

**“FROM HOMELAND TO HOPELAND”: A
DIASPORIC MARXIST PERSPECTIVE ON
KHALED HOSSEINI’S *THE KITE RUNNER* AND
*AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED***

By

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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES
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Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* and *And The Mountains Echoed***

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: “From Homeland to Hopeland”: A Diasporic Marxist Perspective on Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* and *And The Mountains Echoed*

This research examines Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* and *And The Mountains Echoed* by employing Georg Lukacs’ concept of “transcendental homelessness.” Moreover, I have employed Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of “ambivalence” as a minor lens to trace the association of immigrants with their host nations as represented in the selected novels. Most of the characters in the selected texts have to go through hardships and are forced to leave their homes and hearths. They migrate to the countries where they find solace and can find better prospects of life. While searching for a better life, these characters become indifferent to their homeland and forget the blood relations and affiliations that were associated with it. The western metropolitan cities have become dream destinations of most of the people in the global south who look towards the “Center” for fulfillment of their needs. This research discusses the socio-economic issues related to the migrants. It also talks about the contemporary diaspora writers and the trend in their inclinations towards western lands. Since this research is qualitative in nature, I have taken textual analysis as a tool to read my primary texts.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. *TKR* for *The Kite Runner*
2. *AME* for *And The Mountains
Echoed*

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my work to my mother whose prayers have brought this day that I celebrate and whose love and concern had been my energy all along, and my father who had been my support in all the highs and lows of life.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this study, I have chosen Khaled Hosseini's novels *The Kite Runner* (2003) and *And The Mountains Echoed*¹ (2013) to analyze the migration of characters from homeland to the hopeland. When life in Afghanistan poses a challenge for the characters in the novels, they trade off their homeland for Western economic and social benefits. I address the movement of these characters through the concept of "Transcendental Homelessness" given by Georg Lukacs who is a Marxist philosopher and a critic. He is an aesthetician and literary historian. He is acknowledged as one of the pioneers of Western Marxism. He worked on Marxist theory and contributed in the development of Marx's theory of "class consciousness." For my title, I have adapted "From Homeland to Hopeland" from Cyril I. Obi's essay "From Homeland to Hopeland? Economic Globalization and Ogoni Migration in the 1990s" in Suman Gupta and Tope Omoniyi's *The Cultures of Economic Migration: International Perspectives* (2007). It vindicates characters' mobility from Afghanistan to western destinations in order to better their lives in terms of social security and financial stability.

The community of Afghan migrants is divided into various strata on the basis of age and wealth. In terms of age, one generation is ambivalent towards its host while the other assimilates into the western world as if it had been an integral part of it. In addition to this, the role of the rich in migration towards the hopeland is significant. Khaled Hosseini, in portraying this scenario, takes a pro-west stance and has proved himself to be a part of, what Anthony Appiah calls, "Comprador Intelligentsia" (Appiah 348), a western-style, western-minded writers whose works

provide a promise of a hopeland for the struggling Afghan communities in migration from their homelands to the west.

Khaled Hosseini's novels contain various instances of intra- as well as inter-state migrations. The characters move within the land and away from it to sustain life and to ensure the survival of self as well as the race. The post-migration scenario is depicted in a detailed fashion where the characters are seen either assimilating or in ambivalence with the host lands. Since the novel narrates the story of the characters that are on the move and live in a space between multiple nationalities, the overall impact is referred to as diasporic in nature.

The word "diaspora" in the title does not refer to the regular discourse of identity crisis; it is concerned with the relationship that the migrant communities develop with the host lands. "Marxist" in the title coincides with my objective of tracing the role of class difference in migration. This research analyzes the affiliation of rich and poor with home or hopelands. The characters in the novels have this tendency to be at home anywhere in the world. These characters adapt themselves to the conditions that are suitable for their existence regardless of any distinction between a home or a host. When at home, they enjoy luxury and comfort and, with the crisis in the country, when the circumstances become unfavorable for survival and all the comforts disappear, they migrate to the Euro-American lands. Apparently it is a struggle for survival but actually, it is Hosseini's notion that communities of the migrants can have stability only in the West. The first part of the argument deals with characters' tendency to be at home. The nostalgic affiliations of these characters with the native land cannot be denied altogether but there exists an assimilationist stance on their part, especially the younger generation. The relationship of the migrants with their host nation is regarded as an ambivalent one. The generations that migrate are

torn between the nostalgia for their home and the need of a better place for their survival. The older generation is relatively more inclined towards nostalgic sensations for the homeland while the second or younger generation is more assimilating towards the host culture.

The second part of the argument claims Hosseini to be one of the “Comprador Intelligentsia” (Appiah 348) which, according to Anthony Appiah, is a group of western-style writers, mediating the trade of cultural commodities between the third-world countries and the west. The texts under study show an association of characters with western countries. This is how Hosseini advocates the hopeland ideology by showing the generations migrating and then assimilating with Euro-American world. The challenges in the form of disasters and hardships in the homeland, is only one of the reasons for the characters to migrate. The act of migrating involves a movement from difficulties towards prosperity. The difficulties do not mean the Afghan crisis only but the social and economic challenges being posed to the common masses in the form of poverty, racial discrimination and a euro-philic biasness of the elite.

Khaled Hosseini, in trying to advocate the necessity and huge impact of migration towards hopelands, has completely overlooked the innate bond of a native to his land. He has focused the need of an individual in a practical way and in doing so, has completely eliminated the emotional side of his characters. The characters are seen challenging all the filial and familial bonds. The proclamation of Hosseini that only Euro-American world is the promising land that can fulfill the needs and necessities of every individual, is what makes him a part of comprador intelligentsia.

The investigation of George Lukacs idea of “Transcendental Homelessness” has been quite helpful in the critical study of Hosseini’s novels. According to this

idea, the soul or an individual has a tendency to be at home anywhere in the world. The concept synchronizes with the part of argument that deals with the movement of characters from one land to another. Further description of Lukacs idea is given in upcoming chapters.

In his *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha talks about “ambivalence” which is defined as a “complex mix of attraction and repulsion” (Ashcroft 10) on part of the characters for their hostland(s). The migrants, especially those mentioned in the primary texts, are linked to their host states and in order to define their relationship with the host countries, I have adapted the concept of ambivalence. The assimilationist tendencies of younger generation of characters in Hosseini’s novels provide contrast to the cultural nostalgia of older characters, thus creating space for their ambivalence.

In addition to the ideas of transcendental homelessness and ambivalence for the analysis of these novels, I have also employed Anthony Appiah’s concept of “Comprador Intelligentsia” to judge the role of the writer in displaying Afghan culture and the Euro-American world. In his article, “Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?” Appiah states that, “Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a *comprador* intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery” (Appiah 348). The reason for adaptation of these concepts is to illustrate the phenomena of migration and settlements of the characters from one home to another as a quest for home that goes parallel to the relationship with their surroundings. The writer’s inclination in this regard may not be neglected.

My research is qualitative because it uses an exploratory and interpretive research designs. Since qualitative research is not generaliseable, I have analyzed my primary texts with a view to exploring the discursive possibilities embedded in them. My research method is Textual Analysis. I have drawn on Catherine Belsey's essay on Textual Analysis in Gabriel Griffin's book *Research Methods in English Studies* (2005). Belsey is of the view that "... textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism, where cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts, or seeks to understand the inscription of culture in its artefacts" (Belsey 157). Belsey's notion that "Research is expected to make a contribution to knowledge, it uncovers something new" (Belsey 160), gives me a space to contribute to the existing knowledge of the diaspora. With this method, I have been able to analyze my primary text through divergent perspectives.

Before migration, the characters need a place for shelter, a place to earn more money and a place to exercise a luxurious lifestyle. After moving to America and European states, some of the characters get dissolved in host culture while some of them remain suspended. The tendency to get assimilated is presumably the innate ability that is further strengthened by the lack of a definite home in early childhood. Adherence to a developed and prosperous culture serves the purpose for the masses of any migrating community. The younger generation of Afghan characters, in the novels under study, could not attain a definite sense of a mother-culture owing to the Afghan crisis. After migration, these characters got a land that not only gave them shelter but also provided them with a space to discover and then improve their lives. Khaled Hosseini specified and particularized the western lands for this specific task of being the hopelands for the migrants. He advocates this ideology that the only

possible home for existence, is the home away from motherland, a home that is far more promising than the home that these migrants leave behind them. Such a home, according to Hosseini, may only be Europe or America.

In the novel *The Kite Runner*, a boy named Amir is in his native land. He is then challenged emotionally, by his illegitimate stepbrother, Hasan. He gets restless due to the daily routine of his parents. When Hasan is abused sexually by the boys in the neighborhood, situation gets worse for Amir. He considers himself responsible for the sufferings of Hasan. The feelings of restlessness and guilt do not evade until he has moved from Afghanistan to America. Once in a new home, he gets a new life and has time to stabilize himself. It is only because of American soil that he roots out the evil in him and decides to set things right. He brings Hasan's son to America.

When we look at this in terms of ambivalence, Amir's father has trouble adjusting himself to the foreign culture. This lack of cultural synchronization is however limited to the first generation of the migrants only because Amir readily adheres to the foreign environment. In addition to Amir, the migration of Hasan's son proclaims the fact that the second generation of migrants is assimilating to the host culture. Hence the two modes of relationship of the migrants with their host nation go parallel to each other and the overall impact is ambivalent rather than assimilative or abrogative.

In the novel, *And the Mountains Echoed*, there is the story of a Div in the beginning. An old farmer has many children. He cannot look after them owing to the lack of resources. One day a Div attacks the village and takes away some children. He warns the farmer that next time, when the Div comes he will take the youngest son of the farmer with him. This upsets the farmer as the child was dearest of all to him. Div

returns and takes away the child. The farmer is grief stricken and decides to go after Div and retrieve his son. The farmer goes to the mountains and finds a huge palace where Div resides. He meets Div and asks about his son. Div tells him that he did not eat his son but kept him alive in his palace. He takes the farmer to his son. The son is living a luxurious life. Div has provided him with a life style that farmer could not even think of. Seeing this, the farmer decides to sacrifice his wish to take his son back for the sake of child's future. The farmer then comes back to his village and decides to live without his son.

The way Hosseini has narrated the events of the novel is similar to the story of Div. Pari's father sells her to a rich family of Wahdatis, thinking that she will have a living standard that her father could never provide her with. Pari's need for a mother culture is overlooked and as a result, she has no definite culture of her own and remains transcendently homeless. The past comes to her only in fragments of what she had experienced as a child. These fragments do not allow her to assimilate completely. However, her children are brought and bred as Europeans and in this way, her association with her birth land comes to an end.

1.1 DELIMITATION

This study is delimited to *The Kite Runner* and *And the Mountains Echoed* by Khaled Hosseini. These two novels exemplify the notion that the characters possess an ability to be at home anywhere regardless of their kinship or emotional associations. The texts provide such instances that situate the need of a better place as superior to any other relationship that may exist between an individual and his surroundings. This idea motivated me to select Hosseini's novels as my primary texts.

1.2 THESIS STATEMENT

Khaled Hossieni's novels portray the tendency of characters to be at home everywhere regardless of nostalgic affiliations with their native lands. They tend to exchange their cultural affinities with better economic prospects in the west in an assimilationist mode, but not without ambivalence that characterizes their lives largely.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of the study are:

- 1- To trace how a native culture is traded off for foreign benefits.
- 2- To study the role of classes and generations in Afghanistan in developing a relationship with Western states.
- 3- To analyze the perception of the writer regarding the home or host societies.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1- Why and how is the indigenous culture/home traded off for western economic security by the characters in the selected texts?
- 2- How are the class and age factors in Afghanistan, as depicted in the text, responsible for the development of characters' relationship with Euro-American destinations?
- 3- How does the writer in the selected texts negotiate the space between homes and host societies?

1.5 RESEARCH PLAN

I have organized this research work in six chapters. Chapter One introduces the research work. In this chapter I have outlined the parameters of my research. It highlights my intentions and objectives that I have to meet through this study. It contains the thesis statement and research questions. In Chapter Two, I contextualize my research and justify its motive through Literature Review. This chapter gives a glimpse of other works that have been done before this research. Through this chapter I have tried to correlate my study with the works that were done before me. In this chapter, I have related the previous works to my study. Chapter Three is about the theoretical framework and methodology that I have adopted to conduct this research.

In Chapter Four, I have studied TKR using Lukacs' theoretical lens. I have conducted a detailed study and carefully followed the framework to find out the answers to my research questions. Khaled Hosseini has shown his characters as migrants towards prosperity. In doing so, he advocates the notion of a shift from one home to another. I have explained the stance of the writer and characters' relationship with the host country in my analysis. Chapter Five contains a detailed analysis of AME. I have analyzed the text through the theoretical lens. Chapter Six concludes my study. I have summed up the entire discussion and presented my findings. I have reviewed my argument and discussed the importance of my work. I have answered my research questions in this chapter. I have also given suggestions for further study in the area relevant to my idea.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Owing to the current circumstances in the world, migration and quest for a better mode of life constitute a controversial issue, especially for the Global South whose population is influenced by their past. This study is the critical analysis of the process of migration. It highlights the factors that are responsible for the movement between homes. The research tries to explore a link between the migrants and their host countries through the concept of “Transcendental Homelessness” by Khaled Hosseini. The writer is in the favor of migration from native Afghan culture to the Euro-American world.

This study discusses the role of diaspora writers in depiction of homeland. I have analyzed Hosseini’s stance through the idea of “Comprador Intelligentsia” by Anthony Appiah. The link is actually a platform where the diaspora and their hosts can stand at the same level regardless of the differences that might exist between them. This work analyzes and then gives an account of the state of expatriates in the foreign countries like America. It vocalizes the characters’ necessity of a home. It highlights the instinct of a man to adapt better modes of life in order to survive. It may prove a useful critical study of the diaspora writers, especially the “comprador intelligentsia,” working as the mediators between the East and West. It highlights the inclination of the diaspora towards the global capitalism rather than the indigenous culture. This research is significant for the up-coming researchers whose area of interest coincides with my study. The following chapter gives the significance of the research by indicating the contrasts in various works which have been reviewed in detail.

ENDNOTES:CHAPTER-ONE

¹ Henceforth I will use *TKR* and *AME* as abbreviations of *The Kite Runner* and *And the Mountains Echoed* for parenthetical citations across my dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of literature review is to contextualize and situate one's research project within the contemporary scholarship. Many texts have been produced in such a way that their themes correlate with the ideas that have been portrayed in these novels of Khaled Hossieni. Many critics and researchers have worked upon these ideas and have come up with their own interpretations. This research work focuses the critical analysis of Khaled Hosseini's works. The writer advocates the idea of migration and proposes to move from homeland to the Euro-American worlds. The characters in his novels discard their native culture and assimilate to a new lifestyle. Hosseini assumes the role of a moderator of the cultural trade and may be a part of Comprador Intelligentsia.

In order to trace the required objectives, I have adopted the idea of "transcendental homelessness" given by Lukacs. Along with this idea, I have used Appiah's notion of "Comprador Intelligentsia." Keeping in view, the theoretical framework, I have studied the works that share my idea. This chapter deals with the review of the literary works and their link with this research. Through this literature review, I have been able to tackle with the issues pertaining to my idea, especially those that had been left untapped by the previous researchers. The order of the reviews given is thematic. Each paragraph comprises of a single work explained and linked with my study. In the beginning, I have reviewed those works that stress upon the importance, flexibility and applicability of Lukacs' concepts. Since the writer of

the selected novels is an Afghan and the novels depict the story of Afghan people, the focus shifts to Afghan context and those works have been analyzed that discuss the hardships and migrations in Afghanistan. The talk then moves to diaspora writers and finally it addresses various adaptations of the idea of ambivalence.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Richard Wolff and Stephen Cullenberg, in their work “Marxism and Post-Marxism” (1986), assert that Marx and Marxism have been set aside by historical variations and theoretical development. It is further stated that Post-Marxism deviates from the main course of Marxism and Marxist themes and traditions are challenged. The texts that are Post-Marxist, do not advocate Marxism. They negate and challenge the Marxist set of beliefs. Georg Lukacs is Post-Marxist critic. His idea of “Transcendental Homelessness”, when viewed through the perspective of Afghan migration (my area of study), may add a new chapter to the study of Marxism.

