Diaspora, Literature, and Writing of Afghan Lives in Iran

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Diaspora is currently a widely discussed topic worldwide. It has a long history and is an interdisciplinary term that encompasses various fields such as sociology, political science, cultural studies, literature, and communication. The term itself is derived from the Greek word "dispersion" (Tololyan 27). In ancient times, diaspora referred to groups of people who were displaced from their original homeland, including Jews, Greeks, and Armenians (Bakwell 2).

Since the 1980s, the concept of diaspora has evolved to encompass both travel and immigration. As a result, new scholars have begun classifying diaspora into categories such as migration issues and academic writings (Cunningham and Sinclair 9). In the diaspora of the 20th and 21st centuries, there has been a notable increase in voluntary immigration as individuals seek a better life. As Hickman (9) points out, diaspora now serves as an umbrella term to describe various groups of people, including expatriates, displaced persons, political refugees, foreign residents, immigrants, ethnic, and racial minorities.

Diaspora is an important phenomenon, with approximately 3.5% of the global population living outside their native country. Scholars like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Edward Said have contributed to the understanding of diaspora in a postcolonial context (Abina 9). One category of diaspora is the victim diaspora which according to Hickman: "resulting from Diaspora is an important point as around 3.5% of people worldwide live outside their home country". During this period, postcolonial concepts demonstrated by scholars such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Edward Said represented the new definition of diaspora (Abina 9). There are different types of diaspora, such as victim diaspora, which, according to Hickman, are "resulting from dispersal after a traumatic event in the homeland, to two or more foreign destinations" (11).

The victim diaspora includes the Jewish, African, Armenian, Palestinian, and Irish diaspora. The African diaspora especially refers to the involuntary forced immigration of Africans through enslavement and nowadays also

includes voluntary immigration. This diaspora can be found in Asia, European countries, and the USA. In the 9th century, a significant number of black slaves were present in Iraq and other Muslim countries due to the Arab slave trade. These slaves were taken to countries such as India, Pakistan, and Indonesia. Unlike Armenia, it is believed that in the Asian world, most slaves were encouraged to assimilate into local society rather than being separated and alienated from it (Cambell). The Armenian diaspora occurred at various times, with the victim diaspora specifically referring to the refereeing to period between 1915–16, when around two-thirds of their population (1.7 million people) were forcibly driven to Syria and Palestine. Many of these individuals eventually settled in France and the USA (Cohen 3).

The Armenian diaspora is often defined in terms of the Armenian Genocide, and the forced migration it resulted in (Bolsajin 30). However, significant migrations from Armenia occurred long before the Genocide due to various reasons, such as financial crises. The first Armenian migration began in 17th century, with people moving to the United States. This migration continued in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, happening in three different waves: "the first wave was a direct result of Armenian persecution by Ottoman Turks, first in the Hamidian massacres in the 1890s, and then in the Armenian Genocide, which lasted from 1915 through about 1922" (30). The Armenian Genocide was a cruel and systematic killing that occurred under the pressure of the Ottoman Empire, resulting in the death of approximately 1.5 million Armenians due to national and religious reasons. The first wave of migration consisted of around 100,000 Western Armenians who settled in the United States. The second wave occurred among the descendants of those who participated in the first wave, with approximately 60,000 people migrating to the United States. "Many of these migrants came to the United States as neither survivors of the Genocide nor from the ancestral homeland" (Pezeshkian 11), but rather as individuals who believed they could live a better life in the United States.

The main focus of this book is the "Afghan diaspora". The past forty years of Afghanistan has been marked by invasion, violence, displacement, and migration (Ahmad 7). The Afghan people have encountered numerous challenges, leaving them with the decision to either endure suffering or fight back. Local turmoil and invasions by foreign countries have compelled millions of individuals to flee their homes in search of a more peaceful life.

Afghan immigration traces back to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan from 1979–1989. This war, marked by insecurity and instability, forced millions of people to flee their homeland to avoid death, starvation, and other dangers. Apart from the Soviet Union's invasion, internal conflicts also fueled three significant waves of Afghan immigration. The primary destinations were Iran and Pakistan, along with various European countries, Turkey, and the United States.

In 2015, Afghans were considered the second largest group living outside their national borders in Europe, after Syrians. The current study focuses on five European travel destinations for Afghans—Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Sweden. The presence of Afghan people in Denmark has lasted no more than ten years. About 18,600 Afghans have lived there in recent years, seeking better living conditions, security, and opportunities. Although Denmark is a primary destination for immigration, some Afghans, especially young people, choose to change their fate there (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2018).

Compared to other European countries, Germany took in the most Afghan refugees between 2014 and 2017, along with a few Syrians who had also found hope for the future in Germany. Data shows that as of December 31, 2017, there were 251,640 Afghans in Germany, with a disproportionately high proportion of young men (almost 50% between the ages of 15 and 29) (22).

Sweden is another European destination where Afghan people have moved in the last decade. In 2018, an estimated 16,000 people lived in the country, a number that had declined due to the government's more restrictive immigration controls. In 2015, they made it more difficult for immigrants to enter their country without a valid passport or ID card, making it harder for asylum seekers to establish a life in the European country. Despite their efforts to reduce the number of illegal immigrants living in their country compared to previous years, Sweden was among the countries that donated large amounts to Afghanistan.

