corsair of the taxi driver, “a joke car [which] made Bertram aware that in this society such a car was still a symbol of some status” (15). So, like Moses, also Bertram has to deal with the backwardness and the cold welcome of his own people, as the driver’s words remind him:

[...] remember you’re back home now and things do move differently here. I’m often picking up fellars who been living in England and America and all them places, and they coming back here like we must adjust their pace rather than it’s they who must remember just who it is they dealing with once they reach back. (17)

Bertram is immediately warned that things have changed on the island and that he has to adapt himself to the new situation. Actually, even his family does not welcome him in the proper way: the first question his mother asks him after twenty years of silence is “when you planning on taking off again?” (50). The disapproval of Bertram’s mother is not weird, since homecoming may not necessarily reunite people with their families or their familial homesteads (Markowitz, Stefansson 2004: 26), and it is justified by twenty years of disinterest from Bertram, even though it is possible to affirm that the hope to re-embrace his mother and brother was one of the reasons which pushed him to return.

Once back he has to contemplate also the island’s changes imposed by the new American hegemony, which sponsors the tendency of globalization to promote “homelessness”, rather than the search of a stable homeland. This paradox deeply affects Bertram’s new life in the Caribbean because it prevents him to fit into the new state he has found by coming back: he cannot settle in his own homeland because he does not understand it, and also because the island does not provide him the means to live there (Phillips 1986: 81). From this perspective, it seems that Bertram keeps on justifying himself without admitting his lacks and mistakes,

especially in relation to his family; the author actually condemns Bertram for his cowardice and selfishness, as well as for his “ill-considered desire to be entirely free from all social and historical ties” (Brown 2013: 94). Moreover, Bertram’s “self-centredness is such that he is unable to assess the extent to which his uncaring behaviour might have affected people around him” (Ledent 2002: 49), and the damages caused by his “independence” from everyone are emphasized throughout the novel. Hence he tries once again to escape from his responsibilities by seeking refuge into a mere fantasy:

He played a game with himself that he often did when disturbed. He would pick out a spot on the horizon, focus on it, then close his eyes and try and imprint it on his mind. Then he would reopen his eyes and look again, and try to pick out a spot beyond it, close his eyes, imprint, then open his eyes again and try to look even further beyond that spot. This way he was trying all the while to see further into the distance so that he might one day see another island that nobody else had ever seen, and then proceed to people it with persons from his mind so that he had his own world that nobody could touch. (Phillips 1986: 97-98)

Bertram’s fantasy of a personal autonomy and a personal island where he could act like a king underlines once again his naive nature and his incapacity to deal with the problems of his return’s journey. Moreover, his fantasy is conceived in geographical terms in order to further sustain the similarities between the returnee and his homeland as both slaves of their weaknesses.

Hence Bertram certainly reflects returnees’ tendency to replace the concrete hostility and complications of their homeland by an imaginary idea of a comforting land. As Brown points out,

Bertram’s simplistic dreams of returning “home” as if nothing has happened in the intervening twenty years are roundly discredited. In depicting Bertram as childish and out of touch, Phillips suggests that his protagonist’s isolationist rhetoric of sovereignty is unable to account for the true complexity of the contemporary situation. (Brown 2013: 98)

So, Bertram definitely cannot deal with the new balances of power and the current umpteenth exploitation of his homeland, especially because he does not realize that his life on the island cannot depend from a simple birth right. Indeed, when he states that nobody can stop him simply because he is born there (Phillips 1986: 113), his ex-friend Jackson laughs at him, making clear that the island is his home anymore (119). It is for this reason that, according to Jackson, Bertram should return to England:

England is where you belong now. Things have changed too much for you to have any chance of fitting back [...] You English West Indians should just come back here to retire and sit in the sun. Don't waste your time trying to get into the fabric of the society for you're made of the wrong material for the modern Caribbean. (136)

So, re-inhabiting the past is an impossible aspiration for returnees. From this perspective, Bertram can be compared to a pilgrim who wishes to reach a sacred place pushed by the blind persuasion that the land of his spiritual inclination is the right destination to satisfy his thirst. This is the reason why he has come back to the Caribbean after his experience in England: he had decided it since the beginning of his English stay, when “he had known that perhaps he would one day have to return home empty-handed” (152). Also during his stay in Britain, in fact, he has known moments of frustration and discomfort, so that he had started to think that coming back would have been a good solution for his mourning. His British life has gradually turned into a delusion, and in this context, the photographs and the memories of his family started to become an evidence of guilt, rather than a cure to his loneliness (152). All these motivations eventually convinced him of the necessity of a return; hence, despite his first assertions about the advantages of his British life, he ultimately affirms that he really has nothing to go back to in England, “nothing except a place and a people I know and don't care much for” (152). His problem is that he does not feel at home in the Caribbean either, thus confirming a general condition of displaced Caribbeanness (Ledent 2002: 42) which characterizes that zone and its processes of identity formation.

3.3.3 A place of comfort: home and return for South Asian migrants

The struggle to affirm stable belonging and rootedness typifies also the South Asian scenario and Indian migrants' homecomings. However, if we consider the concept of "home" not as the place one belongs to, but the place one starts from (Nasta 2001: 1), it is possible to work around the affective value of roots by focusing on a place where diasporic people can start a new life.

This was Biju's intention when he moved to the USA in *The Inheritance of Loss*. As already stated, however, the experience in his new American home is disastrous; so, he gradually desires to return to India, but only after the achievement of the Green Card, the piece of paper which can definitely testify to the world his legal position and delete the shame of his illegal migration: "How he desired the triumphant After The Green Card Return Home, thirsted for it – to be able to buy a ticket with the air of someone who could return if he wished, or not if he didn't wish" (Desai 2006: 99). The possibility to choose and to be able to freely move into the world are the unavailable dreams of migrants, whose globalized rights are denied by the same institutions which should assure them. This rejection inspires a deep sense of nationalism in migrants such as Biju, who eventually decides to return to India even without the Green Card.

In the mirror of the airport's bathroom, he saluted his migrant-self to welcome a new person who desires to live a simple life in his own homeland:

Here he was, on his way home, without name or knowledge of the American president, without the name of the river on whose bank he had lingered, without even hearing about any of the tourist sights – no statue of Liberty, Macy's Little Italy, Brooklyn bridge, Museum of Immigration; [...]. Now, he promised himself, he would forget the insight, begin anew. [...] Biju played the scene of meeting his father again and again like a movie in his head [...]. They'd sit out in the evenings, drink chhang, tell jokes [...]. (286)

Biju ultimately rediscovers his need for the simple aspects of his Indian life; to him, therefore, the idea of return has been gradually constructed all along the

narration, as soon as his arrival in America and despite the warnings about coming back of Mr. Kakkar, the owner of a travel agency in New York:

“You are sure you want to go back??” he said alarmed, his eyes popping. “You’re making a big mistake. Thirty years in this country, hassle-free [...] “Going back?” he continued, “don’t be completely crazy – all those relatives asking for money! Even strangers are asking for money – maybe they just try; [...] they will get you; if they won’t, the robbers will; if the robbers won’t, some disease will; if not some disease, the heat will”. (268-269)

Reasons to stay in the USA seem principally influenced by the typical Indian stereotypes, nurtured by the same Indians abroad, although, according to Mr. Kakkar, also the new balances of power in the globalized world-system play an important role in favour of a prolonged stay in America:

“America is in the process of buying up the world. Go back, you’ll find they own the businesses. One day, you’ll be working for an American company there or here. Think of your children. If you stay here, your son will learn a hundred thousand dollars for the same company he could be working for in India but making one thousand dollars. [...] Still a world, my friend, where one side travels to be a servant, and the other side travels to be treated like a king.” (269)

In this regard, Desai does not intend to give a completely confident and positive image of return, but she seeks to highlight also the negative aspects of coming back; in this way, she wishes to insist also on the contradictions of the globalized system. Indeed, on the one hand, she describes Biju’s attachment to the memories of his Indian traditions and roots: “Biju found himself smiling at the memory of the time the whole village had watched India win a test match [of cricket] against Australia on a television running off car battery because the transformer in the village had burned out” (270), while, on the other hand, she also considers India’s imperfections through Mr. Kakkar’s words. Actually, none of these positions facilitates the kind of contamination which would create a stable cosmopolitanism (Jay 2010: 135); however, it is interesting to note that Desai’s benevolence

ultimately is for those subjectivities which privilege attachment to roots, and in fact Biju decides to return without thinking of “any of the things that had made him leave in the first place” (Desai 2006: 270).

When he finally arrives in India, he soon feels the “dusty tepid soft sari night. Sweet drabness of home” (300), where “drabness” has not yet an upsetting meaning, but a familiar one. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to underline also that the very end of the novel insists on considering the contradictory character of returning home through Desai’s depiction of the fixity of Indian society, embodied by the theft of Biju’s luggage at his arrival in Kalimpong. This last image would imply that both rootedness and globalization are marked by loss, but also that the former is a form of inheritance of the latter (Jay 2010: 136). From this perspective, it is possible to affirm that globalization paradoxically produces forms of belonging, and the more a country is involved into the global system, the more it originates a sense of attachment to roots in its migrant and diasporic people. This situation seems wholly confirmed in *Return to India*.

In Narayan’s report, the author’s desire to come back home is proportionate to the number of her relocations in the USA: it seems that the more she travels into the American landscape, the more she feeds that sense of belonging which will push her to return. Therefore, she starts to criticize her “pseudo Indian” friends (Narayan 2012: 119), as well as all the globalizing elements of the American society which have westernized them, by stating that “America is nice...but India is home” (128). As already mentioned, the moment of her cathartic revelation is the birth of her first daughter Ranjini, when “tired, sleep-deprived and encumbered, the ‘land of the free’, no longer seemed so to me” (151). Shoba needs her homeland because it represents a familial womb, where she can raise her daughter thanks to the help of her family. In this sense, in spite of her western education, her mindset has clearly remained anchored to a prototypical Indian set of values, according to which family bonds have a central role in taking care of her own family. However, her desire to return home has also another meaning:

I had started thinking of our return to India as something we needed to do to prove to

ourselves, and others, that it was possible. It would be a grand message, something that would inspire legions of Indians to move back home. [...] A nation would rise. (160)

From this perspective, the author's dream of homecoming has a wider value, assuming the character of a nationalistic act which would create a "new" nation thanks to the return and the work of his migrants.

This assumption recalls the birth of "New India" (Srinivasan 2015: 314), that is the economic and social progress of the subcontinent started in 1991 thanks to the recent global developments, and underlined also by Shoba: "India had also advanced a lot since the time Ram and I left. The IT (information technology) boom had made available technologies that were on par with, and occasionally better than, those available in America" (Narayan 2012: 205). So, since returning turned into a concrete occasion, Shoba's desire has become a real obsession. She has written also a list of pros and cons about her possible relocation to India: on the one hand, her reasons to come back are linked to nostalgia, the ageing of her parents and the missing of her family, the correct values she wants to pass to her children, the desire to give back something to the country that nurtured her, and a reaction to the consumeristic American society (161). On the other hand, she thinks that staying in America would assure medical facilities, material comforts, and global opportunities based on meritocracy and the American "imperfect" multicultural society (162) because, despite problems, "there is a reason why so many immigrants who come to America never move back to their home countries [...] [they] had gotten used to the ease and efficiency of America" (164). So, if on the one hand all these reasons are a good explanation to decide to stay in the USA, on the other hand diasporic people cannot escape from the call of their roots. In this regard, "the returnee seeks to fulfil or assuage a temporal longing for the past through the spatial operation of relocating (back) to India, and the writing that ensues emerges from this time-space conflation" (Srinivasan 2015: 310). Also in this case, therefore, as well as in *A State of Independence*, the diasporic subject can be considered as a type of pilgrim whose search for the irrecoverable past leads him/her to return where he/she was born (310). Also Shoba's return is a sort of spiritual journey characterized by a kind of constitutive rootlessness. This is

why she is constantly torn between two different positions: the innate rootlessness of her diasporic identity pushes her to live in-between America and India and to strive with her husband, who represents, instead, those migrants who do not aspire to come back. Actually, Shoba's dream of return sometimes seems just a caprice, or a "game" (Narayan 2012: 202), using her husband's words; nonetheless, the final decision is taken after a talk with her friends Shyam and Priya who have actually moved from London to India. They affirm that they have never regretted moving back for the simple fact of being around their own people, watching their children learning their mother tongue, and getting reacquainted with old friends (206). This confession convinces Shoba that she is doing the right thing, and that "sometimes you need to go back to where you are from in order to find out who you are" (224). Therefore, she can claim that India is definitely her home (225), and she ultimately goes back also to make her children aware of this condition and of their same roots.

The clash between first and second generation in relation to the question of the relationship to homeland is depicted also in *A New World*. In Amit Chaudhuri's novel, however, Jayojit does not show the same deep attachment to India expressed by Narayan. This is maybe due to the character of his city of origin, Calcutta, which has a strong diasporic soul and has been shaped throughout the centuries by different flows of people (Blunt, Bonnerjee, Hysler-Rubin 2013: 142). Therefore, as a city of minorities in both colonial and postcolonial eras, Calcutta is the city of rootlessness par excellence, and this is the reason why NRI do not return gladly to it (Chaudhuri, *Calcutta* 2013: 16). Indeed, Chaudhuri's description of the city in his essay *Calcutta: 2 years in the city* is not flattering, since it describes a metropole where new houses are less valuable than the land they stand on, so that, generally speaking, the whole city does not seem to have recovered from its own past. This is the reason why Indians deeply abhor Calcutta (17); and the situation does not seem better at the beginning of the 1990s, when Joy comes back. In fact, the environment depicted by Chaudhuri in the novel does not show the signs of a deep industrialization as the recent development of the "New India" would determine. Indeed, Joy's mother claims: "Look what's happening to this city. You can't walk on the pavement, can't post a

letter.’ In English again, seriously, ‘I wouldn’t *advise* you to come back to it’” (Chaudhuri 2000: 75). From this perspective, India does not show the same image of appealing country described by Narayan; nevertheless, the power of homesickness and the worries for the aged parents still push migrants to come back, even just for a brief period of time (Chaudhuri, *Calcutta* 2013: 70-71). Indeed, most returns take the form of one-off visits (Blunt, Bonnerjee, Hysler-Rubin 2013: 147), as in the case of Jayojit and his son Bonny, although their journey also derives from Joy’s awareness of the value of the concept of home and “how fortunate one was to have a home” (Chaudhuri 2000: 77).

These constant contradictions, as well as India’s ambivalent character, definitely embody the up-rootedness of Jayojit, who lives in-between two different realities: actually, while he incessantly recalls his American life, he also gradually feels his old attachment to home and his cynicism about the USA revitalised: “he felt unable to commend any of its [of America] virtues without causing discomfort to a part of himself” (111), although, at the same time, “he didn’t particularly like being at home” (180), that is in India. This quite schizophrenic position can be explained by considering that Jayojit’s attachment to his homeland is caused just by the affective role that India has signified to other diasporic Indians in the past. In this light, his feelings towards the subcontinent emerge only in relation to a common memory which makes him feel linked to his homeland; but, if on the one hand he can actually recognise some points in common with his compatriots, on the other hand their mutual ancestral bond is too far away to assume a concrete value for him. This condition highlights the double valence of diasporic identities as,

both aimless and purposeful, subject to chance and yet goal-oriented– [and it] dovetails with an account of the diasporic subject as one who moves both volitionally and despite himself. Return to India fulfils what is, in many cases, an unconscious yearning. (Srinivasan 2015: 311)

This confused longing constituted Joy’s spirit when he came back home. Moreover, if we consider that returning is often seen as “a sign of failure, of not having done as well as you could have” (Harrison 2009), it is quite obvious that

Joy cannot be happy to stay in Calcutta, a city where something amiss and can reappear only in the realm of the imagination (Chaudhuri *Calcutta* 2013: 95). Starting from these considerations, it is not astonishing that the author describes Joy's return as a flat event, deprived of any form of affection or interest, and torn between an exercise of personal volition and the result of filial devotion for his parents' conditions. This indeterminacy is at the base of the novel, and it answers to the author's desire to deal with both the perception of limited opportunity for returnees in India, and the need to return it anyway, such as Joy's annual return demonstrates.

Hence, if *A New World* is the bare narration of an actual return to South Asia, Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* is a detailed account of a non-return, since the characters never achieve to come back permanently to Pakistan.

Actually, the idea of return is discussed throughout the novel, but it unfortunately remains a mere dream, an illusion which only brings hope and helps immigrants to tolerate the weight of their condition. Kaukab is the character who desperately desires to return home: she has never totally accepted her husband's decision to move to the UK at the beginning of their marriage in order to find a job (Aslam 2004: 88) and she has never gotten accustomed to live in Britain. Hence they have always lived their condition of English inhabitants as an indentured slavery, and not as a free choice.

In fact, Kaukab and his husband Shamas have left their affective bonds in Pakistan, so they keep on aspiring to return permanently one day; after all, it is widely known that deeply relative attachments affect return migration plans (Carling, Erdal 2014: 4), and this is particularly evident in the case of British Pakistanis. Moreover,

return visits thus have the effect of letting migrants reassess their balance of belonging. In other cases, such visits are preparatory steps for permanent return. Moving back can also be a gradual process in which transnationalism softens the transition from living primarily in the country of destination to living primarily in the country of origin. Alternatively, return visits can become a substitute for a more permanent return migration altogether, either as a sustained transnational lifestyle, or as longed for annual breaks to re-engage social and cultural ties. (4)

In this light, the periodical return visits of the Pakistani couple serve as a softening measure to deal with their English life, and although they wish these visits to be preparatory passages for their final return, their temporary journeys home become just substitutes of the actual homecoming dreamed by Kaukab.

Indeed, the whole novel depicts dreams and narrations of return which will never be realized: it is possible to affirm that almost all the members of the community project their personal homecoming, first and foremost Kaukab and Shamas who “wanted to return to Pakistan”, and for this reason they planned that their son Charag “would become a doctor and go back with them – this was understood by him. They – all of them – would be free of England when he finished his studies” (Aslam 2004: 131). In this regard, the clash between generations is particularly evident because Charag does not have the slightest intention to go back to Pakistan: as a second-generationer, he prefers to fight for his full integration into the British society, and his feelings towards “home” are quite different from those of his parents.

The sole character who was sent to live in Pakistan, thus realizing the dreams of the whole migrant community, is the only one who had never sought to come back to his native land, that is Chanda, one of the two hapless lovers of the novel. Actually, as a young girl, she was forced by her family to marry a cousin in Pakistan, but their botched and unhappy marriage convinced her to divorce and return to England where she falls in love with Jugnu, provoking the hate of their families. Chanda’s situation – as well as her destiny and that of her lover Jugnu – is quite ironic and it highlights her distance from the rest of the community, as if the author intended to demonstrate that weak relationships with family and homeland are bound to be punished by death. In this regard, the strong transnational community created by these diasporic identities is an actual substitute of homeland on the British soil, a place of loyalty, as home should be, and every member of the community has to swear allegiance to this sort of institution, just like the citizens of a nation-state used to feel loyal to their native home. From this perspective, Aslam’s Pakistani migrants do not need to return home, since they have recreated a surrogate of it which functions as substitute of their distant homeland. In this light, England, which “had been seen only as a

temporary accommodation” because migrants “never thought of [it] as home” (91), has been transformed in order to get close to their idea of home. In other words, life in Britain has to follow the restricting rules of these fundamentalist Islamic families, and if the white society does not accept it, the Pakistani migrants described in the novel are determined to apply their own rules at least in their own houses, veritable microcosms and *sacrarious* of their traditions. In this light, home for South Asian migrants is more a place where protecting their customs, rather than a space of self-consciousness as it is for the Caribbean returnees, a distinction which helps to go in depth into the core of the conceptualization of the idea of homecoming.

3.3.4 “Finding home in movement”: a new conceptualization of return migration

Following the analysis so far, what it is sure is that the concept of home is not dead, but it has changed into the individual’s ability of finding home in movement, away from any notion of fixity (Bender, Winer 2001: 334). The notion of “off balance” nomads given by Bauman (Bauman 1998: 88) perfectly fits the condition of Aslam’s migrants: although they desperately wish to give stability to their lives, they actually live in a sort of circle in which their Pakistani homeland cannot be the centre. Globalization as well has collaborated to the change of the concept of home towards this pluralization: nowadays migrants have more than one single home, and they aspire to write about their home(s) as much as to come to terms with their fragmented situation. Vijay Mishra explains this phenomenon by highlighting that the postcolonial condition makes real integration impossible for migrant people, who see their diasporic habitat as “a contradictory, often racist and contaminated space” (Mishra 2007: 187). As a result, memories of homeland and the preservation of the same idea of home in the foreign land are the only way to survive to an often racist and suffocating situation, even though Nadeem Aslam also warns against an excessive exploitation of these devices.

Furthermore, in the debate about homeland and return, the question is not only to observe *where* migrants feel at home, but also *whether* they can really experience

that sense of belonging which leads them to remain in a place and to escape from the frustration of wandering. As noted in the examined novels, the current notion of home is extremely composite since it can include different variants: migrants can create surrogate of homes in their host countries, but the myth of homeland is a fundamental point which still survives in their dreams and thoughts. This is because any attempt to establish a visceral relationship with Britain or the USA is generally bound to collapse: the difficulties which characterize the diasporic life, such as episodes of racism, discrimination, and psychological violence are unbeatable obstacles which will never allow migrant people to feel at home, in spite of the assurances of globalization's scholars. In this context, homecoming appears as the sole solution to find the stability negated by the globalized system. Hence first-generation migrants of every age and time desire to return home; but, although most of them have managed to come back, in many cases their experiences of return have turned into a delusion. For example, Ralph Singh and Bertram Francis's dreams of a magnificent return to their Caribbean islands have been disrupted by their inability to adapt themselves to the new political systems of their recently independent homelands, while Moses Aloetta, who did not have any kind of expectations about his homecoming, has eventually decided to go back to the UK. Also Indian narrations of return are plagued by misunderstandings and mourning. South Asian migrants of all caste and age actually find it difficult to re-acustom themselves to their homeland, as we have seen in *A New World* and *The Inheritance of Loss*: if Jayojit Chatterjee and judge Jemubhai are certainly examples of well-educated – and westernized – Indians, who cannot understand the passivity and immobility of “their” Indian habitat, also the poor illegal migrant Biju share their same sense of rootlessness when he finally arrives in his native village, so that he even thinks of having made a huge mistake by coming back (Desai 2006: 318). The only positive accounts of return are those reported by Colin Morgan in *The Sleepless Summer* and Shoba Narayan in *Return to India*, but just because the two novels do not depict the experiences of return directly, preferring to focus on the moments which precede the actual return. So, Dennis and Narayan actually describe the migrants' psychological preliminary phase with its doubts and troubles, but they prefer to end their narrations without portraying a

real account of return. In this way, it is not possible to affirm whether their experiences of homecoming were completely satisfying or not; only Colin reports a brief description of his journey in both Jamaica and Ghana, but he also quickly gets rid of the topic by claiming that he cannot find the right words to describe it (Dennis: 1989: 128).

Hence it seems that coming back home or remaining abroad have similar consequences for these diasporic people, since their dissatisfaction is quite the same. From this perspective, the absence of homecoming described by Nadeem Aslam is really significant because it manages to catch and explain the current uprooted character of migrants, who still try to return to their homelands without understanding that dreams of return could maybe be better than the actual homecomings. This is the most important difference between the fictional accounts of return and those reported in the sociological surveys; although also real returnees usually experience the difficulties of the reintegration and problems in finding a new job at home, their perception of the decision to return is still positive (Conway, Potter 2005: 169). By contrast, the novels show a deep discomfort, as well as the misery of the returnees who actually cannot get accustomed to their homeland again. And if the reincorporation to home of the first generation of migrants is almost always problematic, the question is even more complex for the second generation, whose attachment to the ancestral homeland is less guaranteed.

4. Does the second generation return “home”? The counter-diasporic homecoming of the children of diaspora

As seen in the previous chapter, the first episodes of return to homeland of migrant people can be dated to the late 1960s; then, the phenomenon flourished, especially during the 1970s, when also literature started to investigate it thanks to the increased number of first-generation migrants' returns. In the 1980s and 1990s, the process has not been arrested, but it has continued through the return of labour and skilled migrants of both first and second generation. Indeed, different generations of migrants have various reasons for coming back: from the lack of real integration into the destination country to the desire, at the end of their working lives, to resettle comfortably in a nice house on their native soil for the first generation; from the wish of employing their acquired skills in their countries of origin, to the need of discovering the ancestral link with the so-called “homeland” for the second-generationers. So, what distinguishes return migration from both contemporary international movements and past transnational migration is “historical continuity across at least two generations, a sense of the possible permanence of exile [of the second generation], and the broad spread and stability of the distribution of populations within the diaspora” (King, Christou 2008: 3). This classification enables to distinguish between straightforward return migration (generally of first-generation migrants) and counter-diasporic return, which only applies to the so-called “children of diaspora”, that is those who descend from the previous diasporic condition and had established new relationships with the ideas of home and homeland. Viewed in this light, this definition lays the foundation to understand the difference between first and second generation's returns because it introduces the differentiation between the concepts of home and ancestral homelands typical of the second generation.

Actually, the difference between first and second generation's experiences of return is given by their dissimilar kinship with the concept of home; indeed, while the first generation perceives a stronger attachment to the Caribbean and South

Asian countries, the second-generation diasporic identities feel an indefinite bond with the ancestral homelands, being born and bred in the host societies. Moreover, it is noteworthy that a certain tendency to construct an emotional and affective tie with the host country and to deconstruct any relationship with the original homeland can be found also in those migrants who have directly experienced – and then totally rejected – the migration process when they were children. These migrants were not born in the UK, but their impact with the mother-country has been so significant that they have started to think of it as their home, as is described in Tariq Mehmood's *While There is Light* (2003) and Atima Srivastava's *Looking for Maya* (1999).

That said, since the relationship between home and host countries is generally reversed for second-generation counter-diasporic “returnees” if compared to that of their parents, the return journey itself may be a greater failure in getting a satisfactory work, learning the language, or coping with different cultural practices (King, Christou 2008: 14). It is for these reasons that these “returnees” then often come back to their country of birth and original residence in the West; this is also due to the nature of second-generation distinctiveness which includes hybrid modes of cultural identity that reflect both the country of settlement and the parents’ country of origin (9) with a preference for the former. Therefore, if the relevance of “the ancestral return” and the myth of homeland is particularly spread in the first generation’s homecoming, this same feeling can have different and various consequences for the second generation. Such trips to homeland – which are usually motivated by tourism, the presence of family members and friends, or the desire of (re)discovering elements of the ancestral culture – may end up by simply reinforcing notions of how “westerner” the second generations are, and convince them that their parents’ home can never become their own home. For others, instead, the return visit may be the precursor to a longer-term project of return, although this definitive return may or may not work out (King, Christou 2008: 10).

