

Split Identity as A Byproduct of Migration to the West: Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*

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Abstract: Among the major critical phenomena of the contemporary globalising world, migration has been one of the major issues discussed in the contemporary English literature. The works by Khaled Hosseini point his anxieties regarding the problems of Afghan people in their home country and the Western countries where they migrate. At this point, while *A Thousand Splendid Suns* embodies Hosseini’s critical outlook on gender discrimination within the dominance of patriarchy in the Afghan society, *And the Mountains Echoed* best represents his concern about the inequalities and disunities between different social strata in Afghanistan. However, among all his fictional works, *The Kite Runner* is an epitome of Hosseini’s critical approach to the issue of migration for its focus on both the causes and effects of migration process on Afghan immigrants. Hence, this part aims to discuss *The Kite Runner* as the best example representing Hosseini’s critical outlook on disunities in the Afghan social context and the problems of immigrants in host countries in the West.

Keywords: Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*, Migration, Ambivalence, Contemporary Fiction

1. Introduction

Afghan migration has been one of the major subject matters in contemporary British fiction. In particular, the works by Khaled Hosseini point his anxieties regarding the problems of Afghan people in their home country and the Western countries where they migrate. At this point, while *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) embodies Hosseini’s critical outlook on gender discrimination within the dominance of patriarchy in the Afghan society, *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013) best represents his concern about the inequalities and disunities between different social strata in Afghanistan. However, among all his fictional works, *The Kite Runner* (2003) is an epitome of Hosseini’s critical approach to the issue of migration for its focus on both the causes and effects of migration process on Afghan immigrants. Hence, this part aims to discuss *The Kite Runner* as the best example representing Hosseini’s critical outlook on disunities in the Afghan social context and the problems of immigrants in host countries in the West. At this point, a critical analysis of his other works focusing on the problematic aspects of life in Afghanistan contributes to the appreciation of Hosseini’s major points of concern in *The Kite Runner*.

2. Split Identity as a Byproduct of Immigration: Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*

As an author feeling a sense of belonging to Afghan identity in cultural sense, Khaled Hosseini shows sensitivity to and shares his concerns about the problematic issues in his native country. Hosseini observes the vast inequality among different cities and towns across Afghanistan. The dramatic differences in terms of life standards and level of prosperity cause imbalance among various social strata across the country. Inequalities among social classes in Afghanistan are epitomised in Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed*. The work deals with the story of three siblings and their father as well as their efforts for survival in socio-economic sense and

the problems the children in this family experience while they grow up and become mature individuals in their future lives. As the narrator of the novel, Hosseini's description of the circumstances under which this family lives indicates the extent of their inhumane lives:

The day's colours slowly dissolved into gray, and the distant mountain peaks became opaque silhouettes of crouching giants. Earlier in the day, they had passed by several villages, most of them far-flung and dusty just like Shadbagh. Small square-shaped homes made of baked mud, sometimes raised into the side of a mountain and sometimes not, ribbons of smoke rising from their roofs. Wash lines, women squatting by cooking fires. A few poplar trees, a few chickens, a handful of cows and goats, and always a mosque. [1]

While homes made of baked muds represent the lack of planning for the residences in low-class area, women's washing of clothes nearby a water source signifies problems in hygiene. The lack of planning for the inhabitants as well as hygiene problems arguably derive from the economic hardships across Shadbagh region. So, in an area subject to these problems, the narrator's following words about the siblings' father best explain the extent to which economic hardships get destructive on the low-class Afghan people: "Father's world was unsparing. Nothing good came free. Even love. You paid for all things. And if you were poor, suffering was your currency" [2].