Talking about the changes in Marxism, the transformation occurred in the functions of the theory of Marxism in 1920. Western Marxism is one of the most important research programs among the theoretical traditions. The first socialist revolution had to occur in developed West rather than Russia. This idea founded the experience of Western Marxism. Many Western Marxists like Georg Lukacs contributed in experimenting the introduction and incorporation of non-Marxist traditions into the framework of social theory. Habermas claims that the theorists like Lukacs, Ernst Bloch and Antonio Gramsci, brought Marxism from political economy to Philosophy. This highlights the importance of Lukacs’ ideology and strengthens the adaptation of Lukacs’ idea for this study.

Vera Maslow in “Georg Lukacs and the Unconscious” (1964) considers Lukacs as a strong advocate of reason. For Maslow, Lukacs is the representative of the internal development of images. Lukacs does not support Kafka because his works are away from reason and anxiety overcomes the reality while the true reality is suspended. Lukacs is committed to realism and his approach is mainly centered upon the comprehension of life. Therefore, the idea of Lukacs may be applied to realist scenarios as addressed in my study. Terry Eagleton considers the ideas of Lukacs to be synonymous to those of D. H. Lawrence. Ernst Bloch once commented about Lukacs that there is none like Lukacs with whom he could have an intellectual affinity and that the past philosophers have receded to a minor level. Bloch took some of the ideas of Lukacs into his own philosophical system. For Bloch, Lukacs had been an encouraging debater, partner and a critic with marvelous capabilities. Bloch not only admired but also criticized Lukacs in matters like language, tradition, Hegel and the early works of Lukacs. This highlights the significance of Lukacs and his ideas which enable me to take it as a major theoretical perspective.

Georg Lukacs wrote *The Theory of the Novel* (1915) the year he died in Budapest. This book was written in Heidelberg as a theoretical introduction to Dostoevsky’s novels. Lukacs claimed that this book turned him from “Plato to Hegel”. *The Theory of the Novel* begins with description of the “transcendental homelessness” of the modern man. Lukacs describes the society critically and rejects the alienation while he looks for a new map, a new homeland. According to Lukacs “The novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, yet which still thinks in terms of totality” (Lukacs 56). This review signifies the importance of Lukacs’ ideas and gives a hint towards its necessity and application.

Cascardi in his “Totality and the Novel” (1992), claims that transcendental homelessness is a characteristic of a subject in the modern world. It is a world in which man is “unsheltered” and cannot enjoy the luxuries of gods. He does not even have access to the natural context of desire. He is then forced to derive meaning from the world itself. For Lukacs, the first great novel existed in the beginning when Christian God began to forsake the world. Man got isolated and could derive meaning from his own soul. The soul was homeless, so it became a home in itself. This concept of transcendental homelessness is adopted in modern novels in such a way that the novels are labeled as philosophical paradigms that lack any roots and yearn for lost totality, for the world that is vast and just like home. This approach of Cascardi helps me to situate my paradigm in terms of migration and movement. I have focused the practical aspects of it rather than the philosophical.

Mariana Torgovnick in her book *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (1991), maintains that man who suffers from exile should construct a world elsewhere that may ensure the wholeness, freedom and pleasure. She calls transcendental homelessness, as a state of Western mind and claims that “going-away” means “going-home.” Torgovnick has utilized the framework that constructs my research. Her work shows the impact of migration on a man through the lens of transcendental homelessness. She further talks about Kracauer who wrote a programmatic essay in 1922 “Die Wartenden” (Those Who Wait). In this essay he discusses the processes of history that arise in modernity as enhanced withdrawal from reality. The world, according to him, is getting fragmented into an enigmatic multiplicity of phenomena. It alienates human life and his personal relationships with his surroundings. The subject is lost into a new dimension of space and time that is cold and empty. Kracauer considers this dimension as “transcendental homelessness.”

He further talks about the subjects living in big cities who are in a state of exile and disintegration from the world in which they live in. This work illustrates the varied applications of Lukacs' idea. It adds to the importance of the concept that I have chosen for my study.

Jacques Derrida, as mentioned in David H. Miles' "Portrait of the Marxist as a Young Hegelian: Lukacs Theory of the Novel" (1979), does not advocate the concept of wholeness or metaphysical nostalgia for some lost unity. He claims that this ideal form of consciousness is only fiction. Schopenhauer, in this article, asserts that greater works to be called novels are those which are rich in inner depiction rather than the outer paradigms of life. The contrast between the approaches of these eminent philosophers enables me to broaden my concepts. I can think about contributing towards enrichment of the idea by looking at the limitations and drawbacks of this ideology.

Lukacs seeks help from Rousseauism when he maintains that the artistic consciousness is the longing for a thing that is most opposite to "self." He discriminates the ancient society from the modern society in terms that the modern society unlike ancient society is unbound and highly enigmatic. This is because the mind and soul of the protagonist in a novel expands in such a way that he travels into the realms of insight and inward journey towards aesthetic imagination and inward contemplation. It means transcendental homelessness is not limited to the physical movement of a character. It is more about a journey within self. Lukacs like Hegel does not enjoy it but laments it because it was Hegel's belief that the inner and self-conscious journey of the characters shall be absorbed into philosophy rather than literature. I assume that the study of Lukacs' concept through this perspective may be a healthy experiment. Theodor Adorno, the arch-rival of Lukacs and one of the

eminent Marxists of the time in Germany, considers the work of Lukacs to be a landmark in philosophical aesthetics.

Bruce Robbins, in his work “Comparative Cosmopolitanism”, claims that “Absolute homelessness is indeed a myth...” (Robbins 173). He further stresses a certain belonging[ness] that is associated to the act of homelessness as, “... everyone belongs somewhere, that there is no alternative to belonging” (Robbins 173). However, Robbins himself negates his proposal when he defines cosmopolitanism and states that “Cosmopolitanism would seem to mimic capital in seizing for itself the privilege (to paraphrase Wall Street) of “knowing no boundaries”” (Robbins 171). Robbins does not highlight here that “belonging” to a nation or a place will limit the cosmopolitanism because if a person belongs somewhere, his belonging will bind him to that territory and no matter where he goes, the label of that territory will not let him be boundless. This is where cosmopolitanism counters the homelessness. I have discussed Robbins’ idea in order to clear the perception of homelessness in my theoretical lens.

Samir Dayal is of the view in his article, “Diaspora and Double Consciousness” that “not all migrants are exilic or nomadic; some are refugees, some merely follow the money” (Dayal 49-50). There are certain types of migrants that have been addressed in the line given above. These are exiles, nomads, refugees and those who migrate for money. It must not be overlooked that the characters in my primary texts for this study possess an affiliation for a stable life and hence may be associated to the third and fourth type mentioned above. In this way, we can add to the meaning of homelessness and can study the text through this perspective.

Tanja Stampfl's essay "The Elusiveness of Cultural Identity in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*" appeared in a book titled *Imagined Identities: Identity formation in the Age of Globalization* (2014) by Gonul Pultar and Nur Yalman. In this essay, the writer claims Hosseini's novel as "a national allegory" (Yalman 34) as Amir, the protagonist of the novel, is in pursuit of the "Afghan" part of his personality. Stampfl also asserts that "Hosseini is mediating an image of Afghanistan to his audience..." (Yalman 36) which may lead us to conclude that he is focusing the Afghan image and identity. It may be noted here that this talk of identity is related to the act of finding one's roots, my idea refers to the uprooting of the masses from homeland. Furthermore, my work is not the regular talk of identity crisis. Therefore, I will not be addressing the aspects that Stampfl has mentioned.

David H. Miles in his article, "Portrait of the Marxist as a Young Hegelian: Lukacs Theory of the Novel" (1979), claims that Lukacs' work had been praised more than read. Because of his philosophy, his style gets more Teutonic and abstract. Paul de Man, in this work, claims that the language is Pre-Hegelian and Post-Nietzschean with a tendency for abstract systems. He criticizes Lukacs for his abstractness. For de Man, Lukacs can only be studied as a part of the heritage of romantic and ideal thought in the broader canvas of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My study may prove the practicality of the application of Lukacs' idea.

The "homelessness" takes us to the situation of Afghan community. Larry Goodson in his "Fragmentation of Culture in Afghanistan" (1998), talks about the Afghan history. He asserts that Afghanistan owing to her important geostrategic position had been an important buffer zone between two rival imperial powers in nineteenth century. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan were affected by British colonial regime but it was Afghanistan that suffered more devastation as it had been a buffer

zone between Indian, British and Russian Empire as Pakistan had become part of British Empire. When it comes to common people, Afghanistan was never a nation. It had a collection of disparate groups that had been forced to cope together owing to the geopolitics. Most of the Afghan population migrated to seek shelter in other countries and today we catch a glimpse of such communities through diaspora writers like Khaled Hosseini. This contextualizes the scenario of migration that has been addressed in my study.

James Clifford wrote “Diaspora” (1994) in which he defines diaspora as “transnational cultures” (Clifford 303). A longer distance and exile is usually presupposed by the diaspora which is a community that connects dispersed population. Roger Rouse is of the view that different places become a single community through a consistent circulation of people, money, goods and information. In assimilationist national ideologies, the immigrants may experience nostalgia or loss but actually they are on their way to a new home. The best example is of United States of America as portrayed by Hosseini in his novels. My study is based on similar argument and I have explored it through the lens of Lukacs.

Rachel Blumenthal in “LOOKING FOR HOME IN THE ISLAMIC DIASPORA OF AYAAN HIRSI ALI, AZAR NAFISI AND KHALED HOSSEINI” talks about Hosseini’s “larger search for an ideological homeland” (Blumenthal 257). The author is of the view that:

... two canons of literature working ... to construct a narrative ... cannot so easily locate an ideological homeland in either Islamic Afghanistan or secular America... we must interpret these dual strands of narrative as a mark of

Hosseini's hesitancy to privilege one canon over another, one set of cultural values over another, one ideological homeland over another. (Blumenthal 258)

Blumenthal's assertion runs counter to my argument. I have discussed it here to pinpoint the difference of opinion which I hold with the writer. My study is based on Hosseini's biasedness towards one culture rather than his act of keeping the cultures on the same level.

Rab Nawaz Khan in his desertation for Ph.D *Identity and Power: A Study of Voices in Discourses in Khaled Hosseini's Novels* (2015) talks about the identity of Pashtun and Hazara communities in Afghanistan. He employs critical discourse analysis to analyze the identity crisis. He focuses the language of the selected works and pays attention to socio-political and historical scenerio. My research work may not be synchronizing with this work as my intention is to trace the inclination of the writer towards migrations of the characters away from home.

Homi Bhabha, in his "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" (1984), describes culture as an entity that is not congruent with national borders. They do not assimilate but constitute a space for resistance and struggle. This idea provides a context for the concept of ambivalence that has been adopted as a minor lens in my theoretical framework. He further asserts that nativists strive hard to create a reformed and distinct "other" as a symbol of difference that may almost be the same but not entirely. He then talks about the colonizer's gaze and maintains that it is not often the colonizer who does the surveillance but it may also happen at times that the observer becomes the observed. My study coincides with this notion as a diaspora writer like Hosseini portrays a picture of the colonizers as life-savers. George Lipsitz argues that diaspora writers portray a memory which is mostly a

mixture of history and myth that rejects the western dominating and biased thinking and advocates a potential combination for a change. Lipsitz overlooks the role of Comprador Intelligentsia who do not reject the western domination but pave a way for their people to join hands with the west. Just like Khaled Hosseini whose works, I have chosen for this study.

Many texts give a vast and detailed display of the lives of diaspora and the migrants that have to travel round the world in search of a place that they may call “home”. Many a times the characters come across various trials and tribulations and they have to wade through a sea of hardships. However, the most frightening aspect of such characters is that their ultimate desire or struggle to gain a totality is coupled with a sudden indifference between them that arises owing to their fight for a better life. Anita Desai, in her *Journey To Ithaca* (1995), narrates the story of a character who is on the move in search of inner peace and in other words a “home” for the soul. Mohsin Hamid in his novels also depicts this struggle for home but unlike Hosseini’s characters, Hamid’s plot is more concerned with the retention of identities. His works like *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) manifests such ideology. The characters are seen struggling to retain their identity. These texts require a reading with similar theoretical framework.

2.3 CONCLUSION

It may be concluded in this way that the concept of Transcendental Homelessness has been addressed many times in various works but it has not been touched upon with the perspective of migration especially of the communities where they have to discard a culture for wealth. It has been found out after careful readings and reviews that Transcendental Homelessness is a multi-dimensional term. It is more applicable to

practical aspects of life rather than philosophy. It addresses the issue of movement from one land to the other. It is concluded through this study that there are many factors that are responsible for Afghan migration. This gives me space to trace writer's intention as he motivates the native readers to admire the thought of migration. The tradition of "Ambivalence" as introduced by Bhabha, calls for a more pronounced application in terms of migrators and their relationship with the host countries. I have explained the theoretical framework and research methodology for this study in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to carry out this research, I have used a theoretical framework comprising three main theoretical concepts that overlap in terms of their importance. The first of these three concepts is related to the movement of individuals, in the selected texts, from their homes to the lands of their hopes. This movement may be because of the crisis that they faced in their country or the luxury that they dream of achieving in foreign countries. Lukacs' idea of "Transcendental Homelessness" addresses the movement of characters from one land to the other. Second concept facilitates me to discuss relationships of characters with home and host lands. There are some characters in Hosseini's novels that get assimilated into the host culture while others have problems adjusting with the foreign customs. This relationship assumes a vital importance and thus, has been discussed in detail in the upcoming chapters. The third idea is chosen to analyze the overall impact of the novels under study. It brings forth the themes and the agenda that Hosseini tries to incorporate into his works. I have detailed my theoretical frame of study under following headings:

3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The migrations of the characters whether they are within the state or without, have been explained through the concept of "Transcendental Homelessness" by Georg Lukacs. This idea gives me leverage to analyze the movements of individuals from

one land to the other and also the reasons behind these movements. This idea can be stretched to an extent where it encompasses the root of the migrations along with a detailed view of the circumstances that an individual or the soul has to go through.

In his book *The Theory of the Novel*, the writer gives us an image of the world as a single unit that can be called a home. “The world is wide and yet it is like a home...” (Lukacs 11). He actually tries to give this notion that there is no discrimination between a native or foreign land. Home is a home whether it is near or far away. He stresses the fact that this world, as a complete unit, is just like a home. He further adds to this idea by saying that “It is a homogenous world, and even the separation between man and world, between ‘I’ and ‘You’, cannot disturb its homogeneity” (Lukacs 13). This shows us that the whole world is free from any discrimination between host or guest, between I and You and the only thing that matters is a home.

The only distinction that may occur is between the immediate home and the home that a character dreams about. It is entirely at the disposal of a character to choose between homes without any nostalgic feelings. “When the structures made by man for man are really adequate to man, they are his necessary and native home; and he does not know the nostalgia that posits and experiences nature as the object of its own seeking and finding” (Lukacs 28). In these lines Lukacs ascertains that the home is a place that is suitable for luxury and peace of any individual. It is not dependent upon the geography or any other relevant aspect. The soul, the base and the center of any home is the individual himself. The creation of home depends entirely on man, whenever he wants, wherever he wants, without any nostalgic perceptions.

The writer further stresses that a character by becoming the creator of his own home becomes unaware of any emotional attachment with his native or prior home. In other words, the character does not suffer from nostalgia because he carries the home within him. Wherever he goes, his home goes with him. Another significant aspect is the ability or tendency of any individual to enhance his experience. This experience is enriched either by the character's interaction with nature or by his movement from one place to the other. It can be assumed further that the more an individual moves, from place to place, the more he enriches his experience as he takes his home with him.

The movement of an individual from one land to the other is beneficial for the soul as it enhances the tendency of the character to get adhered to any part of the world. This movement for any soul is like an adventure or a journey through which the soul achieves comfort and inner peace. This also increases the experience of the individual. The home inside an individual is beautified when he is on the move. The writer advocates this point in a manner such as, "The soul goes out to seek adventure; it lives through adventures..." (Lukacs 11).

By embarking upon a journey into the world beyond his own, an individual wanders into an abyss of estrangement and familiarity. He interacts with his surroundings and adapts to a change outside his self. This wandering goes on until the soul finds a definite place. "... every lost wanderer finds the home that has awaited him since all eternity..." (Lukacs 25). This highlights a conception that the journey that an individual has to make is sometimes predetermined or predestined and at other times, it is just a surprising outcome of certain aimless wanderings of a character. The predetermined destinies do not need adventurous wanderings for the characters to achieve them. However, the home that is left to chance, is achieved through

wearisome wanderings from one place to the other with an urge and desire of the soul to reach at some point.