Nevertheless, the role acquired by the notion of “home” is still a central motivation to return, also for the children of the first migrants. Its meaning can deeply vary in relation to the motivations, the characteristics, and the aim of the

return: are second-generation “returnees” acting independently, that is leaving their parents behind in the host country, or are they moving as part of a multi-generation family return migration instigated by their parents, or to be closer to other relatives, such as grandparents or cousins? Are they in the early or mid-career phases of their lives? Do they hope to permanently settle in the ancestral homeland or are they temporally visiting it?

These are some of the topics investigated in the second-generation novels; so, in the next paragraphs I will focus on the complex interrelations among identity and community formation, space and home, homeland and return, as they have been depicted in some 1990s and 2000s works about the second generation’s homecoming. I will deal with the works of both Caribbean authors – as in the case of *Fruit of the Lemon* (2000) by Andrea Levy – and South Asian diasporic novelists such as Atima Srivastava with *Looking for Maya* (1999), Tariq Mehmood with *While There is Light* (2003), and Hardeep Kohli and his *Indian Takeaway* (2008). These writers have portrayed from different perspectives the nature of the second-generation return: they have described stories of discrimination and difficult assimilation as in Mehmood’s work, or the search for roots, as in the case of the Caribbean narration of Levy. This last viewpoint actually seems the most relevant in this kind of accounts: indeed, the exploration of one’s own origins is the central point also of Kohli’s novel, a journey into the cultural and culinary character of the contemporary India, and Srivastava’s work, where the actual return never happens even though it is a central question which hides back all the protagonist’s life.

That said, what is interesting is that, in spite of the phenomena reported especially by Conway and Potter (2009) about the actual return home of the so-called “next generation”, literary narrations of homecoming of the second generation are not so recurrent. Literature has not paid much attention to the return of the children of diaspora, while this same theme had been acutely dealt in the case of the first wave of migrants, thus marking a significant difference with the real situation of these diasporic people. Moreover, literature shows that Caribbean islands are less attractive than South Asia for the second-generation “returnees”, despite Goulbourne’s statement that, from the 1970s, Caribbean

returnees who were born in the UK seek to return because of their unfavourable incorporation into the British system (Goulbourne 1999: 160-161). So, although elderly migrants actually are the larger proportion of those returning (159), a clear tendency to come back to the Caribbean is quite manifest also in their children, a tendency which is not yet fully recreated by the literary representation.

On the other hand, the South Asian second generation seems to have built a stronger attachment to its original homeland. As birthplace of their parents and grandparents, it exercises a veritable force of attraction to its diasporic children, even though their process of identification is not without struggles. Indeed, many second-generation migrants consciously choose not to learn the language of their parents or to follow their traditions (Oonk 2007: 21), but this does not mean that they do not go back to South Asia for temporary periods or visits to their relatives. The examples provided by the novels confirm this situation: in *Looking for Maya*, *While there is Light*, and *Indian Takeaway* the protagonists return or think of returning to the homelands of their parents for different reasons, but none of them involves a real desire of resettlement as it was for the first generation. After all, their kinship with India or Pakistan is totally opposed to that of their parents: their idea of home is far from that of the previous generation, both geographically and emotionally, since “home” is perceived as a dislocated and porous element, such as their entire lives. Nonetheless, while members of the first generation were repudiated by the neo-independent Indian government which encouraged them to stay abroad (Lall 2003: 126), their children have started to be warmly welcomed since the 1980s, thanks to their western education and their greater “economic muscles” (Oonk 2007: 183) which appealed to the Indian administration. So, while on the one hand, Caribbean second-generationers seem to have lost their link to “home”, on the other hand second-generation migrants of Indian and Pakistani origins have maintained a stronger bond with their South Asian roots (Jayaram, Yogesh 2004: 115).

Moreover, as already mentioned, the formation of a diasporic identity depends not only on where migrants were born but also on where they properly feel at home. From this perspective, second-generationers begin “to map out the contours of their own identity as black British people, not as rejected outsiders, but critical

insiders” (Wambu 1999: 28). Hence it is possible to define their return more like a circuit, an unceasing movement to find the origin of the source, rather than a definitive resettlement.

4.1 A “cultural car crash”: second generation’s identities and community formations

Defining the relationship between host societies and second generation has always been problematic because migrants’ children are definitely torn between the call of their ancestral places and the tendency to assimilation into their western “homes” – which are often also their birthplaces. This last point is particularly important because, if on the one hand, it is actually impossible to deny the bond with the country where they were born and their diasporic identities were forged, on the other hand, it is also necessary to look beyond assimilationist arguments to consider the intrinsic significance of transnationalism in the second generation’s experience. As Bhabha points out, “the problem consists in whether the crossing of cultural frontiers permits freedom from the essence of self (Lucretius), or whether, like wax, migration only changes the surface of the soul, preserving identity under its protean forms (Ovid)” (Procter 2000: 301). This is a central question when considering the mechanisms of migration and return, also in relation to the second generation and its in-between fragmented identity. Thus, the question of cultural appropriation in the host country is moved “beyond the assimilationist’s dream, or the racist’s nightmare, [...] towards an encounter with the ambivalent process of splitting and hybridity” (301) which underlines the importance of cultural difference; in this context, second-generation migrants have many problems in recognising where they belong to, as it is evident in the texts set in the 1980s.

This decade of the XX century has seen a significant shift in the perception of the idea of Blackness with its acquisition of a strong political meaning, and its attempt at “deconstructing the racist signifying systems that had supported colonialist and imperialist ideological state apparatuses and were still operational” (Arana 2005: 231). In particular, instead of affirming their Britishness, the second

generation claimed “equal and just treatment as English citizens despite their skin colours” (232), in favour of a dialectal and dynamic process of their identity’s renegotiation. This perspective is well reflected in both Andrea Levy’s *Fruit of the Lemon* and Tariq Mehmood’s *While there is Light*, especially in their depiction of the relationship between the young protagonists Faith Jackson and Saleem Raza and their home(s). They both feel not to totally belong neither to England nor to Jamaica or Pakistan, and they both have a troublesome relationship with their families, even though for different reasons; so, they embark on a journey to their respective homelands to solve their personal dilemmas and reconstruct their family bonds.

The role of family ties is fundamental from a second-generation perspective. In particular, I agree with Peggy Levitt when she claims that it is possible to apply a transnational approach when talking about second generation because “when children are brought up in households that are regularly influenced by people, objects, practices and know-how from their ancestral homes, they are socialised into its norms and values and they learn how to negotiate its institutions” (Levitt 2009: 1225). Hence while parents’ accounts help to maintain the interest towards those far homelands, as well as temporary visits should preserve children’s curiosity about them, on the other hand, the lack of these elements and of a family can have disastrous effects on identity. Moreover, viewed in this light transnationalism should not be observed as an alternative to assimilation, but rather “as one possible variant of assimilation”, since transnational immigrants of all ages work to both maintain homeland connections and, at the same time, to engage in the process of acculturating to the host society (Quirke, Potter, Conway 2009: 5). In other words, having a good and mindful affiliation with both homeland and family should help to build a better relationship also with the former mother-country, as it is shown in Mehmood and Levy’s novels.

4.1.1 Pakistani and Jamaican identities under the sign of family boundaries in 1980s Britain

Family bonds are at the core of Tariq Mehmood's work *While there is Light*. Indeed, in the novel the kinship with both England and Pakistan of the young Anglo-Pakistani protagonist Saleem Raza is called into question by the distance from his parents and his difficult relationship with them. Saleem was not born in the UK, but he was sent to live there by his family when he was just a little boy. He has been raised by his uncle and aunt in Bradford, and the trauma of the separation from his parents, especially from his mother, has caused him a sort of loss of memory about his Pakistani origins.

At the beginning of the narration, he actually refuses to remember his early childhood in Pakistan as if he was born again on his arrival in England at the end of the 1960s, and in fact he affirms that in 1962 he was not born yet (Mehmood 2003: 13). Throughout the narration, we discover that this is not true because his mother asserts that she gave birth to him in 1957; this means that he has totally rejected and almost deleted from his mind his first years in Pakistan. His mother's death, however, is the shock which awakens his nostalgia and his memories of home by forcing him to come back: "Waves of nostalgia ride out of the talis. I remember now how much I loved these trees with their leaves bent down with the weight of dust, shortly before a monsoon rainfall" (43). The homecoming helps him to embrace his Pakistani origin and to break up his defences of Englishman: "I had never thought anything could happen which could make me cry more than a few passing tears. People I grew up with in England rarely cried and if they did, it was usually in private" (44). His new condition of returnee pushes him to call into question his "English" identity, so that, once back in Pakistan, he discovers that his education in the UK has not deleted neither his Pakistani roots and customs, nor the ability to talk in Pothowari, his mother tongue. This situation rouses a number of questions which had only been buried in his mind: why did his mother send him overseas? How could she let him go so far from her when he was just a little child? The lack of answers to these questions during his fifteen years in England definitely influenced also his British life transforming him in the

classical “desi” that is, following Helen Kim’s definition, a hybrid subject characterized by a sense of belonging in the multiple and blurred spaces of transnationality (Kim 2015: 36). However, the notion of “desi” also refers to something which belongs to “homeland”, thus underlining the mixed character of those people who live a “dual nationality” (37). Saleem can be defined a veritable desi because, despite his efforts to deny his origins, he cannot repudiate his bond with Pakistan: in a certain sense, it is as if he had to negotiate between two nations and, at the same time, he was also forced to question his own location and sense of belonging (38). The second generation is trying to solve this dilemma by making these contrasting factors to coexist, in order to avoid a painful choice between the two “homes”. Thus, the strong attachment to the UK of the second-generationers, which is perceived as their actual homeland, has to be balanced with the link to the land of their ancestors and relatives.

In Saleem’s case, the feeling of having been rejected by both his mother and his home pushes him to identify himself with English people: “I am still a child, I think to myself in English. I thought I understood the world. [...] I am nothing more than Valaiti-babu [an Englishman], a gora, imprisoned in the skin of a Paki” (Mehmood 2003: 165). The British mother-country is seen as a surrogate of the maternal love which should take care of and welcome him, so that he relies on it, even though his first attempts of integration at school were denied by some episodes of racism, such as when he was hit by his schoolmates because of the colour of his skin (104).

In spite of these incidents, during his first years in Britain, he keeps on constructing his own identity on the English models and, as a child, he does not understand why a man should not be pleased and grateful of working under the British capitalist system. However, the words of the communist father of one of the boys who had hit him start to set doubts in Saleem’s head; although he has never thought that a man could complain about the perfect British world, these words give a new perspective to Saleem’s set of values:

“A communist is someone who believes in a different world, a different kind of system, one which is based on respect for life, not on individual greed. Not one where the son of a worker can attack another, just because of his colour”. I listened

intently to this vision of a different world, though most of what he said didn't make any sense to me. My uncle worked in a mill, but he felt eternally grateful for the privilege. (106)

The communist father and his vision of the world speak up for Saleem's migrant condition, so that the boy begins to understand that England is betraying its own "children" and he starts to fight to reach the better world drawn by the communist's words. This episode is particularly relevant because, for the first time, Saleem's British identity undergoes a shock: even though he admits that "I was born again in England", he also understands that he was "a Paki at first, and an Asian later on, then a Black with pride and finally [...] a rebel who sought a different world" (38). In fact, his community in England is formed by "an assortment of runaways. There were those who didn't wish to get married; [...] those who'd had too much to drink and were scared of facing their parents" (50); his flat is the port of call for those who need any sort of help and for the black outcasts of the city for whom he "not only acted as an unpaid social worker, an emotional cushion, but they also cost me money" (50). In this phase of his life, as a confused young adult who wishes to channel his own frustrations of rejected son, Saleem needs to re-appropriate his original community by helping his own compatriots. In a first attempt to return to their migrant past and, at the same time, to fight for recognition by England, Saleem and his friends also deal with the riots and manifestations which took place in Bradford at the beginning of the 1980s, when the tension reached its maximum pick because of the discriminating atmosphere of the Thatcherian era.

Tariq Mehmood knows very well this period of the British history since he took part in the case of the so-called "Bradford 12", which is the source of inspiration for the novel. The combination of fictionalised accounts of political and historical racial incidents with reports of personal tensions with parents is a typical characteristic of the South Asian novels of that period; as a result, writers often portray Black British youngsters as

finding much love, warmth, and friendship within a growing 'immigrant' community. [...] Alienated from white society, and often at odds with their parents

whose demands on the young are shaped by discourses developed in different social and political formations, young Black British in these stories cling to each other for love, support and understanding. (Bald 1995: 82-83)

So, young “desis” actually insist on fighting for their rights and recognition into both their families and the British society by creating their own growing communities of belonging; this does not mean that they wish to be like white people, but they aspire to affirm their own identity by “making a postmodern music of discordant notes and multilingual voices” (86). In *While there is Light*, Saleem’s quest includes three stages of self-knowledge: at the beginning, the absence of a parental bond and the arrival in England cause his personal confusion and rejection of his homeland; then he understands that he is “a Paki in England, unwanted”, but also “a Valaiti in Pakistan, naïve, arrogant, despicable” (Mehmood 2003: 165). At this point, in order to re-articulate and configure his identity, he recognises that he needs to return to the land of his origin and come to terms with it.

The seeds of this sort of epiphany are implanted in the boy’s mind by Payara Singh, an old Pakistani migrant who used to be a regular visitor of Saleem’s youngsters’ community in Bradford:

‘Do you know why I come to your house every Sunday?’

‘You have never told us.’

‘You have failed to understand when I have,’ Payara Singh cleared his throat. ‘I long to hear the sounds of those words you boys say in your language. But you say them less and less.’ [...]

He said, as if in a trance, ‘My son, I even know your village’s name. Banyala.’

‘Who told you?’ I was surprised.

‘You did.’

‘I never,’ I laughed, waiting for him to excavate one of his famous pearl of wisdom.

‘You told me so with your own tongue.’

‘But I only really speak English.’

‘But when you don’t. When you talk, even in those childish sentences. I hear flutes, wailing over those hills at whose feet Banyala sits. [...] Without your knowledge, off your tongue has rolled Pothowar’s ancient music.’ (152-153)

Payara makes Saleem understand that he has lost his past and his roots, and in fact the boy asserts that “something in his voice made me feel a deep sense of loss” (153). By reminding him the sound of his mother tongue and telling him the story of his family and his land, the old Pakistani manages to indoctrinate Saleem about his own history. This is important because all the people who took part in his past “are your history. They live in our memory. Memory never dies. It is reborn with each generation, always rejuvenated, full of past light, waiting to shine. You just have to learn to see it” (153). In this light Payara also manages to establish a connection between the whole history of Pakistan and Saleem’s family history: one’s own homeland is like a mother or a beloved, so it is impossible to deny or cut the bond with it/her. What is more, he helps Saleem to understand that his mother has not renounced him because she does not love him, but for his own wellness and to save him from the illnesses of poverty (156). So, the path of criminality and integralism chosen by Saleem is an awful error; he cannot repay his mother’s sacrifice with a criminal son thinking that, in this way, he has achieved something (157). The conversation with Payara Singh does not produce an immediate effect, since it does not prevent Saleem from being engaged into the “Bradford 12” affair; but it will help him to compose the puzzle of his life and complete his “redemption” throughout his journey back to Pakistan, where he finally catches the importance of family.

The homecoming signs his return to his own roots, his home, and his mother. Although Saleem learns of his mother’s death only when he arrives at Islamabad’s airport, he manages to reconcile with her by assisting to her burying, and especially thanks to a tape-recording that his mother left for him. By listening to it, he (re)discovers how much his mother loved him, and the vicissitudes which forced her to agree to his departure for the UK: “Maybe if your uncle Shabir hadn’t die when he did you may never have gone from me. He was a little older than you and it was he who was supposed to go to England” (185). Indeed, the premature death of Saleem’s uncle, his mother’s little brother, pushed his grandfather to take his nephew to England in place of his dead son, but his mother had strenuously fought not to let him go:

‘Have you ever noticed, Saleem,’ her voice asks me in the darkness, ‘when you break a branch off a plant, drops of water seep from its wound? Well, it isn’t water, son, it’s tears. And if you look carefully at the droplets as they well up, you’ll see this scar will never heal. But who listens to cries of plants?’ (187)

The mother compares herself to a plant which has lost its branch, and this parallel is particularly interesting because it allows to establish another connection with homeland as the soil where people “plant” their roots. Saleem and his mother can be seen, therefore, as plants born from the Pakistani soil, and one originates the other: in this relationship, it is unnatural that one plant loses its buds so that it cannot keep on giving them the nourishment they need. In this regard, England is seen more as a step-mother than a mother-country, an evil entity who “stopped you [Saleem] from receiving what I [the mother] had to give you, what I needed to give” and who “makes you all forget us back here” (191), thus recalling the idea of a branch cut off the plant.

The gardening symbolism is given throughout the novel; for instance, also at the mother’s funeral, an old wise Pakistani affirms that: “You can forget us, but you are part of us. [...] I know you as well as I know every single plant that grows in this land” (86). This sentence summarizes Mehmood’s account of the migrant journey: like in the novels of the first generation, the linkage with birthplace, family, and “roots” appears as a fundamental element of identification. The contact with the Pakistani soil makes Saleem remember his past, detaching him from his condition of second-generation migrant. After all, he was not actually born in the UK, as he had implied at the beginning of his return experience by pretending not to understand an old woman speaking Photowari (11). Although everybody calls him “Englishman”, his relationship with England is not due to a birth right, and in fact when his real home calls him, his memory inevitably responds. Hence, he remembers the point where he used to catch buses “before a road was built” (60), his mother’s tenderness and the places where he used to play (67), as well as some episodes of his brief school time in Pakistan (113-116).

Saleem is, therefore, torn between first and second generation: at the beginning he is entrapped in England, “a land without parents” (188), and then he is in search for his roots in Pakistan, the land of his ancestors but also his own soil. In fact, as

his mother reminds him in her final recording, he may live in the UK, but he does not have to forget how deep his “foundations are here” (174), in the land where his parents built their house with their own hands; indeed, her last present to him is the narration of their family history from the partition in 1947 to the dynamics which led to Saleem’s own division from his family. The value of this gift is incommensurable because it allows Saleem to come to terms with his past and with the process of return itself: in other words, his decision to return to Pakistan, which firstly was a forced choice to escape from the British justice, eventually appears as a “performative act during which the migrant, through the story of the self, is (re)located in the story of the familial, the ancestral, the national and ultimately within the transnational diaspora” (King, Christou 2008: 22). In this light Saleem’s return and the re-appropriation of his personal history are the essential elements which allows him to discover his real identity in order to construct a better relationship with both his ancestral homeland and England.

The relevance of the family bonds for the stability of second-generation migrants’ lives is at the core also of the Caribbean diaspora. In Andrea Levy’s *Fruit of the Lemon*, the protagonist Faith Jackson manages to reconstruct the rhizomatic nature of her genealogical tree thanks to the story-telling and narrations of her relatives during a temporary trip in Jamaica, the homeland of her parents.

Unlike Saleem, Faith is the typical second-generation migrant: she is the daughter of Wade and Mildred, two Jamaicans who decided to move to London after World War II pushed by the wonderful accounts they had heard during their school years in the former British colony. Faith was born in London and, despite the protection of her parents, she has to deal with the Thatcherian climate of discrimination and suspect towards black people described also by Mehmood.

Nonetheless, at first sight what is interesting to note is that Faith appears as perfectly integrated into the British system, since she has only white friends, and she lives in a flat with other three white roommates as an independent black woman who works in the costume department of the British television. She identifies herself with her friends and her job, and in fact her brother Carl affirms that “She doesn’t really like black people” (Levy 2000: 143), while his girlfriend

suggests that she should “spend more time among your own people” (143). Actually, the protagonist’s relationship with her Caribbean roots is depicted as quite absent at the beginning of the novel, because “my mum and dad never talked about their lives before my brother Carl and I were born. They didn’t sit us in front of the fire and tell long tales of life in Jamaica – of palm trees and yams and playing by rivers” (4). Her only knowledge derives from her few direct questions, so that Faith is really shocked when she discovers that her parents actually had come to England on a “banana boat”, like her white classmates used to say to make fun of her when she was a child (3). Faith’s insufficient knowledge of her ancestral past has caused her scarce interest towards Jamaica, thus confirming that, for the second generation, relatives’ narrations have a genuine role in establishing the nature of their transnational ties (Chamberlain 2006: 13) which may, on the one hand, gradually be severed, or on the other hand, be at the focus of their attention, leading to counter-diasporic migration. In Faith’s case, the absence of both a concrete and an induced bond with Jamaica has provoked her identification with the British system, although also this link has an evanescent character. Precise episodes of racism unmask her actual situation in the UK; from the difficulties in getting the job of dresser because of the colour of her skin (Levy 2000: 70), and the prejudices of her best friend’s father (93), to the more violent demonstration of racism acted by a group of militants of the National Front against a black woman in a book shop, which Faith witnesses (150). This last episode is the final pretext which pushes her to go back to Jamaica to discover her roots.

That said, the idea of Blackness developed by Levy is really composite because it involves different points of view: what Faith thinks of herself is not what people around her perceive. Her parents, for instance, would have preferred to see her living in the UK, but married with “a Christian with family from Jamaica or one of the ‘small islands’” (19), while her best – and white – friend Marion, despite loving her, does not understand the implications of having the black skin. Actually, she labels the candid racial blunders of her father as a “cultural thing. Something that belonged to their way of life – like an instinct” (93). This ambivalent situation further complicates Faith’s own identity perception, and in

fact she affirms: “I had known Marion’s family for years. I liked them. [...] But when they looked at me [...] I always wondered who they saw” (93). Also at work, she is discriminated by her bosses, who have always given her only insignificant works to eventually employ her as a dresser just because she had insinuated that they did not like to have black people doing this particular kind of work (108-109).

Nevertheless, the problem is not what black or white people think of her, but what she actually is; it is a matter of self-knowledge and self-recognition obviously complicated by her distorted perception of herself. After all, according to Portes and Zhou (1993) the second-generation groups who have the best opportunities to upward social and geographical mobility are those who resist acculturation from the host country, while on the other hand, those who do not resist, like Faith, have a strong possibility of experiencing downward assimilation and joining the urban underclass. So, Faith’s journey to Jamaica has the purpose of evading from this situation, so that she could express and discover her identity in a different place.

Family boundaries have a fundamental role in this context. Faith embarks on this journey also because she wants to know her family inheritance, thus starting a veritable “ethnic reunion”, a trip which “allows members of culturally displaced communities to renew or reconstruct a personal association with the ancestral homeland” (Stephenson 2002: 416). Once in Jamaica, Faith discovers that her family tree has intricate and mixed interconnections with the colonial history, as well as many branches, more than she could expect, and these different perspectives on her genealogy shed new light also on her perception of Blackness and Whiteness.

In Jamaica, her viewpoint is firstly totally reversed, since for the first time she is immersed in a “black” context, exclusively surrounded by black people:

Black people were everywhere. Sitting by the shacks, walking along the road, in the road, standing, talking, gesturing in conversation, calling across to others. Eating food, watching the traffic going by. Bending over to small children. Children that ran and played, darting around in a game. (Levy 2000: 177)

From this description, it seems that Faith is almost astonished that so many black people could be in the same place at the same time, and that they act as common “normal” people, as white people do. From this perspective, she behaves like a white tourist in the Caribbean, and she does not seem to note that she is a black person herself. In fact, unlike Saleem in *While there is Light*, she actually does not have any memory of or linkage to her ancestral land. Her Englishness is truly rooted in her mind, so that at the beginning it is not easy for her to rediscover her own Blackness.

From this standpoint, her condition is very similar to that of pure second-generation migrants investigated by Potter and Phillips who see the liminal, hybrid, and in-between racialized identities of Caribbean second-generationers, as well as the problem of racism, as one of the main reasons to come “home” (Conway, Potter 2009: 83). What is noteworthy is that this kind of migrants are frequently referred to as “mad” in the sense that they are seen as “others” by their own compatriots, “in a manner that means that they do not have to be listened to, or their advice heeded” (10). They feel outsiders in their parents’ homeland and this condition leads them to coin the expression “being in mid-air” to describe their own situation.

Faith’s process of inclusion into the Caribbean world as well is slow, gradual, and full of adversities; when she arrives at Kingston’s airport, she perceives that “Every face [is] keen with anticipation – Jamaicans wondering whether you belonged to them” (Levy 2000: 175). But after a few days of reciprocal “examination”, she starts to appreciate the new anonymity of her condition: “No one noticed me. I smiled at anyone who looked in my direction. But no one did. I was blending in. I was just one of the crowd. I was just another guest. It was wonderful” (293). The sensation of being one among many thrills her, since for the first time she is not “different”, as she used to be in London. Moreover, she sees black people doing all the sorts of works around her, while in England she was used to seeing them just “working in kitchens, [...] waving trains off at Underground station” (224), or doing other lower jobs. Her own prejudices towards her compatriots make her feel very English in Jamaica (225), but this sensation has a positive connotation because she finally understands that she has

to work on herself in order to dismantle her own preconceptions about her origins. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that also her cousin's wife Gloria, a born and bred Jamaican young woman, shares a westerner way of looking at the "Others", and in fact she thinks all the best of the American and English systems (208), thus demonstrating the persistence of a colonial state of mind. A certain inclination to mimicry, or at least to exalt the British system, is therefore evident also in the younger generations, as it was for Faith's grandparents, who used to imitate the grandeur of the white colonizers during the last years of the British colonial hegemony.

The story of Faith's family is, in fact, strongly interconnected to the history of the British colonialism in the Caribbean. Its narration is entrusted to Faith's aunt Coral, the veritable source of information of the young second-generationer. This is how Faith discovers that she has white ancestors in her family tree because her great-grandfather was a white doctor who had had a long relationship and many children with a West Indian woman, although he already had a family in England. For this reason, one of his sons, Faith's grandfather Obadiah, and his wife Margaret "acted like they one of them, doing foxtrot and waltz" (284). They tried to hide their mixed origins because "those high society sort of people they mixed with don't know you if they think you black" (284), and they instilled this mentality also into their children Donald and Wade.