Unlike the inhumanely challenging circumstances of people in Shadbagh, prosperity and wealth are prevalent in Kabul. In fact, Kabul is an orderly, systematic and planned city, when compared with the other parts of Afghanistan. At this point, the following description of Kabul represents its difference from the rural low-class areas in Afghanistan:

Everywhere, he [Abdullah] saw traffic lights, and teahouses, and restaurants, and glass-fronted shops with bright multicoloured signs. Cars rattling noisily down the crowded streets, hooting, darting narrowly among buses, pedestrians, and bicycles. Horse-drawn *garis* jingled up and down boulevards, their iron-rimmed wheels bouncing on the road. The sidewalks he walked with Pari and Father were crowded with cigarette and chewing gum sellers, blacksmiths pounding horseshoes. At intersections, traffic policemen in ill-fitting uniforms blew their whistles and made authoritative gestures that no one seemed to and made authoritative gestures that no one seemed to heed. [3]

In Kabul, where traffic lights, the sidewalks, policemen, roads that intersect, shops for various needs signify an urban, modern and prosperous lifestyle as a distinction from the other parts of Afghanistan, wealthy classes and their life standards are epitomised in the case of Wahdati family, in whose charge Uncle Nabi, Abdullah's step-uncle, works as a chauffeur. The Wahdati family lives in a grand, modern and luxurious house unlike the house where Abdullah and his family live in Shadbagh. The narrator's depiction of the house where Wahdati family lives arguably embody the stereotyping in terms of the vast difference in lifestyles in Afghanistan:

The house proved even more impressive once Uncle Nabi led Abdullah, Pari, and Father inside. Abdullah estimated its size big enough to contain at least half the homes in Shadbagh.[...]. On their way to the room where Mr and Mrs Wahdati awaited their arrival, Abdullah spied a bathroom with the porcelain toilet Uncle Nabi had told them about, as well as a glittering sink with a bronze-coloured faucet. Abdullah, who spent hours every week lugging buckets of water from Shadbagh's communal well, marvelled at a life where water was just a twist of the hand away. [...]. Everything in the room was polished, free of dust. Abdullah had never in his life being so conscious of his own dirtiness. Uncle Nabi's boss, Mr Wahdati, sat on a leather chair, arms crossed over his chest. He was looking at them with an expression that was not quite unfriendly but remote, impenetrable. [4]

In the Afghan society, gender roles are stereotyped as well in addition to the lifestyles and level of prosperity of different social strata. Khaled Hosseini dwells upon gender roles with reference to Mr Wahdati's wife, Nila. The narrator's description of Nila as well as Uncle Nabi's reaction to her modern style shed light on the approach to women in Afghanistan:

It was then that the front gates opened and a black-haired young woman emerged. She wore sunglasses and a short-sleeved tangerine-coloured dress that fell short of the knees. Her legs were bare, and so were her feet. [...]. She rested the heel of one foot against the wall behind her and, when she did, the hem of the dress pulled up slightly and thus revealed a bit of the thigh beneath. I felt a burning spread down from my cheeks to my neck. [...]. Everything she did - the way she spoke, the way she walked, dressed, smiled - was a novelty to me. Nila pushed against every single notion I had ever had of how a woman was to behave. [5]

In patriarchal discourse, women's responsibilities are limited to household duties and showing her sexuality only to her husband. In Nel Noddings' words, "woman has been associated in a stereotypical way with both good and evil. As an 'angel in the house', woman has been credited with natural goodness, an innate allegiance to 'a law of kindness'. But this same description extols her as an infantile, weak, and mindless - a creature in constant need of male supervision and protection" [6]. Considering Noddings's arguments in relation to stereotyping, Nila is a deviant, unacceptable and abnormal woman in terms of the dominant patriarchy in Afghan society. Her clothing style that reveals the attractive parts of body does not fit the traditionally accepted notion of "woman" in Afghan social context.

Nila is a deviant character transgressing the Afghan perception of "woman" not just because of her clothing style, but also due to her intellectual position. As a matter of fact, she is a poet and writes about physical and personal love in her verses. Thus, Nila's ability to write to express her individual ideas and feelings is also viewed as a transgression of the boundaries in patriarchal system in Afghanistan, as expressed in her following words in an interview:

