T.C.
ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE PHD PROGRAMME

DISPLACEMENT AND FLUID IDENTITIES IN *LITTLE BEE*, *SHOOTING KABUL* AND *EXIT WEST*

Dissertation

Adnan Riaz

Ankara-2021

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this Dissertation titled "Displacement and Fluid Identities in *Little Bee*, *Shooting Kabul* and *Exit West*" prepared by Adnan Riaz meets with the committee's approval unanimously as PhD Dissertation in the field of English Culture and Literature following the successful defence conducted on 13/12 /2021

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ÖZ

[Riaz, Adnan] [Little Bee, Shooting Kabul ve Exit West'te Yer Değiştirme ve Akışkan Kimlikleri], [Doktora Tezi, Ankara, [2021].

Günümüzde yaşanan göç dalgaları, uluslararası toplumun yerli kültürlere bakış açısını yeniden şekillendirdi. Göçmen kültürü, ulus-devletlerin değerlerini, kültürlerini ve normlarını bir dereceye kadar seyrelterek onlara meydan okumaktadır. Tez, göçün keyfi bir seçim olmaktan ziyade kapitalizm ve küreselleşmenin sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan bir zorunluluk olduğuna odaklanmaktadır. Başlıca suçlular olan sömürgecilik ve yeni-sömürgecilik araçları, zayıf ulusların, gelişmiş dünyanın ekonomik ve politik çıkarlarını beslemek için sömürülmesinde kullanılmaktadır. Kültürel ve ekonomik parazitler olarak görülen mültecilere sığındıkları gelişmiş ülkelerde nefretle bakılmaktadır. *Little Bee Shooting Kabul* ve Exit West romanları mevcut göç krizini mercek altına almaktadır. Žižek ve Agamben'in göçmenlerin doğuşu ve hak mücadelelerine ilişkin görüşlerinin de desteğiyle bu tez, konu ve kuramlar arasında bir paralellik kurmaktadır. Little Bee çok uluslu şirketlerin faaliyetlerinin kurbanı olan genç bir mülteci kızın mücadelelerini anlatmaktadır. Hikâyede genç kız her ne kadar Birleşik Krallık'a ulaştıktan sonra olumlu ilişkiler kurmaya çalışsa da yetkililer onu mülteci kimliğini kanıtlayan belgeleri göstermediği nedeniyle sınır dışı eder. Shooting Kabul Afganların, Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyetler Birliğinin çekilmesinin ardından Taliban'ın Kabil'i ele geçirmesiyle savaştan zarar gören Afganistan'dan gidişlerini anlatmaktadır. Eserde göçmen kültürünün derin köklülüğü, göçmenlerin ev sahibi kültüre meydan okuma biçimleri ve göç sonrası yaşam betimlenmektedir. *Exit West* dini fanatikler tarafından istila edilen mültecilerin vatanının kasvetli bir resmini çizmektedir. Vatandaşlar her ne kadar Batı yaşam modelini kopyalamaya çalışsalar da ekonomik ilerleme ve barış sağlayamazlar. Ancak roman, korkunç bir savaşın ardından göçmeyip yurtta kalanlar ve göç edenlerin yeniden buluşup yakınlaşmalarıyla olumlu bir hava ile sona ermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç, Sömürgecilik, Kültür, Yerlilik, Ulus Devlet

ABSTRACT

[Riaz, Adnan]. [Displacement and Fluid Identities in *Little Bee, Shooting Kabul* and *Exit West*], [PhD, Ankara, [2021].

The contemporary migration crisis has reshaped the outlook of the international community on native culture. Immigrant culture challenges the nation-states by diluting its values, culture, and norms to a certain degree. The dissertation focuses that migration is not a random choice but a compulsion, and it is not a natural development but an outcome of capitalism and globalization. Colonization and neo-colonization work as the prime culprit as the weaker nations are exploited to feed the economic and political interests of the developed world. When the refugees reach the advanced states, they treat them with disgust and deem them cultural and economic parasites. The novels *Little Bee, Shooting Kabul,* and *Exit West* bring the current migration crisis under the spotlight. With the support of Žižek and Agamben's views on the immigrants' birth and the struggle for rights, the dissertation establishes a parallelism between the texts and theories. *Little Bee* shares the struggles of a young refugee; she is a victim of multinational companies' endeavours. After reaching the UK, the girl tries to establish a positive relationship with the hosts, but the authorities deport her for not showing the documents proving her refugee identity. *Shooting Kabul* depicts the migrants' journey from war-torn Afghanistan, which is an aftermath of the Taliban overtaking Kabul after the USSR withdrawal. The deep rootedness of immigrants' culture and the defiance in host culture depict the post-migration life. *Exit West* sketches a dismal picture of the refugees home overrun by religious fanatics. Though the citizens try to copy the Western life model, they cannot achieve economic progress and peace. More or less, the novel ends with a positive note when the hosts and refugees establish rapprochement following a scary battle.

Keywords: Migration, Colonialism, Culture, Nativeness, Nation-state

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The study emphasises the global migration crisis and its reflection on the post-colonial literature. Three works are selected to this end: *Little Bee* (2008) by Chris Cleave, *Shooting Kabul* (2010) by Naheed Hasnat Senzai and *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid. The chosen authors carry the tinges of the respective tendencies influenced by their cultural background, memories and writing techniques; hence, the works portray dissimilar prospects for the immigrants' crises. However, the thesis argues that certain parallelism engages all these writers into theories presented by Slavoj Žižek and Giorgio Agamben.

The dissertation will begin with a theoretical framework, including two main theorists, Slavoj Žižek and Giorgio Agamben; it comprises a detailed discussion on the theories to establish a parallelism between the ideas and their utilisation in the forthcoming analytical chapters. Relevant critics' views will be employed to strengthen the theorists' argument. The dissertation will emphasise immigrant literature as a powerful reflection of the current refugee crisis. The refugee crisis seems to have found a profound place in the post-colonial literature. The work details the refugees' formation, journey, and settlement processes within the theoretical limitations by focusing on the selected texts. The dissertation will essentially analyse displacement as a process that not only involves the problems in the indigenous population, but the colonial and neo-colonial imprints play a critical role in their exile.

The dissertation aims to study the selected postcolonial novels as portrayals of the migrant crisis. The mentioned works are discussed in the context of Slavoj Žižek and Giorgio Agamben's theories on migrants and host response to the arrival of millions of people into their home culture. The dissertation will relate the fictionalized depiction of events as a part of the real events discussed in the mentioned theories. However, the dissertation will emphasize the novel's representation of migration issues in the globalized world.

The selected texts are recently published works containing a parallel view of the current migration crisis. However, the authors' representations of migrant and host communities and outcomes are different. Their respective approaches provide settings different from each other, but essentially, they portray the universality of the migrant question. Chris Cleave provides a British writer's perspective, which helps understand

a native author's view. At the same time, *LB* helps the readers understand the African migrant's representation. Cleave's use of two narrators essentially provides the reader with two perspectives. *SK* is Naheed Hasnat Senzai's portrayal of a similar context but in different settings. The Afghan family is a victim of the ongoing conflicts and the issues concerning Afghanistan's internal and external affairs. The novel depicts the psychological patterns of an immigrant child and describes the events related to the loss of a family member. *EW* is a potrayal of different parallel lives in the west and East. Using the magical realist technique, the author's perspective provides multiple angles to the migration crisis. All three works relate the characters' past life to the [neo]colonized states, i.e., Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The mentioned states that were a part of the British Empire had specific influences exerted by the global powers on their internal and external affairs. Arguably, the novels are the cultural products of the authors' respective pasts and therefore give a chance to see the issues from different perspectives. Similarly, the characters in all these novels try to reach countries that were either directly or indirectly involved in their status as migrants.

Three consecutive analytical chapters will follow the theoretical framework. The focus will be to divide the immigrants' life in the text into three main sub-titles: the past, the present and the future. The divisions and subdivisions essentially have a detailed description of the related novels and settings, focusing on the theories. A conclusion chapter will re-evaluate the works to understand the authors' techniques for incorporating a global issue into the text.

The first chapter will discuss Chris Cleave's Little *Bee* (2008). The author describes the journey of a young girl who suffers from the loss of a sister. The author calls the lead character with different names, including "Little Bee," "London Sunshine," and "Udo." The author describes the neo-colonial world as a culprit in the fall of the immigrants' home societies and their consequent struggle for a new home. The ease of goods' transportation and the challenges of human mobility are the underlining concept of the chapter. Since *LB* builds on the ruins of a village deserted by the villagers because of oil expeditions, the chapter evaluates the capitalist market, causing the displacement of millions of people globally. Corrupt government, mafia, and oil discovery represent the Nigerians' lives caught in a vicious cycle of violence. However, when people like *Little Bee* request relief, they must prove multiple standards for their reception in developed countries. The refugees have to speak their

acceptable accent, and her nuances of Nigerian culture seem to fade. “Pound” appears as a “sorcerer” to the young immigrant; it has all the tricks to control and outdo the problems in the world. Contrary to the ill-treatment of poor Africans in the host cultures, financially strong immigrants are welcomed open-heartedly in the developed states. On a similar note, Perkins believes that “Western lives are thrown into stark contrast against the terrifying realities of war-torn Africa” (“*Little Bee*” 77). The critical elements of *LB* will include dialectical aspects of the narration, redefinition of gender roles, the feeling of going back to Nigeria, the journey to security, colonised memories and neo-colonised economies, the struggle for rights, statelessness, the ideology of language, the realisation of differences, immigrant policies and future, the commodification of refugees, and illegitimacy and continuous escape.

The second chapter will focus on *Shooting Kabul* (2010) by Naheed Hasnat Senzai. The author portrays a relentless emotional journey of an Afghan boy, Fadi, and his struggle to find his lost sister when the family tries to leave Afghanistan. KJ Möller says that *Shooting Kabul* narrates the children's feelings left unrepresented in immigrant societies (61); it is more than a child’s story as the plot also questions historical facts related to the global Afghan policy. The struggle of the family to escape the Afghan Taliban after they force Fadi’s father underlines the birth of an immigrant family. The Afghans in the USA portray a resilient culture that suffers a significant blow after 9/11; they are more into their cultural contact than the interaction with the hosts. The different Afghan age groups display various sorts of affiliation to their past culture. The author emphasises the difficulties that immigrants face in their search for safety and stability. The novel’s key themes are the formation of immigrants, their journey to the United States, and the ongoing effort to handle the difficulties of being an Afghan in the multi-cultural host community. However, Afghans consider that because Afghan mosques are dedicated to religion, people feel compelled to safeguard them and provide funds to build and restore mosques. The story indicates that immigrants who cannot retain values of authentic Afghan culture would lose their legacy while living in host nations that recognise and promote multiculturalism. At the same time, the state of Afghanistan is linked to the perception of the Afghan culture overseas. The writer maintains that a language would be a precondition in the process of culture’s need to manage a committed social, political, and cultural identity. The chapter analysing *SK* will discuss the migrants’ creation, which results from internal

conflicts and foreign interventions. The process of migration and the economy of migration will describe the loopholes in the border policies. When the Afghans reach a host culture, they show a distinct exilic frame of mind which plays a crucial role in reclaiming Afghan cultural identity. The chapter also focuses on the stereotyping of the immigrants, which is often related to Osama Bin Laden and the Islamic dress code.

The third analytical chapter encapsulates Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017). It brings to light a variety of aspects of the migration crisis, including the formation of immigrants, their journey to a host society, and the settlement process. The backdrop is dismal, with the inescapable creation of immigrants. The author addresses the immigration dilemma through the use of magical realism, the dilation and dilution of time and space, and the building of doorways that make the world openly available to all humanity worldwide, irrespective of race, belief, ethnicity, or location. The chapter relates the text to the selected theories, which help understand the refugee's life in ghettos, their homesickness, and the conflict with the host culture. Though Hamid's contemplation of the entire human race stuck in a loop of migration through time and space is controversial, he finishes the story on a hopeful note when the city previously controlled by the hardliners is tranquil, and the younger generation is living peacefully. This section will incorporate the past and the present lives of immigrants. It will employ the nuances of theories regarding the relationship between the neo-colonial and colonial states and the migration crisis. Among other aspects of migration, the repositioning of gender roles is also discussed. Nadia tends to challenge the Eastern patriarchal despotisms in the wake of their arrival in Western cities. As Betsy L. Fisher says, "Nadia sought integration and connection with refugees of other nationalities, while Saeed sought solace from their co-nationals" (1122). Some examples highlight women immigration as a different journey, enabling and emancipating compared to men. Magical doors and rebirth, the inconsistency of space and time, immigrants' ghettos, legitimacy and rights, securitisation and clashes, statelessness, identity, nostalgia for home fundamentalism, and hybridity and multiculturalism will formulate the basis of this chapter.

Migrant literature deals with the social, economic, and cultural contexts of the migrants' home country that play a crucial role in their displacement. Migration studies cover migration experiences, reception in the country of arrival, experiences of racism and hostility, the sense of loss of identity or rootlessness, and the search for

compromised identity. The postcolonial literature focuses on migration centred settings. The migrants from the British and the French colonies relocated to their respective imperial centres after the fall of their respective empires. The overlapping of the postcolonial literature and migration literature meets on colonialism theory. However, not all migration is postcolonial, and all postcolonial literature is not focused on the theme of migration. A question of the current debate is how postcolonial theory incorporates migration literature in non-colonial settings.

Since migration literature relates to the postcolonial era, postcolonial theories incorporate much of its nuances. Nonetheless, the non-colonial settings cannot be disregarded in migration literature. Migration literature incorporates the ideas on displacement, which is also a key term in postcolonial theory; it applies to the majority of the migration situations. Displacement can further be divided into physical and mental movements from one place to another. Migration literature can reflect either of them or both of human conditions simultaneously. After displacement, hosts and guests are the two terms used for the natives and migrators, respectively.

In the article "Migrant, Emigrant, Immigrant. Recent Developments in Turkish-Dutch Literature" Graeme Dunphy argues that the characters' perspectives can be of two different natures: emigrant and immigrant perspectives. The emigrant perspective can relate to the main focus backward to the home country of migrants. In contrast, the immigrant perspective can be associated with the immigrants' confrontation of challenges in the foreign society. It also refers to the reconcilement with the prospect of permanent residence in a host culture. Therefore, it can be seen as an adjustment to a host setting or a reaction to new ideas that contradict his emigrant perspective (1-7). Marcelo L. Urquia et al. in "From Places to Flows. International Secondary Migration and Birth Outcomes" note that primary and secondary migration can refer to a single family member leaving for work and the rest of the family following that person to a new country (1621). The dissertation will focus on some characters being secondary migrants seeking refuge in another country and trying to settle in a third country.

First-generation migration is also a part of the analysis in this dissertation. In the selected novels, characters are primarily first-generation migrants. They take the initiative or make a move from one state to another. There is no direct involvement of second-generation migrants, except Habib in *SK*. The perspective across the migrant

community and generational gap also point to the meaning of migration for different age groups. In this context, if the elder members of the migrant community practice their culture, the community can be termed an ethnic minority; in this regard, the dissertation focuses on *SK's* portrayal of the formation of resistance of a minority culture.

A feeling of "between culture" is associated with the cultural nuances of *Afghaniyat* practised by Afghans in *SK*. The characters appear to live in an interstitial space. In this regard, the challenges confront the family structure of Afghans. In this context, *SK* portrays a comprehensive note on various challenges the Afghan community faces in the host culture. Moreover, in *EW,* the idea of "hybridity" is discussed, referring to language, practices, and political and religious harmony; it is analysed as a by-product of colonialism and capitalism. It supports the acceptance of migrants' way of life and discourages a systematic assimilation process that paralyses the migrants' home culture. In other words, it searches for a middle way. In this regard, bilingualism emerges as an outcome of a hybrid culture. The dissertation refers to *LB* and *SK's* use of a bilingual narration and highlights its significance to strengthen the theoretical basis of the dissertation.

Immigrants confront various issues, including unemployment, language and communication barriers, shelter, access to local services, transportation, cultural disparities, prejudice, isolation, climate, and weather challenges. Rebecca Walkowitz, in “The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer,” argues that the literature on migration would have to include all works that are produced in a time of migration or that can be said to reflect on migration (533). While it is challenging for the immigrants to leave their ancestral homes and settle in a new culture, the indigenous masses also face an unprecedented situation with the arrival of non-citizens. In the integration process, the hosts deem the guest culture as non-indigenous and force them to accept specific cultural and social ideas or leave their states. The major threats are the culture and economy of the natives, which provide the basis for the anti-immigrant narrative and anti-immigrant politics. Borjas argues: “immigrant hordes” harm the employment opportunities of natives” (1667). The division of the material resources threatens the economy of the host society, but it is one of the many issues the migrant community faces.

With time the host concerns about migrants exceed economic considerations. As the society moves to multiculturalism from a well-defined national culture, the immigrant culture threatens the hosts' identity. The challenges from arrival to integration and leading to acceptability concerns are also a part of the study. Both immigrants and the indigenous population explore the options conducive to mutual understanding and long-term rapprochement between culturally different people. Since the thesis' theoretical basis introduces a wide range of topics, the analytical chapters endeavour to deal with the threats the host culture encounters.

The study sheds light on three aspects of refugees' lives: the first one concerns the refugees' home states and their relation to the modern world in terms of colonization, and neo-colonisation. The second aspect discusses that as an outcome of colonisation and the following neo-colonisation, violence accompanies refugees through migration and their journey to security; hence, it becomes the main culprit in their homelessness. It also leaves a permanent inscription on their memories. Thirdly, when they reach a new place, they face the issues of shelter, basic human rights, stereotyping, and nativist politics. *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave, *Naheed* Hasnat Senzai's *Shooting Kabul* and *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid will be analysed to understand the refugee crisis as a theme in English literature. The topical idea of displacement makes up the new society's underlying concerns that take birth after mass migration. It will also focus on transferring and receiving new cultural values in a different fictional community. Edward Said says that with new people, "Transplantation, Transference, Circulation, and Commerce" also present a contemporary cultural discourse never experienced before in the host setting (226). The dissertation focuses that although the three works under discussion have distinct approaches to immigration, they criticise refugee crises severely as an outcome of global intolerance, economic and political ventures.

CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF GIORGIO AGAMBEN AND SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK'S VIEWS ON MIGRATION

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical bases are of two theories: Giorgio Agamben's work "Beyond the Human Rights," which refers to the ideas of "denizens" and "citizens" and Slavoj Žižek's Refugees, Terror and Other Troubles with the Neighbours: Against the Double Blackmail. Both theorists discuss the cultural and administrative responses of the modern states to the global refugee crisis.

The dissertation focuses on the theories by Giorgio Agamben and Slavoj Žižek to extract the fault lines of the migration crisis discussed in the selected texts. There is certain parallelism that binds the three works in a comprehensive phenomenon of the migration crisis. The theories help understand migrants' formation, their journey to a new land, assimilation setbacks and efforts made in immigration in the modern nation-states. The views provide a fundamental understanding of the refugee as an intricate but fathomable concept that can roughly be summed up as an outcome of globalisation and capitalism. Immigrants' journey to the host culture also defines their identity expedition. The dissertation focuses on a three-staged journey that the refugees confront in the way of migration. It includes the past life of the immigrants in the home culture and their relation to the modern world. The present times in the host culture is defined by a struggle to acclimatise to the new culture and economy. The future of the immigrants includes a hypothetical assessment of the texts' outcome. Their past life works as the most significant force in the process of identity formation; they try to find their mutual differences, consequently placing the bricks for their present and future identity. The dissertation analyses that the past helps the integration process, but at the same time, it reflects the colonial and neo-colonial relations. The memories of the colonised era help the immigrants with the language, culture and social norms of the host culture—but some immigrants see the colonisers' involvement in their culture and internal political affairs as a cause of exile. However, the present times are also crucial as they confront a relatively hostile western culture. These conditions have different influences, and the hosts' resentment leads them to form an immigrant identity. This stage is complemented by a renaissance of past culture, nostalgia, and idealising

religious and cultural aggression. The host culture's response and the consequent rapprochement are based on the two earlier factors; the dissertation includes it as the third stage.

The dissertation underlies the unpleasant reality that the refugee crisis results from man's unbridled economic and political ambitions. The consequences of global politics, struggle for power, capitalisation, and neo-colonisation have a due share in the mass migration. Though the immigrants decide to leave their homes, the powerful nations create the circumstances for migration. Meanwhile, the "Freedom of movement for all" slogan remains a famous catchphrase in the modern democratic arena. Still, it becomes a relative term when the immigrants move into the host culture—the rights' mantra has failed big time on the eve of refugee crises. The dissertation also underscores the political economy of the refugees and their journey to the capitalist realms. The argument underpins Slavoj Žižek's conviction that we believe in the "global world, commodities circulate freely, but not people; however, they will desire for refugees when they need cheap or free labour force" (Žižek 47-48).

When the host societies receive the refugees, they are mainly unapprised of their government's colonial and [neo]colonial involvement in the world. They deem the gross migration as a migration at will but not a quest for survival. The crisis appears as global scale karma through which history reiterates itself; the [neo] colonised seek shelter in the [neo] colonisers' world. Foreign involvement in these states appears as a continuous cause of dissatisfaction in the minds of the displaced people. The three novels: *Little Bee, Shooting Kabul* and *Exit West* help formulate a cause-and-effect cycle contributing to the displacement of millions of people across the globe. The three works under consideration represent the down-trodden refugees escaping wars, persecution, and effects of neo-colonisation: such states are more victims of foreign or neighbouring powers than the internal rifts (Žižek42). The selected works are discussed in the framework of an encapsulated world which promises a backlash of the powerful states' policies. Colonel Gaddafi once warned NATO of grave consequences, intervening in African states internal affairs. In the article "Is Europe Doomed to Burn in Hell as Gaddafi Promised," the writer quotes Gaddafi:

> Now listen you, people of NATO. You're bombing a wall which stood in the way of African migration to Europe, and in the way of Al-Qaeda terrorists. This wall was Libya. You're breaking it. You're idiots, and you will burn in Hell for thousands of migrants from Africa. (Alexandrova)

As a notion based on the evidence, the intervention policy prevails throughout war-torn regions. Therefore, ordinary immigrants would declare the peaceful and developed societies as the "criminals" and consider them responsible for their home predicaments (Žižek 43).

The terms "Immigrant," "refugee," and "asylum seeker" denote different backgrounds of the people leaving their home countries. Immigration is the international movement of people to a destination country of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship to settle as permanent residents, naturalised citizens, or it is "the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country" ("Immigration" Oxford). A "refugee" confronts issues of urgent nature; "A person who has been forced to leave his or her country to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster" ("refugees" Oxford). And, an asylum seeker is a person who has left his home country as a political refugee and is seeking asylum in another ("Asylum Seeker" Oxford). Though the displaced have different legal statuses, they are tagged and received as non-citizens when they arrive on the foreign land. On a similar ground, the three works chosen for the dissertation highlight concerns of distinct characters with different pursuits and past experiences forcing them out of native lands. *Little Bee* is based on the life of illegal immigrants in the UK; the story is grounded on an actual event leading a father to commit suicide. The native Nigerians flee their homes after they are threatened by local mafia and corrupt political leaders. *Shooting Kabul* resounds on the grounds of the first- and second-generation crises resulting in a long journey to retrieve a sibling. The after-effects of the USSR invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, the emergence of Sunni fanaticism and consequent civil war leading to the Taliban capturing Kabul after the withdrawal of the USSR set the stage for *Shooting Kabul*. In *Exit West*, the civil war, presumably the condition of Pakistan between 2003 to 2011, is reflected. The two leading characters are fleeing the warzone and enter different doors opening to new cities. In short, they reflect different situations; nonetheless, they strive to find solace and security.

Displacement is at once an opportunity for a better life and a step into the distinctive host culture. Leaving home seems urgent in all cases; it is a choice between life and death, but a continuous conundrum of being different from the hosts is stigmatic. The modern states promise fundamental rights to citizens and the displaced people, but it does not get as simple as it seems when the unprecedented arrival of migrants confronts the state. Žižek deliberates that "my rights" and "their rights"

denote the differences between the refugees and host communities. Accepting their way of life will essentially justify human rights abuses; it will not adhere to the voice of "human" as such and will give way to their irresponsibility to continue. Sexism, brutality, and racism will be born with the view of as expressions of a particular culture that we have no right to judge by foreign "Western values". The use of unpopular policies towards immigrants has adverse consequences on the host country. Žižek believes that Norwegian terrorist Breivik attacked the immigrant tolerant people towards the refugees but not the foreigners. Hence, the issue is not the outsiders but their own cultural identity (56-8). The indigenous population is instigated when the creation of an immigrant community threatens their culture and way of life within the host settings. Over time, the hosts' resentment is utilised by the political parties as a popular anti-immigrant narrative. In an interview, Sarah Palin, an American politician, shares the same notion when talking about her feelings towards the immigrants. She believes that the immigrants should be asked politely, "would you [immigrants] mind going home […] But I say if they [the native Americans] can't learn to get off those horses and start speaking American – then they should be sent home too" (Palin qtd. by Henry). Hence, the acceptance, rights, and integration are far more demanding in the context of the refugee's integration in the politically disturbed host culture.

Agamben's essay "Beyond Human Rights" helps understand the second stage of immigrants' lives, which involves insecurities that constantly haunt them after they settle in a new culture. The migrants confront issues that are simultaneously urgent and long-lasting; when they reach the new place, the refugees face an identity dilemma, and it continues in the life of their upcoming generations. Because of the trying circumstances, refugees lose the rights and the will to assimilate at all costs and form a new immigrant identity. Immigrants are often regarded as stateless people; the statelessness establishes itself as an accomplished fact in their lives.

The world must explore different options available as a comprehensive plan to facilitate the lives of refugees. For the nation-states, it is equally important to seek the confidence of the indigenous population while taking a radical shift in the immigrant policies. Since the nation-states are more confident of their racial identity and culture, the infusion of refugees without hosts' consent dents the refugees' cause as it gives rise to host concerns. Without the hosts' support, the chances of a clash between the host and the guest get stronger. Žižek believes that the political parties use the anti-immigrant narrative in Sweden, which is a debacle for immigrant policies. Similarly,

in the USA, the slogan "protecting our way of life" is a major manifesto chanted in the election campaigns. The reaction that the immigrants opt for is the outcome of the "labelled, defined, oppressed, excommunicated, even physically distorted, by society" (22). Žižek adds that the reaction by the immigrants may be in the shape of a suicide attack, gun attack, or stabbing to death. Similarly, criminal minded hosts and immigrants justify such acts by relating them to ideological grounds and a way of showing resentment; Frankenstein behaves like an ultimate victim after he is convinced of unjust behaviour. Such dejected individuals either join the refugees or join the armed rebels in several host cultures such as Haiti.

