

'Diasporic Consciousness' and National Identity: A Comparative Study of *Asal Eswed (Black Honey)* and *New York* Movies

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Abstract

Many debates surround the meaning of the term 'diaspora' that appeared in Post-colonial studies. This paper, however, goes with Steven Vertovec's (1999) concept of Diaspora as a kind of 'Consciousness.' It argues that such 'Diasporic Consciousness' has a role in determining or undermining the individual's national identity (ies). Through a comparative analysis of Khaled Marei's Egyptian movie *Asal Eswed (or Black Honey)* (2010) and Kabir Khan's Indian

movie *New York* (2009), the paper explores the suitability of Vertovec's concept on the diasporas found in these movies in spite of the different nations or cultures in which this 'Diasporic Consciousness' is produced or reproduced, and its impact on shaping or reshaping their national identity (ies).

Key Words: diaspora, diasporic consciousness, migration, national identity.

المخلص

لقد طال مصطلح "الدايسبورا" أو "التشتت" الكثير من الجدل الذي بات

متداولا بكثرة في دراسات الادب مابعد الاستعماري. ولكن هذا البحث يدرس مفهوم ستسفن فيرتوفيك (١٩٩٩) لمصطلح "الدايسبورا" أو "التشتت" بوصفه نوعا من "الوعي و تأثيراته في تعزيز أو تقويض الهوية أو الهويات الوطنية للفرد من خلال تحليل الفيلم المصري "عسل إسود" (٢٠١٠) للمخرج خالد مرعي و الفيلم الهندي "نيو يورك" (٢٠٠٩) للمخرج كبير خان محققاً في إمكانية تطبيقه على كافة الأفراد المشتتين عبر العالم بغض النظر عن طبيعة الأمم و الثقافات التي تنتج أو تعيد إنتاج ذلك " الوعي المشتت".

Abbreviations: *Asal Eswed* = AE , *New York* = NY

Introduction

Diaspora and national identity are interrelated issues as long as determining of one can automatically deconstruct or undermine the other. With diaspora, national identity can be either deconstructed or

maintained. In present time, the meaning of diaspora can be understood according to Vertovec (1999, 1), as a "term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritorialised' or 'transnational' -- that is, which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides." So, being transnational, any person can eventually attain more identities besides the national one and even can maintain one (s) on the account of other (s). Therefore, Ernest Gellner (1983, 6) claims that "A man must have a national as he must have a nose and two ears." This need of national identity is actually permanent in anyone's consciousness because for Roger Scruton,

The condition of man [...] requires that the individual while he exists and acts as an autonomous being, does so only because he can [...] identify himself [...] as a member of society, [...] state or nation, [...] which he recognizes instinctively as home. (1986, 156)

Therefore, the importance of getting a home (land) is parallel to the individual's sense of existence and being. Both directors, the Egyptian Marei and the Indian Khan put the idea of diaspora and national identity at the heart of their movies *Asal Eswed (or Black Honey)* (2010) and *New York* (2009). Whereas Marei talks about the significance of getting more than one national identity through the diasporic situations of his film's protagonist, Masry, Khan finds the impossibility that diaspora can provide to his character, Sam or any individual to gain more than one national identity showing

that diasporas have to maintain one national identity on the expense of the other to be able to live. As a matter of fact, there is no standard criterion for diasporas to get their national identity or identities while they are entrapped in the center of diaspora. Their identity (ies) can be shaped or reshaped through their diasporic experiences and confrontation with their 'Diasporic Consciousness.'

And thus, this paper intends to use Vertovec's concept of 'Diaspora as' a type of 'Consciousness' to examine its suitability on diasporas from different cultures and its

interconnected relationship in shaping or reshaping their national identity (ies) through comparing and contrasting the characters Masry and Sam. While Masry represents the Egyptian Diasporas around the world, Sam symbolizes the Indians. Vertovec's (1999, 8) Diaspora as 'Type of Consciousness' reveals how diaspora affects the "state of mind and a sense of identity." Such 'Diasporic Consciousness,' yet, is revealed through a dual or paradoxical nature of mind, self-awareness of multi-locality, engagement with, and consequent visibility in, public space, religious and cultural consciousness (Vertovec 1999, 8- 18).