The presence of these white ancestors is quite interesting for the protagonist's search for roots, since it seems to justify her claim for "Whiteness" at the beginning of the novel. However, what is really significant is that Faith's parents have never acted as Englishmen, in spite of their white origins and their conscious decision to move to England. They have never forgotten their real homeland and the value of their Jamaicanness, and in fact they are planning to return home, "abandoning" their children in London: "'Your mum and me are thinking of going back home,' Dad said finally. I thought of our old council flat where Carl and me had grown up. [...] 'You going back to the flat?' I asked. [...] 'No, Faith,' Mum said. 'We're thinking of going home to Jamaica'" (44). Their decision demonstrates that, unlike Faith, they fully recognise who they are, "they knew where they came from and they knew where they wanted to go" (331), and that

the place of origin, the birthplace, eventually has a central role in establishing personal identities. In this regard, also Faith's claim for her own Britishness can be justified by a sort of birth right, and in fact her relationship with the UK is stronger than that of her parents. It is for this reason that they do not seek to bring their children in Jamaica with them: they understand Faith's belonging to England, even though they also wish to see a sort of "interest" in her daughter for her Caribbean origin:

Evidently, I had never in my life shown even the slightest interest in my parents' life before they came to England. I never asked where they lived, what life was like for them, I never wanted to know about any of my Jamaican relatives. [...] I was not interested. According to my parents, my eyes would roll in my head when they began to speak about the place they had once called home. (332)

This situation may be explained through the original perception around the notions of Blackness and Britishness typical of the 1980-context. Young Black "born-British" citizens sought to affirm their personal process of renegotiation, their cultural diversity, and the denial of rigid borders between black and white (Arana 2005: 237), and these prerogatives have been the seeds of the harsh debate begun in 1987 among postcolonial scholars and novelists to point out the inadequateness of the term "Black" and of similar notions, "terms that mask the 'constructedness' of much more complex racial and ethnic identities" (236). Faith Jackson's condition depicts this same situation; so, she tries to mediate between her two souls, in an attempt to solve the duality of her individual subjectivity, which is "linked squarely to a distinct genealogy of black achievement conjoined to cultural continuity" (McLeod 2010: 46). This cultural continuity is embodied by the rediscovery of her roots which would serve to "own" England through the appropriation of the British history. Faith's return and the narration of her Jamaican family story can be read from this standpoint: besides confirming "the resilience and role of transnational family" in the second-generation return to the Caribbean (Chamberlain 2009: 64), her homecoming and the peculiar characteristics of her family also reiterate the tight relationship between England and its former colonies, and the right of the former colonized people to

recognition. Hence, through the encounter with her family history, Faith not only “hold on to the talismans of those literary traditions that emerge from those former colonial words”, but she also “forges a new, constructed future in the new British landscape” (Dawes 2005: 278-279). Therefore, it is not so strange that Faith’s cousin Constance, despite her fair white skin, blue eyes, and curly hair of the colour of the sand (Levy 2000: 312), desires to be considered for what she really is, that is a black woman, “proud of her black race” (317). Constance acts, therefore, as a sort of reversed Faith, or a counterpart of the young returnee’s fate: she has white skin, but she wants to be considered in relation to her black land and her black interiority, while on the other hand, Faith is black, but she tries to affirm her Britishness, although without underestimating the importance of her black roots. As a result, as Dawes suggests, the reinvention of the British nation in novels like *Fruit of the Lemon* is marked by an entirely legitimate solipsism, as something which serves first and foremost the dislocated subject (Dawes 2005: 260). Hence Andrea Levy’s work attempts at explaining that being British does not mean to be white, and that there are a number of Black British second-generationers who wish to affirm it. After all, the second generation is often unwilling to accept a migrant identity or the stigma of otherness (258), although they are the veritable in-between identities, those who are at once “alienated from their British society as well as from the very tethered and nostalgia-bound imaginations of their parents who are constantly repeating the mantra: “when I make enough money, I will go back and settle in Jamaica/Barbados/Nigeria/Ghana” (274); and India, I would add.

4.1.2 Looking for family roots in the ancestral community: 1990s and 2000s quest for identity in the Anglo- Indian second generation

The about-quoted homecoming’s dream of the first generation is the mantra also of Mira’s parents in Arinta Srivastava’s *Looking for Maya*. Indeed, they have returned to their Indian home a few years before the time of the narration, while their daughter Mira still lives in London and, as a young second-generation

woman, she considers the former mother-country as her home. She is not interested in starting an emotional and actual trip to India in order to (re)appropriate her “real” identity because she already feels at home in the UK. She has an English boyfriend, Luke, and unlike her parents, she is not obsessed with pointing out racial differences or nosing out connections to mark her origin (Srivastava 1999: 5). In fact, she is quite annoyed by her boyfriend’s interest in the eastern culture, music, and people, as well as by his tendency to “like...everybody so much”, that is “ethnic people, black people, people who are not English” (18). The westerner Luke seems more interested in discovering the eastern world than in his girlfriend, in fact he “had started his investigation of Eastern music long before we had come together, although sometimes I wondered if I was part of the research” (18). Mira, instead, would like to be appreciated beyond her roots, indeed she affirms that “I don’t care. I’m not lost. I’m not looking for my roots or trying to live something down. I just want to live” (37). Her expectations about the future are totally opposed to those of her parents; she does not want to stand out in Arts and Sciences as all Asian girls are expected to do (37), and she is not interested in her culture of origin or in the “Black politics” in vogue at her university (18).

Her attitude is not totally in contrast with the general behaviour of the second generation in the last years of the XX century: the novel is actually set in mid 1990s, when “the ‘Black Experience’ and the ‘urban landscape’ have become increasingly integral” (Kelleher 2005: 241), in a period when the claim for appreciation and incorporation into the British environment for the children of migrants had gradually been quite welcomed. So, Black British writers of the 1990s have managed to depict the inner English reality because they felt part of it, and this situation has been shaped by the agenda of the 1980s with its request for equal recognition and rights between black and white people. At the same time, however, the second-generationers seem also to consider the fights of the first generation as a distant context, far from their actual condition. It is for this reason that Mira did not pay particular attention to the Postcolonial Literature course she had taken in her final year of university, and she “hadn’t attended many of the lectures either, intimidated by the earnest class and the amount of background

reading required” (Srivastava 1999: 21). The “background” required to understand the postcolonial lessons is her own rejected background, but it is not seen as a means to appreciate and discover something about herself, but just as a heavy burden in view of the exam. As a result, she is almost totally unaware of her Indian heritage, and what is worse, she does not care about it.

Her point of view about the concepts of roots and “race memory” is quite sceptical as well. She does not believe that “you might not have been born in India or Africa for instance, but the memory of your ancestors lingers in your blood” (41), and her position is even more paradoxical considering that her English boyfriend instead agrees with this standpoint: “‘Makes sense,’ he said. ‘D’you think so? It sounds like nonsense to me. You can only remember what happened for real. All the rest is suggestion and fantasy’” (41). According to Mira, the lack of a direct contact with homeland is a major obstacle for the understanding of her origins: the South Asian region is the realm of fantasy and suggestion for her, while the UK represents reality and certainty. In other words, Mira shares the same problem of Faith in *Fruit of the Lemon*, that is she does not know her homeland and she is not interested in it, despite the visits to “home” she made with her parents Ravi and Kavi when she was a child, and their dedication to recreate an Indian house in London. This goal, however, is achieved in the wrong way, as they recreate their Indianness through ethnic objects and texture they had bought in “Haus Khas Village” in Dehli, a real village turned into shoppers’ paradise for well-heeled Indians (20). These surrogates of a real Indianness – outcomes of globalised goals – cannot compensate for Mira’s need of roots, so that they just obtain the opposite result, that is distancing Mira from India even more.

However, unlike for the other protagonists of the second generation’s novels Faith and Saleem, Mira’s identity is not confused, and she actually struggles to affirm her right to be English, even when she is in India with her parents and she actually behaves like a British tourist:

My dad warned me that if they charged excess baggage to bring all the material through Customs because it exceeded twenty-five kilos, I would have to abandon it with my uncle who had come to see us off. Implicit in this warning was the bald

criticism that (as usual) I had not considered things, that (as usual) I had not thought of the consequences when I had exuberantly rushed into the tailor with reams of hand-woven blue cotton. 'It's so cheap, Dad.' 'You're in India,' he said, 'not in Habitat. You should compare like with like. No one here would think it was cheap.' 'But I don't live in India, Dad. I don't know what to compare it with, other than with Habitat.' RaviKavi had a policy about being Indian. Just because you live abroad, just because you are earning 'ponds', doesn't mean you can go to India and throw your money around. At the very least it shows a lack of culture. It gives you a respect which is not earned. (76)

Mira's behaviour in India demonstrates that she knows nothing about her ancestral culture, and that she thinks of herself as an English woman visiting India. She is not familiar with its customs and traditions: she does not mind offending her own "compatriots" with her behaviour because she has not the cultural tools to realize that she is insulting them.

After all, as already noted for the first generation, "symbols of ethnic pride and cultural identity [...] became signals that barred access to resources and employment in the larger society" (Zhou 1997: 998), so the second generation has learnt to avoid using cultural signs in order to totally integrate into the British system. It is for this reason that Mira hates the "smell of garlic" (Srivastava 1999: 106) which, according to her was responsible for her lack of friends at school when she was a child. The result is a generation of migrants' children who have become undistinguishable from their westerner peers, except for the colour of their skin, and who feel uncomfortable in relation to their culture of origin, such as Faith at the beginning of *Fruit of the Lemon*. However, while Levy's character has managed to solve her identity quest through the return to Jamaica, Mira totally refuses the actual return experience.

This peculiar situation reminds of the condition of the Pakistani migrants depicted in *Maps for Lost Lovers*. Like in Aslam's novel, the topic of return is just a sketched recurrent theme which has no possibility to be realised, even though for different reasons. In fact, unlike for Aslam's first-generation characters who desperately wish to come back home, the second-generationer Mira does not aspire to return to a land that she perceives as culturally, emotionally, and

geographically distant from herself, and like Kaukab's children in Aslam's novel, she feels at home only in the UK. Hence, also in this case, the return is transformed just into an obsessive matter of discussion for Mira and the other characters of the novel, although it never really occurs.

This void is filled by Mira's relationship with Amrit, an Indian writer much older than her, who supplements to her lack of knowledge about her ancestral community and identity by bringing Mira closer to her Indian heritage. In this light, he functions as a sort of bridge between the young girl and India because he helps her to understand the importance of roots. Indeed, despite the lack of a happy ending for their relationship which is ravaged by the age difference and their distant aspirations, Amrit certainly helps Mira to appreciate her origins, included the hated smell of garlic of her childhood: "Now it smelled of home. I would cook dahl and lace it with a sizzling tarka, a concoction of seared garlic and chillies, and breathe in the aroma" (106). Amrit helps her to understand the importance of home and of its tradition, in spite of his apparent mask of Indian man educated at Cambridge and perfectly at ease with the British habits:

'Do you eat Indian food?' I asked him suddenly. 'At home, I mean.'

'Of course,' he said indignantly. 'Sometimes,' he added apologetically. 'When I cook it.'

'Don't your women know how to cook?'

'They're English,' he said. (106)

In spite of his several English lovers, Amrit's ties with his Indian past are still really strong; in fact, as Mira will later discover, it is not by chance that his only wife was an Indian girl, Maya. As a young man, Amrit has been forced to divorce from her sole love, and the title of the novel, therefore, embodies not only his impossibility to forget his wife, but also his and Mira's search for roots: "looking for Maya" actually means looking for a return – though figurative – to their Indian legacy.

Hence the tie with India as well as the differences between black and white perceptions of it and between first and second generation are highlighted throughout the novel. In this way, Mira does not need to physically return "home"

in order to shape her identity and her sense of community; the author still manages to underline the importance of both roots and routes by stressing the fact that Mira is

the product of multi-cultural education, where mothers from council estates regularly complained to the school because their child knew more about Diwali than Christmas. And at home, India had continued as surely as it had in Dehli and Bombay: Hindi was spoken, food cooked, values drilled, connections given, histories recounted, gods entertained. (142)

This paradoxical condition is a mirror of the current British multiculturalism, a context in which children study the Bangladeshi communities in the East End (213), and English people dream to fly to India. Mira's behaviour is, therefore, certainly quite different from that of Saleem and Faith, the protagonists of the previous second-generation novels; the idea of Blackness and Britishness that she represents recalls a sort of post-ethnic and post post-colonial way of seeing the world (Stein 2004: 113) which re-invents the whole British identity far from the concept of Englishness and from the colonial experience, but also from the idea of Britishness and the label of "Black British". In this light the notion of transnationalism applied to the first-generation experience can be seen of limited use. As Quirk, Potter, and Conway observe,

A broader definition of transnationalism along the lines propounded in Vertovec's work which emphasises the 'variegated phenomena' that constitute transnationalism alongside its 'conceptual muddling' would be more useful in furthering an understanding of the identity formation, experiences and global ties to the ancestral home of first-, one and a half-, second- and third-generation groups. (Quirk, Potter, Conway 2009: 6)

The most significant "variegated phenomena" which nowadays shape the idea of post-racial transnationalism according to Vertovec are a new social morphology, type of consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, site of political engagement, and reconstruction of place or locality (Vertovec 1999: 448). All these issues have

to be used together in order to create a post-racial optic that “demands we dispense with daft ideas about race, nation and indigeneity while recognizing the persistence of prejudice that stands in our way” (McLeod 2010: 49). These prejudices should be fought through the raise of a new consciousness which goes beyond the geographical and cultural boundaries, maintaining at the same time a special consideration for ethnic tradition.

At the beginning of the XXI century, this need is strongly claimed by second-generation novelists in works such as *Indian Takeaway*. The novel written by the British born writer and journalist Hardeep Singh Kohli is a humorous account of the return journey to India of the author, who decides to make this trip to find himself (Kohli 2008: 12). However, in this case the classical identity question “who am I” is approached from an original perspective, connected to the development of a new consideration of the same notions of Britishness and Indianness.

Unlike Mira, Kohli wants to live an authentic experience in India; he does not wish to act like a tourist (40), so that his journey is also a sort of quest (Maxey 2012: 104):

He [an Indian cook, Arzooman] understands that I want to travel the country of my forefathers, that I wish to explore my heritage and free my mind of the preconditioned opinions I had of India as I was growing up. He is also very acutely aware of the tension that exists in my dual identity, but seems perfectly comfortable with my sense of Britishness and Indianness. Perhaps that is because he has travelled much of the world. (Kohli 2008: 50)

In this passage, Hardeep’s need to preserve his Indian traditions and free himself from prejudices is clearly stated, but at the same time the author also underlines the importance to solve the tensions in his identity by overcoming it, and this is possible only by melding his Britishness and Indianness together. Kohli’s account combines, therefore, the classical quest to find one’s own origin with an innovative key: the intermixing between the Indian and the British cuisine. In other words, the practical and “profane” culinary field is used in order to support the creation of a post-racial world, in which different types of cooking, as well as

different “races”, can coexist and live together in peace. It is for this reason that Hardeep’s mission includes “the education of the Indian palate” (50) to British tastes by cooking British food in India, and at the same time the rediscovery of the taste of Indian food in the ancestral homeland.

All along the narration, the author seems to suggest that the key to coexist is making compromises and mixing to each other: “I explain that while it seems part of my culinary journey is bringing Britain and Europe to India, I am also trying to take a little of India back to Britain and Europe” (52). So, in *Indian Takeaway* food becomes a metaphor for identity; in particular,

the central role given to home, family, and the past in the genre of the culinary memoir is an attempt to address the reconstruction of the migrant’s self in the context of cultural contact and border crossings challenging the maintenance of tradition. In other words, food and the culinary are links to the migrant community and its history but they also have the potential to generate cultural border crossings. (Nyman 2016: 191)

In this context, the role of food is also that of disrupting the traditional concept of community, by overcoming the idea of ethnicity: Hardeep Kohli’s aim during his trip in India is not only re-discovering his origins, but also establishing a new form of hybrid community, in which Indian and British cultural peculiarities could co-exist. This idea goes beyond the previous concept of transnationalism, and it opens a window on a possible form of “reverse migration”, according to which nationalities and borders are gradually losing their meaning. In this perspective, food can be an element of cohesion because “food unites. That much is clear. And as I sat there, a devoured plate of lamb curry in front of me and the remnants of a paratha, I started to think that maybe I should return to India what India has so successfully given Britain: food” (Kohli 2008: 17). And although his British dinners in India are not always successful and they do not always represent traditional British dishes, their symbolic value is indeed fundamental: they make Kohli understand that he does not have to look for his “Indian” identity in the subcontinent, or his “Britishness” in the UK and vice versa, but that he has openly to abandon ancient concepts of identity and community. It is for this reason that

“the central task of autobiographical and the travel writing genres, to define the self, appears increasingly problematic in Kohli’s book” (Nyman 2016: 199); the question is to overcome the old tendency to compartmentalise the general way of thinking about identity, and this is evident in the episode in which Hardeep cooks the shepherd’s pie for a group of young Indian socialites in Dehli. As Kohli affirms, “the socialites are my contemporaries. They are who I might have been had I been born in India and raised here. [...] How similar are these upper-middle class Indians to this middle-class me?” (Kohli 2008: 212). This clash among counterparts is particularly interesting because, unlike Hardeep, these guys were born in India and they have been in the UK just to study at the British universities. Therefore, they do not like British food (219), a fact which makes Kohli’s challenge even more risky. Nonetheless, the outcome of the dinner is quite surprising: Indian guys love Hardeep’s pie, so that they recognise him as an Indian man who was just born in the UK from “a man who was born in India. This is very confusing” (221). The author’s confusion is soon explained by the awareness that he has actually managed to prepare a good shepherd’s pie thanks to the mixing of his Indian heritage and his British life experience: had he been a veritable British man, he would not have prepared a pie that the Indian guys would have appreciated. As a result, the love for the culinary tradition of his land of birth – the UK – has been mixed with his Indian origins, transforming his self into a borderless “hybrid and multilocational identity” (Nyman 2016: 200).

This aspect is particularly interesting considering the new spatial interpretation of the last years. Nowadays, it is a fact that the contemporary global landscapes and the balances among them are changing, and this condition removes people from the old notions of ethnicity and identity. As a result, most people of Asian and Caribbean descent are no longer comfortable with the habit of being classified as “Black”, or under other ethnic labels, because this kind of terms is too homogenizing and covers a great variety of different cultural backgrounds (Cuevas 2008: 21). In this context, the linkage between identity and place is fundamental, especially in relation to the concept of “place-belongingness” (26), because people are still inevitably influenced by the place where they live and by their attachment to it. Hence considering that, according to

Gilroy (2004), space is even more a borderless location, it is possible to assume that also the lack of stable geographical and cultural borders of the current world-system is actually influencing the identity formation process of people beyond their national and “ethnic” belongingness.

In this light the notions of place and space acquire a central role also in people’s decision to return – and in their choice of what is – home.

4.2 Space as a borderless location: second-generation journeys looking for ancestral land-and city-scapes

As Susanne Cuevas suggests, “as members of diasporic communities, black and Asian British have often been regarded by postcolonial theorists as outside traditional national belonging, as having post-national, unsettled or travelling identities” (Cuevas 2008: 27). However, this assumption does not take into consideration the emotive impact and the role of spatial dynamics in the diasporic process, as well as the divergent experiences of different groups of diasporic subjects. In other words, along with the post-national and travelling character of the diasporic experience, migrant fiction of both first and second generation still underlines the tendency to search for a stable sense of place and belonging.

For the second generation, this sense of place can be traced not only in the metropolitan landscape of big cities such as London, but also in suburban and rural geographies, as James Procter states (Procter 2003: 2). Therefore, it is worth considering also another aspect of this search for belongingness, which pushes the children of migrants – as their parents had done before – to find a place which could be called home outside the UK, in their parents’ homelands. The spatial and cultural dynamics involved in the second-generationers’ lives have received little attention, while there is also “a failure to recognise its [of the second generation] strategic positionality with regard to fundamental cultural-geographic questions articulated in the context of a ‘return’ to the homeland” (King, Christou 2008: 16). The return to the “source” for the second generation can actually be seen as the diaspora’s cathartic attempt to re-enter its mythic space and time, or a search for

“grounded attachment” (Blunt 2007: 687), as in the case of Saleem Raza in *While there is Light*.

4.2.1 The spatial dynamics of homecoming: a cathartic experience towards home

In Mehmood’s novel, the young Anglo-Pakistani Saleem lives a veritable “transnational homing experience” (King, Christou 2008: 17), in which the boundaries between his life in the UK and his relationship with Pakistan blur. To him, home is both a “material and immaterial, lived and imagined, localised and (trans)national space of belonging” (Walsh 2006: 123), and this aspect is underlined by Saleem’s relationship with his mother.

Indeed, his whole perception of space in both Pakistan and Bradford is filtered by the presence or the absence of his mom. The British habitat is depicted as a hostile, “cold, clinical land” (Mehmood 2003: 58), a space of forgetfulness which takes the sons away from their mothers, and where Saleem has to follow the restrictive norms imposed by the system. This situation is exemplified by his jail and bail conditions, which “stipulated that I had to surrender my British passport, sign on at the police station daily, stay in my uncle’s house, remain under curfew between 7pm and 7am and not to go one mile near a public meeting or a demonstration” (4). By participating in the Bradford’s riots, he has already violated the norms of the British society, according to which he is an unwelcomed person. In this light, jail’s space metaphorically represents the whole UK, an unfriendly environment where diasporic people are viewed with suspicion and unfairly charged by the police (92).

The real face of Britain is unveiled by Saleem himself in a letter that he has never had the courage to send to his mother,

Mother, I want to tell you about the first home I made for myself here in England. I used to live in a little house made from cardboard next to the walls of Lido Swimming Baths, in Manningham Park. [...] I used to hide here sometimes as a child. It was well hidden from the world. (204-205)

Saleem's innocent game as a child describes his loneliness far from his mother(land), and from the cosy objects and places of his Pakistani land: hence the British mother-country is like a step-mother, hot like a tandoor and cold like a fridge (209), and it is completely different from his real Mother, "something warm and protective" (209) just like Pakistan.

Therefore, the whole Pakistani space is connected to Saleem's mother and the memories of his early years in Asia. The young returnee firstly connects his mother's figure to the Pakistani rural and wild landscape:

And below the hill, in the small gorges, covered in all shades of green, sprouting out from the red-brown earth was the place I used to come with my mother when she came to cut grass for our black and white cow. [...] I was never scared in the jungle even when mother was out of sight. For I knew she could move faster than any monster lurking out there [...]. (60)

Saleem's mother is described as part of the wild environment of rural Pakistan, since she is able to deal with the "monsters" and animals, as well as with all the adversities, which could derive from a potentially dangerous landscape. She can do so because she "embodies" it, she is one with grass, cows, ants, bushes, trees, and hills which characterize the Asian location. Indeed, in most of the protagonist's memories of his mother, it is possible to trace a fusion between the maternal figure and the mother(land):

This is the very bridge where my mother often walked. Just past the bridge the road winds down into the shining waters of the kas, with its silver-grey sand, where I spent my childhood. And then I will be able to see the outline of our ancestral graveyard. There to the left of me, as our car pulled out of the stream, runs a path that leads to the village where my mother lived. (37)

What is interesting is that, until his mother was alive, the Pakistani scenario did not scare or surprise the child Saleem, in spite of its harshness and contradictions; whilst, when the mother is dead, the same landscapes with their peculiar objects and characteristics become hostile, unknown, and foreign. This is noticeably

evident from the reference to the graveyard, which was a neutral space until Saleem found his mother there (37), but it can be inferred also from his relationship with the domestic space and its objects.

Indeed, when Saleem had come back for the first time some years before the time of the narration, he had found a garland of jasmine flowers and red roses, a drummer's loud rattle in his house's courtyard, brightly coloured confetti, sweets, a sacrificed cow, and ten rupee notes everywhere (74-77). And, although for Saleem this warmly welcome represents a "strangely familiar; yet oddly alien culture" (77-78) and the relationship with his mother is shaken by the thought that she has sent him to England without an apparent good reason, he can actually appreciate his own town and house because his mother is there to take care of and protect him. On the other hand, without his mother,

each footstep becomes heavier the closer I get to our house. Every inch forward brings with it a flash of another stream of images of a faraway land flickering like childhood. The house is different now; [...] I stop by the entrance. The images of the interior rush towards me: a large open earthly courtyard; an uncovered well; a guava tree; a gigantic jandh. 'It is hard for Pardesi sons to come into a house in which there is no mother to welcome them,' my mother's sister, Parveen says. (83)

Once again, the relevance of the domestic sphere is underlined in a novel of migration; however, in *While There is Light* this essential element of identity formation and of creation of geographical ties is introduced in relation to the role of family, and in particular to the mother's role. Therefore, the hatred and love for the country is sublimated in the maternal figure for which Saleem has contrasting feelings.

Hence, it is only at the end of the narration, when he manages to elaborate his mother's death and to understand the reasons for her "betrayal", that he can start to appreciate his land again, as evidence of the fact that "For members of the second generation relocating to the 'homeland', home is itself a two-way street" (King, Christou 2008: 18). This means that, as Levitt claims,

some children, more deeply and intensely embedded in transnational social fields, do not simply choose between the home and the host-land. Instead they strike a balance, albeit tenuous, between the competing resources and constraints circulating within these fields, and deploy them effectively in response to the opportunities and challenges that present themselves. Their experiences are not just a continuation of the first generation's involvement in their ancestral homes but an integral part of growing up in a new destination. [...] the children of immigrants create a complex set of practices of their own. Adolescence becomes transnationalised and institutionalised, such that it structures the lives of subsequent members of the second generation who later come of age. (Levitt 2009: 1239)

This condition could explain the ambivalent set of feelings towards both England and homeland of the second generation. In this context, it is possible to postulate that also Saleem's difficult relationship with the Pakistani space is actually helping him "growing up in a new destination", as if his return allowed him – and, generally speaking, all transnational people of the second generation – to live a sort of second growth, even though homelands do not always offer the welcoming embrace of a longed-for homecoming (King, Christou 2008: 18).

Indeed, as already seen for the first generation, experiences of return often invoke feelings of disillusionment and rupture. According to Markowitz and Stefansson, homecomings can be described as "unsettling paths of return", especially for people of the second generation who leave behind their actual birthplaces to travel to basically unknown countries (Markowitz, Stefansson 2004: 7).

