
Toward a Line of Flight: Art and the Modern Migrant

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Abstract

The present study examines the significance of art as it emerges in novels by a selection of Indian diasporic writers from V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie to Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri. Art will be examined at three levels:

1. Recreation of the homeland in the private sphere through remembered songs and poems in the native language, the preservation of paintings in the native style, etc. In studying this private level, attention will be given to how this fixation with the homeland reveals the fissures in the *individuum* of the deterritorialized subject and the pliability of the idea of the homeland as an effect of deterritorialization.
2. *Simulation* (as in the theory of Jean Baudrillard) of native festivities and observances, sacral images and configurations, within the host milieu. In scrutinizing this public, communal level, the paper will look at how these images come to form a voice of opposition against the inviolability of borders and how they reflect the cultural psychology of the community.
3. Reinscription of borders and binaries through the creation and transmission of art. While art is directed against the regime of borders in the second level, in the third, art is directed away from it. The study examines how these works on the migrant experience as events with participation (audience/readership) from around the globe become *lines of flight* (as in the work of Gilles Deleuze) directed away from border-centric or binaristic readings of migration.

Keywords: Diaspora, Migration, Homeland, Post-Structuralism, Contemporary Fiction, Literary Criticism.