Finally, this paper falls into three sections along with

abstract, introduction, conclusion and references. The first section gives different concepts and definitions for both diaspora and national identity along with historical overview. The second section on the other side examines *Asal Eswed (Black Honey) (2010)* movie. It thoroughly examines the 'Diasporic Consciousness' and its effect on national identity found in this movie through the protagonist Masry. The third section, then, explores *New York (2009)* movie in relation to diaspora and its effect on constructing or reconstructing national identity for the protagonist Sam. It concludes that by comparison, the 'Diasporic Consciousness' of the characters, Masry and Sam is the main cause of determining or undermining

their national identity (ies). Also, it shows that such 'diasporic consciousness' is uncovered via studying the experiences that diasopras can go through.

Diaspora and National Identity

Diaspora is a term used in cultural and post-colonial studies to describe the state of people who are dispersed from homeland to different countries for different reasons. Generally, both Robin Cohen (2008, 17) and William Safran (1991, 83-4) define diaspora as the process of dispersal of people from the original homeland into two or more destinations either traumatically through exile or displacement for economic aims seeking for work or perusing certain trades. For them, those groups can share a collective or

myth memories of their homeland with lasting connection and idealization of return to it that is constructed through the feeling of alienation in the host country (Cohen 2008, Safran 1991). On his part, Cohen (2008, 17) identifies four phases of diaspora studies starting with the classical notions of diaspora: transcending the Jewish tradition, the victim of diasporas like the Africans and Armenians, Labour and imperial diasporas: indentured Indians and the British along with trade and business diasporas: Chinese and Lebanese. Therefore, agreeably, theorists find that the history of nations includes some remarkable kinds of diasporas like the Jewish, Armenians, Greeks, and Kurds who have

been traumatically dispersed, scattered into different locations from their homes. In addition to the Arab Muslims such as Algerians and Moroccans that emigrated and were displaced in the Western world for work or trade or affected by their previous colonisers.

Nonetheless, 'diaspora' is not restricted to the previous classifications because Kim D. Butler (2001, 189) identifies the term abstractly to mean "the dispersal of a people from their original homeland" or countries. Dispersal, however, is identified by Rogers Brubaker (2005, 5-7) as one of the main three general criteria for diaspora along with homeland and boundaries maintenance. Unlike other theorists who classify diasporas according to people of ethnic groups who were forced to live

outside their homelands. For Brubaker (2005, 5-7), dispersion is not specifically related to traumatic or forced dispersion, but it is generalized to define "any kind of dispersion in space in which the dispersion crosses state borders." Like Brubaker (2005), Katharyne Mitchell (1997, 259) sees the contemporary use of the term "has come to signify a more general sense of displacement, as well as a challenge to the limits of existing boundaries." Immigrants in this sense can be 'Diasporas' no matter of what were the reasons behind their migration as long as they can be put under similar circumstances. For this reason, both James Clifford (1994, 307) and Khachig Tölölyan (1996, 29) perceive the term 'Diaspora' as

a signifier that is built upon the multiplicity of political, cultural and social associations or “social formation” through a “constant movement of displacement,” and thus, “the notion of diaspora is caught up with and defined against that of nation-states” to put nationality and national identity in question. Gabriel Sheffer (2003, xiii) urges to understand and feel the hard situation of the diasporas across the world who struggle between their attempt to preserve a kind of vital “connection with their old homelands while striving to feel at home abroad.” In this, Mitchell (1997, 259) argues that “signified diasporas have, by and large, given way to broader conceptualizations of travel, displacement, dislocation, and divided loyalties.”

Consequently, being displaced, dispersed and exiled, nationalism and national identity of diasporas can be affected and put into question. Haj Yazdiha (2010, 35) asserts, “nationalism is founded upon a collective consciousness from shared loyalty to a culture, one would assume this culture is well-defined.” National identity, nevertheless, is defined by B. Güvenç (1985, 27) “as a kind of socialization manner processing that takes part in the individual within any certain community, or, it is a feeling of the state of belonging to any group by means of acculturation.” Besides, in his *Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986), Anthony D. Smith (1986) finds that national identity and origin are typically determined by nation’s geographic roots in some

ancestral homeland and frequently portray the nation as a product of both blood and soil. As a result, national identity is a merit that goes for persons who are born in a specific country or manage to (e) migrate and live for a long time in that country. Eventually, national identities in the contemporary age in the 21st century can be defined in the words' of Montserrat Guibernau (2004, 134) to describe the identities that are "applied to citizens of a nation-state". Yet, Stuart Hall (1996, 621) affirms that national identities can be strong with "legal and citizenship rights", unless the "global identifications begin to displace, and sometimes override, national ones."