No one in Kabul considered me a pioneer of anything but bad taste, debauchery, and immoral character. Not least of all, my father. He said my writings were the ramblings of a whore. He used that word precisely. He said I'd damaged his family name beyond repair. He said I had betrayed him. He kept asking why I found it so hard to be respectable. [...]. Well, I was angry. 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. And women, don't you know, are emotionally, morally, and intellectually immature. They lack self-control, you see, they are vulnerable to physical temptation. They are hyper-sexual beings who must be restrained lest they jump into bed with every Ahmad and Mahmood. [7]

While Hosseini describes the prejudiced outlook on women in their consideration as emotionally, morally and intellectually immature and hyper-sexual beings from the perspective of the dominant patriarchal discourse in Afghanistan, he reflects the characteristics and modes of behaviour expected for men and women in the social area in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). This work mainly deals with the story of Mariam for her efforts for the discovery and expression of her female individual self within the dominance of strict patriarchy that causes them to lead their lives under inhumane circumstances. Despite her freewill, Mariam is forced to marry Rasheed, a man much older than her, as a by-product of the strict male-dominated system in the Afghan social context. In his daily interactions with Mariam, he constantly tells her about how to behave in accordance with the patriarchal ideals to get integrated with the social circumstances in Afghanistan. His words in the following dialogue embody the repression against Mariam in relation to revealing her face in the society:

"I have customers, Mariam, men who bring their wives to my shop. The women come uncovered, they talk to me directly, look me in the eye without shame. They wear makeup and skirts that show their knees. Sometimes they even put their feet in front of me, the women do, for measurements, and their husbands stand there and watch. They allow it. They think nothing of a stranger touching their wives' bare feet! They think they're being modern men, intellectuals, on account of their education, I suppose. They don't see that they are spoiling their own nang and namoos, their honour and pride."

He shook his head.

[...]

He fixed Mariam with a hard glare.

"But I am a different breed of man, Mariam. where I come from, one wrong look, one improper word, and blood is spilled. Where I come from, a woman's face is her husband's business only. I want you to remember that. Do you understand?"

Mariam nodded. When he extended the bag to her, she took it. [8]

Basing his claim on moral and religious concerns and comparison with the women wearing modern clothing, Rasheed justifies his prohibition of Mariam's integration with the social life in Afghanistan. His emphasis on "namoos", which refers to honour, as a warning to her establishes the basis of Mariam's imprisoned lifestyle in her home during her marriage. Despite this strict attachment to religious and patriarchal principles that restrict Mariam's life in social sense, Hosseini points the hypocrisy in men's allegiance to these ideals. Rasheed's perusal of magazines with pornographic content and Mariam's silencing in spite of this discovery about her husband embody both the hypocritical characteristic of male-dominated social system and the inevitable requirement for women's submissiveness against this hypocrisy:

Beneath the gun were several magazines with curling corners. Mariam opened one. Something inside her dropped. Her mouth gaped of its own will. On every page were women, beautiful women, who wore no

shirts, no trousers, no socks or underpants. They wore nothing at all. They lay in beds amid tumbled sheets and gazed back at Mariam with half-lidded eyes. In most of the pictures, their legs were apart, and Mariam had a full view of the dark place between them. [...].

Mariam quickly put the magazine back where she had found it. She felt drugged. Who were these women? How come they allow themselves to be photographed this way? [...]. And what about all his talk of honour and propriety, his disapproval of the female customers, who, after all, were only showing him their feet to get fitted for shoes? A woman's face, he had said, is her husband's business only. [...]. If so, why did Rasheed insist that she cover when he thought nothing of looking at the private areas of other men's wives and sisters?

Slowly, an explanation presented itself. He was a man, after all, living alone for years before she had moved in. [...]. Mariam knew that she could never talk to him about this. It was unmentionable. But was it unforgivable? [9]

