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Diasporic Restlessness in John Fowles's *The Magus*: A Post-Colonial Reading

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Abstract

This article examines how identity, nostalgia, and belonging impact Nicolas Urfe in John Fowles's *The Magus* (1965). Drawing upon Homi Bhabha's "Hybridity", Stuart Hall's "Cultural Identity", and William Safran's "Myth of Homeland". This article examines the inherent futility in Nicolas's persistent attempts to attain belonging and inner reconciliation, with the aim of uncovering the underlying causes of his psychological conflicts—namely, anxiety, restlessness, and a sense of rootlessness. The significance of this article lies in its endeavor to analyze the diasporic experience on an individual ground that does not align with the typical paradigms of Nicolas's relocation. This article also explores whether or not Nicolas feels a sense of belonging to a particular place he can consider as home. We aim to address two fundamental questions: What influences underlie Nicolas's adoption or rejection of a new self-identity in Fowles's *The Magus*, and can his multi-layered identity be associated with both his native and host lands—namely, England and Greece, respectively? In order to fill the existing gap, we explore how Nicolas's identity oscillates between pre-immigration and post-immigration spaces, namely England and Greece.

Keywords: Identity, Belonging, Nostalgia, Diaspora, John Fowles, *The Magus*

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Introduction

Since ancient times, the worldwide phenomenon of diaspora has affected all cultures. In Judeo-Christian cultures, the dispersion of Jews during the Babylonian exile came to be known as Diaspora, and for a considerable portion of time, the term "diaspora" solely referred to the experience of Jews dispersed to various areas of the world. The word was capitalized on account of this singular Jewish historical event, making it a marking, denoting a tragic and a triumphant experience of a particular religious and cultural community. This definition of "diaspora" places a strong emphasis on the cohesion and consistency of the members of the group based on either their shared religious beliefs or clearly defined cultural ideas or practices. Thus, it is strongly related to the collective actions of a particular cultural group. According to William Safran, whose concept rests on the pillar of "Jewish Prototype", there are six distinct characteristics of a diasporic community that are derived from the experience of the Jewish diaspora, notably in terms of dividing the host land into the homeland and the peripheral areas ("The Jewish Diaspora" 2005: 37). To Safran, diaspora is defined as:

> expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland-its physical location, history, and achievements, [and, often enough, sufferings]; 3) they believe that they are not-and perhaps cannot be-fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) 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-when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal [*Sic*] consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. ("Diasporas in Modern Societies" 1991: 83-84)

The diasporic individuals' connection to their origin country is addressed by Safran's second and fourth criteria ("The Jewish Diaspora" 2005: 37). The definition of "diaspora" places a strong emphasis on the unity and uniformity of the members of the community that are centered either on religious faiths or specifically stated cultural beliefs or practices. Diaspora is often used to refer to a group of people who have moved away from their original cultural home. Currently, this feature continues to characterize the social science research on diaspora in the modern era, in which it is no longer possible to solely understand the diverse diasporic experiences shared by various communities and individuals in terms of the dichotomy of homeland and hostland, with the underlying presumption that the diasporic community will eventually return to its homeland and, by extension, that it views its host-land as a "peripheral" momentary inhabiting or staging area before this inevitable and eventual return. From this vantage point, a diasporic population appears to be reasonably unconcerned about assimilating into or embracing new forms of being in the host-land. Therefore, an emerging diasporic experience of the current era should be perceived as the shared experience of a specific group without considering the various individual motivations and evolving states of being for those who intend to recognize the host-land as their new homeland, or at least, as an integral part of the diasporic individual's dualistic lifestyle (Vertovec 2004: 971). From this perspective, it is clear that the various forms of diaspora that exist depart from the biblical paradigm and that, in the context of continual, global human migration, a particular diaspora is a process of both diasporic individual and a community creating meaning. Homeland and host land may be remote from one another, yet they both serve as diasporic individual's foundations as they create a new self in new locations with novel settings and circumstances, in which allegiance to the ancestral homeland is substituted for the interests of the diasporic self.

The diasporic experience has become an important topic in the recent decades, particularly regarding the changes to the self and the ego during deterritorialization. In relation to this concept, the main character in Fowles's *The Magus* is explored in terms of his state of being "in-between" and his endeavor to find a sense of identity. Despite embarking on a journey to discover meaning in his midlife crisis, Nicholas Urfe remains indecisive and fails to achieve a sense of belonging. This unresolved

issue raises questions about the significance of his quest and true meaning of his journey. This article examines the inherent futility in Nicolas's persistent attempts to attain belonging and inner reconciliation, with the aim of uncovering the underlying causes of his psychological conflicts—namely, anxiety, restlessness, and a sense of rootlessness. The value of this article is in its attempt to examine the diasporic experience on a personal level that diverges from conventional frameworks typically associated with Nicolas's relocation. This article also investigates whether Nicolas experiences a sense of belonging to any particular place he can consider home. To address this gap, it examines how his identity oscillates between the pre-immigration and post-immigration spaces of England and Greece, respectively. This study seeks to address two central questions: What factors influence Nicolas's acceptance or rejection of a new self-identity in Fowles's *The Magus*? And to what extent does Nicolas, with his multi-layered identity, feel a sense of connection to both his homeland and host land—England and Greece, respectively?

Literature Review

In an article entitled "Through Seeking to Mystery", John Fossa notes how Nicholas's quest for self-knowledge that brings him to the mysteries of his own extreme freedom and love for another person, is portrayed in Fowles's book as an allegory. The protagonist in this book strives to become a magus or someone who develops and lives out his own patterns and ambitions for life. Through such a process "[b]ecoming a magus, in one sense, is achieving self-knowledge in a loving relationship; in another sense (or rather, put in another way) it is learning how to live authentically" (1989: 162).

