

THE POLITICS OF AFGHAN IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE: WAR, DIASPORA, AND HOME

Naveed Khan

Email: naveedkhan.english@gmail.com

English lecturer

ABSTRACT

Human identity is fundamentally constituted through social interaction, collective belonging, and the sharing of cultural, political, linguistic, religious, and normative frameworks. While collective identities provide individuals and communities with a sense of belonging, continuity, and social cohesion, they may simultaneously generate processes of exclusion, discrimination, and othering when confronted with competing or divergent identities. This study critically examines the construction, fragmentation, and crisis of Afghan identity as represented in Khaled Hosseini's selected fictional works. Drawing upon poststructuralist deconstruction and the theory of cultural hybridity, the study interrogates the complex historical, political, social, and cultural forces that contribute to the destabilization of individual and collective identities.

Hosseini's fictions consequently emerge as a significant literary sigh for examining fractured belonging, homelessness, cultural dislocation, and the persistent negotiation of identity within a conflict-ridden and culturally heterogeneous Afghan society.

Keywords: Identity Crisis; Cultural Hybridity; Displacement; Homelessness; Marginalization; Warfare; Afghan Identity

Introduction

Khaled Hosseini's novels include *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), and *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013). The selected novels of Hosseini are written as trilogy of Afghanistan. These novels express the cultural norms, values and taboos, geopolitical significance, lawlessness, social evils and the menace of perpetual wars in Afghanistan in paramount artistic way. It is only possible through the fictions to highlight the grim realities of a war-stricken country like Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the genre of fiction is overwhelmingly owned in the contemporary world since it is the exclusive genre that offers a lens to comprehend the complicated and cumbersome structure of Afghanistan. In the portrayal of a widespread description of Afghanistan it is more convenient to see how things work in countries like Afghanistan. Furthermore my area of exploring the identity complicated nature captivating me to look into a comprehensive fiction written on Afghanistan and its people. Found it interesting in the fiction of Hosseini's, since it offered a lens about the contemporary circumstances in Afghanistan while explaining its past factors. Therefore, I found that the fictions of Khalid Hosseini could be a better choice to work on. Additionally, I have used different data basis and diversified search engines to get access through so that I could found relevant work on Afghanistan and in the field. It is to share that although I figured a few research project but failed to get access to it.

Structuralism, Language, and the Construction of Identity

The study of identity in literary and cultural scholarship is deeply indebted to structuralist theories of language and meaning. Structuralism conceptualizes language not merely as a medium of communication but as an underlying system through which individuals organize, interpret, and make intelligible their social reality. Ferdinand de Saussure's foundational contribution to structural linguistics established the principle that meaning is produced relationally within a system of signs rather than residing inherently within individual words or objects. His distinction between the *signifier* and the *signified* demonstrates that linguistic meaning emerges through socially constituted systems of difference. From this perspective, identity can similarly be understood as a relational construct produced through cultural, linguistic, and social systems rather than as an autonomous or naturally predetermined essence.

Such an approach is particularly significant for the study of Afghan identity, where national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural affiliations have historically intersected with political conflict and competing claims to belonging.

Structuralist thought further emphasizes the role of binary oppositions in the organization of meaning. Concepts such as self/other, civilized/barbaric, native/foreign, male/female, Muslim/non-Muslim, and homeland/diaspora acquire significance through their differentiation from perceived opposites. In literary representations of Afghanistan, these binaries are particularly consequential because political and cultural identities are frequently constructed through processes of inclusion and exclusion. The representation of the Afghan subject, therefore, cannot be separated from the discursive construction of the “Other”—whether the Other is conceptualized as a foreign occupier, ethnic rival, religious outsider, political opponent, refugee, or culturally displaced individual. Structuralism provides an initial framework for identifying these systems of differentiation; however, its assumption of relatively stable structures of meaning has subsequently been challenged by poststructuralist theorists.