The United Kingdom is another country where Afghan asylum seekers are seeking their fortune. The United Kingdom (UK) is one of the most important destination countries for Afghan migrants in Europe, especially in Germany. The surge in Afghan migration to the UK began in the mid-1990s and has been increasing ever since.

Asian countries, especially those in the Middle East, are the most suitable destinations for Afghan people. Many have migrated to nearby countries like Pakistan, India, Turkey, and Iran for several reasons. These include short distances, similar cultures, fewer entry restrictions, similar racial disparities, and lower immigration prices, all of which make it easier for them to find work in these countries. Let's explore the significance of the Afghan diaspora in these countries.

Many years before the so-called Taliban returned to power, Afghans migrated to Pakistan due to the common ethnolinguistic groups found on both sides of the border, such as Pashtuns, Hazaras, and Gujjars (Allimia 1). The similar culture of these ethnic groups, along with the geographical proximity and other significant political and social factors, have motivated the Afghan population to relocate to Pakistan.

Another popular destination for Afghan people is Turkey. Security, economic, political, and religious factors contribute to Afghan immigration to Turkey, compelling many Afghans to leave their homeland. Economics in particular is the second most common reason for Afghan migration to Turkey, with over 36% of Afghan migrants leaving their country for economic opportunities.

This welcoming approach has made India a preferred destination for many people fleeing persecution, conflict, and instability in their home countries. The lack of specific refugee laws in India has resulted in the status of refugees being governed primarily by political and administrative decisions rather than a codified legal framework. This lack of consistency in the treatment of refugees can lead to inequalities in their access to rights, protection, and opportunities in India. As a result, some refugee communities may receive more favorable treatment, while others may face challenges and uncertainties regarding their refugee status and protection.

As one of Afghanistan's neighbors, Iran has been welcoming Afghan people for many years. The temporary migration of Afghans to Iran for economic reasons is a well-established phenomenon, with documented evidence dating back to the 19th century and possibly even earlier. Throughout the years, the country has hosted a large number of Afghan asylum seekers and refugees. Iran's initial policy towards Afghans seeking asylum has been described by many as an "open door" policy. During times of conflict and instability in Afghanistan, Iran has adopted a relatively lenient approach to accepting Afghan refugees and providing protection and assistance. The open door policy allowed Afghan refugees

to enter Iran without strict border controls and provided access to basic services and assistance. According to data from interviews, the majority (67 percent) of second-generation educated Afghans had attended Iranian schools, while 15 percent had attended Afghan schools.

Diaspora literature is a genre that captures the narratives and perspectives of individuals in a state of ambiguity on the edge of belonging. Characters in this literature, often immigrants, find themselves caught between two worlds that do not fully belong to their country of origin or their host country. After experiencing a sense of difference in their new environment, these immigrant intellectuals embark on literary endeavors based on their observations and experiences, as well as those of other immigrants. The themes addressed in diaspora literature arise from the complexities of navigating multiple identities, cultural shifts, and the search for a sense of place. In their stories, the characters deal with the emotional and psychological challenges of displacement and the conflict between familiar traditions and new realities. Diaspora literature serves as a vehicle to express the unique perspectives and voices of those living on the peripheries of two cultures, illuminating the intricacies of their lives and the broader implications of migration and cultural diversity.

Among the writers who have engaged in diaspora writing, we can point to Teju Cole, a Nigerian-American writer whose works portray the atmosphere of the diaspora. One of his diasporic works is "Every Day is for the Thief," published in 2007. Another notable writer is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a 45-year-old Nigerian author who is very vocal about racism and cultural issues in her works. One of her works that explores diasporic characteristics is "The Thing Around Your Neck", published in 2009. This novel is based on Adichie's personal experiences living in Nigeria during the repressive era of General Sani Abacha's dictatorship in the 1990s. The Afghan writer considered in this book is Mohammad Asef Soultanzadeh, who illustrates the experiences of a diaspora intellectual who journeyed from Afghanistan to Iran and eventually settled in Denmark in 1365 (Hijri calendar), driven by the instability in Afghanistan caused by the communist coup. In his literary works, Soultanzadeh delves into the complex narratives of Afghan immigrants in Iran and sheds light on the diverse emotions and challenges they face.

The final chapter of this book is titled "Writing Afghan Life in Iran". In this chapter, the lives of Afghans in Iran are presented through several new stories, three poems, and a drama. These genres provide scholars with an opportunity to analyze Afghan life in Iran based on diaspora concepts.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY, DEFINITIONS, AND DIFFERENT KINDS OF DIASPORA

The origin of diaspora

Due to the fact that the term diaspora has a long history and "its interdisciplinarity as related to sociology, political science, cultural studies, geography, anthropology, history, philosophy, literature, communication, religion, cinema, music, theatre" (Vertovek 2, Karim 1) is obvious, it is logical to embrace its origin first and then see how it has been enlarged and altered in time. The origin of the diaspora can be traced back to the Greek word that consists of two terms; "it is derived from the Greek word diasperien which is comprised of dia meaning over and spiro meaning to sow" (Tololyan 27).