In this context, the relationship between migrants' feelings and the space around them has an interesting connotation since, for the second generation,

the illusion of the homeland experience is frozen in space and time, or distorted through partial experience. For the second generation, images of the ethnic homeland are preserved through the prism of their parents' reconstructions of the 'homeland in exile' and by their selective memories and narratives of the 'old country'. (King, Christou 2008: 18)

This is Faith Jackson's case in *Fruit of the Lemon*: she is "victim" of her parents' dream to come home and her relationship with both the Jamaican and the English space is influenced by her parents' myth of homeland.

Evidence for this comes from the decorative landscape of the domestic sphere. Much has been written about migrants' preservation and display of objects and memories from 'home', such as landscape and family pictures and religious iconography, as a "signifier of the desire to incorporate 'origins' and 'nation' into everyday life, and even into the body itself" (18). In Levy's text, this phenomenon is highlighted by Faith's parents' accumulation of empty boxes (Levy 2000: 15). These packets symbolize Mildred and Wade's life in the UK: they had been collecting them for years thinking about the moment when they would have finally filled them with all their possessions and Jamaican mementoes to leave the UK. In this light, the boxes represent also the British space as migrants see it, that is an empty landscape which can be filled with their old and new memories. Furthermore, the passage from the emptiness of the boxes to their refilling exemplifies the new spatial conceptualization because it highlights the relevance of the individual perception and experience of the space through the material act of filling. In other words, by filling the boxes, these Jamaican migrants concretely occupy the space around them, thus affirming their right to move from a country to another, from a place to another, of the world. In this case, they sustain the existence of both a geographical and spatial context where they can freely move, escaping from the (physical) restrictions of the colonial past.

This is one of the devices characterizing Andrea Levy's literary exploration of migration. In *Fruit of the Lemon*, the author has set up a geographical and historical (dis)continuity by revising the traditional binary oppositions between centre and margin, local and global, in order to analyse the emergence of a new geography of relations on a worldwide scale (Duboin 2011: 16). Indeed, the double setting of the novel allows to assign different meanings to both the Jamaican and the English spaces and to reconceptualise them from a global perspective. This means that the Jamaican environment, despite its colonial legacy, acquires a relevant position in relation to the UK; it is an affective and warm place, whose incongruities and problems are overlooked by people who live

there. And this is true also for the “returnee” Faith: in spite of her initial diffidence and the belief that “England is a lovely place” (Levy 2000: 56), she eventually appreciates also her ancestors’ land, becoming accustomed to the unfamiliar landscapes made up of palm trees, ferns, jasmines, bushes with yellow and white flowers, and especially the lemon and banana trees, the real emblems of her Jamaican heritage. In the Caribbean, such wild plants do not have to live in hard conditions in the simulated tropics of central heating like in England (200). Hence the gardening metaphor acquires once again a great relevance: Faith can be compared to these tropical plants who are transposed and suffer in Britain because their original homeland is in the Caribbean. They may even not recognise their condition of “slavery”, but they immediately feel at home when they arrive there. Moreover, this sense of familiarity and hospitality is even more accentuated in her aunt’s house where she sees her relatives’ photographs in nice frames on the open shelves, including those of her brother Carl and herself, thus demonstrating that family ties are stronger than distances and they can resist to every change of landscape and latitude, from the British “buildings with snow on the ground” to the “sunny gardens” of Jamaica (202).

At the same time, different houses – in different countries – also represent different kinds of identities. For example, the English Simon, one of Faith’s flatmates, defines the village where he comes from as “quintessentially English” (115), and his parents’ house is a veritable stronghold of Englishness if compared to Aunt Coral’s home, which is instead a byword for Jamaican spirit. In the English countryside, palms and lemon trees are replaced by rows of cypresses and vast cultivated fields; and in this calm environment Faith realises that the English village’s model she used to admire in a London park when she was a child was not just a legacy of the past, but a real model of the perfect village, with lush grass and “little thatched houses with windows and doors that looked too small, the pub, the post office, and the steeped church surrounded by yew trees and teetering grey gravestones” (116). Everything is perfectly symmetrical in the British landscape, and there is no trace of the lush disorder of the Jamaican environment. In addition to this, the order described in Simon’s house is distant from the untidy and confused chaos of Faith’s own London flat, although it reflects the precision

of Faith's parents. This demonstrates that every space represents its occupant's identity, even though a generational difference can be assumed between different kinds of migrants: the first generation still shows a personal order which recalls a sort of rootedness and a desire of stability, which is instead totally disregarded by their sons. According to this situation, the novel's composition of space, with its dichotomic distribution of order and chaos, reflects the conflict between parents and children, as well as the counter diasporic conception of space of the second generation.

In this context, Jamaica can be seen as a space of contact among different generations and experiences, but also "a colonized space symbolizing nature versus culture" (Duboin 2011: 19); and the relevance of nature in the tropical habitat is evident also in the description of the colourful city of Kingston. The presence of "sunlight", "shadows", "grass", and "exotic plants" (Levy 2000: 221) overcomes the classical urban landscape of metropolises like London or New York. Houses in Kingstone are compared to "shells" and "dead tortoise" reclaimed by animals and plants (221), but this description of desolation and decay may leave room for a "site of anchorage and resistance that allows racial emancipation and the positive reconstruction of an insular collective self" (Duboin 2011: 23). Indeed, the joyful disorder of Coral's house and of her friend Violet's shop (Levy 2000: 271) is very different from the confusion of Faith's flat (and life) in London, and it helps to understand the nature of the Jamaican spatial identity: people like Coral and Violet, who have a strong sense of belonging and place, do not know states of mental and physical chaos, unlike second-generationers like Faith. It is for this reason that the old Violet prefers to live in the back of her messy shop rather than in the colonial and beautiful mansion bought and paid by her first husband, with two acres of land bought by her second husband (274): her Jamaican self pushes Violet to reject the colonial heritage embodied by the house itself, in order to affirm her spatial attachment to Jamaica. This situation recalls the use of an "architectural imagery" (Procter 2003: 36), which means that the architectures of London or the English countryside, as well as that of the Jamaican urban and rural landscapes, can shape and reveal not only different racial divisions, but also racial solidarity.

Therefore, while on the one hand, England is described as a bog-standard set up place where racism and angst are on the agenda, on the other hand the vastness of the Caribbean Sea and the tropical nature of Jamaica reflects the warm hug of homeland:

The Caribbean Sea is like no other. I swam in its warm dear bath as tiny silver fish darted around my legs. [...] We ate ice cream, walking in the shade of overhanging palms. Jamaican ice cream – paw paw, pineapple with rum, coconut, almond, chocolate, coffee, mocha. [...] I placed a flat grey stone in my suitcase. I had picked it up at Fort Charles in Port Royal. A stone that could have been lying on that ground for several hundred years. [...] I packed a bag full of red coffee berries intending, when I got to London, to pluck out the familiar beans from inside and roast them as my grandfather used to do and make at least a mouthful of the famous brew. (Levy 2000: 321-323)

The warmness of the Jamaican landscape is opposed to the inaccessibility of London spaces and places portrayed, for example, by Faith's parents' struggle for a house in London when "Nobody wanted them to live in their house" (331), and other racist episodes witnessed by Faith. From this perspective, the English landscape seems to build just difference and exclusion despite second-generationers' attempts to renegotiate identity in what should be their proper space of living. For them, Jamaica should mostly embody a homeland of the mind; but, as Andrea Levy shows in her *Fruit of the Lemon*, the apple (or the lemon in this case) never falls far from the tree, thus demonstrating that homeland could be an anchor of rootedness also for second-generation people.

Nevertheless, even though second-generationers can actually visit the geographical territory which is considered as their place of origin, it is also possible that they will never arrive to a total acknowledgement of it (King, Christou 2008: 17), as it is showed in *Looking for Maya*.

In Srivastava's novel, the rural and wild Jamaican environment described in Levy's work leaves room for the aseptic cosmopolitanism of the 1990s-London. The protagonist Mira is totally absorbed by the urban scenario of the British

capital, and she is absolutely at ease in what she considers her town (Srivastava 1999: 18), more than her boyfriend Luke:

I smiled, because it was I who had begun Luke's introduction to London [...] He's grown up in Brighton, he'd only seen London on day trips and then only the London of tourists. I had shown him the pockets of London that he had never imagined could be true. The little countries inside the capital. I'd taken him to Wembley full of aspiring Gujaratis in Mercs, to Green Lanes dotted with Cypriots sitting in darkened rooms playing cards, Finsbury Park thrumming with Nigerian taxi drivers [...]. (19)

Through their peregrinations across the city, Mira demonstrates that she is the actual Londoner: the second-generation Anglo-Indian girl belongs to the city more than her British boyfriend ever will. Moreover, she feels so English that she also dreams of having ordinary bourgeois parents, like Luke's parents, who live in a

large white detached affair with curved roof tiles and leaded windows. It was set to the side of a huge cultivated garden with pathways leading to benches inside little alcoves bordered with clipped hedges. [...] It was exactly the kind of house that I used to wish RaviKavi could have made for me. (43)

Hence, like Faith in *Fruit of the Lemon*, she admires the typical English way of life, and she lives a definitely conflictual relationship with her roots, desperately looking for a material place that she could call home. Her temporary visits to India as a child did not satisfy her because she has always felt a sort of distance from it, refusing its traditions and customs (59). From this perspective, it seems that Mira is characterised by the "sense of place" (Kim 2015: 39) typical of second-generation people who, albeit recognizing their South Asian origins, firmly sustain a strong attachment to the British space since, unlike their parents, they can actually affirm to come from the UK. Therefore, they identify themselves as British citizens who live in perfect transnational spaces, and

Whether individuals ultimately forge or maintain some kind of cross-border connection [with homeland] largely depends on the extent to which they are brought

up in transnational spaces [...] transnational strategies were adopted over several generations, depending on individuals' needs and desires at different ages. (Levitt 2009: 1228)

Second-generationers' relationship with the British space and their overseas homeland depend, therefore, extensively on their parents' influence, although it is quite evident that their idea of space and home is significantly different from those of their parents.

If the novels of the first generation highlight a constant discomfort in relation to the British and American metropolises, and the migrant characters are always looking for objects and places which help them to create a sense of community and belonging, the protagonists of the second generation are almost always born and bred in the UK, so they are familiar and totally at ease with the British cities. When they are young, they just concentrate on the possibilities and advantages of their English lives; they usually look for their ancestral homes only when they have their own family, thus emphasising the persistent relevance of transnational connections and family ties. Hence, Mira is a young Anglo-Indian woman who has not yet got a chance to appreciate her homeland because she is too busy to compete in the social space in which she is inserted. She is trying to construct her own identity far away from India, and her perception of space is distant from those analysed up until now: she is in fact maybe the first protagonist who manages to lay claim to Lefebvre's "right to the city", that is an actual appropriation of the British urban landscape, and she manages to do so simply through the affirmation that London is her place, in spite of her supposed "Otherness". In this regard, it is fundamental to remember that Lefebvre has theorised the existence of a perceived and a conceived space, that is a real and an imagined world in which the representations of human spatiality in mental or cognitive forms are relevant as much as the material places. This situation led to the creation of a "Thirdspace", another mode of thinking about space which goes beyond both the material and the mental approach (Soja 1996: 11). In this light, it is possible to affirm that Mira has shaped her own personal place in London far from the material and geographical constraints, since in the last decades spatiality

has increasingly become a sort of inner way of being in which space is even more seen as a borderless location.

These assumptions seem to be confirmed also by Hardeep Kohli in his *Indian Takeaway*, where his voyage to India represents a borderless condition but also a mental re-organization of space. Indeed, the author has to deal with a new conception of both the British and the Indian spaces, since he seeks to reconstruct his relationship with his ancestral homeland in order to rediscover his tie to the UK. As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, this process is realized through the emotional impact of food, even though also Kohli's perception and constant re-shaping of the two different spaces has a relevant role.

Even in this case, it is interesting to note that there is a clear juxtaposition between Britain and India, a contrast which is based on the classical order/chaos dichotomy typical of the colonial/postcolonial opposition (Upstone 2009:8). While the little Scottish village where Hardeep grew up is described as "a load of Wimpey houses on a few fancy little streets with slightly avant-garde names" (Kohli 2008: 3), emblem of the ordered British society, India is the "home of mysticism, the epicentre of spirituality, the birthplace of religious civilisation" (5), but also a chaotic world where "people, elephants, carts, bicycles, oxen, buses, children, goats, cars, lorries, and a white Ambassador taxi all exchange space in the potential explosion of metal on flesh" (38). So, despite the tendency of the contemporary globalised countries to construct a "world-order", that is "a system, ultimately, which is defined not by chaos, but by order" (Upstone 2009: 9), it is interesting to consider that Kohli still sees and describes the XXI century-India as a dis-ordered place, following the classical stereotypes about the Subcontinent. This is maybe due to the failure of the contemporary "civilising" mission of the capitalist and globalised world which aimed at bringing stability to the supposed uproar of the developing nations; however, the kind of solidity and firmness which characterise the neo-imperial western countries cannot be employed all over the world, especially because this imposition would mean regressing to a colonial state of things. Moreover, this polarised way of seeing the world obscures its complexities, and it does not take into consideration neither the new borderless condition, nor the cognitive implications of the new spatiality. Actually, the

order/chaos dichotomy is progressively abandoned throughout Kohli's novel; in fact, as Hardeep is discovering India and its culinary and social traditions, he gradually understands also the "industrious nature of the Indian psyche" and especially its "industry of the place" (Kohli 2008: 130):

Growing up with the negative images of poverty, famine and the like I was never aware of quite how hard Indians worked. [...] There couldn't be a more pronounced sense of the past meeting the future at the crossroads of the present. I see a cartload of sweet perfumed orange mangoes in the shadows of a sky-blocking shopping development. [...] The entire Bangalore skyline is punctuated by cranes. There is building work on every side. (130-131)

India is neither a chaotic space, nor an ordered place influenced by the "global multinational" (131); it is a combination of both these conditions, where a "mellow, well-planned urban calm" rich of beautiful nature is mixed with apartments for the "chic young city dwellers" (131). Bangalore is the perfect example of this new India, a "well-designated city", where people can stroll by the lakes, or visit the shopping centre, and when he arrives in this southern Indian city he also notes its cosmopolitan and global character. In fact, his plan is cooking in a call-centre, the symbol of the new India, as further demonstration of the fact that globalization is a fundamental aspect of the rising subcontinent: what is interesting to note here is that, despite their negative aspects, the global changes have partially improved the country since they contributed to reduce the level of corruption:

Globalisation seems to have changed the rules; it's not enough to know someone. [...] they [the American managers of the multinationals] certainly have no idea what a man of influence he [Hardeep's cousin] is. India, it would seem, is changing. Corruption has been corrupted. (144)

Hardeep actually does not manage to have access into the call-centres despite his cousin's help, hence the advent of globalization has had some positive effects also for Kohli's experience because, after the refusal of the call-centres he is forced to

rediscover an old place which has been forgotten by Indians themselves, the Bangalore Club (145). These circumstances inevitably affect Hardeep's sense of place and home: he expected to feel at home in a global city like Bangalore, but he ultimately realises that he just feels once again inadequate, an "outsider":

[...] much as I knew India was changing, the rapidity of the change was difficult to comprehend. [...] I had hoped that I would come to Bangalore and somehow understand how the two sides of my life met; Bangalore seemed the perfect place to learn about this. That is what the call centre would have given me. Instead I ended up relying on Bharat [his cousin] who is himself part of old India. (155)

The author thought of feeling at ease in the most globalised and westerner of the Indian cities, however he eventually understands that the old India is the place where he could find himself. In addition to this, what is important is that his voyage through the Indian subcontinent helps him to look at different spaces with a different perspective: at the end of his peregrinations Hardeep understands the irrelevance of the "material" spaces and the old notions of nation, border, and journey because it is not important where you are or where you come from, but where you feel at home, and he wonders whether "the east and the west could truly combine in a symbiotically balanced state" (155), as he wishes. This epiphany is the natural conclusion of his personal re-consideration of the contemporary global spaces of flows in relation to his idea of and search for homeland, and it finally emerges in Ferozepure, the native village of his father:

I stand in the tiny kitchen chopping onions and heating oil, waiting to taste my own goat curry. It seems right that having ventured to bring a little taste of Britain to all of India, I should finish with a flourish and enjoy a little bit of India in that place I call home. [...] For the first time in my life these [India and Britain] are not two different places but the same unified space; and that space is within me. (284)

India and Britain are both parts of himself, so that he has created a sort of personal, imaginary place, or better "linkage among places" (Warf, Aras 2008: 4). His own mapping of India, from the southern cities of Mysore, Bangalore, and

Goa, to the northern village of his ancestors, is aimed at exploring and experiencing the ever-widening other spaces that go beyond the narrow perspective of the classical definition of homeland. This kind of voyages should be the norm in a global, cosmopolitan conception of the world, since they comply with Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the postmodern space, one "centered on rapidity, movement, and constant flux without the usual co-ordinates of distance and direction" (70).

Speediness, movements, and flows of people are the fundamental characteristics of the contemporary world system; however, it is maybe possible to postulate that the only element which resists to these new impositions is the concept of home. As already seen for the first generation of migrants, this idea has an intrinsic connotation of stability and fixity which makes quite difficult to eradicate it. The changeable nature of the contemporary world and the subsequent instability for diasporic people are not opposed to their adamant conception of home, also getting back to Bhabha's statement according to which "To be unhomed, is not to be homeless" (Bhabha 1994: 9). Therefore, bearing in mind the relationship between the first generation and their homes, it is noteworthy to reflect as well on how the second generation has dealt with this fundamental idea and the inheritance of their family stories and pasts, also by considering the double meaning that the notion of "home" acquires for them.

4.3 From "home" to "homeland": the second-generation return

The concept of return for the second generation has definitely a different worth compared to their parents' situation since second-generationers have no – or little – experience of their homelands. Their idea of home is, therefore, connected to the British territory, the land where they were born or where they have lived since the early years of their lives, so also their return journeys have different emotional and factual connotations.

However, for both first and second generation, one thing is for sure: the idea of birthplace is a fixed point in everyone's life. After all, the same notion of

“diaspora” is concerned with human beings attached to their home(lands), and “their sense of yearning for homeland, an enquiring attachment to its traditions, religions and languages give birth to diasporic literature” (Singh 2008). The children of the first migrants are not engaged with the ancestral homeland with the same intensity as their parents (Levitt 2009: 1225) because they do not recognise it as their birthplace, and this is why their return trips quite always end with the return to the UK: in spite of the innate kinship with India or the Caribbean and the transnational family boundaries, for those people who were born or raised in Britain it is difficult to fully accept the customs, traditions, and ways of life of these “foreign” countries. In a certain sense, the situation presents the same characteristics of the first-generation condition, although from a reversed standpoint, since the first migrants strenuously fought to return to the former colonies to stay, while their children lack this same sense of belonging which could strongly relate them to South Asia or the Caribbean because they feel it in relation to the UK. So, they generally work hard trying to figure out how to combine “homeland” and “home” values and practices (1227) and to transform their return into an existential journey to the source of the self which has to deal with the double complex meaning of “home”.

The concept of “home” for the second-generationers regards “the lived experiences and spatial imaginaries of diasporic people [...] the existence of multiple homes, diverse homemaking practices, and the intersections of home, memory, identity and belonging” (King, Christou 2008: 17), and in this respect, the transnational homecoming’s experiences make explicit the multiplicity and fluidity of home. This means that there is a fundamental difference between the notions of “home” and “homeland” in the second-generation discourse because, while “homeland” has a quite historical and genealogical meaning which is connected to the location of their family roots, the idea of “home” is a more practical concept, linked to where people actually feel at ease and literally “at home”. This is why most of the children of immigrants have no plans to live in their ancestral homelands: they do not conceive them as homes and, although they felt good when they first went back, then they gradually realise that they are more British than they thought (Levitt 2009: 1235). As a result, the “myth of return”

could be substituted by the “myth of home”, thus shifting the focus from the obsession of returning to the ancient homelands to the search for a place of security, comfort, and certainty (Markowitz, Stefansson 2004: 24), which does not have to be necessarily the homeland, and this idea is at the base of the second-generation novels.

4.3.1 As seeds replanted in the ancestral womb: the “myth of home” for the second generation

In *While there is Light*, the homecoming of the protagonist Saleem is a symbolic return to the maternal womb, that is to a world of safety embodied by his years of childhood in Pakistan and by his mother’s figure. As already mentioned, the whole Saleem’s kinship with his homeland is constructed around the presence of his mother; also during a previous journey in Pakistan, he had recognised that the Pakistani culture was an alien aspect for him (Mehmood 2003: 78), while the only familiar element of his return was his mother’s presence. He did not recognise his uncles and aunts, cousins and childhood friends, but he found an anchor in his mother’s immutability, despite the tensions between them due to the long period of detachment.

So, homelands for second generation may function as totemic sites of heritage based on a generic emotional link which suggests questions of migratory identity, homing, and belonging (King, Christou 2008: 11). In Saleem’s case, the emotional link is represented by his mother, and in this light it is possible to postulate a definition of homecoming as “heuristic journeys” to “sites of memory, sources of identity and shrines of self” (Bender, Winer 2001: 338) in which, however, failure is always around the corner because the information about homeland that second-generation returnees possess are totally based on less-than-accurate portrayals, such as family narratives or short visits (King, Christou 2008: 14). Also Saleem’s knowledge of his native village is based just on his previous temporary trip, so that homeland functions as an experienced place for him such as for the “pure” second-generationers; however, the tie with his mother has also embodied an ancestral linkage to Pakistan, as an ancestral place of ancient

memories. Albeit she has not physically accompanied his son in the UK, she has spiritually escorted him thanks to the persistence of her instructions and love, so she has maintained his bond with Pakistan. In this light Saleem's experience resembles that of other second-generation migrants such as Mira in *Looking for Maya* or Hardeep Kohli, who were born and bred in the UK and they have been deeply instructed by their first-generation parents about home(land). Also in Saleem's case, his perception of Pakistan has been mediated by his mother, thus rendering him in-between first and second generation. After all, transnational migration is characterised also by migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one context (Levitt 2009: 1227), so the double feelings of Saleem and the other second-generation migrants towards the UK and their ancestral homelands are effortlessly justified.

Saleem's condition of in-betweenness is underlined also in the description of his departure from the UK. At the airport, he notes a variety of "old" migrants who are waiting for the boarding to return home; just about everyone "is dressed in their best, giving the place the air of a colourful mela" (Mehmood 2003: 6). In this relaxed scenario, however, Saleem "look[s] around fearfully, hoping not to be recognised" (6) in the crowd among his own compatriots; he does not want to share his condition with the other migrants who "are flushed with joy at the chance of going back home" (8). Instead, he feels "torn between two worlds" (8), like a second-generationer who does not understand the attachment to traditions of the old Pakistani returnees. Indeed, on the plane he does not want to be put next to anyone with a beard, and he is "filled with horror" at the prospect of sharing his space with an old Pakistani lady (10-11). At the same time, his hybrid condition emerges once again when he affirms that he "feels affection towards the old dear" (11), even though he pretends not to understand her when she talks in Pothowari, his mother tongue: "'I'm sorry madam, I don't speak your language.' [...] 'Can't speak your own tongue. Living with English, you've become one of them as well, eh!'" (11). The old lady does not know that Saleem is not a pure second-generationer, but he is born in Pakistan like her. After all, his refusal to share the cultural elements of his homeland with his own returning compatriots pushes him away from them, from those who are born in South Asia like him.

Saleem's position can be justified by his conflictual relationship with his mother; this unsolved condition has so affected his whole life, that now he cannot accept any kind of interferences in his life from his relatives: "I had lived for so long on my own that I found it difficult to adjust to family life and resented being told what I could do or should do" (21). This sort of impasse initially prevents him from feeling at home in Pakistan, especially during his first visit, when his mother is still alive, and the situation has not changed at his arrival at Islamabad's airport for his second journey. Saleem is too English to be accepted by his compatriots and to recognise his own homeland:

I don't recognise this chaotic world. All the faces seem to merge into moustaches and shouts and smiles and announcements. Whilst looking for my mother, I fight off an array of moneychangers, porters, taxi drivers and beggars. I am beginning to become paranoid at the possibility of my parents not being there to receive me. Perhaps they had not been informed about my flight. Just then, the sight of my cousin fills me with happiness. I rush towards him and embrace him tightly. (32)

The presence of his cousin, a member of his family, reassures the only apparently brave Saleem, thus demonstrating that family bonds and the benevolent influence of homeland still have an important role in his life. Moreover, his problematic legal situation in the UK and his second direct experience of Pakistan gradually strengthens his awareness that only his birthplace is the space where he can feel at home: "Plants can grow anywhere, [...] but they are only truly happy in that earth which gave them birth. It is only there they find life's true meaning, and it is earth, in one form or another, to which everything has to return" (87). In this context, the fundamental concept of home appears as related to the recognition of a real sense of belonging and real roots. Therefore, what is important to underline is the essential role played by the birthplace: Saleem can be considered for all intents and purposes as an in-between identity, torn between first and second generation since he has been raised in the UK but he was born in Pakistan. Especially this last point is the element which constructs and influences all his life: the British experience has inevitably conditioned his perception of himself as a second-generation "Englishman" (165), but at the end of the novel he cannot

forget that his birthplace is Pakistan, and in fact he is inevitably directed to it. This means that birthplace and the concept of “home” are indissolubly linked to each other, and they play a fundamental role in migrants’ observation of the world and of themselves, as well as in their experiences of return. Therefore, it is no coincidence that, although Saleem had initially thought to stay in Pakistan just to escape from the English police (12), the novel’s ending is quite open, with Saleem’s wondering in front of her mother’s graveyard about the possibility not to go back to England, to “that place” (220), but to permanently stay not only for convenience, but for his gradual affection for his birthplace and his rediscovered family.

Therefore, Saleem’s roots seem to have been replanted in the homeland’s soil (King, Christou 2008: 10); and the importance of the gardening metaphor is recalled also in Andrea Levy’s *Fruit of the Lemon*, even though with a different meaning.

In Levy’s work, the family tree which grows as the novel proceeds schematising the various global connections and the interrelationships between the UK and the Caribbean culminates in the protagonist’s mixed cultural heritage, thus revealing the inability of labels like “Jamaican”, “black” and “British” to fully capture her various natures. What is evident is that Faith’s journey looking for her own “home” has to pass through a full awareness of her hybridity and of the “social, political and institutional factors, in both the migrants’ home countries and in their countries of settlement” (King, Christou 2008: 13). Faith’s knowledge is initially quite feeble from both these standpoints, since she cannot distinguish neither the characteristics of the racist feelings which are still at the base of the 1980s-UK, nor the elements of Jamaican culture. However, her homecoming helps her to come to terms with both her “homes”.