Poststructuralism, Deconstruction, and the Instability of Identity

Poststructuralism constitutes an important theoretical departure from structuralism because it questions the stability, coherence, and determinacy of linguistic and cultural structures. Jacques Derrida’s theory of deconstruction, in particular, challenges the assumption that binary oppositions produce fixed and hierarchically ordered meanings.

Derrida demonstrates that oppositional categories are mutually dependent, unstable, and internally contradictory. Meaning is therefore continually deferred and reconstructed rather than permanently fixed within a particular sign or category. This theoretical intervention is especially productive for examining Afghan identity because the category “Afghan” cannot be treated as a homogeneous or historically unchanging identity. Rather, it encompasses multiple and sometimes competing ethnic, linguistic, regional, religious, gendered, political, and diasporic subject positions.

From a poststructuralist perspective, identity is not an essential or singular possession but a contingent effect of discourse, power, history, and representation. This understanding is particularly relevant to literary narratives concerned with war and displacement, in which established identities are repeatedly destabilized by political violence, forced migration, exile, and cultural transformation. Afghan identity represented in contemporary South Asian literature may consequently be understood as an ongoing process of negotiation rather than a fixed cultural essence. Literary texts become important sites through which dominant definitions of national belonging can be questioned, displaced, or reconstructed.

Derridean deconstruction is further relevant to the study of identity politics because it makes visible the ideological assumptions embedded within apparently natural categories. Political discourses frequently invoke supposedly unified identities—such as “the Afghan,” “the Muslim,” “the refugee,” or “the native”—while suppressing the internal differences that characterize the communities represented by these terms.

Deconstruction enables the researcher to interrogate how such categories acquire authority and how they may be employed to legitimize exclusion, marginalization, or political domination. In representations of Afghanistan, therefore, identity is inseparable from the operation of power: the definition of who belongs, who is excluded, and who is authorized to speak for the nation becomes a political act.

Stuart Hall: Identity, Difference, and Cultural Formation

Stuart Hall’s intervention into cultural studies provides a particularly significant framework for conceptualizing identity as relational, historical, and continuously produced. Hall rejects the notion of cultural identity as a fixed essence inherited unchanged from the past. Instead, he conceptualizes identity as a process of “becoming” as well as “being,” shaped by historical

experience, cultural representation, political power, and relations of difference. His approach is particularly relevant to the study of Afghan identity because Afghanistan's contemporary cultural formations have been profoundly shaped by war, migration, political upheaval, colonial and postcolonial encounters, and transnational cultural exchanges.

Hall's understanding of identity emphasizes that subjects occupy multiple and sometimes contradictory positions simultaneously. An individual may, for instance, identify through nationality, ethnicity, religion, language, class, gender, region, or diasporic experience, with none of these categories independently constituting the totality of the self. Identity consequently emerges through the intersection of multiple subject positions. This conceptualization provides a productive framework for literary representations of Afghan characters whose identities are frequently fractured by war, displacement, exile, and encounters with foreign cultures.

Hall's theory is particularly valuable for understanding diaspora. Diasporic identity is characterized not simply by geographical movement from one country to another but by an ongoing negotiation between memories of the homeland and experiences within the host society. The diasporic subject may simultaneously inhabit the cultural memory of the homeland and the social realities of the present. This condition produces what may be described as a divided or doubled cultural consciousness, in which belonging is neither completely located in the homeland nor fully transferred to the host society. Contemporary South Asian literary representations of Afghanistan can therefore be examined as narratives of cultural negotiation in which migration generates new configurations of identity rather than merely replacing one identity with another.

Hall's emphasis on representation is equally significant. Identities do not exist independently of the narratives through which communities imagine and represent themselves. Literature consequently becomes an important cultural space for negotiating Afghan identity. Narratives of war, exile, refugeehood, and return participate in the construction of collective memory by selecting, preserving, contesting, and reinterpreting experiences of violence and displacement. Afghan identity in contemporary literature should therefore be examined not only as a social or political category but also as a representational and discursive formation.