The term diaspora can be traced back to the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. This translation was carried out by scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. "The uses and meaning of diaspora in the Septuagint should be understood in a theological sense" (Cohen and Fischer 13). Although Jewish dispersion is known as one of the major diasporic issues, it seems that it is simplistic to only consider diaspora as an exile of Jews in the sixth century BCE, since it is more authentic not to neglect the divine punishment aspect of it, the punishment of God that led to homelessness as a result of not respecting him through the lens of Christianity. To make it short, according to them, diaspora was a dispersal concept, not a historical one. With the rise of Christianity, diaspora referred to those religious men who were compelled to be banished from the city of God and that is why the term was only used as a negative concept in literary works by Christian authors. Three centuries later, in the third century, when Christianity was replaced by Latin, the term dispergere was used meaning diaspora, which can be found in different works of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Justin Martyr in different meanings, "from the 'diffusion of the gospel in the entire world' to that of 'the dispersion of men' (14). The old meaning of diaspora "was used with capital 'D' to refer

to specific groups of people which had been dispersed from a historical 'homeland' including Jews, Greeks, and Armenians" (Bakewell 2).

By the eighteenth century, the meaning of diaspora was changed when "members of [the] Protestant Moravian church were forced to settle in other countries in Europe to follow their mission by which they had to influence early Methodists who were members of another branch of Christianity". That was the other and new concept of diaspora which does not refer to dispersion but a 'link' instead–the link between different versions of Christianity in different places.

One of the most important terms that had been created due to Jewish dispersals was entitled Babylon. Babylon refers to the negative senses that one might experience far from his homeland such as isolation, alienation, and unsafety in the host countries. To go further and go deeply inside the history of the diaspora, some other groups can be examined through the same perspectives in parallel like the African diaspora, and the Armenian diaspora.

African diaspora

Although the term "African diaspora" first emerged in the 1950s in the literature, it is associated with the giant migrations of African people since the 15th century. African diaspora was utilized first by George Shepperson in 1965 "because of the close parallels he saw between the Jewish diaspora and the dispersal of Africans as a consequence of the slave trade" (Alpers 4). African diaspora describes the situation in which mass groups of African people were banished from their homeland between the 1500s to 1800s and it is called the Transatlantic Slave Trade, when "slaves were shipped from west Africa, west central Africa, and Eastern Africa to the European colonies in the new world" (Nunn 3) and is known as the most important slave trade that began in the 15th century and "is responsible more than any other project or phenomenon in the history of the modern world, for the creation of the African diaspora, the dispersal of Black people outside their places of origin on the continent of Africa" (Boston 1). Africans experienced some other slave trades forcefully before, in 200 AD: the trans-Saharan, Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, by which about 18 million people were compelled to quit their countries as slaves. We have to be careful that all African migrations are not categorized as African diaspora unless they followed the conditions such as slavery and imperialism which both were against human rights and were forcefully done. It should be noted that "the period of almost four hundred years of

the European enslavement of African remains the heart of the African diaspora" (Baumann 11).

> The African diaspora concept subsumes the following: the global dispersion (voluntary or involuntary) of Africans throughout history; the emergence of a cultural identity abroad based on origin and social condition; and the psychological or physical return to the homeland, Africa. Thus viewed, the African diaspora assumes the character of a dynamic, continuous, and complex phenomenon stretching across time, geography, class, and gender (Harris 22).

It is remarkable to note, "African diaspora theory provides a framework for understanding the socio-historical experiences of peoples who have been categorized by phenotype or skin color" (Barbour et al. 3), which is the reason for them being known as "Black Diaspora", and these two concepts have been utilized interchangeably. African slavery or the Transatlantic Slave Trade included three different levels which are known as the triangular trade: the first part occurred by the shipping of goods, sailed to Africa, the second one included between 12 and 14 million enslaved Africans who were carried across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas, and the last part which is entitled the Middle Passage happened by the transportation of goods from the Americas and returned to Europe. Due to the fact that most of the enslaved Africans were brought to the Americas, they were known as "African Americans" since some were enslaved in Latin America, and others were taken to the United States and about 1.8 million people were doomed to the aforementioned fate. American and European nations like Portugal, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Denmark, the United States, and some like Germany and Sweden indirectly, and Canada as a French and British colony, participated in the process of enslaving transportation in order to gain the incredible wealth for their people in recognition of trampling Africans' human rights. To speak about the African diaspora in Europe specifically, it should be noted that the presence of African people from Egypt began in Greece in the thirteenth century B.C.E, and it was until the 16th century, when the African diaspora existed in Sicily and Italy. "From the mid-sixteenth century onward it began to spread over the rest of Europe. There is evidence of the African presence in the Netherlands, England, France, the German-speaking countries, Scandinavia, the Balkan states, and from 1670 there are even Africans in Russia" (Ember et al. 19). African Americans were enslaved in parallel with some others from other countries like Asia, Europe, Brazil and Native America with various cultural habits, religion, dance, and food. "The history of African diaspora is complex, dynamic, and continuous. With Africa at its root, members of the diaspora

developed multifaceted religious, cultural, and socio-political characteristics to adapt and survive in their new environments" (Rotimi 6). Africans immigrated to another continent like Asia, which is going to be examined as the Asian diaspora in the following parts.