Katherine Tarbox (1986) is another scholar who has inspired many individuals to undertake further study on John Fowles. She provides a detailed study that dissects Fowles's books in terms of their themes, significant ideas, dominant philosophy, and an evaluation of their important characters in her highly referenced work *A Critical Study of the Novels of John Fowles*. As a result, there are many connections between the physical setting of the events and their psychological effects. Throughout the chapter entitled *The Magus*, she refers to Nicholas's relocation to Greece and the fact that he hopes to find his lost identity. Tarbox opines:

> Greece, with its associations of myth and archetype, is a projection of everything Nicholas is afraid of-the going back, the going-deep, the excavation of frightening, hidden things-and an evocation of the real human condition: where nothing is absolute. Phraxos, identification with the mind is further stressed when we learn that Bourani means 'skull.' Fowles speaks many times of the 'island of the self.' (1986: 13)

In an article entitled "The Magus: A Study in the Creation of a Personal Myth", Ralph Berets (1973) seeks to create a personalized narrative for the "elect" person in an effort to impose a meaningful pattern on one's existence. This is what Nicholas is supposed to learn through his adventures in Phraxos while being guided by Conchis. In the opening lines of *The Magus*, Nicholas makes it apparent that he has this goal in mind, "1 didn't know where I was going, but I knew what I needed. I needed a new land, a new race, a new language; and although I couldn't have put it in words then, I needed a new mystery" (Fowles 1965: 15). The reader is inclined to believe the earlier, more optimistic view given that the book closes with no attempt to refute Nicholas's final interpretation and that this conclusion supports a definition of love given earlier in the book saying, "Nicholas is now in the position of creating and acting out his own patterns and goals of existence. This means that Nicholas has become one of the elect" (Berets 1973: 95).

John Fowles is a post-colonial writer. Thus, this paper will primarily be applicable to the diasporic context. In order to fill the existing gap, we explore how Nicolas's identity oscillates between pre-immigration and post-immigration spaces. At the same time, we limit our research to Nicolas's identity formation between native land and host-land, namely England and Greece, respectively.

Theoretical Framework

Drawing upon Homi Bhabha's "Hybridity", Stuart Hall's "Cultural Identity", and William Safran's "Myth of Homeland", respectively, the diasporic perspective is dissected in this section. In the past, the term "diaspora" was primarily used to describe the earliest or most typical examples of diaspora groups, such as the dispersed Jewish, Greek, and Armenian communities. The term "diaspora" evokes a complex web of

tangible and intangible linkages that connect dispersed individuals, who maintain their sense of "belonging" through an intricate network of diverse interactions, including yet not limited to familial ties, commercial exchanges, cross-border travel, shared cultural practices, linguistic affinity, religious rites, and the medium of both written and digital communication. The terminology is now frequently used to describe any dispersed population that resides outside of its country of origin. The issue with the term "diaspora" and how it has been misused throughout the recent decades are raised by Rogers Brubaker, who notes:

> [a]s the term has proliferated, its meaning has been stretched to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agendas in the service of which it has been enlisted. This has resulted in what one might call a 'diaspora diaspora'–a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space. (2005: 1)

Stuart Hall, however, subsequently refutes this interpretation by pointing out that the concepts of "home" and "identity" are not immutable truths yet rather "never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 1990: 222). The importance of acknowledging the distinctiveness of diasporic identities and communities that are "not fixed, rigid, or homogeneous, but are instead fluid, always changing, and heterogeneous" is critical (Hua 2005: 193). In other words, diaspora is inextricably linked, interwoven, and bound up with temporal, geographical displacement, and spatial dislocation, encompassing a complex web of interrelated connections and interactions. Furthermore, it is imperative to recognize that diasporic communities are not immune from internal and power conflicts stemming from differences in factors such as gender, class, age, ideology, and other forms of social stratification.

Bhabha is regarded as a remarkable figure whose controversial concept of "hybridity", which "is constituted and contested through complex hierarchies of power, particularly when used as a term which invokes the mixing of peoples and cultures" (Brah and Coombes 2005: 2) is a fundamental notion in post-colonial philosophy. It seems that Bhabha undermines the idea that the world is divided into "self and other"

(Huddart 2005: 4). In order to define these categories, Bhabha brings the idea of hybridity that illustrates "the construction of cultural authority within conditions of political antagonism or inequity" (Hall and Gay, Questions of Cultural Identity 1996: 58). Furthermore, according to Bhabha, the hybrid discourse or strategy "opens up a space of negotiation" where "power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal. Such negotiation is not 'assimilation' or 'collaboration'" (1996: 58). It allows "the emergence of an 'interstitial' agency that refuses the binary representation of social antagonism" (1996: 58).