Homi K. Bhabha and the Politics of Cultural Hybridity

Homi K. Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity further expands the conceptualization of identity by challenging the assumption that cultures exist as pure, internally coherent, and mutually exclusive entities. Bhabha argues that cultural identities are produced through interaction, negotiation, translation, and encounters between different cultural formations. His concept of hybridity is particularly applicable to Afghan diasporic literature because prolonged migration, displacement, and transnational mobility create cultural spaces in which the boundaries between homeland and host society become increasingly unstable.

Bhabha's concept of the "Third Space" is particularly useful for examining the experiences of displaced and diasporic Afghan subjects. The Third Space represents an interstitial cultural location in which different identities and cultural meanings encounter, negotiate, and transform one another. The diasporic subject therefore does not necessarily belong exclusively to either the homeland or the host society. Instead, identity emerges within an intermediate space characterized by cultural translation and negotiation. Such a framework is valuable for analyzing literary characters who simultaneously retain memories, values, languages, and traditions associated with Afghanistan while adopting or negotiating the cultural practices of South Asian, Western, or other host societies.

Bhabha's concept of *mimicry* further illuminates the unequal power relations involved in cultural encounters. Mimicry occurs when the culturally subordinated subject adopts aspects of the dominant culture, often producing a form of resemblance that nevertheless remains incomplete. In diasporic contexts, mimicry may involve language, dress, social practices,

educational norms, or cultural behavior through which migrants attempt to negotiate acceptance within the host society. Yet this process does not necessarily produce complete assimilation. Instead, it may generate an ambivalent identity characterized by simultaneous identification with and distance from both cultural locations.

The concept of hybridity is consequently significant for the study of Afghan diaspora because displacement does not merely result in the loss of an original identity; it can generate new and complex forms of cultural belonging. Afghan diasporic subjects may preserve memories of homeland while simultaneously participating in the cultural life of their host societies. Their identities therefore become products of cultural translation rather than straightforward continuations of an original national identity. Contemporary South Asian literature provides a particularly important textual space for examining this process because literary narratives frequently represent the tensions between cultural inheritance, displacement, assimilation, and cultural renewal.

War, Displacement, and the Fragmentation of Afghan Identity

The existing theoretical literature on identity becomes particularly significant when applied to the historical experience of Afghanistan. Decades of political instability, foreign intervention, armed conflict, ideological contestation, and forced migration have profoundly affected the formation and representation of Afghan identity. War disrupts not only political institutions and geographical communities but also the cultural structures through which individuals understand themselves and their relationship with others. The destruction of homes, separation of families, refugee movements, and exposure to competing political and ideological systems can produce profound disruptions in individual and collective identities.

From a poststructuralist perspective, war may therefore be understood as a condition that destabilizes established categories of belonging. Political actors frequently attempt to consolidate power by producing simplified distinctions between insiders and outsiders, loyalists and enemies, authentic and inauthentic citizens, or legitimate and illegitimate forms of cultural identity. Such processes demonstrate that identity is not merely a personal phenomenon but a field of political struggle. The contestation over who qualifies as authentically Afghan, for example, can intersect with ethnic, linguistic, religious, gendered, and ideological hierarchies.

Literary representations of Afghan conflict are significant because they frequently foreground experiences that are marginalized by dominant political narratives. Fiction can recover individual memories from large-scale historical events and demonstrate how geopolitical violence enters everyday life. The literary representation of war consequently enables an examination of identity at both the macro and micro levels: at the macro level, through state power, foreign intervention, ideological conflict, and national politics; and at the micro level, through family relationships, personal trauma, displacement, gender relations, and individual memory.

Diaspora, Exile, and the Negotiation of Belonging

Diaspora constitutes another major dimension of contemporary Afghan identity formation. Large-scale displacement has transformed Afghan identity into a transnational phenomenon, extending the cultural and political experience of Afghanistan beyond its territorial boundaries. Diasporic communities negotiate their relationship with Afghanistan through memories, family histories, language, religious practices, cultural traditions, and literary representations. The homeland may consequently become simultaneously a geographical location, an imagined community, and a repository of cultural memory.