Armenian diaspora

The other group that has been known as a diaspora throughout history is the Armenian diaspora. Armenia as one of the oldest countries in the world has a long history. "The Armenian diaspora originated in historically isolated incidents of large-scale migrations out of the native land" (Gevorkyan 1). The origin of the Armenian diaspora is not known. "According to one theory, this people emerged from the same migration movement by which the Greeks entered the Peloponnese and the Phrygians entered Anatolia, from the Balkans, possibly first reaching the Euphrates as early as the 12th century BC" (Mahe 26). Whatever the situation may be, the first Armenian State is related to the 6th century BC by the integration of the Persian Empire and the Greek and Roman Empire. Christianity was the religion that was chosen by the Armenian State and that was the reason for the great connection between Armenia and Europe when European nations selected Christianity as their formal religion. "The Armenian diaspora is often defined in terms of the Armenian Genocide, and the forced migration it resulted [in]" (Bolsajin 30), although the great migrations in Armenia occurred long before the Genocide because of various reasons like financial crises. The first Armenian migration began moving to the United States in the 17th century and continued into the 18th, the 19th, and the 20th centuries in three different waves: "the first wave was a direct result of Armenian persecution by Ottoman Turks, first in the Hamidian massacres in the 1890s, and then in the Armenian Genocide, which lasted from 1915 through to about 1922" (30). The Armenian genocide was a cruel systematic killing when they were under the pressure of the Ottoman Empire and about 1.5 million Armenians died during the years because of national and religious reasons. The first wave contained about 100,000 western Armenians who settled in the United States. The second wave happened to those whose ancestors were participants in the first wave. About 60,000 people migrated to the United States. "Many of these migrants came to the United States as neither survivors of the Genocide nor from the ancestral homeland" (Pezeshkian 11), but those who believed they could live a better life in the United States. It seems that Armenians began to learn how to adapt to new places and foreign countries. One of

the main points about the Armenian diaspora is that, many of them who are called the returned diaspora decided to go back to their country where they had to embrace the hardships of Soviet Armenia ruled by Stalin. The third and last wave of immigration to the United States began in the 1980s during the conflict with Azerbaijan about the status of the Republic of Artsakh as well as the massive earthquake that struck Soviet Armenia. Some migrations of Armenian people were voluntary, and it should be noted that most of them were forcefully done. They abandoned their country to settle in Cilicia in the 11th century. A great mass of people moved to Europe in the 14th century and "there are various reasons for the dispersion of the Armenians such as military service, trade, the attraction of imperial or trade centers, deportations, war and genocide" (Yepremyn and Tavitian 32). They have been migrating to different countries up to now in a way that they are measured at 10 million around the world. Most Armenian people live outside of their homeland and this is something unique about a country. All the people who have settled outside of the Republic of Armenia are considered Armenian diaspora and the issue will be continued and scrutinized in the next part of this book as well.

> For a diaspora to emerge out of the dispersal of a given population a number of conditions have to be met. Among other things these often include the time-depth of Dispersal and settlement in other locations; the development of a myth of the homeland; the attendant diversification of responses to homeland and host nation; the evolution of class segmentation and conflict within a given diaspora alongside the concomitant evolution of an elite group of cultural and political brokers; and the ways in which contradictions among the various class segments end up reinforcing different forms of material and emotional investment in an imaginary ideal of the homeland (Quayson and Daswani 3).

Dispersals do not lead to diasporas necessarily. For instance, the violent dispersals in Libya in 2011 are not considered diasporas since they do not cover the mentioned conditions, but the Afghanistan dispersal between 1979 to 1989 that occurred by the dispersals of Afghan tribes can be seen as the meaning of diaspora. To make a long story short, diaspora is not only related to the movement, but also "of notions of citizenship, technology, forms of multinational governance, and the mechanisms of global markets" (4). Apart from displacements across borders, "dislocations and relocations, integrations and disintegrations, outsiders and insiders, sameness and difference" (Hall 22) relate to the diaspora. Diaspora also refers to "issues like cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism, nation and nationalism, transnationalism and migration" (Cohen Vertovec). Other than these are ideas on "strangeness and identity" (Gilroy and Georgiou),

while "notions of ethnicity, immigration, settlement and race are all found to intersect and dissect conceptualisation of diaspora" (Kalra, et al 9), just as it "shares an overlapping semantic field" (Tololyan) with these subject matters (Brubaker 10). Diaspora is additionally a culturalist approach to the contextualisation of resettlement amongst a people, as it emphasizes boundedness, and possible integration (in the host land) against individualism (Robins and Aksoy).

Hickman declared, "Traditionally the paradigmatic diaspora has been defined as being produced by some form of coercion that leads to the uprooting and resettlement outside the boundaries of the homeland of large numbers of people; this grouping of people already has a fully constituted identity in its homeland" (9). Diaspora's meaning has been changing over time, in the past, it referred to a group of people who were forcefully compelled to alter their place or voluntarily decided to change their home and settle elsewhere. "In the contemporary meaning, the term encapsulates a group of people who have a common geographical origin, have trans-located through migratory patterns occasioned either by the forces of globalization and/or domestic stress, and share identifiable markers, a collective consciousness, and common experiences in their new locales" (Tettey and Puplampu 4). The new meaning of diaspora in the 20th and 21st centuries and how the concept can be applied to different nations in the post-colonial era will be analyzed in the following.

Diaspora 20th and 21st century

Diaspora in the 20th and 21st centuries should be explained from the colonial to the post-colonial era. As Radhakrishnan affirms, "the passage into citizenship is also a passage into minoritization. [The displaced individual] is different and thus rendered a target of hyphenation in pain and alienation" (174). Indeed, the legacy of European imperialism and ethnocentrism is having a profound and lasting impact on transcultural interactions in different parts of the world, including America. This historical context has shaped power dynamics, social hierarchies, cultural hegemony, and hybridity, "economic and social privilege, justification of privilege, legitimizing colonial rule, racial essentialism, normalization of oppression, maintaining privileges, and strengthening hierarchies" (Memmi 48) that continue to shape the ways different groups interact and perceive one another.