In this regard, the directors, the Egyptian Marei

and the Indian Khan, discuss diaspora and national identity in *Asal Eswed (or Black Honey)* (2010) and *New York* (2009) movies. They take Masry and Sam as models to represent the African Egyptian and South Asian or Indian diasporas, who emigrate in the 1990s. From this, the narration of the two films has been built on emigration, which is the soil where diaspora has been born and grown in the sense that the main characters of the films emigrate from their original land, which is Egypt for Masry and India for Sam to America as a host land to be lived and raised. So, Masry's emigration has been presented when his father and mother decide to emigrate because for Fady baha'I Seleem (2010), in the 90s, Egypt experiences a hard

political and economic environments in which emigrants are fully aware. For that, Butler (2001, 189) states, emigration can be pursued as a consequence for “intolerable economic conditions”.

On the other side, Sam’s emigration and diaspora are the product of economic intellectual land educational reasons because his father has decided to immigrate to America to be a professor in the Indian Culture in one of the New York’s universities. This according to Cohen (2008, 141), a globalized economy that “permits greater connectivity, the expansion of enterprises and the growth of new professional and managerial cadres, thereby changing but creating new opportunities for diasporas.” Conversely, M. Kearney (1995,

557) discovers that in India 1992 “100 million people were living outside of the country of their birth, a displacement due to various factors such as military conflict, employment or the lack thereof, or poverty”.

Hence, *Asal Eswad (or Black Honey)* (2010) narrates the story of Masry as an emigrant who returns to his ancestors’ country, Egypt, where he clashes with reclaiming a national identity because of the bad political, economic, and social life that the Egyptians experienced and got accelerated from the 90s that made them as a second-class citizens in their own country on one hand and his nostalgic quest that brought him to Egypt, on the other. Ahmed Marei (2010) describes Egypt’s reality that shocks Masry and

causes him to be imprisoned country:
and alienated in his own

An emigrant who returns to his country to be confused with the crowded streets and the routines [...] imprisoned in a free country, imprisoned inside himself because he is shocked with the state of chaos he experiences in Egypt while he's coming from the country of discipline, law and civic rights, but at the same time [...] you'll live with Helmy's conflict of which is the best America [...] or continuing in the homeland.

From this, because of being an emigrant coming from foreign country, Masry encounters exploitation, fraud and mistreatment in everything such as the exaggeration of the prices of water and food or extra security fees that the hotel's employee makes him to sign for hiring a car once he knows that he's Egyptian not American. So, for Nadia Abou Magd (2010), "The film is being praised for giving an honest look at Egyptians, revealing their flaws, daily suffering, and

how they have become second-class citizens in their own country, which they love despite everything". At the end, and through a series of challenges and events, Masry retains his national identities both the American and the Egyptian.

Nevertheless, *New York* (2009) tells the story of an emigrant, Sam, who lives in America with a total belief of his American (ity) to the extent he even forgets his roots as Muslim and Indian and he even

does not have Indian friends just Maya and then, Omar. Actually, Khan here tries to portray that kind of people meant to emigrate from South Asia and to Kearney (1995, 553), have been able to “create transnational spaces that may have the potential to liberate nationals within them who are able to escape in part the totalizing hegemony that a strong state may have within its national borders”. But, after 11/9 and because of his detention to be a terrorist, Sam diagnoses himself to be diasporian. But, this identification shocks him especially when he’s bestially humiliated, tortured and humanly degraded by the FBI’s officers and puts his national identity in question. For that, he’s got the feeling of

nothingness and alienation as Muslim, Indian and the Other in the American’s community to eventually lead him to revenge for his dignity through joining one of the terrorists’ cells in New York City, but his revenge’s journey end in the persistence of his American national identity.

Then, both Masry and Sam are diasporas, but Masry symbolizes the traditional diaspora of both Safran’s and Cohen’s lies on displacement, alienation and nostalgic to the return to the homeland while Sam depicts Clifford’s and Tölölyan’s diaspora of displacement and social formation. Also, being diasporas, Sam and Masry get a national identity crisis thereby they try to overcome their nationality’s problems through

a series of events to finally maintain one (s) in the next sections.