While Rasheed's view of pornographic magazines despite his emphasis on honour and propriety signify the paradoxical characteristic of patriarchy in Afghanistan, Mariam's awareness of the impossibility of talking to her husband about the content of the magazine considering the situation as unmentionable explain the submissiveness as a major stereotypical mode of behaviour for women in social area within the male-dominated system. Dealing with the issue of women's submissiveness, Hosseini relates women's submissive traits to patriarchal consideration of women as people with no knowledge. Particularly, Rasheed's response "You don't know what a communist is? Such a simple thing. It's common knowledge. You don't ... Bah. I don't know why I am surprised" [10] epitomises lack of knowledge as a stereotypical characteristic of women in patriarchal Afghan society. Although Mariam is eager to learn new knowledge and become an enlightened person, Rasheed's response not only reinforces her obligation to limit her life to home, but it also eliminates the chance for her intellectual development. Hence, it is not wrong to argue that patriarchal system both restricts women's life and inhibits their possibility of developing themselves in intellectual sense. These restrictions on the basis of prejudiced outlook on women by patriarchy lead to deepening social inequalities in terms of gender differences formulated by stereotypical mode of behaviours.

Khaled Hosseini's focus on the inequalities in the social area with regard to the wide differences between social classes as well as gender discrimination as a by-product of the dominant patriarchal system not only present the problematic aspects prevalent in the Afghan social context, but they are also arguably the reasons leading Afghan people to leave their home country and migrate to Western countries for a life standard more civilised, prosperous and modern than that in Afghanistan. In this sense, while *And the Mountains Echoed* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* deal with socio-economic differences and gender discrimination respectively, *The Kite Runner* concentrates on not only the problematic issues in the social arena as the causes of migration, but it also elaborates on the migration process, its transformative effects on the immigrants as well as the results of the migration process.

The Kite Runner tells the story of Amir Khan, the protagonist of the work and his father, as well as the transformation they experience in their lives from his childhood to adulthood. In this sense, it is not wrong to view this novel as an example of Bildungsroman, which refers to a biographical account of the transformation of the main character from childhood to adulthood. However, Amir's personal development does not occur independent of the social circumstances in his native land, Afghanistan. In Mriganka Sekhar Sarma's words, "the novel intertwines the personal life of Amir, the son of a wealthy Afghan businessman with the violent political events of the twentieth century Afghanistan" [11]. Thus, a novel produced in Bildungsroman technique, *The Kite Runner* does not only tell readers about the personal development of the protagonist, but it also gives readers an insight into the social unrest and disunities in Afghan society, establishing the basis of migration to the Occident, as well as the consequences of migration process on the immigrants in terms of their sense of self.

Early in the novel, Amir Khan, the narrator of the novel as well, describes the house where he spent his childhood. In making the description, the narrator's depiction of the house where their servant, Ali, lives with his son, Hassan, as well embodies a microcosm of the socio-economic inequalities in the social area in Afghanistan:

Everyone agreed that my father, my Baba, had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, a new and affluent neighbourhood in the northern part of Kabul. Some thought it was the prettiest house in all of Kabul. A broad entryway flanked by rosebushes led to the sprawling house of marble floors and wide windows. Intricate mosaic tiles handpicked by Baba in Isfahan, covered the floors of the four bathrooms. Gold-stitched tapestries, which Baba had bought in Calcutta, lined the walls; a crystal chandelier hung from the vaulted ceiling. [...]. On the south end of the garden, in the shadows of the loquat tree, was the servants' home, a modest little mud hut where Hassan lived with his father. [12]

In addition to the sense of belonging to different social strata and hence leading different ways of life, Amir and Hassan's families experience a further problem, i.e. the sectarian tensions based on Sunni and Shia conflict predominant in Afghan social area, causing social unrest in religious sense as well. Amir's following observations about one of the books on the sects in his father's study room best represent the basis of the sectarian conflict that causes social unrest across Afghanistan: "An entire chapter dedicated to Hassan's people! In it, I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. [...]. The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their lands, burned their homes and sold their women. The book said part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a" [13]. In the novel, Hosseini indicates that the sectarian conflicts reach such an extent that it even leads to disunities among children, particularly when they play games with each other. At this point, Asef's insulting and discriminatory words to the Hazara children, particularly Hassan, in the following conversation embody the extent to which sectarian conflicts shape even the interactions among children in negative sense:

His blue eyes flicked to Hassan. "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood." He made a sweeping, grandiose gesture with his hands. "Afghanistan for Pashtuns, I say. That is my vision."

[...]