Colonial Hierarchies and Power Dynamics

European imperialism often involved the colonization of land and the subjugation of indigenous peoples. This created hierarchical structures in which colonizers enjoyed superior power and privileges while indigenous peoples were marginalized. Even after the end of the formal colonial period, these power dynamics persisted and continue to affect social, economic, and political relations (Bhat 8).

Cultural Hegemony

European colonizers often imposed their cultural norms, values, and worldviews on colonized societies, resulting in cultural hegemony. This dominance of European cultural norms created a framework through which other cultures were evaluated and often marginalized. This influence can still be seen in various aspects of societies, including language, education, religion, and social norms (Ramirez 118).

Cultural Hybridity and Resistance

Despite these challenges, transcultural interactions have also led to cultural hybridity and resistance. Colonized communities often found ways to assert their agency and preserve their cultural identity, leading to the blending of traditions and the emergence of new cultural forms. Postcolonial legacies: the aftermath of colonialism and struggles for independence have left lasting legacies of socioeconomic inequalities, political instability, and cultural trauma. These legacies continue to shape relationships between diverse cultural groups and impact efforts for social justice and equality (Marota 1).

Understanding the historical roots of these dynamics is critical to promoting more equitable transcultural interactions and addressing the enduring effects of imperialism and ethnocentrism. It requires acknowledging and addressing these legacies while working towards mutual respect, inclusivity, and a shared commitment to social change and justice (1).

Construction of economic and social privilege

Memmi argues that the colonizer constructs a system of economic and social privilege that favors his own group. This privilege often results from the exploitation of the labor, resources, and land of the colonized. The

colonizer benefits from this unequal distribution of wealth and power (90).

Justification of Privilege

The colonizer often justifies his privileged position by various means, including cultural and racial superiority. Ideologies of racial hierarchy and cultural superiority are used to rationalize colonizer dominance and to maintain a sense of entitlement to the colonized (2).

Maintaining Privileges

The mechanisms and structures that maintain colonizers' privileges have been maintained over time. Economic systems, legal frameworks, and social norms are often designed to help the colonizer maintain his control over resources and institutions. Albert Memmi's work provides valuable insights into the psychological and societal effects of colonization. He examines how both colonizers and the colonized are affected by unequal power dynamics and sheds light on the complexities of identity, resistance, and the struggle for liberation (64).

The construction of a binary representation of the colonizers, positioning them as virtuous, civilized, and progressive while portraying the colonized as savage, backward, and in need of civilization is a central feature of colonial ideology. This act of representation serves several main purposes:

Legitimizing colonial rule

By presenting themselves as virtuous and civilized, colonizers justify their presence and rule over the colonized. They position themselves as benevolent leaders bringing progress, development, and enlightenment to the colonized (124).

Strengthening hierarchies

The act of representation strengthens hierarchical structures by placing the colonizer at the top and the colonized at the bottom of the social, cultural, and economic hierarchy. This reinforces the notion that the culture and values of the colonizers are superior (65).

Naming and Definition

By naming and defining the colonized, the colonizer exercises control over how the colonized are perceived and understood. This naming process helps create a discourse that shapes public opinion and justifies colonial policies. This process of representation is a form of cultural and ideological domination in which the perspective of the colonizer becomes the norm, and any deviation from it is seen as deviant or inferior. However, this binary representation is a constructed fiction serving the interests of the colonizer. It simplifies complex cultural, social and historical realities and increases the power imbalance between colonized and colonizers. Colonialism used racial and cultural constructs to create a sense of superiority and dominance over colonized groups (51). This process involved several key elements like racial essentialism cultural hierarchies, and normalization of oppression.

Racial essentialism

Colonizers propagated the idea that different races had inherent and unchanging characteristics. These traits were used to categorize and classify groups, often portraying the race of the colonizers as superior. These notions were based on pseudo-scientific theories used to justify colonial policies and practices (57).

Cultural hierarchies

In addition to racial hierarchies, colonial discourse also established cultural hierarchies. The culture of the colonizers was portrayed as superior, advanced, and civilized, while the culture of the colonized was portrayed as inferior, uncivilized, and backward. This cultural superiority was used to justify the enforcement of the values, institutions, and way of life of the colonizers (45).

Normalization of Oppression

The portrayal of colonized groups as inherently distinct and inferior led to normalized oppressive practices, such as forced labor, land grabbing, and cultural assimilation. These practices were justified as necessary for the prosperity and betterment of the colonized, and strengthened the power dynamics of colonial rule (67).

Overall, colonialism used these constructed notions of racial and cultural differences to gain and maintain control over colonized territories and peoples. These ideologies not only justified the dominance of colonized groups, but also had lasting effects on their social, cultural, and economic development long after the end of formal colonial rule.