Her partial integration into the British society is the element which has reoriented her to the parental home island, whose memory has been kept alive by her parents’ narratives. Once back, in spite of her scarce familiarity with the new environment, her homecoming assumes the characteristics of a return to the cradle of a lost collective identity. Indeed, her aunt’s house – that she expected to be “a mud hut with a pointy stick roof and dirt floors” (Levy 2000: 180) – looks

strangely familiar to her, “a brown velour three-piece suite. A cupboard with ornaments”, which “reminded me of home” (180). From this perspective, the return journey acquires the characteristics of the cathartic mission theorized by Blunt (2007), according to which Faith’s voyage into her homeland and her family history would represent the search for an ancestral past which would help her to find out a place of belonging.

Therefore, in the struggle between home as the place where one was born and live, and homeland as the place where one originally comes from, it is fundamental to consider the experience of locality, the sounds and smells of a specific site. According to Avtar Brah, this difference can be summarised defining homeland as a “mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination [but] a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin”, while home is the “lived experience of locality” (Brah 1996: 192). In *Fruit of the Lemon*, these definitions can be traced back to the protagonist’s relationship with Jamaica and the UK. While on the one hand, she gradually appreciates her parents’ land and she becomes attached to her Jamaican family, on the other hand she also eventually understands that England is strongly part of her, as professed by her Aunt Coral’s words: “You can’t leave England and come all that way without losing some bit of you” (Levy 2000: 185). Therefore, if for Faith it is certainly important to experience the dark nights and the noise of Jamaica, with music coming from somewhere, dogs’ sporadic piercing barks, cicadas, and laughing (186), this return to homeland helps her to understand the strength of her tie with her actual home, that is England. Hence, even if she feels at ease in the Caribbean, wondering about the possibility to live there (293), she eventually returns to London, especially after discovering the “plan” that her parents had always had about her journey.

Indeed, she discovers that they had intentionally pushed her to Jamaica, so that she could learn more about her cultural heritage and traditions. According to their point of view, she was losing all this because she “wanted to fit in” (330) the British system; however, in order to freely live her English life, she had firstly to know and love her Jamaican roots:

Oh, they had given me a better life in England, better than I could have had in Jamaica. They had no regrets. But when they first came to England it was a different story. [...] Everyone told them they were from the jungle [...] But they knew they were Jamaican. They knew where they came from and they knew where they wanted to go. They just go on with it. [...] But me, I was born in England and I knew nothing else. [...] So now, according to my parents, I had no job, no proper home and everywhere I looked I saw people trying to hold me back. (331-332)

According to Faith's parents, her only chance of starting again in the UK is beginning from the source, that is from her ancestral homeland; this is the only way to find her "proper" home, a place where to belong. Her final decision to return to London is inspired by a transnational logic, according to which "the experience of migration does not usually end with the return: transnational links generally continue, and both migrants and returnees are profoundly affected by their migratory experience for the rest of their lives" (King, Christou 2008: 20). Faith ultimately decides to come back to England because now she has the necessary tools to deal with her British life, just like it had been for her parents forty years earlier; but now, she also knows that she has a big family in Jamaica, a country where she could make the difference one day, thanks to her education and skills, just like it happens in real migrants' return experiences (Conway, Potter 2009: 83).

Hence it is no coincidence that second-generation migrants often see themselves as "agents of change", that is as bearers of positive and improving changes in the homeland. The only problematic element of this apparently ideal state of affairs is the lack of a complete integration into the Caribbean society: many returnees are still considered by native people – and by themselves – as foreigners, in a process of "black-on-black racism" (89) which leads to the elaboration of an "intermediate position of post-colonial hybridity, according to which they are both black and (because of their 'British' upbringing and their 'English' accents) symbolically white" (King, Christou 2008: 20). Also Faith suffers from this situation when she participates in a Jamaican wedding, especially when she notes that everyone is looking at her because she is wearing trousers instead of a more appropriate dress or skirt (Levy 2000: 294). Therefore, despite a general positive identification,

more contradictory and nuanced reactions are in the running making this kind of migrants feel frustrated and longing to come back to Britain.

Moreover, if we add that most children of migrants do not want to return to live in their ancestral homes because of the great gap that they perceive between themselves and the destination of return (Levitt, Waters 2002: 20), it is not so strange that the protagonist of Levy's novel eventually returns to Britain. So, she does not decide to come back because she has judged her return experience as a failure, but rather because she now manages to fully appreciate both her homeland (Jamaica), and her home (England); in spite of all her difficulties, the UK is where she comes from, as Jamaica was the place where her parents came from, and this is an undeniable condition which cannot be changed by the role of the Caribbean island in this process. So, through a rediscovered relationship with her Jamaican family, she has finally created a "transnational social space" (King, Christou 2008: 15) which comprises both the Jamaican "homeland" and the British "home". With this new awareness, on the plane which is taking her back to England she can now affirm: "It was Guy Fawkes' night and I was coming home. I was coming home to tell everyone...My mum and dad came to England on a banana boat" (Levy 2000: 339). Through this reference to both the English popular myth and her parents' origins, Faith highlights her new self-consciousness and pride about both her homes and identities, an awareness which will never let her feel a foreigner neither in Britain, nor in Jamaica.

4.3.2 Home is "where the heart is": living in-between two homes for the second-generation Anglo-Indians

The tendency of the second generation to live in-between and construct hyphenated identities is evident also in the Anglo-Indian context. In particular, migrants' children have to deal with their parents' tendency to "transplant" the South Asian traditions to the host country, a phenomenon which often causes frustration and embarrassment in the second generation (Oonk 2008: 203), as it is clearly depicted in *Looking for Maya*.

In Srivastava's novel, the propensity of both Mira's parents and her Indian lover Amrit to be nostalgic about their Indian lives and memories irritates Mira, who instead considers herself an English girl who does not know much about India. Nonetheless, a certain tendency towards East is described throughout the novel through the narration of many other journeys to India: indeed, most of Mira's relatives and (white) friends do return or go for the first time to the Indian subcontinent, from her parents who have decided to come back to live in Bombay as the first generation usually do; to her boyfriend Luke who, after their break-up, resolves to make this trip in order to satisfy his interest in the Indian culture, as well as her best friend Tash. These examples prove the beginning of a new force of attraction which pushes many westerners to "migrate" towards East and anticipates the topic I will deal with in the next chapter about the "expatriation" of English citizens to India.

Mira's connection with Asia is, therefore, less strong than that of her ex-boyfriend or her friend: indeed, she has no real intention to come back to the subcontinent or to visit it as when she was a child forced by her parents. According to Oonk, this situation can be classified into a "rebellion" pattern "in which the individual [of second generation] rejects all aspects of the ethnic minority culture and adopts all aspects of the dominant culture" (204). This condition is opposed to a "returning/rediscovery" form of identity (204), a hybrid state which pushes migrants' children to be much more curious about the chance of rediscovering homeland.

Mira's behaviour confirms the yet anticipated second-generation attitude to privilege Britain over the ancient homeland; in Mira's case, this condition is accentuated by the inclination of her English boyfriend to esteem and appreciate all that is Indian, from the manufactured goods to art and literature. This tendency reminds Mira of her parents' compulsive accumulation of Indian objects every time they made a trip to the subcontinent when she was a child (Srivastava 1999: 20), and it contributes to ruining her relationship with Luke. In fact, Mira does not take into consideration the chance of visiting her homeland even when he decides to go to India, the ancestral home where her parents have already gone back to live; instead, after his departure, she feels unburdened, like seven months earlier

“when I had waved RaviKavi off the same airport” because in both the cases she feels “excited [...] to be free of obligation and dependence” (56).

This is a good occasion for her to change skin (57), now that all the people who represented her ties to India are far away. So, with the help of her best friend Tash, she starts to transform her flat:

She [Tash] washed, ironed and hung up the blue curtains I had lugged back from India and stuffed in a suitcase. She ran up cushion covers in an afternoon from velvet and silk garments purchased from Oxfam shop and arranged all the half-finished lotions and potions in the bathroom cabinet. [...] The flat was evolving into a living space, a place of home. (58-59)

Her friend hangs up the Indian curtains that Mira had inadmissibly abandoned in a suitcase, but this is the only element of Indianness in Mira’s life: indeed, her sense of belonging is not due to a piece of furniture, but it has to be found in her everyday wanderings in London, in her kinship with the city, and her search for a lover like Amrit who, like her, has tried all along his life to detach himself from his Indian origins.

Mira is so alien from her Indian heritage that when Tash decides to go to the subcontinent for a trip, she does not consider her “Indian” friend a good source of information:

“This guy, do you think he could give me some tips on India? I mean I’ve got the Rough Guide and I’ve talked to loads of other travellers, but you know...” “What?” I shrieked. “I can give you tips about India, what do you think I am?” [...] “Oh yeah, right. You’ve already given me your tips, though. Stay at the Taj, take taxis everywhere and stay out of the sun,” said Tash rolling her eyes. It was true. I had given her my idea of as a perfect a holiday in India as I could imagine, a holiday I had never had, and never would. (85)

Despite the fact that she is Indian, Mira has a touristic approach to her homeland; she would like to stay in a beautiful hotel and visit monuments like all the other English tourists, rather than visit relatives and stay in their houses: “Every time I

had gone to India I had dragged along behind my parents, jumping trains and travelling third class as they had always done, staying in cramped conditions with my relatives who didn't have Western toilets or air conditioning" (85). Her return experiences as a child have always been disastrous, with her family trying to instruct her on how to be Indian:

My father didn't see why I should get a taxi when it was ten times the price of a bus ticket. All ordinary people travelled this way, just because I lived in England now, did not entitle me to turn into a memsahib. [...] my dad had dismissed my reservations with a snort derision. This is the real India, he would tell me; this is what you will remember. (86)

Ravi tries to inculcate in her daughter's mind the principles of an Indian person, or at least what he thinks being Indian means. This search for the traditional values of homeland should be one of the aims of the second-generation homecoming; however, in Mira's case the plan of her whole family is bound to fail, since she keeps on looking for "another India", the exotic one showed in English TV programmes like *The Jewel in the Crown* and *The Far Pavilions* (87). Despite these considerations it is remarkable to say that Mira's affection for her homeland is not denied throughout the novel; she loves her parents and relatives, as well as the food and the joyful confusion of their Indian houses, however, it is imperative to underline also her ambivalent feelings towards them, especially in relation to the admiration and the sense of home and security she feels in England. This ambiguity is evident when she talks about India with Tash. When the English girl comes back from her voyage, the accounts of her personal trip in the subcontinent make Mira wonder about her own feelings:

I knew she [Tash] must be feeling disoriented, needing a calm environment to lay her head, to let the tumultuous images of India subside in the quietness of London streets, and that she had expected this in my flat, which she had created, knew well and felt cosy in. Yet my heart was fluttering madly, restlessness sweeping me away. (166)

The juxtaposition between the clamour of the Indian space and the calm of London can sound a bit strange considering the vital character of the contemporary British metropolis, but it shows Mira's consideration of her two "homes": she actually perceives the multicultural and cosmopolitan London as a relaxing place where people can think and reorient themselves if compared to the confused and chaotic India, and this is the reason why she prefers the English capital to her Indian "home".

However, it is interesting to note that also her negative experiences of return contributed to constructing her hybrid idea of home, and she realises it by remembering a conversation with her father:

"These people, your uncles and aunties and neighbours who you don't know, all these people who keep asking you the same question..." "Do you like it here or do you like it there?" I mimicked in Hindi, twisting my face in disdain. "All that and this, the toilet without a door and flies. Your feeling of disgust and discomfort and despair. Remember it. Remember all of it. Don't let anyone make you forget it."
(169)

By recalling this conversation, Mira understands that all her past experiences and memories, both positive and negative, forged what she is now and her perception of home. She recognises that she is lucky to have a home in London and a homeland in India, while her friend Tash has a difficult family situation, no roots, and no point of reference (171). In other words, it is maybe possible to define her as a "tourist with roots" in India, while at the same time also her parents are "tourists with roots" when they come to the UK to visit her. In this light, it is evident that the situation of the first and second generation is opposed but symmetrical, like two faces of the same coin.

For all these reasons, Mira does not feel the necessity to return home actually; however, this does not mean that she does not have some kind of affective kinship with homeland.

Therefore, Mira's example confirms that

the maintenance of a strong ethnic identity in the host society does not necessarily mean that the group has strong transnational ties to home [...]. Indeed, it could be argued that the existence of a vibrant ethnic enclave which effectively reproduces most elements of the 'home culture' means that migrants do not need to visit their (parents') home country. (King, Christou 2008: 9)

For Mira, returning home is not an inevitable requirement, but just one possibility among many other possible scenarios which her parents gave her thanks to their decision to migrate to London; therefore, the myth of homecoming depends on the personal meanings that migrants give to the concepts of home and homeland.

In Hardeep Kohli's novel, for instance, in spite of his parents' maintenance of a palpable ethnic identity in Britain and their transmission of these same traditions to their children, the author still decides to return home, specifically to his father's native village, and this decision is taken in spite of his good integration into the British system. Indeed, as King and Christou's surveys on second-generation returns have observed, a successful assimilation does not preclude the second generation from the possibility of engaging in a range of transnational/diasporic activities which link them back to their "home" country (9). Once again, therefore, the question of return depends on a set of personal sensations which can vary from person to person.

In *Indian Takeaway*, the transnational/diasporic activities which link Hardeep to India are related to the culinary world; the art of cooking and the passion for both Indian and British food are the elements which have put him in contact with his ancestral homeland. What is interesting to note here is that his "mission" should have the aim of returning to India what India has offered to Britain, that is food (Kohli 2008: 17), thus highlighting the British debt to its former colony, but at the same time also affirming Kohli's Britishness of second-generationer who wishes to visit the subcontinent as a tourist (Maxey 2012: 104). What really happens, however, is a reawakening of his Indianness and a new attachment to homeland, although his rediscovered affection for India does not deny the fact that he refers to Scotland as his actual home (Kohli 2008: 4), a home in which he can explore also his Indianness thanks to the presence of his parents, and of

temple and Bollywood movies, aunts and uncles, and Gran and her stories. I'm not sure that my day-to-day experience of being Indian in Glasgow was any more accurate than the image I was offered from the wider culture around me; I had yet to actually visit the sprawling subcontinent. The India I was imbibing at the tender age of nine was an India fed to me by parents still stuck in 1960's India. (10)

So, now he has the opportunity to live the real India where feeling a sense of "shared history" (277) and satisfying his questions about home, identity and "who I was and where I was going in life" (28).

As already stated, all the answers pass from the art of cooking and food as genuine cultural and identity elements. By identifying Glasgow – and its culinary tradition – as his home, Hardeep seeks to bring British food to India, in a sort of response to his father's recognition of Indian food as part of his home: "I didn't quite understand why he was so happy eating red chicken; it was only years later that I fully comprehended how much my dad missed the food of the Punjab, the food of his home" (46). His father is, therefore, the natural element of cohesion between nourishment and Hardeep's concept of home because he has influenced both his passion for food and his interest towards his ancient homeland. His father's nostalgia for home is, in fact, always described in relation to a typical Indian dish, or to the search for a surrogate of it:

Every week my father would return home with produce from KRK. KRK was, for all Indian and Pakistani immigrants in Glasgow back when I was a boy, a lifeline of food and produce. KRK was the only place you could get spices and lentils, Indian style meat, fish, chicken and mangoes. [...] If you couldn't afford an airfare back to the subcontinent all you needed to do was pop down to KRK on Woodlands Road. (80)

A similar situation occurs to Hardeep in India, where he tries to reproduce typical British dishes with the help of Indian ingredients. This combination of British and Indian cultures and products reflects the author's personality and in-betweenness – as well as his father's – in an unceasing metaphor which exploits the culinary lexicon to talk about identity: "He [an Indian boy, Nagamuthu] accepted my food

for what it was, although it wasn't perhaps the most authentically British of dishes. On the golden beach in front of his stack I felt at once at home, at home within myself" (86). In this passage, food stands for Hardeep himself, a not totally authentic British man who feels for the first time at home in India because he is finally accepted for what he is, with his double soul. Hence his duality, which made him feel so miserable in the globalised Bangalore as seen in the previous paragraph, can be solved only through the cathartic act of voyage; as a westerner in search for his deep Indianness (161), he needed to experience the contrasts between the multifaceted landscapes of his homeland and the rain-laden skies of Britain to find himself. So, his whole narration is a continuous fluctuation between his two homes, between pork Vindaloo and the Scottish soup he prepares in Dehli, because the important thing is not defining the percentage of his Britishness or Indianness, but feeling right (254); and this is why his final destination is Ferozepure.

His father's village represents one of the central elements of migrants' search for "home", that is family ties and their influence. Indeed, at the end of his journey, Hardeep understands that home is "where the heart is" (275), and in his case, the encounter between his rational wonderings on the sense of words like "home", "identity", and "borders" and his emotions happens in his father's native village, in particular in his grandfather's house at 22 Moti Bazaar. This is his Indian home (277) because it is his father's home, so that the role of family in understanding and transmitting the importance of cultural ties, behaviours and movements (Chamberlain 2009: 8) is ultimately affirmed. As a consequence, the author discovers that "home is where I want it to be. Glasgow, London or within these four walls at 22 Moti Bazaar, Ferozepure" (Kohli 2008: 284), because what is important is that he is part of the continuity of the history of his family. These final considerations show that a univocal definition of home is not possible, because "it is a quest that is just beginning rather than ending" (284), and a complex web of factors has to be solved before "the new place – or perhaps new place(s), as well as place of origin – may be sincerely embraced as 'home'" (Kain 1997: 1).

After all, according to Jussawalla, the widespread idea of hybridity advanced whenever we talk about migration and its related concept of home is an imposed label created to supplement the lack of individuality, selfhood, and cultural pride (Jussawalla 1997: 20). In this light Bhabha's conceptualization of hybridity would be another colonialist tool created just to fit in the agenda of certain academic institutions and centres, and the need to relocate migrants' home to the former mother-country would respond to these requirements. In this way, the plausibility of home would be denied (22). However, I think that these reflections do not take into consideration the irrational factor which is part of the migrant process. This means that the choice of home cannot be labelled as an "academic" or forced imposition, but it is related to the most intimate and recondite part of the human mind, which is particularly connected to the birthplace of migrant people. As already observed, this is why migrants of first generation ultimately tend to return to and to decide to stay in the place where they were born, that is where they can feel a stronger sense of family, while their children prefer to live in the UK. This is also the reason why first-generation migrants maintain the dream of homecoming and they desperately chase it all along their life, while those of second generation cannot resist the call of the UK after their visits of homeland.

4.4 Towards a new conceptualization of a British post-postcolonial identity

To conclude this chapter, I think it is important to underline John McLeod's observation that all kinds of British identities are "conceptualised in ways which supersede received racialized models of subjectivity and selfhood" (McLeod 2010: 47). The role of homecoming in this conceptualization is quite evident because the search for roots can support the overcoming of the old model of identity formation for the so-called Black British writers, but also for white English authors. Indeed, the contemporary global world-system, with its uncertainties and lack of clear social, geographical, and ethnic borders currently equates people all over the world, so that the final tendency will be that of living

in a totally borderless system. In this context, I think that it is central to consider also a distinction between “Black British writing” and “contemporary black writing of Britain” (46). In particular, the second definition should demarcate the accounts of those black authors who daily experience the current global changes in the British scenario: their peculiar way of seeing them could be the keystone for a new reading of the contemporary global system. However, this definition could also go beyond, with the overcoming of the term “black” in order to avoid any racial or ethnic classification. This proposal originates in a loss of importance of the notion of racial identity, since when contemporary writers produce works which are “much less primarily concerned with the subjectivity of black Britons or the select concerns of race” (47), they definitely produce better works. Furthermore, I personally agree with McLeod’s clarification that much of the current British novels

escapes, rather than neatly evolves, from the orthodox paradigm of Black British writing that hitches the revision of the identity of the UK to exclusively Black British needs. Of course, this does not mean that the important battles of the eighties and nineties are necessarily concluded or have been won. [...] These writers’ attention to the illiberal role of race in imagining the nation is often a starting point for a different kind of reinvention of the UK, one which reaches beyond the more specific parameters of Black Britishness. (47)

Starting from these considerations, I suggest concretely going beyond the traditional parameters of “Black” or “White literature” by avoiding the use of these terms and by analysing also works of writers who are generally considered “proper” British authors who write about a migrant context. What I would like to do in the last section is to consider migrant literature as a unique field of investigation by using the minimum number of selective and objectifying labels, thus demonstrating how the barriers which were used to separate and distance the so-called East and West of the world could be gradually demolished by actually considering the current migrant, global, and borderless world as a unique space of interrelation.

5. Towards post-postcolonialism: the reverse migration of British expats to India

In the previous chapters, I focused on the phenomenon of return migration of the first and second generation of migrants who moved to the UK as former colonised people. The situation of the current world-system, however, enables to take into consideration another form of migration to the former colonies which involves the displacement of western people, in particular of British citizens, towards the former “pearl of the empire”, that is India. These back-and-forth flows characterising the current global situation are a condition which goes hand in hand with Dipesh Chakrabarty’s suggestion of provincializing Europe. In other words, the present state characterised by the loss of centrality of the so-called “First world” concerns the end of historicism and the strong reaffirmation of space, as the examined novels have demonstrated. In this context, what is important is not the place *per se*, but the links among places and spaces created by migrant flows, while the notion of time and its own narrative of development of the West are losing their supremacy (Chakrabarty 2000: 8). This situation has stimulated the creation of more complex historical narratives which stress the centrality of marginalized people and places; the narrations of return and reverse migration are inspired by this logic because, by highlighting the current position of relevance of the former colonies and their inhabitants in the migrant process, they contribute to shape new paths of analysis of the whole world-system. Following this line of investigation,

many scholars have sought to undo the opposition between the West and the Rest by insisting that the West has never been modern just as the Rest has never been traditional, by producing new disciplinary knowledge that is more sensitive to contingent empirical details and the power relations. (Skaria 2009: 54)

At the beginning of the new millennium, Edward Said underlined “the eclipse of the old authoritative, Eurocentric models and the new ascendancy of a globalized, postmodern consciousness from which, as Benita Parry and others have argued,

the gravity of history has been excised” (Said 2001: 66). His position, however, is less optimistic than Chakrabarty’s, since he highlights also that,

Anticolonial liberation theory and the real history of empire, with its massacres and exploitation, have turned into a focus on the anxieties and ambivalences of the colonizer, the silent thereby colonized and displaced somehow. Along with that has gone a celebration of an almost purely academic version of multiculturalism with which many people in the real world of ethnic division, conflict, and chauvinism would find it difficult to identify. (66)

Said’s considerations reflect a certain pessimism towards the contemporary global phenomena and the actual realization of a pure form of multiculturalism which people in the “real world” cannot find. However, if this situation certainly occurs in the western metropolises where the coexistence of different ethnicities is still a problematic matter, I would rather suggest to focus on the relationship between globalization and the locality (Gupta 2009: 95) of the overseas territories which are currently exploiting this same phenomenon. These emergent global spaces can concretely give rise to the formation of multicultural and transnational environments thanks to increased possibilities of social, cultural, and geographical cross-borders given by their vital and globalised milieu. This condition is leading to the creation of new forms of transnational individualities, a phenomenon which affect also the “stable” British identities as it is shown, for example, by the elderly retired people described in Deborah Moggach’s *These Foolish Things* or by the young lady moving to Mumbai in *Becoming Mrs. Kumar*. In other words, we are talking about the reinvention of the whole British identity, far from the concept of Englishness, but also from that of Britishness.

Moreover, I suggest that the same idea of “British” identity has lost its original meaning with the provincialization of Europe. In particular, Chakrabarty points out that,

To provincialise Europe was precisely to find out how and in what sense European ideas that were universal were also, at one and the same time, drawn from very particular intellectual and historical traditions that could not claim any universal

validity. It was to ask a question about how thought was related to place. Can thought transcend places of origin? Or do places leave their imprint on thought in such a way as to call into question the idea of purely abstract categories? (Chakrabarty 2000: xiii).

Firstly, by substituting the “European thought” mentioned by the Indian scholar with European literature, and in this case British literature, it is possible to affirm that the novels analysed in the previous chapters have transcended the places of origin, as the new spatiality leaves its imprint on the literary representation and calls into question the previous forms of national belonging. So, if in the 1980s the public identity of the British nation was “modified and updated” by the development of literary writings (Arana 2005: 232), nowadays this same identity has undergone another significant change due to the collapse of historicism and of the centre-periphery dichotomy. The overturning of these two concepts has also led to a mutual exchange of cultural elements, according to which the supposed “dominant” cultures tend to import food, films, and also literature from the alleged “inferior” nations. This condition supports the creation of new global citizenships, far from the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion constructed by the cultural elements of reference of the old nation-states. This complex process is obviously still in its starting phase; however, it seems that the future tendency will be to consider space as an including and dynamic element, wherein globalization will not create cultural homogeneity and uniformity, but the construction of solid transnational networks which will allow reversed forms of flows between centres and peripheries.

The postcolonial scholar Victoria Arana as well agrees with this new conceptualization of contemporary British identity; however, her “progressive transformative critique of Britain as a public or civic imagining, curiously decoupled from the matter of internationalisation [...] is deemed to follow automatically from the articulation of new ethnicities by black Britons” (McLeod 2010: 47). I think that this approach is quite outdated to describe the current balances among different regions of the world and their inhabitants because the old definitions of “new ethnicities” and “black Britons” have been replaced by a

porousness of borders which has led to a dissolution of previous forms of identity (Jay 2010: 23), and this is true especially for Britain. In other words,

the reinvention of the identity of the UK in an international and polycultural frame is revising how all kinds of British identities - Black British and beyond - are conceptualized in ways which supersede received racialised models of subjectivity and selfhood (McLeod 2010: 47).

This means that a radical change in the consideration of the question of identity formation is required in order to understand the implications of the current world-system.