He reached for something from the back pocket of his jeans. "I'll ask the president to do what the king did not have the quwat to do. To rid Afghanistan of all the dirty, kasseef Hazaras."

"Just let us go, Asef," I said, hating the way my voice trembled. "We are not bothering you."

"Oh, you are bothering me," Asef said. [...]. "You are bothering me very much. In fact, you bother me more than this Hazara here. How can you talk to him, play with him, let him touch you?" he said, his voice dripping with disgust. [...]. Asef narrowed his eyes. Shook his head. When he spoke again, he sounded as baffled as he looked. "How can you call him your 'friend'?" [14]

Rab Nawaz Khan and Abdul Wahaad Qureshi discusses the issue of racism in relation to cultural rather than racial differences and hence justify their arguments in terms of the various groups and communities within the same society. For Khan and Qureshi, "racism is not only an ideology, but also a discriminatory discursive practice which is aimed at dominating, dehumanising, devaluing, excluding and discriminating against the minority or weaker social groups by the elites or dominant social groups" [15]. Considering the children's interaction with each other with regard to Khan and Qureshi's approach to the term "racism" and the common meaning of racism, Khaled Hosseini combines the two aspects of racism in the conflict between Pashtun and Hazara children in the novel. In other words, Pashtuns relate their superiority to Hazaras to the sectarian differences based on the consideration of Sunni sect as superior to Shi'a sect in Islamic world. Albeit a Sunni, Amir, the narrator of the work, makes friends with Hassan, the Shi'a son of his father's servant. Asef's intolerance to the narrator's welcoming and friendly approach to Hassan despite his sense of belonging to a sect different from Amir epitomises racism in terms of discrimination against the weaker and lower-status communities, i.e. Shi'as in religious sense and Hazaras in ethnical/racial aspect.

The coup d'état is portrayed as an inevitable result of the growing tension among different groups and communities in Afghan society. Once a country in peace and harmony, Afghanistan turns into an insecure land where daily life almost comes to a halt. In Amir's words as the narrator, "the shootings and explosions had lasted less than an hour, but they had frightened us badly, because none of us had ever heard gunshots in the streets. They were foreign sounds to us then. The generation of Afghan children whose ears would know nothing but the sounds of bombs and gunfire was not yet born. [...]. a way of life had ended. Our way of life. [...]. 'They blocked all the roads and the telephone didn't work. I [Amir's dad] was so worried!'" [16]. Hence, in addition to the socio-economic inequalities, the inhumane circumstances under which the Afghan people are made to lead their lives in social area establish the basis of the migration from their native land.

While social disunity and insecurity lead people to migrate to the Occident, these factors also make Afghans get alienated from their sense of belonging to Afghan identity. Amir's father epitomises this alienation from the original identity. Amir's description of his father's approach to the West is the best representation of the attachment to the Occident as quest for a new identity on which a new life could be based: "Baba loved the idea of America. [...]. 'There are only three real men in the world, Amir,' he'd say. He'd count them off with his fingers: America the brash saviour, Britain, and Israel. 'The rest of them -' he used to wave his hand and make a phht sound 'they're like gossiping old women'" [17]. As a matter of fact, the father's love for America, a representation of the Western world, as a signification of his alienation from his Afghan identity due to the

inequalities, disunities and tumult in the social arena in Afghanistan is transmitted to his successive generation, i.e. his son, Amir. Amir's following metaphorical description of America is arguably an embodiment of the migrants' hope for a life in peace, civilisation and prosperity, free from the chaotic circumstances in Afghanistan: "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. Someplace with no ghosts, no memories, and no sins. If for nothing else, for that, I embraced America" [18]. In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, Elleke Boehmer explains the causes of migration as "anti-imperialist conflict, the claims of rival nationalisms, economic hardship, famine, state repression, the search for new opportunities" [19]. Considering Boehmer's statement, together with his father, Amir experiences rival nationalism based on Pashtun-Hazara dichotomy as a by-product of sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shi'a groups. Even if he is from a wealthy family, Amir's consideration of America as "someplace with no sins, no memories" signifies both his alienation from his original Afghan identity and his hope for America as a source of the beginning of a new life in prosperity, civilisation and liberty, independent from the repression and tumult in Afghanistan.