It also happens that an individual while wandering loses his contact with nature and gets lost into a maze of his own inside world. For such individual, the quest for home becomes difficult as he gets entangled into the meshwork of his own unnatural ponderings. Lukacs is of the view that “Estrangement from nature... is only a projection of man’s experience of his self-made environment as a prison instead of as a parental home” (Lukacs 28). For such a character, his native home becomes a prison. As he is responsible for the creation of his own world, he is responsible for this prison as well that hinders his quest. He gets isolated from the community and this isolation punishes him and becomes a torture for him. The soul gets trapped into its native home. “... loneliness is not simply the intoxication of a soul gripped by destiny... It is also the torment of a creature condemned to solitude and devoured by a longing for community” (Lukacs 18). The character must incorporate nature into his experience in order to judge the course of his journey. In other words, the character has to evolve according to the nature around him. His inside world, where he felt comfort at one time, has to be changed with the change in the surroundings. The detachment from the native home is the first step towards the desired home. “... heroes must first break out of their prisons and, in desperate struggles or long, wearisome wanderings, attain the home of their dreams...” (Lukacs 25). With this context in mind, Lukacs goes on to say that “... the novel form, like no other, ... transcendental homelessness” (Lukacs 16).

The whole idea is summed up in this manner that the character has the innate tendency to evolve and hence should move from one place to the other so that he can get experience that is necessary for survival and hence leads to better prospects of life.

Since the home is situated within the character, it becomes transcendental as the character moves from one land to the other. There has to be some discrimination between a native home and a prison that has to be left behind as per circumstances. Though the emotional attachments of any character cannot be overlooked, they have to be eliminated somehow, only then a soul will be able to get the home of its dreams.

I have entwined transcendental homelessness with the idea of “ambivalence” by Homi K. Bhabha, This idea is taken as an act of attraction and repulsion of the individuals towards the lands of their hopes. The migrants that are mentioned in these novels, are in a direct relationship to the host countries and if one is to define this link, ambivalence may be an appropriate idea. Since, it holds a minor position in the framework, it is not explained in much detail.

In addition to the ideas of transcendental homelessness and ambivalence for the analysis of these novels, Anthony Appiah’s concept of “Comprador Intelligentsia” has been employed to judge the role of Khaled Hosseini as a mediator between the Afghan culture and the Euro-American world. In his article, “Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?”, Appiah states that “Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery” (Appiah 348). The reason for adaptation of these concepts is to illustrate the phenomena of migration and settlements of the characters from one home to another. The quest for home on part of the characters goes parallel to the relationship with their surroundings. Also the writer’s towards the west and his role in advocacy of the philosophy of global capitalism may not be neglected. I have used these lenses to read the primary texts.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research is qualitative because it uses an exploratory and interpretative research design. Since qualitative research is not generalizable, I have analyzed my primary texts with a view to exploring the discursive possibilities embedded in them. My research method is Textual Analysis. I have drawn on Catherine Belsey's essay on Textual Analysis in Gabriel Griffin's book *Research Methods in English Studies* (2005). Belsey is of the view that "... textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism, where cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts, or seeks to understand the inscription of culture in its artefacts" (Belsey 157). Belsey's notion that "Research is expected to make a contribution to knowledge, it uncovers something new" (Belsey 160) gives me a rationale to contribute to the existing knowledge of the diaspora. My research design is exploratory and interpretative. With this design, I have been able to analyze my primary texts through divergent perspectives. The theoretical framework that I have constructed coincides with the research premises.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This study is about the investigation of migrations from one land to another. The idea of Transcendental Homelessness is significant for this scholarship because it is the movement of soul from one place to the other. Transcendental homelessness as defined by Lukacs is associated to the quest of an individual for a better home. As a result of this quest, one arrives at a place, he/she may call it a home. The idea of homelessness may find a useful application among diaspora. In addition to this idea, Bhabha's idea of ambivalence demonstrates the state of attraction and repulsion

towards a host. Comprador Intelligentsia is applicable to the diaspora who propose to trade off the native affiliations for some alien benefits. The application of these ideas will be detailed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

SEEKING AMBIVALENCE THROUGH NECESSITY: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *THE KITE RUNNER*

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I have analyzed Khaled Hosseini's *TKR*. My approach is thematic, interpretative and exploratory. I have divided my analysis into various sections. Each section comprises the target objectives and questions answered one by one. The characters in the novel trade off their homeland for western economic benefits. They quit their homes and hearths to achieve foreign luxurious life style. They move "from homeland to hopeland" to attain stability. The generations of the characters, who have migrated, develop an ambivalent relationship with host culture. Furthermore, the writer has represented the act of migration as something imminent and useful. He advocates the philosophy of moving away from home and is keen on praising the western lifestyle. Thus he may be claimed as a part of 'Comprador Intelligentsia.'

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan-American novelist. He also served as a physician in California. He has written three novels namely, *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and *And The Mountains Echoed* (2013). When he was eleven years old, his parents migrated from Afghanistan to France. Later he became an American citizen. At the age of thirty-six, Hosseini visited his native land and describes his visit as that of a tourist. Hosseini has this conception and a certain feeling of guilt that he had left his home. However, this feeling of Hosseini may be

associated to his personal life only because his novels are biased towards the characters' need to move to the West for social and financial stability.

TKR is the story of a boy named Amir. He is a Pashtun boy. He, along with his friend Hasan, enjoys the time by kite fighting. Hasan is a Hazara and son of Ali, a servant of Amir's father. Amir's father is a successful merchant and is disappointed by his son. He considers his son to be weak. Amir calls him Baba. Baba loves the two boys equally. Amir finds Rahim Khan, a friend of Baba, to be more sympathetic towards him. He understands Amir, his interests and supports him when needed.

Amir is criticized by the boys of the neighborhood, especially Assef for keeping terms with a Hazara. Assef is a Pashtun boy with a taste in violence. He tries to fight Amir but Hasan protects his friend with his slingshot. Assef swears to take a revenge on Hasan. One day when Amir wins a kite-flying tournament, Hasan runs a kite for him. In an alleyway, Hasan is caught by Assef who beats him and then rapes him. Amir watches Hasan being raped but is unable to do anything about it. He considers himself to be responsible for what happens to Hasan and is scared to reveal this to Baba who would hate him if he ever knew that his son was such a coward. Amir stays away from Hasan and plots a way to distance himself from him. As a result, Hasan and Ali leave the house.

After Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, Amir and Baba escape to Pakistan and then to USA. Baba works at a gas station there and Amir completes his high school. They also sell goods at a flea market. Amir meets Soraya Taheri there and later they get married. Baba dies of cancer and Amir gets a call from Rahim Khan who informs him of Sohrab. Sohrab is Hasan's son and needs to be rescued from Afghanistan. Amir is further told that Hasan was killed by Talibans and the boy that he is to rescue

is his nephew as Hasan was his half-brother because Hasan was Baba's illegitimate son. Amir brings Sohrab with him to USA and the story ends focusing the inner peace that Amir attains. In the forthcoming pages, I have analyzed TKR under the following subheadings:

- Leaving home
- The hopeland
- An unsettling settlement
- Interpreter of maladies: Hosseini in the dock

4.2 LEAVING HOME

As per Lukacs idea, "... every lost wanderer finds the home that has awaited him since all eternity..." (Lukacs 25). It may not be, in John Neubauer's words the "spirit's general alienation" (Neubauer 533) but a movement from one place to another with an in/definite motive. In order to discover the relationship of the characters with the home or host-lands, a distinctive line is to be drawn between the two and then studied in comparison to highlight the relationships that various migrating generations develop with them. For that purpose, writer's depiction of homeland in the novel is to be analyzed. There are several aspects through which the homeland is to be studied. The foremost aspect of home that we come across, while reading the novel, is the racial discrimination. Racism is one of the social evils prevalent in the third-world countries especially the states that are less cosmopolitan and more exclusive in terms of tribal distinctions, marked by a division of population among class, ethnicity and gender. The standards for such a society run counter to the values like equality, fraternity and common well-being which may be regarded as the fundamentals for the development and progress of any society. The place which Amir

once called home is a place where people are treated according to their ethnic backgrounds. “Who did you eat, you flat-nosed Babalu?” (Hosseini 8). These are the remarks that Amir’s servant Ali had to bear because he belonged to a class of people who are considered downcast and lowly in Afghanistan. There is a prevailing clash of two ethnic groups, Pashtun and Hazara. Pashtun people are reluctant to accept the Hazaras as equivalent to any noble community. Hazaras are maltreated and tortured to any level possible and are kept as slaves in Amir’s homeland.

The children in the streets mocked Ali because he didn’t meet the racial standards of homeland and attained what Marc E. Wohlfarth calls a “minor position” (Wohlfarth 189). Pashtuns are the dominant people and mostly belong to the elite class. The Hazaras are however treated as the down-trodden and down-cast mostly because of their readiness for service and their sacrificial nature as, “... people called Hazaras mice-eating, flat-nosed, load-carrying donkeys” (Hosseini 8).

Khaled Hosseini gives a detailed account of the homeland as how it is a place of injustice and replete with social inequality. He portrays Afghan culture as a community of racists. In the later chapters when Amir and Hasan are being bullied by Assef, we get a clear picture of what the people in homeland are suffering from, Assef claims that “We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our *watan*. They dirty our blood” (Hosseini 35). These words may imply that there is a formation of binaries in the country. There are “pure Afghans” and the “flat-nosed.” The term ‘pure Afghan’ stereotypes a certain community, uniformly infected with certain standards that render it different from other communities in the immediate vicinity. These standards may be regarded false or self-assumed notions to create a space between the two types of people found in Afghanistan. “Flat-nosed” is a qualifier that highlights a flaw in the physical features

of the qualified. This defect or flaw provides a base for the discrimination as cherished by the dominant Pashtuns. The actions ascribed to the “flat-nosed” people are the pollution of land and dirtying of blood. These may be the chief elements of contrast and discrimination among the communities and, thus, are responsible for the *Racist* image of Afghanistan.

A society, especially the one called “world ... out of joint” (Neubauer 533) by John Neubauer, may have an incomplete expression without racism. It is a major mark, a chief characteristic of the Afghan community. On one occasion, when Amir is looking for Hasan, his friend Omar gives us a hint of Hosseini’s imagery and approach towards his people as, “I mean, with those tight little eyes, how does he see anything?” (Hosseini 60). ‘Tight little eyes’ is the reference to Hazara Mongoloid features that those people acquired from their ancestors. This reference highlights the roots for Hazara ethnicity as different from that of Pashtuns. This reference marks the alienation of a community and hence provides a space for discrimination to be discerned.

On another occasion, when Amir is looking for Hasan, he stops by an old merchant and asks him about Hassan. The old man eyes him suspiciously and ridicules the act of looking for a person so unimportant: “He is? Lucky Hazara, having such a concerned master. His father should get on his knees, sweep the dust at your feet with his eyelashes” (Hosseini 61). The terms like “master” situate the relationship between the two communities in the homeland. “Concerned” qualifies the master to have a virtuous set of habits. Ascribing it to one ethnic group only questions the virtue of the other and hence creates discrimination between the two. Furthermore, the values of age and humanity are seen as being challenged when a “father” is expected to sweep the dust off the boots of a young master with his eyelashes. The act

of getting down on the knees and sweeping the dust with eyelashes especially for someone as esteemed as a father, at least in civilized societies, is one of the most ridiculous ways to comment about someone. The reference is a clear indication of racism that impregnates the home culture. The writer has planted this in his novel to elaborate the evils associated with the homeland.

Not only the people but also the places associated with the Hazaras have been shown ridiculous and uncivilized:

... I was driving up a rutted dirt road, nothing on either side but sunbaked bushes, gnarled, spiny tree trunks, and dried grass like pale straw. I passed a dead donkey rotting on the side of the road. (Hosseini 179)

These lines describe the Hazarajat, the place where Hazaras live. The choice of words for description of home gives us a miserable picture of homeland. Words like “rutted dirt road,” “sunbaked bushes,” “gnarled, spiny tree trunks” and “dried grass” depict a forsaken land that is full of harsh conditions and lack of life. The choice of such words creates an image of a place that is far from civilization. Reference to “dead rotten donkey” signifies not only a lack of a balanced system but also creates a sense of repulsion. Dead rotting animals denote sickness and disease. Such imagery given by the write constructs a debilitating image of home. It relegates home culture to an inferior level where the home may be seen as a land which is dismal and pathetic.

If we move further and look upon some more descriptions of home, we see that homeland is divided into sects and various geographic regions associated with the people living there. We find homeland to be comprised of:

The mud wall, short and pocked with holes, enclosed the tiny house-which was really not much more than a glorified hut. Barefoot children were playing on the street, kicking a ragged tennis ball with a stick, and they stared when I pulled up and killed the engine. (Hosseini 180)

These lines show the miserable condition of life in Hazarajat. There is a community within home which is deprived of a reputable living standard. Children here are “barefooted” and have “ragged tennis ball” as a toy to play with. “Staring” on part of children clearly indicates lack of education and disconnection from civilization. “Stare” signifies the curiosity of the children and signifies the lust to know. They stare because they are unaware of the modern inventions like motor vehicle. This description of home points out a sub-standard living and a horrifying future for the children. People and places are seen neglected and relegated in the portrayal of home by Hosseini.

Talking about illiteracy of the people, it may be seen that the system of education is not effective in Afghanistan. The type of education that is given to the children is viewed through the remarks given by Amir about his education at school. He says that “School textbooks barely mentioned them and referred to their ancestry only in passing” (Hosseini 8). “Them” is the reference to Hazara people. It may be assumed through these lines that the education that is provided to the children is incomplete as it lacks a comprehensive or, at least, a significant part of the culture and ethnic values of their homeland.

Another aspect of homeland that is made prominent in this novel is the class discrimination. Afghan people are torn between the wealthy and the poor. Rich people

are enjoying luxuries and comforts of all sorts. They have big houses and luxurious lifestyles. Amir's father is leading one such life as mentioned here:

Everyone agreed that my father, my Baba, had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan District, a new and affluent neighborhood in the northern part of Kabul. Some thought it was the prettiest house in all Kabul. (Hosseini 4)

The narrator gives a detailed account of his former home that had been built by his father. The house had facilities of all sorts and its residents lead a life unknown to all sorts of worries and problems. On the other hand, the poor had to lead a difficult life. They stayed devoid of the ease that was accessible to rich only. A glimpse of the life of poor may be seen as, "On the south end of the garden, in the shadows of a loquat tree, was the servants' home, a modest little mud hut where Hassan lived with his father" (Hosseini 5). These lines signify the humbleness of the economically challenged class. They always have to live in the shadow of some rich building. Their modes of life are limited and they have to look up to the classes belonging to the upper stratum of society. Mud belongs to soil and earth and thus symbolizes modesty. Describing the residence of Ali as a 'mud hut' denotes the deprived and economically challenged state of the people belonging to the lower community.

Another perspective that describes the homeland and is one of its chief characteristics, is the religious sections and the social fragmentation on the basis of religion. The history reveals that the Hazaras were oppressed by the Pashtuns and had been uprooted from their homes and hearths by the Pashtuns. The reason is that the Hazaras belong to a different religious group and hence have to face the maltreatment from the fellow natives of the homeland. This can be judged from this line, "The book

said part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a" (Hosseini 8). It may be denoted that religious extremism is also seen bearing its roots in home culture. One religious group dominates the other and tries to express its superiority through oppression.

When Amir refers to the book in which he read about the Hazaras to a teacher, the reaction of the teacher was somewhat repulsive. He keeps no hold to express his hatred for the oppressed Hazaras, We find it in the lines as, "He wrinkled his nose when he said the word Shi'a, like it was some kind of disease" (Hosseini 8). The religious extremism, like ethnic discrimination, is so intense in the homeland that the new generation acquires hatred as a legacy from their ancestors and instead of resolving or changing the established norms of the native culture, they become part of it.. Khaled Hosseini has not spared any detail in highlighting the evils that exist in the homeland.

Not only the teachers but the Mullahs of the homeland have also been shown with all their negative tendencies and extremisms. The writer adds the details with exaggeration. His anti-Mullah stance in the novel gives us a clue that he is down-sizing his home culture and it is as if a seed of repulsion and hatred is being sown for homeland. "His name was Mullah FatiUllah Khan, a short, stubby man with a face full of acne scars and a gruff voice" (Hosseini 14). In these lines, Hosseini seems to be extra curious about the appearance of the person teaching Islam to the children. Religion is a dominant factor in Afghan society. Showing it as something ridiculous or associating it with "stubby" men with "face full of acne scars" creates a biased image. Through his narrator, Hosseini chooses such description that leads to a sensation of ridicule. Not even once, in the whole novel, has the writer used such description for a foreigner especially the ones belonging to US. Descriptions such as

this have added to the criticism and poor image of the homeland rather than the proper definition or the correct version of home.