Asal Eswed Movie (2010)

National identity in this movie has been dislocated, displaced and lost within a process of a diasporic nationality's identification for the main character Masry. Though raised in a foreign country, Masry does not forget his origins, national identity and language; he even feels

nostalgic for his childhood places, memories in Egypt. James Clifford (1994, (307, 312)) claims that immigrants "are only en route to a whole new home in a new place" while they "may suffer nostalgia and loss" thereby the 'Diasporic Consciousness' is constructed and lived through "loss and hope as a defining tension." In other words, the diasporan lives with a diasporic consciousness that:

Its particularity is variously described as being marked by a dual or paradoxical nature. It is constituted [...] positively by identification with [...] historical heritage [...] or contemporary world cultural or political forces (Vertovec; 1999, 8).

Thus, Masry lives and confronts the diasporic consciousness in his host state America but preserves the old

picture of his home country, Egypt and its culture as if he lives in the 'here' of America, but there "his consciousness of Egypt." He says,

I came to Egypt thinking that I'll find the same picture that I left behind. I lived in America

twenty years whereas I compress this picture in my mind in order not to be erased. Twenty years, I was dreaming in the day when I came here and see this picture again. (AE, 2010)

In relation to the previous quote, Masry's diasporic consciousness makes connection through memory, which is according to Arjun Appadurai & Carol Breckenridge (1989, i), a "collective memory about another place and time and create new maps of desire and of attachment." That picture preserved by Masry about

Egypt is actually a "collective memory" shared among Egyptians inside and outside Egypt. An example for this collective memory is the memory of Ramadan and Eid that Masry regards as symbols for his relation to Egypt. With this memory, however, he decides to return to his nation-state, Egypt in order to settle down forever. He declares,

Masry: I will settle here in Egypt and I'm so happy because I'll stay here in the ramadan's last days for Iftar and Tasahor [...] When we migrated to America, I begged my father to visit Egypt in al-eid, but, instead he was just giving me edia. (AE, 2010)

Yet, Masry's American (ity) with his confrontations with his Egyptian (ity). Instead for diasporic consciousness Vertovec (1999, 9), "these collective memories and 'new maps' do not always serve to

consolidate identities; rather, for Appadurai & Breckenridge (1989, i), they are fractured “often built on the harsh play of memory and desire over time.” In the case of Masry, such ‘fractured memories’ split his identities because they push him towards Egypt in the sense that Masry’s has two passports Egyptian and American, but he returns to Egypt with his Egyptian passport leaving the American behind in America. That’s why; a dialogue of national identity negotiation is constructed from the first moment in his arrival to his homeland Egypt.

In Egypt, Masry experiences a quest of national identity with the loss of his passports during his journey when he shocks in the political situation in Egypt that makes

Egyptians diasporic, alienated and discriminated in their own country to the extent they become a second degree citizens in their own country, which prevent them from their simplest rights to make Masry in the words of one of the reviewers in Elcinema (2010) as “a hero lost in his country and in a society that deconstructs its citizens’ rights and gives more advantages for foreigners over them.” This is seen when in the airport his airplane’s Egyptian colleague who also has an American passport is treated with respect and easily finishes the entrance’s procedures whereas Masry is treated so badly by the airport’s employee when he asked Masry to stay aside to check his Egyptian passport as a regular routine. Also, in another occasion,

Masry is humiliated and his rights transgressed by the police officer who takes him to prison where he's been beaten by prisoners just because he has been taking pictures to the Nile thereby he says "I'm an Egyptian and I have Egyptian rights" (AE, 2010), refereeing to his situation as an Egyptian citizen who's rights are transgressed by law instead of being protected by it.

As a result, Masry decides to give up his Egyptian nationality by throwing away his Egyptian passport from the hotel's room veranda after the receiving of his American passport and he even decides to not to settle in Egypt either. In this regard, Abou El Magd (2010) claims that Masry "returns to his native country with big dreams, but finds

things are not so easy in the land of his father. Trials and tribulations await around every corner." Nevertheless, trying to defend Radi, Masry has to confront the police officers who let the sons of some politician or important class or position in the country go without punishment when they hit Radi's car. He does so, with his American passport as a kind of resistance in which Vertovec (1999, 10) states, it comes from his diasporic consciousness and this resistance is processed through "engagement with, and consequent visibility in, public space." Robin Cohen (1995, 13) argues that "Awareness of their precarious situation may also propel members of diasporas to advance legal and civic causes and to be active in human rights and social justice issues."