Hall's conceptualization of diasporic identity and Bhabha's theory of hybridity together provide an effective framework for understanding this condition. While Hall emphasizes the unfinished and historically contingent nature of diasporic identity, Bhabha highlights the cultural negotiations that occur within interstitial spaces. Together, these approaches challenge

binary understandings of homeland and host society. The Afghan diasporic subject is neither necessarily detached from Afghanistan nor completely assimilated into the host culture. Instead, the subject continuously negotiates multiple cultural affiliations.

Contemporary South Asian literature is therefore significant for examining the political dimensions of diaspora. Literary narratives may transform displacement from an exclusively geographical experience into a political and cultural question concerning citizenship, belonging, memory, exclusion, and representation. The diasporic subject often occupies a complicated position: simultaneously an insider through cultural inheritance and an outsider because of geographical displacement. This ambivalence can generate both alienation and new forms of cultural agency.

Cultural Memory and the Literary Reconstruction of Afghanistan

The concept of cultural memory provides an additional dimension to the study of Afghan identity. Cultural memory refers to the ways in which communities preserve, transmit, reinterpret, and contest memories of their collective past. In contexts marked by prolonged conflict and displacement, memory becomes particularly important because political violence may disrupt conventional mechanisms through which historical experience is transmitted across generations. Literature can function as an alternative archive through which experiences of war, migration, loss, trauma, and belonging are preserved.

The relationship between memory and identity is therefore reciprocal. Collective memories contribute to the construction of identity, while existing identities influence which memories are preserved, forgotten, or marginalized. Literary narratives may challenge official historical accounts by foregrounding experiences of ordinary individuals, women, refugees, ethnic minorities, and displaced communities. Such narratives complicate homogenizing representations of Afghanistan by revealing the multiplicity of experiences contained within the category of Afghan identity. Cultural memory is also central to diasporic identity because displacement frequently intensifies the significance of the homeland as a remembered and imagined space. Memories of childhood, family, language, landscapes, cultural practices, and experiences of violence may become central resources through which diasporic subjects reconstruct their relationship with Afghanistan. At the same time, memory is not necessarily a transparent reproduction of the past; it is selective, mediated, and continuously reconstructed. Consequently, literary representations of Afghan memory should be understood as processes of cultural interpretation through which the past is repeatedly reimagined in response to present circumstances.

Class Conflict: A Structural Determinant of Afghan Identity Crisis

Class conflict constitutes one of the most persistent structures through which Khaled Hosseini represents the fragmentation of Afghan identity in *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*. Across the three novels, social class is not merely a background feature of Afghan society; rather, it operates as a formative mechanism through which relationships, opportunities, belonging, and individual identities are regulated. Hosseini repeatedly demonstrates that the category of “Afghan” is internally differentiated by wealth, lineage, ethnicity, gender, and social status. Consequently, the apparent unity of Afghan society is repeatedly undermined by hierarchies that privilege certain groups while marginalizing others. These class divisions become particularly significant when considered alongside war and displacement, because access to mobility, security, education, and material resources determines who can escape political violence and who remains exposed to it. Class, therefore, intersects with the broader politics of identity by determining whose identity is protected, whose identity is subordinated, and whose experiences are rendered socially invisible.

The relationship between Amir, Hassan, Baba, and Ali in *The Kite Runner* provides a significant illustration of this class-based organization of identity. Although Hassan and Amir develop an intimate childhood relationship, their social positions remain sharply unequal: Amir

belongs to the privileged household, whereas Hassan occupies the subordinate position of a servant and is further marginalized by his Hazara identity. Their relationship thus embodies the contradiction between personal intimacy and structural inequality. Hassan's loyalty to Amir does not erase the social hierarchy that separates them; rather, it reveals how deeply class and ethnic hierarchies are embedded within interpersonal relationships. Hosseini consequently complicates the notion of a unified Afghan identity by demonstrating that individuals who share the same geographical and cultural environment may experience radically different forms of belonging. Hassan's marginalization illustrates how class, ethnicity, and social status intersect to produce a fractured national identity in which some subjects are positioned as authentic members of society while others remain socially subordinate