An innovative scenario of investigation of the current migrant flows can be observed in three novels representing diverse cases of reversed journeys, in which different British characters decide to move to India for retirement, work, or love. Deborah Moggach's *These Foolish Things* (2004), Geoff Dyer's *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi* (2009), and Heather Gupta's *Becoming Mrs Kumar* (2013) are, therefore, central to understand how English literature has tackled the consequences of the global phenomena. This situation would lead to an enlargement of the category of "postcolonial literature" also to those authors who do not share a colonial past of exploitation and oppression and, in my opinion, it demonstrates that the canonical partition between English and postcolonial works is quite outmoded. Indeed, the experiences of the current reverse migrants emphasise a certain affinity to those of migrants of first and second generation, although with due distinctions.

5.1 (Re)constructing a global identity: the transnational community of the British expats in India

The phenomenon of reverse migration implicates a peculiar kind of emotional involvement of the British migrant due to the encounter with a new reality. This condition does not ask for authenticity because the reverse migrant is a sort of first pioneer who moves from the West to the former colonies for the first time. And,

even though many English people had travelled from Britain to India during the highest expansion of the British Empire in the XVIII and XIX centuries, the situation of contemporary reverse migrants is totally different because it is comparable to that of migrants who move abroad for necessity, experiencing many difficulties and problems; in other words, these people are veritable “expats”.

In literary criticism, the term “expatriate” denotes people who “live in a foreign country”, thus losing the coercive character typical of the proper migrant experience since, “the expatriate is more typically pulled to a foreign country than compelled to leave home” (Hart 2011: 557), while the fiction produced by this kind of migration is described as one in which “residence abroad is matched by a concern with how modern life is shaped by the crossing of national borders and the interactions of diverse cultures” (555). The novels analysed in this section confirm this tendency; in each of them, the expatriate protagonists have to deal with the cultural and geographical twisting caused by the porosity of borders of the contemporary world with consequences on their own identity. Their condition, albeit not fully comparable to that of migrants from the former colonies, is remarkable anyway.

In Deborah Moggach’s *These Foolish Things*, the protagonists are elderly British people who are sent to Bangalore to live in *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, an ancient hotel of colonial origins which has been transformed into a retirement home by two Anglo-Indian cousins, Sonny and Ravi. The author’s choice of sending to India the former *sahib* is a well-orchestrated literary expedient which allows to highlight the current relationship between the Indian nation and its former mother-country. This is possible not only through the pensioners’ point of view, but also thanks to the presence in the text of some young Indians who work in a call-centre, symbol of a global and globalizing context.

After all, globalization has recently shed light on the marginalised social classes, the so-called “non-élites”, thus giving life to attempts of globalization from below. As Jay affirms,

Any analysis of literature's engagement with how subjectivity, social relationships, and forms of economic and cultural production get constructed under globalization has to pay attention to the representation of economic inequities and class relationships in the texts we study and to how material conditions mediate what we call "cultural" (and "personal") relations. (Jay 2010: 71)

This means that the transnational turn which has affected also literary studies is given by the idea that the cultural and literary production of a specific society is nowadays not only a mere aesthetic object, but also the result of the economic condition of the same society (71). The novels analysed in this section take into consideration this perspective, since they demonstrate how the economic and social balances among different nations and different geographical areas of the world have affected the contemporary migrant flows from the UK towards East. This is particularly evident in Moggach's text, where examples of marginalised classes are embodied by both the young Indians and the group of English pensioners. A literary and transcultural approach which could veritably be defined as both postcolonial and global has to take into consideration these conditions, as well as the importance that migrant movements of the last fifteen years have had in the creation of this context. Therefore, I would like to suggest that, if one of the focuses of postcolonial criticism and literature was traditionally centred on migration from the former colonies to the UK, nowadays it is possible to follow the reversed path, by examining the flows towards the former colonial territories, and in particular to India.

Gozzini has defined the new transnational movements as "travelling cultures" which cross the frontiers shifting between local and global perspectives. The most interesting characteristic of these new kinds of cultures is the fact that they affect also the so-called "dominant" communities – such as the British one – which thus show dis-placed and relational features (Gozzini 2006: 19). This is what happens in Moggach's novel, where displaced and relational aspects are embodied by the encounter between the English culture and the "Other" in the Indian territory.

The formation of the British transnational community in India is a response to the failure of the welfare system in the UK, so that Sonny affirms,

“In my country we care for our elders and betters – know what our pension scheme is called? It’s called the family! Here in Britain what happens to them? There is nobody to look after the poor old buggers, their families are scattered hither and thither. People like yourself [his anglicised cousin Ravi], what do you care for your old *apas* and *ammās*?” [...] “Where’s the money to pay for them?” asked Sonny. “Your National Health Service is cracking up under the strain.” (Moggach 2005: 17)

From these lines, one can glimpse the main signals of the debacle of the western society and its crisis, which prevents nations and their citizens from assisting their elderly people. The idea of the two Indian cousins aims at exploiting the facilities supplied by globalization in the emerging countries, such as “cheap and plentiful labour, low costs. The elderly could be looked after at a fraction of the price, thus unburdening the social services. He [Ravi] and Sonny would form a company and set up a deal with local authorities” (19). Moreover, Sonny further underlines the current global people’s perspective all over the world:

“We’re all global travellers now, old boy, cheap packages to God knows where [...] Who wants to be stuck there in some nasty little room smelling of cabbage? Why should they [the British pensioners] be mouldering away in rainy, dirty old Britain when they could be sitting under a palm tree?” (19)

This situation allows a sort of re-localization of the British identity in India, a displacement that, rather than exalting the UK and its centrality in the global world-system, further highlights the emergence of the locality and of the former peripheries of the world. The attempt to promote this new sense of spatiality is evident since the first advertisement of the retirement home: “Enjoy the ambience of a bygone age with the advantages of modern living [...] first-class cuisine includes both English and South Indian specialities. Come and pamper yourself! You deserve it” (23). The attempt to create a global mixed reality which takes the best aspects from both British and Indian cultures is a cardinal element of these new transnational communities in the former colonies, where “Catherine Cookson paperbacks” and “Cooper’s Marmalade” (97) can coexist with the Indian tradition of hospitality and its sense of family. This is possible also thanks to the

contradictory character of the modern India, an emerging nation where the “legless young man” and the schoolchildren with their “white socks, so neat and clean” (98) can stand side by side.

In this context, the community formed by the elderly British people in the retirement home functions as a sort of detachment of Britain in India, but with the characteristics of a veritable migrant community: as it was for the first waves of migrants in the UK in the 1950s, the British pensioners live in a closed community which has, however, also some significant interchanges with the outside society. They perfectly know that

they were all in the same boat, all deserted in one way or another by those they had loved, and now they had to stick together. After two months they had become a sort of family; even those she [Evelyn, one of the pensioners] didn't particularly like had grown so familiar that concepts of liking or disliking had become irrelevant. England was distant now, it was another life; it was these people now who concerned her. (140)

This strong sense of attachment to the migrant community is perfectly comparable to that of migrants in Britain analysed in the previous chapters, and it demonstrates an affinity between the condition of the contemporary western migrants and earlier forms of diasporic movements.

At the *Marigold*, every member of this original migrant community is described through the vigilant and curious gaze of Minoo, the Indian director of the retirement home: the guests are actually elderly people with their own faults and qualities, as it is clear from the fact that, also in the small community of pensioners, a number of sub-groups have already been created:

Friendships had been forged; territories staked out. It reminded Evelyn of boarding-school, a period in her life which she remembered with painful clarity. Madge's [another guest] efforts to move people around at dinner had been firmly resisted by those who had found congenial companions and were determined to stick with them. (96-97)

What is interesting, however, is the pacific coexistence of these inflexible former colonizers with the Indian citizens, and their desire to discover the real India, far from the stereotyped dimension perceived in Britain. In other words, the elderly pensioners are looking for a new community of belonging in India.

One of them, Evelyn Greenslade, is particularly aware that “Once, the British had ruled this place. The Raj, however, like her certainties, had long since crumbled. Now it was she herself who was the ethnic minority” (99-100). In order to delete this sense of foreignness typical of the first period of the migrant journey, Evelyn realises that they have to integrate into the Indian society by going outside the retirement home and meeting Indian people, so that she is the first one among the English pensioners who understands that “Outside the walls, India clamoured” (97).

The attempt of integration is another recurrent motif of migrant narration, and it is well depicted throughout the novel, especially in the approximation of the host Muriel Donnelly to the Indian spirituality (138), or in Evelyn’s encounter with the Indian youngsters of the call-centre. From these episodes, it is possible to glimpse a genuine attempt of exchange between two different cultures which are now trying to know each other far from the old colonial preconceptions; the guests of the *Marigold* are immerse into a post-postcolonial and globalised dimension in which they can share their experiences and knowledges with those of the young Indians, in a fruitful occasion of dialogue and confrontation not only between different cultures, but also different generations:

They arrived a couple of days later, twenty girls and boys from the call-centre, and filed into the lounge. [...] Sonny, who arranged it, ordered Pepsis all around. Surinda sat next Evelyn, her head resting against the side of the armchair. [...] Evelyn felt a maternal rush. She longed to take care of this lovely plump girl. [...] Sonny clapped his hands. “Silence, please! Now, my good friends, the aim of this gathering is for you to ask our distinguished Britishers here about their home country [...]”. Conversations broke out around the room. [...] It was a novel sensation, having people interested in what they [the pensioners] said. (162-163)

It seems that the elderly British guests and the young Indians actually need each other, especially because they can reciprocally take care of themselves. This is an actual answer to the decay of both their communities which have abandoned and neglected them; however, it is interesting to note that the British pensioners are in a position of weakness not only because they are elderly people abandoned in a foreign country by their own families, but also because, in India, they belong to an “ethnic minority”, as previously stated by Evelyn. After all, as pointed out by Gozzini, migrant transnational identities in a diasporic context can move up a common future in which the national belonging will be less inclusive (Gozzini 2006: 20). This situation helps to consider the condition of these British “migrants” as a genuine transnational experience supported by a multiplicity of local and international belongings and identities. In this light, previously fundamental concepts, such as citizenship or nationality, tend to acquire new “postnational” forms founded on the distinction between cultural and political communities (20).

This tendency is depicted by the condition of the guests of the *Marigold*. The portion of British culture they have brought to India in this post-national context is in a previously unknown position of subordination similar to the tie existing between ancient parents and children, when the former need the help of the latter, thus demonstrating the new unusual relationship between the UK and its former colonies. The “old age” of Britain has triggered this mechanism, thus pushing its citizens to migrate in reverse in order to be taken care of by their young “children”.

This reversal is further underlined by the description of Ravi’s identity. The Anglo-Indian doctor has literally escaped from his Indian homeland because he definitely does not like India (Moggach 2005: 20). As most Indian migrants to Britain, he loves his new English life, and he is satisfied with his position in the UK, while he is organizing the journey of his father-in-law and the other pensioners to Bangalore. Ravi is said to be “more British than the British” (34), as further demonstration of the fact that the twines and exchanges of the contemporary human community are actually overcoming the borders and identities of the past (Gozzini 2006: 20), in an incessant reversed process which

defines the contemporary routes and the new communities and identities of the emerging areas of the world.

The complexity of the current global balances is further expressed in Geoff Dyer's *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi*, a fictional investigation into the multifaceted personality of an English journalist, Jeff Atman, during his wanderings in Italy and India. At first sight, it is interesting to note that the two parts of the novel seem totally detached from each other, the first section dealing with the three-days trip in Venice of the protagonist for the Biennale in 2003, while the second part is centred on Jeff's experience in Varanasi. In fact, there is no evident linkage between the two journeys, and also between the two "Jeffs" protagonists of the sections; indeed, the author himself has affirmed that "just as everyone is an avatar of someone else in Hindu myth, so the characters are different incarnations of each other" (Crace 2009). Actually, a strong link to spirituality and the Indian aptitude to influence human perception and senses is underlined throughout the novel; the idea of wholeness and circularity which characterises Indian culture is displayed by the different sections of the book, which has to be considered "as a small part of a larger whole that comprises the unity of the Dyer experience than as separate entities in themselves" (Crace 2009). In this light one can follow the evolution of Jeff's identity by observing the alterations in his life and in his way of seeing it: if in the first half of the novel he embodies the character of the shameless art journalist accustomed to the vagaries of art dealers and artists and up to exploit people and situations to achieve his personal success, on the other hand, in the second section, he starts a path of regeneration in Varanasi, an environment which is totally opposed to the sparkling glamour and pomp of the art world of Venice. Even the title of the novel suggests this reading: the physical "presence" and the fact of "being" Jeff in Venice in the first half is deleted by his journey to Varanasi, where the old self dies to be reborn with a new awareness of him-*self*. In this way, Jeff's temporary journey to India is transformed into a permanent resettlement in the former colony, a modern destination for global tourists from all over the world, but still able to show its most genuine face to those who can catch it.

So, the protagonist experiences a veritable identity clash: he is deeply impressed by the contradictions of the Indian environment, where he can assist to the exploitation of the Indian traditions and the deployment of its stereotypes during the shooting of a film by a western director (Dyer 2009: 183), but also to their exaltations and genuine expression in the beautiful temples and in the streets of the city. The idea of reincarnation and double-ness which forges Jeff's new "Indian" identity is given also by his assertion that "in another life I could quite happily have worked here" (187), in a continuous changing of mind about his own life and personality which are getting used to the subcontinent's habits.

Jeff gradually loses, therefore, the characteristics of a tourist to assume that of his alter ego who is rooting in India. According to Zygmunt Bauman, the line of separation between tourists and vagabonds, i.e. migrants, is not always clear (Bauman 2005: 349): in fact, for the Polish philosopher, the vagabond is what the tourist could become, as it happens in Dyer's novel. So, it is not by chance that the current English tourists in India, "the longer they stayed, the more closely they conformed to an international standard of scruffiness. Quite a few had dreadlocks anyway, some [...] opted for turbans that had started out as sarongs" (Dyer 2009: 199), as they try to adapt themselves to the Indian environment. A genuine reverse migrant like Jeff ends up accentuating all these elements until mixing himself up with the local traditions and customs:

When I first came to Varanasi, like all the other tourists, I had treated the Ganges with extreme aversion. It may have been a sacred river, but it was a filthy one too, awash with sewage, plastic bags and the ashes of corpses: a sacred, flowing health hazard. Now I felt the urge to take a dip. [...] Dillydallying was just postponing the inevitable. Since there would come a time when I had bathed in the Ganges, not doing so made no sense: like trying to avoid doing something I had already done. Just after sunrise, at Kedar ghat, I took off my shorts and T-shirt and stripped down to my underwear [...] I walked down the steps and entered the water. [...] When they [tourists] saw me, they saw a rebuke to their own timidity. (280-282)

Jeff is a migrant who tries to assimilate himself to the foreign environment, in a journey which is deeply transforming him; this is the intrinsic meaning of his bath in the Ganges.

Affected by an identity crisis which pushes him away from the western world and eager of “keeping one’s options open” (180), Jeff dives into the expat community of those who “in time, would turn into versions of the older guys who were here, guys my age, many of whom looked like they’d done a decade or more in Goa” (200). So, he moves to the *Ganges View Hotel*, where most of the permanent tourists reside, spending his time at the Lotus Lounge, the terrace of the hotel, when he is not busy wandering through the city. The atmosphere in the hotel is characterised by a semi-communal spirit that “encouraged interaction among the guests. As different people came and went, bonded and dispersed, so the vibe of the hotel changed. At any time, different combinations and nationalities held sway” (205), thus giving to Jeff the possibility to meet and establish relationships with a number of different European people “migrated” to Varanasi. From this perspective, the hotel guests a veritable international transnational community defined by the presence of western visitors animated by a number of motivations to stay in Varanasi: French, American, German, Scandinavian, and Italian people, “a mixture of people from all over the place [...] Everyone had come from somewhere and was going somewhere else” (205). They all arrive in India as tourists, but some of them are bound to become diasporic identities and to stay there, sharing their experiences and communal anecdotes and building a sense of belonging which was rare to share in their previously chaotic and impersonal lives in the West. As a result, Jeff “ate dinner in the hotel every night. It was nice meeting people, and sometimes we sat around talking after dessert, but [...] for people used to running their social lives on booze, the lack of wine at dinner meant that once the food was eaten the experience was pretty well finished” (205-206). These first attempts to create a strong transnational community out of Europe fail because Jeff and the other guests are still too anchored to their western life and habits; however, after some months in Varanasi, Jeff’s condition of tourist begins to change, especially when he realises that the “anguishes” and “problems” characterising the western societies are fleeting feelings compared to the real pain

that Indians are used to bear without complaining. From this moment, and not by chance, he starts to appreciate the “holy man, sitting by the river, in the shade of a mushroom umbrella”, as well as the “‘I LOVE MY INDIA’ sign” hanging out of the hotel (233).

His direct eyes-to-eyes encounter with the holy man sat on the street is the eventual element of cohesion with India. They sit in the shade, cross-legged, facing each other, but in their meeting there is nothing of the western stereotyped vision of the Indian spirituality. Jeff is totally aware that “he was in his world and I was in mine. My world-view would never be his and vice-versa”, but he also adds that “that was what we had in common” (242), thus sponsoring the possibility of having a totally free, unselfish, and not mimic relationship with the inner part of India, and the strength of this kinship is difference. This situation can produce a healthy exchange between cultures, as well as an intense curiosity about foreignness:

What was it like to be him? I wished we could have changed places, for a while at least. If I looked closely, I could see my own face reflected in the dilated pupils of his eyes. It was as if I was there, a little homunculus. And then, after a while, as I concentrated on it, so that little image of me came to fill my vision. I zoomed in on it so that instead of seeing his face, all I could see was my own, staring back at me as from a mirror. That was one way of seeing it. The other was that I was actually seeing what he was seeing and, contrary to what I'd originally thought, there was no real difference between the way I saw him and the way he saw me. (242)

Hence, in this context, difference is similarity without hierarchy, and it actually produces cultural and spiritual enrichment, as well as a deep closeness among people. In this way, Jeff can recognise himself in the eyes of the holy man “as from a mirror”, as if he saw himself for the first time, “a man in his mid-forties, grey-haired, thin-faced, the mouth set in an attitude of some glumness. The face was not unkind, but there was a rigidity about it, [...] What the face was full of, I could see now, was yearning, desire, in this case a desire for knowledge” (242-243). Through the encounter with the Indian holy man, Jeff finally knows himself, so that the rigidity of his face can eventually be replaced by a smile, the same of

his new Indian friend: “Having zoomed in on the pupil of my friend’s eye, [...] I saw his nose, his teeth and the gaps where his teeth were missing. He was smiling. I smiled back” (243).

Starting from these premises, it is not by chance that, at the end of the novel, Jeff decides not to go back to London by indefinitely extending his stay in Varanasi, and this is a new beginning for this contemporary British “migrant”. Indeed, as the title of the novel suggests, Jeff actually finds his metaphoric death in Varanasi, so that he claims: “‘I am in mourning for myself,’ I said, reprising the old Chekhov joke. ‘My old self refuses to die. The new is struggling to be reborn’” (278), thus highlighting a transitional stage between two different identities, and two different countries. He has detached himself from the West by becoming gradually less interested in it, and less involved with the world outside Varanasi. In this way, he can be part of the Indian community without losing his own personality – since, to his mind, he is still recognizably himself (287) –, but embracing, at the same time, a contemporary hybrid identity. This in-between condition places Jeff on a level similar to that of migrant people in the UK; moreover, the author’s intention to give his character a genuine migrant identity can be postulated also from the formal structure of the text. The first Venetian part of the novel is, in fact, narrated in the third person, while the Indian section is in the first person and definitely focuses on the protagonist’s standpoint, as if Jeff eventually identified himself with Varanasi more than he had done with the western society, thus displacing the experience narrated in *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi* on a really strong emotional level.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that these kinds of transnational English migrations towards East have taken place just in recent years: this is especially due to the work opportunities offered by the Indian subcontinent. A narrative example is given by *Becoming Mrs. Kumar*, where the protagonist Julia Robinson is the alter ego of the writer Heather Saville Gupta who has actually lived the same experiences narrated in the novel. Julia is an Account Director at one of the most important advertising agencies in London, and is sent to Mumbai to work with an international client located in India.

Therefore, the initial impulse which pushes Julia to move to the subcontinent is due to work reasons, just like for Jeff in Dyer's novel. However, the young English woman definitely underlines that she "didn't want to be labelled as one of those annoyingly pretentious types who wanted to go to India to 'find themselves'" (Saville Gupta 2013: 9). After all, at first sight, Julia seems more linked to her "Englishness" than Jeff, so that she spends her last month in the UK enjoying the "small pleasures" of this same sense of "Englishness clinging on the last remnants of the life that I was leaving behind" (16). From these first considerations, it is already evident that Julia's identity at the moment of her departure for India is adamantly linked to her own country, so that she is not fully prepared to the "utter chaos" she finds in Mumbai (17). As soon as she arrives, she starts to compare Indian habits to the British ones, highlighting the noises and smells all over the streets:

Clearly, this was a country with very different rules from back home [...] We drove for about an hour through tiny streets clogged with cars, bicycles, people, dogs, cats, goats and the occasional cow. Finally, we arrived at my new home [...] Despite my research, which had told me that India was dirty, polluted and chaotic, I had expected something little nicer. (19-20)

Julia's impact with her new reality is not fully positive, as it is still fuelled by the stereotyped vision she has of India, typical of an Anglo-centric perspective; however, she also demonstrates to be more flexible than she would have expected, especially thanks to the expats' community she gets in touch with. Therefore, even though she does not feel the "deep spiritual connection" that other Westerners usually feel in India (23), she manages to settle in better than other British migrants. After all, a substantial clash between expectations and reality is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the migrant journey and, as already seen for the first generation of migrants in the UK, the answer to this delusion is to be found in the compatriots' communities.

The role of western transnational groups in the first attempt of integration of expats into the Indian environment is really relevant. The initial cultural shock typical of all migrant experiences is actually mainly overcome through the help of

other migrants, and this is true also in the real life. In fact, many English expats to India denounce the cultural surprise and the loss of privacy of living in the subcontinent. The accounts reported in the web site expatarrivals.com⁴ describe the expats' lives as generally confined to gated communities and complexes with security, where they can live together constructing genuine transnational communities. This form of human aggregation resembles for many aspects the Indian and Caribbean communities of migrants in the UK after World War II, especially considering their collecting atmosphere and the "welcoming and helpful" side of their hospitality. In Saville Gupta's novel, Julia is inserted into Mumbai's social life by her friend Johann, a German expat who has married an Indian girl. His hybrid condition, in-between West and East, allows him to introduce Julia to both Indian and Western inhabitants of the city so that she can actually develop both her identities.

Even in this global, multicultural, and stimulating context, however, things seem not so different from the colonial past. British people are still in a position of superiority, even though this situation can be seen as a double-edged sword. In fact, if on the one hand their white skin is a key opening many doors since it gives them an allure of "exoticness" (Saville Gupta 2013: 82) on the other hand this same condition is an example of another reversed process: because of their whiteness indeed, and however privileged they could seem, British people in India are treated and exploited like migrants with all the burdens of this state. For instance, Julia experiments the wretchedness of her position when she meets an Indian boy, Krishna, who literally exploits her and her exoticness by showing her off like a trophy and stealing her money behind her back. This tendency to exploit the "Other" and his/her work and resources is a typical feature of the migrant condition. As a result, Julia initially tends to maintain a certain attachment to her roots, as all migrants tend to do, as a response to her "subaltern" position. Therefore, if on the one hand British expats certainly benefit from a number of privileges as migrants in India, on the other hand it is undeniable that their whiteness does not always avoid them a certain dose of complications. This

⁴ This web-site reports a number of accounts of European migrants all over the world, but especially to the so-called "emerging countries".

situation initially prevents Julia from abandoning her western point of view filled with stereotypes and orientalist considerations about Indian people, and pushes her towards the British community in Mumbai:

I decided to reach out the expat community, figuring that I could probably learn from others who had been here longer than me. There was a small, but fairly active Expatriates Group whose members sent e-mails and requests for help in finding maids and drivers, bought and sold furniture cars and other requirements for setting up home in the city. [...] Living in Mumbai felt like you were permanently on the set of those challenging game shows, where obstacles were thrown at contestants in a bid to defeat them mentally and physically. (121-122)

The challenge offered by the city is initially too hard for Julia, and this is why she starts to participate in the cocktail events organised by the “European Ladies Group”:

She [the host] proceeded to introduce each one of the ten or so ladies in the room, most of whom seemed to be British, French or Swedish. They were all casually, but impeccably, dressed and immaculately polished. [...] It seemed that all the ladies were in agreement, that Mumbai was generally a nightmare, a ‘hardship posting’, and an agony to be endured for a fat salary before returning to the sanity of home. (123-125)

The vision that these young women have of Mumbai is quite negative since they are “trailing spouses”, that is wives who generally follow their ambitious husbands all over the world. This condition is nowadays quite widespread, and it is reported also in some expats’ interviews on Internet⁵, where the “Overseas Women’s Club” (‘OWC’) of Bangalore is cited, for example, as a good place to start entering the expats’ life, thus demonstrating that these new forms of aggregation in India are not rare at all. One of the interviewed also affirms that: “There is a very strong expat community in Mumbai, although I like very much to mix my friendships with Indians too. [...] We do mix with other expats too as it

⁵ See <http://www.expattarrivals.com/india/expat-experiences-in-india>

seems to happen naturally when you find people you have things in common with”, a position shared by most expats because: “It is easy to make friends with those who have a shared experience; you are not alone”⁶. As evidenced by these assertions, it seems that British expats’ condition is very similar to that of Indian and Caribbean migrants in Britain: they share the same fears and desires of inclusion into a social group in order to respond to their frustrated need of belonging. Therefore, I do not totally agree with Hart’s statement that “unlike the immigrant who tries to assimilate to a new country, the expatriate is defined by remaining out of place” (Hart 2011: 557), since in some cases, as it is showed by Julia, Jeff, and the elderly pensioners of *These Foolish Things*, expatriates actually try to insert themselves into the social context of their adoptive country, but they are rejected, just like it happens to migrant people. Hence, as already seen for migrants in the UK, the function of all transnational communities is re-creating a place of acceptance for those who feel rejected by the host society. In the case of British people in India, we find a reversed condition, where the ex-colonisers are living the migrant experience in a foreign country which was part of their former imperial possessions. This unsettling situation leads to the creation of two different groups of western migrants in India, those who “preferred to exist in a bubble wrapped state of false security during their entire posting, living with a sense of detachment and an innate superiority throughout their stay” and those who “came, driven by the desire to experience a lifestyle that seemed so much more meaningful and spiritual than that which they’d abandoned back home” (Saville Gupta 2013: 132). The two souls of contemporary western expats in India are the authentic elements of diversity which make the lives of these actual migrants in the subcontinent different from those of the first British officers of the Raj in the past.