The European societies turn out to get multicultural as they host immigrants from different countries and lifestyles. Mary Louise Pratt describes multicultural Western societies as "contact zones", which she defines as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination across the globe" [20]. The basis of relations in multicultural Occidental societies on domination and subordination accounts for the discrimination in the host society against immigrants. Hence, as a result of the segregation against immigrants from a wide variety of background and identities, "contact zones become conflict zones" [21]. Thus, viewed in relation to Clifford's argument, the USA, where Amir hopes to start a modern, civilised and prosperous life together with his father, turns out to be a conflict zone rather than a country of liberties for them. Amir and his father are considered as outsiders rather than an integral part of American host society. Because Amir and his father are immigrants, they cannot continue their formerly prosperous life in America due to the drastic transformation in their socio-economic status. Because of this radical change in their social class, they are not welcomed in the social area due to their failure in adaptation to economic circumstances in America:

He [Amir's father] had been working at a gas station in Fremont and had the day off. I watched him jaywalk across Fremont Boulevard and enter Fast&Easy, a little grocery store run by an elderly Vietnamese couple, Mr and Mrs Nguyen. [...].

It turned out that Baba had had no cash on him for the oranges. He'd written Mr Nguyen a check and Mr Nguyen had asked for an ID. "He wants to see my license" Baba bellowed in Farsi. "Almost two years we have bought his damn fruits and put money in his pocket and the son of a dog wants to see my license!"

"Baba, it's not personal," I said, smiling at the Nguyens. "They are supposed to ask for an ID."

"I don't want you here," Mr Nguyen said, stepping in front of his wife. He was pointing at Baba with his cane. He turned to me. "You are nice young man but your father, he's crazy. Not welcome anymore."

"Does he think I am a thief?" Baba said, his voice rising. People had gathered outside. They were staring.

"What kind of a country is this? No one trusts anybody!"

"I call police," Mrs Nguyen said, poking out her face. "You get out or I call police." [22]

Jonathon W. Moses explains the view of immigrants as a threat to the peace and unity of Western host societies as follows: "People in the developed world are afraid of immigrants: they fear that immigration challenges their wealth, security and sense of community. [...] People worry that their (national) cultural identity is threatened by the immigrants" [23]. The Western host countries view immigrants as a threat to their social, national unity arguably due to the tendency of the immigrants not to integrate with the common norms that regulate daily life. Considering Moses's arguments in this sense, while Amir and his father aim to lead their lives in civilisation and prosperity, free from the social disunities and turmoil in Afghanistan during their inhabitation in America, the members of the host society inevitably expect them to obey the common norms and practices in social area. Although the experience to which Amir's father gets exposed embodies the biased outlook on the immigrants due to their consideration as a significant problem for the social unity and security in America, his disagreement with integration with the general practice of showing ID for purchases causes him to be viewed as "outsider" due to his violation of the common practice in the social arena.

In addition to the drastic transformation of socio-economic status of Amir and his father in America, they also experience discrimination in healthcare system. Even if they continue their lives in America, Amir's father does not take effective health service due to his position as an immigrant in the USA. Amir's following description of his father's illness and the doctors' responses to him embody the prejudice against immigrants in health system:

Even though Baba was a manager at the gas station, the owner hadn't offered him health insurance, and Baba, in his recklessness, hadn't insisted. So I took him to the country hospital in San Jose.

[...].

"What's that?"

He [the doctor] gave me a quick glance. Pushed up his glasses. Began scribbling again. "He's got spot on his right lung. I want them to check it out."

"A spot?" I said, the room suddenly too small.

"Cancer?" Baba added casually.

"Possible. It's suspicious, anyway," the doctor muttered.

"Can't you tell us more?" I asked.

"Not really. Need a CAT scan first, then see the lung doctor." He handed me the referral form. [...]. Looked from me to Baba and then back again. "They'll call you in two weeks."