Diasporic writers frequently write about hybridity seen in "tropes and thematisations of the experience of cultural inbetweenness, processes of intermixture, fusions or doublings of two or more cultures or two or more systems of signification" (Moslund 2010: 4). Due to this reason, hybridity is highlighted by their diasporic experience as "a cultural catch-all of alien positivity" (Fludernik 2003: xxii). Writers who recount migratory experiences are seen by Edward Said as "chroniclers" of "[e]xiles, émigrés, refugees, and expatriates uprooted from their lands" (as cited in Moslund 2010: 3). Moreover, Roy Sommer divides migration fiction into several categories and maintains that it is "transcultural-hybrid" novel that encompasses "visions of the dissolution of fixed cultural identities" and the expression of "cosmopolitan hybridization" and "ethnic fragmentation" that opposes "exclusive national or ethnic identities" (as cited in Moslund 2010: 5). In addition, Sommer claims that since they present hybrid characters, such novels are connected to Bhabha's theory on hybridity that is related to "in-betweenness", a "borderless cosmopolitanism" and express "transnational" and "transitory" identities (as cited in Moslund 2010: 5). In other words, these books reinterpret "identity as impure, intensified by formal multiperspectivism and transformation, semantic instability and restlessness" (2010: 6). Along with creating hybrid discourses, they also challenge the accepted ideas of whom we are. These books, according to Moslund, glorify migration and depict a migrant as:

> a global hero-figure of almost messianic qualities, as a new kind of fluid, complex, multiple, open, inclusive identity, replacing old identities and cosmologies of stability and belonging with the uncertainty of a liminal

> position in-between two or several cultures. By virtue of these qualities the transcultural migrant hero is assumed to be endowed with a special, inclusive vision and sensibility, a double-vision that is particularly conducive for the heterogeneous complexity and perspectival uncertainty of novelistic modes of representation. (2010: 6)

in the present paper, diaspora studies are employed to better grasp Nicolas's major motif and obtain a clearer sense of where he is in his life as he oscillates between the poles of his homeland and somewhere he strives to connect himself to, though in vain. The term "diaspora" conjures up networks of actual or imagined ties between dispersed individuals whose feeling of "belonging" is maintained through a variety of connections and interactions, such as commerce, traveling, a shared culture, and so forth. Given Safran's (2005) explanation, the idea of "homeland" supposed to be established in the definition of diaspora when the process included geographic migration, an activity that would undermine the sense of home and identity. For instance, although the term "homeland" can refer to either the current host country or the country from whence individuals originally hailed, the latter is typically given greater attention. As a result, the original home, a set geographic place, is the only "homeland" considered in many diasporic studies. The conceptions of identification and exile are also seen as provided in previous iterations of diasporic studies that further distinguishes "homeland" as a "'authentic' space of belonging" from the present settlement as "somehow 'inauthentic' and undesirable" (Hua 2005: 195).

We claim that, although some scholars, such as William Safran and Roger Brubaker, argue for a differentiation approach towards the diverse groups formed by dispersion, other scholars, like Hall and James Clifford, propose a broader and more inclusive interpretation of the diasporic concept.

Discussion

Myths of Homeland, Homelessness, and Homesickness

In Safran's (2005) definition of diaspora, the notion of "homeland" was traditionally regarded as immutable, despite the fact that the diasporic experience often involved geographic mobility that fundamentally challenged traditional notions of "home" and

"identity". The term "homeland", for instance, can refer to either the current host country or the country from which people originally hailed, however, the latter is typically discussed in more detail. As a result, the concept of 'homeland' is frequently used in diasporic studies to refer only to the initial residence, a specific geographic area. The conceptions of identification and exile are also seen as given in previous iterations of diasporic studies that further distinguish "homeland" as a "'authentic' space of belonging" from the current settlement as "somehow 'inauthentic' and undesirable" (Hua 2005: 195).

The allegiances of the diasporic communities are not accurately reflected by supposing a core from which these communities are spread. In a direct response to Safran's (2005) aforementioned requirements, Clifford composes:

> If this center becomes associated with an actual 'national' territory—rather than with a reinvented 'tradition,' a 'book,' a portable eschatology—it may devalue what I called the lateral axes of diaspora. These decentered, partially overlapping networks of communication, travel, trade, and kinship onnect the several communities of a transnational 'people.' The centering of diasporas around an axis of origin and return overrides the specific local interactions (identifications and 'dis-identifications,' both constructive and defensive) necessary for the maintenance of diasporic social forms. The empowering paradox of diaspora is that dwelling *here* assumes a solidarity and connection *there*. But *there* is not necessarily a single place or an exclusivist nation. (1994: 321-322)

Clifford's (1994) opposition to the inclusion of territorial boundaries, as a fundamental concern for the diasporic individuals, raises insightful inquiries regarding the "center" or the "centers" from which these individuals are dispersed and their intricate relationships with such regions.

The term "homeland" as it is now generally understood cannot be placed in a specific geographic area, yet it does signify a sequence of de- and re-homing. The idea of "home" and "identification", as articulated by Hall, is noted as not being an immovable truth nevertheless "never complete, always in process, and always

constituted within, not outside, representation" ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 1990: 222).

The earlier definition of "home" is initially unstable due to individuals' departure, either voluntarily or involuntarily, in the search of their futures. No longer is home "a promise or a place that is God-given" (Deek 2016: 28). Hence, home for immigrants becomes "a mobile habitat" or "a mode of inhabiting time and space" that is not "fixed and closed", yet provides "the critical provocation of an opening whose questioning presence reverberates in the movement of the languages that constitute our sense of identity, place and belonging. There is no one place, language or tradition that can claim this role" (Chambers 2005: 4). In other words, immigrants lose their sense of home and become unhomely. Bhabha asserts that the unhomely "captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world in an unhallowed place" (Bhabha, "The World and the Home" 1992: 141). Moreover, he notes, "to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and the public spheres" (1992: 141). He believes, "the unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow" (1992: 141), and then remarks:

> In the stirrings of the unhomely, another world becomes visible. It has less to do with forcible eviction and more to do with the uncanny literary and social effects of enforced social accommodation, or historical migrations and cultural relocations. The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the home, the home-in-the-world. (1992: 141)

More significantly, he pinpoints, "the unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence" (1992: 144). Bhabha further acknowledges:

> Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions through

> which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed. These spheres of life are linked through an 'in-between' temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history. This is the moment of aesthetic distance that provides the narrative with a double-edge which like the colored South African subject represents a hybridity, a difference 'within,' a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality. And the inscription of this border existence inhabits a stillness of time and a strangeness of framing that creates the discursive 'image' at the cross-roads of history and literature, bridging the home and the world. (1992: 148)

Martin Heidegger also states that homelessness is "coming to be the destiny of the world" (as cited in Chambers 2005: 1). Tyson describes "unhomeliness" in reference to Bhabha's (1992) theory as "this feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo which results … from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives" (2006: 421). Tyson defines being unhomed as "to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee" (2006: 421). Furthermore, displacement results in one's deep urge to "cling to history, to hang on to memory; for when one is nostalgic, one remembers; for displacement alienates one from both time and place" (Deek 2016: 25). Hence, displacement has both advantages and disadvantages. Much of what it covers is concerning the "self: its depths and consciousness, its dreams and complexities, its identity, and experiences of restlessness, desolation, isolation and suffocation, memories, uncertainty, and nostalgia" (Deek 2016: 36).

Owing to their disparities, migrants experience primary feelings of alienation and longing for the familiar. Immigrants must integrate in order to survive nostalgia, though. For immigrants, home is a location that they frequently remember and reflect on. Particularly, the first-generation immigrants frequently differentiate their current circumstances with their past ones and remember the peaceful eras they once had in the country they have left. In this definition, "home" is "like a sanctuary, an abode of peace and tranquility and a place which provides the care for its inmates"

(Chowdhury 2016: 97). However, immigrants emphasize their separation from their home by reflecting on their native country. Furthermore, Deek aptly points out, "all fiction is homesickness and reversely, all homesickness is fiction" (2016: 10).

While conversing with Nicholas in a mountainous setting, Alison opens up about her career as an air hostess and how it has led her to feel a sense of "displacement" and a lack of genuine connection to any one place. She tells, "it's just I haven't roots anywhere any more, I don't belong anywhere. They're all places I fly to or from. Or over. I just have people I like. Or love. They're the only homeland I have left" (Fowles 1965: 272). She describes how she possesses people whom she loves yet no "homeland", as she seldomly flies to or from places. Her utterances explore her fundamental need to cling to others while trying to disprove that which has resulted in her feeling "disconnected" and without a sense of identity or belonging. In this sense, Alison's experience as an air hostess can be seen as a metaphor for the experience of diaspora, as she is constantly in motion and never truly grounded in one place. Overall, what she says in that meeting highlights the emotional toll of diaspora and the importance of finding a sense of "belonging" and "connection", even in the absence of a physical "homeland".

Nostalgia, Memory, and Remembrance

Nostalgia offers a significant perspective on the concept of home, suggesting that it "is never dead; the past cannot be erased, and the idea of home will never be overrated" (Deek 2016: 44). Additionally, "the smell of one city/place reminds him [the immigrant] of other cities/places" (2016: 44). Darwish claims that sentimentality or clinging to nostalgia is "what has been selected from the museum of memory. Nostalgia is a selector, like an export gardener; it is the repetition of a memory which has been cleansed of impurities" (as cited in Deek 2016: 44-45). Stuart Hall holds similar views:

> They bear upon them the traces of the particular cultures, traditions, languages and histories by which they were shaped. The difference is that they are not and will never be *unified* in the old sense, because they are irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures, belong at one and the same time

> to several ‘homes’. (as cited in Kalra 2005: 28)

Hall also contends, “the past continues to speak to us” nevertheless, it does not address us “as a simple, factual ‘past’,” because “our relation to it, like the child’s relation to the mother, is always-already ‘after the break’,” that is, it is “always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth” (“Cultural Identity and Diaspora” 1990: 226). He then adds to his previous thoughts asserting, “this New World is constituted for us as place, a narrative of displacement, that it gives rise so profoundly to a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to ‘lost origins’, to be one again with the mother, to go back to the beginning” (1990: 236). He also makes the following points in relation to nostalgia “for lost origins, for ‘times past’”:

> this ‘return to the beginning’ is like the imaginary in Lacan-it can neither be fulfilled nor requited, and hence is the beginning of the symbolic, of representation, the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search, discovery-in short, the reservoir of our cinematic narratives. (1990: 236)

Furthermore, Mahmoud Darwish asserts that nostalgia is:

> The excuse for being unable to keep with the train’s passengers, who know their address well … It is an evening visitor, when you look for signs of yourself in your surroundings and do not find them, when a sparrow drops onto the balcony which seems to be a letter from a land you did not love, a land when you were there, as you love it now, when it is within you. It was a given thing, a tree, a rock; it became the tokens of spirit and thought, a live coal in language. It was air and earth and water, and it turned into a poem … It is the swallowing up of nature by consciousness and unconsciousness, and the complaints of time lost from the sadism of the present. (as cited in Deek 2016: 42)

Moreover, according to Deek, “the perception of the displaced of place becomes confused with perplexed feelings toward the lost past which disrupts one’s moment

in the current moment. The lost physical place becomes therefore metamorphosed into a nonverbal past and an unwritten history" (2016: 42). A migrant's memories of what they leave behind follow them because they carry "them around, locked up somewhere in my [their] head, from which there is no migration" (Hall, "Minimal Selves" 1996: 44-45).