In the following lines, the writer describes the process of learning in religious classes as:

... though he never translated the words for us, he did stress, sometimes with the help of a stripped willow branch, that we had to pronounce the Arabic words correctly so God would hear us better. (Hosseini 14)

In these lines, a mode of teaching Islam is being displayed. This may not be a universal method of teaching religion to the children but it surely has marked itself as one of the factors that contribute to the relegation of the home culture. Amir had to go through the torture of learning a foreign language with a consistent fear of being hit with a willow branch.

There is a contrast between the teachings of religion and the actual practices in the home country, Amir is taught about religion as, “He told us one day that Islam considered drinking a terrible sin; ...” (Hosseini 14). On one hand, the children are taught the principles of religion while on the other hand, these teachings are being challenged when the children see the opposite being practiced in the society around them, This line shows the contrast as “In those days, drinking was fairly common in Kabul” (Hosseini 14). The contrast between the teachings of religion and the actual practice is the negative aspect of the homeland. People here are away from the boundaries and limits set by their religion.

Moreover, the image of the religious preachers is not reputable in Amir’s house. His father has a strong anti-mullah stance towards all the preachers, In this

line, “You’ll never learn anything of value from those bearded idiots” (Hosseini 15). “[B]earded idiots” is a reference to preachers in Afghan community. Beard is a dominant feature of Afghan people. By calling the bearded people idiots, the writer humiliates the home culture. It is not limited to Toophan Agha only. It can be associated to all the elite class of the Afghan community. On similar occasion, Toophan Agha says, “Piss on the beards of all those self-righteous monkeys” (Hosseini 15). Pissing on the beard implies discarding the cultural norms and values. It challenges the values of home. Though the preachers are also responsible for shattering the image of the religion, this aspect has been highlighted by Hosseini to portray a weaker image of home.

The religious discrimination as shown by the writer in his work is prevalent in the home culture. At one point, when Amir and Hasan had a conversation, Amir shares his views about Iranians as, “For a lot of Hazaras, Iran represented a sanctuary of sorts-I guess because, like Hazaras, most Iranians were Shi’a Muslims” (Hosseini 50). He further elaborates the conceptions about Iranian in these words as, “... my teacher had said that summer about Iranians, that they were grinning smooth talkers who patted you on the back with one hand and picked your pocket with the other” (Hosseini 50). These remarks of the protagonist in Hosseini’s novel are crucial and critical in relation to demonstrating the ideology that the writer wants to express through his work.

The criticism does not end here. The writer has woven the repulsion for religion in a mosaic manner throughout the plot. Learning of Koran has been shown as a torture and the environment in which this learning is taking place is not to be overlooked. In the lines below, we see a negative and exaggerated image of religion as:

Summer meant long school days sweating in tightly packed, poorly ventilated classrooms learning to recite *ayats* from the Koran, struggling with those tongue-twisting, exotic Arabic words. (Hosseini 94)

It may be pointed out here that the protagonist being a Pashtun, had learnt the language of the homeland with quite ease and fluency but when it comes to learning the language of their religion, he is confused and bewildered. This is a matter of affinity that had been in the characters since the beginning and has been very carefully and deliberately discussed by the writer himself. The narrator adds, “It meant catching flies in your palm while the mullah droned on and the hot breeze brought with it the smell of shit from the outhouse across the schoolyard, ...” (Hosseini 94). This line signifies two things; firstly, the protagonist considers the act of catching the flies and learning Koran to be synonymous. He is bored by the learning in a religious class and tries to pass the time by catching flies. Secondly, the mullahs are not keen on performing their duties in the homeland. Their modes of teaching, as shown by the writer, are slack and outdated. “Flies” and “shit” creates a filthy image of home. By adding lines, as given above, to his work, the writer has tried to focus the flaws in homeland.

The criticism for religion does not end here. In the later part of the novel, where Toophan Agha dies and Amir is at the graveyard with all the friends and the family, there is a quarrel between a mullah and another man. This quarrel shows us that the religion is something that poses conflict among the people. It also shows the extreme nature of the people belonging to the homeland as in these lines, “The mullah and another man got into an argument over which was the correct ayat of the Koran to recite at the gravesite” (Hosseini 152). It can be inferred from this line that the people of the homeland are emotional and subjective in terms of religion. There are quarrels

and arguments over petty issues like the choice of an ayah to recite at the grave site of the deceased. The writer adds, “It might have turned ugly had General Taheri not intervened. The mullah chose an ayat and recited it, casting the other fellow nasty glances” (Hosseini 152-153). These lines define the clash between religion and common masses. People of homeland are rebellious towards the teachings of their religion. It can also be seen in this way that the religious aristocracy has gone corrupt in the homeland and this issue is taken up by the writer in his work.

Apart from religious extremism, gender discrimination or sexism is one of the elements of homeland. This aspect of homeland is seen in the portrayal of women and the way they are treated. Apart from Soraya, all the female characters in the plot have not been given a proper platform to express themselves. Even Soraya’s role is rather reserved and not sublime. Female characters of the home country are either dead or had been involved in disgraceful escapades. The women, especially the Hazara women, were treated as a commodity by the men in homeland. In the line as, “I knew your mother, did you know that? I knew her real good. I took her from behind by that creek over there” (Hosseini 6). These remarks were given by a soldier about Sanaubar when he taunted Hasan. Sanaubar is a Hazara woman, who married Ali. As a result of an illegitimate relationship with Toophan Agha, she gave birth to Hasan. The fact that she was a Hazara and that she had an unscrupulous character, we find women in homeland to be doubly marginalized. They are oppressed not only religiously but also through their femininity. This adds to the list of evils associated to homeland.

Sanaubar, a woman belonging to a Hazara community, has been shown as having a loose character. She represents the women of a down-trodden class. She has a flirtatious nature and is disrespectful towards her husband. She is even reluctant to take her son Hassan into her arms. Hosseini describes her as, “... a beautiful but

notoriously unscrupulous woman who lived up to her dishonorable reputation” (Hosseini 7). Her remarks about her husband were like this, “This is a husband?” she would sneer. “I have seen old donkeys better suited to be a husband” (Hosseini 9). At the time of giving birth to Hassan, when she saw the cleft-lip of her son, she refused to hold him, “She had refused to even hold Hassan, and just five years later, she was gone” (Hosseini 9). She went away with a band of musicians.

One of the female characters that add to the image of the women of the homeland as depicted by Hosseini is that of a garrulous midwife who helped Sanaubar to conceive Hassan. She narrates the event of Sanaubar’s mockery upon her husband after she gave birth to cleft-lipped Hassan. The disgraceful remarks of an Afghan woman could be heard by everyone owing to the female characters in homeland. This unsatisfactory and inappropriate attitude of women towards their men in Afghanistan, show a poor image of the country. It may be coupled with the fact that women here are treated as commodities and are considered lowly. Sanaubar’s father married her to a handicap in order to restore a false reputation of the family. The life of a girl is put on a stake in the homeland. Her resistance or defence against her status is shown as a rebellion by Hosseini.

Home has been shown as a land where women are suppressed. They are treated as commodities and not given a space. When General Taheri married Khanum Taheri, a condition was imposed on Khanum that she quit her interests. This is shown as, “That she never sing in public had been one of the general’s conditions when they had married” (Hosseini 154). The women in the homeland are dependent upon men for their marriage and happy life. They have to look up to someone who would come and ask for the marriage instead of finding the right partner themselves. This has been addressed to in the form of a fear that every Afghan mother has, “... that no honorable

khastegar would ask for her daughter's hand. That her daughter would age alone, husbandless, childless" (Hosseini 155).

The people of the home culture in general have various characteristics that have been taken up by the writer to show the image of homeland. One of their traits as shown by the writer is the *laaf*, which the writer explains as,

... *laaf*, that Afghan tendency to exaggerate-sadly, almost a national affliction; if someone bragged that his son was a doctor, chances were the kid had once passed a biology test in high school. (Hosseini 11)

Another characteristic of Afghan people is found in the later chapters where the protagonist is travelling with his family and friends. The people are chatting on their way and this is how the way of their talking is explained by the writer, "Everyone in the van was talking, talking loudly and at the same time, nearly shrieking, which is how Afghans talk" (Hosseini 72). The loud voice is considered an animal trait and civilized societies do not approve of the noise. Associating this manner of talking to the Afghans is clearly a hint towards the uncivilized nature of the people who belong to the homeland.

A detailed view of Afghan people can be found in the selected novels of Hosseini. The people, here in the homeland, are doubtful and scoffing. They are "... always doubting..." (Hosseini 13). Also, they "... scoff..." (Hosseini 13) about their fellow people of the homeland. The state of home along with its people is miserable. On one occasion, Afghans are shown as jealous people, "... jealous Afghans, jealous because Iran was a rising power in Asia and most people around the world couldn't even find Afghanistan on a world map" (Hosseini 50). The inherent nature of the people in the homeland cannot be changed. Therefore, when they migrate towards the

hopelands, some of them remain the same or at least the overall Afghan aura is retained. The lines about the San Jose flea market in USA, reveal more about the characteristics of an Afghan,

The only thing that flowed more than tea in those aisles was Afghan gossip. The flea market was where you sipped green tea with almond *kolchas*, and learned whose daughter had broken off an engagement and run off with her American boyfriend, ... (Hosseini 120)

In these lines, another glimpse of Afghan girls is given as how they discard their native traditions and go away with the foreign world. It also adds to the overall ridiculous and pathetic nature of the people belonging to the home country. The general habits of Afghan people in hopeland are described as, “Tea, politics, and scandal, the ingredients of an Afghan Sunday at the flea market” (Hosseini 120). It may be assumed from these lines that people belonging to Afghanistan, actually belong to the flea market in the modern worlds. No matter what their standard was in homeland, they have to sell garbage in the hopeland because it equates their standings.

In the matter of women, Afghan people not only possess a double-standard but are fickle. No matter how many follies an Afghan brat is indulged in, when it comes to a woman, she must be pure and clean for him. Otherwise, she will have to stay at her father’s house forever and no one would come to marry her. This reality is elaborated by the writer in guise of Soraya’s case. She had once eloped with an American boyfriend and was brought back by her father after sometime. For this reason, no one came to marry her, except in the end, Amir. It is from Amir’s views that we get a glimpse of this particular nature of the Afghans, “Afghan men,

especially those from reputable families, were fickle creatures. A whisper here, an insinuation there, and they fled like startled birds” (Hosseini 129-130). Such a condition of Afghan young men is shown that reveals their true nature in the following lines,

Their sons go out to nightclubs looking for meat and get their girlfriends pregnant, they have kids out of wedlock and no one says a goddamn thing. Oh they're just men having fun! (Hosseini 156)

The image of Afghan people for others is not good. When Amir was in Pakistan with Sohrab, the hotel manager commented about the Afghan people in this way, “The thing about you Afghans is that... well, you people are a little reckless” (Hosseini 275). The protagonist, after quitting his homeland, looks back at the people of the homeland and criticizes them. According to his own perception, his people are the ones who destroyed their home, “My chest tightened with a surge of unexpected anger at the way my countrymen were destroying their own land” (Hosseini 280). When it comes to honor and pride, it is just a mere pomp and show and nothing in real about the Afghan men. The appearance and the reality are quite opposite. Take the example of Toophan Agha, who was considered reputable and honored throughout the homeland. In actual practice, he slept with the wife of his servant and bore her a son.

In addition to the people, Afghan culture is also depicted as something influenced by trifles, “In Kabul, fighting kites was a little like going to war” (Hosseini 43). The home culture consists of such cheap standards and the people of the country are involved in such activities that kill the time. This further shows that the people of Afghanistan possess no sense of hard work and have no intention of working for the betterment of the country.

When Amir revisits the home country, his disgust for its culture has heightened. The way he looks at the home people, is actually the way the foreigners look at them. In the following lines, he describes the miserable state of home,

We had crossed the border and the signs of poverty were everywhere. On either side of the road, I saw chains of little villages sprouting here and there, like discarded toys among the rocks, broken mud houses and huts consisting of little more than four wooden poles and a tattered cloth as a roof. (Hosseini 203)

The state of the home is shown as poor and the protagonist uses the term ‘toys’ for the houses which highlights his disgust for the homeland. The ‘toys’ symbolize the treatment of home as something miserable and pathetic. “Broken mud houses” and “huts” symbolize the living standard of the people of homeland. “In addition to the houses, the people have also been depicted poorly, “I saw children dressed in rags chasing a soccer ball outside the huts” (Hosseini 203). The ‘rags’ show the poverty of the people. The backwardness of people is also shown in this way, “A few miles later, I spotted a cluster of men sitting on their haunches, like a row of crows, on the carcass of an old burned out Soviet tank, ...” (Hosseini 203). The people have been compared with crows which can be interpreted in this way that the people of the homeland are not humans. They are the animals with all their habits and habitat. Such indications symbolize the lack of civilization and modernity of people at home.

The backwardness of the home can also be judged by the following lines, “Wars were waged, the internet was invented, and a robot had rolled on the surface of Mars, and in Afghanistan we were still telling Mullah Nasruddin jokes” (Hosseini 232-233). After observing the condition of Afghanistan, the protagonist is of the view

that it is a hopeless place. He expresses this in the following lines, "... maybe what people said about Afghanistan was true. Maybe it *was* a hopeless place" (Hosseini 233). In *TKR*, the writer has defined Afghanistan as a backward land. It is shown as a land of no civilization and as a place replete with cases of racism, sexism, extremism and barbarianism.

In the beginning, the protagonist is seen disturbed by his past. He tries to forget what had happened to him in his childhood but he is unable to do so. Hence, he declares the past to be something that is persistent and comes back to the person making him a victim of the haunted past. It is shown in the lines as, "... it's wrong what they say about the past, I've learned, about how you can bury it. Because the past claws its way out" (Hosseini 1). The word 'claw' may be taken as a signifier that denotes the past as something monstrous that, even buried, can come back and haunt the sufferer with its horrifying impacts.

The protagonist Amir is being devastated by the happenings of the past and he is not at peace unless he finds a suitable solution for the fidget that has gripped him. It is shown as, "It was my past of unatoned sins" (Hosseini 1). The only facility, he has, is the peaceful and soothing environment that has been provided to him by his host country because he had migrated from Afghanistan and now resides in San Francisco. His past is somber because of the circumstances and geography that served as a catalyst in his dismissal from a place he once called home. He moves out of his apartment in San Francisco and visits various calm and serene places where he has time to reflect upon the inner agitations. After spending some time with nature, he feels better and hence we come to know of his relationship with his host. It may be assumed from this line as, "... San Francisco, the city I now call home" (Hosseini 1). It must have been a gradual process through which the affiliation of Amir changed

over time from Kabul to San Francisco. As per Lukacs' notion, the protagonist, owing to his own misconceptions of nature around him, transformed his native home into a prison. Therefore, he had to migrate and shift his destination in order to satisfy the longing for a new home. United States proved to be the desired land and he got himself assimilated to this new culture.

Lukacs idea is elaborated further if we focus these lines of the novel, "I thought of the life I had lived until the winter of 1975 came along and changed everything. And made me what I am today" (Hosseini 2). In these lines, Amir's life in Afghanistan has been mentioned. He considers the circumstances and the environment around him responsible for his sufferings. This is exactly what Lukacs points out that a character or a soul develops a poor perception of the nature and hence feels entrapped into the maze or a prison. Hence, he tries to get free from the boundaries. Keeping in view, the above image of homeland, migration proves to be inevitable for most of the characters. This is exactly what Amir did. Migration to San Francisco gave him a new world and a chance to change his view point on life.

4.3 THE HOPELAND

Hopeland, as shown in the novel, is the land of opportunities for Amir. It inspires him in many ways as, "America was different. America was a river, roaring along, unmindful of the past. I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me someplace far" (Hosseini 119). It may be observed here that America is referred to as a "river." River signifies water which is an essential element for life. Water may be taken as a sign of life. However Afghanistan, as shown earlier, has been taken as a sun-baked land, with gnarled bushes, dead grass and rotting carcass of donkey. If seen in comparison, the two lands possess a contrast between

them. Homeland is shown as a sign of death and misery while hopeland is a land of life and a promising future. The protagonist is inspired by the vastness of the hopeland. He mentions, “Almost two years had passed since we had arrived in the U.S., and I was still marveling at the size of this country, its vastness” (Hosseini 118). The choice of words like “marveling” denotes an admiration. This reference by Hosseini is deliberate as he tries to create a wonderful image of hopeland. The hopeland is grand not only in terms of size but also standard and magnitude. The elite or at least notable people of the homeland sell garbage here in the hopelands. Such is the comparison of the two lands. Including Amir and Toophan Agha, who belonged to a worthy family in Afghanistan, there are other notorious people who meet them in the flea-market, selling used goods as shown below,

... greeting people he knew from Kabul: mechanics and tailors selling hand-me-down wool coats and scraped bicycle helmets, alongside former ambassadors, out-of-work surgeons, and university professors. (Hosseini 120)

The grandeur of the host culture is also measured when it is compared with the homeland. At various instances in the novel, the writer shows a comparison between both homes. Studying these comparisons and contrasts is quite important. One such example is, “... where people who’d never shaken hands with kings lived in shabby, flat one-story houses with barred windows, where old cars like mine dripped oil on blacktop driveways” (Hosseini 118). This shows the comparison between Amir’s ancestors in Afghanistan and the descendants who have migrated to America.