Žižek views that the capitalistic economic structure functions as neo-colonialism in many weaker states across the world. More people leave their homes for security and better economic opportunities. Capitalism is viewed as the possible culprit in the process, which gives rise to consumerism and dehumanises human feelings, and the "global market did not give rise to universal tolerance" (60). Immigrants pose a direct danger to the indigenous population's economy; however, the economy has long-term benefits as the workforce is improved. Not only with the new arrivals, but the new limitations will also be set; they affect the job market in the most direct manner, hence, "increasingly hard-line extension of the process of segregation" (62).

The unchecked inclusion will have grave consequences for refugees. For instance, as Žižek says, Muslim children may not like pork served at schools. Though they may be tolerated, they are never respected. (21-42) Muslims find it impossible to bear blasphemous images and reckless humour (which we consider a part of our freedoms), Western liberals also find it impossible to bear with many practices such as the subordination of women that are part of the Muslim life (82) thus, laying the bricks of antipathy: "In short, it is not enough to say that this 'cultural difference' is one in the series of antagonisms that are operative in today's social processes" (51). Even if the refugees decide to do certain things by choice, they are pigeonholed.

Agamben believes that the refugee condition defies the first article of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, encompassing the idea of the French Revolution *liberté, égalité, fraternité*: which means that human beings are equal irrespective of differences. Human conscience must lead the way ahead in the spirit of universal brotherhood (UN). Agamben particularly focuses on the Jewish refugees—however, the modern immigrants are primarily Muslims from war-torn countries, so

their state of affairs is a reflection of the Jewish immigrants. Referring to Hannah Arendt, Agamben says that refugees travel from their hometowns to various places only to find themselves in the quagmire of problems. But they happily endorse their past cultures as Arendt argues that "refugees driven from their countries represent the vanguard of their people—if they keep their identity" (274).

In 2016, the *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* reported that there were 22.5 million refugees and 65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide (UNHCR). It has caused the decline of the idea of the nation-state, "In the predominant modern conception of the world order, the nation-state is the given basis of identity and culture, the 'natural' place to live and belong" (Bauman qtd. in Eastmond 162). The influx of refugees neutralises the hosts' national identity and concerts it into the pre-nation-state era. The more poignant crises are those of immigrants. Mentioning the conditions of the displaced people of WWII, Arendt says that refugees:

> Lost home, which means the familiarity of daily life [they] lost occupation, which means the confidence that is of some use in this world. [They] lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings. [They] left [their] relatives in the Polish ghettos. (Arendt 264)

Agamben argues that immigrants erode the traditional political and judicial classifications and challenge the idea of the nation-state. In *English Literature*, as Oldenburg says, the influence of xenophobia on constructions of national identity opens the door to reimagining immigrant relations in early modern England and its literature of the Early Modern period (391). In the modern nation-state, the struggle for acceptance and integration in the host society is more remarkable. No matter how the integration process is carried out, identity travels with the refugee. Natalie Friedman believes, instead of shedding the trappings of the home culture and throwing himself headlong into the work of accepting the new culture, the lead character of the contemporary immigrant novel—whether an immigrant or a child born to immigrants—is more concerned with their dual identity (112).

Immigrants have no voice in the new society, according to Agamben, because refugees are not considered equals with hosts. The status of the refugee is temporary, leading to legally and politically unrepresented people. Therefore, "[t]he concept of a refugee must be resolutely separated from the concept of the "human rights" and the right of asylum (which is by now in the process of being drastically restricted in the legislation of the European states) must no longer be considered as the conceptual

category" (93). In a nation-state, the system processes the individual through naturalisation, which are control mechanisms used to quicken the integration process. The naturalisation process includes examinations, language learning, and other considerations that are important for integration. Hence, the refugees' cultural background is neutralised or brought to a different level, giving way to a new host identity. The hosts accept the refugee at the cost of evading his past and compliant to the present, transforming the immigrant from a "denizen" to a "citizen" (96).

Agamben argues that the internal politics of the host society influences the state's immigration policy—the region's politics is under the shades of "bio-politics[1]", an idea used by Michel Foucault. Foucault defines the concept of bio-politics in his work, *Homo Sacer,* as the assimilation of natural life in the mechanisms and calculations of state power and politics; in such a system, the ruling mechanism is carried out by using statistics as the input for the actions of the government. Agamben reasons that bio-politics started in Europe at the time of the ancient Greeks. It is the organisation of life and a locality's population as its subject. To quote Foucault, it is "to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order" (138). Agamben also emphasises the legal status of refugees, saying that it plays a critical role in the politico-constitutional level of the nation-state. The modern refugee crisis has led to a division of the concept of human rights. For the indigenous population, the definition differs from the status of the displaced people. The condition of the immigrants is like the status of the "*homo sacer*," a figure in ancient Roman law whose life was worthless, and if anybody murdered him, he would not be sentenced for the crime; it was not considered an offence in the eyes of the Roman Law. In the Roman context, the "*homo sacer*" is the one who is "set apart" from society. Agamben sees the ambiguity in the conceptualisation of the legal status of a refugee with less or no rights compared to the citizens of the nation-state. This factor nullifies the status of the people as refugees as the "man" and "rights" defined under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[1] Foucault first used the term ''biopolitics'' in the 1970s to denote how social and political power is used to structure and control human life, and his concept and method of analyzing political structures is currently used across disciplines, including political science.

Describing Hannah Arendt, Agamben says the ideas of birth and citizenship are concurring ideas. In the host surroundings, refugees' life is secure, but it cannot be enough in the context of human rights. Lifestyle and cultural values change along with other slogans of the state. Therefore, the idea of "humanity" fades, and "citizenship" replaces it. (95) The integration process implemented by the hosts does not outlaw the status of the refugees; instead, an immigrant is assimilated as a part of the society after the evasion of his past life. In other words, deculturalization takes place, and a new version of culture is taught and redefined. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K Bhabha argues, "The very concepts of homogenous national cultures, the consensual or contiguous transmission of historical traditions, or 'organic' ethnic communities—as the grounds of cultural comparativism—are in a profound process of redefinition" (5). Agamben uses the "inclusive exclusion" in his further deliberation of the refugees' status. The refugees gain the status of the unifying system but remain hapless and go through cultural acceptance if he impersonates the existing culture. However, the definition of the status of the refugees cannot be put in the binary dichotomy, as the intrinsic refugee culture is distinct from the life of the permanent resident of the nation-state with whom the term "citizen" is associated. The universal rights' declaration does not apply to the arriving refugees because they do not have a legal status to advocate their standpoint, which is like the *homo sacer* who could not live with the citizens; he was told to remain outside the city boundaries, much like an illegal immigrant or refugee in today's world. *Homo sacer* was driven to the edge of the society where he lived in the "black holes." Agamben calls such disregarded immigrants as the "denizens" who must abide by the cultural, social, and legal codes of the place, *sine qua non* they are unworthy of citizenship (90). The status of the *homo sacer* could be narrowed down to the idea that almost every single individual, be it in their own country/ state, in life finds the condition of the *homo sacer*. Additionally, people are labelled as homosexuals, trespassers, the mentally ill, the unemployed, blacks, feminists, beggars, the homeless, and addicts. Almost every individual will have the qualities of a *homo sacer*; hence, refugeehood becomes a global phenomenon.

Refugees' segregation is different from the individual choices in the life of a citizen. Dressing, food, living style, worship, and even beard insinuate a particular cultural and religious background. The status of *homo sacer* denotes the vague position of different communities. This is significant that the tolerant refugee states are

primarily the western nations and the refugees are Muslims from the middle eastern countries; it leads to a chasm between the cultures. The majority of the wealthy Muslim states are unwilling to support the refugees by giving them space. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar are the wealthiest Muslim countries, but they have contributed pennies in the crises. On the contrary, when some immigrant workers make it to these authoritarian states, they are treated as modern slaves: "[there are] millions of immigrant workers in the Saudi peninsula who are deprived of elementary civil rights and freedoms" (Žižek 45). Žižek further adds that the capitalist world controls the economies of oil-rich states and is indifferent to the migration crisis.

The people from other cultures are a permanent mass of non-citizens in the industrialised states who do not wish to be and cannot be integrated or repatriated. They have their nationalities of origin, but they do not want to return to their own states' vulnerable protection; instead, they find themselves in a permanent status of *de facto* statelessness. Žižek also questions the means of migration and the financial strain related to it; he argues that the process of immigration involves pain and struggle and the consumption of already scarce financial means. Žižek believes that refugee transportation is a complex economy worth billions of dollars. The question arises that who is financing and controlling the human traffickers (Žižek 44-45).

With the arrival of immigrants, the concept of the nation-state will decline, so will the traditional political-judicial categories and divisions. Agamben believes that refugees reshape the ideas of the nation-state and set limits to the structure of a future political community; the fundamental concepts through which the questions of politically significant ideas are answered need to be revised for a better outcome for an immigrant society. The dissertation implies that a political settlement of the issues is the best option for both hosts and the refugees. The refugees do not want to go back as they escape not only war or insecurity; they always have an aspiration for a utopia that explodes every time they touch new land; hence, it is only an "*objet petit a"*. The most potent manifestation of this 'desire for the West' is represented by immigrant refugees: their desire is not a revolutionary one; it is the desire to leave behind their destroyed habitat and re-join the promised land of the developed West. Žižek adds that those who remain behind try to create their wretched "copies of Western affluence, like the 'modernised' parts in every Third World metropolis, in Luanda, Lagos, and so on, with Italian-style cafés, shopping malls." (47-70)

Agamben believes that refugees' arrival brings a radical crisis to the principles of the nation-state and clears the way for a revitalisation of policies that can no longer be deferred (94). New narratives later confront the states receiving refugees on all grounds. Said believes the cultural and intellectual life of the populace are influenced when new substances are introduced; they are typically nurtured and often continued by this flow of ideas. The influence could be both conceded or unconscious, creative borrowing, or wholesale assumption. At once, the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity (226). Mieke Bal in *Working with Concepts*, regards that ideas exchange between "disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities" (24).

Agamben adds refugees' acceptance lingers slowly because of cultural differences. When people travel, they keep their ideological weaknesses and strengths. It is a natural process as Said believes historical period and National culture are continuously reshaping, accepting and rejecting certain features of other influences (226). Immigrants' influence directs the host culture in a new direction. Hence, the concept of cultural affiliation of an individual to a state or society transforms regularly under certain circumstances. Living under the given circumstances, people usually unconsciously deal with the strain of losing their identity. In reclaiming the past self, both the minorities and majorities display their increasing defiance resulting in conflicts. The factors that contribute to the reassessment of the conditions by the immigrants and the indigenous population vary, but they are intrinsically the natural reaction that emerges from the fears that the immigrants bring with them. The conditions that contribute to the revival of these cultural instincts are mainly socio-cultural, and the newly met cultures are unable to receive each other openly in their respective lives. Nevertheless, such tensions usually come to peaceful resolutions after an initial upsurge.

The national narrative reiterates the significance of communal memory and the remembrance of where one belongs; it can play the role of uniting the people who have a little more in common (Hansson 216). Ethno-cultural identity takes birth in the lap of civic identity, and it is pretty often proven that nationhood is not founded on ethnic origin as there is no unconscious sense of belonging, and the individuals feel estranged when they are alienated confronting the majority. The ideas of indigenous culture are

challenged with the arrival of new cultural values. Also, cultural heritage tends to recuperate when new political, economic and social narratives are introduced to deal with a challenge. When such narratives build up, they are liable to construct and reconstruct in the present environments. However, Richard Kearney, in his *On Stories*, believes that when such a situation occurs, it becomes dangerous as people go to extremes like fascism (81).

Žižek opines: "Modern industrial or capitalist economies require the state, and the state, in turn, can operate successfully only if it can develop and be maintained by a common, accessible, written culture" (51), it gets more challenging to maintain a resilient cultural structure amid frequent influences coming with the arrival of the diverse displaced people. Cultural identity, Shada Islam says, takes a more vigorous shape in immigrants and asylum-seekers, many of them Africans, seeking to enter southern European ports and islands illegally. In addition, as highlighted by recent terror attacks, bomb alerts, race riots, and public skirmishes between mainstream Europe and Muslim minorities, such as those over the pamphlet of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, ensuring security in Europe necessitates serious action to curb the radicalisation of young Muslims in Europe and the threat of "home-grown" terrorism. The EU must win the "battle of ideas" to positively fight the demand of fundamentalist preachers and terrorists preying on Europe's estranged Muslim youth (2).

When migrating, different factors contribute to decision making; however, staying in these host countries challenges the cultural and moral tones of the natives. American Senator Alan Simpson concluded legislation with the following statement:

> Finally, this legislation is not unneeded. Some have claimed that more immigration—both legal and illegal—is what this country needs. Anyone who believes that has not been listening to taxpayers who are being adversely affected—for example, by welfare abuse, schools that are overcrowded and beset by demands for multi-cultural curricula, rising crime and expensive, time-consuming deportation procedures. Both the Senate and House bills tackle the problem in a rational, sensible, and fairway, one that advances the interests of most of our citizens—and thus our national interest. (qtd.in Butcher, Kristin F., and Anne Morrison Piehl)

The immigration crisis also changes the perspectives on nationality and nativeness. For instance, in *Exit West*, the author challenges the idea of nativeness, as Lagji argues: "Hamid's use of irrealist and fantastic modes challenges readers to entertain normative claims about the world" (218). Kearney contends that migrants

have their definition of nationality, and views on nationality vary around the globe. However, there is no difference between these words; in the Swedish language, for example, citizenship and nationality are synonyms (2-5). A migrant cannot be called a "national" even if he has all the necessary documents to prove his status. The demographic transition transforms; David Coleman, in his "Immigration and Ethnic Change in Low-Fertility Countries: A Third Demographic Transition," affirms that even the ancestor of some national populations is being profoundly changed by mass immigration of individuals from remote states and origins who carry diverse racial backgrounds. The state of affairs is further challenged by the low fertility rate and high immigration (401-66). Ron Lesthaeghe and Johan Surkyn in "When History Moves On: The Foundations and Diffusion of the Second Demographic Transition" conclude that behavioural changes, especially in terms of sexual behaviour and childbearing, are influenced by migration (325).

CHAPTER 2

LITTLE BEE

Chris Cleave's *Little Bee* (2008) sheds light on the struggle, commitment, and resilience of a young Nigerian African girl Bee (a.k.a. Little Bee, a.k.a. London Sunshine, a.k.a. Udo), in pursuit of a sanctuary in the UK. The modern nations' role in the persecution of the weaker nations and the mobility of resources and immobility of human beings is one of the many critical aspects of this work. Bee fears maltreatment in Nigeria as she is a witness to the murders and blatant violations of human rights committed after the oil conflict started. Her story is cross-continental, but the miseries are universal, and sufferings are relatable. After reaching the UK, living with civil war experiences displays one part of the enigma, whereas the host communities appear to have more hurdles to offer than relief. Her memories live with and prick her existence throughout life in the host culture; unfamiliar language, culture, and skin colour play respective denting roles in reawakening her past. The struggle to disregard her bygone days is exasperating, and her illegal status thwarts her prospects in the UK. Thus, *LB* includes the experiences of a girl that reflect the universal call for refugee crisis; the hosts (once Colonizers) must accept the brand of people with particular cultural nuances as she is a victim of her people on the one hand, but the neo-colonial exploits in her country have a fair share in her debacle. Cleave deciphers the layers of the immigration process, including causes of displacement, cultural differences, psychological problems associated with it, and financial hindrances. Andrew Rosenheim, in his "The Fiction of Prophecy", supports the argument: *LB* is an equally topical story, in this case, it causes the collision of worlds when an asylum seeker seeks refuge with a middle-class Englishwoman living in a prosperous suburb of London (32). Cleave describes *LB* in "Author Q&A" thus:

> There's something you can do in fiction that you don't have the space to do in news media, which is to give back a measure of humanity to the subjects of an ongoing story. When I started to imagine the life of one asylum seeker in particular, rather than asylum seekers in general, the scales fell from my eyes regarding any ideological position I might have held on the issue. It's all about exploring the mystery and the wonder of an individual human life. Life is precious, whatever its country of origin. (Chris Cleave)

Thematically, *LB* is a social document concerning asylum seekers' struggle at the time of conflict in the host environment. Here, Bee tries to forget her past, but she fails and accepts her present time.

In the novel, the author uses real-life experiences gained from his life. The detention centre functions as the ghetto of modern times; it bifurcates humanity from legal to illegal, from white to black, from European to non-European and so on so forth. Cleave worked in a detention centre and considered the detention centre a jail jam-packed with people who had not committed a crime — he had been living within ten miles of the place for three years and did not even know it existed (Cleave). In his "Chris Cleave: The Author Explores the Tragicomic Way Britain Deals with Asylum-Seekers", Christian House remarks that Cleave spent his early childhood in West Africa, which he credits for having partially inspired the work. Patrick Parrinder sums up in his *Nation and Novel*, British writers will continue creating and recreating the national identity (414). While Cleave renders voice to the refugees living in the UK, he introduces a critique of the condition of the British middle-class mentality towards the refugees. *LB* supports diversity and empathizes with the black protagonist; it is similar to Cleave's *Incendiary* which is about people with Spanish-sounding names who are ethnically varied, ranging from fair-skinned to brown and black.

There is an accurate depiction of refugees in this work; however, the reader may also find stereotyping of the immigrants. The British author, to an extent, degrades refugees and submits a request for consideration of their asylum request. Berthold Schoene in "Cosmo-Kitsch vs Cosmopoetics" states that the contrast between middle-class Londoners with desperate strugglers from the Third World country is the centre of Cleave's argument, but it has shortcomings of the sort while dealing with the internationalization of English literature (106) and culture. The writer clings to stereotyping Africans, tagging her with the debilitating name "Little Bee," which Bee assumes as the only superhuman name in her country (*LB* 313). The language associated with her also suggests the writer's involuntary cliché defining the particulars of the African girl: "she was whispering [...] in some language that sounded like butterflies drowning in honey" (*LB* 19). However, it seems that Cleave is sentimental on the subject when the British editor's lover pronounces, "you're the brave little refugee girl, and I'm the selfish bastard" (*LB* 269).

Cleave sheds light on the psychological issues the refugees face in the host community, suggesting that refugees' psychology is equally crucial while studying refugee crises. The traumatic experiences also haunt the hosts Sarah and Andrew as they struggle to renounce the beach incident; however, failing to face the self-reproach of Bee's sister's death causes Andrew's untimely demise (*LB* 380). The beach incident

formulates a haunting reminiscence for Sarah, Andrew, Bee and her sister. The bond is reinforced by Bee's arrival at the couple's house in the UK and Andrew's death. Sarah's cleaved finger is a constant *aide-mémoire* of the beach tragedy. Had the couple not encountered the incident, they would not have felt the need to support Bee as a refugee; therefore, the past impels the present times. The memories construct the basis of life-changing experiences for all the characters living in the UK, and through the memories, Cleave connects most of the characters to a mutually experienced instance of the birth of a refugee on the Nigerian beach. W. J Berry, in "A Psychology of Immigration", suggests that the psychological experiences of both sides are mostly neglected; these aspects are equally important in understanding refugee crises (615). Cleave's motivation came from his brief service while learning experimental psychology at the University of Oxford for this work. During the summer, Cleave painted underpasses, gardened and picked up litter, and hoped to use this experience to write a book. Cleave's refugees are ordinary individuals with strengths and resources who have been caught in abnormal situations (313). In this regard, the occurrences make the characters peculiar. *LB* helps the reader understand refugees' intricate experiences, including recollection, culture, insight, and awareness of the mind influencing the behaviour.

Both rationality and sentimentality appear as conspicuous facets of human psychology in this work. These aspects mould relationships on the individual and social level; it helps dissect Sarah's and Andrew's relationship and Bee's association with them. Sarah tends to see her husband as the cause of Bee's sister's death: Sarah thinks that "he said, Words are nothing. The person I am is the person you saw on that beach. He knows where the commas go, but he wouldn't cut off one finger to save you" (*LB* 422). Andrew authored about refugees' miseries, but he lacked a pragmatic approach to it when needed. In short, Cleave's experimental psychology is perhaps the most formidable device that initiates the proceedings.

To create an equilibrium, Cleave introduces two narrators providing two different contexts—the host and immigrant are represented by Sarah and Bee, respectively. The text focuses on the individual and social assertions of the narrators. The writer's position is dialectic: dialectic or dialectics, also known as the dialectical method, is at base a discourse between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through reasoned methods of argumentation. In *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, P. Edward Corbett J.

Robert and J. Connors define Dialectic as resembling "debate, but the concept excludes subjective elements such as emotional appeal and the modern pejorative sense of rhetoric" (17). Concerning the novel's two titles and two narrators, Cleave argues that "*The Other Hand*" is a good subtitle because it speaks to the dichotomous nature of the story, with its two narrators and two worlds (Cleave).

Neither Bee nor Sarah can forget the beach incident; thus, with the establishment of Sarah-Bee relation, a new discourse takes place, as Edward Said says, with the arrival of new people, a contemporary cultural discourse is formulated, which is never experienced before in the host setting (226). Bee is a shrewd observant of the emerging circumstances; she comments on and concludes the situation from her perspective. On the other hand, Sarah is a professional woman working as the editor of *Nixie*. Sarah describes Bee as her other hand (*LB* 87). Emotionally, she feels that with the arrival of Bee, she has, somehow, regained her chopped-off finger. When she asks Bee to open up, there is a moment of pause between the two (*LB* 289). The moment is described differently in their respective narrations; Cleave's alternating perspectives put it as a legal hearing; the separate individuals' argumentation seems to advocate their particular cases; there is a slight disparity between Sarah and Bee's perspectives.

Bee is from a village in the Niger Delta. Sarah is from rural Surrey. Bee's village was demolished, her relations raped and murdered by a so-called oil militia. Sarah has an unsatisfactory husband, a sceptical lover, and a residential house. On the day they meet, Bee flees with her sister, Nkiruka, into the jungle: she is frightened that they will be slain. Sarah and Andrew are trying to patch up their marriage during an unlikely beach vacation to southern Nigeria. Sarah tries to help the girls and bargains for their lives and, acting on impulse, makes an awful sacrifice that saves Bee but not Nkiruka. Such are the similarities—and stark differences—through which Cleave forges an artistic relationship between the two women, one white and one black, one with papers and one without. Bee and Sarah are not naïve narrators: Sarah and Bee represent their time, culture, class, social and economic species—arguably, both characters are not individuals but species. Andrew's inaction devours Bee's sister's life, but Sarah sacrifices her finger and saves her from the hunters; Sarah is her guardian on British soil.

The struggle for refuge that starts with Bee seems to be ingrained in the lives of almost all the characters. In *LB*, characters seem either geographical refugees or

seek emotional exiles. Most of Cleave's characters are refugees in their private spheres; Cleave believes human beings are exiles from reality and refugees in their respective pasts (*LB* 65). Bee cherishes the moments spent with her siblings and friends in the small town. Andrew seeks sanctuary in death after the incident on the Nigerian beach. The hunter warns Andrew, "you will not forget. Maybe one day you will wake up in Kingston-upon-Thames, and you will understand you lost more than your finger" (*LB* 250). Andrew has hallucinations of Bee and the incident—when Bee arrives, he is almost crazy and considers Bee unreal when she is hiding in the garden (*LB* 418). For Andrew, death appears a genuine and justifiable refuge. When Andrew commits suicide, Cleave suggests that the eternal shelter he has attained on the soil of no country, where a new name, mask or cape will not hide him from himself. It is the best choice available once your realm of conscience denies you asylum (*LB* 65).

Sarah has an extramarital relationship with Lawrence, but she misses Andrew after he dies. Ironically, Sarah finds solace in Bee's presence, the cause of Andrew's death, whereas Lawrence is a refugee in Sarah's existence. Bee replaces Andrew; Sarah says: "When I thought of Andrew, I thought of Little Bee" (*LB* 386). Sarah and Bee are on the same ground as Bee says, "I lost my parents and my sister. You have lost your husband. Both of us have lost" (*LB* 310). Soon after Andrew's death, Sarah clings to Lawrence for emotional support believing, "But to escape from Andrew, to become me, I had to go the whole way and fall in love [with Lawrence]" (*LB* 357-8). When alive, Andrew leaves for Ireland as soon he is emotionally dented, so does Bee, who tries to find consolation in memories. It is instinctive to go back to your roots in both physical and mental anguish, away from home. Cleave implies that predicaments are universal, and no one can escape them (*LB* 411); even the Queen of England cannot get away from it: "Sometimes I feel as lonely as the Queen of England" (*LB* 188). Bee sees herself as the Queen's parallel.

> [The Queen] is carrying a heavy cargo too. The Queen and me, we are ready for the worst. In public, you will see both of us smiling and sometimes even laughing, but if you were a man who looked at us in a certain way, we would both of us make sure we were dead before you could lay a single finger on our bodies. Me and the Queen of England, we would not give you the satisfaction. (*LB* 126-7)

It is instinctive to escape dangers, be it emotional or physical, and seek refuge as "Lawrence and I [Sarah] escaped from our tragedies and into each other," (*LB* 477) the relationships in *LB* suggest. The individuals are a part of a complex emotional mechanism that ultimately decides on the future of refugees from other countries. *LB*

essentially communicates the universality of mental torments. Like natives, immigrants experience life before coming to the UK; human feelings influence their present circumstances and prospects.

Cleave does not introduce immigrants as vigorous and well-built men but malnourished women suffering from depression. Desperate to be free, Bee goes through mental anxiety; she thinks suicide is a means to ease her suffering. She feels otherwise when she "touches the soil of England as a free woman" (*LB* 59). Bee is a survivor of men's aggression in her home country: "the men came and they took the girls and killed many that was how all of our stories started of missing daughters" (*LB* 186). It is interesting to see those female immigrants are doubly subjugated in this context—Bee shares her experience: "I realized I knew nothing about men apart from the fear" (*LB* 55).