Class, Mobility, and Unequal Experiences of War

The relationship between social class and political violence becomes even more visible when Afghanistan descends into prolonged conflict. In *The Kite Runner*, Baba possesses the economic and social resources necessary to leave Afghanistan when political violence intensifies, whereas Ali and Hassan lack comparable opportunities for mobility. The difference is significant because displacement is not experienced equally across social classes. Those with economic resources can transform geographical displacement into a strategy of survival, while socially and economically marginalized groups remain more vulnerable to violence and dispossession. Hosseini therefore represents migration not simply as a consequence of war but also as a class-mediated phenomenon. The capacity to leave the homeland becomes itself a form of privilege.

The destruction experienced by marginalized communities further exposes the unequal distribution of security within Afghan society. Ali's inability to escape the conditions of violence demonstrates how political conflict interacts with pre-existing social hierarchies. In this sense, war does not create identity fragmentation in isolation; rather, it intensifies social divisions that already exist. The destruction of homes and communities consequently becomes a destruction of the social and cultural structures through which identity is sustained. Hosseini's representation of class therefore

contributes directly to the larger politics of Afghan identity: displacement, insecurity, and marginalization collectively destabilize the individual's relationship with family, community, homeland, and nation.

Class Hierarchy and the Gendered Politics of Identity

The intersection of class, gender, and patriarchy becomes particularly pronounced in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Mariam's marginalized social position is established from the beginning of the narrative through her illegitimate birth and her relationship with Jalil. Her mother, Nana, occupies an economically and socially vulnerable position, while Jalil possesses the social authority and resources necessary to determine the terms of their relationship. The relationship between Nana and Jalil therefore demonstrates how patriarchal and class hierarchies operate simultaneously. Mariam inherits not merely a stigmatized social position but also the consequences of a social order in which women's identities and social legitimacy are determined largely through male authority.

Political Upheaval and the Fracturing of National Identity

While class hierarchy provides an important structural basis for identity fragmentation, Hosseini's novels simultaneously locate the crisis of Afghan identity within the country's prolonged political instability. Political upheaval transforms the meaning of national belonging by repeatedly altering the institutions, ideological frameworks, and power structures through which Afghan society is organized. The

transition from monarchy to republican governance, the Soviet invasion, the civil war, the rise of the Taliban, and subsequent foreign intervention produce successive disruptions in the

political and cultural order. Hosseini's narratives suggest that when political institutions become unstable, the individual's relationship with the nation also becomes uncertain. The question of what it means to be "Afghan" consequently becomes inseparable from the political forces that claim authority over Afghanistan.

In *The Kite Runner*, this historical transformation is particularly evident because the narrative follows Afghanistan across several major political periods, beginning with the pre-Soviet era and continuing through the Soviet invasion, civil war, Taliban rule, and the post-Taliban period. The novel consequently operates not merely as a personal narrative but also as a literary representation of historical rupture. Amir's individual trajectory parallels the transformation of Afghanistan itself: childhood stability is followed by political violence, displacement, cultural estrangement, and eventual return. His changing relationship with Afghanistan demonstrates how national identity may become fragmented when the political landscape of the homeland undergoes radical transformation. The homeland that survives in memory does not necessarily correspond to the homeland encountered after displacement.

The same relationship between political transformation and identity appears in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The changing political regimes repeatedly restructure the everyday lives of the characters, particularly women. Political authority becomes a determining force in the regulation of mobility, education, marriage, dress, and public participation. The novel therefore illustrates how political regimes penetrate private life and transform individual identity through institutional control. The political instability of Afghanistan is consequently represented not merely as a sequence of governmental changes but as a process that reshapes the social and cultural conditions under which individuals understand themselves and others.