In regard to this, although Masry does not join to any institution for civic or human rights, he does defend so harshly Radi in front of the police officers. On the other side, with the defence of Radi, Masry loses his American passport in a demonstration against America thereby he becomes without national identity to be dislocated and displaced in his nation-state country. Faifmain (2010) (IMDB .com) states that *Assal Eswed* is shaped around “A 20 years old Egyptian goes back to Egypt after living in America for most of his life to suffer from the difference Specially after losing his identity.” This can be admitted in the scene when Masry returns back to the hotel without identity (ies) and the receptionist refuses to make

the checkout procedures for him saying that “So, you are neither Egyptian [...] nor American now” (AE, 2010).

Consequently, Masry makes his mind to get back to America in which he again confronts his nostalgic diasporic consciousness, but this time for America. This reformation is, however, is natural because for Cohen (2008, 141), “diasporas are in a continuous state of formation and reformation.” Yet, Masry can’t return back to America until he restores back his American passport and here he becomes aware of his multi-locality situation. Vertovec (1999, 8) admits that multi-locality is a basic for diasporic consciousness along with “the need to conceptually connect oneself with others, both ‘here’

and ‘there’, who share the same ‘routes’ and ‘roots’.”

Thus, whereas Masry lives in his ‘root’ country, he realizes of his connections with his ‘route’ nation and this can be understood when Masry says, “Do I still there!” (AE, 2010). In these words, Masry replies after hearing from the embassy’s representative that for the Americans, he is still there and never leaves America as long as he has not travelled with his American passport. This awareness of “multi-locality,” then, along with the previous “fractured memories” according to Vertovec (1999, 9) the “diaspora consciousness produce a multiplicity of histories, ‘communities’ and selves. Yet [...] such *multiplicity* is being redefined

by diasporic individuals as a source of adaptive strength.”

When Masry finally gets his American passport and in the last moment while he’s travelling back to America, he changes his mind to return to Egypt thereby he uses his American nationality to maintain the Egyptian one. In the aeroplane final scene, Masry pretends to be sick in the flying aeroplane to make the pilot returns and lands in Egypt again. But when the pilot knows that Masry is an Egyptian, “He looks like an Egyptian,” the host says, the pilot doesn’t care about him. At this moment, Masry shows his American passport saying, “I’ll breathe with my American passport” (AE, 2010), implying that he can’t live without his American identity. With this revelation,

the pilot does return to land again in the Egyptian airport. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc-Szanton (1996, 11) assert that most of transmigrants determine some identities that connect them to “more than one nation.” So, here in the case of Masry, his diasporic consciousness maintains both his Egyptian (ity) and American (ity) after a long journey with national identity negotiations conflicts.

New York Movie (2009)

In *New York* movie, diaspora is constructed through difference, religious and cultural diasporic consciousness

that play a fundamental role in deconstructing the national identity of the protagonist, Sam. The religious and cultural consciousness, however, other types of the diasporic consciousness assigned by Vertovec (1999). The ‘religious diaspora consciousness’ refers to specific religious groups like South Asian religions affected by multi-locality and cultural difference (Vertovec 1999, 10-11). For Sam, this ‘religious consciousness’ is revealed after his detention as a suspected of being a terrorist in the explosion of the New York twin towers because of his religion. He says,

Sam: On the basis of some photographs I had clicked the World Trade Centre during college and one airline ticket they tried to label me a terrorist. I never knew then but the FBI had detained 1200 people like me and put them in different jails. We had just one thing in common, our religion. (NY, 2009)

In the words of Vertovec (1999, (14, 17)), this ‘religious consciousness’ establishes some sorts of self-awareness to religious beliefs and practices along with religious pluralism that distinguish religion from culture. In this regard, Sam as a person has been migrated to America since childhood; therefore, he has been raised in America and lived the whole of his life as an American regardless to his Indian roots and religion. This can be manifested when Maya tries to make Omar understands Sam saying, “He does not have too many Indian friends [...] He’s been living here since he was 4 years old [...] He’s just so American in his ways” (NY, 2009).