Consequently, gendering immigrant crises adheres to fundamental female concerns on the foreign land struggling to be accepted in the mainstream of a new society. Fearing extradition, the female asylum seekers do not share their identities—a female character, in *LB,* has no name and dies unnamed, and Bee continues without a name till the revelation at the end of the novel. It is mainly because their past is deep-rooted in their characters reflects their present fears. Bee has stark memories of her past life, seeing girls and women being raped, homes burnt. She embarks on a ship to the UK to escape the brutalities. In "Gendering Human Rights and Their Violation: A Reading of Chris Cleave's *Little Bee*", Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg believes that Bee portrays the condition of women of the world. It includes the feeling the women are subjugated by thugs, government officials, and government institutions (60). Bee's companion Yvette offers sex to an administrator as payment for their release from the detention centre. Though different in social settings, the memories of Bee's sister being raped, and smashed against a boat in Nigeria and refugees offering sex in the UK, refer to the nature of brutality against women collectively. Moreover, the refugee inmates are provided with less food, and to get more, they were asked for different tasks "If you danced and swayed to show you liked the music, he would bring you extra food" (*LB* 136). However, her migration is based on the desire to start living and build a secure future.

Cleave implies that female immigrants are more susceptible to troubles unless they get "pounds", which "has all the tricks of a sorcerer" (*LB* 22), but they do not have the opportunity to earn it. Paradoxically, a pound is free to travel across the globe;

the better-looking women are suitable for western culture to remain fit for the integration while others are "sent home" and, "In this way, your country becomes lively and more beautiful" (*LB* 25). Because of the large number of refugees, men and women are mostly kept in one place. At the detention centre, the women are constantly threatened by men who are compared to hungry wolves that should be kept away from the women at night (*LB* 29). The UK is not better for the immigrants than the "Nigerian shores where the men and dogs hunt women together" (*LB* 296). In the UK, it is more often easier to adjust to a different life where men and women work together but Bee finds it challenging: "For the whole two years I did not smile or even look in any man's face" (*LB* 32).

2.1 A Source of Pain and the Increasing Homesickness

Cleave implies that refugees do not leave behind their countries; instead, it travels with them (*LB* 436). Becoming British and being British are noteworthy features of Bee's life. Though Bee is physically in the UK, her spirit is left behind. She relishes moments of the past, and she is more vigorously connected to it than the time she spends in London. Past inspires her will to live, reconnect to memories, rejoices her when she is depressed and constructs and reconstructs Bee's behavioural pattern over time. It also defines Bee's status in the eyes of the host community. Bee seeks refuge in the UK; hence, pragmatically, she has to learn the British way of life. In other words, it is forced conversion. As an asylum seeker, Bee is required to evade her past by the host ideals. She has the will and the wish to forget her past, but the circumstances eventually describe her as more Nigerian than a British woman, leading to her banishment. Agamben suggests that a yielding refugee, ready to give up their past, would more easily absorb into the new society and get the chance to become a citizen (96), but *LB* indicates an asylum seeker cannot let go of her past; hence, she is not recognized ultimately.

The immigrants live with both psychological and physical scars; earlier time accompanies the characters in the shape of reminiscences as well as marks on their bodies which "suggest their survival strength and dedication and the will to life: a scar does not form on the dying. A scar means that the refugee has survived the harsh times" (*LB* 38). In the detention centre, where life is miserable, Bee resorts to memories of her family; when she flees from the detention centre, her sister's apparition shares the journey as she feels that her sister is walking with her in the darkness of the night;

"Nkiruka walked beside me" (*LB* 187). When the sun rises, she finds herself alone: "looked over at my sister, but she had disappeared with the night" (*LB* 190). Bee's strength mainly originates from her bygone days and scars on both the mind and the physique, suggesting that she rejoices past and believes in gaining strength from it.

Bee feels a constant urge to go back to her Nigerian village; nevertheless, the decision could be fatal as the warlords deem her a threat to their hegemony over the oilfields. Though there is nothing significant left behind for refugees, the instinctive response is always to go back, to seek the old life again, but the fear of being murdered subsides everything— the love for her hamlet is substantial that is the reason Bee likes the suburbs more than London (*LB* 459). The contrast of London with the small poverty-stricken village signifies the feelings of association with the birthplace. Also, dark memories live with refugees "inchoate, senseless, awful" (*LB* 269). Bee's childhood memories occupy her whenever she feels it is impossible to assimilate herself into British society. The following statement links the two worlds:

> I dreamed of watching Nkiruka swinging back and fro, back and fro, and when I woke up there were tears in my eyes and in the light of the moon I was watching something else swinging back and fro, back and fro. I could not tell what it was. I wiped the tears from my eyes and I opened them fully, and then I saw what it was that was swinging through the air at the end of my bed. (*LB* 184)

Playing, running and celebrating different occasions have their tinges on the mind that influence immigrant life in the UK.

Cleave provides validity to Bee's past by positioning a middle-class English woman Sarah on the beach with her on the day of the murder—Bee's refugee case is subject to Sarah's testimony. It appears that even to make it more credible for the UK readers, Cleave introduced her character as an *alibi*. The writer could have used an African narrator throughout the work, but, as an English woman, Sarah establishes a more cordial relation to the reader. Her chopped off finger and dead husband: "It was depression [of not being able to help Bee and her sister] that killed Andrew, of course—depression and guilt" (*LB* 70) make Bee sufferings more authentic. More significantly, Andrew does not offer his finger to save the life of an African girl, and it haunts him throughout his later life. Sarah believes only ten per cent of one's income, as her finger one out of ten, can help a refugee; hence, ten per cent of the British economy could save the lives of millions of refugees. Since the town was utterly abolished and there were not supposed to be any survivors to tell the story (*LB* 232),

Sarah provides the reader with the authenticity of the events and the credibility of a British national.

Cleave does not cleave past from the present in the life of a newcomer in society. Consistent images of experiences connect human life into a whole of experiences, and it is humane to thrive on them. Bee's representative on the British soil, Sarah, provides her with options such as lodging in the UK, food and shelter. Like Bee, Sarah has her long chain of strangulating episodes in her life. She is incapable of cleaving Andrew from her memories; "It was completely automatic; […] if there's a problem with Charlie, I always call Andrew. I just forgot he was…you know. I thought I was ready, you know, to hear what happened to you…and your sister. But I wasn't. I wasn't ready for it. Oh god" (*LB* 310). Even Andrew's death is associated with the memories of the time spent on the Nigerian beach and the murder of the girl. He ultimately collapses emotionally— Bee notices the changes taking place in his character. In the presence of Sarah, Andrew is volatile, which continues in her absence. Crying, sobbing, having soliloquies and kneeling in despair without much to consider dominate his latter days. Bee reckons that he is full of evil spirits (*LB* 418), but to the reader, he is a victim of reminiscences and feelings of guilt. Cleave's justice to insensitivity to humanity heralds a suicide.

Primarily, in *LB,* characters are driven by the past into new physical and emotional realms. When Bee comes across a particular situation, she drifts into memories. Frequently, the construction of the whole out of a significant part of the plot develops with a small event triggering memory. While reaching a place to rest, on the first day out of the detention centre, Bee sees hens— she compares the situation with the one she faced with her sister in the village while fleeing. On the farms of the UK, she mingles the memories of the past with the present condition of the hens and begins to note their every movement. In the mind of the Sari Girl, the harmless hens tend to transform into aggressive men approaching them (*LB* 177). To ease the traumatic experiences of the village children, elders say that smoke rose from the volcano; in fact, it was their homes burning (*LB* 153). A volcano takes long before it erupts, and the memories of the refugees erupt with the cremating recollections of their hometown (*LB* 153). The murky pasts of the characters develop melancholic refugees. It is not because of their innate proclivities, but because of the hardship they are subjected to on their journey to their new home. The refugees desire to forget their painful past for a stable today.

According to the author, Bee's "past had smashed to dust" (*LB* 58). Forgetting the immigrants' origin does not qualify them for acceptance in *LB*—Bee is sent back when she cannot prove her legal status. To her level best, she has embraced everything acceptable in the context of British law, except bearing a legal document. However, she unconsciously speaks her accent to the hawker and uses a Nigerian accent when under duress. Her forced cultural conversion pops up now and then only to remind her of a distinctive culture.

The past is multi-layered in *LB*— recollections tend to be amalgamations of multiple stories emerging from different factors. Mainly the stories of the immigrants include village life, but there is always a sad end to them. When a traffic accident happens, residents laugh at it as it is the first-ever accident in their community. The village residents express their feelings in the following words:

> We should be thanking you, sir, you have put our village on the map, this is our very first road traffic accident. And the driver of that Mercedes, he laughed, and he stayed too, and he became great friends with my father, so much that I called him my uncle. And my father and my uncle lived very happily in that place until the afternoon when the men came and shot them. (*LB* 194)

Bee wishes, through her imagination, to transform the people of London into the people of her Nigerian village. She sees the images of her relatives in the faces of the pedestrians: "My sister, my mother, my father and my uncle. Every face I see, I am looking for them in it" (*LB* 198). On another occasion, she sees, "Once I saw my mother, but when I looked more closely, she was somebody else's" (*LB* 473).

Seeking refuge is not an option, but a compulsion in the wake of crises, the author of *LB* implies. Past inspires going back to the home culture. It leaves Bee with Hobson's choice: she feels for her war-torn hamlet on the one hand, and London offers no future on the other hand. She misses everything back home: she yearns, "I would like to be a village girl again and do the things that village girls do. I would like to laugh and smile at the boys. I would like to do foolish things when the moon is full. And most of all, you know, I would like to use my actual name" (*LB* 490). She wishes to taste her local tea; she responds to the unfamiliar taste in the following words, saying:

> Tea is the taste of my land: it is bitter and warm, strong, and sharp with memory. It tastes of longing. It tastes of the distance between where you are and where you come from. Also, it vanishes—the taste of it vanishes from your tongue while your lips are still hot from the cup. It disappears, like plantations stretching up into the mist. (*LB* 290)

Except for Sarah, Bee does not have any friends on British soil. She remains in contact with her Nigerian friends through her imagination, fantasizing about conversations with her friends and family members about cultural differences between Nigeria and the UK. Bee's stream of internal conflict has detailed discussions between her and her people; she deliberates on the dressing style of British people and compares it with the dressing habits back home. It is all new to her, and learning a new culture is simultaneously pleasurable and shocking. Bee's comments on the cultural differences reads:

> There was a white girl in the newspaper photo and she was topless. You know what I mean when I say this because it is your language we are speaking. But if I was telling this story to my big sister Nkiruka and the other girls from my village back home then I would have to stop, right here, and explain to them: topless does not mean, the lady in the newspaper did not have an upper body. It means she was not wearing any garments on her upper body. You see the difference?
> —*Wait. Not even a brassiere?*
> —*Not even a brassiere.*
> —*Weh!* (*LB* 28)

She confronts a new culture entirely different from her past, but the positive aspect is her graciousness. No negativity can be deduced from her comments whatsoever. However, there is always an element of surprise mixed with pleasure when seeing something different from her cultural background.

2.1.1 Every refugee's journey to security

Rebecca Walkowitz, in "The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer", claims that immigrant literature should include small instances of the migration process (533). There are girls with different pasts in the detention centre, and the same situation applies to when several refugees are waiting at the airport to be deported to Nigeria. Bee is an individual in this work; in reality, it is not a single case but millions of migrants walking across countries to reach safe places. Bee's macabre narration persistently confirms the struggle for life; she is an asylum seeker. The gruesome events in Nigeria haunt her existence — a proportion of her memories is permanently connected. The story of *LB* begins with the accumulative assessment of the refugee crises as a collective phenomenon, but it moves into Bee's life. Almost every refugee has to tackle with the inhuman condition in their struggle to survive: "Our stories are the tellers of us" (*LB* 295). Escaping death, paying money to traffickers, lodging and travelling in inhuman conditions, trudging along for days

and months, and bearing severe climate are a few of many issues concerning their journey to safety. Cleave believes that thousands of people float on the ocean; they pay smugglers, and those who cannot pay stow away on the cargo ship's freight containers. It fills the description of the voyage with darkness, hunger and fear, but they all have the will to reach an imaginary country where they would find physical and mental peace. Slavoj Žižek believes that the international community must see the economy of illegal immigration, as a business worth billions of dollars is yearly carried out by these traffickers (44-55). Often the travellers have to pay hefty amounts for their way to security. In Bee's case, she does not have money to pay, but her body (*LB* 171) and even Bee's sister dies to prove that they need protection. Death is the only option the characters mostly see as emancipation even when they reach a safe country — Bee states, "After a hundred sleepless nights I had finished working out how to kill myself in every single corner of the detention centre and the country outside" (*LB* 120).

The immigrants' economic conditions influence their approach to and stance in the host communities. Bee's life experience is categorically classified as non-commoditized by Cleave, although London may rightly be called the birthplace of capitalism: "Each time I saw something for the first time" (*LB* 194). The concerns of people living in the small Nigerian village are incompatible with those living in a metropolis like London. In her village, accidents are thought to have brought happiness. Bee suggests that the people of the town acknowledged the person saying that he had put their village on the map; otherwise, it was unknown. They became good friends and later were killed when oil was discovered in the town (*LB* 194); before the oil discovery, the town represented a budding place for peace, if not prosperity in material terms. The milieu in London is different from the settings of a Nigerian village. Sarah says about the funeral of her husband: "I suppose it had been reckless of us to abandon our home and spend the whole morning at a funeral" (*LB* 225). The more materialistic approach suggests moving away from the idea of man being a social animal. The social fabric Bee was related to in her past life was more inclusive, and people were less materialistic. However, the presence of more people recounts the feelings of a city full of living dead; it is reminiscent of Alfred Prufrock, TS Eliot's poem. Bee envisions: "If I was telling this story to the girls from back home, I would have to explain to them how it was possible to be drowning in a river of people and also to feel so very, very alone. But truly, I do not think I would have the words" (*LB* 197). While escaping the traffic, Bee feels that she is narrating the whole story to her

friends. She wonders why people do not work in the fields near their homes and go to other places for it; it would save their time and money (*LB* 192).

2.1.2 The colonized memories, neo colonized economies and violence

The post-colonial era, which initiated after the dissembling of the great British empire, encouraged migrants of third world countries to settle in the UK. In *LB,* there are refugees from former British colonies. They were culturally under the influence of the British religious and cultural codes. John Darwin in *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of The British World-System* states that for more than a century, most parts of the world were controlled from London (2). Interestingly, when Bee is asked if she knows anything related to this country: "Sure, darlin. Williyam Shakespeare, Lady Diana, Battle of Britten. "Me know dem all. Learned de names for me Citizenship Exam" (*LB* 164). Moreover, Andrew Porter, in his *Religion Versus Empire: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion,* considers that religious missionaries were utilized to gain more control over these colonies (*LB* 11). In "Neo-Colonialism: A Study of the Post-Independence Dilemma in *Anthills of The Savannah, Devil on the Cross* and *Shame*", Ersoy Gümüş considers that the colonialists left the third world nations physically, but they left their ideologies and thus continued the exploitation. They continue to abuse the previously colonized, which is an indirect way of colonisation. They have achieved it by brainwashing the native people by levying their education, religion, and culture upon them (15). The author refers to the religious sentiments suggesting that the colonies are under the influence of the British settlers even decades after the fall of the British empire. Bee mentions: even the missionaries had boarded up their mission. They left us with the holy books that were not worth the expense of shipping back to your country. "In our village, our only Bible had all of its pages missing after the forty-sixth verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of Matthew, so that the end of our religion, as far as any of us knew, was My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? We understood that this was the end of the story" (*LB* 400).

The writer implies that exiles, more often, are mostly victims of oil politics, regional conflicts and world politics. They are mainly from the neo-colonized parts of the world. The setting by the novelist portrays an emblematic display of refugees in the modern world. It can be subdivided into relations: Sarah as the neo-colonizer host and a pro-refugee, Bee as the Colonized. Bee is a victim of such an adventure from

abroad in Nigeria, and she believes: “I think I wanted to say thank you to Sarah for saving me, but also I wanted to punish Andrew for letting my sister be killed” (*LB* 418). As Žižek argues, the exploitation of weaker nations results in bitterness in the hearts and minds of migrants (43). The resentment in Bee’s attitude is triggered by the intervention of these multinational oil companies on her soil in Nigeria.

Bee’s journey begins when her home is distorted from a village to an oil field (*LB* 230), leading to "one grisly outbreak in an off-the-radar oil war" (Donna Seaman 24). The same men who burned their community, the company’s men, were in their search to murder them (*LB* 244). Bee mentions the moment peace ends and exploitations begin in her town: “in that village, we did not yet know was built on an oil field and would soon be fought over by men in a crazy hurry to drill down into the oil. This is the trouble with all happiness—all of it is built on top of something that men want” (*LB* 187). Gangs and mercenaries are engaged to depopulate the town. These groups are backed by the local authorities and foreign western exploiters: Bee recollects, “She fled from the men who would kill her because they were paid to, and the children who would kill her because they were told to” (*LB* 230). The gang includes educated men who have no choice but to be addicted to war and drugs. The author mentions the hunter’s chief, who is looking to kill all the people who are witnesses to the murders of the towns’ men: “There was a leader. He had a wound in his neck. It was rotting—I could smell it. I knew he was going to die soon” (*LB* 246). With the help of the local oil coterie, the layers of insecurity enable the corrupt local authorities to earn black money from the illegal oil projects. Žižek, referring to the role of Talibanization in the Pakistani region of Sawat, says that the fundamentalists force the people to accept their narrative as, for a long time, the state policy has supported extremists (53). In *LB,* the author confirms the connection between the on-ground policies and the extremists willing to sabotage for empowerment.

If the authorities deport Bee to Nigeria, she will be detained there. If they find out who she is and what she has seen, the politicians will find a way to have her murdered. Or, if she is lucky, they will put her in jail. Cleave adds, “Many people who have seen what the oil companies do, they go to prison for a long time. Bad things happen in a Nigerian prison. If people ever get out, they do not feel like talking” (*LB* 411). Bee is not docile; she fathoms that nature and cause of the conflict and the level of exploitation including oil, tea, and gold—She articulates, “The first time I hear white man say my business not his business. You got our gold. You got our oil” (*LB*

255). The Nigerian murderer, a graduate of a British university, utters the bitter remarks about the crises and the international role in it and he wants payment: "White man been giving me this finger all my life. Today you can give it me to keep. Now cut off your middle finger, mister, and give it me" (*LB* 255). With the help of the resources, people of the oil-rich town could live more comfortably than Londoners, but the Nigerian river is glittering with oil, stuffed with the carcasses of oil labourers and the townsmen (*LB* 230). Ironically, refugees experience a more vivid picture of foreign involvement in the host environment. Bee learns about the gasoline exports of her country from a newspaper in the detention centre: they discovered crude oil, a dream of prosperity; however, "it ends with a rude awakening" (*LB* 396) and the death of millions of villagers who are oblivious to their cause of death. Such news never reaches a common person—"British and Nigerian governments both deny to this day that it even took place" (*LB* 225). Indeed "We [the Nigerian people] never tasted tea in my village, even though they grow it in the east of my country. […] The tea they grow, that vanishes too. I think all of it is exported. Myself I never tasted tea until I was exported with it" (*LB* 288-9).

Gasoline is mentioned flowing through the pump made a high-pitched sound as if the shrieking of her family was still present in it. The nozzle of the gasoline pipe went right inside the petrol tank of Sarah's car and the transmission of the fluid was concealed. She adds that she still does not know what petrol looks like: "If it looks the way it smells on a rainy morning, then I suppose it must flash like the most vivid pleasure, so passionate that you would go blind or crazy if you even looked at it. Maybe that is why they do not let us see gasoline" (*LB* 396). On this occasion, the writer establishes the commodification of petroleum and the dehumanization of man. Cleave suggests that the products from Nigeria are welcomed but not the people—she fled the confrontation with a shipment vessel loaded with tea (*LB* 288) and she, the illegal immigrant, stands by the petrol pump, which is probably selling oil from Nigeria.

Wars across the globe result in mass exoduses. In *LB*, oil conflicts overshadow the ecstatic life of the Nigerian village, but it is not the only cause of mass migration. On TV screen wars from the Middle East to Africa: "Different landscape, the same column of thick black smoke" (*LB* 91) announce the creation of more asylum seekers soon. The guilt associated with the UK involvement in the crises is practically made a specific case in *LB* but it also takes the world politics into account. Ironically, the UK government takes pride in selling off arms and ammunition to the fighting mafias in

Africa and declare it as a prominent feature of her exports. Similarly, people like Andrew are forming public opinion about wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It appears that, as Cleave suggests, it was a time "where no one took their costume off," (*LB* 77) and pretended everything was decent inside and outside the country. Public opinion is kept under control by propaganda disseminating institutions. When Sarah urges to write on a real-life feature focused on the story of a woman trying to find her way out of Bagdad—her colleague Clarrisa has worked on a "new kind of orgasm you could apparently only get with the boss" (*LB* 89). The author emphasizes that people are more prone to reading on sensual topics than real ones.

Violence prompts migration in *LB*— the author infers, "To flee from cruelty is the most natural thing in the world, of course" (*LB* 65). The miseries in life affect the individual approach to death; in Bee's character, violence dates back to the day battle starts. That is the reason she is not sensitive to death and violence, and she keeps acting normally after seeing Andrew commit suicide—she relates Andrew's death to her sister: "The noises he made from his throat; it was like the noises my sister made while they killed her" (*LB* 422). Violence solidifies memories of immigrants and changes their outlook. The crux of the situation lies in violence following these people to new places. Bee, like most immigrants, attends the same detention centre as the adults, with men and women locked up in the same place. The young detainees have to bear with adult males' "ravenous eyes" (*LB* 29). The female detainees have marks on their bodies suggesting they have been through thick and thin: Bee describes, "That is what the scar makers want us to think. But you and I, we must agree to defy them. We must see all scars as beauty. Okay? This will be our secret." She continues that the scar is dear to them, for it shares a glimpse of the violence they faced (*LB* 38). The author mentions the memories of a refugee in the following words:

> *burned-my-village-*
> *tied-my-girls-*
> *raped-my-girls-*
> *took-my-girls-*
> *whipped-my-husband-*
> *cut-my-breast-*
> *I-ran-away-*
> *through-the-bush-*
> *found-a-ship-*
> *crossed-the-sea*
> and-then-they-put-me-in-here. (*LB* 49)

Robert W. Schrauf and Lesa Hoffman, in "Bilingual Autobiographical Memory in Older Adult Immigrants: A Test of Cognitive Explanations of The Reminiscence Bump and The Linguistic Encoding of Memories" argue that positivity bias portrays preferential memory for optimistic feelings and the “fading affect bias defines greater fading of negative versus positive emotion” (895-913). Bee also has a mixture of feelings at this stage. Cleave refers to the inability of refugees to forget violence-related events. The choice between death and refugee status dwell in Little Bee’s mind throughout the novel. Like Andrew, she lives with suicidal thoughts. The option for death is more manageable and more straightforward than being accepted in the UK. Her time passed at the detention centre desensitizes her to the point of no return. Cleave refers to her hopelessness as: “For the first six months in the detention centre, I screamed every night and, in the day, I imagined a thousand ways to kill myself” (*LB* 117). When the refugees encounter the farmer, out of fear, they shiver and sob like “a baby who was woken in the night by the sound of distant guns and who must be soothed without being further excited” (*LB* 146). Though these characters have suffered, they are resilient enough to be integrated into British society; the ones who survive that much cruelty cannot be dumb, Cleave argues (*LB* 173). However, memories are a part of the learning process for characters. Cleave suggests that there are refugees with traumatic memories: yet unpleasant experiences add strength to their characters. A tragic incident means the narrator has escaped the scene; “later something fine will occur to her, something splendid” (*LB* 38). Unforgettable harsh conditions construct the character of a refugee who jeopardizes everything for a new verve of life.

2.2 The Struggle, Refugee Rights and Illegitimacy

In *LB*, Bee spends most of her narration time in the UK, representing the condition of the refugee community there. According to Agamben, refugees no longer represent individual cases but a mass phenomenon (92). Bee’s epic struggle continues throughout the narration, and it appears it will continue if she survives the threats of her government and the mafia. Bee’s narration covers her time spent at the detention centre, at Sarah’s home, and later on, ends up on the Nigerian beach from where it all starts. She is an illegitimate migrant, bringing in bad luck for Sarah with the death of her husband Andrew (*LB* 314). She longs to speak sophisticated English so that the

British system would accept her; she tries to escape the authorities of Britain and Nigeria—she is an eternal escapee.

Bee has very little or no rights when she comes out of the detention centre. Work, shelter and other primary provisions seem to be a far cry. Although she deserves to be protected, she is sent into the wild. The system is too crowded by refugees and lacks the fundamental consideration for life. Bee's detention, her freedom, her time spent at Sarah's home and her deportation portray the cycle of a typical immigrant's lifecycle in the UK. Bee arrives in the UK in a cargo ship on the estuary of the Thames River. Because she is incapable of deciding for herself, she is carried to the immigration officials and put into the detention centre without considering her adolescence. Cleave declares that the "system is cruel"; Though she receives charity boxes filled with clothes and shoes, she faces issues because of her young age (*LB* 117). At the outset of *LB*, immigrants live in the immigration detention centre, in Essex, in the south-eastern part of the United Kingdom (*LB* 24). The place lacks the fundamental amenities, and refugees like Bee suffer inhuman living conditions. The girls are in danger in the middle of hundreds of people—the girls wear untidy clothes to keep the molesters away. Michael Welch and Liza Schuster, in "Detention of Asylum Seekers in the US, UK, France, Germany, And Italy: A Critical View of The Globalizing Culture of Control", criticize such a rush to the imprisonment of refugees; it reflects a cultural character that supports a greater reliance on prisons while ignoring the long-term impairment that mass incarceration imposes on society, communities, and prisoners (332). Bee succumbs to such a treatment in the detention centre—when she sees Andrew committing suicide, she fails to respond — she is unable to cultivate her human side. She even mentions that Andrew's death means justice to her dead sister. Because she fears going back to the detention centre or leaving for Nigeria, she overlooks helping a dying man. Ironically, security to her life is on top of the considerations under the existing precarious circumstances.

Sarah feels for Bee as she is a witness to the beach episode. *LB* suggests the reader's review of the immigrants' assessment on humanitarian grounds. Coming to safety is a blessing which Bee mentions, "I realized that the earth had not rejected me and the sunlight had not snapped me in two. I smiled because the whole world was fresh and new and bright" (*LB* 60-1). Sarah puts forward cleave's sentiments — She supports Bee during the stay at her home, fights her case at home and goes to Nigeria to save her, even she realizes Bee's part in her husband's death. When Lawrence

suggests that the authorities should be informed about the presence of an illegal refugee, she shrills: “I cut off my finger for that girl. Will you tell me when is the logical point to stop something that started like that? Do you really want me to make a choice like that? I cut off my own bloody finger. Do you think I wouldn’t cut you off too?” (*LB* 382). Cleave encourages the acceptance of refugees as fellow human beings who are denied life and comfort they deserve. For the writer, grief and pain are universal and “we don’t have a grown-up language for grief” (*LB* 201). — Bee and Sarah are on equal grounds when it comes to anguish, but Sarah is not threatened to be murdered on arrival at her home town in Nigeria. The novel is centred on the search of unattainable security for Bee.