War, Foreign Intervention, and Displaced Identity

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan represents a decisive rupture in Hosseini's literary construction of Afghan identity. The invasion transformed Afghanistan into a major site of geopolitical confrontation and generated extensive violence, displacement, and social disruption. Hosseini's novels represent the consequences of this geopolitical conflict primarily through its effects on ordinary individuals and families. Political events occurring at the international level become intimate experiences of loss, separation, migration, and cultural dislocation. In this respect, his fiction connects the macro-politics of international intervention with the micro-politics of individual identity.

The subsequent rise of the Taliban further complicated this process by introducing a highly restrictive ideological order into Afghan social life. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, women's identities become particularly subject to political and religious regulation. The Taliban's restrictions on women's movement, education, employment, and public participation transform the domestic sphere into an instrument of political control. The injunction that women remain within their homes and be accompanied by a *mahram* illustrates how political ideology becomes embodied in everyday practices (Hosseini, 2007, p. 271). Hosseini therefore exposes the relationship between political power and identity formation: when the state attempts to determine how individuals should dress, move, work, speak, and interact, identity itself becomes a political site of regulation and resistance.

The post-9/11 intervention further demonstrates the international dimensions of Afghanistan's identity crisis. Thomas Barfield's analysis of post-2001 Afghanistan emphasizes the continuing difficulty of establishing political stability in the context of Islamist insurgency. The subsequent international intervention consequently represents another phase in Afghanistan's prolonged political transformation. Hosseini's fiction captures the cumulative effect of these interventions by presenting Afghanistan as a society in which successive political regimes and foreign powers repeatedly redefine the conditions of citizenship, security, belonging, and cultural identity. Afghan identity thus emerges from a history of political interruptions rather

than from a stable and uninterrupted national narrative.

Political Violence, Migration, and Cultural Dislocation in *And the Mountains Echoed*

And the Mountains Echoed extends Hosseini's examination of political instability by presenting displacement as a dispersed and transnational experience. Unlike a conventional war narrative that concentrates exclusively on Afghanistan, the novel follows characters across Afghanistan, Pakistan, Europe, and the United States. This geographical expansion demonstrates that political violence continues to shape identity even after individuals have physically left the conflict zone. Migration does not automatically resolve the identity crisis; instead, it frequently produces new forms of alienation, cultural dislocation, and uncertainty regarding belonging.

The experiences of characters such as Timur and Idris demonstrate this tension. Having left Afghanistan during periods of political violence, they return to Kabul after years abroad and encounter a city that no longer corresponds to the one preserved in their memories. Their return exposes the difference between remembered Afghanistan and contemporary Afghanistan. Kabul has become simultaneously familiar and foreign, demonstrating how war transforms not only physical landscapes but also the cultural meanings attached to them. Their experiences therefore reinforce the argument that identity is relational and historically contingent: when the homeland changes, the individual's relationship with it also changes. Saboor's decision to relinquish Pari further illustrates the intersection of political instability, poverty, family, and displacement. His decision cannot be understood exclusively as an individual moral failure; rather, it emerges within a socioeconomic environment shaped by poverty, insecurity, and political instability. The fragmentation of the family consequently mirrors the fragmentation of the nation. Hosseini repeatedly connects personal separation with larger structures of violence, suggesting that the loss of family, home, and community constitutes an important dimension of Afghanistan's broader identity crisis.

The Complicated Meaning of Home: Watan, Belonging, and Homelessness

The question of home occupies a central position in Hosseini's representation of Afghan identity because geographical belonging becomes increasingly unstable under conditions of war and diaspora. Traditionally, *watan* signifies homeland and can provide an important foundation for collective identity. However, Hosseini destabilizes the assumption that homeland and home are necessarily synonymous. Across the three novels, Afghanistan may represent birthplace, cultural inheritance, childhood memory, political trauma, or a lost homeland, but it does not consistently function as a secure or emotionally inhabitable home. The concept of home therefore becomes fluid, relational, and dependent upon the individual's historical and emotional circumstances.