Nonetheless, memory for the hybrid subject plays a pivotal role in creating a "place of stability, agency, and negotiation between the subject's initial homeland and the newly acquired one (which remains mainly an illusory endevour)" (Dascalu 2007: 33). This is mostly due to the fact that nostalgia and remembrance are both "celebratory" and "melancholic" (Deek 2016: 10). At once, Espin believes, "feelings of loss and the need to mourn those losses are at the crux of the process of successful adaptation" (2003: 30). Consequently, "one's feelings of loss must become integrated into the individual psyche" so they can properly acclimate to the new culture (2003: 30). Yet, following that identity, there must be "transformed, and this transformation brings with it the additional need to mourn the old identity" (2003: 30).

The notion that an immigrant is pitiful and desperate and unable to adapt to the new culture has recently been contested by scholars like Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1996). As culture and identity are not immutable, these critics reject the essentialism associated with these concepts. Identity is in flux because, in Hall's view, it is no longer feasible to preserve a sense of "cultural belongingness" or, in other words, a sense of "collective or true self hiding inside the many others". Hall and Gay note that it is dangerous to consider "'local' cultures as uncontaminated or selfcontained" because it is "unimaginable" (Questions of Cultural Identity 1996: 54). Thus, he contends that identities are daily created.

Nicholas's desire for self-expression and intellectual exploration is at odds with his family's adherence to tradition and conformity. He feels constrained by their expectations and seeks to be emancipated, yet ties that bind him to his upbringing are strong. The death of his parents offers a sense of liberation, and it also leaves him disoriented, without a clear sense of identity or belonging. This conflict is a universal one, as individuals grapple with the tension between their desire for individuality and a need for social acceptance. The pressure to conform can stifle creativity and self-expression, leading to a sense of alienation and despair. However, the quest for

individuality can also be isolating, as individuals seek to forge their own path without the support of a community or tradition.

Nicholas gradually seeks to escape his current situation and find new opportunities abroad. He is vulnerable and desperate, feeling as if he is trapped into a cycle of life he does not yearn for. When he observes the advertisement for a teaching job at the Lord Byron School in Greece, he finds it as a chance to escape and start anew. He imagines experiencing another place and mentions, "it would be different abroad; there would be no common-room, and I should write poetry" (Fowles 1965: 22). The desire to escape is a common human experience. It may arise from a feeling of being stuck in a routine, or from a desire for adventure and new experiences. It often appears as a need to escape a difficult situation or toxic environment. Under such circumstances, the desire to escape can be powerful and consuming. At the end, Nicholas's decision to take the job in Greece may or may not lead to fulfillment, yet the desire to escape is a reminder that he gradually needs to take control of his life and evaluate whether he is truly happy and fulfilled.

In-Betweenness

To be "in-between spaces is to live in the shadow of borders and borderlines; it is to be between passing locations, in transit" (Deek 2016: 41). Alternatively put, an immigrant fluctuates between "integrity and discontinuity" and, in fact, "this oscillatory movement is never supposed to be fully resolved in favor of one or the other pole but only creatively contained as defining a realm of open possibility" (Quayson and Daswani 2013: 18). In addition, "in-betweenness" overwhelms the displaced a "fluidity, a movement back and forth, not making any claims to any specific or essential way of being" (Bhabha, The Location of Culture 1994: 3). According to Bhabha, being displaced provides immigrants with a "double vision", an "insider's outsideness" that "defines a boundary that is at once inside and outside," and an "ethical and aesthetic project of 'seeing inwardness from the outside'" (The Location of Culture 1994: 14). The past and the present are "neither a break nor a bonding with the past" and they are "separated but coexistent, one feeds the other" (Deek 2016: 41).

According to Bhabha, the state of being "in-between" is a phenomenon that

accentuates the encounters of migrants. He describes the "in-between" as "neither one nor the other" (The Location of Culture 1994: 128). He then elaborates on what he had already said by noting, "these in-between spaces" pave the way for "elaborating strategies of selfhood-singular or communal" that commence "new signs of identity, innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (1994: 1-2), and the "emergence of the interstices-the overlap and displacement of domains of difference" leads to the negotiation of the "intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interests, or cultural values" (1994: 2).

Abundant examples suggest the ambiguity of the narrative structure and its complexity, which blurs the boundaries between reality and illusion, truth and lies, and past and present. The character of Alison Kelly, Nicholas's love interest, is another example of this "in-betweenness". Alison's appearance and behavior constantly shift between different personas, making her a difficult character to pin down and thoroughly understand. One moment Alison is described as "feminine" with a "boyish figure" and a "contemporary dress sense" (Fowles 1965: 33) and the next moment she is described as having a "shallow" and "spoilt-child" (1965: 23) appearance. She wears a lot of eye-shadow and has a sulky way of holding her mouth, which gives her a "bruised" look that makes men yearn to "bruise her more" (1965: 34). Her innate sensuality is apparent as men always take notice of her when she walks down the street, dines at restaurants, or hangs out at pubs. Alison's behavior is similarly ambiguous. She spends one day doing domestic tasks like cleaning and cooking, and then the next few days she lies on the floor reading a variety of books. She gives herself violently to Nicholas one moment, and then yawns at the wrong moment the next. She is always a little unpredictable and ambiguous, making it difficult to understand her true nature. This "in-betweenness" in Alison's character reflects the larger theme of the novel that is about the power of storytelling and the ways in which we construct our own realities.