A Detention centre does not work as a place where the integration of inmates is of prime importance. Bee is in a long period of detention in an Immigration Removal Center or “IRC,” the sort of place that Cleave, in an author’s note, anathematizes as “a British concentration camp.” Cleave considers he would not have written the novel were he not a parent, as he does not wish for his children "to grow up into a world that is callous and stupid” (Cleave). The young immigrants like Bee experience traumas there: “You have not committed a crime, so all you can think of is, when will I be let out? But they tell you nothing. After a month, six months, you start to think, Maybe I will grow old in here. Maybe I will die here. Maybe I am already dead” (*LB* 326). It is further explained that the common people of the UK are unaware of the circumstances the refugees face. Sarah reacts to the harshness of circumstances in the following words:

> I read an inspector’s report about the immigration detention centres. How long did you say they kept you in that place, Bee?” “Two years.” “Oh Bee. I had no idea how hellish they are. I was imagining, I don’t know, a sort of high-security hotel, I suppose. Is it true they keep it deliberately cold in there? Is it true you have to apply in writing if you just need a paracetamol?” I smiled. “If you are planning to have a headache, you need to apply twenty-four hours in advance.” (*LB* 661)

Most of the common British people have little information about the condition of such camps. Sarah is not a common British woman considering her experience as an editor and her research based on her husband’s documents about refugees—however, she is unaware of the depressing condition of refugees. She sighs: “so it is true then” (*LB* 662). Lawrence has, more or less, the same understanding of the conditions of asylum seekers.

> "Nothing. Asylum seekers, apparently they just lock them up when they arrive here."
> "For two years?"
> "You don't believe me?"
> "I don't believe her. Two years in detention?" (*LB* 272)

Bee sees everything in the UK from the prism of her experiences attained in the detention centre. She believes she had her maturity at the concentration centre, and she "was reborn—in captivity" (*LB* 33). In the detention centre, for Bee, it is all about shedding off the past and wearing a new covering for the sake of identity — she terms her mother tongue as a savage way of speaking (*LB* 25). On the day she is discharged, she keeps no definite identity: "And this woman they released from the immigration detention centre, this creature that I am, she is a new breed of human" (*LB* 33). Cleave, in Bee's case, presents her oxymoronic moment of enslaving freedom. The following paragraph explains the moment:

> Outside, the fresh air smelled of wet grass. It blew in my face. The smell made me panic. For two years I had smelled only bleach, and my nail varnish, and the other detainees' cigarettes. Nothing natural. Nothing like this. I felt that if I took one step forward, the earth itself would rise up and reject me. There was nothing natural about me now. I stood there in my heavy boots with my breasts strapped down, neither a woman nor a girl, a creature who had forgotten her language and learned yours, whose past had crumbled to dust. (*LB* 58)

The stigma of illegality is a Damocles sword for refugees — the immigration authorities extradite Bee to Nigeria for not having the legal status. There are many categories for unwanted guests. In "Breaking the Convention: Researching the 'Illegal' Migration of Refugees to Europe", Richard Black categorizes the displaced as "illegal", "irregular", "undocumented", "clandestine", or "bogus" (34). Comparably, in *LB,* there are more ways to be tagged illegal than being accepted. Bee sobs that "I have been in your country two years. I learned your language, and I learned your rules. I am more like you than me now" (*LB* 414). Agamben believes the refugees do not wish to be integrated into the new national identity; he adds that it is ironic that they leave their homes for the new land without the internal call for acclimatization (87-91). Modern states define citizenship and legality with the help of a document and a stamp of approval on it. Hence, without a digit determining your status, the host system pronounces you "illegal". Illegality is, more or less, a tool to redefine the concept of humanity in *LB*; Cleave criticizes illegality of a refugee escaping death by linking it to the fundamental instincts of life and death, of sadness and happiness: sadness, questions, and police officers—and none of these can be answered when your papers

are not in order (*LB* 188). Cleave suggests we have an entire department consecrated to ensuring that it expels the refugees to their war-torn cities (*LB* 382). Bee's life is hinged with her staying in the UK. The nation-states believe immigrants will eventually lose their identity; hence, they have made it a hectic process of assimilation. After Bee leaves the detention centre with other immigrants, she lives in a vicious cycle of legality and illegality: "I am illegal" (*LB* 306), she says. Out of immigrants' naivety, they leave the detention centre without their legal documents. They are ineligible to get a job (*LB* 227), police would haunt her (*LB* 197), and the ones who give her shelter would have legal consequences (*LB* 150), and some may lose their jobs (*LB* 374). Cleave calls them floating people who have no papers to show their identity (*LB* 188). Bee has no rights and no justice in the UK. Cleave assumes that the immigration services in their country are more like Hitler and Nazi Germany (*LB* 308), where only Germans were supreme, and the rest were creeping vermin. Lawrence mentions that:

> "Yes, but what if you can't make it right? You know the most likely outcome for that girl, don't you? They'll deport her."
> "I'm sure it won't come to that."
> "Sarah, we have an entire department consecrated to ensuring that it will come to that. Officially Nigeria's pretty safe, and she's got no family here, by her own admission. There's bugger all reason for them to let her stay." (*LB* 382)

Since refugees do not easily avail legal status, the idea of refugee gets polysemic. It is deconstructed, and a new nation is born. Culture, language, institutions, religion, and history lose vitality in the context of host ideas. The cultural background of *LB's* displaced people complies with the characteristics of British history, but their existence in the UK, to an extent, is myopic. They try to speak the host language, wear their dresses and most significantly, they yearn to devout themselves to the idea of Englishness, but all in vain. Bee constructs a hierarchy of the most influential figures and institutions that she needs to approach: roughly, they are the pound, Queen of England and her eloquent language, "the men," the Detention Center and Police. Without their support, she will have to bear with the refugee tag. Hence, a figure like Bee, who adores the UK, is wishful to have a flag of refugees as their identity (*LB* 187). The Sari girl believes the nation of the displaced should formulate a united nation of refugees (*LB* 55).

With the arrival of new people, the nascent idea of segregation originates; the natives think of detention centres as the sources of purification, whereas refugees consider forming a new mechanism for dealing with the crises; they create a faction.

In *LB,* there are such references to the issue. African, Indian, Pakistani, and people of other nationalities merge and form an imaginative union. “Come wid us, gals, she said. We de United Nations, see it, a today we are all following Nye-JIRRYA” (*LB* 55). This may be called the configuration of a new community in the host society. Particular occurrences in this novel imply the United Nations’ inability to deal with the refugee crises. Hence, the millions of refugees across the UK reserve the right to call themselves: “We de United Nations” (*LB* 55). Neither the nation-states nor the United Nations seems to address their concerns:

> I was thinking, if the head of the United Nations telephoned one morning and said, Greetings, Little Bee, to you falls the great honour of designing a national flag for all the world’s refugees, then the flag I would make would be gray. You would not need any particular fabric to make it. I would say that the flag could be any shape and it could be made with anything you had. A worn-out old brassiere, for example, that has been washed so many times it has become gray. You could fly it on the end of a broom handle, if you did not have a flagpole. Although if you did have a spare flagpole, for example in that line of tall white flagpoles outside the United Nations building in New York City, then I think that old gray brassiere would make a fine spectacle, flying in the long colorful line of flags. I would fly it between the Stars and Stripes and the big red Chinese flag. That would be a good trick. Thinking about this, I made myself laugh. (*LB* 235)

Cleave refers to the morbid role of the international community to either minimize the outflow of refugees or curb global conflicts. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi held as he informed the UN Security Council in New York: “Securing solutions for the millions of people uprooted around the world, and avoiding a repeat of the massive outflows that have taken place over recent years, ultimately rests on political solutions […] A full response to today's massive displacement flows can only be achieved through action to restore security, resolve conflict and build peace,” he concluded (UN News).

Bee’s Nigeria is war-wracked, ruled by oil mafia—the oil is smuggled to other nations, fuelling their economies, but it does not reach the indigenous population. Cyril I. Obi in “Oil Extraction, Dispossession, Resistance, And Conflict in Nigeria's Oil-Rich Niger Delta” deems the connections between oil extraction, dispossession, and the growing violence in Nigeria’s Niger Delta. It includes local ethnic-minority paramilitaries complaining against the Nigerian state–oil multinationals alliance that has obtained oil from the region for five decades, with little or no profit adding to the populaces of the region. Media reports vividly record acts of violence: sabotage of oil pipelines and installations, clashes between militias and government troops, killings, and a thriving transnational trade in stolen oil (or illegal oil bunkering) that reportedly

accounts for the estimated loss of one-tenth of Nigeria's annual oil production (220). In *LB,* the writer refers to the pathetic condition of the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) at their homes. They do not get anything to eat for days and spend their time with wild animals (*LB* 233). While on the other side, in the new country, the refugees are perceived as unwelcomed guests and suckers of the resources and their past is often disregarded. Meanwhile, Bee's legal status fades from legal detainee to an absconder— so do the chances of acceptability. The matter of the fact is that she is a victim of the modern state mechanism wherein a civil war survivor struggles to prove her identity to stay in the UK— ironically, she is incapable of justifying her case; she is sure to be assassinated on her deportation to Nigeria, but to the UK administration, she is an illegal infiltrator who must be transported to Abuja.

2.2.1 The ideology of language

In "When Talk Isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy" Judith Irvine defines the ideology of language as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (249). Dr Val Colic-Peisker in "At Least You're the Right Colour': Identity and Social Inclusion of Bosnian Refugees in Australia" mentions that for many people, however, this self-inclusion is thwarted in the second stage of resettlement when they are expected to find jobs and 'acculturate', as the language barrier and their non-English-speaking background become a basis of difference and potential exclusion (615-638). Cleave does not seem to put much value in language skills as a source of acceptance. However, there is another level of English that Bee mentions as "Queens' English". About thirty-two times, Bee refers to "Queen's English" and repeatedly shows her profound veneration for it—she boasts up the excellence, class and grandeur of "Queen's English", but she fails to understand the nuances of the language, and she calls herself savage merely because of her accent (*LB* 25).

Carlos Gussenhoven and Inyang Udofot in "Word melodies vs pitch accents: A perceptual evaluation of terracing contours in British and Nigerian English" regard difference between Nigerian English and British English as visibly diverse accents; British "English listeners are relatively insensitive to deviations in the pitch of unstressed or unaccented syllables." It is noteworthy that Bee with Nigerian background goes unnoticed on British soil. Equally, Cleave acknowledges the influence of mother tongue on the refugee's second language—it cannot be easily

subsided. Learning the host's language and adopting the accent benefits the immigrants in the long run— it is a proof of loyalty and a step towards acceptance. Bee yearns to be a "British" English speaker and tries to prove it, but she fails miserably. While talking to the taxi driver, she is a victim of malapropism: she went to "open window and said to the taxi driver, Hello, I see that you are a cock" (*LB* 136). Robert W. Schrauf and David C. Rubin in "Bilingual Autobiographical Memory in Older Adult Immigrants: A Test of Cognitive Explanations of The Reminiscence Bump and The Linguistic Encoding of Memories" consider that long after migrants recall their memories in their mother tongue (437) which is a process of the shift of language, they rejoice every bit of memory. Also, the shift of language suggests a new meaning resulting from the contrast. In Cleave's context, Nigerian English has developed, influenced by local languages. In the below statement, the word "topless" has different connotations for the Nigerian people. Bee is split between two languages and cultures simultaneously. She tries to continue monologue:

> Nkiruka would say, Listen, okay? Listen. Just so we are clear. This girl in the newspaper photo. She was a prostitute, yes? A night fighter? Did she look down at the ground from shame?
>
> —No, she did not look down at the ground from shame" […]
>
> "*Then is it not shameful in Great Britain, to show your bobbis in the newspaper*?" (*LB* 28)

"Shame" is also culturally interpreted in this case: both cultures have their distinctive approaches to the female body and nudity. The exposition slowly gets into a more detailed view of seeing and adopting the host community's culture.

> *— Why do they not all show their breasts, if the men like it and there is no shame?"*
>
> *"—I do not know.*
>
> *—You lived there more than two years, little miss been-to. How come you not know?*
>
> *—It is like that over there. Much of my life in that country was lived in such confusion. Sometimes I think that even the British do not know the answers to such questions.* (*LB* 28-29)

Bee's monologues answer certain cultural questions, but she also lives with perplexities. She, while talking to her imaginative Nigerian friends, asks herself: "So do all the girls over there show them off like that? Walk around with their bobbies bouncing? In the church and in the shop and in the street?" (*LB* 28). At this moment, even though she has stayed in the UK for two years, she has no straightforward answers. On a similar note, the conversation between a taxi driver and the immigrants turns bitter. The refugees are a victim of solecism: "Taxi man say he no pick up from dis place. Then he says, You people are scum" (*LB* 44). When the immigrants search

the meaning of the expression "scum" in the "*Collins Gem Pocket English Dictionary*. I said to the first girl, […] You are a film of impurities or vegetation that can form on the surface of a liquid" (*LB* 44). There are references to Bee's language evolution driven by circumstances. For Cleave, immigrant language continues its way through different phases of acquisition, rejection, rejoicing, comparison and bewilderment. It is a tool to cheer the motherland in one's mind and describe and receive a new culture and a place.

Cleave's treatment of language narrows down to a mother tongue being inundated by the new language in the UK, and the right to speak one's mother tongue is disregarded. Though hosts may not outspokenly propagate any policies about the language, the milieu plays its role. Bee is cultured into her language, but she unconditionally dwells into the romantic fantasies of English; she has conversations with the queen and listens to her commandments (*LB* 23-4). Cleave shares a more detailed view about the tinges of the mother-tongues on the languages spoken by different immigrant characters of *LB*. For instance, the assumed Indian woman says with much stress on the alphabet "T" and "D" (*LB* 152-62). Most Indo-Aryan languages stress alphabets "T" and "D" and make deep vocals of them.

Refugees join a community founded on the capitalistic principles in *LB*. The relation of the refugee to the host population is a step deeper into the notion of an individual being an alien to fellow human beings living in modern cities. Sarah's lamentation of her husband's death is an example of the commodification of emotions; she observes her neighbourhood continuing a routine life; even she is herself listening to the radio. When she analyses the context of her lost husband, it is all emotionally too ambiguous for her to even conclude, and she appears to mourn only to show the people (*LB* 201). Cleave's assessment of the London life contrasts with the life of the Nigerian village, wherein peace exists profoundly, and people are more into emotional relation than material ones: Cleave mentions that when a car breaks down in the Nigerian village, the driver searches for a mechanic, and encounters the narrator's mother— the entire village celebrates the first-ever accident in their town (*LB* 193-4). Sarah believes that they live in a privileged place wherein almost everything is available, but the chaos in the outside world is forgotten, and the people in the UK do not want to heed to them (*LB* 214).

2.2.2 Proximity and differences

Proximity makes distinctions visible, leading to the recognition of differences of values. When refugees realize the extent of exploitation on their home soil, they begin to abhor the hosts (Žižek 43). Bee's stance is passive throughout, but she has tinges of discomposure when she sees oil, tea, and other products smuggled to the UK. On the other side, the common citizens of the UK remain indifferent to their share in this crime. Though Bee struggles to find security, she is cornered, and she cannot be outspoken on this issue, she retains punitive feelings and mentions it—when asked to mind her own business, she yells at an English man saying that they have acquired gold and oil from her country (*LB* 255).

In the host society, small factors such as clothes get the attention of fellow human beings. Sarah is uncomfortable with Bee's choice of clothes, which she deems improper for the occasion of a funeral; "Bee was wearing my smart black raincoat over the clothes they let her out of the detention centre in—a mortifyingly unfunereal Hawaiian shirt and blue jeans" (*LB* 68). Bee's Nigerian background is essentially different in terms of observation of funerals. Joan Omoruyi in his "Nigerian Funeral Programmes: An Unexplored Source of Information" regards most of the Nigerian funerals as events observed with amplified music and electric guitars supplemented by dancing; also, mass media has been incorporated, banners, pamphlets and hundreds of passport size photos of the deceased for the occasion (58). Cleave's reference to the funeral could be linked to the historical context of an African leader's funeral on British soil— Bee's presence on this occasion coincides with Jomo Kenyatta funeral. The official end of colonization was not the end of British involvement and attention to former colonies. Poppy Cullen, in his article "Funeral Planning: British Involvement in the Funeral of President Jomo Kenyatta", implies that when the Africans asked the UK to help them with the funeral of their leader Jomo Kenyatta, it ended up in a failure (514). Yet the funeral story, like Bee's condition, also shows that the relationship was sometimes illogical and drew on multiple, sometimes cross-cutting, personal ties and institutional links; neither the funeral itself nor African politics worked to a script written by British officials. Nevertheless, Bee's background as a poverty-stricken African suggests that she does not take care about the condition of her clothes— She is more into the sentimental approach of the people and their lack of interaction. The Londoners seem too mechanical to her: "If I was telling this story to the girls from

back home, I would have to explain to them how it was possible to be drowning in a river of people and also to feel so very, very alone. But truly, I do not think I would have the words" (*LB* 196). She considers the multitudes as dead and beside Thames, there was a parallel river of dead people flowing, "I stood still for a moment and the dead flowed around me, like the muddy brown Thames flowing around the pillar of a bridge" (*LB* 197).

2.3 Uncertainty and Immigrant Policies

Eva-Maria Asari, Daphne Halikiopoulou & Steven Mock in the study "British National Identity and the Dilemmas of Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics", consider that with new cultures and lack of a successfully "mobilizing, inclusive civic British identity came to be seen as the cause of large-scale divisions within the United Kingdom that could increasingly serve as a source of resistance and encounter" (3). Cleave warns the British reader of a humanitarian crisis and its adverse effects on British life. As they deport Bee to Nigeria, into the hands of the oil mafia, her future remains dismal. Deducing from her case, it is perceptible that a country's politics, policies, and legislation somehow shape the outlook of indigenous masses on the refugees. In *LB,* there are references to media drives, TV shows, and individual responses circulating and forming a public narrative. For Bee, in addition to the law enforcement agencies, there is a constant threat of Lawrence who believes that immigrants must be refused asylum. Though later on personal grounds, Lawrence accepts Bee's presence, his position remains that of an anti-immigrant throughout. Blackmailing Lawrence on the affair with Sarah seems to be the last option available for Bee.

Learning skills to fit in an economy is time-consuming, as the immigrants are ill-equipped with the know-how of the new economic challenges. Hence, they need support to fit in. Mostly, the acrimony between the average person and the refugees is built on these grounds which resulting from the economic propaganda. *LB* repeatedly mentions newspapers discussing the refugee influx as a threat to the economy: "The headline on the new page said ASYLUM SEEKERS EATING OUR SWANS" (*LB* 55). It appears the security guard at the detention centre wants the refugees to read the news: "While I looked, he moved his arm over the page to cover the headline. He made it look like he needed to scratch his elbow" (*LB* 55). The common perception is controlled by media houses where the viewers are regularly indoctrinated to disregard

the humanitarian refugee crises. In this quagmire of opinions on potentially unwanted visitors, there is another stratum represented by the working-class people which sympathizes with immigrants. The lower-class grasps the depth of the issues as they consider themselves victim to such bifurcating policies. Cleave mentions the positive response of farmers when they see the illegal refugees entering their field; they not only welcome them but also shelter them, knowing that they may face charges for sheltering illegal immigrants. Their outlook is vocally strong but seems unheard on the national policymaking level:

> This government doesn't care about anyone. You're not the first people we've seen, wandering through these fields like Martians. You don't even know what planet you're on, do you? Bloody government. Doesn't care about you refugees, doesn't care about the countryside, doesn't care about farmers. All this bloody government cares about is foxes and townspeople. (*LB* 148)

London is one of the most influential cities of recent human history. It was the capital of the British Empire which controlled a considerable proportion of the earth for centuries. However, Cleave sees London as a machine where one can easily forget human obligations (*LB* 84). London is indifferent to the sufferings of refugees and Londoners seem apathetic about displaced people. A small share of income will ease the assimilation process of the refugees: "Here, safe in the West. That's the way to think of it. If everyone gave ten per cent, we wouldn't need to give asylum" (*LB* 456). However, as the people in the UK see conflicts on screen, they associate it with the people arriving in their towns. Even worse than that is the indifference shown by the hosts as they have been continuously watching the news merely as information, as Sarah mentions:

> The war was four years old. It had started in the same month my son was born, and they'd grown up together. At first, both of them were a huge shock and demanded constant attention but as each year went by, they became more autonomous and one could start to take one's eye off them for extended periods. Sometimes a particular event would cause me momentarily to look at one or the other of them—my son, or the war—with my full attention, and at times like these I would always think, Gosh, haven't you grown? (*LB* 115)

Even the people from the suburbs within the UK perceive London differently: "Neither fish nor flesh, the suburbs. Unnatural places, full of unnatural people" (*LB* 181). Bee seeks refuge in the western model of London which the third world countries' people aspire to experience "the London sunshine" (*LB* 483). However, for refugees, it is otherwise: "I was trying to see my future, but I could not see it at all" (*LB* 459). Žižek believes that the refugee is marked, demarcated, oppressed, excluded,

even physically distorted, by society (22). Hence, life is transformed into a fight for survival — they start living with both feelings "one of them was horror, but the other one was hope. I realized I had killed myself back to life" (*LB* 123). As the capital of the UK and Commonwealth, London must receive the people from the previously colonized regions as the guests not parasites to their system and economy. However, along Sarah's lines, emotional attachment to refugees' crises can be seen in the demeanour of the farmer's family; he debunks authorities' stance on the humanitarian issue saying: "It's bloody typical of this government," he says: "I don't give a damn if you're legal or illegal" (*LB* 148). Cleave establishes a parallel picture of these sides; lower-classes people living in the UK and Nigerian town face the same fate in the hands of the policymakers and mafias. The attachment or care for each other ultimately relates their emotional traumas in their individual lives. The farmer's wife helps refugees believing that we were all human beings (*LB* 180). Cleave adds that "The existence of a Nigerian girl, alive and standing in one's garden—governments may deny such things, or brush them off as statistical anomalies, but human beings cannot" (*LB* 225). There are instances the author celebrates the humane feelings; Bee mentions that a small boy's father had dark skin whereas her mother was a white woman—they were holding hands with the child whose colour was light brown (*LB* 476). Through such instances in the work, the novel presents a ray of positivity coming out of the masses.

A refugee is supposed to be under protection in the host environment for the reasons she/he leaves his home. On the contrary, refugees face multiple threats to their existence on the new land; Cleave declares, we must understand that there is no refuge (*LB* 115). If the refugees are deported, they will be killed, if not they will die of hunger as they cannot work and earn for themselves (*LB* 173). Cleave adheres to the continuation of experiences and associated horrors in the minds of refugees: "I stowed away in a great steel boat, but the horror stowed away inside me. When I left my homeland, I thought I had escaped—but out on the open sea, I started to have nightmares. I was naive to suppose I had left my country with nothing. It was a heavy cargo that I carried" (*LB* 116). Cleave's refugees are absconders in the eyes of the state institutions. To be safe, they have to keep a distance from the streets and police. The lady with the African accent reiterates:

> Ain't dat simple, darlin. Dere's freedom as in, yu girls is free to go, and den dere's freedom as in, yu girls is free to go till we catches yu. Sorry, but it's dat

> second kind of freedom we got right now, Lil Bee. Truth. Dey call it bein a illegal immigrant. (*LB* 126)

Refugees spend years in the quest for identity or legal status. For this reason, Bee tries to adopt the host culture in the process of acquiring legitimacy. An analysis of modern educational, social, and legal policies and practices validates that the accommodation of ethnic minorities through the annihilation of their mother tongues and cultures is not a vague memory but an ongoing experience. Despite this, Bee has fewer opportunities and rights compared to the "citizens"; she compromises her ethos. Cleave identifies certain matters. For instance, there is a girl without a name who dies in the process of obtaining an identity. Cleave shares that refugee is not one of us. That girl is a halfling, a child of an unnatural mating (*LB* 36). It is degrading and demoralizing to their upcoming generations as it leaves a permanent identity mark on their subconscious. Bee lives or prefers to live without any name, considering that it will be safer (*LB* 272) —suggesting that it is difficult to carry your past. Cleave suggests that a petty matter like one's original name could be detrimental to one's case for permanent residence in the UK.

Not only, it is impossible to overlook one's previous days and get integrated into a new place, but also the host milieu does not support them. Immigrants like Bee who consider themselves "neither a woman nor a girl, a creature who had forgotten her language and learned yours, whose past had crumbled to dust," (*LB* 58) and she will have to suffer all along. Cleave signifies the cultural dilemma that lives with Bee. The insecurity at home is an impetus to leave one's family but ultimately it is forced cultural conversion. Cleave refers to the advent of the cultural impasse in the lives of refugees:

> Is it my fault if I do not look like an English girl and I do not talk like a Nigerian? Well, who says an English girl must have skin as pale as the clouds that float across her summers? Who says a Nigerian girl must speak in fallen English, as if English had collided with Ibo [Igbo], high in the upper atmosphere, and rained down into her mouth in a shower that half-drowns her and leaves her choking up sweet tales about the bright African colours and the taste of fried plantain? Not like a storyteller, but like a victim rescued from the flood, coughing up the colonial water from her lungs? (*LB* 35)

Under certain conditions, an asylum seeker may be hazardous for the society as he/she is in a desperate state resulting in act like Frankenstein (Žižek 62)— as the refugee says: "At our end the road finished where we sat—it did not go anywhere else" (*LB* 117). Bee loses her vitality of human sympathy and consideration when she lets Andrew take his life—at that moment, she believes that if she helps Andrew, she will

be interrogated by the police, leading to unveiling her illegal status. Cleave insinuates that illegal immigrants tend to live in a "gray area. I thought about how I was going to live. I thought about the years, living as quiet as could be. Hiding my colours and living in the twilight and the shadows […] Fear is a constant accomplice" (*LB* 178).

2.3.1 The commodification of refugees

A chief concern in this work is to see a human life of prime importance compared to material gains. The social newcomer is expected to play a pivotal role in the economy but sometimes it is beyond his capacity. Certain states require a clear amount of money and specific skills before they allow an immigrant. Cleave suggests that money tends to influence the identity of the refugees, forcing them to see themselves as nothing more than a commodity and a lot less than a "pound". Bee sees the UK as a place where "A pound coin can go wherever it thinks it will be safest," but someone without legal status will crave to survive (*LB* 19). In Bee's case, Cleave states an ironic statement: "A pound is free to travel to safety, and we are free to watch it go. This is the human triumph. This is called globalization" (*LB* 20). Žižek says that the global market has led to non-acceptance of refugees but commodities are warmly welcomed (47-60). Hence, for the females of the poor nations, sex trade is relatively an easier way to get into Europe than merely as a female immigrant. It is the most cherished globalization not allowing asylum seekers unless they need a cheap workforce (Žižek 47-48). Skilled labourers are welcomed to promote the capitalist market; Cleave suggests that even skin colour, communication skills, gender and beauty are more convertible to be a part of the host communities (*LB* 37).