All these elements are clearly evident in *Becoming Mrs. Kumar*. Julia actually recognises that the world is changing, so that she gradually realises that she does not want to belong to the first group of migrants who use their white skin to obtain privileges. Therefore, it is not by chance that she finally finds her “Mr. Right” –

⁶ For further interviews to the British expats in India see <http://www.expattarrivals.com/india/expat-experiences-in-india>

an Indian man, Vikrant – and a definitive balance when she manages to come to terms with her new life in India. In fact, she is eventually able to recognise and appreciate the fresh and stimulating environment of Mumbai, unlike the Indian boys she dates during her first months in India:

I told him [Hari, an Indian guy] that I had been offered the job here and I accepted it gladly. He looked as though I was completely mad to have swapped the comforts of London for Mumbai. ‘I hate India,’ he said. ‘I plan to go back to the UK as soon as I can. [...] It’s so filthy here, and the people are so backward. London is far more civilized.’ (164)

From this conversation between Julia and Hari, an Indian guy she met on an internet dating site, it is quite evident that the fiercest enemies of India are Indians themselves, and in particular the youngest generations, which are often slaves of a colonial heritage, as already emphasised by Ravi’s behaviour in *These Foolish Things*. This is a problem of mental settings which recalls the devaluation of homeland typical of second-generation migrants, especially when Hari refers to the “civilization” of London. In this regard, it is interesting to note that British people like Julia are more open-minded and willing to appreciate the so-called “emerging countries” than the original inhabitants of these areas:

I bit my tongue, wanting to jump to the defence of Indian masses, yet not wanting to get into an argument with this guy who clearly had an over romanticized view of my hometown, and a very different view of Mumbai from my own. ‘But don’t you find this an incredible energizing city?’ I asked. ‘There’s so much potential here, and it’s so exciting.’ ‘Not at all,’ he replied with a smirk. ‘India will never get anywhere in the world. It is too corrupt, too backward, and too poor. The only way to get anywhere in life is to leave.’ [...] Hari had been seduced by the apparent superiority of the West and its glittering exterior. (164-165)

By considering that Julia labels the superiority of the West as “apparent”, and that Hari seems to assume that she should automatically share his opinions just because she is English (165), it is possible to derive the real aspect of the current

transnational identities in India: British people seem quite open to consider the subcontinent as a land of new opportunities and personal and working development (as the UK was for Indians in the past), but this situation has not changed yet the natives' colonial perception of their own country, a consideration which is still sturdily influenced by the colonial inheritance. Even the decision of the second generation of migrants living in the UK to come back home just for temporary visit trips is a further demonstration of the fact that India (and also the Caribbean) does not manage to totally appeal its citizens, while foreigners paradoxically have more confidence in its potentialities. Obviously, generalising these considerations means to have a partial view of the complex West/East relationship; indeed, some British people still find India a difficult place to live, such as Julia's parents in Saville Gupta's novel (327), however one cannot deny the emergence of a new balance among the former centres/peripheries. As Julia claims: "No amount of my gushing about my adopted country would convince them [her family] that I would willingly have exchanged my comfortable life in London for an alternate reality" (335), thus confirming both Julia's ability to come to terms with the new changes imposed by the contemporary global challenges and that Julia's identity is ultimately quite absorbed into the Indian space.

In the novels examined in this section, the transnational identity of current western migrants to the East has undergone some significant jolts due to their moving to South Asia. The pensioners of *These Foolish Things*, the journalist-traveller of *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi*, and the young businesswoman of *Becoming Mrs. Kumar* are literary examples of a real and concrete phenomenon which is currently changing the dichotomic classification of the world into black and white people. The overcoming of national borders from a geographical, emotional, and identity standpoint can lead to the overwhelming of the same notion of postcolonialism because, when material and mental boundaries are bypassed, the definitions and labels of the past tend to be substituted following the evolution of the personal and communitarian features. This tendency is marked by the recent developments in British literature: the insertion of British migrants into an "Other" world and society in the novels of the last fifteen years reflects the

inadequacy of any labels for migrant literature, due to the fact that also white people have to move to other countries experiencing the same mourning, discomforts, and lack of certainties of the post-war diasporic souls in order to start a new life. This is due to the collapse of the colonial and postcolonial model and the subsequent creation of a new world order in which “we are all being dealt an ambiguous hand, one which may eventually help us to accept the dignity which informs the limited participation of the migrant” (Phillips 2001: 6). Although the decision-making participation of migrants in the global processes is still limited, the cultural impact of these new phenomena is noteworthy because it stimulates the re-emergence of the notion of world literature from a wider perspective. Indeed, nowadays it is maybe possible to fully embrace this concept by considering that the national origin of writers has lost its centrality being related to the “hierarchical structure of world literature as a whole” (Casanova 2004: 42). Following these considerations, it is evident that the value of a literary work comes before its author’s nationality; the next step will be to find out a way to bypass the impasse of literary history by definitively discarding national differences.

In order to do so, it is necessary to reconsider also the idea of space, and the novels analysed in the present dissertation can be considered examples of a new interpretation of it because the contemporary subjects they introduce benefit from “the coming of a public sphere [which] opened up a space in public life” (Chakrabarty 2000: 147). In other words, we are talking about a new approach to the social life linked to an innovative contemplation and production of the public and territorial spaces redrawn by the contemporary global phenomena.

5.2 Space and the City: the production of a new global spatiality in the contemporary world-system

The production of an original social and urban space passes through the already mentioned critique to historicism made by Chakrabarty, which is reported also by Edward Soja in his theorization of “Thirdspace” as a “a fully lived space, a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual locus of structured

individuality and collective experience and agency” (Soja 1996: 11). In particular, this conceptualization is a way of interpreting socially produced space, where the idea of spatiality acquires the same scope and meaning as the social and historical events. In this context, it is interesting to observe the social value of a spatial movement like expatriatism.

As Hart properly considers, “as an adjective or noun, ‘expatriate’ denotes the condition of choosing to live in a foreign country; its verb form, however, refers to the act of forcing a person or group to leave their nation land” (Hart 2011: 557). In this way, the term implies a remarkable combination of spatial choice and coercion which perfectly reflects the ambivalent influences of the Indian world on expats’ identities and their peculiar construction of space, a veritable in-between universe characterised by both desire of integration and colonial privileges. In fact, although nowadays India has become an emerging country which may appeal tourists and migrants from all over the world, the contemporary globalization cannot be considered, according to Miguel Mellino, as the engine for the production of a global, smooth, and homogeneous space (Mellino 2009: 6). This is because the current global processes are redefining not only the concept of border, but also the hierarchies among countries from a political and a cultural standpoint. This new order of things is well portrayed in *These Foolish Things*, where the balances among states and spaces are totally altered.

In Moggach’s novel, in spite of the British pensioners’ initial tendency to exalt their homeland by nostalgically recalling it, it is not possible to deny the new balances of power between the West and the East. This situation was already evident from the previous pensioners’ lives in the UK, where they witnessed a series of social and political changes, first of all the arrival of foreign migrants after World War II. Thus, while the elderly Muriel Donnelly keeps on exposing the Union Jack to pay homage to the members of the Royal family,

many of the families she knew had moved out, to be replaced by blacks. Nowadays, crack dealers drove past in convertibles, music blaring, the thuds making her ornaments tremble. Huge girls [...] shoved past her, shouting on their mobiles. [...] More recently illegal immigrants had moved in, grey-faced men from God knew where. (Moggach 2005: 60-61)

This England is an unknown place for people like Muriel who were born during the colonial era. The inevitable problems and the subsequent adjustments of a multicultural society cannot be understood by these old people, just as they cannot believe that India could be a safer place compared to Britain. Indeed, after an assault by a gang of young immigrants, Muriel is aided by an Indian newsagent who affirms “‘I’ve had enough,’ said the man. ‘I’m packing up and taking my family home [...] I’m going to take them home to India. It’s safe there’” (64). This roles’ reversal confirms not only the migrants’ tendency to return home underlined in the previous chapters, but also an actual overturning of the traditional hierarchies between East and West. The subcontinent is described as a place which appeals to people. After all, as the Indian Ravi underlines, “India had an unexpected effect on people; one could never predict who would surrender to its allure and who would be baffled and distressed” (69), and the British guests of the *Marigold Hotel* end up loving it. Moreover, Ravi himself admits that “the world had changed so profoundly” (70) and changes must be confusing for aged people, thus underlining the disadvantaged position of pensioners who have to come across the twisting globalised system, even though India seems to have all the characteristics to welcome its new British inhabitants as the “Pensioners’ Paradise” (74). What is interesting is that the so-called “centre” seems to have lost its relevant role in defining what is a modern and cutting-edge society. The overcoming of all kinds of boundaries seems, therefore, a possible achievement, especially considering that contemporary globalised spaces tend to break down barriers through a sort of homogenization of the territories due to the transnational flows of people. This means that, for example, Christmas time in Bangalore may resemble that in England, since “they all go to Midnight Mass at St. Patrick’s Church, and then it’s roast turkey and all the trimmings at Koshy’s” (74). This global way of living does not acquire the negative connotation highlighted by a number of scholars of globalization, but it can produce new forms of “otherness” in the meaning expressed by Mary Louise Pratt: “If A is a symptom of B, then every instance of A may be read as an instance of B. [...] This structure of possibilities grants the interpreter a huge capacity for absorbing or creating otherness” (Pratt 2002: 27). This means that, although the current modern India

can be seen as a product of the past hegemony of the British Empire, it is anyway possible to derive a condition of healthy otherness from this situation. This is further demonstration of the fact that “cultures can no longer be conceived of as neatly bounded entities” (Rubdy 2013: 2), since homogenization and heterogeneousness operate in tandem, thus stimulating the so-called “peripheries” to creatively engage with their colonial past by subverting it. From this perspective, Rubdy claims that “culture does move in the opposite direction, that is, from the rest to the West” (5), and this is certainly true if we consider, for example, the spread of international food in the UK. Therefore, since the former colonies do export their cultures, people from the former mother-country are pushed to visit and live in the ex-colonial territories; this situation leads to the creation of a new idea of locality which is part of an international and transnational movement. In this way, globalization has dislodged culture from particular locations, while it has also helped to construct a new notion of space.

After all, as already pointed out, the current spatial politics in literature underlines the importance of the living space, that is a space which can be represented through symbols, objects, and images and that, at the same time, has a strong relation to reality (Benvenuti, Ceserani 2012: 109). The Indian context described in *These Foolish Things* corresponds to this definition since strong and vivid images of the real Indian landscape perfectly fit with the narration of the placid lives of the British pensioners in the retirement home. Moggach has managed to make these two distant situations coexist, aware that “people moved around the world as if they were popping down to the corner shop” (Moggach 2005: 105). This is, therefore, a world of intermixing kinships, a kaleidoscope which firstly shakes, and then settles pieces into a different arrangement, because “being in India was like being in the tube in the rush hour” (143). This chaotic space is observed through a romantic and constructive gaze by the elderly British expats at the *Marigold*, while the youngest visitors are still influenced by ancient stereotypes and colonial clichés.

When she arrives in India to visit her mother, Evelyn’s daughter Theresa acts as spokesperson in this situation: she is spiritually close to the Indian subcontinent and ready to criticise the behaviour of her mother and of the other pensioners

without realising that, through her mimic mystical conduct, she perpetuates the same prejudices she wishes to fight. She is aware that changing place is not enough in order to change habits, and she also thinks that her mother and the other retirees have constructed a sort of bubble, an in-between space in which they can live protecting themselves from the fear generated by the changes in their British lives: “Theresa could see it in the faces of the old people, so damaged by the western culture in which they had been brought up” (204). However, also her insistent search for the “exotic”, “real” Bangalore during her visit of the city is another example of an orientalist approach, which denies the social and economic developments of India as well as Indians’ proper pride:

On her first day Theresa had hired a car and taken her mother around; the driver had insisted on giving them a tour of the various IT buildings, including a glass edifice soon to be occupied by Newscorp. ‘This is our Silicon Valley,’ he said proudly. ‘Mr. Rupert Murdoch, you have heard of him? He is setting up a digital software facility for his global networks.’ ‘It’s just like Milton Keynes,’ said Theresa. ‘Sssh dear,’ said her mother. ‘I’ve come half-way round the world to get *away* from this.’ (204-205)

Theresa does not recognise that things have changed, so that her behaviour denotes a tendency towards prejudices which is more narrow-minded than her mother’s breakfast with English jam at the *Marigold* because it seems to affirm that India cannot improve or participate in the global processes. In fact, when she arrives in a slender lane which smells of dump and she claims “this is the real India” (209), she demonstrates that she cannot catch the wholeness of the subcontinent’s nuances. Her denial of the so-called “New India” and her search for the “poor” side of the country is an attempt to come back in time to her childhood or to a sort of lost bliss which will never come back. In this way, she shows the British tendency of not accepting the independence of their former possessions, and a desire of immutability which has been instead overcome by the old pensioners. This is due to the fact that they have accepted the global changes occurred in India in the last decades, as well as its contradictions, and this

situation leads to the creation of their personal space at the *Marigold*, which is not a bubble far from reality, but a cross section of global space.

The challenge represented by the British cohabitation with the new Indian space, and the establishment of a personal living space is at the core also of Jeff's adventures in Dyer's novel. First of all, it is worth saying that Jeff is the British literary expats who mainly managed to understand the Indian landscape and its inhabitants. During his personal path in the subcontinent which ferries him from the condition of worker/tourist to that of inhabitant, he passes from a substantial ignorance of the Indian geographical space to a deep consciousness and connection with it. So, if at the beginning of this process he admits, "I'm not sure exactly where it [the Indo-Gangetic Plain] is. It's so big, it's difficult to say where it ends. [...] It's everywhere" (Dyer 2009: 178), thus demonstrating the general British indifference about the nature and history of what is Other, he eventually manages to detach himself from these spatial and cultural limits, as shown, for example, by the already mentioned bath in the Ganges.

At the beginning of his journey, even Jeff, as the other British migrants, looks for what is British in the Indian landscape and he is shocked by the traffic, the smell, and wandering animals. After a few weeks, however, these feelings of repulsion are replaced by the awareness that the country, and in particular the city of Varanasi, can give more than what a simple tourist could expect. From this perspective, the city acquires a fundamental role, since it represents the point of contact between West and East; after all, the "new Indian city" is the result of the nation's kinship with its history and the world (Srinivasan 2015: 315), so that it embodies a perfect balance between the inheritance of the rich Indian cultural past and the current global networks with the world outside India.

This awareness is given by a careful observation of Varanasi, "probably the most colourful city in the world" (Dyer 2009: 185). The fact that Jeff is able to recognise its colours means that he is gradually disconnecting himself from the western stereotyped vision which, instead, closes it in a black and white photographic book:

One of them [books about the city] was called *End Time City*, a book of photos by Michael Ackerman. It took some adjusting to: the buildings looked familiar, but the pictures were in black and white, [...] To get rid of the colour was to create a place that, in some ways, was not a place at all but a stunned reaction to it. They were like pictures of the inside of the photographer's head while he was here, or later, while he was remembering it, or while he was asleep, sweat-drenched and dreaming about it. (185)

The photographer's representation of Varanasi is clearly influenced by his biased vision; what is interesting, instead, is Jeff's ability to go beyond these assumptions, so that he also understands the new Indian sense of space: "in India there was always room. Even when there was no room, there was room" (186). India is like a puzzle box, where the absence of a concrete space leads to the ingenious creation of spatiality which carries the tourist-in-progress to a different lane, a temple, or simply a different place and a different situation: "I found myself outside a temple – I didn't know which one, only that it was not the big one, Vishwanath, [...] I took off my sandals and stepped inside the temple" (188). It is during this peregrinations from a city's lane to another, that the protagonist's consciousness begins to change. By realising that in Hinduism "there is always room for another god" (189) such as in the Indian cities there is always room for a different landscape and a different perspective, Jeff starts to appreciate the Indian spirit, in particular his sense of ridiculous, which thus becomes a sense of sublime (189). From this perspective, Varanasi is a "crossing place, between this world and the next" (204), where the same idea of world can be interpreted through a global viewpoint: the Indian city is the crossing place between the western assumptions and the emerging East, and its contradictions are the symbol of this condition. Basically, Varanasi does not belong to "this world" because it is the incarnation of a future reality, in which the distances between the West and the Rest will probably be eliminated. In this light Varanasi is the point zero which "made going anywhere else seem nonsensical" because "all of time was here, and probably all of space too. The city was a mandala, a cosmogram. It contained the cosmos" (204). Thus, the unhinged balances among places denounced by some theorists of postmodernity, such as Bauman, are subverted thanks to the recognition of the

wholeness of places such as India, where it is possible to observe the entire range of humankind.

The heterogenous character of the New Indian cities is the distinguishing feature of the new Indian space, where the idea of chaos typical of the former colonies' cities acquires a positive connotation; this happens when Jeff begins to "drift free of the usual demands of time and dates" (275), and this is the final recognition of the overcoming of the time's slavery in favour of a space's exaltation. So, it is not by chance that Jeff loses his British passport – thus abandoning himself to his new Indian identity – when he realises this new condition: this is the definitive integration of the ex-Englishman into the Indian environment, and a final affirmation of the superiority of space – embodied by the Indian subcontinent – over time – represented by the West.

Although Saville Gupta's India is quite different from Dyer's representation, due to the modern globalising characteristics of the Indian cities described in *Becoming Mrs. Kumar*, the idea of space shared by the two novelists is the same. Also Mumbai, like Varanasi, is a city where "many people were struggling to survive in lives that were so difficult and often downright miserable" (Saville Gupta 2013: 92), but its superiority to London is not called into question: if compared to the Indian one, the English landscape is less friendly and welcoming, certainly too controlled and poor of spice, unlike the curried Indian land. In Saville Gupta's view, the majestic Indian space makes the idea of the passage of time less important than in Britain because also the approach to daily life is completely different from the British one. In Mumbai, the aggressive working culture is compensated by a frank and direct environment which is far from the introverted UK. This is because the Indian habitat is strongly influenced by the "New India" policy, so that Julia's Indian boyfriend Vikrant affirms: "I could always see the potential in India, and things were starting to really change here a decade ago. There was, and still is, energy and an incredible entrepreneurial spirit as well as a can-do attitude here" (226), thus confirming that the fundamental change in the Indian environment took place in the last decades, starting from the liberalizing economic reforms of 1991 (Srinivasan 2015: 309). This sort of national myth-making has inspired a new spatial approach which has affected also

the foreign workers/migrants' decision to move to India. After all, as Capuzzo suggests, the new spatiality and mobility have definitely changed the dichotomic categories of the past: nowadays, the global flows of people, technologies, money, images, and ideas move to create a reality rich of fractures and contradictions (Capuzzo 2006), and in Saville Gupta's novel, this is evident from the descriptions of the Indian urban and rural landscapes, in which the author does not seek to hide the contrasts between the poor areas of the countryside and sparkling business cities such as Mumbai and Dehli: "Although India was in many ways a modern and progressive society, I often forgot that Mumbai was the very tip of the iceberg in terms of India's population and that it was hardly representative of the country at large" (Saville Gupta 2013: 241). The problems of the rural villages, with limited or no electricity and miserable working opportunities, have not been forgotten by Julia; however, it is undeniable that an important change has been produced at least in the cities which are real "spaces of efficient capital accumulation" ready to host a cosmopolitan population (Srinivasan 2015: 314), as evidenced by the description of Dehli and its spaces:

Dehli was a huge, circular metropolis, which sprawled in every direction [...] [it] received the lion's share of investment for new roads, swanky metro systems and sanitation. As we entered the pretty two storeyed house, my eyes widened at the glittering chandelier atop the vast hall, a sweeping staircase completing the luxurious feel. I was so used to cramped spaces, that the sheer size of this room was making me reel. (Saville Gupta 2013: 313)

The splendour of Dehli's houses and the impressive vastness of the city amaze Julia, who is discovering the global and rich face of the Indian metropolises.

Moreover, what is interesting is that the condition of a young Indian like Vikrant is totally similar to that of a reverse British migrant like Julia. In fact, Vikrant's relationship with the city of Dehli is utterly equal to Julia's reactions: he expects having the best things and the best opportunities from the Indian environment, and he behaves with detachment, giving to Julia a different impression of the Indian "sense of space": "Here, the sense of space gave an impression of a very different kind of India. I felt like a tourist, but enjoyed Vicky's narrative as he explained

the stories behind the buildings” (244). Julia’s impression of being a tourist in Delhi immersed into a man-made setting is a sign of her new condition of inhabitant of the Indian environment: indeed, she is not at ease in this “kind of India” because she now appreciates, and actually prefers, the “real” Indian space, with all its contradictions. In fact, it is not possible to analyse India’s current spatial situation by avoiding considering this fundamental aspect: the poor and rural areas go hand in hand with the bright developed metropolises, and it would be limited and discriminating trying to hide one of these conditions. This is evident also when analysing the reciprocal prejudices; if on the one hand the Indian Vikrant cannot understand why foreign people in India

want to find the cheapest deals and half of these people look like they are completely penniless. They’re so scruffy, and what’s with all the baggy clothes and the tie-dye? [...] Indians can’t really understand why Westerners would come here looking so unwashed and unclean (245),

on the other hand, Julia points out, “We don’t all come here and want to look like this” (245), thus highlighting the necessity to avoid any form of preconceptions, from any sides of the world.

Moreover, these descriptions also confirm the “role reversal” (246) of travellers who move from one place to another, and in particular from West to East. These people are experiencing in many cases a veritable reverse migration, comparable to that of migrants in the past for the difficulties of the assimilationist process into the new habitat and the inevitable cultural distance they try to fill. However, by looking at these elements from a spatial perspective, it is possible to note that nowadays the British and Indian contexts are more similar to each other than we could expect. London and Mumbai, for instance, are both two global metropolises with “miniscule patches of grass masquerading as gardens” and “tightly packed streets and alleys” (288-292), so that they both play with the idea of an ironical spatial narrowness in the vastness of big cities. The real “sense of space” of the British landscape is given by the open country (292), where the atmosphere is “warm and slightly chaotic, more English eccentric than stiff upper lip” (293), and it recalls the chaotic Indian cities: this means that Indian and western landscapes

have some important points of contact, and this situation supports the contemporary migrants' decision to move to India.

The phenomenon of reverse migration here suggested is still in its embryonic stage; however, its characteristics are already quite well defined in the selected novels, especially in relation to migrants' linkage to the ideas of home and homeland.

5.3 A new perspective for the study of contemporary migrant flows: reverse migration and the concept of “home”

The concept of “reverse migration” takes a cue from the notion of “reverse colonization” which characterized the relationship between the first generation of migrants and England after World War II. According to Looker, reverse colonization, and the consequent migrants' “appropriation” of the English spaces, was a way to respond to the British discrimination in order to feel at home in the UK; the final act of this peculiar process of integration was a real colonization in reverse which can be compared to European colonialism until World War II (Looker 1996: 66). In this light, reverse colonization is the equivalent and, at the same time, the opposed process to the act of colonialism, as well as reverse migration can be said to be the equivalent issue and the opposite of the migrant phenomenon. Indeed, although the *roots* of “return” and “reversed” migrants are quite opposite – since they come from different countries – their *routes* and trajectories are basically the same, despite the fact that for Indian and Caribbean migrants the return journey means to come home, while for English travellers the reverse journey is to leave home and settle in a new space. In this context, the same idea of “home” is challenged since contemporary British migrants try to redefine their perception of home by setting it up on the former colonies where they live, just like the first migrants did in the past. This means that the current notion of “home” is a borderless term also for western people, who are increasingly willing to transform and adapt it to the inevitable changes of their

muddled lives. Also western countries had, in fact, to deal with the twisting of globalization and the turn upside down of the world-system: the pluralization of the concepts of centre and periphery as well as the recent increasing instability of the migrant process are leading to a disappearance of these notions as we know them, so that nowadays it is possible to observe not only migrants' journeys towards home, but also English displacement to the former empire. This situation has clearly redefined the same idea of "home" whose search in the host country is another element recalling the migrant condition.

In Moggach's *These Foolish Things*, the new Indian home is a sort of place of redemption for the British pensioners, where they can feel useful again. Their relationship with the young Indians of the call-centre makes them feel at home thanks to a grandparents/grandchildren affinity which recalls a domestic family unity.

The kinship with India is so ancestral for British people that Dorothy Miller, another *Marigold's* guest, manages to find an actual piece of home in Bangalore, since it is the place where she lived when she was a young girl during the colonial period and where she has returned as a pensioner. Indeed, she even manages to find again the house where she lived and her Indian playmate:

Dorothy shouted: "I'm little Dotty! Dorothy! Don't you remember me? [...] This is my house, I used to live here. His father [of her playmate] was our driver, he and I used to play together when we were little! [...] He doesn't recognise me!" She turned to the gateman. "*Mai Mr. Miller ki beti hoo!*" It was then that the chowkidar realised. A smile broke out on his face. "Dotty?" he asked in a strangled voice. He stumbled out of his hut. For a moment it seemed that Dorothy was going to hug him. She recovered, however, and put out her hand. The old man shook it. Then they both burst into tears. (Moggach 2005: 212-213)

Despite this touching encounter, it is not possible to deny that the balances of power among England and India to which Dorothy and her old friend were accustomed have deeply changed from the colonial era: nowadays, the British organism has to rely on the Indian one, in a reversed system wherein the western supremacy can no longer be confirmed. The reversal is further evidenced by the

fact that the former *memsahib* Dorothy comes back – and dies – where she was born, whereas her mates at the retirement home start to accept and belong to the same land. This new relationship between England and its former dominion partially avenged the discriminations which characterized the first migrant flows to the UK, and helps British migrants to integrate into the new environment and to feel “very at home”, so that England is “a distant memory” for most of them (129). Their condition is also a concrete attempt to fight against the inheritance of a colonial thought which would push the pensioners to behave in an orientalist way. So, although Ravi asserts that “You British go there [to India] – oh the poverty, oh the sunsets! [...] You romanticize the place, you always have, but you’re all the same, you take what you want from it” (142), expats’ search for a sense of home is more similar to a migrant approach than to a colonial spirit of exploitation and dominion. They actually try to integrate into the Indian system also by establishing a point of contact with the local inhabitants and looking for a balance between their own habits and the local ones. After all, the reasons why they migrated to India are numerous and deep, such as those of the first waves of migrants:

Surinda whispered to Evelyn: “Why did you all leave England?”. “Various reasons, dear. Some of us found we couldn’t manage to live there any more.” “What do you mean?” “Various – well, provisions we made – didn’t turn out to be quite what we had been led to expect. Pensions and so forth.” [...] “Do you miss it, aunty?” “Sometimes”, said Evelyn [...]. “It [Britain] doesn’t belong to us any more. We don’t understand it. Britain belongs to other people now”. (165-166)

The condition of the old English migrants once again recalls that of the migrants of the past: in a certain sense, they have been forced to leave their own homeland because of the “invasion” of “others” who have complicated the living conditions in their country, so that they had to take a reversed journey to the country of their invaders in order to establish a new balance.