[...].

Two weeks passed and no one called. And when I called them, they told me they had lost the referral. [24]

The lack of health insurance and the doctors' insensitivity to the serious health problem of Amir's father are arguably the by-product of the biased outlook of American society on Amir and his father due to their status as immigrants, considered as outsiders, not an integral part of the host society. Thus, as a result of this prejudiced view against immigrants, Amir can't succeed in acquiring American identity in cultural sense. His marriage with an Afghan girl in America embodies his continuing bond with his original Afghan identity, despite his alleged alienation from his original sense of self. More particular than that, Amir's observations about his own self after his father's death represents his failure in acquiring a sense of self not only in cultural but also individual context: "Listening to them [the mourners in funeral] I realised how much of who I was, what I was, had been defined by Baba and the marks he had left on people's lives. My whole life, I had been 'Baba's son'. Now he was gone. Baba couldn't show me the way anymore; I'd have to find it on my own. The thought of it terrified me" [25].

The segregation by the host countries in the West as well as the failure in the discovery of the individual self leads to an in-betweenness in terms of the sense of belonging to a cultural and individual identity. Homi K. Bhabha elaborates on the emergence of in-betweenness in the introduction to *Nation and Narration*, stating that "the 'locality' of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as 'other' in relation to what is outside or beyond it. [...]. What emerges as a [consequence] is a turning of boundaries and limits into the in-between spaces through which cultural and political authority are negotiated" [26]. Thus, considering Bhabha's arguments, it is not wrong to argue that Amir's visit to Afghanistan despite his established lifestyle and harmonious marriage in America is an embodiment of his effort for discovering his true sense of self. However, his observation for the increasing tumultuous and chaotic circumstances in Afghanistan due to the restrictions of Taliban regime leads to the failure in Amir's discovery of his individual self and establishes the basis of his ambivalence in terms of his sense of belonging to a specific cultural identity. At this point, Zaman's words as the manager of the orphanage which Amir visits explains Taliban's imposition of inhumane circumstances on Afghan society as the reason for Amir's failure of his individual self as well as the reinforcement of his split individual and cultural sense of belonging:

"We don't have enough beds, and not enough mattresses for the beds we do have. Worse, we don't have enough blankets." [...] "The last time I checked, we have less than a month's supply of rice left in the warehouse, and when that runs out, the children will have to eat bread and tea for breakfast and dinner." I noticed he made no mention of lunch. "There is very little shelter here, almost no food, no clothes, no clean water. What I have in ample supply here is children who have lost their childhood" [27].

The concerns for clean water, the need for shelter, healthy nourishment as well as anxieties for the survival of the children losing their childhood memories embody the inhumane life circumstances imposed on the Afghan people by the Taliban regime. Hence, Amir's statement that "I feel like a tourist in my own country" [28] not only signifies his reaction against the inhumane practices of Taliban regime against Afghan people but it also arguably explains the reason for his alienation from his native land. His observation of the unchanging and even deteriorating social unrest in Afghanistan accounts for his fractured identity and sense of belonging to Afghan culture.

3. Conclusion

The Kite Runner is a story of ambivalence, a problem lasting for generations, as a by-product of prejudices against immigrants in the host countries. While gender discrimination, inequalities among social classes and the insecure social context due to the practices of Taliban regime in Afghanistan, together with their hope for a new life in security, civilisation and prosperity, lead to Amir and his father's migration to America, the father's work at a gas station, his lack of health insurance and his death due to the prejudices against immigrants in healthcare, and their failure in integration with the social practices in America cause their inability to gain a sense of belonging to American identity in cultural and individual senses. Amir's alienation from his Afghan identity in addition to his lack of sense of belonging to American culture represents split selves and fractured identities as the major result of migration process. The points discussed in Hosseini's works offer readers and researchers new perspectives for the causes and effects of migration to countries with different economic status and cultural circumstances. Whether or how the prejudiced approach to immigrants will change in the future is open to debate, but Hosseini's work is important in contemporary literary canon for representing the concerns about the negative outlook on the immigrants and the process of migration.

4. References

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