The poignant instances of LB include the idea that displacement is an essential element of human life and history. However, the artificialities of life, modern states and economic and security considerations have dented the options available in the biological realms. While moving from rural England to urban regions, nature accompanies refugees in *LB*. When they arrive in the suburbs of the main cities, the benevolent nature shifts from the beautiful landscape to the roaring of city vehicles. The instant feeling of being a part of the "nature" disappears and the man-made world swells (*LB* 189-90). Also, the men living closer to nature share more love and concern for the refugees (*LB* 149-50). Bee has fond memories of Nigeria but the struggle for oil, which is an offshoot of globalization and neo-colonial approach, terminates peace and the people are forced to leave their birthplaces. The natural surrounding's peace is

overlapped by the considerations for resources. The same is the concept of the indigenous populace and the condition of urban life, which is considered abnormal, decomposed and home to unnaturalistic behaviour (*LB* 181). The town of unnatural people influences Bee's introspection of herself as unnatural because she has left her birthplace (*LB* 51). Even Cleave regards those who try to integrate into a host population as "unnatural" (*LB* 38). They are not born with the environmental ability to adjust in some other parts of the world other than one's own.

CHAPTER 3

SHOOTING KABUL

> It is, therefore, a source of great virtue for the practised mind to learn, bit by bit, first to change about invisible and transitory things so that afterwards, it may be able to leave them behind altogether. The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner, he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong, but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong man has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his. (Hugo of St Victor, a twelfth-century monk from Saxony, qtd. in Roberson 188)

The analysis of *Shooting Kabul* (2010) investigates a range of questions, for example, recollections of belonging to *Watan* (Home country) and myths that immigrants bring in during their stay at the country of residence. These issues effect cultural identity conservation, the creation of transnational identity, the psychological and physical health conditions, culture and heritage preservation, inter-gender and intergenerational roles, the impact of globalization, and Afghan inclusion into host societies and those who return home. Like Naheed Hasnat Senzai's *Saving Kabul Corner*, *SK* introduces a young protagonist who has just arrived from Afghanistan. Both novels share a constant struggle for a redefinition of the migrants' Pashtun culture and manners.

Senzai's *SK* portrays the conditions of an immigrant family living in the USA, facing the trauma of a lost child, Mariam. *SK* sheds light on the complex interplay of the migration process, cultural bereavement, cultural identity, and cultural change affecting migrant communities. New considerations emerge in this dynamic interaction between migration, cultural identity and cultural coherence, together with biological, psychological and social influences on the host milieu. The young Afghan boy Fadi unilaterally describes himself as the culprit as he left his sister's hand while embarking on a truck to escape from Afghanistan; therefore, more than Mariam's story, *SK* is Fadi's struggles to bring his sister to the USA. Concerning Fadi's apprehensions and difficulties following his sister's disappearance, the story shares the traumatic experiences of a young child.

Senzai has seen less of her country and culture but portrays Afghan culture in a calculated and astutely interwoven manner. In *SK*, Senzai describes pre-and-post-9/11 events in by forming an immigrant trilogy composed of immigrants, the US, and

the Afghans. The novel discusses implications of identity commitments[2] representing convoluted allegories of allegiance and betrayal of cultural standpoints.

The core characters exemplify the softer Afghan image, but the rest are belligerent, such as the militants in Afghanistan; the characters speak for the Past and present of Afghanistan. Undeniably, as William Maley *in The Afghanistan Wars* concludes, Afghanistan is a country of extremes. It was one of Asia's most stable countries for over half of the twentieth century, from 1929 to 1978. During WWII, it maintained its neutrality and avoided conflict with its neighbours. However, with a Marxist coup in 1978, all of this began to crumble (vi).

SK thematically reflects Afghan history; it discusses wars and conflicts, resulting in a long-lasting merciless influence on the state's socio-economic façade. The author insinuates that Afghanistan is a junction for global powers and clash of titans; the Russian invasion in the 1980s and the US's "war on terror" after 9/11 resulted in the spreading of Afghans across the world. According to Rhoda Margesson in *Afghan Refugees: Current Status and Future Prospects*, the people of Afghanistan started fleeing their country in April 1978. The total number of Afghan refugees is eight million, making it the second-largest globally (6).

SK entails an unbiased argument by problematizing the immigration process and investigating different levels of immigrants' creation, reception, and projection. The past of the migrants in Afghanistan is responsible for the current plights of the immigrants in the USA. Foreign interventions and internal conflicts have particular roles in the deteriorating condition of their state; the mentioned factors are also linked, whereas the foreign interventions have led to civil war in the home state; there is a chain of bad omens resulted from the external interventions. Fadi's family leaves Afghanistan amid crises which is connected to a long history of conflicts. Trembling economy, insecurity and fanaticism are the spinoffs of international interest games and use of Afghanistan as a playground. It leads to no option other than running away from the Afghan homeland. After a long struggle when they reach the USA, they face hurdles such as stereotyping and lack of job opportunities. In the novel, though at

[2] Ideally, the commitments youth make give direction to their life and as such contribute to their sense of adjustment. Many studies have addressed this hypothesis by examining associations between individuals' strength of identity commitment and their personal adjustment (Marcia 255).

present the life of the Afghan is much better than their previous life, they tend to miss their home more vigorously than ever and formulate a second home in the US and call it Little Kabul with an emphasis to recreate the cultural nuances of Afghanistan. Meantime, as characters respond to their migratory status in the USA, they face identity crises, wherein the *Afghaniyat* (Afghan-ness) revitalises. However, their response to such conflicts is different considering immigrants' age groups.

Similarly, different age groups have a considerable variance in their contact with the American society; so, the future of the immigrants relies on the refugee rights, acclimatization process, and the desire of Afghans' letting go off their past and acceptance of the US culture. Afghans fall prey to global interest conflicts leading them out of their homes; thus, commencing a long journey for a second home, resembling Kabul. When immigrants reach the host society, they face crises of identity, economy, rights and language. They live in an alienated circle where they yearn to create a community of their own, made from the bits and pieces of the memories in Afghanistan. The patriarchal dominance and cultural dilution in the wake of a new capitalist society play a pivotal role in understanding the lives of immigrants in *SK*.

With two cultures meeting at unprecedented crossways, the story gives more room for discussion through three stages: the pre-migration stage, the migration stage and the post-migration stage; these are culturally daunting for both the Afghans and the host culture. For the Afghan family, the first stage is the decision making; the financial and mental preparation for the journey. The Family's physical relocation is the second phase of migration; they reach Pakistan and move to the US after receiving their migration documents. The third stage is the attempt to integrate and absorb the new social and cultural fabric; it is the immersion and acclimatisation process. This is the most crucial in the process; though financial and security issues are solved, identity crises, the absence of an imagined ideal land, the real hard-hitting life on the ground, and the discrepancy between the cultures play a crucial role.

The writer remains at the cultural crossroads through the novel—she has an association with both the US and Afghan cultures. About herself, the writer says that

> I grew up speaking two languages, balancing life lived on the edge of two cultures, and, happily, two cuisines--tandoori chicken and hot dogs, grilled side by side on the 4th of July. I got on a plane for the first time at two months, in Chicago, IL, where I was born, and have been travelling ever since. I grew up in San Francisco, Jubail, Saudi Arabia, and attended boarding school in London, England. (N.H. Senzai)

However, she introduces herself as an adherent of both cultures—Afghan and western, born and grew up in England and the US (N.H. Senzai). In the author's note, Senzai declares that she resisted the novel for many years, knowing it concerns many sensitive and personal issues. She associates the story with her husband's escape from Afghanistan following the civil war (*SK* 302). The conflict zones in Afghanistan expelled a massive number of civilians. Among these people, a good number of folks travelled to countries like the USA. She uses the term Taliban for the good men have gone rogue. They were the fighters who played a critical role against the USSR: "in 1979 and supplanted a communist puppet government, intellectuals like him were forced to make a decision: join the regime, go to prison and be tortured, or flee the country" (Author's note *SK* 303). Though she circumvents critical interpretations of the USA's role in the catastrophic outcomes for Afghanistan, she acknowledges that how immigrants are more sinned against than sinning. The writer portrays an optimistic picture of the environment, the Afghan immigrants trying to settle in. There is a contrast among various factors in the host society incorporating culture, ethnicity and religious belief affecting both the immigrant and the host societies.

The host-migrant interaction is significantly deliberate and authentic, but there remains an unrepresented white American in *SK*. For the migrants, the loss of credibility in Afghanistan is slowly restored on the American soil. Debatably, the immigration in *SK* is immigrants' stealing off from the world in return for losing their peace; they seek their ancestral peaceful Afghanistan in the USA. Meanwhile, it is a passionate resistance not to let the idea of the Afghan nation fade while facing the majority culture. The Afghan community holds together, resisting impending discrimination and upholding their identity. Therefore, they undo the ethnic differences and reaffirm Afghan identity in the broader context. In as much subverting embodiments constitute a picture of immigrants' lost world confronted by the trials for the hosts' bereavement of being overrun by the alien culture, it is thus formulating reciprocal conjunction—a region of identity crises demanding submission to the dominant culture.

The text's historical context and the dominance of politics of identity constitute the strife within the social spectrum of the story. The text encompasses migration and immigrant communities in the USA, showing that the celebration of *Afghaniyat* assists the Afghan community to constitute a socio-political-cultural identity in the multi-

cultural host society. As mentioned earlier, the author has no practical experience in the Afghan conflict, but she associates it with her community, thus entering into a conflicting power relationship. There are assumed structures and assumptions about the central controlling authority, which is the American society. The author conforms to her own geographical, and sociocultural contexts. However, the faint touches of *Afghaniyat* contradict the western understanding of immigration; the text portrays them as a by-product of western ventures on foreign lands. Nevertheless, the immigrant community is attached indifferently to their language and culture—the author formulates a hybrid language.

There is an Afghan-American linguistic ambience in the novel; the Afghan-Islamic linguistical tinges also appear intermittently. The text conforms with the multi-cultural standpoint and deals with multiple sources and cultural backdrops. The following paragraph contains the italicised words from Afghanistan's ethnocultural background—words of the *Persian* and *Pukhto* language spoken in Afghanistan but primarily used in the religious context:

> The imam shuffled toward the front of the building and the *mihrab*, which pointed toward *Mecca*. His long, fluffy white beard hung down his chest, and a prayer cap covered his bald head. He settled his rotund frame onto a prayer rug in front of the crowd and cleared his throat into the microphone. It was a hint to quiet down before his *khutba*, or sermon began. (*SK* 193)

Words such as "*dastarkhan*" (*SK* 201), the traditional eating area, acquaint the reader with the Afghan culture. Furthermore, when the characters are emotional, they tend to use such words. The writer mentions: "Anger burned through him, and he hungered for Badal" (*SK* 305). Words enrich the idea of the cultural aspect of life; for instance, the connotation of the "*mihrab*" is strictly religious, referring to the minaret of a mosque. The word "*badal*" or revenge takes the cultural meaning more vigorously in its definition— it is a social commitment of Afghans which encourages taking revenge at all costs. The phrase "*mea khala*" can be translated as "my aunt", which is neither religious nor cultural etymologically but an expression commonly used to address an elder woman. The author's use of such words offers an accurate idea of the Afghan languages and makes them available for a cultural assessment; by including words that reflect the text's religious language, cultural language, and vernacular.

3.1 Migrants' Creation through Internal Conflicts and Foreign Interventions

In the text, the refugee crises seem to be an outcome of global politics, international tug-of-war and internal conflicts of Afghanistan. Refugees' creation is multidimensional linked to the past of the Fadi's family in *SK* —it portrays Afghans' social and cultural fabric which is ruined by constant troubles. It is a reason for the international communities' reluctance to see the uprootal causes of these people from their native lands. The war-wrecked Kabul city portrays a devastated civilization primarily because of foreign intervention. The author remarks: "Fadi peeked around the cement wall to watch the one-legged man pet the long-eared animal" (*SK* 26), and that "Many men, women, and children had lost limbs to land mines across the country" (*SK* 27). The modern states support extremism in many ways to sustain their hold on the weaker states (Žižek 53). Senzai also returns to the notion repeatedly and gives the reader an idea of how the "bombed-out Soviet tank and exited the pockmarked highways" (*SK* 9) in Afghanistan prove to be premonitions for the indigenous people. When Fadi's family leaves home and enters the city, they observe that "The concrete walls were riddled with bullet holes and grenade blasts" (*SK* 10). Though Žižek supposes the immigration crisis is a capitalists' crime, the socialist USSR also played a demonic role in Afghanistan.

When Fadi's family reaches the USA after 9/11, a new conflict emerges in the host culture when the Americans deem the Afghans a terrorist race. The author does not mention the Americans realizing their governments' role in the miseries of the Afghan society. The Western powers created Taliban and labelled them heroes of the West against the USSR,[3] they are now the villains for the US[4]; "The once respected and honoured Taliban" (*SK* 52), and "Osama Bin Laden helped us fight against the Soviets. The United States even gave him money during the war" (*SK* 48). The allies begin a comprehensive plan to overthrow the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan by bombarding the major cities. Such destruction in the immigrant's homelands is herald

[3] Osama Bin Laden was considered influential leader of the Afghan jihad against the USSR in the 1980s. Senzai establishes a parallelism between the actual events and the fictional setting by incorporating a historical context.

[4] The attack on the World Trade Centres, twin towers, and Pentagon was carried out by Al-Qaida, a militant extremist group led by Laden in Afghanistan. Consequently, America declared them terrorists and invaded Afghanistan.

of more refugees heading to western nations. The USA bombards Afghanistan resulting in a large-scale destruction, the author mentions:

> Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched from both US and British ships this evening, signaling the start of Operation Enduring Freedom. This was accompanied by a mix of strikes from land-based B-1 Lancer, B-2 Spirit, and B-52 Stratofortress bombers. The initial military objective, as articulated by President George W. Bush, is to destroy terrorist training camps and infrastructure within Afghanistan, the capture of al-Qaeda leaders, and the cessation of terrorist activities. (*SK* 237)

To the Afghans living in the USA, it is destressing to see Afghanistan bombarded by the US's army. In *SK*, children's patriotic sentiments are triggered by the violence on TV. Fadi is sensitive to the news and reacts to the attack; "Fadi hunched over his plate as his appetite evaporated. He watched his parents' faces pale as they all imagined the falling bombs" (*SK* 237). While living in the same society, it may be a piece of routine news on Tv for the natives, but Afghans see it as their home under attack.

SK sheds light on the US-Afghan policy. The author positions the immigrant family in the spotlight of global powers. The US and coalition forces encounter religious extremists who were once their allies in the fight against the communist ventures in the 1980s. However, the extremists seem to be working against US commands and interests. The allies left Afghanistan in the quagmire of civilian conflict after the USSR left. It provided real help to extremism as they were armed and had the human resources to crush any democratic and progressive opposition in Afghanistan in the later years. Fadi's family is a victim of the US policy's which helped religious fanatics seize power after the failure of the Afghan government.

Arguably, the origin of *Talibanization* in Afghanistan contains the panacea for the immigration crises. The implied significance of Mariam's question, "if the Taliban did such a good thing, why are they bad now?" (*SK* 22), raises concerns about the long-lasting interventions in Afghanistan. The all members of Afghan community are not essentially Taliban; the "*Talib*", which means "student", are religiously motivated individuals from across the world, accumulated by the allies to hinder the progression of the USSR in the 1980s. Florian Weigand criticizes the role of powers in Afghanistan, arguing that the mujaheddin factions turned against each other after the soviet cease-fire in 1989 and the defeat of the pro-Soviet Najibullah administration held Kabul until 1992. Afghanistan has rapidly disintegrated, confronted by shifting

alliances into many regions dominated by various strongmen. The southern Kandahar province was also split up at this time. When foreign investment in the province was drying up, opposing commanders maltreated and extracted finances from the population (*SK* 364). Essentially, presenting the global issue of *Talibanization* and its impact on the Afghans assists the author yearns to establish a dialogue for consensus, i.e., how the jihadis were created, trained and sent to Afghanistan and how they were unleashed after the USSR left Afghanistan. There are references the writer makes about them as the "*Mujahid,"* meaning holy warrior.

However, the earlier definition of holy warriors does not fit in the American-led war in Afghanistan; those fighting against the USSR were *Mujahideen,* but those fighting against NATO forces in Afghanistan are tagged fanatics or terrorists. Initially, they were supported by the West when they were a young militia. They toppled over the government, ruled for several years, and established strict rules against poppy fields used to make drugs (*SK* 21). Florian Weigand "Afghanistan's Taliban – Legitimate Jihadists or Coercive Extremists?" mentions their involvement that often with the support of "Western countries that were channeling money and weapons through the Pakistani intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (363). Consequently, Pakistan has hosted two million Afghan refugees in Pakistan (Daniel 43). Pakistan supported mujahideen to fight in Afghanistan which proved ruinous for Pakistan, resulting in a prodigious influx of Afghan immigrants creating political, economic, social, environmental and ecological complications; it also posed a threat to Pakistan's internal security (Hilali 291). It appears that whenever Afghanistan descends into war, Pakistan will indeed feel the fallout affect. Senzai mentions that *Mujahideen* were practically more repressive over time and they forced people to join the Taliban against their will (*SK* 85), including Fadi's father. The American and Western contribution creates a backdrop wherein the Afghans fail to survive; therefore, they take the route to migrate to other countries. If immigration is an issue, US citizens are confronting migration created by their policies on foreign lands. The Taliban's existence summarises a broad topic of how Afghans are forced out of their land. The American citizens are oblivion of the pain of migrants and their governments' involvement in this crisis.

More or less like the real Taliban policies on the ground in Afghanistan, in *SK*, there is a recurrent image considering the socio-cultural and economic conditions. The

Taliban are vital stakeholders in the affairs of the state, but principally they lack the visionary leadership required to establish reproachment across the board among the ethnic and religious groups. They lack governance skills, and they rule by using sheer force. The author mentions: "The Taliban came with so much hope," said Habib, rubbing his red-rimmed eyes. "Now fighting with the Northern Alliance has flared up. They are all the same—power-hungry and arrogant" (*SK* 21). Because of the Taliban's policies, the Afghan economy also suffers. Though it is not mentioned as a critical factor in Habib's case, the family's financial condition is not promising — he cannot fulfil the family needs. They are not living but surviving and: "Since the war, the trees had been cut down for firewood. And after years of neglect and lack of money for repairs, the house was falling apart" (*SK* 25). Like Habib's financial condition, the Afghan economy is in shambles because of the Taliban's policies. The author mentions that "The United Nations Security Council had passed a new resolution to tighten the monitoring and enforcement of sanctions against the Taliban" (*SK* 84). The Taliban operated against the establishment of universities and educational institutes regarding modern western education as a tool for the exploitation of the common masses. Kabul University presents an uncertain future for the youngsters of Afghanistan, though it had a glorious past: Senzai points out pressing matters about education in Afghanistan at the time of the Taliban. About Kabul University, Senzai says that: "Founded in 1931, the university had once been the finest in Asia, the intellectual heart of the country. But after years of war, it was in shambles and had to be shut down" (*SK* 102). Taliban banned books; therefore, books are only available on the black market. The writer mentions that:

> Since the banning of books, people had resorted to illegally trading them on the black market. Every few months Fadi would accompany his mother and Noor to a carefully chosen location arranged by a bookseller whose renowned shop had been raided and shut down. After digging through piles of old books, they'd quickly make their purchase. Within minutes they'd emerge onto the road and head home, the books hidden in bags under piles of vegetables. (*SK* 29)

The text suggests that as the conflict cycle resumes in Afghanistan, so does the production of migrants. Now, ironically, the westerns are backing the Northern Alliance to fight off the Taliban; the support of these factions by the USA and the West would prove destructive as they are unbridled, like the mujahideen of the 1980s (*SK* 49). Again, Afghanistan will be left with warlords and fanaticism who "all want to grab power for themselves" (*SK* 49). History is repeating itself, and "Ever since the

US bombings of Jalalabad, the flood of refugees had increased tenfold, causing more confusion and chaos along the border" (*SK* 258). Insecurity, in this case, is directly proportional to the number of people leaving their homes for more secure places.

States like Afghanistan are more vulnerable to external or neighbouring interests than to internal schisms (Žižek 42). Pakistan has a long history of involvement in Afghanistan, and Pakistan faces the brunt of the migration crises: hosting two million Afghans for four decades. The prosperous states earn indignant migrants who see their hosts accountable for their plight at home (Žižek 43). In the novel, Habib's family along with many other Afghans flee to Pakistan as their first station. Hence, immigration is not a simple concern but a global one and needs an all-inclusive approach; ultimately, the international forces are involved in what they receive in the shape of migrants. However, it seems that the ordinary US citizen is unaware of the history of involvement. On the ground, statements such as those made by Sarah Palin, an American politician, have a lopsided view of immigrants. It is a political mantra in many parts of the world. Palin suggests that immigrants should be asked politely, "Will you [immigrants] mind returning to your homeland? […] Still if they [the native Americans] can't get off their horses and start speaking English, I believe they should be deported as well" (Palin qtd. by Henry). Žižek argues that the political parties in Sweden use anti-immigrant narratives, herald immigrant miseries for immigrants. Also, in the USA, the slogan "protecting our way of life" is a significant theme chanted in the elections.

The immigrants' reaction results from their new status, which is "labelled, defined, oppressed, excommunicated, even physically distorted, by society" (22). Senzai's work exposes a desperate situation for the immigrants perceived as heterotrophs. However, the circumstances of their creation are often neglected by the host communities. Habib's family runs away from Jihadi Taliban (*SK* 85), the groups trained by the US. The irony of fate is, as Žižek believes, the idea of a capitalistic market as a free market does not give rise to universal tolerance for the immigrants (*SK* 60). The author establishes a strong connection between the use of ruthless power against the immigrants back home and the ignorance in the host community about the immigrants that prevails in the USA. The novel is an educational document for the reader to understand that global conflicts play a vital role in a mass exodus.

The novel suggests that the Taliban got the USA off guard. The Taliban have immense strength and confidence in their power after the disintegration of the USSR.

However, it was all possible due to the interference of the allies. In the novel, the Afghans are confused about whether to call Osama a hero or a villain. The writer mentions that he helped defeat the Soviets as a hero, but his position against the US is villainous because the Pukhtun tried to protect their cultural values. The cultural significance of *panah*, which means the protection of one's guests at any cost, costs the Afghans thousands of lives, and they proudly mention it as a Pashtun cultural code:

> Taliban have offered Osama *panah*, so he's not leaving Afghanistan anytime soon," said the "He's right, thought Fadi. According to the *Pukhtunwali* code of *panah*, or asylum, if a person asks for protection against his enemies, the person, in this case, Osama, would be safeguarded at all costs. (*SK* 175)

Senzai's words have a prophetic essence, described in the Author's note: "It saddens me that Afghanistan is yet again at a crossroads, with its people caught at the centre of indecision and conflict" (*SK* 415); she seems to describe the condition of Afghanistan in 2021. The novel suggests Habib's family leaves Afghanistan after the USA's funded mujahideen become oppressors. It is reflecting the real condition of Afghanistan; as the NATO forces leave, the chances of a civil war rising from the war rubble are high; it may result in another civil conflict leading to a mass evacuation. The policymakers fail to realise their mistakes as history repeats itself. The repeated fears described in the plot duly address the genuine issues of Afghanistan as the international forces leave the Afghan people in the lurch once again. There is no concrete support to the Afghan forces; meanwhile, the Taliban mount frequent attacks and capture Afghanistan. The writer also mentions the war-stricken state of Vietnam. In the Vietnamese conflict, the USA had a significant role to play. Anh's parents were also lost at the time of migration from Vietnam; she mentions her experiences: "As my father says, it was fate. When he and my mom left Vietnam on a boat fleeing the war, they got separated. But they found each other again in a refugee camp in Cambodia and came to America together" (*SK* 218). Like Afghanistan and Vietnam's treatment in real global players, *SK* portrays both countries migrants in the USA. The migrants are essentially the victims of the host cultures.

3.1.2 Commencing migration: "A Perfect Night to run away."

> "For all the problems in Afghanistan, this was still home. Dread crept into his heart. Would this be the last time he ever saw it?" (*SK* 27)

Families escaping conflict either have war wounds or emotional distresses associated with the process of the relocation. Fadi's family relates to the moment of

sheer agony when the family plans to move from Afghanistan to Pakistan. The unprecedented outcome of their decision converts the journey for safety to a voyage full of emotions concerning their little lost child. They run away from the Taliban, but the trauma of Mariam remains with them for a long time. The whole experience is traumatic; this is described in the following words, describing a comprehensive picture of immigrant experience:

> The Taliban were in hot pursuit, and he had a lot of money riding on getting his human cargo across the border. At first, Zafoona didn't understand what was going on, but her pale face whitened further as Noor told her what had happened. Zafoona […] screamed, "Noooooooo!" […] "We have to go back! My baby, my baby is there!" sobbed Zafoona. As illness and exhaustion overcame her, she crumpled to the ground. "She's all alone.… She's only six!" Fadi could hear the echoes of her anguished wails as she pleaded to the other passengers to stop the truck, to go back to find her little Mariam. […] They couldn't stop, or they would all be arrested, or worse, killed. Noor held on to her mother's sobbing body, trying to comfort her as best she could, her horrified gaze flying from her father to Fadi. Habib tried to climb out of the truck, but the other men wrestled him to the floor. He would get himself killed—either from falling off the truck or by the pursuing Taliban.
> Fadi sat huddled in a corner, replaying over and over again the instant his fingers had left Mariam's hand as the truck accelerated to a breakneck pace, finally losing their pursuers in […]" (*SK* 218)

The process of immigration is emotional, physical and psychological that continues to live with them for years, even after they arrive at a safe place. Also, it has grave financial ramifications for these families. It is a nightmarish picture when Habib's family struggles to leave Afghanistan for Pakistan. The following paragraph, shows Habib and his teacher in a wretched position owing to the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, as they lose their jobs:

> "Salaam Alaikum, and good luck, Habib," whispered the driver. His eyes glanced nervously over the deserted, dusty street.
> "Walaikum A'Salaam, Professor Sahib, and thank you for risking your life to bring us here," replied Fadi's father with a grim smile.
> "How could I not?" replied the driver. "You were my best student at Kabul University," he added, cracking a tired smile." (*SK* 12)

Senzai calls the truck carrying the immigrants a "human cargo" (*SK* 40). Žižek criticises the tendencies of the age wherein global goods widely flow; the prosperous nations would not want refugees unless they need inexpensive or free labour (Žižek 47-48). People are stuffed into the truck like animals, and they never wait for those left behind. Senzai portrays the situation as havoc, requiring all to run to the vehicle to take them to Pakistan. The situation is narrated thus:

> Fadi paused next to a burned-out car for the others to catch up. Noor and his mother came up beside them, and then a loud splash echoed on the right,

> followed by the sound of running feet. A group of men ran in front of them and veered toward the truck. Two women with three small children emerged from behind an oil drum near the truck and scrambled onto the back of the truck. "Hurry," yelled Habib, his eyes wide as he staggered past. "We have to get on that truck." Dozens of people emerged from hiding places, all scrambling toward the truck. Fadi and Mariam followed Noor, bypassing a group of women carrying an old bearded man with sunken, tearful eyes. (*SK* 32)

Fadi and his father feel guilty that Mariam is left behind because of them (*SK* 84). Fadi is traumatized and declares it an unpardonable crime that he has committed (*SK* 98). Now and then, he has Mariam's illusions and recalls the moment he left her hand; "Fadi sat huddled in a corner replaying over and over again the instant his fingers had left Mariam's hand" (*SK* 41). The family experiences trauma because of the loss of the youngest member, and therefore he fails to disregard the moment when he lost Mariam; "He could practically feel Mariam's tiny fingers slipping away from his as the phantom rumble of a truck echoed in his mind" (*SK* 200). The author suggests that the migrant families endure emotional scars which take years to heal. Even at the cost of leaving someone behind, Senzai's characters have no choice but to leave their hometowns, and it is a scary picture "watching Afghanistan disappear behind them" (*SK* 42).

