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Cultural Identity and the Location of Diaspora in Daljit Nagra's

Look We Have Coming to Dover

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Abstract

Diaspora writers express themselves through a variety of literary forms: fiction, poetry, essay, biography, autobiography, travelogue etc., representing a multitude of ethnicities, languages and traditions. They engage in the complicated politics of their location and dislocation and their perspectives are shaped by their ethnicity, gender, migrancy and post coloniality, defining the personal and political implications of their Indianness as manifest outside the boundaries of the Indian subcontinent. The glut in communication technologies have eroded all boundaries across the globe making diasporic communicaties local and provincial as well as transnational at the same time. This paper seeks to analyse selected poems by Daljit Nagra, BBC Radio 4's Poet-in-Residence and a poet of Punjabi origin based in London. His creative outpourings explore 'innate Punjabi values, culture, traditions, social norms' as juxtaposed with diagonally opposite western societal trends of living. Another area of relevance to be examined in the paper would be how the diasporic protagonist in his poems negotiates with the challenging experiences of practically inhabiting a dual existence. The paper will lay special emphasis on Nagra's 2007 seminal poem, Look We Have Coming to Dover, which is in dialogue with Matthew Arnold's Dover Beach, as Nagra discusses the ideas of immigration and racism as mutually insoluble. Thus, the paper would study the contemporary face of diasporic poetry, especially Punjabi poetry in communion with the western world.

Keywords: Diaspora, Cultural Hybridity, Migration, Immigrant literature

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