The rich and elite of Afghanistan, the people, who had acquaintances with royal families, are poor and belong to the lower stratum of the hopeland. When compared with the hopeland, their magnitude gets shrunk as shown here, “Homes that

made Baba's house in Wazir Akbar Khan look like a servant's hut" (Hosseini 118). It refers to the same difference in the magnitude of the two homes. The homeland is so small in comparison with the hopeland like, "BMW's. Saabs. Porches. Cars I'd never seen in Kabul, where most people drove Russian Volgas, old Opels, or Iranian Paikans" (Hosseini 118). Even in technology, America surpasses Afghanistan which is lagging behind by ages. The economical standards of hopeland are the models, these people dream about, "In Afghanistan, owning anything American, especially if it wasn't second-hand, was a sign of wealth" (Hosseini 61). These lines further show the economic difference of the two lands. The term "American" signifies the admiration which the characters in Hosseini's novels have for the western world. The advancement in science and technology is highlighted in the text: "I can find you a good doctor. They're coming up with new treatments all the time. There are new drugs and experimental treatments..." (Hosseini 175). There is an advancement and progression about the life in hopeland. People are stepping forward and achieving milestone after milestone towards glory. The admiration for western culture lies embedded in these lines and may not be overlooked.

Apart from economy and technology, there is a difference of general approach towards life as shown here, "I see America has infused you with the optimism that has made her so great. That's very good. We're a melancholic people, we Afghans, aren't we?" (Hosseini 175-176). In these lines, Rahim Khan is narrating the difference between the two nations. He points out the flaws with the home society. He associates "melancholy" with home and considers America as a land of "optimism". Summing up the above mentioned differences between the two lands we come to the conclusion as of Amir's. He considers hopeland as, "America was different" (Hosseini 118). This

difference generates an affinity for the better choice of the two homes. This admiration leads to the migration of the characters from one land to the other.

Migration in itself is not simple as there is a distinct line between those who migrate and those who do not. A migrant for Edward Said is “a leper, a social and moral untouchable” (Said 113) and hence, he is treated differently as compared to those who stay. The relationship between the quitters and the stayers is also very important for this study. Those who migrated in the novel had their own reasons specifically the ones explained above. The stayers also had their reasons and shall be explored as follows from the text.

The people in the novel, who migrate, have a certain type of traits in them. They do not migrate because of hardships only. They possess certain characteristics that distinguish them from the people of the homeland. These characteristics let them adapt to the host cultures. The foremost trait of these migrants is wealth. They are rich and belong to a notable class. In order to survive, they can shift their home from one place to the other. General Taheri is a class conscious man. He belonged to an elite class in Afghanistan and migrated when the circumstances got unfavorable. Even in the hopeland, he has an ego as shown in following lines,

I learned that he had kept his family on welfare and had never held a job in the U.S., preferring to cash government-issued checks than degrading himself with work unsuitable for a man of his stature... (Hosseini 154)

Apart from wealth, their life style does not synchronize with the homeland and hence, they have an edge over the rest of the population, when it comes to migration. “Baba was pouring himself a whiskey from the bar he had built in the corner of the room” (Hosseini 14). Whiskey is not a part of Afghan culture in general. People are

followers of religion or are too poor to afford such luxuries as a bar in the house. The life style of Toophan Agha differentiates from the general living standards of the home country. Therefore, when it comes to migration, he has no trouble in choosing another land as a home. Toophan's ideology, "... Piss on the beards of all those self-righteous monkeys" (Hosseini 15), does not correlate with the standards of the homeland. Talking about religion, Toophan has some rebellious ideas that render him a stranger in his homeland. We may see as, "If there's a God out there, then I hope he would have more important things to attend to than my drinking scotch or eating pork" (Hosseini 16). His way of living is better suited for a land like America rather than Afghanistan.

Not only Toophan but Amir as well possesses a slight tendency to be away from religion which is opposite to the standards of the homeland. "And may God-if He exists..." (Hosseini 48). It may be argued here that Khaled Hosseini chooses the characters with certain traits as champions of the act of migration. These characters stay dominant in the whole plot of the novel. The story revolves around these characters and this fact claims for a relatively superior position for these characters than the rest of the population at home. Such choice of characters is deliberate on part of Hosseini. He is biased towards people who have a western-like living standard.

There is a statement made by Amir in the novel that represents the state of migrants. One evening, when Hasan was being bullied and raped by Assef, Amir lurked behind a wall and didn't intervene to save Hasan. And when he had a choice to stay and defend Hasan or run away, he ran away. This is how the migrants are towards their country. In the times of hardships, when it comes to a choice of migrating or staying, they migrate. They run away like Amir as shown in this line, "I ran because I was a coward" (Hosseini 68). Hence, another trait of the migrants is

their selfish nature and their cowardice. They seek satisfaction in defending themselves and not the country. When Amir is called back to his previous home in order to rescue his nephew, he calls this old home a “shit”. This describes the selfishness in him that he wanted to stay away from the hardships and in a cozy new home. He claims that, “I had a good life in California, pretty Victorian home with a peaked roof, a good marriage, a promising writing career, in-laws who loved me. I didn’t need any of this shit” (Hosseini 195). The choice of signifiers like, “good”, “pretty” and “love” by the writer, signify a promising life that the migrants like Amir enjoy in the hopeland. Such diction constructs an image of a land superior in its impact.

On another occasion, when Rahim Khan wanted Amir to go to Afghanistan and bring his nephew back, Amir was reluctant, “I have a wife in America, a home, a career, and a family. Kabul is a dangerous place, you know that, and you’d have me risk everything for...” (Hosseini 194). When Amir was about to enter the house where Sohrab had been kept as a hostage, he wished his father was with him, “Baba would have busted through the front doors and demanded to be taken to the man in charge, piss on the beard of anyone who stood in his way” (Hosseini 239). But in actual practice, Baba ran away. He migrated to a land that had better prospects for him and abandoned his home when it needed him the most. Even General Taheri migrates for his selfish reasons. When there were hardships in the homeland, he ran away and, in the hopeland, he awaits the turn of circumstances so that he can go back and enjoy his position once more. It is seen in lines like, “The general believed that, sooner or later, Afghanistan would be freed, the monarchy restored, and his services would once again be called upon” (Hosseini 154). It may be argued here that the act of migration is not imposed on the people rather it is a matter of choice. People with certain type of

traits choose to move away for a while and may choose to return when it is promising for them.

Another reason for the migrants to leave their homeland is because they are misfit in this land. On their way to Pakistan, when the father and the son were in the truck, Amir felt nauseated and car-sick. To this, the driver states, "Tell him to have a strong stomach" (Hosseini 97). This statement implies that Amir is not cut for the situations that arise in the homeland. If he has to stay here, he will have to adapt himself according to the situations. Looking at the scenario as shown in the text, Amir did not adjust himself according to the requirements of home and hence, migrated to another home, where he is welcomed. Amir's father used to wrestle with the bears and fight his own way in life. Amir was quite the opposite. He could not stand for any cause like his father. This may be seen in Toophan Agha's comments about his son as, "Rahim, a boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up to anything" (Hosseini 194). Amir's father was indeed worried about his son. If his father is taken as a symbol of a true Afghan, then comparing Amir with him implies that Amir is not a true Afghan. Lukacs claims that the circumstances dictate the movement of the characters from one land to the next. It can be added here that the innate tendency of the character or the natural incompatibility within him, also triggers the development of a poor relationship and hence, in the end, the character has to migrate from the land, he once called home.

In order to analyze the characteristics of those who choose to stay and do not migrate, there are certain parts in the text that need to be studied. The foremost characteristic of the non-migrants is their illiteracy. The people who could not migrate are illiterate. They relied on the educated masses for their lives and hence could not think of working for themselves. It is shown as, "That Hassan would grow up illiterate

like Ali and most Hazaras had been decided the moment he had been born, ...” (Hosseini 24). Their illiteracy keeps them from standing up for their rights when they are at home and need to fight.

Though they are illiterate, the people, who stay, are close to the religion and their cultural practices. They do not adapt a fancy foreign style and live deeply rooted into the soil, they call home. The stayers have traits like, “... he always said a prayer when his son left the house” (Hosseini 53). This habit of saying a prayer, being described in these lines, is of Ali. Unlike his masters, he has a firm belief in God and says his prayers. The way these characters have been carved out and the way they are treated by the society around them may not be overlooked. There are certain traits of the stayers that are typical and exclusively home-like. Hence, they may be considered misfit or unwelcomed anywhere else. In the text, when Amir plots against Hasan to send him to Hazarajat, he claims that it is for Hasan’s best. This implies that the only place for Hazaras is their Hazarajat. Likewise, the people who chose to stay are the people not carved for any other place. Their home is the only place for them.

The people who choose to stay are loyal to their country, their culture and their people. They have purity in their hearts. They mean everything they say. This has been shown by Hosseini in his novel. Through Amir, the writer classifies the types of people that live in the homeland. Amir is the prototypical instance of one kind, those who migrate and discard their nativity and belonging to the home; and those like Hassan, who remain loyal and true to anything associated with home. Amir represents the migrants while Hassan is the example of those people who stay. The contrast among the two characters is the contrast between the two types of people.

Amir defines certain characteristics of Hassan. On one occasion, when the two of them were waiting for kite, Amir tried to toy with Hassan. When Amir told Hassan that he did not know whether he will lie to him or not, Hassan replied, "I'd sooner eat dirt" (Hosseini 47). And when Amir asked him if he would actually do this act, Hassan replied, "If you asked, I would," (Hosseini 48). Loyalty to this extent, as shown in the text, may be an innate ability of the people who are loyal to their homeland. Even if it is not in their blood, this loyalty is acquired by them owing to the fact that they have no other place to call home. Hence, they are fully devoted to the only home that they have.

Amir also remarks about Hassan, "To this day, I find it hard to gaze directly at people like Hassan, people who mean every word they say" (Hosseini 48). This is the difference between a migrant and a stayer. Khaled Hosseini associates the good traits like honesty and purity to people like Hassan and by showing them as subjects to sufferings and miseries, the writer tries to prove that all the traits like the ones possessed by those who stayed, are meant to be discarded. The feelings like loyalty and chastity need to be shaken off. For survival, things like loyalty, honesty and purity, mean nothing. One must quit the place when it is necessary without any affiliation with the previous land.

Another difference between the migrants and the stayers is that the migrants are never ready to accept anything for a longer period of time. They quit and exchange when needed. Stayers on the other hand accept what they have. The people who stay loyal are the ones who have stood true and content with the only thing that they have without considering any other option as,

His saying that made me kind of sad. Sad for who Hassan was, where he lived. For how he'd accepted the fact that he'd grow old in that mud shack in the yard, the way his father had. (Hosseini 51)

Again by showing this class of people as strugglers, Hosseini tries to enforce the idea of being disloyal and mean. He tries to legitimize the idea of migration. The people who are good shall have to struggle; therefore being bad is actually good. This adaptive feature of the migrants allows them to migrate from one home to the next. It may be questioned here whether this temporariness in the nature of these characters, allows them to achieve some definite home? Here is when the idea of transcendence comes into action. The home remains suspended. The acquisition of a definite home, is yet to be explored..

Not only the poor class but also the certain characters from the elite chose to stay at home because of their love for the homeland. Rahim Khan, a friend of Toophan Agha, did not migrate from Afghanistan during the hardships. He stayed at home which shows his strong connection with the homeland. When asked about his choice to stay, he replied, "Kabul was my home. it still is" (Hosseini 174). It may be inferred from this that staying at home is not related to the hardships or as Lukacs puts it, the change in the perception of the world around the soul. It is the innate tendency of any individual to either stay or leave according to his association with the land. Those who migrated, had a weak relationship with their homeland and those who stayed, possessed a strong connection. Like Rahim Khan, another example is of a Professor who begged in the streets of Kabul. Hosseini documents what that beggar tells Amir: "The old beggar nodded and smiled... "I used to teach it at the university"" (Hosseini 218).

As discussed earlier, it does not depend on the conditions but the inner will of an individual that renders him a stayer or a migrant. Those who chose to stay in their homeland, despite the hardships, made a small world of theirs amid the hardships. This proves that the home is where an individual is. It may also be claimed that the individual carries his home within his soul and not without. The characters like Rahim Khan, Hassan and his wife Farzana, who chose to stay, worked for the prosperity of their home. They were determined and would mend anything destroyed by the bombings. We may find such instances in lines as, “Outside the walls of that house, there was a war raging. But the three of us, in your father’s house, we made our own little haven from it” (Hosseini 183). In order to strengthen the argument, another scenario of Zaman, a guy who runs an orphanage, is to be quoted. He did not migrate even when he could,

Everything I ever owned or inherited I sold to run this godforsaken place. You think I don’t have family in Pakistan and Iran? I could have run like everyone else. But I didn’t. I stayed. I stayed because of *them*. (Hosseini 225)

It again points out the capability of an individual or a soul to stay contented with home.

In order to study the state of migrants and non-migrants, the relationship that they have with each other is to be studied. The first aspect of their relationship is reluctance to accept the other. This reluctance is either experienced by those who migrated to the other world or those who stayed and fought the hardships. No matter how loyal Hassan is towards Amir, Amir is selfish in return. At the start of the first chapter, Amir introduces Hassan, not as his childhood friend or his stepbrother but as kite runner. Amir is seen confessing the fact that he never accepted Hassan as his

friend. There was a difference of religion, race and class between the two and above all, they were apart because one of them belonged to the home and the other did not. It is highlighted in the text as, "... I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either" (Hosseini 22). Although they had been friends for a major part of their childhood, it did not matter for Amir at least. Further reference may be seen as, "Never mind any of those things. Because history isn't easy to overcome... I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara" (Hosseini 22). Despite all his loyalty and love for Amir, Hassan got a cold and selfish behavior in return as stated here, "Still, I had been mean to Hassan" (Hosseini 53).

Whenever there is some difficulty or some higher cause including the migration, Amir becomes a stranger to Hassan. He denies Hassan's services and repels him. At one time when they came across Assef, who was about to beat Amir because he was friends with a Hazara, Amir denied his relation to Hassan. It is shown in the text as, "*But he is not my friend! ... He's my servant!*" (Hosseini 36). On another occasion, Assef defines the relationship between Amir and Hassan as, "Have you ever wondered why he never includes you in games when he has guests? Why he only plays with you when no one is around? I'll tell you why, Hazara. Because to him, you are nothing but an ugly pet" (Hosseini 64).

Hasan's loyalty as in the text, "*For you, a thousand times over*" (Hosseini 1) signifies the relationship of a master and slave. The difference of class kept them separated as, "I went past the rosebushes to Baba's mansion, Hassan to the mud shack where he had been born, where he'd lived his entire life" (Hosseini 5). There is a difference of "mansion" and "mud shack" between the two poles of the homeland. One of them is shown as dominating the scene while the other is relegated.

Apart from Hassan and his loyalty, there are people who stay and they hate those who run away from home. When Amir came back to Afghanistan for Sohrab, he met Farid, the cab driver. The attitude of Farid with Amir signifies the relationship of the people who were left behind with those who moved away as, “Farid gave me another dismissive look, this one with a hint of barely suppressed animosity...” (Hosseini 200). Farid is reluctant to accept Amir as part of his home and it may be seen in the text as, “You’ve *always* been a tourist here, ...” (Hosseini 204).

The above discussion leads us to draw a conclusion that Amir had been misfit in his homeland. Not only Amir but the homeland itself is misfit for its inhabitants as shown by Hosseini. Therefore, Amir had to move away. The transcendence of Amir is in correlation with the circumstances. As Lukacs had suggested, the soul moves away from the world that does not relate to its needs and its wills. As we know that Amir has no affiliation with the place he once called home, we move to the migration of Amir and his relationship that he develops with the hopeland. It must be kept in mind here that Amir is not alone in this act of migration, there are certain other characters too that move from their previous home to the next one.