Conversely, Omar describes Sam’s characteristics

to the FBI’s agent Roshan commenting, “He was impressive, good at sports, spoke well, got good grades, he had just one problem, people found him arrogant” (NY, 2009). With all these merits along with the fact that he has been so skilled in drinking alcohol, this is a characteristic that distances him from being a Muslim; Sam has been a secular representing the South Asian community in Europe and America. Kim Knott (1986, 46) describes the state of South Asian immigrants who live in their host country and aware of “religious pluralism” in these countries that make their religion as “something to be remembered during large festivals and at births, marriages and deaths” thereby they separates their religion from the

culture they pursue and this is called ‘secularization.’

And thus, Sam separates himself from religion, but after his attainment, he becomes more aware of both Islam as one of the religions in America that is Other to Christianity and of the extremist believers and the violated practices that those believers follow. For Vertovec (1999, 11), “the believer may now be in a position of having to rationalize and justify elements of and practice to members of other faiths.” This is clearly defined when Sam joins the terrorists cell in New York City after his decision to revenge for his dignity up on his humiliation by the FBI during his imprisonment for months under terrorism suspicion. Sam tells Omar that the extremists “had another

motive, but they were giving me a chance to fight for my dignity, and that’s what I was looking for, that’s all I needed” (NY, 2009).

As a result, Sam’s awareness and confrontation with his religious diasporic consciousness leads to the loss of his national identity, which is all the time the American identity because for him America is his homeland and not a host land. He with no doubt considers America his first nation to the extent that he has been so keen to participate in the annual bizarre race held by the college’s students in order to raise the American flag at twelve o’clock and he’s done it. Even Maya notices that Sam “would have been totally American,” and according to one of the IMDB’s reviewers,

Dsangar (2009), shows Sam while giving “away a deep insecurity and desire to fit in.”

As a consequent, during the period between his detention and decision to revenge, Sam's diasporic consciousness is accelerated when he is badly treated and rejected in different jobs because of the suspicion record in his file. For Dsangar (2009), such acts have been

paranoid reactions from the Americans towards Islam and Muslims “blaming their culture and religious beliefs for that tragic event.” On Sam’s side, Imran Zunzanif (2009) argues that he experiences a sense of “loss of confidence & retaliation that develops due to gross mistreatment.” In this relation, Sam tells Omar,

Maya tried her
best, but something has died beside
me [...] I couldn't remember anything [...] I couldn't concentrate on anything [...] I would tremble while speaking [...] I was good for nothing [...] I didn't know what to do. (*NY*, 2009)

Yet, this feeling of nothingness and humiliation along with his awareness of being Other and different because of his religion becomes the conflict that makes Sam decide to throw away his American identity and be

Sameer, and not Sam. In other words, Dawodinator (2010), Sam is transforming from a great believer for America to a hater and even enemy. Eventually, this transformation reveals another self-awareness

not just on the religious basis but the cultural basis as well because defines people on the basis of their race, colour and name, which is Vertovec's (1999, 13) called 'cultural consciousness.' In the scene, cultural consciousness is shown through one of the Indian Muslims, Zilgai who is mistakenly suspected of terrorism when the police officers follow his car, he tells Maya, "No Maya this is neither normal, nor routine. This is happening because my skin colour is different, my face is different and my name is different" (NY, 2009).

Hence, both Sam and Zilgai represent the Indian diasporic Muslims community in America and by attaining them; they realize their situation in America after 9/11 as Others

because of both religious plurality in America and on cultural difference criteria too. Nonetheless, Sam's loss of his American identity is by his choice, but his decision to give up it does not prevent him to pretend his American (ity) in front of Maya and his son. He says, "I will keep Maya and my child away from this new world of mine. I became the Sam from college for Maya because Sameer had found his purpose" (NY, 2009). In reality, Sam continues living without real identity since he becomes neither American, nor Indian and Muslim and not a terrorist as well as long as he has just wanted to revenge from the FBI when he confirms, "My fight with the FBI" (NY, 2009).