Displacement, Dislocation, and Disconnection

Displacement irrefutably "troubles the ideas of citizenship and national belonging and offers to the noncitizen the freedom to be 'out of place', out of the familiar and

status quo, which opens doors for cultural translation and filtration" and "celebrates multiplicity and hybridity" (Espin 2003: 1). According to Bhabha, displacement is "the fragmented and schizophrenic decentering of the self" (The Location of Culture 1994: 216). Bhabha emphasizes, "displacement's hybrid/syncretic, dual, and bipolar nature and its continuous defereal" (as cited in Deek 2016: 4). In the light of this perspective, he says, "past and present act in tandem in the displaced's articulation of identity" because displacement "starts somewhere and ends nowhere" (2016: 7-20). Being displaced actually means "to celebrate responsibility toward a beginning, without being locked in its attic" (2016: 23). Hence, immigrants might "undergo metamorphosis" and move "from the melancholic to celebratory detachment" (2016: 22). Accordingly, Barghouti remarks:

> Displacements are always multiple. Displacements that collect around you and close circle. You turn, but the circle surrounds you. When it happens you become a stranger in your places and to your places at the same time. The displaced person becomes a stranger to his memories and so he tried to cling to them. He places himself above the actual and the passing. He places himself above them without noticing his certain fragility. And so he appears to people fragile and proud at the same time. It is enough for a person to go through the first experience of uprooting, to become uprooted forever. It is like slipping on the first step of a staircase. You stumble down to the end. (as cited in Deek 2016: 24-25)

Reinforcing Barghouti's standpoints, Gilroy, in a similar way, postulates:

> [w]hat was initially felt to be a curse—the curse of homelessness or the curse of enforced exile—gets repossessed. It becomes affirmed and is reconstructed as the basis of a privileged standpoint from which certain useful and critical perceptions about the modern world become more likely. (as cited in Deek 2016: 26)

"Multiplicity" is a trait associated with "displacement". In Said's opinion, displacement "promotes innovation and experiment" (as cited in Deek 2016: 26) that

might take various forms including "spiritual and abstract as well as physical and concrete" (2016: 26). Displacement provides the subject with plenty of merits as "the veil of racial, ethnic, and national consciousness is critically reconstructed and a more self-conscious identity and image of the world becomes available. Displacement in this sense opens doors to aesthetic creativity via critical distance" (2016: 26). Additionally, it involves not only "estrangement and loss but also creativity and gain; here and now and there and then; tradition and newness, old and new" (2016: 26). As Deek remarks, "the displaced migrant, geographically dislocated, culturally alienated, psychologically in exile, … finds refuge and reconciliation in the familiar and known as opposed to the changing and foreign" (2016: 173). He clarifies that "between the strange and unfamiliar and its opposite (familiar culture, language, place, and history), the displaced is caught between the melancholy of loss, nostalgia, homesickness, loneliness, estrangement, change, and instability and the celebration of creativity, newness, openness, and flight from national and religious nets" (2016: 36). The dislodged stand is there "in-between the poetics and the problematics of displacement" (2016: 36). For someone to be displaced, it must be "dislocated in endless circles without central authority of either the natal cultural identity or the adopted one" (2016: 40).

"Displacement" is a complex and often traumatic experience that involves leaving behind one's home, culture, and community. For those who are forced to leave their original context and move to a new culture, the experience can be disorienting, as they must navigate unfamiliar customs, languages, and social norms. This process requires a continual adaptation and translation of one's experiences and perspectives to fit into the new context. The displaced subject interprets and appropriates difference, experiencing "a continuous process of re-articulation and re-contextualization, without any notion of a primary origin" (Hall and Chen, "Cultural Studies and the Politics of Internationalization" 1996: 393). In order to navigate new cultural contexts, they must translate their own experiences and perspectives into a new language or cultural framework. At once, they must also re-appropriate elements of the new culture into their own identity, incorporating new customs and practices into their self-sense.

This process of "re-articulation" and "re-contextualization" can be difficult

and disorienting, as the displaced subjects must constantly renegotiate their self-sense in relation to their new environment. Thus, it is emphasized that this process is ongoing and without any clear sense of a primary origin. The displaced subjects must frequently adapt to new contexts and translate their experiences and identity into new frameworks, without a clear sense of where their original identity or culture "came from". The complex and ongoing nature of the process of adapting to new cultural contexts involves challenges of navigating unfamiliar social norms and customs, while at once highlighting the resilience and adaptability of the displaced subjects. By constantly re-articulating and re-contextualizing their identity, they are able to navigate new cultural contexts and find a sense of "belonging" in their new home.

The experience of "displacement" can be extremely challenging and traumatic for diasporic individuals, particularly when it deals with their mental health and prosperity. "Displacement" has the potential to devastate a brilliant mind and alter one's character, and as Domin attests, the loss of affiliation is a wound that never totally heals (Robinson 1994: 130). When individuals are displaced, they are often forced to leave behind their homes, families, and communities. This can be a deeply traumatic experience, and the one that can have lasting effects on their mental health. For some individuals, the trauma of "displacement" can be so overwhelming that it permanently changes their personality and creative output.

The idea that "displacement" can ruin a genius indicates the potential impact that this trauma can have on highly creative individuals. When individuals' sense of "identity" and "belonging" is disrupted, it can have a profound impact on their ability to create and innovate. This is because creativity often relies on a deep connection to one's surroundings and cultural context, and when this connection is severed, it can be difficult to tap into that creative energy:

> Depending on the situation, adaptation can hinder or support creativity. In some cases, adaptation means tightly conforming to a confining environment that stifles creativity. In others, it means creatively adjusting to subtle nuances of a changing environment or moving out of one context into another better suited to one's abilities or preferences. (Cohen 2012: 5)

One of the most prominent themes in the diasporic literature is the experience of "displacement" and "dislocation" that is characterized by a sense of being uprooted from one's home and forced to adapt to a new environment. This theme reflects the concept of diaspora that studies "the dispersions of populations and cultures across various geographical places and spaces" (Hua 2005: 191). This theme is evident in Nicholas's experience of leaving England and going to Greece which represents a significant change in his life.