The post-colonial era, diaspora and in particular, the diaspora community, based on what William Safran noted, were increasingly used as metaphorical terms for various categories of expatriates, displaced persons, political refugees, resident foreigners, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities (1). Since the 1980s, the concept of diaspora has been transformed into a new concept and began to consist of both travel and immigration. Consequently, some new scholars have attempted to classify diaspora into new categories, such as migration issues and academic writings. Since then "the concept became more popular" (Cunningham and Sinclair 9). Migration has become one of the most important issues and the primary subcategory of diaspora, and it is crucial to acknowledge its political implications in the modern era. According to Hockman, "the concept is now deployed to describe different categories of people, for example: expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities" (9). An important aspect of diaspora is highlighted by the fact that approximately 3.5% of people worldwide live outside their homeland (as of 2019), "the concept of diaspora often carries the same anti-essentialist freight as the concept of hybridity" (Abina 2188). The concept of diaspora has taken on various meanings over the years and has established a relationship with post-colonialism in recent decades. "Almost all the forms of dislocation are associated with colonialism and its aftermath and so they have necessarily become the central topics of postcolonial thought and literature" (7). The concept underwent a transformation in the 20th and 21st centuries due to increased voluntary immigration driven by the pursuit of better living conditions. Postcolonial concepts highlighted by prominent theorists like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Edward Said may shape new perspectives on diaspora in these centuries. Edward Said first articulated his concept of Orientalism in his 1978 book of the same name. Consequently, Western cultures have long been engaged in constructing Eastern cultures and depicting them as inferior. According to Said "the Orient was almost a European invention" (9). As Eastern countries were deemed inferior, Edward Said introduced the concepts of self and other. By juxtaposing these terms, he argues that Western countries maintain dominance, perpetuating the dehumanization of people in the East. Homi K. Bhabha, an influential Indian-British thinker, is renowned as one of the most

effective scholars in the postcolonial era. One of his main concepts, hybridity, "is celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoggvelt 158). According to Bhabha, "hybridity is the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonized" (211). In his view, the third space emerges when a colonized identity doesn't belong to its first or second space but rather to a new place—termed the third space.

Different kinds of diaspora (voluntarily and involuntarily)

People have different reasons for choosing to live abroad and enduring the difficulties of migration. They may be involuntarily forced to leave their country of birth, or they may voluntarily choose not to continue living there–"for instance, in 2015, a total of 60 million people were forcefully displaced due to wars, famine, or natural disasters and around 20 million of them were displaced across international borders" (Toivanen and Baser 47), others leave their countries by choice, seeking human rights, security, an escape from discrimination, violence, and injustice. Immigrants encounter various challenges when settling in host countries, even if they have chosen to explore new areas. It is common to perceive them as individuals transcending their homeland, viewing themselves as newcomers entirely belonging to the new lands. The relationship between people's homelands and receiving countries, whether chosen voluntarily or not, has given rise to a new concept known as the **Transnational Space**. The concept is frequently employed as a substitute for diaspora. Transnational space denotes a social realm that stretches across national borders, encompassing cross-border activities, engagements, mobility, social relations, and emotional attachments that diaspora groups maintain and cultivate within host countries, toward their homeland, and among diaspora communities settled elsewhere (Baubock and Faist 30).

Upon closer examination, it's important to note that the concept of diaspora gains meaning in the interplay between home and host countries, shedding light on the conditions of those who have left their countries and how they are received in their destination countries. The only asset immigrants carry to the new place is their identity; even though they have left their country, they do not relinquish their self-esteem. The connection between the homeland and diaspora groups is not severed but continues persistently, remaining alive within them. Transnationalism imbues

significance into both voluntary decisions to live abroad and the forceful dispersal of people. According to Robert Cohen, one of the most influential diaspora writers, the concept is categorized into five types based on varying conditions and implementation methods. Depending on the type of diaspora, the histories of different countries are categorized into subgroups for study. Cohen argues that the concept of diaspora gains meaning through voluntary migration or forced exile due to aggression, war, or violence. He proposes four classifications: victim diasporas, labor diasporas, merchant diasporas, and imperial diasporas. While banishment from one's homeland results in expulsions, subsequent investigations may explore the nuances of how these occurrences happen and how they differ. "Being shackled in manacles, being expelled by a tyrannical leader, or being coerced to leave by force of arms, mass riots or the threat of 'ethnic cleansing' appear qualitatively different phenomena from the general pressures of over-population, land hunger, poverty or a generally unsympathetic political environment" (2).

Victim Diasporas

According to Mary Hickman, "a victim diaspora is one resulting from dispersal after a traumatic event in the homeland, to two or more foreign destinations" (11) like what happened to the Jewish, African, Armenian, Palestinian and Irish diaspora. The victim diaspora, also known as the classic diaspora, refers to groups that were forced into exile. In the previous section, we examined some victim diasporas such as the Jewish, Armenian, and African diasporas. Here, we will delve into additional details about them and touch upon other classic diasporas, such as the Palestinian and Irish diasporas. The earlier-discussed African diaspora can be further categorized into the African diaspora in Asia, which involved both forced and voluntary migration. As previously mentioned, the forced migration of the African population occurred through their enslavement. "Enslavement of Africans can be traced back to the Pharaonic times, as is illustrated in Egyptian Art" (Karmwar 5). In the 9th century, large numbers of black slaves were in Iraq and many of them were brought to the Muslim world through the Arab slave trade. Forced to reside in various parts of Asia, they assumed different names. In Muscat, North African people were referred to as Hubshees, while in India, they were known as Habshis or Habashis. This African diaspora also extended to other countries such as India, Pakistan, and Indonesia. "In the Asian world, in contrast to the Americas, most slaves were subject to forces promoting assimilation into local society rather than separateness and alienation from