4.4 AN UNSETTLING SETTLEMENT

The migrants can be divided into two generations. The older generation that comprises of parents and all the elderly people like Toophan Agha and General Taheri. The younger generation consists of all the children of the older generation who were either born in hopeland or have migrated from the homeland in their childhood like Amir. We shall discuss the relationship of both these generations with the hopeland.

Although homeland is seen as a place of torment and challenges for Amir yet there is also a relationship that cannot be denied. It was the homeland where Amir discovered his hidden talent. He started writing stories in his homeland. One day he reads a story to Hassan and is appreciated a lot. Here he comes to know of his talent as shown in the lines as, “Fascinating,” “I repeated, a little breathless, feeling like a man who discovers a buried treasure in his own backyard” (Hosseini 26). Another important aspect of Amir’s relation with his home is that home has provided him with a base. He is granted a pedestal where he came to know himself. After his migration to the hopelands, Amir is provided an opportunity by his homeland to be good again. Though the character does not acknowledge the importance of home in his life, yet he is given another chance as shown here, “*Come. There is a way to be good again*” (Hosseini 168). It is a call for all the quitters to understand the value of home. They have suspended themselves in a search for luxuries.

Despite his knowledge that home had been significant for him, Amir is reluctant to accept this in some later part of his life. This may be due to some of the mishaps that haunt his memories about his childhood as the one with associated with Hassan. His envy for Hassan and a weak relationship with his father did not pose to be a healthy environment in which he could lead a satisfactory life. Hence from his early childhood, he could not develop a good relationship with his home. This can be judged from his lack of regret or remorse while leaving his home. He is sorry for his father only, as seen in the text as, “My eyes returned to our suitcases. They made me sad for Baba” (Hosseini 107). Amir being sad for Baba while leaving home signifies his inclination towards a world away from home. It is his attraction for the land of his hopes that does not allow Amir to get emotional towards his former home. If the two generations are seen comparatively according to their relationship with home, the

older generation is more attached to home. Younger generation, as shown by the writer, is alien to home culture.

America is a gift for Amir who “has no smell” in the hopeland (Adichie 3). This is the land where Amir gets to find his true self. This is where he works on himself. America being the land of opportunities provides him with a life that he always desired. He fits into the host land as a piece from a jigsaw puzzle. It is as if he was made for this land. Migration from homeland to hopeland has been shown as a blessing and a gift for the protagonist as in the text, “I thought of all the trucks, train sets and bikes he’d bought me in Kabul. Now America. One last gift for Amir” (Hosseini 113). The word “gift” signifies an aura of admiration and privilege. America being presented as a gift is actually the inclination of the writer. It shows an attraction and a prestige that Hosseini has for America. These lines also highlight the ice that melts between father and son after they migrate. The two generations have got closer than they were in the homeland. A strong connection that develops between Amir and Toophan Agha after their migration towards hopeland, implies the glory of the land. Hopeland has been shown as a place where relations get closer. Where, a mutual bond between the generations gets strengthened. It adds to Hosseini’s glorification of Western world.

The roles have reversed in the new world. Amir who was weak and submissive in the native country is now bold and independent. He is standing shoulder to shoulder with his father and taking responsibilities. The life in America has changed him. Moreover, he has found love, “After I met Soraya Taheri, every night of the week became a *Yelda* for me... Soraya Taheri’s brown-eyed face already in my head” (Hosseini 125). This is a sign of new life for Amir. The love, he longed for in his native land, has been found in the foreign country that is his new home. Hopeland

in all respects has met his hopes. It has been shown as the land of opportunities. America has been shown as a land of blessings and a place that grants satisfaction. It must be noted here that highlighting positive aspects of a land only in contrast to the shattered image of another land, creates a binary between the two worlds under discussion. It shows the over-glorification of one land and the biasness of the writer against the other.

The nature of relationship of older generation is not transparent as compared to the relationship of younger one. On one hand, elders are seen loving their home country while on the other they are ready to give away their land for foreign pleasures. The people of the Afghan community, especially the elite, leave their home in hardships and dream of coming back and enjoying the luxuries of the mother land. However, their migration towards a foreign land is the proof of their affiliation with the hopeland. It may be argued here that they develop a temporary association with any land that is beneficial for them and this is why their relationship with any land cannot be classified as definite. This may be seen in these lines as,

At least I'm not like him, sitting around while other people fight the *Shorawi*,
waiting for when the dust settles so he can move in and reclaim his posh little
government position. (Hosseini 159)

These lines are about General Taheri and his stance towards his home culture. He compromises his culture for western benefits in times of hardships in Afghanistan. When the dispute settles, he is ready to go back.

On one hand, Toophan Agha is migrating, leaving his home for Western benefits and, on the other hand, he is showing his love for his homeland in these lines:

He emptied the box and picked up a handful of dirt from the middle of the unpaved road. He kissed the dirt. Poured it into the box. Stowed the box in his breast pocket, near to his heart. (Hosseini 105)

There have been characters in this novel like Hassan and his family; the blind professor who was begging in the streets and the owner of the orphanage who had a chance to escape but all of them did not leave their home owing to their love for it. The emotions that Toophan has for his home are pompous and fickle as his deeds contradict his words.

Not only their relationship with the homeland is dubious but also the relationship of older generation with the homeland is somewhat complex. Their association with the foreign culture is an ambivalent one as they assimilate as well as reject the new culture. The very first impact of America on Toophan Agha is that he got an ulcer, as shown here, “It was living in America that gave him an ulcer” (Hosseini 109). The term ‘ulcer’ may be taken in multiple contexts. The first one is the literal meaning of ulcer as Toophan’s health starts deteriorating as soon as he migrates to America. Later on, he becomes a cancer patient and dies with it. Hence, in this way, his first contact with the foreign land is not a healthy one. Another meaning of ‘ulcer’ may be a metaphorical one.

If we focus on the line preceding the one quoted above, it says, “Baba loved the idea of America” (Hosseini 109). This shows his admiration for the host country. And getting an ulcer from it may mean that owing to the culture differences the elder generation faces troubles in assimilating and adapting to a foreign world. The fact that first generation of migrants faces difficulties adjusting to new norms and traditions may lose its appeal if we focus the fact that this generation migrated after all. Despite

the differences, they managed to stay in a new land and develop roots strong enough to assimilate their younger generations. It brings in Hosseini's notion of migration that no matter how hard it is to move to a new world, things get settled in the end and one achieves the desired stability.

The writer expresses his gratitude for hopelands through his characters. The elder generation that was perceived to be nostalgic, associates itself to the new home. Toophan Agha posed a dramatic departure from homeland but a glimpse of his post-migration life and his affiliation with America shows Hosseini's admiration for America. In the text, we may find some hints as, "There are only three real men in this world, Amir; ... America the brash savior, Britain and Israel.... The rest of them... they're like gossiping old women" (Hosseini 109). These are the views of Toophan Agha about America. It may be assumed clearly that he is biased more towards hopeland than his former home. Choice of words like "brash savior" denote Khaled Hosseini's inclination for the West. It signifies the role of America as a chosen land or a superhero who has a responsibility to save the world.

On another occasion in the text, Agha's views about Jimmy Carter show his concern for America as, "He is not fit to run this country. It's like putting a boy who can't ride a bike behind the wheel of a brand new Cadillac" (Hosseini 110). Using the term "brand new Cadillac" for America signifies the image of country in Agha's mind. It highlights Hosseini's pro-American position. Cadillac is a reference to material comforts and capitalist manifestations. It is an American brand of motor vehicles and is known for manufacturing some supreme quality machines. Its reference points out the admiration of the writer for Western commodities. It shows his appreciation for America. He is not only inspired but also tries to develop a

familiarity of foreign products among his readers and propagates a sense of affinity for the host country.

Keeping in view the above discussion, we move on to another aspect in this novel. After migration, the two generations get mixed with foreign culture. They have adapted the customs of new home and an amalgamation of the two cultures is seen. This amalgamation is a very important tool for the writer who uses it to give a glimpse of post-migration life. Many native standards have been compromised as a result of migration and many new aspects have been adapted. One such example is kissing the hands of female guests while receiving them to a ceremony. Contrary to the conservative customs of Afghan culture where it is considered a sin to indulge in a casual talk with women and where women are made to wear *Burqas*, an act of kissing a woman's hand is like breaking the conventions. The Afghan people in the novel, after becoming part of the hopeland, are kissing the hands of women, as shown in the text: "I planted a kiss on her hand, ..." (Hosseini 146). This implies a rejection of native customs and shows an adherence to a foreign culture. In addition to this, the *chapan* wearing community is now wearing tuxedos. The rest of the traditions, like not allowing the bride and the groom to go out alone and customs like *Shrini-khori*, are intact.

It may be argued here that two different customs from two different nations have been amalgamated. This is an example of a mixture of traditions that Hosseini idealizes for the migrating community. It gives a hint towards writer's stance in dispelling the native culture and creating a friendly space between migrants and their host. In this way all the communities can think about migrating, whether they are conservative or not. There is a transcendence of traditions as shown in the text, "I remember walking toward the stage, now in my tuxedo. Soraya a veiled *pari* in white,

our hands locked” (Hosseini 149). In this reference to the text, words like “tuxedo” indicate a devotion to western norms. Interweaving the two cultures together shows writer’s intent to bring the two worlds closer. It highlights his motive of removing the boundaries and eliminating the differences between the two nations in order to pave way for western ideology in its incorporation with home. Following heading explores Khaled Hosseini’s role in detail.

4.5 INTERPRETER OF MALADIES¹: HOSSEINI IN THE DOCK

If we recapitulate the discussion done so far, we find that the Afghan characters, owing to the hardships in their homeland, tend to migrate to the West. Here they adapt themselves to a new world and a mixture of two cultures is achieved. All these events are shown by the writer with a pro-west lens. He starts with criticizing his culture and country. Then he admires the foreign world and finally provides the readers with a post-migration scenario, a glimpse of life after migration.

In the beginning of the novel, the aspects that Hosseini adapts while introducing his home are disappointing. He deliberately gives a negative impression of his home. He shows it as a world of social evils and disorder. He vehemently displays the hatred that the people of his country possess for each other. “Hazara people”, “mice-eating, load carrying donkeys”, such terms do not generate a healthy picture rather create a sexist, racist and barbaric image of Afghanistan. Furthermore, homeland is seen afflicted with class discrimination. The writer associates all the virtues like loyalty and honesty with the poor or stayers, as mentioned earlier and then show them as suffering from misery. It implies the notion that faithfulness towards homeland does not ensure a stable life but migration does. The social evils and miserable condition of people in homeland are not highlighted. When seen in

comparison, the land shown with no struggle and misery is the one that gets admiration.

In Hosseini's work, a certain class is seen surviving and leading a central life and that class is the one that migrates and is close to western mode of living. Toophan Agha and his son, General Taheri and his family, they have taken the central roles in Hosseini's novel while Hassan, Ali or Rahim Khan, either died or disappeared. The overall impact is as if, those who adapt American life shall survive and others will perish.

Let us see some of the instances of the act of admiration for hopeland from the text. If we see the lines as, "We saw our first Western together, *Rio Bravo* with John Wayne, at the Cinema Park, across the street from my favorite bookstore" (Hosseini 23). The writer may use the western symbols like "Rio Bravo" for two reasons, firstly, to impress the American audience by trying to prove that he is close to their culture and secondly, by inspiring the native Afghans to adapt a western living standard like Amir. In both cases, he is a pro-west, advocating a foreign culture. If we see the following lines, "... I drove off in his black Ford Mustang – a car that drew envious looks everywhere because it was the same car Steve McQueen had driven in *Bullitt...*" (Hosseini 23). "Ford Mustang" is an American motor vehicle that is admired worldwide. Reference to it in the text suggests Hosseini's approbation for Western products. "Envious looks" refers to a sense of competition and jealousy for something exotic and sublime. It gives a connotation that western brands or actors are symbols for admiration.

On one hand, the writer talks about the magnificence of American products while on the other portrays a pathetic picture of his own home as, "We took strolls in

the musty-smelling bazaars...” (Hosseini 23). “Musty smelling” suggests repulsion and dislike. Khaled Hosseini uses a certain pessimistic tone for his home like, “The end, the *official* end, would come...” (Hosseini 32). It may be to propagate the ideology of abandoning the home culture. He stresses the act of migration through the poor description of his native country. The reference to terms like “official end,” denote the notion of Hosseini. He associates pessimism with home and suggests migrating away from it.

Furthermore, he tries to present an assimilationist picture of the two worlds and suggests becoming part of a new home. In the lines as, “Thomas agha is a good man and Betty khanum is so kind, ...” (Hosseini 193). The terms like “Thomas agha” and “Betty ahanum,” used for foreigners, show an urge of the writer to get mixed with a foreign world. These terms suggest the assimilation that the writer advocates. The claim that Thomas Agha is “good” and Betty khanum is “kind” proposes a positive images of assimilation. It advocates the act of migration as good and beneficial for Afghan people.

When Khaled Hosseini expresses his affiliation with the west in his works, at the same time he presents a poor picture of his native country. In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini presents a picture of Afghanistan that resembles Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. In his novel, Hosseini gives a negative image of his home. He shows it as a world of doom and chaos. Especially when Amir goes back to bring Sohrab from Afghanistan, it’s like bringing the boy from heart of darkness. There is no civilization or humanity and Amir, like Marlow, has to go through challenging situations to rescue the child, “... it was a scorching summer day and I was driving up a rutted dirt road, nothing on either side but sunbaked bushes, gnarled, spiny tree trunks, and dried

grass like pale straw. I passed a dead donkey rotting on the side of the road” (Hosseini 179).

The writer’s exaggerated description adds up to the pathetic reputation of home. He uses unnecessary details to stress his point as in this line, “... we drove past the bullet-riddled sign that read...” (Hosseini 200). He continues to highlight the poverty of his country as, “We had crossed the border and the signs of poverty were everywhere” (Hosseini 203). He talks about his people in a ridiculous way as “I spotted a cluster of men sitting on their haunches, like a row of crows, on the carcass of an old burned-out Soviet tank, ...” (Hosseini 203). He uses words like “crows” for his people. His definition of Afghan, formulated through his descriptions, is underprivileged and dismal. The children have been shown as hungry and uncivilized organisms that lack manner and conscience as:

As I ate, I noticed Wahid’s boys, all three thin with dirt-caked faces and short-cropped brown hair under their skullcaps, stealing furtive glances at my digital wrist-watch. (Hosseini 209)

Boys with “dirt-caked” faces stealing “furtive glances” show lack of civilization. The children are also being sold in this unfortunate place as shown in these lines, “There is a Talib official... He visits every month or two. He brings cash with him, not a lot, but better than nothing at all... Usually he’ll take a girl. But not always” (Hosseini 224). Hosseini unveils another evil associated with home. Afghanistan is shown as a land afflicted with child abuse. This adds to the gloomy portrayal of home.

The writer continues to highlight the misery of the homeland, “The building was still standing, but its doors were padlocked, the windows shattered, and the letters K and R missing from its name” (Hosseini 226). The haunted and pathetic description

adds to the darkness. “I saw a dead body near the restaurant... A young man dangled from the end of a rope tied to a beam, his face puffy and blue, ...” (Hosseini 226). All of these references create a negative image of home.

The discussion may be summed up in this way that in this novel, the writer tries to convince his readers that his native country is a land of mishaps and doom. He criticizes the culture and policies of his own people and gives a pitiable sketch. He acts as a mediator and is seen biased towards the Western community. He admires the idea of migration from homeland to hopeland and creates a terrible image of home to justify his position. He has shown the younger generation of his characters to be adhered and assimilated to the customs of a foreign land. The elder generation is however, not assimilated but is seen ambivalent at one stage of their lives. Later this ambivalence turns into a feeling of regard and affiliation towards the foreign countries. This also shows the inclination of Hosseini towards Euro-American world. The next chapter shall reveal more about the writer’s approach.

4.6 CONCLUSION

It may be concluded from the above discussion that some characters and not all in *TKR* migrate to the western worlds. Those who migrate have an innate tendency in them that keeps them uneasy and not at home in Afghanistan. Moreover, the characters assimilate with the foreign culture and adopt a new life style without any constraints unlike any other character in some novels. Characters in some novels have language acquisition issues and they are subject to racial discrimination, as in *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie².