Lastly, Sam's diasporic religious consciousness and

self-awareness of his cultural difference and Otherity that have caused in the loss of his national identities are terminated in the scene above the FBI building. In the scene, Sam surrenders and slips away the remote that controls the bombs before the FBI officers shoot him with their guns to regain his American national identity. With his death, Sam's American identity continues through his son who keeps living in America as a champion, beloved child among the Americans. For this, Rohsan tells Omar, "A Muslim boy whose father was a terrorist is playing in an American team and they're hailing him as a hero [...] This is a new generation Omar" (NY, 2009). And so, Sam's American (ity) is instilled forever in his son

through both his name, Daniel and his outlook, which is deliberately shaped to be American, "It's weird to have white kid from Indian parents"(NY, 2009), refereeing to the American culture that obviously determines the American national identity for both Sam, Maya and their son.

Conclusion

This paper has defined the meanings of the term 'Diaspora,' but analyzed thoroughly the conception of Vertovec (1999, 8-18) that identifies 'Diaspora' as a type 'Consciousness'. Yet, such identification has been comparatively carried out in both Marei's *Asal Eswed* and Khan's *New York* movies through their protagonists Masry and Sam to question both the suitability of Vertovec's

conception about 'Diaspora and their national identity (ies). In this relation, both Masry and Sam migrate from their homelands to America because of economic reasons. Also, both of them encounter their 'Diasporic Consciousness' that causes in either deconstructing or maintaining their national identity (ies). While Masry's 'diasporic consciousness' has been instilled since childhood, Sam's has been uncovered to him by chance after 11\9.

For Masry, his 'diasporic consciousness' is there all the time and it has a paradoxical nature in the sense that it confronts him with fractured memories and nostalgia about his home land Egypt while living in his host land, America. This leads him travel and settle in Egypt by using his Egyptian

passport leaving the American behind. And thus, Masry's consciousness makes him give up his American national identity to maintain his Egyptian one. Nevertheless, such paradox is reproduced again in Egypt and Masry becomes diasporic in his home country entrapping between his nostalgic quest that brought him to Egypt and the bad political and social situations that define Egyptians as second class citizens and different in their own country. That's why Stuart Hall (1990, 235) contends that "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference".

As a consequent, Masry's diasporic consciousness in Egypt makes him formalize a

kind of resistance through throwing his Egyptian passport and using his American one to be lost in crowded demonstration leading him to get trapped in an identity crisis again. The direct effect of Masry's diasporic consciousness projects him as nationless or without national identity. It is just with Masry's recognition of his multi-locality; he has been able to determine his national identities represented by the Egyptian and American. And so, Masry is not able to live in one identity without the other, but in the final scene in the aeroplane, Masry has to use his American national identity to maintain the Egyptian one.

By comparison, like Masry, Sam does confront his 'diasporic consciousness,' but

by chance because it has been governed by specific events. In other words, in normal circumstances Sam lives as an American and secular with no relation to his origin as Indian or Muslim, because for him America is his home. Sam's 'Diasporic Consciousness,' however is revealed through his situation as Muslim emigrant when he has encountered with difference after the event of 11/9 and detained by the FBI as a suspect terrorist. From this, Sam confronts his diasporic religious consciousness that makes him aware of the religious plurality in America and his cultural consciousness that is determined through using his real name Sameer instead of Sam. Hence, Sam lost his Indian national identity with his

emigration to America to admit his American national identity.

Nonetheless, Sam regards America his first nation and by confronting his religious and cultural diasporic consciousness, he lives in a diasporic conflict that made him lose his American identity to be ended up nationless. That's why, Hall (1996, 612) finds that "national identities are not things we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to representation". At the end, it is only with the death of Sam, the diasporic conflicts have been resolved to finally regain his American national identity through his son. Consequently, the Muslim Diasporas grow to live in America as long as they are not terrorists on one hand and Sam's American (ity) is

culturally formalized by his son's name and outlook that is white child and his name is Daniel, which is of course an American name.

To conclude, the importance of this paper contributes in Diaspora studies since it questions the suitability of the diasporic consciousness to diasporas, their response to it along with its effect to maintain or deconstruct their national identity (ies). Whereas Masry maintains two identities, the Egyptian and the American after losing the two, Sam maintains the American one through his child, Daniel. Yet, the exploration of the suitability of such 'Diasporic Consciousness,' implies that diasporas may or may not confront their 'consciousness.' So, they can live, feel and

interact according to their experiences and circumstances they go through. In this regard, further studies needed to record the experiences of diasporas to find out about their share points and differences in regard to their national identity (ies) and the symptoms of the diasporic consciousness.

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