it" (Campbell 3) and they were allowed to use human rights more than Africans in America. For slave owners in Asia, it was vital that Africans be familiar with local customs. As a result, many African slaves in the Indian Ocean World (IOW) adapted to local languages and religions, including Hinduism and Islam. After a certain period, they were granted freedom to marry and establish new lives. Another significant migration of Africans to Asia took place during the 6th, 10th, and 13th centuries through the spread of Islam. Additionally, in the 16th century, Africans were brought to India by Europeans, particularly the Portuguese, who transported them from East Africa to India between the 1530s and 1740s. In India, Africans were employed for specific roles such as soldiers, bodyguards, and security guards. The experiences of Africans in the Indian Ocean World differed from those in the Atlantic World, as they enjoyed greater social rights in the Asian continent, influenced by Islamic laws. Conventions, where women and children were free, and slaves had more recognized human rights, shaped their interactions. Another facilitating factor for Africans living in Asia compared to America was the similarity in skin color, with some Asian populations, like the Sri Lankans, sharing the same skin color. Omar said, "free or enslaved, soldiers, servants, sailors, merchants, mystics, musicians, commanders, nurses, or founders of dynasties, they contributed their cultures, talents, skills and labor to their new world, as millions of their descendants continue to do" (1). An estimated 20,000 Africans resided in India, and approximately four million Africans migrated to the Indian Ocean World (IOW) between the 1st and 20th centuries, with many forced into migration and others choosing to do so voluntarily. The division of Africans into different countries such as the Arabian Peninsula, Iran and India was based on their gender and age and named like so: "Kaffir means nonbeliever, Siddi means prisoner of war, Habshi and Zanji which relate to a black person from eastern Africa" (3). To complete the Armenian diaspora, and among the various historical events experienced by the Armenian people in the past that can be considered diaspora, the one that is called the victim diaspora refers to, in the 19th century, "their forced displacement during 1915–16, when the Turks deported two-thirds of their number (1.75 million people) to Syria and Palestine. Many Armenians subsequently landed up in France and the USA" (Cohen 3). The Armenian people are a mixture of different groups. The Armenian diaspora happened at different times and for different reasons, voluntary and involuntary. Since the late fourth century AD,

> Armenians left Armenia for three reasons: to study in the centers of Greek culture, to fight in long-service military contingents guarding the eastern boundary of the Persian empire and later the eastern and northern frontiers

of the Byzantine Greek empire, and as a permanently deported population of men, women, and children who were forcibly relocated to depopulated regions of the Byzantine empire (Adalian).

The last mentioned, involving voluntary migration, is considered a victim diaspora among the various versions that have occurred. The Armenian people have endured resettlements by different empires on their territory over various centuries, persisting into the present day. For instance, they settled in Cilicia, southern Turkey, due to conflicts between Arab Muslims and Byzantines in the seventh and tenth centuries, "the refugees who fled the invasion of the Seljuk Turks by going north along trade routes with which they were already familiar" (Embeder et al. 38). For instance, there were those who migrated to Eastern Europe in the 14th century. In the 17th century, another significant diaspora occurred due to the decision of the Persian king Shah Abbas, who aimed to depopulate Jolfa and expand his territory. In the 18th century, the Armenian people faced the expansion of the Russian Empire, which had slowly begun in the 16th century and was officially continued in the 19th century with Russia's invasion of the Republics of Armenia and Georgia. During this period, Armenians started residing in the United States, Great Britain, France, and Egypt. The pinnacle of the Armenian diaspora is connected to the World War I genocide, during which around 2 million Armenians were killed, and approximately 250,000 sought refuge in the Russian Empire. Another victim diaspora is associated with the Irish people during the period 1845-1852, following the Great Famine. This devastating event, caused by potato crop failures, resulted in disease, death, and a significant exodus of impoverished individuals, including adults and children who had no other choice. Approximately two million Irish were compelled to leave their homeland for the United States and Canada in order to survive. Besides the Great Famine, the Irish faced other traumatic challenges such as colonialism, oppression, and racism in their home country during the 19th century.

Labor diaspora

The term 'diaspora' can have various meanings under different conditions. It is not exclusively formed by forced migration; individuals may also experience dislocation while searching for jobs or economic opportunities unavailable in their home country, leading to profound disappointment. Illustrative examples encompassing the concept of labor diaspora include the Indian and Turkish diasporas. Labour diaspora is not exclusive to international job seekers, but "it develops when migrants are on the one

hand, subjected to social exclusion and on the other hand continue [to] retain ties with their own culture, religion, language, and social norms" (Koshal 57). According to Weiner, labor diaspora describes the ones "who move across international borders to work in one country while remaining citizens in another" (48).