This study also brings us to situate Hosseini’s role in showing the two worlds. His inclination towards western worlds is prominent in this text. He displays a

pathetic image of his homeland to seek assurance and appraisal from the west. Brought up abroad, he is a western-styled writer who is moderating the trade of cultural commodities between his country and the West. In this novel, Hosseini shows a home that is inferior to the hopeland. Analysis of the second primary text chosen for study will reveal more about the writer in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES:CHAPTER-FOUR

¹ See Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter Of Maladies: Stories*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

I have adopted this subheading from Jhumpa Lahiri's Booker Prize winner short story collection

² See Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Americanah*. (First edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013) I have talked about the character of Ifemelu, who talks about issues of being non-native in her blog in chapter 21 of the novel.

CHAPTER 5

REALITY AND DREAM: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED*

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I have analyzed Khaled Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed* which is a story of kinship and disintegration of familial bonds over the course of time. Saboor is a farmer who has two children; AbdUllah and Pari. He sells his daughter Pari to a rich family of Wahdatis. This decision of their father affects the lives of both children. AbdUllah, who had been taking care of his sister Pari after their mother's death, gets disturbed. The plot moves further and we get an introduction to the stepmother of the children, named Parwana. She is seen as a less favored child in her childhood. Out of jealousy, she harms her twin sister, who gets paralyzed for the rest of her life. Parwana has to take care of her until she asks Parwana to help her commit suicide. Their older brother Nabi leaves the village and works for Wahdatis.

Mr. Wahdati and his wife Nila live in Kabul. When Nila tells Nabi of her inability to conceive a child, Nabi talks to Pari's father and then they sell her to Nila Wahdati. As the plot progresses further, AbdUllah leaves Afghanistan and Mr. Wahdati has a stroke due to which Pari and Nila are moved to Paris. Nabi takes care of Mr. Wahdati and later finds that Mr. Wahdati was in love with him. After many years of service, Nabi helps Mr. Wahdati to commit suicide by putting a pillow on his face.

Idris and Timur are introduced who were Wahdati's neighbors and moved to United States after Soviet Invasion. They return to Afghanistan after many years in order to claim and sell their property. Idris is a doctor and makes a bond with a young girl Roshi who had been brutally injured by her uncle. After paying for her operation and medical aid, Idris leaves her and goes back to United States. Many years pass and Idris finds Roshi in States.

Nilu remains unsatisfied with her life and commits suicide. Pari suspects that Nilu was not her biological mother so she decides to look for her parentage. However, she gets married and bears children due to which her quest is suspended. After many years, she receives a letter from Nabi who explains her parentage and adoption. In the end, AbdUllah and Pari are reunited but AbdUllah, owing to his Alzheimer's disease, is unable to remember her.

5.2 THE ROLE OF WRITER

AME starts with an important story of Div. This story summarizes the ideology of the writer. According to the writer, once there was a Div who attacked villages and took away children. One day, he takes away a young child of a farmer. The farmer gets grief stricken and decides to kill Div. He embarks upon a journey towards mountains. He reaches there and meets Div. He tells Div that he intends to kill him because he took his son. Div suggests that the farmer should listen to him before proceeding with the killing. He tells the farmer that he did not kill his son but kept him in a palace and provided him with all the luxuries and comforts of life that the farmer could not provide. The farmer after seeing his son's comfort resolves to go back without taking him.

Judging the writer's biased stance is unlike "solving the riddle of the sphinx" (Kadarkay 230). The idea is that the people should move to a place where they lead a successful and accomplished life, compromising and even neglecting their affiliations with the native cultures. The theme of the novel revolves around this story. Through this story, the writer addresses the reasons for migration. Keeping this idea at the base, he constructs his pro-west scheme. If we analyze the story, we come to know that the story challenges the regular impact of evil. Evil in this story has been shown as a blessing. The writer has tried to prove that those who appear to be "bad" are not actually "bad" Just like America, that is seemingly bad but not actually bad for the Afghans. If Afghan people stop hating America and adopt its ways, they can be prosperous in life. Through this story, the writer proves his role as a mediator between the two cultures, the Afghan and the Western.

Div, in the novel, has the responsibility to civilize the children of poor and uncivilized villagers, as it is the responsibility of a "White Man¹" to civilize the world. The writer takes this idea as a theme and advocates the philosophy of migration as "... he will touch many lives with his kindness and bring happiness to those trapped in sorrow" (Hosseini 11). Div has taken the responsibility of educating the poor.

In this novel, the writer has shown the blood relations to be very weak and temporary. He challenges the bonds of kinship and negates the importance of virtues like loyalty. These virtues have been associated to animals and hence, shown as something inferior, "Mother, whose face was all but lost to him now" (Hosseini 21). In this line the writer highlights the transient nature blood relations. The strongest bond that a person can have is with his mother. Khaled Hosseini, in this novel, challenges this relation and stresses the existence of his characters as lone survivors.

A child who has lost his connection with a relation so pure, can be homeless transcendentally rather eternally.

The bond between brother and sister is usually seen as very strong. In their childhood, one seems almost inseparable from the other. However, this condition cannot last forever. In the novel, the characters have lost each other at an early age and have grown and survived independently. It vindicates that the blood relations, though important, are dispensable. AbdUllah and Pari have lived separate lives and, in the end, they could not even remember each other. Both the brother and the sister have led their lives on their own.

There association may be seen in these lines, “It was a mystery. I have never seen such affinity between two beings. In truth, AbdUllah was as much father to Pari as sibling” (Hosseini 93). This relationship ends in a tragic one-sided remembrance of some lost feeling that once lingered in a mind. The writer deliberately portrays such occurrence to give this message that one should not let the relations pose as hurdles in an individual’s way towards hopeland.

Pari had been given away to a rich family of Wahdati’s. This event signifies the value of needs in comparison to other aspects of life. The need for money led her father to sell Pari to wealthy people. The writer couples this issue with the idea that the relations and emotions subside with time in a way that “... she, with each passing day, [gets] more forgetful of her past life in Shadbagh and of the people in it” (Hosseini 103). At one time, it seems impossible for an individual like Pari to be able to leave her home, her father and above all, her brother. However, she not only leaves her home but also forgets her past and her life in her village. The only memories that are left behind are the ones that she cannot vividly recall.

This is not the case with a character only. The surrounding environment of a character also denies its bond once the character decides to move away from it. It may be seen in the lines as, “No one in the village asked after Pari” (Hosseini 47). Apart from a character’s relationship with his home or native surroundings, he loses his connection with his fellows. We have the example of Pari and her brother and the relationship of two sisters; Parwana and Masooma. The writer has shown this association of two sisters as some fickle phenomenon. One is jealous of the other and as a result, cripples her by pushing her down from a tree. Jealousy of Parwana is shown as, “Everyone loved you, Masooma. No one me. And why, sister? What had I done?” (Hosseini 71). By highlighting such events in his novel, the writer maintains his proposition that the bonds of love and kinship are temporary and have to be cast away if needed..

The writer associates the virtues like loyalty to animals and not to humans as shown, “It was for Pari that Shuja lost all composure. His love for her was vast and unclouded. She was his universe” (Hosseini 25). Shuja was Pari’s dog. We see in the text, “Dogs are like that, ... They’re better at it than some people I’ve come across” (Hosseini 43). The loyalty of man has been challenged here and referred to as a trait of animals. In a comparison, the dogs have been shown superior to men. Hosseini compares humans with animals and declares later to be better as in the following sentence, “These dogs she doted on and treated not as equals to her servants but as superiors, and by several ranks at that” (Hosseini 89). The association of virtues to animals ridicules their impact.

The biased nature of writer is judged by the way he describes his homeland. The writer provides a lens through which the readers can see a shattered image of Afghanistan. Hosseini criticizes his culture, norms and values and gives poor glimpses of the native country as, “... the hollering of a horde of village kids who

chased the big blue car with the tan top and shiny rims” (Hosseini 26). These lines show a lack of civilization in the homeland. The village kids are amazed and astonished by the technology and hence chase a foreign machine with curiosity. There is no law and order in the country as, “At intersections, traffic policemen in ill-fitting uniforms blew their whistles and made authoritative gestures that no one seemed to heed” (Hosseini 34). The state of the cities is shown as lacking rules and regulations. People seem to violate the law with or without any knowledge of it. Furthermore, following reference adds to the lack of civilization in Afghanistan as, “My exact age is a mystery to me, as it is to many Afghans of my generation, ...” (Hosseini 74). This points to the lack of a proper system of government in the homeland. There is mismanagement in the system.

The writer deliberately discusses such aspects to highlight the anomalies of the native country. Hence giving a poor image of Afghanistan to the West and urging its natives to migrate to a better home:

Timur’s father had told them that they would have to “maneuver” through the infamously sluggish, ponderous Afghan bureaucracy—a euphemism for “find the right palms to grease.” (Hosseini 137)

It may be assumed from these lines that Afghanistan is a land of injustice, illegality and lack of civilization. The writer finds weak points of his native country and then describes them in detail. Through Nabi, one of his characters in the novel, the writer narrates the event of Mullah Shekib. The Mullah used to tell everyone that Muslims have Arabic numerals “81” and “18” written in both hands respectively, by God. If we subtract 18 from 81, we get 63, which is the age of Holy Prophet (PBUH). Once a traveler questioned Mullah that he had met a Jew who had the same written on his

hands. The Mullah replied “Then the Jew was a Muslim at heart” (Hosseini 86). This again refers to the negative aspects of home. Religion holds an important position in homeland. Its criticism and ridicule shatters its image. It adds to the gloomy description of home by the writer.

Hosseini displays a pathetic image of home. He targets the uncivilized especially villages of Afghanistan. We may see in the text as, “The distant provinces, the *qarias*, the small villages. The *real* Afghanistan, so to speak” (Hosseini 40). He discusses the flaws and weaknesses of those areas that are backward and underdeveloped in words as follows:

... people were gathering for a view of her. There was BaitUllah, a childhood friend of mine, looking on from the edge of a roof, squatting with his brothers like a line of crows, all of them chewing *naswar* tobacco. (Hosseini 91)

These lines depict the vulgar nature of villagers. He also addresses the conservative thought of people in Afghan community through the reference that people were getting together for a “view” of Nila Wahdati. It is perhaps because Nila was not wearing a burqa and was all dressed up in fancy new clothes. These clothes were beyond the reach of a common villager.

This conservative approach is seen in the modern Afghan generation as well, “In another picture, Mrs. Wahdati, holding a glass, laughing, her bare arm around the waist of a man who, unthinkably to AbdUllah, was not Mr. Wahdati” (Hosseini 38). The purpose of drawing such an image is to declare the negativity in the minds of natives. The writer compares his native people with animals and, hence, highlights their lack of civilization. He bluntly describes his countrymen as uncivilized. Hosseini moves on to describe negative nature of his Afghan people as, “But Saboor, like many

of my countrymen, had the affliction of pride, an affliction both misbegotten and unshakable” (Hosseini 101).

In both his novels, the writer tries to coin the most miserable definition of “Afghan” by associating all the negative tendencies with it. For example, the pride of Afghan people, as in terms of a superlative notion that no other being can be like them. This has been criticized by the writer in his novel as “I am not Afghan. So I am not real woman” (Hosseini 134).

The culture and its constituents are criticized again and again as “... I fight government, hospital, bureaucracy, bastard neurosurgeon. Every step, I fight for her. And I don’t stop. She has nobody” (Hosseini 136). These are the words of a foreign nurse who has volunteered to work in Afghanistan. The writer in this way tries to establish a bridge between the foreign people and the common masses of Afghanistan. There are two types of migrations that have been shown. Firstly, the native people discard their homes for its backwardness and secondly, the people from other cultures come to Afghanistan to civilize it. In this way, the writer renders these foreigners in the good books of his people and tries to create a positive image of the West.

In comparison between the people of two cultures, the people of the foreign world are shown as superior as compared to the people of home. The comments of a nurse about Roshi’s uncle, who is an Afghan, are “He’s bastard too” (Hosseini 136). Hosseini is keen on showing a pathetic portrayal of the people and places in Afghanistan as,

... he walks down the hallway, past graffiti-spangled walls, rooms with plastic sheeting for doors, a shuffling barefoot old man with an eye patch, patients

lying in stifling-hot rooms with missing lightbulbs. A sour-body smell everywhere. (Hosseini 152)

Khaled Hosseini, in his work, has employed a clash between women of the community and religion in terms of “burqa” in Afghanistan. The women have been shown challenging the oppressive norms of the patriarchal home. This definitely points towards the backward and conservative mentality of the people of homeland. In the text, we see as, “Imagine, ... a woman in Afghanistan arrested for wearing a *burqa*... The lungs of the mullahs inflated with enough gasps to fly a thousand *Hindenburgs*” (Hosseini 181). Wearing a burqa or not, had always been a major issue in conservative Afghan community.

The writer has addressed the issues to strengthen his motif as, “I moved to France because I wished to save my daughter from a certain kind of life” (Hosseini 182). Here the writer educates the women to migrate to the West so that they can be away from the shackles of patriarchy. Nila’s daughter is Pari, who had been bought from a poor farmer. One of the connotations of Div that the writer talks about is an independence of the women of Afghanistan from a kingdom of misery. Nila is a Div for Pari who has saved her from a horrible life by taking her away from home.

The character of Nila Wahdati in the novel rises against the patriarchal domination. She is seen defying the social norms imposed on her and other women. Her ideology enables her to transcend from the male withhold. She breaks away from her culture and her surroundings. In the lines as, “Let’s say I’ve divorced myself from my more troublesome half” (Hosseini 180), she refers to her life in Afghanistan. These lines can be seen through Lukacs idea of transcendental homelessness.

When she is no longer at home with herself, Nila detaches herself from this life and embarks upon a quest to find a new home. She looks for a place where she can have peace and a life of her choice. In doing so, she rejects all the customs of homeland and the traditions outside the homeland. One such example is her inability to find a perfect man for her. In pursuit of that man, she ends up being in bed with almost anyone who meets her on the way. She is seen as, “I drank and smoked and took lovers” (Hosseini 194).

Nila is seen unable to find a perfect spot in life. She is breaking away from a certain kind of life that had disturbed her in the past. However, as a result she is nowhere near a point where her journey would be fulfilled. See the following lines, “I was angry about the attitude that I had to be protected from sex. That I had to be protected from my own body. Because I was a woman” (Hosseini 212).

Nila remains dissatisfied with her life till her death. It seems as if she had been on a journey that had no end except death. She was in search of a home that did not exist anywhere. She kept challenging the barriers and went on breaking and trespassing them but the reason for which she did so was never achieved. Her condition may be termed as “Eternal Homelessness” rather than transcendental homelessness because if a home had been transcended, she would have attained peace at one spot. However, this wasn't the case. She went on roaming into the open world and died searching with nothing to be found. She was in a state of an eternal quest that never ended.

A glimpse of Nila's eternal homelessness is seen in AbdUllah's daughter Pari. She is also shown as the one who is unhappy with her surroundings. She yearns to achieve a life that may not be there at all. Hence, she is set on a journey with no end.

There is a clash between the women of younger generation like Pari and the patriarchy as shown in the text as, “I begged Baba to end Farsi classes, but he refused” (Hosseini 362). Farsi is the native language at home. Younger generation is reluctant to learn it. Moreover, her reluctance also shows that she is at the verge of boycotting the life that the patriarchy has to offer her. She is reluctant to accept any token of association with the native culture. She wishes to break away from all the barriers and restrictions just like Nila.

We see in the text as, “The room where we studied-a dozen other Afghan girls and I-was tiny, had no air-conditioning, and smelled of unwashed linen” (Hosseini 362). This highlights criticism of writer on religion. As shown in *TKR*, Khaled Hosseini criticizes religion in *AME*. Highlighting the negativities and exaggerating them, creates a sense of ridicule and hatred towards homeland. Moreover, criticism on religion signifies that there is a need of a revolution that brings civilization to the homeland or at least enables the people to move away from it.

Khaled Hosseini takes full advantage of the situation and criticizes the state of mosques. He educates the readers to break away from the bonds that unite them with culture, religion being one of them. We see in the text as, “I would find myself thinking of Jeremy Warwick, from math” (Hosseini 363). Pari is sitting in mosque taking Quran lessons during which she thinks of Jeremy. Jeremy signifies a rebellion with the home and beginning of a journey that has no ending. Once she embarks upon this quest, she will be in a state of oblivion, a maze of unattainable wishes and dreams. The perfection that she idealizes is nowhere and hence she will be a victim of eternal homelessness.

The relationship of characters with their home in terms of wealth is very important. There are certain characters that discard their home in search of wealth. There are certain other characters that come back home to reclaim their wealth. There are still others who stay at home and accumulate all the wealth left by the migrants and also snatch the share of poor people. These three categories have been depicted in detail by the writer. AbdUllah is a character that migrates in search of wealth. He establishes Abe's Kabob House in USA.