The transport of refugees to different locations is a dynamic market of trillions of dollars (Žižek 44-45). In *SK*, Habib's family faces financial issues while deciding to flee their home. Habib is out of work in the brutal Taliban regime, forcing him to join them in fanatical pursuits; therefore, to avoid the Taliban and their proposed path, he uses all his savings to run away from Afghanistan. Fadi mentions that "his father had paid human traffickers twenty thousand dollars, the family's entire savings, to get them out of Afghanistan into neighbouring Pakistan" (*SK* 31). Habib received his education in the USA, which helps him obtain the documentation required for immigration, but still, he goes through multiple issues in the immigration process and trials get more severe when they pass through the immigration centres of Pakistani authorities. They bribe Pakistani forces to let them ride in their vehicle to cross the border (*SK* 256).

3.2. The Afghan Exilic Frame of Mind and Stereotyped Immigrants

Eisenbruch M in *From Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder To Cultural Bereavement: Diagnosis Of Southeast Asian Refugees* suggests that the loss of one's

cultural and social system may trigger grief, leading to different psychological illnesses and traumatic experiences. The Afghan immigrants are conspicuous because of their atypical personality traits. Mostly, they are stereotyped as confrontational and belligerent people, which according to Robert Johnson, is shaped by the urge for survival in the troublesome region over the centuries (164). Habib puts forward a similar point stating that "maybe it's in our blood," [because] "Afghanistan has been invaded so many times. By the Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Mongols, British, and then the Soviets" (*SK* 97). There are contrasting pictures of how the immigrants are oblivion of the ongoing conflicts as they struggle to live a decent life in the host country. While the attack is happening on the pentagon and the World Trade Centre, Fadi is busy calculating the amount of money he would require to participate in the photography competition (*SK* 167); and later on, he would be accused of being a Talib. In recent history, 9/11 emerges as a paradigm shift to the idea of globalisation. Opportunities for asylum and resettlement have declined in the USA post-9/11 as the experience increases in nationalism and anti-immigrant sentiment (Phillip and Krogstad). In *SK*, 9/11 proves to be a sudden change in the atmosphere of the migrant community in the US.

SK interprets the post-9/11 stereotyping and securitisation of migration. The author describes the event as "Two planes hit the Twin Towers, and another crashed into the Pentagon" (*SK* 165). As a result, globally, immigrants' cause was impaired; legislations were proposed and implemented to restrain the flow of immigrants in the host states. Maggie Ibrahim, in "The Securitisation of Migration: A Racial Discourse", argues that "migration discourse shifts toward an emphasis on security has been referred to as the securitisation of migration" (163). In *SK*, Osama Bin Laden emerges as the face of Islamic terrorism; the Afghan children are continually forced to believe that they somehow belong to Osama. Ironically, in "Al Qaeda's Third Front: Saudi Arabia", the author notes that until 1994, Bin Laden was the citizen of Saudi Arabia and a wealthy Bin Laden family member (Riedel 34). On similar grounds, Senzai portrays the people targeted for their particular skin colour or demeanour. The pigeonholing process starts on the streets when a Sikh is attacked; "men thought he was a Muslim since he wore a turban and beard. They blamed him for what happened on September eleventh" (*SK* 204). Because Laden has a beard, all people with a beard are considered terrorists. The author describes the Sikh as "When he'd first met Mr Singh the week of his arrival, he'd been surprised to see that the jovial ice cream truck

driver had a beard and turban, similar to many Afghans" (*SK* 109). Irrespective of religious believes, Osama becomes a tag which is associated with migrants with similar clothing and beard.

Fadi's life is miserable at school, where he is frequently threatened: "LOOK! IT'S OSAMA," Fadi froze like a rabbit hearing a hawk" (*SK* 179). Felix calls him a camel (*SK* 179) and bullies him (*SK* 236). Fadi is different from other children as he eats halal food and has past traumatic experiences. Žižek believes that Muslim kids may not like pork in schools. Therefore, the young immigrants can be accepted but never respected as one of them (21-42). It is also a recurring picture that shares the differences between the school children; the immigrant children feel isolated and associate it with the difference in their cultural and social background. A different perspective develops when Fadi takes refuge in photography; this passion helps him observe life from an artistic angle. There are two critical factors in his desire to win the photography contest: to get his sister back and to find solace. In Afghanistan, he explored geography, and he recollected it all vividly: "Fadi remembered what his father had taught him while they'd roamed the hills of Kabul, exploring birds' nests and finding coloured rocks. The three key ingredients of a photo were simplicity, composition, and lighting" (*SK* 190). The author describes the instance when his social incompatibility rouses the desire to see the world through the photo lens:

> Taking a bite of his cheeseburger, Fadi sat alone, watching students flurry around him like snowflakes in a blizzard. He felt as though he were hidden behind a camera lens, watching another world whirl past in shattered fragments. (*SK* 101)

Senzai's characters also develop psychological impairments amid the politicisation of immigration. Though Fadi does not describe his hatred towards the host society, he is cornered by Felix on racial grounds. Felix is spokesperson of the American hosts affected by 9/11. Donald Kerwin, believes that in the political arena, the idea to expel or detain the immigrants for 48 hours began within the first week of the attack (*SK* 749). The general population is agitated by the immigrants and their supposed role in the attacks. Interestingly, imam takes an entirely different stand at this point; unlike his counterpart Taliban in Afghanistan, he is more into the idea of humanity than Islamic fanaticism. His presence strikes a balance between the two extremes of Islamic ideological grounds and statement on the 9/11 attacks constructs the softer image of religious clerics.

> The imam cleared his throat, and soon the hall was filled with melodious Arabic, the language of the Qur'an. The imam paused a moment, then translated. "We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. (*SK* 195)

Habib believes that: "The attacks in New York and Washington have frightened people badly. They are scared and angry, two emotions that can sometimes make people do terrible things" (*SK* 205). Fadi's father states: "These are not true Muslims," and he adds: "In Islam, there is no compulsion in religion. One person does not have the right to dictate how another believes or lives" (*SK* 113). Shops and markets of Muslims were "vandalised the other night—the windows broken … awful things written in spray paint" (*SK* 235). Also, the immigrants are stunned by the events. They are glued to the television, looking at the "Stark, horrific images flickered in the darkened room, bursts of orange, gold, black, and smoky grey" (*SK* 170). The environment is well suited for a conflict between the two portions of society. Essentially, the setting constitutes two cultures representing two different backgrounds. The conflict is instigated by the coexisting differences in material culture and nonmaterial culture. At the Afghan homes and restaurants, the Afghan immigrants vigorously continue to work for the mainstream culture. Their hotels and homes mainly reflect their Afghan identity: their homes and hotels are decorated with red and black carpets and paintings of Afghan landscapes. Traditional songs played from the back of the stereo (*SK* 223), display a passion which they would not be able to enjoy in the reign of Taliban. Ideally, the characters should have been absorbed into the new culture, the attraction of Afghan culture is seemingly irresistible and continues influencing the Afghan migrants.

3.2.1 Rekindling of Afghan identity

SK suggests that the estranged and conflicting ethnicities in Afghanistan merge in the USA to form a shield of *Afghaniyat*; this may be a minority tactic facing a strong cultural opponent. The identity quest is propelled by different factors, such as weaving Afghan recollections and searching for distinctiveness with the effects of living in the diaspora. In *Afghanistan: A Nation of Minorities,* Jawad comments that Afghanistan is a diversified nation with thousands of tribes and several ethnic groups (7). In the novel, Afghan migrants constitute a premature but resilient Afghan nationalistic attitude. This is effectively supported by the post-9/11 events as they feel alienated and subdued by

the unfolding events. The Afghani immigrant children at school represent Afghanistan as a state, not the ethnic identities like Tajiks, Uzbeks and Pashtuns, although these ethnic groups have fierce rivalries in their own country. However, when Fadi is beaten up, they vow to take revenge, and it all happens when they say "time for us to join forces" (*SK* 210). Similarly, Fadi's father conveys to his friends that "We need to come together as Afghans now, for the sake of our country" (*SK* 177). This is an example of immigrant's sense of belonging when they confront a new society wherein, they feel to have a new approach to deal with the challenges after 9/11. The Afghan immigrants tend to accuse themselves of the miseries in Afghanistan and their belligerent cultural values. The author mentions the Afghan quagmire with the following words:

> The blue-eyed man took a step forward, his fists clenched. "Once the Soviets left, the country was overrun by warlords. Do you want to return to that? Seventy per cent of Kabul was destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of Afghans were killed. That includes every ethnic group—the blood of Pukhtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks filled the streets. The Northern Alliance is made up of the same warlords and will bring disaster to Afghanistan. (*SK* 230)

The author introduces Afghanistan as a place for people of different ethnicities; therefore, she introduces the Farsi speakers as the non-Pukhtun. This is a bifurcation of Afghanistan into Afghan as the Pushto speakers. The split follows as:

> The Northern Alliance, led by General Ahmed Shah Masood, a great warrior during the Soviet war, was made up of non-Pukhtun Farsi-speaking groups. Many of the groups didn't get along and were led by corrupt warlords with unsavoury reputations. (*SK* 48)

But the hard times in the USA force the immigrants to come up with a possible dialogue within the community to identify the weaknesses of the Afghan social and cultural fabric. Meanwhile, the other communities also feel estranged in the USA, as they are victims of anti-immigrant sentiments. The native American children call every immigrant a terrorist, including Mexicans and Indians (*SK* 209). In this case, the children are lured into the quest for identity amid the growing fear of non-Americans. Even the Indian community is associated with the Muslims, and they are attacked (*SK* 204). Since the children are more sensitive to the emerging circumstances, they tend to be the focus in this novel. Mariam's insecurity telling her real name (*SK* 342) is a constant readjustment of her identity. Mir Hekmatullah Sadat says that many Afghans have taken on Anglo or Christian identities by assuming nicknames rather than using their Afghan names in order to feel comfortable and integrate into their host society (333). It is a disassociation from the core identity when a migrant changes his name in order to avoid mal-treatment and persecution in the host environment.

The writer deals with cultural sentiments and ideals changing with the family's arrival in the US. Fadi's family is the foremost social and cultural institution spreading the culture of Afghanistan throughout the whole community of immigrants. Though Fadi is too young to understand cultural ideals, he develops the idea of Pashtun identity in Afghanistan and seems to shed it slightly while he is living in the US. Nevertheless, he firmly adheres to his parents' culture.

Mariam is Fadi's lost cultural value, which he wants to reclaim, and meanwhile Noor is forming a new identity. Even when the family is in Afghanistan waiting to be transported, Fadi is reactionary to his Noor's behaviour, "giving her a cross-eyed I-dare-you-to-hit-me look in return" (*SK* 30). When a similar matter comes forth, Fadi assumes a defensive position in the USA, promising to Noor that he "will keep my [his] lips sealed" (*SK* 161). Mariam symbolises Afghan *Ghayrat,* which is the brother's responsibility to protect. Besides the "stab of guilt," (*SK* 246) Fadi's struggle to bring back his sister Mariam addresses the notion of female security and honour in the Pashtun culture. At numerous times, Fadi confronts himself harshly: "It's me that has no honour. All this is my fault. I have to do something" (*SK* 107), and the author says that "he was on a mission" (*SK* 242) to retrieve his sister and "if he succeeded, he would bring Mariam back and reclaim his honour" (*SK* 137) and "fear coupled with determination. As a Pukhtun, his father was bound by the ancient, sacred code of *Pukhtunwali* to protect his *namus*—the women of his family—with his life" (*SK* 13). Women as the representatives of integrity and honour dominates the cultural landscape of Afghanistan. The idea of *namus* surpasses family boundaries and describes Afghanistan as the *namus* of Afghans as the motherland, which is yet another reason for their aggressiveness. In the essay "Being Pashtun-being Muslim: Concepts of Person and War in Afghanistan," the author Bernt Glatzer describes the idea of *namus* in the broadest sense as the Afghan homeland to be protected (4). There is a fluidity in the idea of Afghan *namus* which has a different meaning in the host American culture.

While escaping Afghanistan, the author mentions that "Noor and Fadi's mother stood enveloped in burkas" (*SK* 12). The cultural and religious significance of Afghan dress confronts the immigrant's life while living in the host culture. The author mentions that: "Although many women in Afghanistan traditionally chose to wear the burka, a head-to-toe covering—including his grandmother and his aunts—the Taliban now made it mandatory. Women were compelled to cover up when they ventured outside" (*SK* 28). As soon as Noor boards the flight to the US, the fashion magazine

introduces new dresses and trends; “the magazine was open to a spread showing a model hiding in a tropical forest, dressed in shades of coral, resembling an orchid. Noor hadn’t turned the page since they boarded the plane hours ago” (*SK* 52). When Noor reaches the USA, she feels emancipated from the Afghan cultural codes; she is directly influenced by the host culture’s treatment of women. Noor’s parents show no reservations over their daughter’s job in a cafeteria. Essentially, Noor character comes into the limelight as soon as she boards the plane to the USA.

The idea of a burqa is entrenched in the children's minds that Noor sews a burqa for her doll Gulmina since the Taliban had proscribed all toys that illustrated human figures since they were considered blasphemous, so Gulmina was hidden away in the folds of the bright cloth (*SK* 25). Mariam's Barbie Doll reflects the individuality of Mariam and her link to both Afghan and US culture. Mariam first mentions Gulmina when she asks Noor whether she may help Gulmina to sew a new garment. Mariam has inherited Noor's doll, and it is the link between both sisters. In Mariam's life, the doll is an important object: “the envy of all her friends. […] And now, even though the doll’s features had faded and she was missing a left hand, Gulmina accompanied Mariam everywhere” (*SK* 80). Mariam likes the colour pink and requests her sister to sew a lavender or rose outfit for the doll. Noor sews Gulmina a dress; it is a pink burka like the one Mariam wears. Barbie is inherently considered American, but the doll illustrates Mariam's cultural flexibility in a burka. The clothing also prefigures Mariam's outfit to be discovered: at the end of the novel, Fadi recognizes Mariam in the picture because she wears a bright pink burka.

When Noor starts her life in the USA, she can move and work (*SK* 161). The author insinuates that more progressive social conventions, women's rights, autonomy, and access to resources could yield positive outcomes. Displacement plays a key role in women’s emancipation, though it is a laborious process and involves serious threats to them. In the USA, Noor has more authority because of her earning capacity. Noor stands in front of Fadi and asks for a picture battering “her eyelashes” (*SK* 221). Typically, in Afghan culture females stay distant from male family members. Furthermore, Noor's financial assistance to Fadi represents a shifting image of the cultural environment and host cultural impact: “She put the money into his hand with a conspiratorial smile” (*SK* 163). Fadi’s cultural apprehensions and views about the idea of “sister” as *namus* wane; are replaced by the novel cultural disposition in which Noor has to work to finance her needs. Dinesh Bhugra, in his article “Migration,

Distress and Cultural Identity", argues that women in the minority culture tend to enjoy the positive influence of the host culture (129). The source society of the displaced specifies less gender equality, whereas the new community provides the opposite effect. Access to educational and economic opportunities challenge the traditional approach. Afghan migrants are exposed to a new life that may affect schooling, active social participation, and marriage age. Noor's character would be a new formation, different from her mother and her status in the family. She would prove to be less accepting of the harsh confinements of her Afghan culture. The female gender is depicted as the talisman of Afghan culture, which seems to merge into the more contrasting images of economically more independent women. It is also essential for the Afghan family as they have to be in contact with the majority of US society.

Eisenbruch considers that with time, an immigrant "feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life, feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life" (674). Though *SK* depicts the lives of several age groups of immigrants, Fadi's age proves to be the most crucial one. Children have a romantic perspective of their roots, and they are more likely to cling to them tenaciously. This is mainly because immigrant children like Fadi are humiliated and labelled as terrorists (*SK* 231) by their classmates, providing the basis for an antagonistic view of the host culture. The memories and present times continuously haunt Fadi's acclimatisation process. Under constant pressure, Fadi is moulded into a gullible character who cannot face Felix, an aggressive and confident white teenager (*SK* 179). Consequently, Fadi loses confidence which later subsides the chances of integration.

An ambush is a tactical method used by the Taliban and other fighting groups of Afghanistan. Dr Graham and H. Turbiville, Jr, in the article "Ambush! The Road War in Afghanistan" mentions ambush tactics against the Soviets in the Afghan-Soviet War, describing it as a successful technique to seize arms and ammunition (4). The scene includes the strategic reference to an "ambush" (*SK* 267); it is a method of tribal warfare reclaimed by the Afghan children. Moreover, the Afghan teenagers are vigorously into a fight with the schoolboy considering that an Afghan must take revenge or *"Badal",* which is engrained in the mind of the Afghan progenies when they assume their rivals to be punished for what they have done to Fadi, a member of Afghan community (*SK* 265).

Fadi is furious at the bombing of Afghanistan by the US army knows that his family is disturbed by the Afghan state of affairs. The younger generation of Fadi's age has memories of their past more vividly, but they get the chance to integrate into the new society. Natalie Friedman considers, the protagonist of a contemporary immigrant novel—whether an immigrant or an infant born to immigrants—is more concerned with his or her dual identity than with losing the trappings of the home world and diving headlong into the work of embracing the new community (112). By exposing themselves to the educational institutes, parks and playgrounds, youngsters like Fadi learn the new culture. The novel disseminates the feeling that these children may struggle to acclimatise in the host environment not because of financial or security reasons but because of their, to an extent, romanticised origin. Among other factors, the continuous cultural inculcation at home constitutes their behaviour, so they act sentimentally. Even the young Afghan girls' toys reflect their religious and cultural shades: "One of the girls clutched a doll wearing a stained and torn hot pink burka" (*SK* 291). The financial prospects of the immigrants are not as bright as the natives' children, leading to a constant feeling of dejection. Noor works to support her family. Marta Tienda and Ron Haskins in "Immigrant Children: Introducing the Issue" argue that there are grounds for worry in recent economic and societal trends in the USA. Children with immigrant parents on most social variables are worse than their native-born counterparts (15).

The males are under strict orders not to evade the vitality of their cultural identity that demonstrate power, strength and "*ghairat*" or family dignity. Girls are the symbols of Afghan "dignity" that needs to be safeguarded at any cost, even if you lose your life in the process. About Habib, the family guardian, the narrator states that: "He had lost his sense of honour because he had not been able to protect his *namus*—his daughter. But it wasn't his fault, thought Fadi. It was mine. I have no honour. I didn't protect Mariam" (*SK* 51). The older Afghans falling in the age category of Uncle Amin retain their cultural nuances such as hospitability and warmth for the guests, but they seem to be less aggressive when it comes to other factors of culture such as dignity and *namus*. For instance, for Mariam, they never have a discussion connecting it with their Afghan dignity, but when Fadi's father decides to leave his house, Uncle Amin is furious and declares: "As a Pukhtun, I am insulted you are leaving my house" (*SK* 91). It is also suggestive of the fact that the Americanized Afghan families redefine their family structure. Meanwhile, *SK* presents a fear that if immigrants cannot

maintain some codes of genuine Afghan culture, then they will lose their legacy whilst living in host societies that rejoice cultural legacy and encourage diversity.

A severe blow to *Afghaniyat* has been battered by the structural weakness of Afghan socio-cultural institutions, family structure and the incapacity of traditional Afghan social standards to control the lifestyles of Afghans while living in the West. The *Khanawada* (family), a group of direct and extended families, no longer coexists inside the walls of the family house. Migration patterns, host country living and the lack of homes in the vicinity divide them into nuclear families. Afghan households are increasingly fragmented and destabilized because younger or elder generations meddle and show suggestive influences; younger generations feel easier to adopt in the new cultural form while the elders stick to their cultural memories. Amin and Habib are close relatives, "Uncle Amin was married to Fadi's mother's younger sister, Khala Nilufer. Uncle Amin was his mother's third cousin or something since Uncle Amin's mother was Zafoona's father's first cousin" (*SK* 83), but they decided to live independently (*SK* 91) in the USA. Interfamily marriages and extended families are standard features of Pukhtun culture, but they lose vitality in the US society.

In the migrant community, there is a constant struggle to sustain their religious identity, which seems more enthusiastic than in Afghanistan; they are willing to continue their practical Muslim identity in the USA. Fadi's family is a victim of the religious fanaticism in Afghanistan, but they donate money for the mosque construction in the USA; Zalmay mentions with a feeling of pride that "The Afghan community had spared no expense to construct the majestic building. The main hall could accommodate more than five hundred, and its rising minarets announced prayers five times a day" (*SK* 193). The attachment to the religious teaching is an outcome of a feeling of alienation in the host culture; it is also an effort to get recognition under the given circumstances.

The community members spend their time discussing the good old days (*SK* 199) in Afghanistan. Their emotional attachment to Afghanistan reverberates; therefore, they try to refresh their memories and the past while living in the US; "Here we are. Little Kabul—a home away from the real thing," joked Uncle Amin with a rumbling laugh" (*SK* 104). Contradicting Žižek's idea, who says the ones left behind try to recreate their destroyed homes in the shape of the desired West (Žižek 47), in *SK*, the immigrants recreate their homeland away from home. It shows that the immigrants are more inclined to their home culture but fear persecution, maltreatment,

and economic challenges when they return, like Fadi's family. The elders are reluctant to head back to Afghanistan as they have bitter experiences fresh in their minds. Fadi's family members their luck trying to help the people of Afghanistan, but they fail to do so because of the Taliban's hostility at the time (*SK* 20). Until one night, the narrator mentions, Habib describes "IT'S A PERFECT NIGHT to run away" (*SK* 8) from the miseries of life in Afghanistan. The elders live in the USA with their experiences different from the children's fanciful past imagination; the younger generation has more time and sufficient acclimatization possibilities.

3.2.2 Optimism and the desire for Afghanistan

SK reflects that the Afghan immigrants' future in the USA depends on the state's contextual realities, cultural influences, and policies, whereas going back to Afghanistan does not seem to be an option. The security situation in Afghanistan, threats of the Taliban and available economic opportunities influence their future decisions. It is the second time Fadi's family migrates to the USA; they have multiple layers of experiences in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the USA. A hybrid culture could be prophesied out of this cultural merger redefining the host society's culture. The narrator shows that Fadi's teachers, classmates and friends support him. The novel has the impression that positive host behaviour will be an antidote to stereotyping, alienation, politicization, and securitization of immigrants in the host society.

Though the steady acclimatisation process hampers the immigrants' satisfaction in *SK*, they have frightening experiences, including the radicalism of the Taliban and the complex, tiresome, and complicated resettlement process. Habib returns to Afghanistan with the desire to serve, but he finds himself in the Afghan society but not of Afghan society. He has an extended influence of a separate identity, especially being disconnected from Afghanistan's religio-cultural practices and beliefs. Habib's repatriation increases tensions in the Afghan society; his return is culturally irrelevant considering his current abstruse identity in Afghanistan. Hence, he prefers to be an immigrant in the USA once more rather than a misfit in his birthplace. While in Afghanistan, such individuals represent the *Afghan e kharijee* or the Afghan's coming from outside Afghanistan. Whenever a member of the silent majority warns the Afghan people of involvement in *taqlid-e gharbiya* or degeneration of their *Afghaniyat*, the Afghan counterculture labels them *kohna fekers* or old-minded or old-fashioned people. These people are not readily acceptable in the Afghan society;

therefore, like Habib's family, they are left in the immigrants' cultural dilemma. In Afghanistan, they call themselves *musalman* or Muslims. However, in the USA, especially after the 9/11 attacks, immigrants use modus to deal with crises by replacing *Musalman* with *Afghan*— Habib, and other characters redefine their identity considering the dynamic shift in the idea of terrorism post-9/11. These Afghan countercultures frequently argue that *Ma awal Afghan astum bad Musselman* "I am Afghan first, then Muslim". This statement separates them and any religious rules from the worldwide Al-Qaeda network and the other fanatical religious militias in Afghanistan. Senzai detaches Afghan from Al Qaeda, saying, "Osama was a good friend to Afghanistan" (*SK* 60), which means that he was not an Afghan. The author challenges the underlining perspective that al-Qaeda is intrinsically an Afghan organisation. The organization is ruining Afghanistan and Afghans do not necessary represent Al-Qaeda. Afghans were meant to protect their culture; the author mentions it "Our *Pukhtunwali* tenant of *melmastia* dictates that we do not turn out a guest once we have given them our hand in friendship and a place at our table" (*SK* 47). It is *melmastia* which dictated the Afghans not to hand over Osama Bin Laden to the US. Consequently, the US and NATO attacked Afghanistan.