The labor diaspora is exemplified by Indian workers migrating to British, Dutch, and French plantations from the 1830s to the 1920s, as well as Turkish people relocating to Europe after the First World War. The essence of the Indian diaspora lies in the fact that the initial Indian immigrants were primarily labourers. Three major Indian groups—Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims—played distinct roles in the Indian diaspora. Sikhs, originating primarily from Punjab, constitute approximately twenty percent of India's population. They have resettled in various regions, adopting new identities as farmers or soldiers. Many Sikhs have migrated to countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. Native American migration can be categorized into two distinct waves: the 19th-century diaspora, marked by involuntary movement, and the 20th-century diaspora, characterized by the voluntary displacement of skilled males. Approximately 1.3 million Indians emigrated worldwide during this period. In the 19th century, those compelled to change jobs and work as labourers were entirely under the influence of their employers, labeled as victims of the colonial era. They had limited autonomy in determining their activities and lacked the ability to shape their individual lives. In contrast to the colonial era, as explained in the previous section, the second wave during the post-colonial era, particularly in the 20th century, saw skilled Indians voluntarily leaving their homeland and making independent decisions to relocate to other destinations. "The concept of the Turkish diaspora began to gain ground with increasing emigration and settlement in the West in the post-WWI era" (Kose 68). At the beginning of the 19th century, Turks primarily migrated to various countries within the Ottoman Empire, notably the United States. This pattern reversed during the Turkish Republic period, as most immigrants favored European countries. A key difference between these periods is the composition of the immigrant population. In the Ottoman Empire, the majority were unskilled workers, whereas during the Turkish Republic period, a shift occurred with a prevalence of educated and skilled individuals. In the Ottoman era and the early 19th century, Turks emigrated for diverse reasons, including economic, cultural, geographic, and political factors. They envisioned achieving modernism and technological development in America, considering it unattainable amid poverty and famine in their homeland. Approximately 1.2 million people immigrated to the United

States during the Ottoman era. The transformation of the Turkish diaspora after World War II, detailed in the previous section, played a pivotal role in shaping the conditions of immigration

Trade and Business diasporas

The other type of movement and migration that has been occurring over the years is called trade or business diasporas, according to Curtin: "merchants from one community would live as aliens in another town, learn the language, the customs and the commercial practices of their hosts then start the exchange of goods" (2). The trade diaspora occurred in various destinations, with a notable example being the Chinese diaspora, which we will detail here.

Regarding the Chinese diaspora, millions settled in the East for agricultural and mining reasons, choosing destinations under Chinese government scrutiny and with low population density. For example, in the 19th century, a significant number migrated to Manchuria, where an estimated 30 million people lived. These merchants, who migrated enthusiastically to these places for trade reasons, seemed like potential money-makers. "Chinese from Shandong Province in the north have migrated to Siberia, Korea, Japan, and South Africa, and Chinese from Yunnan have long moved back and forth across the border with Burma" (Mckeown 66). The development of diverse business activities around the world led to strong relations between China and other parts of the world. Chinese traders and merchants are considered among the most important links between the countries of South Asia. The overseas activities, conducted by merchants, increased and accelerated rapidly, with the Chinese becoming the primary traders in various ports.

> By the early seventeenth century, most major ports throughout Southeast Asia had as many as 4,000 resident Chinese and up to 30,000 in the European centre ports of Manila, Fort Zeelandia, and Batavia, where European rulers were dependent on [the] Chinese to build their cities, provide supplies and services, and maintain the lucrative Chinese trade (68).

The Chinese trade diaspora, known as the family trade, was characterized by the participation of relatives among most ship members. In the 17th century, China and the Netherlands were the only two groups that thrived as Chinese trade expanded and became a regional priority. This trend persisted until the early 19th century when British influence continued to

increase. The expansion of British trading was not a sufficient reason to halt the Chinese diaspora. In the 19th century, millions of people worked for Chinese employers worldwide, with around 20 million Chinese emigrating to destinations including Australia, Canada, Europe, Hungary, India, Russia, Singapore, the United States, and many other countries. The discovery of gold in places like New South Wales and Victoria attracted the Chinese diaspora to Australia for new opportunities. "The Chinese in this nineteenth-century wave of migration originated mainly from the Siyi and the Zhongshan localities in Guangdong, with many coming via the Californian goldfields" (Min-hsi Chan 634). They were not only involved in gold mining but also played a role in the tin trade in northern Australia. The Chinese presence in Canada dates back to the mid-18th century when 50 Chinese merchants and sailors arrived to explore Vancouver Island. However, the majority of Chinese immigrants moved there in the mid-19th century in search of gold. Chinese immigrants also participated in other industrial projects, including the construction of the British Columbia National Railway. However, the federal government's order in the 20th century led to a reduction in the number of immigrants in Canada. Unlike South Asian countries, the presence of the Chinese in European countries does not have a long history. They moved to Europe after World War I to contribute to military industrial production. The migration of the Chinese to Europe can also be categorized as a labour diaspora, given the significant number of skilled workers who chose to remain in European countries, especially France, after World War I. By the end of World War II, the Chinese diaspora's migration to Europe occurred in three waves. The first wave involved individuals moving from rural parts of Hong Kong to Europe as the continent underwent the green revolution, replacing traditional plantations with industrial parks. The second wave was a refugee wave, with around 200,000 people leaving their homes. The final wave saw approximately 300,000 Chinese settling in Europe. The Chinese diaspora in Hungary is a 20th-century phenomenon, coinciding with China's engagement in shuttle trade between China and Siberia. This economic activity attracted a significant number of Chinese traders to the Eastern European country. Another notable presence of Chinese for trading purposes dates back to the 18th century in India. A famous Chinese sailor named Atchew went to Calcutta in the 1770s, and within a few years, the city became the most important Chinese settlement in India.

> In the first few decades of the twentieth century, the population of Chinese in India grew as the tumultuous economic and political developments in China prompted many to emigrate, especially from southeast China, where active links with overseas communities facilitated emigration abroad