5.3 THE TWO WORLDS

The characters of Timur and Idris are the examples of those who have discarded their homeland and then return to reclaim the property that they had left, "... they have come back to Kabul: to reclaim the property that had belonged to their fathers, ... The property's worth is skyrocketing..." (Hosseini 136). Their association with the home is need-based. They have no emotional attachment with home whatsoever. They have been defined as, "... wealthy, wide-eyed exiles-come home to gawk at the carnage now that the boogeymen have left" (Hosseini 135). They have torn themselves between two cultures.

They become a part of that culture where they find benefit. We see in the text as, "He has behaved like the quintessential ugly Afghan-American, ..." (Hosseini 147). These characters are similar to the characters like General Taheri (a character in *TKR*) who abandon their homes in hardships and then come back to reclaim the fortune, once the trouble is over. Their association with the home is weak and fickle in nature. And this also points out the nature of certain Afghan people.

Apart from coming back and reclaiming the property, there are certain characters that stay at home and then occupy the territory left behind by the migrators.

In this way they get rich and monopolize the homeland in absence of those who left. The character of Commander Sahib is an example of those characters that stay at home in the name of religion and then acquire the abandoned properties and become wealthy.

The character of Assef in *TKR* is another example of these types of people. Though they claim to work for development and progress of homeland, their favor to homeland is limited to their own benefits. In addition to the people who migrate from their homes and come to Afghanistan for its betterment, these stayers are second in providing benefit to their home. These entities are beneficial for the homeland than those who discarded it. We see in the text as, “Baba jan ... had a hand in the construction of many of them” (Hosseini 245). This line is about Commander Sahib who had built a new village and worked for the development of the area.

There is a reference to a certain type of people as, “We’re not like these people” (Hosseini 147). There is a difference between those who left their homes and those who stayed. The stayers went through hardships, tortures, killings and lootings. The migrants on the other hand enjoyed a life of peace. They might have faced certain wealth issues but on the whole their life was far pleasant than those who stayed.

Apart from home, the migrants also possess a relationship of money with their fellow natives. The Afghan society is divided into rich and poor. There is a line that differentiates one from the other. We may see in the text as, “He was looking at them with an expression that was not quite unfriendly but remote, impenetrable” (Hosseini 37). This reference shows the difference that lies between Nabi and his master. Though he is kind to Nabi, he keeps a distance as shown, “I referred to her always as Bibi Sahib, with the deference expected of me” (Hosseini 82). There exists a space

between the two communities. Rich people hold a position in which they have attained the loyalty of the poor, most probably due to the needs that tie the two together. The rich are capable of buying anything and everything of the poor, including their children. Pari had been bought from a poor family. Need ties the poor to the rich.

Owing to this need, there is a certain class among the poor that are loyal and devoted to the rich. These are the people who get closer to the rich with their loyalty and hence, dominate the rest of the poor. They act as a link between the rich and the poor. The character of Nabi is one such example. He accepts his modest rank in Wahdati house and remains loyal and humble all his life. His loyalty and his role as a moderator can be judged by this reference to the text as,

I berated them for gossiping like a sewing circle of old women and reminded them that without the people like Mr. Wahdati the likes of us would be back in our villages collecting cow dung. (Hosseini 81)

This character is similar to the writers who act as moderators between their home and the West. They dominate their fellow natives in terms of their loyalty and attachment to the West. Just like Nabi who is ready to strike his fellow servants for his masters as shown as, "... I struck him, open-palmed, across the temple as hard as I could. I told him he was a donkey and that he must do as he was told" (Hosseini 106). In a relationship between masters and slaves, there are certain slaves that are more privileged than the rest. Masters choose them to dominate and dictate the rest. Such are the roles of Diaspora writers. Apart from being the Comprador Intelligentsia and displaying a false image of home, they are the Chosen Slaves who dominate their countrymen.

The characters like Nabi, wish to get out of their homes and move away. Nabi for instance, discards his home and moves to a city where he works for the Wahdatis, "... I felt stifled by the life I had in the village with my sisters, one of whom was an invalid" (Hosseini 74). There is another type of migration which is done by Nabi and that is within homeland but from one part to the other. Though he has left his immediate home, he is still working for his home. It makes him better than the migrants who abandon the country and move away to serve the West.

The characters who migrate to the hopelands get assimilated especially the younger generation. Their modes of life including names and language get westernized as, "... he thinks of Zabi and Lemar back in San Jose, who have long professed their dislike of their Afghan names, ..." (Hosseini 156). Idris had migrated to USA and after getting married, his children belong to the hopeland. Their names are the proof of their assimilation with the West. Hosseini writes, "... when Isabelle is three, Pari, a few months pregnant with Alain, ..." (Hosseini 224). Isabelle and Alain are the names of Pari's children.

These characters have completely detached themselves from Home and transcended towards a new habitat. They discard the previous affiliations and contain no liking for it. Their language possesses the tinge of western culture as, "I can't believe we ran into ol' Nabi, ... Jesus" (Hosseini 158). Their planning includes the events of a foreign culture as shown in this line as, "Mother died in this house, on a sunny Christmas Eve morning, ..." (Hosseini 358).

Khaled Hosseini develops a feeble image of his homeland and tries to gain the attention and sympathy of the Euro-American world. His underprivileged description of home culture is a lens that enables the readers to see the weaknesses of the country.

Hosseini writes, "... Idris recalls with fondness the maniac chaos of Kabul's traffic. It's strange now to guide the Lexus down the orderly, pothole-free southbound lanes of the 101, ..." (Hosseini 159).

On another occasion, the writer gives a short review of his home through a character who has returned from Afghanistan in this way, "He describes for her, the shell-blasted schools, the squatters living in roofless buildings, the beggars, the mud, the fickle electricity, ..." (Hosseini 159). The writer is sorry for what his home has done to the people as Hosseini writes, "I felt a need to apologize to Cesar for what had happened to Hector in my father's homeland" (Hosseini 352). The reference to "father's homeland" proves the assimilation of younger generation into western culture.

Time and again, the writer idolizes the western articles, music and other commodities of everyday living as, "He owned a mid-1940s model Chevrolet, blue with tan top, ..." (Hosseini 76). He uses an unnecessarily long list of western celebrities, "... a lengthy discussion of Bud Powell, Sonny Stitt, Dizzy Gillespie, ... Charlie Parker. ... Chet Baker and Miles Davis, ..." (Hosseini 187). By showing his characters to be fond of such artists, Hosseini tries to prove that the people who have migrated are now part of the West. They have no concern for their past. He wishes them to be accepted by the foreign culture to which they have migrated. He is anxious perhaps due to the difference of wealth and stature between the two nations as, "For the price of that home theater we could have built a school in Afghanistan" (Hosseini 164).

5.4 CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that the writer shows an assimilationist stance towards the foreign culture. He portrays the negativities of his own culture and proves it to be inferior and pathetic. His agenda is to make his countrymen believe that not Afghanistan but USA is the land of their dreams. He is therefore a part of Comprador Intelligentsia. The detailed conclusion of this research work is given in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES:CHAPTER-FIVE

¹ See Moore, Katharine. *Kipling and the White Man's Burden*. (London: Faber, 1968.)
I refer to Kipling's use of term "White Man" in his poem.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has focused two novels of Khaled Hosseini and analyzed migration of individuals from one place to another. In this research, I have discussed roots and process of migration of Afghan characters. I have also studied the relationship of these characters with host cultures in post-migration scenario. I have kept in mind the role of writer. I utilized “Transcendental Homelessness” by Georg Lukacs as my theoretical lens. This concept has proved to be useful since it has met all the requirements to study the process of migration. I have been able to evaluate the reasons that made certain characters migrate from homeland to hopeland. Lukacs’ assertion that difficulties and harshness of circumstances take the characters from one place to another has put me in a perspective where I managed to study and discuss the issues that led to migration.

Bhabha’s notion of “Ambivalence” has helped me analyze the relationship of a character with his/her home. I have taken it as a supporting idea in my framework but it has enabled me to explore the complexities of an association between the characters and their homes. In addition to migration and relationship of characters with their homes, I have evaluated the role of primary writer in depiction of homes and studied his approach towards migration through Appiah’s idea of ‘Comprador Intelligentsia’. The purpose of this research has been to trace the native culture being traded off for western benefits. In addition to this, the role of factors, like class and age remained a necessity in development of an association of Afghan migrants with western countries.

Utilizing Transcendental Homelessness, in order to trace the trading of culture, I have found out that hardships in home have led many characters to migration. The process of migration in the primary texts depends on various factors. One of the most important factors is the social status. People who had wealth and fame in homeland had no trouble in migrating. A reason for this is their choice to pursue a luxurious lifestyle. There are certain characters in the novels that did not migrate even when they had a chance to. This favors my argument that the characters migrated because they were afraid to lose a luxurious life that they enjoyed in homeland. In pursuit of luxury and stability, they migrated to America.

Rich people have the resources and opportunities to move between homes. When the circumstances posed a threat to their posh life, they ran away to the promising lands. The characters like General Taheri in *TKR* or Timur and Idris in *AME* exemplify such type of characters whose affiliation with homeland is need-based. Their relationship with homeland is conditional and they seek benefits rather than emotional or nostalgic attachment to any culture. They migrated to the West for an opportunity and when situation got favorable, they returned to Afghanistan to reclaim the lost possessions and status.

Another type of characters included those who had a strong connection with their home but they migrated because they could migrate. They had survival in their minds and instead of staying with the rest at home and instead of fighting the hardships, they moved away. They never returned. Their relationship with homeland is classified as a mere infatuation because they got assimilated to the new culture. The characters like Toophan Agha in *TKR* fall into this category. He had a deep regard for his country which may be judged by his act of putting the dirt of homeland in his pocket. However, as he landed on western shores, he became an American and never

returned to Afghanistan. Even after the stabilization of circumstances in homeland, Agha stayed an American. He shifted his loyalties and became an American by spirit.

The third type of people is the poor who could not migrate on their own and needed a higher source for migration. They had people above them who took them away to homelands. They did not possess a significant relationship with their native culture. They migrated and assimilated to a foreign culture. They migrated because they had to earn money and establish themselves. Otherwise, their poverty would perish them. The character of AbdUllah in *AME* is placed in this category.

Another type of migrants is of those who did not have the knowledge of migration or adherence to any culture. They got transported through a medium that implanted them into the foreign world. They were brought up bearing the notion that the foreign world is their home. The characters like Pari in *AME* may be classified as this type. She had been adopted by a rich family who took her away. She grew up abroad and lived with this notion that it is her home. The case of Amir in *TKR* is different. He migrated in his childhood and considered America his home but he migrated because he wanted to move away from his past.

We can sum up the above forms of migration in this way that financial benefits are not the only reason for trading the native culture. There are multiple factors that contribute to the act of migration. Economic benefits, social security and childhood tragedies are all responsible for the negotiation of home and host land. The writer has enlisted these issues to make the utility of migration more prominent. People with various backgrounds can migrate. It is possible for masses belonging to all the social strata. This conclusion leads to a speculation that shall be discussed later on.

The relationship of generations with homeland and hopeland is of vital importance in this research. There are two generations in terms of age that migrated in both the novels. The older generation had to detach themselves from home and faced a little difficulty in associating them to hopelands. The association of this generation with host remained ambivalent as some characters like Toophan Agha got assimilated while others like General Taheri remained on their toes to return and acquire the lost wealth. The younger generation lost their affiliation with the home culture completely and got assimilated to the new home in all respects of identity, loyalty and emotional attachments. The characters of Amir in *TKR* and of Pari in *AME* are the examples of such generation. It may be noted here that the inclination of generations towards the host culture is neither factual nor coincidental. It is a deliberate act on part of writer as he is biased towards the lifestyle that he has chosen for younger generation of his characters.

At many stages in the novels, as highlighted in the analysis chapters, the writer portrays a pathetic image of Afghanistan. In comparison between the two worlds, he has shown his native world to be weak, flawed, unstable and uncivilized. The writer shows homeland as the land of sexists, racists and religious extremists. Khaled Hosseini advocates the ideology that the people of Afghanistan should abandon their native land and move to the West which is, as shown by the writer, a civilized world. The characters appear to have achieved a stable life after their migration. This notion provokes many native strugglers to shift their loyalties and move to Euro-American worlds where they can lead successful lives.

The writer has taken the example of Div who is a blessing in disguise. This may educate the masses that USA is a Div for the people and they should respect it and adapt to its customs. The writer plays the role of a mediator when he displays a

pathetic image of his home. In contrast to home, he highlights the charm and positivity of the hopelands. The writer admires the western countries and refers to western products in his texts with regard and respect. In doing so, he provides us with a glimpse of his loyalty towards west. He is a western-styled writer who has mediated in the negotiation of cultural, economic and emotional associations between the two worlds.

I have answered my research questions through this study. The first question demands the reasons for the process of migration. I have discussed the factors and reasons for migration already. Multiple factors led to the migration of individuals chief of which were economic and emotional stabilities. The second part of this question has brought me to the conclusion that the process of migration has been simple. The way Hosseini is inclined towards the west is self-evident. Almost all the characters move away from home and appear on the western soil. The writer did not pay much attention to the act of migration in itself but highlighted the pre- and post-migration scenario.

The second question demanded the role of class and age in association with west. The answer to this question is that both the class and age have been important factors in migration and affiliation with foreign worlds. Rich people are the important vectors for successful migration. They not only move themselves but may take the poor class with them. The age factor has helped the writer to prove that attachment or loyalty to any nation is dependent upon time. It is more about the benefits that the individuals get from their association with a better world.

In response to the third question, I have analyzed writer's role in portraying the home and host cultures. I have also studied the comparison that the writer has made in his

novels. I have found out that the writer, when he describes his home, uses a pessimistic tone and draws a poor picture of a home. He associates all the evils with it and tries to prove that home is an uncivilized territory. On the other hand, when he discusses the western world, his stance becomes admiring towards hopeland. He is inspired by the civilization of the west and in comparison of the two worlds, he chooses Euro-American worlds as better than the homeland.. The writer has chosen a style through which he has shown the appreciation for host lands.

This study has led me to some useful findings. One of these findings addresses the loophole in Lukacs' idea. Georg Lukacs talks about the movement of soul from one place to another. In doing so, he limits the movement to two well-defined destinations. However, if we analyze the character of Nila Wahdati in *AME*, we come to know that she migrates in a way that surpasses Lukacs' notion of movement. She abandons her home to be homeless forever. Her movement is not similar to Said's concept of "Exile". Edward Said defines exile as, "It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." However, Nila embarks upon a journey that has no end. She is rebellious to patriarchy, to society, to every country, custom and religion and, above all, to herself. She has no remorse for the loss of home and gets homeless for eternity. This phenomenon may be termed as "Eternal Homelessness" as an inspiration and extension of Lukacs work. It counters Bruce Robbins notion that "Absolute homelessness is indeed a myth..." (Robbins 173). Even the displacement from home, which Samir Dayal calls the "geographical displacement" (Dayal 46), is not coherent with this case as 'displacement' may refer that the subject belonged to some place at one time. It may signify the deliberate movement of a soul from home towards homelessness. This idea may find a fruitful

application in feminist perspective. Exemplifying the character of Nila, the idea is applicable to each woman who is rebellious towards patriarchy and home.

In view of the above discussion, it is concluded that some characters in Afghanistan migrate for wealth and stability. They assimilate to the foreign culture and become part of the new home. In my analysis, Khaled Hosseini has come through as part of comprador intelligentsia and paved way for Afghan citizens to transcend their home. He has painted a positive picture of hopeland for his readers.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The idea of transcendental homelessness may be applied to the texts of other diaspora writers who stress the impact of migration. There are certain writers like Mohsin Hamid who show migration from home to the west and then back home. If studied through Lukacs idea, such work may add to the transcendental homelessness in a way as mentioned above. One may derive some conclusions that discuss the movement of characters from home to a hopeland and then back home. This may broaden the canvas of Lukacs' impression by pointing out a possibility that in addition to migration from home to an outside world, there may be a movement back home.

Playing With Fire is the work of Richa Nagar and her fellow writers. It may prove to be a useful study if seen through the lens of transcendental homelessness. The journey which they call "A journey of our lives and work" (Anupamlata 3), is the movement of characters from the cages of patriarchy towards freedom. The writer is of the view that "... under the weight of those chains are we able to imagine new possibilities..." (Anupamlata 3). These "possibilities" if taken as "hopeland" may be studied with Lukacs lens.

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