Hall's (1990) argument about the displaced subjects feeling the need to constantly produce and reproduce themselves through transformation and difference can be applied to Nicholas's character development. He experiences "displacement" as an Englishman teaching on a remote Greek island. Through his encounters with the enigmatic and manipulative figure of Maurice Conchis, Nicholas is forced to confront his own assumptions and biases, leading to a re-evaluation of his own identity and beliefs. In this regard, Hall contends that displaced individuals feel compelled to constantly "produc[e] and reproduc[e] themselves anew through transformation and difference" ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 1990: 402).

Nicholas undergoes a series of transformations and reinventions, as he navigates the shifting realities and illusions presented to him by Conchis. These transformations involve a constant negotiation of Nicholas's identity and a willingness to embrace change and uncertainty, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of himself and his relationship to the world around him. In this regard, Hall's (1990) argument is particularly relevant to Nicholas's character development. As a displaced subject in a foreign environment, Nicholas is forced to adapt and transform in order to navigate the complex web of illusions and deceptions presented to him. This process of self-reinvention ultimately leads to a transformation in Nicholas's understanding of himself and the world, highlighting the ways in which "displacement" can lead to a unique form of self-exploration and personal growth.

In addition to the impact on creativity, "displacement" can also have long-term effects on an individual's mental health and well-being. In the case of Nicholas, the loss of affiliation also refers to the sense of connection and "belonging" that he has had with his own British culture. When this sense of affiliation is disrupted, it can lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and depression with which Nicholas struggled.

As a result of teaching on the other side of the island, he seems to be "disconnected" from the people and events around him, as Nicholas tries to understand the motives and actions of the people with whom he interacts. Additionally, the fact that he is not originally from the island, and the allusion to a school on the other side of the island, refer to a sense of "displacement" and "disconnection" from his surroundings. This sense is further complicated by the fact that he is being questioned about his "identity" and his job, as if he were not fully accepted or trusted by those around him. The theme of "not belonging" is also reflected in the relationship between Nicholas and Julie, whom he kissed despite her apparent mental illness. He is unsure of her motives and actions, and her sister questions his intentions and identity. This highlights Nicholas's "lack of connection" and understanding with the people around him, and his own conflicts with "identity" and "belonging".

At the beginning of his life story, Nicholas conveys the feeling of a lack of attachment associated with the experiences of a majority of the people who feel disconnected from their surroundings. His remarks illuminate a universal sense of alienation that individuals may encounter while navigating their personal journeys through life. He mentions, "I began to discover I was not the person I wanted to be" (Fowles 1965: 17) and he gradually points out, "I had long before made the discovery that I lacked the parents and ancestors I needed" (1965: 17). Nicholas's upbringing and family background do not align with his aspirations and interests, causing a disconnection between him and his parents. He seeks to escape their influence and forge his own path, yet the weight of tradition and societal expectations hold him back. This conflict for individuality is a common theme in the modern society. With globalization and the erosion of traditional cultural values, people often feel disoriented in a sea of tentativeness where they hardly fit in. This rootlessness can lead to a sense of alienation and loneliness, as individuals try to find a sense of "identity" and "belonging".

Nicholas conveys his sense of disdain and "disconnection" from his provincial upbringing and surroundings through the use of expressions such as "province-hating as myself" (1965: 24). Furthermore, his carnal exploits and detachment from emotional attachment embody alienation and "disconnection" that can originate from a privileged lifestyle. Nicholas's statement, "I came to London with the firm

determination to stay away from women for a while" (1965: 24) manifests that he recognizes a need to maintain the emotional distance and abstain from the romantic entanglements.

Nicholas's reluctancy towards his homeland is evident when he states, "it seemed almost a secondary thing, by the time I left, that I wanted to escape from England" (1965: 42). It depicts a sense of diasporic rootlessness in Nicholas's life. He feels "disconnected" from his home country of England and seeks refuge in Greece, a foreign land with which he has no prior connection. "Displacement" is a common theme in diaspora literature that explores the experiences of individuals who are forced to leave their home countries and adapt to new environments. The Nicholas's feelings of alienation and isolation are compounded by his strained relationship with his partner, Alison, which adds to his sense of "disconnection" and "lack of belonging".

Sense of Unbelonging

Another pivotal theme in diaspora literature is the search for "identity" and "belonging". In this case, Nicolas seeks solace in the idea of Greece that he has idealized in his mind through books and literature. He says, "I got hold of all the books I could find on the country. It astounded me how little I knew about it" (Fowles 1965: 41), which suggests that he is seeking a sense of "identity" and "belonging" that he cannot find in England. Diasporic literature often explores the complexities of cultural hybridity and the ways in which people adapt to new cultures while retaining elements of their original culture. As it is noted, "the power of cultural hybridity–one side of the paradox–makes sense for modernist theories that ground sociality in ordered and systematic categories" (Werbner and Modood 2015: 1). This highlights the alignment between the exploration of cultural hybridity in diaspora literature and the conceptual framework of modernist theories.