In *The Kite Runner*, Kabul initially represents home for Baba and Amir. It is associated with childhood, family, friendship, social status, and personal memory. Political violence, however, transforms the meaning of this space. Baba eventually leaves Afghanistan, sacrificing property and social position in order to secure physical safety. Pakistan subsequently becomes a temporary site of refuge, while the United States eventually becomes the location in which a new life is constructed. This movement demonstrates that home is not necessarily determined by birthplace; rather, it may be reconstructed through security, emotional attachment, and social belonging.

Watan, Gender, and the Politics of Domestic Space

The instability of the concept of home becomes particularly significant in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, where the domestic sphere itself becomes politically contested. Under Taliban rule, the home is ideologically constructed as the appropriate and prescribed space for women. The restriction of women to the *chader* and *chardewari*—the veil and the four walls—transforms domesticity from a cultural practice into an instrument of political regulation. Home consequently loses its conventional meaning as a site of safety and belonging and becomes, for

many women, a site of surveillance and confinement.

Hosseini's representation of home therefore exposes the gendered politics embedded within definitions of belonging. If national identity is constructed through cultural norms, then the regulation of women's bodies and mobility becomes a means of regulating the cultural identity of the nation itself. The political struggle over Afghan identity consequently extends into the private sphere. Mariam and Laila's experiences demonstrate that the question of who belongs in public space, who has the right to move freely, and who can participate in social life is inseparable from the politics of Afghan identity. Home becomes both a physical location and a contested ideological space. At the same time, Hosseini's representation of Afghanistan exceeds narrow political definitions of home. His description of Herat as "the cradle of Persian culture, the home of writers, painters, and Sufis" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 4) associates homeland with cultural memory rather than merely territorial possession. This conception is significant because it demonstrates that Afghan identity is sustained not only through political institutions but also through literature, art, spirituality, history, and collective memory.

Cultural memory therefore becomes an alternative means through which displaced individuals maintain connections with a homeland that may no longer provide physical security.

Diasporic Estrangement and the Transformation of Afghan Identity

The experience of Idris Bashiri in *And the Mountains Echoed* further develops Hosseini's representation of the unstable relationship between homeland and identity.

Although Idris returns to Afghanistan as a person of Afghan origin, his prolonged residence abroad has altered his cultural orientation to such an extent that he experiences the country as unfamiliar. His assertion, "We're not like these people. We shouldn't pretend we are" (Hosseini, 2013, p. 147), expresses the psychological consequences of prolonged displacement. The statement simultaneously acknowledges Afghan ancestry and denies complete cultural identification with contemporary Afghan society.

Idris's experience corresponds with Amir's sense of estrangement in *The Kite Runner* and demonstrates that diaspora produces neither complete assimilation nor complete continuity with the homeland. Instead, it generates an ambivalent identity

located between different cultural and geographical spaces. Hosseini's treatment of diasporic return therefore reinforces the broader theoretical proposition that identity is continuously reconstructed through historical experience. The Afghan diaspora carries memories of the homeland while simultaneously acquiring cultural practices and social identities within host societies. Afghan identity consequently becomes transnational, hybrid, and internally differentiated.

Dysfunctional Family Relations and the Fracturing of Cultural Identity

The fragmentation of family relations constitutes another important dimension of Hosseini's representation of Afghan identity. Family functions as one of the primary institutions through which cultural values, memories, traditions, language, and social identities are transmitted across generations. When families are disrupted by war, poverty, patriarchy, migration, secrecy, or personal interests, the consequences extend beyond interpersonal relationships and affect the cultural continuity through which collective identity is reproduced. Hosseini's three novels repeatedly portray families whose internal contradictions reflect broader fractures within Afghan society.

This paper highlights identity crisis. It is to delineate that more than one reasons were responsible for the fractures identity of Afghanistan for decades. However, a few striking grounds such as the imbalanced class system, ongoing clash for interests and power, discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, geography, political system, operational special Islamic extremists and the menace of cultural patriarchy have been leading Afghanistan to its identity crisis. The exploitation of poor for the sake of a few penny made the circumstances

exacerbated. Equally important was the lack of tolerance for opposite group, people and communities. It has been figured that Afghanistan is more diversified country, but more than its polarization and diversity, it has been more divided country.

