

Diaspora: Identities Moving between 'self' and 'other'

'I am from here, I am from there, yet am neither here nor there.' – (Darwish 2003: 4)
Since the emergence of diaspora studies in the 90s, the term itself has been critically attested as one that is challenging to define. As a 'travelling term' (Clifford 1994: 302) or 'a word of movement' (Gilroy 1994: 207), the challenge of definition indeed crystallises with the plurality that coincides with journeying. Crucially however, alongside its subtext of movement are tensions of relation between self and other, which exacerbate fixing a single universal definition.

This paper therefore draws on the dynamics of movement that complicate identity relations, particularly concerning diaspora as they navigate between selfhood and otherness. In doing so, I highlight diasporas' liminal positionality as they embrace multiplicities of here, there, and beyond; or the vagaries between 'I' and 'non-I'. Here, they subsequently acquire Said's (1988: 48) notion of a doubled vision, identifying with both self and other. Yet, given this positionality and perspective, diaspora is often marginalised and alienated, and so the question of home and belonging arises. Considering the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish from his collection *Fewer Roses*, the negotiation between self and other is pronounced through his personal lens as a member of the Palestinian diaspora. His poems articulate the condition of diaspora and particularly the tensions of claiming identity and belonging midst exile.

This poetic exploration combined with theory drawing on Gilroy, Said, and Minh-ha will inform my discussion of diaspora identity dynamics caught between currents of selfhood and otherness. Thus, while difference, of language, race, ethnicity, or belief, objectively sets a diaspora group apart from wider social collectives, the dilemmas of subjectivity are far more nuanced by the experience of movement and relations encountered and negotiated.