The fear of a whitewashed Afghan culture has two aspects. Firstly, the immigrants' motivation to accept the host culture will be crucial, and it can result in white-washed[5] Afghan culture or neutralising *Afghaniyat*[6]; in the course of migrating, Afghans have to choose to preserve, to hyphenate or to abandon their *Afghaniyat*. Secondly, their prospects, including security and economic wellbeing, play a defining role. Carl Stempel and Qais Alemi, in the article "Challenges to the Economic Integration of Afghan Refugees in the US," argue that though the Afghan refugees do not receive as much money as their US counterparts, they earn a lot more than in Afghanistan (19). Fadi's father receives no offers for jobs, though he has earned a PhD degree in agriculture—however, he drives a taxi (*SK* 302). Compared to the threats Habib receives in Afghanistan, he has a protected life in the USA. The choice of

5 "White-washed" is a concept that means the abandoning of native immigrant culture in favor of the culture of the dominant host country.

6 It suggests sticking to the Afghan cultural values on a foreign land. In June 2001, the word and idea of *Afghaniyat* were first explored in print. Omaid Weekly, 4 June 2001, Mir Hekmatullah Sadat, "The Quest for Afghanistan by Defining *Afghaniyat*."

migration has no economic prospects; instead, it is based on the choice between life and death and Habib's individual moral and ethical boundaries.

In *SK*, the host environment is not confrontational towards the immigrants which is a positive sign. The compassionate response can be observed in the immigration officer's reactions; he is shocked when he hears about the family's missing daughter: "I have three daughters. Couldn't imagine one of them lost all alone like that" (*SK* 87). Senzai's immigrant characters, however, show promise in their respective fields. Fadi has a promising start at the school by winning the photography competition. His sister Noor finds work and starts supporting her family. Because of the Taliban's policies, Noor would suffer immensely if she were ever to move there. Fadi's father also gets a chance as a taxi driver, though it is less than what he deserves considering his academic qualifications since he has a PhD in Agriculture. With an sarcastic statement, a man addresses Fadi saying: "If you don't study and work hard, you'll end up a taxi driver like your father" (*SK* 147). They have financial issues which seem to continue for some time. After arriving in the United States, Uncle Amin had not completed the medical board tests required to practice medicine three years ago. He worked two jobs as a lab technician at a mortuary and studied when he could to support the family. Uncle Amin's brother had lost his job two weeks before and had moved into the house with his wife and three children. During the day, the queue for the bathroom may run down the corridor. The grownups now seemed to be discussing some sort of recession (*SK* 113). The immigrants will take any job offered, sometimes against their will and qualifications, but they show resilience. The Afghan community has no equal opportunities when compared to the natives.

The author implies that immigrant children will endure trials on the way to assimilation. The novel ascertains two future scenarios through the portrayal of the teenagers of the community. Firstly, they will endure lasting impacts of cultural reinstatement. Secondly, they will have a feasible environment in which to arrive at conclusions about their vague status; meanwhile, they learn the idea and need for integration in their lives. The host society is docile mainly on the issue of migration when it comes to children. Fadi feels degraded, shows dejections and considers himself poor when he gets a free lunch at school (*SK* 92); all such small but significant gestures will drive him into the realm of accepting the host culture as the home culture.

3.2.3 Refugee rights

The immigrants search for a place where they are entertained with fundamental human rights. At times, migrants seek asylum to defend themselves against the tyranny of the militia and states; the same is the case with the people of Afghanistan: "Afghans want nothing more than the necessities—clean water, employment, education, and security" (*SK* 415). These immigrant communities have no option at their homes. Prospects, memories and culture are reflected through camera lens and pictures. They have to survive and change as per the US social, political, and economic fabric requirements. In fact, in the novel, Fadi's photographic venture portrays the conditions at home. In *SK*, the photographs reflect the consequences of war in Afghanistan and an African country; the author mentions pictures as a window to see the other side of the world.

> The first picture showed a group of women wading through a rice paddy as bombs went off in the distant mountains. You have to eat, even during war, thought Fadi sadly. The next picture revealed a militia group carrying machetes, marching down the road in some dusty African country. Fadi blinked in surprise at the next shot: a young man wearing a black turban standing with a rifle. The photo next to it was of a group of women in stained blue burkas, walking along a dirt road. (*SK* 290)

Since a photograph is open for interpretation, Fadi associates past experiences with them; the rice paddy portrays the survival of humanity amid trauma, and the militia portrays the unwelcoming nature of the state of affairs in war ridden countries. Clive is a passionate photographer and his work crosses human boundaries and lets the beholder observe the essence of cultural diversity, civilisations, conflicts and happiness. He has worked in every corner of the planet, speaking for all the nations in miseries through his pictures. It chronicled several wars, such as the Iran-Iraq war and the calamities in Cambodia, Rwanda and Congo. He tracked the situation of refugees in Sudan, Iran, India and Pakistan (*SK* 185).

Along with other leisure activities in Afghanistan, the Taliban ban photography which is Fadi's passion. Fadi feels the anger "when his father had brought home the news of the photography ban; his cheeks had flushed with anger" (*SK* 113). The photos of Afghanistan show the sufferings in country whereas the photographs shot in the US are more reflective of peace, tranquillity, love and pleasure. Such pictures are in contradiction with the Afghan homeland pictures. In the following lines, the narrator discusses the differences of different lives captured through the lens:

> The image she'd chosen showed a lean woman in motion, her shimmering dress whipped around her limber body as a man in a tuxedo dragged her across the dance floor. Light flowed in from the back window, illuminating the couple, highlighting the tension in their passionate embrace. Fadi peered down at the intense image captured on paper. It made him feel as if he were eavesdropping on the story of two lovers. (*SK* 282)

In *SK*, the author mentions the trouble the immigrants go through in their pursuit of safety and security. The novel's key aspects are the creation of immigrants, their voyage to the USA, and the struggle to continuously address the feelings of being an Afghan in the multi-cultural host society. Nevertheless, Afghans in *SK* maintain their cultural identity and show resilience with their cultural heritage by living in ethnic concentrations in specific residential localities, practising endogamy, speaking their native language in their home and with other Afghans, adhering somewhat to their religious practices and beliefs, and by interacting with their extended families. However, Afghans believe that since Afghan mosques concentrate on religious rituals, they feel the need to protect them and collect finances to construct and renovate them. The Afghan family is the major social and cultural institution propagating Afghan culture throughout the Afghan immigrant community.

Some Afghans like Habib believe that the lack of communication among the Afghan immigrants and the tendencies to accuse each other of the pathetic conditions at home are the key issues among the community members. It is almost immoral to let go of their *Afghaniyat* by imposing counterfeited rituals assumed from the host countries' cultures. It also appears that servile reception of host social customs and lack of acquaintance with and understanding of Afghanistan are diminishing and terminating the faithfulness to *Afghaniyat*. The novel implies that immigrants who cannot preserve specific standards of authentic Afghan culture would lose their legacy while living in host countries that celebrate their cultural heritage and foster multiculturalism. Also, the political environment in Afghanistan influences the Afghant migrant community's stance of Afghaness.

The text substantiates that *Afghaniyat* or their past helps the Afghan community build society's socio-political/cultural identity while living in the multi-cultural host environment. The cultural dignity and identity of Afghans depend heavily on language and religion. In *SK* some characters practice Afghaniyat expressing that it is not established on historical myths and a false feeling of self-right, but on sensitivity and respect for religious and cultural values.

The immigrants' use of language refers to their religious and cultural identity; the practice of Quranic or Arabic words and Dari or Persian words meaningfully advocate the yearning not to let go of the quintessential Afghan cultural elements. Language would be a *sine qua non* bearing in mind a culture's aspiration to regulate a committed social, political and cultural identity. Otherwise, the community would accept the present multi-cultural identity by forming a white-washed culture and forgetting the past; however, they will be seen as a threat by the indigenous Afghans whenever they go back to Afghanistan. Essentially, *SK* portrays immigrants as people of no land.

CHAPTER 4

EXIT WEST

Mohsin Hamid's statement that "We are all migrants through time […] that everyone migrates, even if we stay in the same houses our whole lives" (*EW* 143) echoes in the text of *Exit West*. In *EW*, immigration is a cyclic experience, diluting physicality and restructuring human capacity to [re] imagine displaced communities' emotional, psychological, and physical crises. Circumstances force people to leave their homelands, searching for security through teleportation doors and ending up at prominent metropolitans amid conflict are the troubles immigrants face in the real world. However, Slavoj Žižek, in his *Against the Double Blackmail: Refugees, Terror and Other Troubles with the Neighbours,* comments that commodities move freely in the capitalistic world, not the people (48-49). Hamid conjures up doors through magical realism that give immigrants access to better lives without border and visa restrictions. Mansoor Ahmad Mir, in "Global Refugee Crisis: A Study of Mohsin Hamid's novel *Exit West*," regards Hamid, a mongrel with extensive migratory experience, who discusses emigrant concerns in his exquisite narrative (16). *EW* received overwhelmingly positive reviews by both critics and readers, with many applauding its relevance and narrative brilliance. The book was declared a *New York Times* Best Book of the Year, received the *LA Times* Book Prize for fiction and was nominated for the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, among many other honours.

In his fourth novel, *EW*, Hamid considers problems of identity, migration, and transition amid a war-torn and transforming world (Aziz 6). Cultural dilution takes place on multiple fronts, including identity, individuality, religion, and gender roles. In addition, the indigenous population in nativist areas forms reactive groups in opposition to the immigrant settlements. The immigrants confront issues such as the redefinition of a homeland, nativeness, securitization of migration, immigrant ghettos, and the apocalyptic clashes.

The formation of an inevitable camaraderie leads the immigrants to the struggle for legitimacy and rights. The chapter will focus on the significant aspects of the voyage for safety, including the creation, reception, rehabilitation, integration, and cultural and political outcomes of migration. The chapter evaluates the significant aspects of the displaced peoples' past life and their resignation from citizenship,

consequential struggle for a new home and submission to the new system. Their old setting forces the younger generation out of its boundaries and resigns them to a new life in a foreign state. The key segments will include the reconstruction of identity, refugees' struggle for rights and integration and their dilemmas, and the natives' reaction to the immigrants. The narrative recounts the lives of Nadia and Saeed, as they are forced to flee their homeland and seek shelter in the West due to conflict and an extreme dictatorial regime. Hamid uses mixed aspects of magic realism with exceedingly vibrant yet straightforward and meaningful writing to portray a narrative of humankind in flux via the different protagonists' lives. Despite the fleeting nature of human connection on the grand scale of things, he investigates how magical realism builds links between cultures by leaving a lasting impression, shaping identities and transforming lives.

4.1 Past and Present: Immigrants' Home

Hamid's *EW* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* share the landscape of leading characters' life in the capitalist society. While Changez is a financial analyst in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Saeed and Nadia are related to a commercially active society in *EW*; the presumed country has much resemblance to Pakistan. Some critics, like Lionel Shriver of *The New York Times*, remark that this city seems to be Aleppo, others comment on its similarities to other cities. Viet Thanh Nguyen and William Giraldi, writing in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, respectively, draw comparisons between Aleppo and Mosul as the cities mentioned in this novel. Hamid claims in an interview that he constructed the unnamed town after his hometown: he composed it in the style of Lahore, Pakistan, wherein he lived. He induces the dreadful calamities that befall Saeed and Nadia's city to afflict Lahore. But he also intended to open it up—to have people from parts of the world perceive it as their city, thereby broadening the novel's entrance point for diverse sorts of readers from other places. The immigrants become universal, and the author undoes the man-made limitations of race and boundaries (Frostrup and Hamid). *EW* allows readers to participate in finding a suitable city for the text. Hamid's work exemplifies what he believes in a global reconsideration of crises and the immigration process (Chambers 244). Since Hamid's words reflect the true intentions behind the unnamed city, it is imperative to evaluate the town under the context of Lahore, Pakistan. The city's description, culture and militancy reflect the era between 2003-10. Thousands of lives were lost in a conflict

between the government forces and the *Tehreek Taliban Pakistan*. As the extremist group in *EW*, TTP is an extremist group in Pakistan demanding the imposition of a particular version of fundamentalist Islamic law in the country.

Historically Pakistan was carved out of British India by disturbing Indian secular society and empowering religious nationalism among the Muslims. Richard Morrock, in “Heritage of Strife: The Effects of Colonialist "Divide and Rule" Strategy Upon the Colonized Peoples” deems that the British found it comparatively easy to set Hindus and Muslims against one another. The League's leaders were Western-educated lawyers who were more at home in English than in any Indian language. Therefore, they could be the best available option (147) to hatch a plan against the solid Indian culture. Interestingly in the *EW*, in a neo-historical context, migration is a reversal of colonization. It appears as *fait accompli* that the injured masses or communities will look to secure themselves in the peaceful society of the colonizers. Also, Pakistan’s creation is considered a British desire to sustain power in the Indian subcontinent after they withdrew from the subcontinent. Figures like Mohammad Ali Jinnah infused the idea of Muslimhood. He is considered the forefront of Indian Muslims seeking secession from India; he is quoted by Samina Awan and Kausar Parveen in “Ideological Orientation of Muslim Urban Leadership in Colonial India”: "It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality" (353). The colonial divide and rule policy promulgated the idea of not two communities living in India but two nationalities thus paving the road to division by undoing the strong roots of centuries-old Indian culture and civilization. The reversal of colonization in Hamid’s work recreates a landscape just before the creation of Pakistan in 1947 when the Indian subcontinent was divided into fragments. On similar grounds, the religious fanatics are targeting the liberal population by imposing a new version of religion. The Pakistani couple moves to the colonizers under the similar circumstances the British colonizers created to sustain their power in the region and safeguard their interests in the upcoming years, particularly against the advancements of the USSR. Hamid’s text suggests that the conflict in terms of religion, colour and cultural differences relate to the historical events orchestrated by the [neo]colonizers. Žižek and Hamid have parallel ideas that provide the proper environment for creating refugees in the neo-colonized world. Žižek claims that the great powers practise colonialism and create a series of artificial states ruled by local warlords, corrupt

political leaders controlling a fair share of the economic benefits, leaving the common people impoverished. Most refugees come from "failed states," or nations where official authority is primarily ineffective, at least in most areas of the state (Žižek 76-77). *EW* formulates an allegorical reference to the socio-cultural realities and event of Pakistan.

The situation in *EW* is considerably influenced by the 1980s when the West decided to use Pakistan as a launching pad for their vested interests and fight against the USSR. The West promulgated *Jihad* to engage in a so-called holy war against the secular regime of the USSR. Pakistan had to support religious groups to fight off the USSR in the 1980s, but later the same fanaticism swept into the social stream. Žižek blames powerful states which use weaker nations to secure regional interests, resulting in catastrophe for the colonized people (42). Pakistan was at peace before the West took it as a playground. Hamid suggests that compared to the older generation, the youngsters are living under constant threats from miscreants. Deeming it innocuous and easily viable, Pakistan supported the infusion of fundamentalism into the minds of the less educated tribal areas, thus resulting in a vicious cycle of intolerance and extremism. Hamid describes the injection of extremist mindset: the extremists have sympathizers within; hence it appears too dangerous to live in the community (*EW* 40). Later, the fighters reinstated in Pakistan were indoctrinated with fanaticism and extremist ideology. Ironically, Pakistan in the 1980s joined the fight against the USSR in Afghanistan. In "An appraisal of the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy to counter-terrorism," Malik Zafar Iqbal argues that the USA used the religious sentiments in Pakistan and waged war against the USSR (14). Whereas, in the era post-September 11, with the hope of controlling the flow of *mujahideen* or the same warriors into Afghanistan, the Pakistani government, after the US pressure, promulgated the idea of "Moderation." It was all based on the western interests that encouraged a hostile environment within Pakistan, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths and considerable blows to the economy and the infrastructure. Pervez Musharraf, a Pakistani politician and a retired four-star general who became the tenth president of Pakistan after the successful military takeover of the federal government in 1999, disseminated the idea of Enlightened Moderation in his policies which was expected to be an antidote against General Zia's idea of *jihadism*, but it never functioned in the true sense. Musharraf describes his idea in the following words in

the article “A Plea for Enlightened Moderation” the propagation roughly coincides with the times described in EW:

> The world has been going through a tumultuous period since the dawn of the 1990s, with no sign of relief in sight. The suffering of the innocents, particularly my brethren in faith -- the Muslims -- at the hands of militants, extremists and terrorists has made it all the more urgent to bring order to this troubled scene. In this spirit, I would like to set forth a strategy I call Enlightened Moderation. (Musharraf)

As discussed, in Pakistan’s case, when needed, West injects the idea of Jihad, when suitable, they ask for moderation. More or less on the same grounds, *EW* sheds light on the hair-triggered fundamentalist psyche prevailing in the city. While Saeed and his father prayed for peace, “the preacher in his sermon urged all the congregants to pray for the righteous to emerge victorious in the war but carefully refrained from specifying on which side of the conflict he thought the righteous to be” (*EW* 39). The common masses are engrossed in the idea of religious supremacy, which appears to challenge the state authority. Therefore, it plays the role of a catalyst in the formation of refugee movement.

Hamid converts the argument of immigration into a whole theory of befallen people, who once enjoyed a particular mode of life without much trouble, but now, seeking a secure city is the only way out of the troubled homeland. Both Nadia and Saeed are caught in the generation's enigmatic crossfire facing the brunt of an unprecedented situation. They can only witness the times before and post-war era and thus ground the desire for migration on the war debris. Fundamentalists ban cinemas, and the people have fewer or no entertainment options within their cities. The locality where Saeed’s family lives had two popular cinemas and had become a byword for that locality, but now, they have closed their cinemas (*EW* 16). The author bifurcates the time before and after Saeed’s parents’ time. Saeed’s parents lived in a calm city which cared more for entertainment and enjoyment in life. Hamid describes the former times:

> Saeed’s parents met at the cinema during the intermission of a film about a resourceful princess. Saeed’s mother spied his father having a cigarette and was struck by his similarity to the male lead in the movie. This similarity was not entirely accidental: though a little shy and very bookish, Saeed’s father styled himself after the popular film stars and musicians of his day, as did most of his friends. (*EW* 15)

Compared to his parent's generation, the current generation is living in a devastated town. The city is destroyed; therefore, the residents have two options: leave

or die. There are differences within the Islamic society, divided into multiple sects declaring war against each other. Hamid describes the militant's psyche and the psychology in the following words.

> The night the militants came, they were looking for people of a particular sect. They demanded to see ID cards, to check what sort of names everyone had, but fortunately for Saeed's father and Saeed and Nadia; their names were not associated with the denomination being hunted. The upstairs neighbours were not so lucky: the husband was held down while his throat was cut, and the wife and daughter were hauled out and away. (*EW* 59)

The violence in the immigrant's past city is associated mainly with the mindset of a war zone. The immigrants' home culture and barbaric experiences continue to be detrimental to them on the foreign land. The people are violently proclaiming to be representatives of certain religious groups. Therefore, many militias have been formed, and the ordinary people leave for better and more peaceful places. Though Nadia and Saeed do not mention the Western powers as the culprits, there is a constant historical reflection of militants' birth in their city because of a war fought for others. The belief in foreign intervention, based on facts, dominates throughout war-torn countries. As a result, common immigrants would label civilized and prosperous nations as "perpetrators" and hold them accountable for their plight at home (Žižek 43). The author mentions the extremity of the war psyche around the city at the time of their departure. Saeed's father assumes some players are "playing with a ball but with the severed head of a goat, and he thinks barbarians, but then it dawns upon him that this is the head not of a goat but a human being, with hair and a beard" (*EW* 61).

Because of the security situation, physically fit inhabitants of the unnamed city move to better societies, which help them grow and fulfil life goals. In the novel, characters like Nadia, Saeed and Nadia's cousin decide to leave their homes because of a particular chain of events that has led to this situation. Educationally and psychologically strong characters leave their homelands for a better future. The author mentions Nadia's cousin, a dedicated and hardworking doctor; he leaves his home country for a better future. While visiting his family in his home city, he is killed in a bomb attack; he "along with eighty-five others, was blown by a truck bomb to bits, literally to bits, the largest of which, in Nadia's cousin's case, were a head and two-thirds of an arm" (26). Žižek believes that the uneasiness at home builds up a "constant flow of refugees into Europe which are momentary reminders of the violent world outside our glasshouse" (17). The events are connected to internal and external

policies, drawing the society into a quagmire of lawlessness. The young generation has no option but to migrate.

Žižek snubs the capitalistic world, directing immigrants to weaker economies. Pakistan, Turkey and Iran are considered the most pro immigrants societies. However, they are funded by the stronger economies to accept millions of displaced people. Hamid's standpoint positions the hosts of immigrants as a displaced community. Saeed mentions that "Millions arrived in our country" (*EW* 113) though, the "country was poor" (*EW* 113). After the war on terror, Pakistan received millions of immigrants from Afghanistan. They started consuming the already weak economy and the fragile infrastructure of the country was unable to sustain them, resulting in multiple issues. In *EW*, the author considers the current situation in the home country overrun by immigrants. It is heralding a similar situation for the people living in Mykonos and London, where many new people have arrived. Among those immigrants, the extremists also move into the host society. In the novel, the unnamed city is being overrun by unidentified terrorists, yet recognizable as the Taliban. The authorities surrendered to the religious fighters; it is a failure of the western model and an obvious message to the cities on the other side of the doors that they will face a similar fate in the hands of immigrants. Unfortunately, the western "glass houses" have innumerable doors open. It suggests an inevitability of crises developed in the backyard of states which dream of going unharmed in the crises.

Though the characters live in an unnamed apocalyptic city of the East, it is an insubstantial copy of the Western economic model. Hamid describes the city as "presently crowded and commercial" (EW 14); it presents a perfect model of a commercial hub. *EW* portrays the life of the people living in a commercial city disturbed by extremist insurgency. The nature of events, sectarian violence and threat of extremists' overrunning the city can be associated with Pakistan from 2003 to 2013 when *Tehreek Taliban Pakistan* took control of several cities. After declaring the independence, Pakistan had to join the Capitalist West or the Communist bloc; Pakistan chose the earlier. With some earlier promising signs, the capitalistic set-up changed the social structure. In her article "Security Dilemmas of Nuclear-armed Pakistan," Samina Ahmed criticizes Pakistan's plunge into the western model which was first introduced in the 1950s. On the condition of implementing the western capitalistic model, Pakistan received western military and financial aid from the West (782). Žižek believes that the psychological tendencies of immigrants living in a third

world city are often influenced by their imaginative creation of an ideal Western lifestyle that they have failed to attain in their home towns (50).

Amid the hue and cry, the people dedicate lives to the glamour of the business community, the struggling advertising companies and the young employees learning survival skills. Saeed's parent's concern for children was based on the worrying factor that "their son is in a country that seemed to worship money above all no matter how much other forms of worship were given lip service" (*EW* 137). Their avariciousness can be felt in the air of the city. The people owned billboards all around the city, rented others, and struck deals for additional space with bus lines, sports stadiums, and proprietors of tall buildings (*EW* 11). While the city is burning, the companies are busy working to capture the market and compete. There is a gap between the material existence and the emotional being of the citizens. It appears that the people are unable to deal with the crises.

Nadia and Saeed are entangled in the vicious cycle of such a routine, and the city helps them unfold their future. A counterfeit of the western model, their city soon crumbles down. Their understanding of life on the other side of the world is a culmination of a perfect picture of an unattainable future. Hamid's declaration of time as a currency poignantly mentions the immigrants' barter of age for their new life in the capitalistic world. The migrants' new life will practically consume a part of their age before they are considered citizens. For the migrants, it is a timeless setting of crises and future uncertainties where they barter their existence for material needs. (90); they sell their age for a hot commodity. Time is a currency that is used to tax on "a portion of the income and toil of those who had recently arrived [...] would go to those who had been there for decades" (83). By suggesting that time can be bartered in the global market, the author describes the harshness of the capitalistic world. The new society devours a part of immigrants' life, after their arrival to a new land.

While Saeed's home city is crumbling, he is engrossed in his daily life and gives no importance to social upheavals. The youngsters are busy attending classes on "corporate identity and product branding" (*EW* 10). Usually, Saeed tries to do copious amounts of online research and customize his presentations as much as possible to convince the buyers; he determinately believes that it is significant to persuade the buyers (*EW* 11). Hamid's characters have fewer concerns about advancing terrorism. Society is thoroughly paralyzed within before it falls. The hawk sketches a similar image of the indefatigability of modern man, willing to work tirelessly, unknowing the

tree-shelter (*EW* 12), which will soon die parched like Nadia's lemon tree (*EW* 59). A capitalistic attitude forces the youngsters of the disturbed city to study courses on the growth of businesses, not the safety and peace of the land. The energy of the materialistic world does not deter the eternally impending end.

In *EW*, the author mentions multiple occasions that drones are in charge of surveillance of the incoming immigrants. The invincible gadget drone crosses the limitations of human faculties in many ways. At the same time, it dehumanizes the host society by keeping human emotions out of the equation; the displaced people are not facing men but robots. Drones are considered to be the cause of ingrown agitation among the regions where they are used. According to Aqil Shah, "since 2004, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency has launched more than 430 drone strikes, show little or no evidence that drone strikes have a significant impact on militant Islamist recruitment either locally or nationally" (47). Rather the drone attacks have left thousands of families homeless. Barack Obama recognized *EW* as one of the twelve novels he 'enjoyed the most' in 2017 (qtd in Wood, 2018). Hamid referred to Obama as an exceptional man whom the world is blessed to have as president of the United States in 2009 (Hamid 113). However, Obama's praise of Hamid's work was paradoxical in several ways, as he has also been outspoken in his criticism of Obama's foreign policy decisions especially use of drone technology. He criticized Obama for extending American military venture in Afghanistan (*The Guardian*). Hamid's *Discontent and Its Civilizations: Dispatches from Lahore, New York, and London* includes an essay "Why Drones Don't Help," which austerely condemns the use of drones in the conflict zones as such measure can only strengthen the hatred against the US forces and create more angry people seeking revenge (Hamid 165–77*).* Hamid mentions drones that force Nadia and Saeed to change locations because of the fear associated with drones. The immigrants find it extremely hard to escape and do not know where to hide (*EW* 96). Hamid uses it in two possible ways; firstly, the people are terrorized through drones. Therefore, they run away from their homelands and seek refuge. Secondly, the story makes no mention of a specific location other than "the valley," the novel's young narrator's exaggeratedly American vernacular makes it apparent that the future envisaged is one in which children in the United States are terrorized and slaughtered by drones. The narrative appears to indicate that modern America's cultural imaginary is only capable of imagining its agony and potential future disaster and that it is somehow incapable of imagining the destruction by its

country's recent decisions or, perhaps, that the latter can only be achieved through the conduit of the former. In 2011, Hamid wrote "Terminator: Attack of the Drone," a short fiction that depicts a post-apocalyptic world wherein, according to the narrator, there are not many humans remaining (Hamid, 2011) in which drones terrorize the surviving people. During Obama's years in power, his government used drones extensively in nations including Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Hamid's home country of Pakistan. Reluctantly, millions of people from such regions left their homes to find refuge across the globe.