Similarly, displacements, minoritization, growth in personal and cultural identities and hybridization are a few reverberations of the identity crisis of Afghanistan and its diverse population. The family system that has been in coming for centuries in Afghanistan is found as losing its ground owing to the identity factor.

Patriarchy is shaping the lives of fundamentalists to its aggravated extend. People are not valued for their characters rather dignified for the gender they hold in afghan society. More acknowledgeable women were marginalized as seen in the novels of Hosseini while on the other hand uneducated male were preferred. The employment opportunities were confiscated from women and imparted to males. The result of ongoing oppression and marginalization the role of women was considered as that of a secondary being.

In the consequences of perpetual wars and discriminations in afghan society, people were forced to migrate from their mother land to the other parts of the globe so that their lives could be safeguarded. Migration and displacement from their native country caused hybridity when people started living with those who could hardly share something of their interest and culture. In the result they became hybrid. Hybridity in the characters of Amir in *The Kite Runner* and Idress, Tamur and Mrs. Whadati in *And the Mountains Echoed* all this happened owing to migration and displacement of Afghanistan. The choices that they made which resembled hybridity and resemblance of other culture were the result of their displacements and diaspora life.

Works Cited

- Afghanistan: The 1st most Dangerous Country for Women." *The Nation*, 16 June, 2013, [online web]. URL: <http://www.nation.com.pk/Afghanistan-news-2011/Afghanistan-1st-most-dangerous-country-for-women>
- Ahmed-Ghosh, Huma. "Voices of Afghanistan Women: Women's Rights, Human Rights, and Culture." *Thomas Jefferson Law Review*. 27.1, p. 27-33. ProQuest. Web. 19 Mar. 2016
- Allied Media Corp. (2009). Afghan demographics. Retrieved from http://www.allied-media.com/Afghan_American/afghan_demographics.html
- Anderson, Jeffery E. "Conjure in African American Society." *Oxford Academic*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2005,
- Ascroft, Bill. *Postcolonial Transformation*. New York and London: Routledge, 2001.
- Astane, M. K. "Folk poetry in the storytelling tradition." In L. Goss & M. E. Barnes eds., *Talk that talk*, New York: Touchstone, pp. 491-493.
- Beauvoir, Simon De. "The Second Sex." Trans. H.M. Parshley." *London: Picador Classics*, 8 1988. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Brantford, Ont: W. Ross MacDonald School Resource Services Library, 2012. Print.
- Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, London and New York: Routledge. 1997.
- Bromley, Roger. *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions*. Edinburgh University Press, 2000. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrp8n. Accessed 10 Sept. 2020.
- Caillouet, Ruth. "The Other Side of Terrorism and the Children of Afghanistan." *National Council of Teachers of English*, Vol. 96, No. 2. 2006, pp. 28-33. [jstor.org/stable/30047124](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30047124)
- Choudhury, Antara. "From Margins to the Centre: A study of the subaltern in Khaled Hosseini Novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*." *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol. 1. Issue 4, 2020.

- Clark, J. P. "Measuring Alienation within a Social System." *American Sociological Association*, 849-852. 1959.
- Cleary, Schlosser. *Qur'an: A new translation*, USA: Starlatch Press 2004. Print.
- Cohen, Robin. *Hybridity and its Discontents Politics, Science, Culture*, Psychology Press. 2000
- Damrosch, David. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton UP, 2003. Print. Emadi, H. *Culture and customs of Afghanistan*. Westport: Greenwood Press. 2005
- Fromm, E. *The Sane Society*, Routledge & Kegan Paul. Geyer, F. (1974).
- Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. Allen & Unwin, 1998.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora Identity: Community, Culture", *Ed. J. Rutherford, London*, Lawrence and Wishart. 222-237.
- TenHouten, W.D. *Alienation and affect*. London: Routledge. 2016.