

AFTERNOON RAAG OF AN UPROOTED INDIAN ON THE ROUTES OF DISPLACEMENT: THE SEARCH OF IDENTITY THROUGH HEALING MEMORY

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Abstract: *This paper examines the impact that the movement from one space to another has over the individual in the formation of identity. The roots of nationhood, ethnic inheritance and traditions are destabilized in the process of forming a hybrid identity, required by the adoptive space. Thus, the stability of the native roots is challenged by the mobility of the new routes which bring displacement. The Indian immigrant—once uprooted—passes through the trauma of maladaptation and lack of integration, not being able to manage the conflict between his Indian identity and the English one. The shifted and hybrid identity becomes unstable, oscillating between the memory of the healing narrative and the new identity. The analysis will focus on defining and characterising these concepts of space in the dialectics of home–land and host–land of an Indian who left for studies at Oxford. Amit Chaudhuri, in his Afternoon Raag, questions the meaning of raag—the Hindi for chant—in its oxymoronic meaning of “song of happiness” or “song of grief.” Therefore, even if the Indian immigrant has achieved his dream of studying and living in a first-world country, still he cannot be content, as he feels uprooted, dejected and not integrated in the new community. He only finds redemption through music, memory and seclusion, or through retreating to his ethnic group.*

Keywords: *space, roots (stability), routes (mobility), displacement (alienation and hybridity), memory, raag (chant), identity*