In other words, these reversed migrants have learnt to appreciate in the subcontinent what Indian people escaped, so that India “reminds them of home” (245) and they try to appropriate it in the same way England was colonised in

reverse by people from the former colonies. Moreover, contemporary British expats show an intense kinship with and respect for the country where they live, just like migrants from the former colonies admired England in the 1950s and 1960s. This is because the Indian subcontinent displays a sort of magic aura able to “step their lost families, drawn to India by its transforming magic” (261), thus renovating and, at the same time, building new family ties and kinships, and this characteristic is what makes India so fascinating for contemporary western migrants.

Other elements of attraction are well described in the reverse migration’s experience of Jeff Atman in Geoff Dyer’s novel. The slow transmutation of the protagonist from his tourist’s condition to a migrant journey is supported by the enchanted and spiritual atmosphere of Varanasi’s lanes and places. The *Ganges View Hotel* is adopted by Jeff as his new home, also considering that the hotel’s staff forgot to record what Jeff had consumed:

In the course of my stay at the Ganges View I’d eaten dozens of lunches, breakfasts and dinners, had ordered endless juices, teas and dozens of bottles of water. Wondering what all this might be costing, I asked Kamal – one of the smiling, gentle Nepalis who worked here – if they were keeping some kind of record of what I’d consumed. No, I was supposed to have kept a record, but they had forgotten to give me the piece of paper on which this record was kept. (Dyer 2009: 204-205)

The hotel managers’ inattention transforms Jeff’s stay at the *Ganges View* into a veritable permanent condition, as if he was rooted in the Indian subcontinent. His process of inclusion, however, is not totally unproblematic with reference to the Indian lifestyle. An initial phase of “irritation and annoyance” (227) for India and all its contradictions comes to a head when he decides to piss in the Ganges as a sign of protest, thus “highlighting the ludicrousness of [the Indian habit of] worshipping a river while simultaneously polluting it” (225). Jeff’s behaviour is, however, a response to his preliminary sense of frustration for his ineptitude in penetrating the real Indian scene; at the beginning of his experience, he feels that he cannot gain access to the cultural and intellectual portions of the Indian society, so he is forced to play the part of the British outsider in the vastness of the Indian

scenario. Nonetheless, the process of reverse migration is already in progress, especially when he realises that there is

something strangely familiar, almost reassuring, about the irritation that had been assailing me for the previous weeks: it was how I felt all the time in London, the default setting for a life in which a constant drizzle of frustration, annoyance and rush-hour Tube travel was the unremarked-on norm. (230)

This unexpected awareness makes Jeff appreciate India's double face, torn between a familiar sense of irritation for small annoyances and a bizarre spirituality and sense of duty which is far from being weird.

His personal change is further highlighted by Jeff's thoughts about the relationship between East and West:

Anguish [for western people] was waiting. And here in India we westerners rarely had to wait for anything. We moaned about the constant pestering, the constant offers of 'boat' and 'rickshaw', but when we wanted a boat or rickshaw we expected someone to be there, providing a boat or a rickshaw immediately, at rock-bottom prices. Accustomed, at home, to the dismal wait for a bus, here we were slightly put out if we had to wait more than a minute. At some level, the poorest backpacker enjoyed the privileges and perks of the Raj. [...] I came to the 'I LOVE MY INDIA' sign, was happy to see it. (232-233)

The first signals of Jeff's approaching to India are, therefore, evident in his new comprehension of the South-Asian context, where "I'd begun to take as normal things that once made me feel like a package tourist" (240). As a result, he gradually adapts himself to the new environment, so that

nothing was so urgent that it could not wait, and if you waited long enough then that which had been urgent became – by virtue of its urgency – irrelevant. [...] I'd come to Varanasi because there was nothing to keep me in London, and I stayed on for the same reason: because there was nothing to go home for. (241)

This last consideration is particularly relevant as it underlines Jeff's point of view on the idea of home: he still considers London and the UK as his "home", but his relationship with them is gradually dimming, so that he also stops to check or answer to e-mails from London (240). Once again, therefore, a reverse situation is given; while Indian people like Jeff's friend Anand look like "a banker in a heatwave" in their Paul Smith shirts and Prada slacks (277), the English expat looks like a backpacker who is looking for a new home in India. As Jeff asserts, it is like "I've been here for ages. [...] I've sort of taken root here" (277). His Indian Friend Anand as well underlines his reversal by describing him as a "castaway" (277), as it was a displaced migrant. In this light it is not by chance that Jeff decides to shave his hair, beard and eyebrows and leave a little pigtail at the back of the head, as he saw on mourners; this new aspect is a symbolic and cathartic act, an attempt of integration into the Indian community, but without aping its culture or rites. Indeed, Jeff has not obviously renounced to his British identity, "nor to the world; I just became gradually less interested in certain aspects of it [...]. I really don't want to come on like someone who has gone through rehab or undergone a conversion or awakening. All I'm saying is that in Varanasi I no longer felt like I was waiting" (279-280), and this sensation makes him feel at home eventually.

Hence the fact that Jeff manages to feel at ease in India does not mean that reverse British migrants forget their homeland when they arrive in the subcontinent; like migrants in the UK they try to come to terms with their new home by implementing both mechanisms of appropriation and integration, which imply adapting the host country to their cultural practices as it is the case of the Christmas's Mass in *These Foolish Things*, and trying to learn and accept the host practices, such as Jeff's gradual incorporation into the Indian spirit. After all, in the migrant process, a number of complex factors have to be solved before the "new place" may be sincerely embraced as home (Kain 1997: 1), such as the demolition of the inevitable racial barriers and of the reciprocal reluctance to accept the Other's culture. From this perspective, home becomes a "highly ambiguous reality", and as Kain observes, "it is both/and while it is neither/nor" (10), which means that it can be an extremely equivocal term.

Nonetheless, because of “home”’s porousness indeed, some British expats end up finding a veritable home in India, as for the protagonist of *Becoming Mrs. Kumar*.

In this case, the final inclusion of Julia into the Indian environment is due to her marriage with her Indian boyfriend; however, both her decision to move to India and her attachment to Mumbai depend on previous situations and were already developed. As stated at the beginning of the narration, as Julia’s thirties approach, she “developed an obsession with the thought of leaving the UK and heading off to travel the world” (Saville Gupta 2013: 8), and the proposal of a job in India seems to offer her a way out of her existential crisis. Julia’s experience of reverse migration starts, therefore, in a quite common way, for a work opportunity, but also because “there was something appealing about India” (12) which pushed her to move.

What is interesting is that the characteristics of her journey and her feelings before the departure are similar to those of migrants of all ages:

Despite my decision and the excitement I felt as the date for leaving England came closer, I couldn’t help but feel nervous about giving up the security of being surrounded by the familiar – my friends, my family and even the routine comfort of knowing how things were done in the office. [...] In between my moments of panic, I looked on the bright side. [...] Now I could start to see myself as a free spirit, a wanderer, someone brave enough to move to the other side of the world. (12-13)

The sense of thrilled disorientation linked to a healthy dose of excitement for the new adventure typical of the migrant experience characterises also the voyage of Julia. In this light her journey recalls those of the first migrants, especially because she feels “simultaneously sad and excited, [...] and dare I admit it, a little bit superior, that I had chosen to take a more interesting path in life” (16), such as Caribbean and Indian migrants of the past felt smug and proud of being able to leave their homelands for a better life.

Her first impact with Mumbai is so positive that she seems initially intentioned to disown her own home since she affirms, “Home is great, but you don’t choose where you’re born and if you’re lucky enough to travel then you should make the

most of it” (31), thus highlighting that it is possible to create a sense of home and rootedness also far from homeland, in an itinerant process. This does not mean, however, that the affective and interpersonal relationships left in the UK are not important; Julia’s mood swings, in fact, from a bright positivity to a deep discomfort due to the fact that she is always surrounded by strangers who do not make her feel like she belonged to India (39). In order to re-establish a fine balance, she looks for mixed groups of English and Indian people: “I felt right at home here in this mish-mash of styles and unpretentious surroundings. We ordered beers, which came in ice-cold frosted pint glasses, and I felt a sudden nostalgic pang for England” (43). Nostalgia for home(land) is therefore always present in British migrants in India, and this situation is another point of contact with the migrant tradition. It is not by chance, therefore, that Julia needs to temporarily come back home in the middle of her experience; as for Caribbean and South Asian migrants in the UK, homesickness is a distinguishing feature of her life abroad, and in fact when she lands in London she suddenly

felt a rush of belonging – this country, though irritating and frustrating in so many ways, was my home. I felt safe and secure here, warmed by the familiarity of systems and processes, people and places that needed no second-guessing nor acclimatization. (91)

Julia’s words perfectly embody the reaction of a migrant returning home, and they confirm the role of homeland in the processes of identity and belonging formation. There is no place like where you were born, and migrants of all ages and nationalities seem to agree with it.

However, this does not mean that they cannot have a satisfactory relationship with the host country. As Sarah Ahmed posits, the “narrative of leaving home produces too many homes” (Ahmed 1999: 330) which are affected by a high permeability of borders. Even the boundary between self and home is permeable, as well as the bound between home and the geographically distant country of migration. Following this perspective, “Movement away is always affective: it affects how ‘homely’ one might feel and fail to feel” (341), and this is true for British expats as well. Indeed, Julia ultimately manages to really feel at home in Mumbai; she

affirms that she loves living in India because it is so “exhilarating and exciting” compared to the “boring old London” (Saville Gupta 2013: 124), while the wives of other western expats “hate it” and cannot wait to return home. This is actually a common feeling in the expat community in India; some real expats denounce the “pollution, rubbish in the streets and rivers. Homelessness and poverty”, so that they miss the British countryside⁷. So, from these interviews, it is further clear that feeling at home in India is an extremely personal matter which might vary from person to person. This is why in Saville Gupta’s novel the big community of British workers met by Julia is a variegated group, and their attachment to the subcontinent has to be evaluated according to their motivations to stay. They all migrated for economic and working reasons, but their migrant condition is obviously more a matter of choice for them than for postcolonial migrants in England: in other words, they can come back whenever they want, while post-war migrants lived a sort of coercive condition.

This situation of greater freedom is maybe the reason why contemporary British expats can develop a deeper sense of belonging to India than other migrants’ nationalities in the UK. After two years in Mumbai, Julia actually realises that “London was more foreign to me than Mumbai was” (175), and that she eventually does not miss her homeland *per se*, but her family and friends. Once again, the personal relationships acquire a fundamental role in the construction of the concept of “home”, further demonstrating that the function of *homeland* can lose all its potentialities if it is not supported by a sense of *home*. Julia’s extra gear is given by her strong realism which helps her to observe things as they are: she is actually able to ponder the pros and cons of her life in India by abandoning all the stereotypes typical of the western thought on the Indian subcontinent (205). This condition makes her feel “torn” between her two homes:

“I don’t know, Jules,” she [her English friend Lizzie] said. “Don’t you miss home? You’re so very far away from us all. And judging from what you’ve told me, it’s a terribly difficult place to feel comfortable. Wouldn’t you be happier back here?”

⁷ For further interviews to the British expats in India see <http://www.expattarrivals.com/india/expat-experiences-in-india>

“Honestly, Lizzie,” I replied, feeling a deep sense of sadness, “I feel completely torn”. (290)

Julia’s feeling towards her own idea of home demonstrates her condition of being in-between East and West which contemplates a possible full integration into the host society. Indeed, this state manages to bypass the strong emotional feeling which usually links migrants to the place where they were born; at the end of the novel, therefore, Julia admits that “I couldn’t explain [to her family] that my ties to Mumbai were emotional, that I’d lost my heart to the city the moment I’d landed here and that I felt a connection to the place and its people which I couldn’t rationalize” (335). Hence Julia seems to have finally found her true home in India, despite the common migrant condition according to which home is where one was born. Unlike the protagonists of all the other examined novels, she finds a genuine and deep connection to the subcontinent; she is far from the disorientation of the pensioners of *These Foolish Things*, whose link to India is still permeated by a smell of Raj, or from the immersion into spirituality of Jeff in *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi*, where the protagonist does not seem to be able to fully detach himself from the traditional stereotype of the western man who goes to India looking for personal peace.

This situation could mean that the current world-system is progressively going towards a new form of transnationalism characterised by a more genuine integration and a greater migrants’ propensity to live in the host country stably, thus creating new ideas of home. After all, as Ahmed points out, “the question of home and being at home can only be addressed by considering the question of affect: being at home is a matter of how one feels or how one might fail to feel” (Ahmed 1999: 89), so that it is an authentic personal and emotional process which cannot follow a unique interpretation.

Conclusions

The present dissertation aimed at analysing migrant experiences in the Black British literary scenario. In particular, I focused on the phenomenon of return migration which pushes millions of migrants to go back to their overseas homeland, as well as on the recent turn to reverse migration, according to which former British colonisers move to their ex dominions, especially to India. Through the examination of these migrant phenomena and their literary representation, I aimed at re-reading the conceptualization of the so-called “subaltern” people by considering authors with different origins and ages. As a result, a wide variety of contemporary migrant fluxes and subjects have been analysed through a global and diasporic standpoint, by following the recent transnational and spatial turn in literary studies. This theoretical background has been the reading key of the current journeys towards the former British colonies; the final purpose was to demonstrate how the new balances among different areas of the world and the subsequent new “world order” have influenced the literary production and its analysis, especially considering the broadening of the meaning of the concepts of “home” and “migration”. Hence I dealt with the literary representation of these global mechanisms by wondering if migrants can transcend places of origin, or if these places leave such a considerable impression on literature that they manage to call into question also purely abstract categories, such as place, identity, and home.

If on the one hand, the question of location in postcolonial literature is mainly addressed to the identification of the centres of production of the literary power, on the other hand I wished to suggest another literary perspective on the centre/periphery dichotomy far from the typical opposition which sees the centre as the emblem of order, while the periphery is the chaotic place par excellence. So, even if Zygmunt Bauman claims that order and chaos are modern twins (Bauman 2005: 321) since they are two inseparable aspects of the same modern global-system, I took into consideration another position according to which centre and periphery might be reversed in relation to the back-and-forth flows of people which characterize the current global situation. In brief, what is important

is not the place *per se*, but the linkages among spaces created by migrant flows and described in the analysed novels. In this context, the concept of location becomes a matter of actual and mental production and negotiation of space, that is a place where people shape their multiple identities, and this is also the function of both the current centres and peripheries of the world. This situation also leads to the centre/periphery's mutual exchange of their cultural elements, thus creating a new kind of kinship in which not only the migrant communities try to integrate into Britain, but also the former mother-country sends its citizens abroad. From this perspective, it is therefore possible to talk about the creation of new global citizens far from the old concept of citizenship based on mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion constructed by the nation-state. This complex process is obviously still in its starting phase; however, the future tendency will be to consider space as an including and dynamic element which will be the tool for the construction of solid transnational networks allowing reversed forms of flows between centres and peripheries. The analysed novels have confirmed this tendency: each of the migrants described by the Caribbean and South Asian authors, as well as reversed migrants, had to come to terms with these unprecedented balances and shape their identities according to the spaces they lived in. The identity struggle of the first generation's protagonists, from Ralph Singh and Colin Morgan, to Moses Aloetta, Bertram Francis and the South Asian characters, has also demonstrated that the first generation generally have trouble adapting to the space of the host country, where they usually feel uncomfortable. The second generation has, instead, a more fruitful relationship with the British scenario: both Caribbean and South Asian characters feel at home in the UK, although they still have some problems with the constraints of their "migrant" landscapes. Reversed migrants deserve specific mention because, although they are first-generation travellers, they ultimately seem to find a fine balance in the host country, maybe due to their inevitable condition of "privileged" migrants.

The literature of the new world-system can indicate, therefore, an innovative relationship also to the concept of homeland and home, which thus become the point of departure to imagine new post-national identities. Indeed, because of the decline of the traditional idea of nation, the faith in the concept of homeland and

the research for a place to call home are still central in migrants' thoughts and dreams: in fact, although the notion of fixed identities has been abandoned, some scholars still claim that "individuals have a 'master' overarching identity that is fundamentally rooted in a single place" (Conway, Potter, Phillips 2005: 137), as further confirmed by the selected novels. The protagonists of both first and second generation recognise the value of the ancestral homeland, even though they have a different linkage to it – since the second generation does not identify it as its home.

Therefore, the concept of homeland is not dead, but it has changed its perspective based on the individual's ability of finding home in movement, giving rise to a sort of homeless mind which moves away from any notion of fixity (Bender, Winer 2001: 334). Actually, according to Bauman, we are "off balance" nomads, and we live in a sort of circle in which there is no centre (Bauman 1998: 88), while also globalization has helped to change the concept of home towards this pluralization: migrants have no more one home, but many, and they aspire to write about them as much as to come to terms with their fragmented situation. So, migrants of both first and second generation, as well as the British expats, have to travel from a "home" to another; and the analysis of the novels has shown that the notion of space often acquires a cathartic function in establishing what home is.

Indeed, home is linked not only to a mythical land, but also to "how people navigate, make meaningful, and attempt to reconfigure the vexing intersections of three overlapping yet often contradictory phenomena: home, diasporas, and nation-states" (Markowitz, Stefansson 2004: 23). It is only by concentrating on the peculiarities of each of these components that it is possible to define home(land) as a "highly packed signifier that encapsulates a concept and a place and encompasses a feeling born of desire, laced with nostalgia" (23). From this perspective, home can include memories, longings, spatiality, families, and the global/local dichotomy, that is all the identity factors analysed in the thesis.

Moreover, what I sought to examine is how the current fragmented concept of home influences migration by transforming its characteristics and goals and, at the same time, by improving the phenomena of return and reverse migration towards India and the Caribbean area. What is evident is that the first generation is

definitely most involved by these topics, though it follows also some geographical differences: home for South Asian migrants is more a place where feeling protected, than a space of self-consciousness as it is for Caribbean returnees, a distinction which helps to go in depth into the core of the conceptualization of the same idea of homecoming. Indeed, what is certain is the adamant presence of the ancestral homelands in migrants' dreams and desires, and this is true also for the second-generationers, although they do not have a direct experience or knowledge of their ancestral homelands, and still consider the UK as their home. This recent pluralization of home(s) is due to the impossible full integration of both first and second-generation people into their diasporic habitat. As a result, memories of homeland, as well as the preservation of the same idea of home in the foreign land and the desire to come "home" are the only way to survive to an often racist and suffocating situation.

Furthermore, in the debate about homeland and return, the question is not only to observe *where* migrants feel at home, but also *whether* they can really experience that sense of belonging which leads them to remain in a place and to escape from the frustration of wandering. This is a tricky matter since the current notion of home is extremely composite. It can include different variants: migrants can create surrogate of home also in their host countries, however, the myth of homeland is a fundamental point which still survives in their dreams and aspirations. This is because any attempt to establish a visceral relationship with Britain or the USA is generally bound to collapse: the difficulties which characterize the diasporic life are quite unbeatable obstacles. In this context, homecoming appears as the sole solution to find the stability negated by the globalized migrant system. So, migrants still try to return to homelands without understanding that dreams of return may be better than actual homecomings. This is what happens to most of the novels' protagonists: the characters of Naipaul, Selvon, Phillips, Desai, Chaudhuri, Levy, Srivastava, and Kohli live disappointing return experiences, or they still prefer to come back to Britain after a period in the country of origin. This is because they have genuine composite identities often accustomed, and strongly linked, to the host country. Moreover, although real returnees as well usually experience difficulties of reintegration and problems in

finding a new job at home, their perception of the decision to return is still positive (Conway, Potter, Phillips 2005: 169); while, by contrast, the novels show a deep discomfort, as well as the misery of returnees who actually cannot get accustomed to their homeland again. And if the reincorporation to home of the first generation of migrants is almost always problematic, the question is even more complex for the second generation, whose attachment to the ancestral homeland is less guaranteed. In *While there is Light*, *Fruit of the Lemon*, *Looking for Maya*, and *Indian Takeaway* the protagonists actually return or think of returning to the homelands of their parents, but none of them feels a real desire of resettlement as it was for the first generation.

This is due to the importance of birthplace. The children of the first migrants are not engaged with the ancestral homeland with the same intensity as their parents because they do not recognise it as their birthplace, and this is why their return trips quite always end with the return to the UK. As a result, the “myth of return” could be substituted by the “myth of home”, thus shifting the focus from the obsession of returning to the ancient homelands to the search for a place of security, comfort, and certainty (Markowitz, Stefansson 2004: 24), which does not have to be necessarily the homeland. Nevertheless, voyages into homeland and family history can represent the search for an ancestral past which would help to find out a genuine place of belonging, thus further demonstrating that the function of homeland can lose its relevance if it is not supported by a sense of home.

These considerations and the emergence of these recent phenomena recall a sort of post-ethnic and post-postcolonial way of seeing the world (Stein 2004: 113) which re-invents the whole British identity far from the concept of Englishness and from the colonial experience, but also from the idea of Britishness and the label of “Black British”.

According to Vertovec, the most significant “variegated phenomena” which nowadays shape the idea of post-racial and post-postcolonial transnationalism are new social morphology, type of consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, and site of political engagement, along with the reconstruction of place or locality (Vertovec 1999: 448). All these issues have to be used together in order to create a

post-racial optic that “demands we dispense with daft ideas about race, nation and indigeneity while recognizing the persistence of prejudice that stands in our way” (McLeod 2010: 49). These prejudices should be fought through the raise of a new consciousness which goes beyond the geographical and cultural boundaries, maintaining at the same time a special consideration for ethnic traditions.

Therefore, the main question is to overcome the old tendency to compartmentalise the general way of thinking about identity and migration. This situation would lead to an enlargement of the classical notion of postcolonial English literature and, in my opinion, it demonstrates that the canonical partition between English and postcolonial works could be outmoded, also because the experiences of the current reverse migrants are not so distant from those of the returnees of first and second generation. The different diasporic people, places, times, novelists, and novels compared in the dissertation sought to demonstrate how the combinations and intersections among different global structures, cultures and institutions can produce specific effects on the current society and the cultural system, starting from the literary production.

At this point, I considered a new form of migration which could include these post-national considerations. Starting from these premises, I suggested the notion of reverse migration to India, as it is exemplified by Deborah Moggach, Geoff Dyer, and Heather Saville Gupta’s works.

In particular, I postulated that the British pensioners of *These Foolish Things* can be considered veritable contemporary migrants because they actually feel an ethnic minority in India; in fact, they are forced to migrate to the subcontinent by the inadequacy of their families and the British system, and they live in a foreign country which inevitably sees them as a minority. This may be the reason why they have a sort of parental relationship with the Indian inhabitants: their condition and age make them subaltern people in an alien world. Therefore, the current condition of these English migrants once again recalls that of the migrants of the past: in a certain sense, they have been forced to leave their own homeland because of the “invasion” of “others” who have complicated the living conditions in their country, so that they had to take a reversed journey to the country of their invaders in order to establish a new balance.

Jeff in Varanasi, instead, lives a different experience and probably the most genuine relationship with the subcontinent. His stay is characterised by a totally free, unselfish, and not mimic or orientalist relationship with the inner part of India, and the focal strength of this kinship is difference. Indeed, in Dyer's view, difference embodies similarity without hierarchy, and it actually produces cultural and spiritual enrichment, as well as a deep closeness among people. Jeff's constructive situation unfortunately does not reflect migrants' condition in the UK, but it can be an encouraging perspective for the future which shed new light also on the apparently weaker Anglo-Indian kinships, such as Julia Robinson's in *Becoming Mrs. Kumar*.

The protagonist of Gupta's novel can be considered a real migrant because she goes to India for better work perspectives; however, she certainly has a privileged position, and she does not live a coercive condition, a fact which makes her an advantaged migrant. So, although she is not a proper "immigrant", her position certainly reflect an interesting global phenomenon and an innovative flow of people to the Indian subcontinent, in-between migration and expatriatism. In this sense, globalization does not create "cultural homogeneity and uniformity, as is often argued" (Nyman 2009: 19), but it can be a fruitful tool creating transnational and transcultural contacts and identities. At the end of the novel, Julia actually decides to stay in Mumbai, thus confirming the global reversals.

Therefore, generally speaking and considering all due variations, I think that it is possible to spot some affinities between past and present migrants' behaviours: in both cases they initially seek refuge in communities constituted by compatriots because they feel uncomfortable in an alien country, although they gradually try to integrate into it. In addition, if episodes of racism are still very common in Britain against migrants of both first and second generation, thus rendering their inclusion almost impossible, for British expats in India as well the assimilation is not an easy matter. That said, it is still noteworthy to underline that discriminations suffered by British migrants overseas are certainly less ferocious and vehement than those affecting the postcolonial diasporic people in Britain; however, they embody a new migrant condition which cannot be ignored. The expectations and dreams of the post-war migrants can, in some respects, be compared to those of

the current unsettled British expats, be they the “rejected” pensioners, the “confused” art journalist, or the “exotic” white girl. Each of them actually has a subordinating characteristic which makes them vulnerable in the subcontinent, in the same way post-war migrants were defenceless in Britain: migrants’ desire to come back home is, therefore, comparable to the current force of attraction to the former empire perceived by British people who decide to move to India, and this is further evidence of the displacement towards East of the contemporary global balances.

In this context, we are talking about a veritable shift of the traditional concepts of “home” and “migration” towards the notions of “homecoming” and “reverse migration”, as it has been proved by literature, so that the latter can be considered as an indispensable tool for understanding the current global alterations. These considerations demonstrate how the new balances among different areas of the world and the subsequent new “world order” have influenced the literary production and its analysis; the adamant presence of home(s) and homeland(s) definitely forges migrants’ identities, and literature is charged with the investigation and clarification of these same phenomena, aware that this new global revolution – along with the redefinition of the ideas of space, identity, and home – is just at the beginning.

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