This feeling of "not belonging" is a recurring theme in diasporic literature. Nicolas is not comfortable with the local culture and customs, nor does he fit in with the other expats on the island. Additionally, his relationship with Alison, a fellow expat, becomes strained, and he feels increasingly isolated from her. The passage

highlights the contrast between the natural beauty of the island and artificiality of the contemporary society, particularly England and London. Nicholas is caught between these two worlds and is unable to fully connect with either of them. He longs for something more authentic and meaningful, yet is unable to find it in his current circumstances. At once, he is disillusioned with his school and feels increasingly "disconnected" from the outside world. He longs for a connection with a conversable girl yet finds the island women to be hostile and indifferent to him. He even considers celibacy as an option, yet ultimately cannot shake his desire for human connection. This feeling of "not belonging" is not only limited to Nicholas's personal relationships but also extends to his relationship with the environment. He is intimidated by the natural world around him and feels as if he had no place in it. He describes himself as a "townsman" and imagines that he cannot be a member of the wilderness around him. This sense of alienation is further exacerbated by his rejection of his own age and an inability to sink back into an older one.

Nicholas expresses a deep sense of isolation and rootlessness in his surroundings despite being in a beautiful natural setting. He states, "the outer world, England, London, became absurdly and sometimes terrifyingly unreal … while the rare newspapers from England that I saw became more and more like their own 'One hundred years ago today' features. The whole island seemed to feel this exile from contemporary reality" (Fowles 1965: 58). This passage conveys a sense of detachment and estrangement from the world which Nicholas experiences. He feels isolated and cut off from the world outside the island that is his current place of residence. The passage suggests that Nicholas is experiencing a deep sense of alienation from his surroundings and the contemporary reality. He finds it difficult to connect with the outside world that seems unreal and distant to him.

Nicholas regrets his honesty, stating, "even as I spoke I knew it would have been better to say nothing, to have made something up" (1965: 275). This utterance elucidates that Nicholas feels a sense of discomfort or restlessness in expressing his true feelings and thoughts, and that he is aware that his honesty may lead to detrimental consequences such as rejection or misunderstanding. This can be seen as an indication that he does not fully belong to the social or emotional context in which he finds himself, and that there is a gap between his internal experience and

external expectations or norms. This sense of "not belonging" may also be related to Nicholas's experiences on the island of Bourani, where he feels alienated and tentative about his self and identity.

Otherness

A trend in the modern writing is the idea of "other", or alternatively, "outsider". Louis Simpsons (1957) examines the various ways in which existentialism and alienation are portrayed by various artists. The idea of an "outsider" according to Simpsons, is "an attempt to delineate a new type of man" (1957: 250). He postulates:

> A descendant of the romantic hero, the 'Outsider', in fiction or in fact, feels himself outside the petty lives, the irritations and satisfactions of ordinary men. His isolation renders him vulnerable to despair, to states of mind in which life seems unreal, to paralysis; On the hand, it enables him to know himself, to realize the power of his will, and to act on superman level. (1957: 250)

Simpsons formulates a distinct model of the human mind that draws inspiration from the profound solitude of living life as an "outsider". One can attain self-realization and a sense of holiness by journeying through the alienation of the secular world. Romanticism suggests that the character's dissatisfaction with the tepid state of daily insanity is what initially causes the feeling of alienation.

Nicholas oscillates between his feelings of attraction towards a woman that he met on the island of Bourani and his relationship with Alison, his girlfriend. Nicholas tries to understand the peculiar events that have occurred on the island and the power that Conchis, the owner of the estate, seems to exercise over him. He is emotionally dishonest with himself and those around him that further isolates him from feeling a sense of "belonging". Yet, he believes, "dishonesty was in my feeling dishonest, concealing" (Fowles 1965: 274). Nicholas's feelings of "not belonging" can be seen in his hesitation to tell Alison the truth about his experience on the island. He is anxious about her reaction and the consequences of revealing his true feelings to her. It is not until Nicholas confesses his dishonesty to Alison that they are able to make love which indicates a moment of vulnerability and intimacy that allows him to feel

a sense of "belonging" with her. Additionally, Nicholas's sense of "not belonging" is amplified by his experience on the island. The events that occur are so eerie and surreal that he is tentative what is real and unreal. He feels as if he were an "outsider" in a world that he cannot fully comprehend. In Nicholas's case, he is experiencing not only cultural disorientation but also a sense of emotional disorientation.

Conclusion

In brief, this article illuminated the origins of Nicolas's journey of rootlessness in *The Magus*. Factors such as his educational background and dissatisfaction with his teaching job led to his restless nature and desire to venture outside of England. While Nicolas embarked on a journey to escape his rootlessness, he tried to develop a profound sense of attachment to any specific location. Despite his experiences on the Greek island of Phraxos, where he underwent transformative events, his search for a true sense of belonging and a place to call home remained elusive. Nicholas's character development aligned with Hall's concept of displaced subjects constantly producing and reproducing themselves through transformation and difference. Nicholas's sense of dislocated-ness and lack of attachment resonated with universal experience of feeling disconnected. The search for identity and individuality in the face of societal expectations and the erosion of traditional values led to a sense of alienation and longing for belonging. Nicholas grappled with the tension between his desire for individuality and a need for social acceptance. He felt constrained by the expectations of his family and society, leading to a sense of alienation and despair. Nicholas's journey took him to Greece, where he sought to escape his current situation and find new opportunities. Yet, he continued to cope with a sense of displacement and disconnection, both from his home country and the events and people around him. Nicolas experienced homelessness, displacement, nostalgia, and a sense of being between his native land and the new land after migration. Alison Kelly embodied this ambiguity, constantly shifting between different personas and challenging our understanding of her true nature. Nicholas's feelings of isolation and rootlessness highlighted the profound effects of displacement on one's self-sense. The theme of not belonging was pervasive, as Nicholas tried to connect with his surroundings and the people he encountered. He was caught between different worlds, unable to fully

embrace or understand either.

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