Although the condition of Saeed's city is eroding the inside of it, to the elite, mafia and extremists, it is a haven as it provides them with the energy and human resource to fish in the troubled water. Žižek argues that added to material gratification (sex, cars, weapons), "One should not forget that Islamic fundamentalism is also a big mafia trading company selling oil, ancient statues, cotton, arms and women-slaves, a mixture of deadly heroic propositions and, simultaneously, of Western corruption by-products" (136). Saeed's encounter with the bigwig portrays the condition; as Saeed weaved through traffic, his side mirror scraps the door of a gleaming black luxury SUV, the ride of some industrialist or bigwig (*EW* 34). The neo-colonized parts of the world have fragile social structures; on similar grounds, EW relates to the idea of Saeed's city drifting into the hands of the mafia.

Nadia and Saeed's immigration is an outcome of a neo colonialized society; they live in a post-colonial era of globalization. Simon During argues that in reality, colonialism, postcolonialism, and globalisation are reductive, frequently internally divided terms for forces that interact with one another and have done so for a long time. Considerably, modern world unification is simultaneously reshaping the past in its image and reviving colonial conflicts that keep ancient legacies relevant (394). Credit to Hamid's positivity, he predicts a non-violent future for the city when Nadia and Saeed visit their old town after years; it implies moderation in the policies of the powerful states. There will not be any refugees escaping the war-torn countries. After a reproachment between the natives and the hosts, a ray of sanity appears in the policies, including the policy of non-interference. After fifty years, when Nadia and Saeed revisit their birth city, they "watched the young people of this city pass, young people who had no idea how bad things once were, except what they studied in history, which was perhaps as it should be, and they sipped their coffees, and they spoke" (*EW* 156). And the city she found herself in was neither heaven nor hell (*EW* 155); it is no

longer a conflict zone as it used to be, and the townsmen live in a reasonably peaceful city. The novel pinpoints the use of extremist groups for strategic depth, which can backfire and hurt common people living in such cities.

4.1.1 Magical doors, immigrants' rebirth and dilution of time and space

When Saeed and Nadia decide to leave home, Saeed's father refuses to go with them. Reluctantly, they leave him, which Hamid describes as an act of "killing" him; Hamid states: "for when we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind" (*EW* 69). Immigrants' aggression reflects the emotional chaos they go through in their journey. Though doors provide easy access to cities, the emotions of the immigrants are left unvented. The moment Saeed decides to leave his father behind is the most significant emotional aspect of the text. Though Saeed and Nadia have a strong association with the land, they choose to migrate when it is imminent that the city will fall to the militants. Multiple considerations exist in the back of the immigrants' minds, including concerns for their loved ones and the fear of never being able to return to the home city:

> It might seem surprising that even in such circumstances, Saeed's and Nadia's attitudes towards finding a way out were not entirely straightforward. Saeed desperately wanted to leave his city, in a sense he always had, but in his imagination, he had thought he would leave it only temporarily, intermittently, never once and for all, and this looming potential departure was altogether different, for he doubted he would come back, and the scattering of his extended family and his circle of friends and acquaintances, forever, struck him as deeply sad, as amounting to the loss of a home, no less, of his home. (*EW* 66)

Both older and younger generations experience the same pain when they leave their hometowns. The older generations, who spent their finest years in the city, are adamant about not moving with the younger generation since they have loved ones buried there. The best choice for Saeed's father is to leave, but he refuses, claiming that he would never leave the spot where he spent time with Saeed's dead mother. The narrator believes that for Saeed's father his wife is still alive, and leaving the area where he had lived his entire life with her would be difficult for him. It is also quite difficult not to visit her grave every day (*EW* 67). Nonetheless, he persuades Saeed to leave since he knows he will have a more challenging time surviving in the city (*EW* 68). Essentially, migration is not a choice between two cities but between life, death, and memories of a life spent in the city. It is a difficult situation for Saeed since he misses moments spent at home. When Saeed decides to leave, he runs his fingers over

the apartment's furnishings, the telescope, the clipper ship bottle. He carefully folds a photograph of his parents to keep hidden under his clothing, as well as a memory stick holding his family album (*EW* 71). Saeed's migration process also plays a key role in his degeneration as a member of the patriarchal structure but his commitment to his family is widely different from Nadia who is already living outside the family boundaries.

Besides the emotional entanglement, the financial troubles tend to challenge the migrants. In *EW*, they pay the smugglers to guide them through the troublesome journey. Though the cities in Hamid's world have magical doors, they are hard to find; to secure a time and place for entrance into a door, they get the help of human traffickers. In the real world, without the support of such countries' corrupt administrative systems and intelligence agencies, it is impossible to pass such routes. Žižek condemns the authorities backing up of mafias involved in the economy of migration which is considered a million-dollar economy (45). Saeed uses his savings to travel through the doors. There are other threats linked with financial matters as these groups could quickly sell them to other groups for more cumbersome amounts of money. Hamid mentions that: "They knew there was a possibility the agent had sold them out to the militants, and so they knew there was a possibility this was the final afternoon of their lives" (*EW* 71).

The magical doors symbolize the reincarnation of immigrants, and through them, not only a new mindset takes birth, but it also declares them vulnerable, like a child out of the womb's protection. Like a new born baby, they are "stunned, maybe, or resting. Possibly dying" (23). The immigrant's progression to different geographies resembles the natural process, including the stages of parturition: "With a final push he was through, trembling and sliding to the floor like a new-born foal" (*EW* 13). The immigrants are transported to a new world through samsara. These doors are not processing migrants from only one part of the world, but almost all colours and races. Hamid provides the readers with a more natural way of approaching immigrants and their diversified backgrounds—the immigrants are not newly born in terms of their cultural affiliations but are also physically relocated. They are different but the same when labelled "immigrants" or when they reach an unusual land through these breaches. Hamid's magical realism allows all distressed men, women and children to approach doors irrespective of racial and geographical background. Like Nadia and

Saeed, African migrants go through the same procedure. Hamid describes the immigrants' emergence in the following words:

> He too was dark, with dark skin and dark, woolly hair. He wriggled with great effort, his hands gripping either side of the doorway as though pulling himself up against gravity, or against the rush of a monstrous tide. His neck followed his head, tendons straining, and then his chest, his half-unbuttoned, sweaty, gray-and-brown shirt. Suddenly he paused in his exertions. He looked around the room. He looked at the sleeping woman, the shut bedroom door, the open window. He rallied himself again, fighting mightily to come in, but in desperate silence, the silence of a man struggling in an alley, on the ground, late at night, to free himself of hands clenched around his throat. But there were no hands around this man's throat. He wished only not to be heard. (*EW* 13)

The magical doors allow the author to see the multiple emotional variances that would not be possible in the real world. The struggle to pass through the door, the desperate silence and the hands clenched around him depict the effort to reach the borders and the migration process. The hands gripping around his neck (14) reflect various concerns, including the unforgiving events, hostile hosts, mafia, and their rulers, laying the foundation for fleeing home. The wealthy nations need people with skills or cash, as both can serve the purpose and help build western countries. Visas, which had been near-impossible for non-wealthy individuals for years, were now impossible for non-wealthy people to gain, and journeys on passenger ships and planes were thus out of the discussion (*EW* 40).

Hamid envisages a prospect of global migration, with mystifyingly mighty doors providing prompt access to cities across the globe by defying man-made borders. By changing the novel into a meaningful dialogue in the post-9/11 world divided into binary positions, the narrator condemns the geographic limitations imposed by the world powers. There is the ease of access for some countries, but the options are not so easy for many countries which are not in the frame of economic unions and visa regions. The doors' concept is a deconstruction of the idea of globalization which is restricting so many poor nations from travelling to other states. Michael Perfect in "Black Holes in the Fabric of the Nation': Refugees in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*" argues that *EW*'s doors are impossible to lock or manage in their totality, unlike the hypothetical teleportation system in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, which is owned and operated by a single firm (8). Again, Hamid appears to agree with Agamben, who claims that a man's political standing can only be imagined once the state boundaries have been penetrated to the point that the citizen will have learnt to recognise the refugee he is in his individual life (Agamben 119). On the grounds of Agamben's

argument, Hamid's undoing the spirit of time and space does not upset the characters' individuality as Nadia and Saeed mostly remain exclusively stagnant; both characters sustain distinctive influences of the journey. The couple has a different response to and feeling of home culture. It is a gravitating force for Saeed, who attempted to reinforce his connection to the city of his birth as he went away from it, over distance and time. But for Nadia, it was gone forever from her desired memories (*EW* 130). The sub-chapter of gender roles will discuss the idea in detail.

The immigrant's war psychology follows them into the host country, and Hamid threatens the indigenous population with a similar recurrent experience. That is mainly because, in *EW,* once host citizens of immigrants' go into exile seeking refuge in the west. There are parallels here, of course, of past depictions of immigrants taking all available space in Saeed and Nadia's old home town before it erupted into open combat. Of course, the consequence is that London – or any city, for that matter – may face a similar crisis; that no metropolis is immune to the possibility of deadly violent conflicts. The western hosts gear up to fight war more fanatically identical to the fight against the radicals in Nadia and Saeed's old city. The central characters have a completely different connection with this group of refugees than they have with the migrants inhabiting various locations in their town. Nadia and Saeed used to be cautious about riding their motorcycles and scooters too close to refugee camps in their city for fear of harming anyone; they now are careful about exiting their refugee centre for they fear the natives' wrath. They were taught that the island was generally secure, except when it was not, which made it similar to most locations. The narrator mentions that it was usually better to stay in the hideout (101). The focus was laid on Saeed and Nadia trying to hypothesize about the refugees' feelings, experiences, and possibly fatalities in the section concentrating on colonies in their city. However, it is a risk to their personal safety that they must consider, and about which they are unsure: they have been told though not with certainty that Mykonos is secure primarily, with specific exceptions, like as at night, when it is probably better not to go anywhere. The author leaves the reader sceptical about the best possible options available for the resettlement of immigrants. Žižek condemns EU policy of redirecting the inflow of refugees to unstable economies, fearing that huge numbers of refugees will overrun Europe. He adds that Turkey was asked to curb the flow of refugees in exchange for a generous amount of 3 billion Euro, but the consequences will be disastrous for Turkey in the long run (12). Turkey is accepting much more than its capacity and

infrastructural strength (81). Žižek and Hamid build up their notion on the resettlement policies, which is the most significant aspect in the process because of the weaker economies' inability to deal with the needs of immigrants in the long run. Without a proper integration process, more often than not, the immigrants opt for violence and create havoc challenging the host society. Thus, the existing threat in the hosts' minds is based on the reality of imminent threats.

In *EW,* on the western side of the doors, the natives respond to the threat of the immigrants' violent behaviour using state apparatuses[7]; it leads to a conflict between the hosts and migrants. The hosts' fear is triggered by an unprecedented number of people arriving in their city. Žižek also considers fear playing a pivotal role in the aggressive host approach towards the migrants. In *EW,* Immigrants challenge the status quo and undo the Utopian cities of the west, creating a power struggle and bargaining for their rights. Hamid's work echoes Žižek's argument that the refugees should not be feared, but a specific process should be adopted to solve their issues (7). Though *EW* is fantastic in tone and description, it convinces the reader that world leaders can solve the immigration crises through dialogues and sensible decisions. If the situation is not tackled sensibly, an anti-immigrant narrative will cause chaos, which can only be solved with a realistic approach. The idea contradicts the globalization theory, suggesting that the world is a global village. It promises equality and ease of access across the globe; however, the real world is entirely different, dominated by economic powers. *SK* sketches a contrasting image wherein migrants with different colours claim their rights in a technologically advanced world. The immigrants can cross the boundaries of the western powers with relative ease.

Doreen Massey in "Places and Their Pasts" prophesies a boundaryless "Europe". However, Hamid's consideration that the experiences of all humans and we

[7] Althusser description can be used to understand the influential hosts use of state institutions. The state apparatus includes "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc. "These are the agencies that function "by violence," by at some point imposing punishment or privation to enforce power […]" To my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses". It is much harder for the ruling class to maintain control over the multiple, heterogeneous, and relatively autonomous ISAs (alternative perspectives can be voiced in each ISA), which is why there is a continual struggle for hegemony in this realm" (Althusser)

all are immigrants through time is debatable. All human beings feel an emotional sense of "loss" of the past, but this is not the same as, or even reasonably equivalent to, being violently relocated by war, oppression, or natural catastrophe. Nevertheless, *EW* does not make that statement; instead, it suggests that we are all migrants across time. In Hamid's favour, it eloquently illustrates how any of us may become asylum seekers:

> But more interesting than the delimitation of its boundaries are the attempts to define the character of this place. All of the attempts depend on a reading of both history and geography: what is at issue here is space-time. And each attempt at identity-definition depends on a particular reading of that history. (Massey 189)

Massey's argument does not cover other regions which are not quickly submerged into more prosperous places. *EW* provides an equal ground for all humans irrespective of colour and region—it is practically a stand against Žižek's notion of difficulties human migrants face (48). In *EW,* the author provides a dilution of time and space, enabling conflict and war victims to move from one place to another; way more accessible than the inland use of routes and crossing of borders with visas. Since time and place provide the fundamental nuances of identity formation, they also reincarnate the systemic dilution of human hegemony over identity. The immigrants are at once in the timeframe and outside it, leaving a vague and untouched arena of human existence. The author describes the conundrum in Nadia's idea of identity, individuality and cumulative understanding of existence. The following passage puts forward an inexplicable feeling of time, resulting in an amalgamation of past, present and the future:

> How she could both read this news and be this news, and how the newspaper could have published this image of her instantaneously, and she looked about for a photographer, and she had the bizarre feeling of time-bending all around her, as though she was from the past reading about the future, or from the future reading about the past, and she almost felt that if she got up and walked home at this moment there would be two Nadias, that she would split into two Nadias, and one would stay on the steps reading and one would walk home, and two different lives would unfold for these two different selves, and she thought she was losing her balance, or possibly her mind, and then she zoomed in on the image and saw that the woman in the black robe reading the news on her phone was actually not her at all. (*EW* 109)

Nadia cannot articulate the time and space relation "under their stains of stars, images as though from an epoch before electricity, but with buildings of today. Whether they looked like the past or the present, or the future" (55). The division of her personality into two well-developed timeframes deconstructs her individuality as it is lost in the time's ebbs and flows.

In *EW*, people are immigrants within psychological and geographical boundaries. Nadia and Saeed live in a city which once hosted the immigrants and now faces a crisis mainly instigated by the immigrants as it is “a city swollen by refugees” (*EW* 10). The changing of locations is also empowering the idea of a cosmopolitan metropolis. People across the globe have similar complications in their lives. While Nadia and Saeed are smoking their first spliff together, the author introduces Shinjuku, a district in Tokyo. Hamid dissolves into Ireland (*EW* 24), and later Australia and Saeed’s city are converged (*EW* 14). Emotionally, the people are not described as distinct human beings; they reflect transient human faculties. The immigrants cannot respond to the situations in one particular manner; instead, they are tied to multiple sensations. Filipino immigrants are described in a diversified emotional realm once they face a Japanese man: “They seemed emotional: perhaps excited, perhaps frightened, perhaps both they were in his territory. Not the first time this week that he had seen a group of Filipinos who seemed oddly clueless in his bit of town” (*EW* 26). The narrator includes citizens from across the globe caught in a psychological and physical migration cycle.

In *EW*, parallel worlds but different cultures meet at crossroads and merge into each other. The narrator reverberates migrants’ sufferings irrespective of region and culture on individual and social levels. Hamid interweaves the account of the voyage with brief anecdotes of comparable shifts occurring all around the world, as individuals from all around the world are joining together and creating new hybrid societies. A disoriented family emerges from a luxury building, a dark shadow emerges from an Australian closet, and an old "wrinkled" guy emerges from a shed and leads a local on a fantastic journey back through it. These stories depict a juxtaposed world in motion, changing and evolving, giving rise to new belief systems and perspectives. The continuous shift in time and space does not nullify the cultural nuances of the characters and their beliefs but gives the characters a chance to reassess cultural and social positions.

The narrator relates to the cultural differences sustain the impact of fluid geographies; the focus is somewhat to describe relativism in culture in terms of gender relations. Saeed and Nadia and Saeed’s parents are two couples representing the same cultural background. Saeed’s parents live in the old cultural settings, but Saeed and Nadia drift away from their cultural practices. Before they decide to leave their hometown physically, they have already left their culture emotionally. In terms of

relationships and marital considerations, east and west are poles apart. While Saeed is unwilling to engage in a physical relationship with Nadia, a western couple lives independently of moral consideration associated with physical relations (*EW* 13). The author's description of parallel settings of different lives also suggests the cultural differences the migrating couple will face in their upcoming lives. However, with the growing desire to leave their city, Nadia and Saeed get closer to each other. The couple in Australia also suffer from a capitalistic lifestyle. As Saeed is busy in his company, "far away in Australia a pale-skinned woman was sleeping alone in the Sydney neighbourhood of Surry Hills. Her husband was in Perth on business" (*EW* 12). By displaying the parallel picture, differences and practices, *EW* expresses that life in the host society can only be at ease when respect develops between immigrants and the hosts.

4.1.2 The Immigrant ghetto as new home and the cry for legitimacy

In *EW*, the immigrants are practically in ghettos wherein they live with insecurities, with hundreds of nativists waiting outside to confront them. In the ghettos, the immigrant identity takes the first step into the transference, integration, or formation of a new cultural or religious identity. Confinements and restrictions remind the immigrants of their birthplace at the times of conflict between the forces and religious extremists—it is also predominantly linked to the violence and aggression unleashed in the host country. As soon as the immigrants reach the host environment, they are segregated from the host culture and left in ghettos: "The migrant ghetto in which Saeed and Nadia found themselves" (*EW* 112). Shelter is the first priority of the refugees but it is only the tip of the iceberg.

The concept of home is essentially associates with the past life of the characters in *EW*; however, with their shelter seeking attitude, they lose the emotional connection with their homes. With the difficulties in the integration process, the narrator redefines the idea of the home, which is a changing idea; once the home of some people could be a shelter to new arrivals; different families use the same house in the *EW* without considering it "home": "who had once called this place home" (12). To Saeed, home is the combination of both materials and sentiments since every object is associated with a particular memory. As Saeed prepares to leave his hometown, he gently folds a photo of his family to conceals it under his cloths (*EW* 71). Leaving home is a degenerating process involving a willful subjection to a new way of life with little

adherence to home defined in sentimental terms. As Saeed and Nadia acclimatize, they transfer the feeling of home with them, signifying desensitization. In Saeed's behaviour, however, recreating an image of his past home continues to live as he frequently looks at the picture he brought to new places. He typically puts it on a bookcase, where it sat, wrinkled; he keeps staring at the photo and briefly transforming the cramped space into a home (*EW* 87). Compared to Saeed, Nadia makes it home wherever she finds a place to settle down. For instance, Nadia mentions that they are living in patches of moments where the desire is confined to considerations such as a place to spend the night, and she dreams "TO HAVE A ROOM to themselves—four walls, a window, a door with a lock seemed an incredibly good fortune, and Nadia was tempted to unpack, but she knew they needed to be ready to leave at any moment" (*EW* 86). Though Nadia and Saeed's perception of home widely differs from each other, in every new city, they are in search of a place suitable to be called home.

In *EW,* there is an unceasing yearning for acceptability by the nativists in the hearts and minds of immigrants. The craving for legitimacy continues throughout their journey—nonetheless, the quest for safeguarding their lives overlaps other considerations such as fundamental human rights. When the immigrants cross a door, they usually face trouble, particularly from the existing governments. Hamid narrates the story of a family continuously watched over by cameras and drones. The mother cannot look into the eyes of the native women, for she may find her suspicious or illegitimate (*EW* 65). However, the immigrants' age difference plays a vital role in their approach to and assessment of the threats they are facing. The reactions are spontaneous responses of different age groups to the immigration process. The mother is uneasy, the father is concerned about the money he has kept in his backpack, and the children are bemused looking at the flying skydivers. Soon they are "intercepted and led away, apparently bewildered, or overawed, for they held hands and did not resist or scatter or run" (*EW* 65). The reception of the immigrants in *EW* reflects the "*homo sacer*," as Agamben considers them; they were deemed worthless under Roman law and are denied their fundamental rights. Therefore, the idea of citizenship and legitimacy takes over human rights and consideration (95). The segregation of the immigrant community, consequently, paves the way for a new immigrant identity. It discusses the time frame when the nativists believe that they have the right to reclaim their hegemonic position: "to reclaim Britain for Britain" (*EW* 96), whereas the arrival of cultural outcasts like Nadia yields a constant challenge to the status quo. Nadia is a

family outcast owing to her moderate "westernized" beliefs. She is deemed illegitimate throughout her journey, starting from her home town to the western cities. Later, she escapes from militants; similarly, she is considered different in the western cities because of her choice of clothes.

Žižek believes that immigrants are a part of the capitalistic economy, but the capitalist world never receives them well. In *EW* after the acquisition of shelter, the second most crucial factor in the life of immigrants is the acquisition of jobs which is fundamental to their survival. The hosts welcome skilled labourers because they play a vital role in the sustainment of the economic machinery. The immigrants work as labourers for extra hours to acquire the facilities (*EW* 119). The host administration separates the local workers from the immigrant workers. The immigrants are paid less than the natives and they eat "modestly, meals composed of grains and vegetables and some dairy, and juiced fruit or a little meat when they were lucky. They were slightly hungry, yes, but slept well because the labour was lengthy and rigorous" (*EW* 138). The hosts do not welcome the immigrants for different reasons; however, they also find it a direct threat to the employment and wages of their working class. Žižek believes that millions of immigrant workers are deprived of elementary civil rights and freedoms in the capitalist world (82). Though in *EW*, the people and the community develop eventually, the times are tough, and the immigrants find it hard to make ends meet. However, as Žižek argues believes that the immigrant workers are the victims of the host exploitations; the immigrants are considered unskilled and they are paid less than the natives (62).

4.1.3 Securitization, clashes and evolution of nativeness

In "Literature with a White Helmet: The Textual-Corporeality of Being, Becoming, and Representing Refugees" Lava Asaad considers that *EW* wriggles out of social realism and eyewitness documentation constraints, evoking modern refugeedom as a hybrid narrative: it is at once a fairy-tale about deterritorialization and a newsreel about civic society (109). In *EW*, the immigrants are cornered and outlawed by the host society through different stages—they are forced to limit themselves to the city suburbs. The securitization of migrants challenges humane feelings; therefore, in the refugees' hearts, the situation forms an anti-native narrative. When the clashes surge, a rumour spreads that around two hundred migrants are incinerated, including

children, women and men (*EW* 113). *EW* is a document portraying a realistic picture of migrants' securitization and emergence of clashes.

In *EW*, the tension between the natives and immigrants is purely defined by the anxiety associated with the immigrants' occupying the places, consuming resources, threatening their way of life—a threat to their identity from entirely different people and cultures. Agamben argues that the modern nation-state firstly put the immigrants in a limited concept resulting in a divided host response to the migration crisis (94); and such a social situation instigates conflicts like "the battle of London," which is a fight between the hosts and immigrants (*EW* 109). *EW* functions as a mediator between the two conflicting sides. Hamid does not support either side, which may be influenced by the author's hybrid status as a non-white British citizen. The author narrates the situation in the following words:

> Fights would sometimes break out, and there were murders and rapes and assaults as well. Some in dark London blamed these incidents on nativist provocateurs. Others blamed other migrants, and began to move, in the manner of cards dealt from a shuffled deck during the course of a game, reassembling themselves in suits and runs of their own kind, like with like, or rather superficially like with superficially like, all the hearts together, all the clubs together, all the Sudanese, all the Hondurans. (*EW* 103)

Immigrants play a pivotal role in the definition of natives' politics. Initially, the natives are agitated and soon the fear of millions of people from worldwide suddenly arriving in their town engulfs the natives (*EW* 113). Immigrant settlers occupy different points in the city (*EW* 91). The reactionary position of the natives disregards a rational approach to the mitigation crisis. The natives are restless and aggressive: "Saeed wondered aloud once again if the natives would really kill them, and Nadia said once again that the natives were so frightened that they could do anything" (*EW* 113). Žižek believes that enraged natives target the fellow natives for supporting or remaining calm on the arrival of so many people different from their culture (58).

While Nadia and Saeed are in London, they have psychological pressure arising from different news sources confirming clashes between the nativists and the immigrants. The globalized world is hurting them in confinements, and a particular anti-immigrant narrative is hatched by the nativists. Rumours circulate that their area is being cordoned off, and new entries are not allowed into the city. The pockets of the city continue to shrink in size, devoid of fundamental needs and are under surveillance: "around this zone were soldiers and armoured vehicles," and above "drones and

helicopters," and inside it was Nadia and Saeed, "who had run from war already, and did not know where next to run, and so were waiting, waiting, like so many" (*EW* 96). Refugees lose both their rights and their desire to integrate and establish a new national identity and, thus are sometimes referred to as "countryless" refugees.

It is suggested in *EW* that the rivalry as a full-scale conflict instigated by the "natives of Britain, many of these people seem too stunned by what was happening to their homeland, and what had already happened in so brief a period" (*EW* 134-5). Žižek's idea can be observed in reactionary extremist views such as "two hundred migrants had been incinerated," (*EW* 110) and the declaration of London as a battle ground" (*EW* 108). The politics of immigration is practiced from the outrageous stance suggesting that immigrants are parasites. Contemporary immigrant politics sketches a familiar picture in the western states. In the case of US politics, Rogers de Waal found that Trump supporters are more prone to believe in a variety of conspiracy theories, including the worry that Muslim immigration to this nation is part of a larger scheme to make Muslims dominant. (Rogers de Waal) Žižek's main concern about the future and the integration process is the simmering nativist political upsurge against the immigrants. In this regard, he comments on the American and Swedish political history of materialization of anti-immigrant narrative for political ends. Žižek argues that the primarily anti-immigrant political narrative focuses on the natives' concerns about their "way of life". The immigrants' way of life seems to be in total contradiction with the host culture. This political initiative leads to the tagging of immigrants as *persona non grata*; therefore, they are oppressed and excommunicated by society (22). In *EW*, immigrants are perceived as a threat to society's peace, stability, and economy. The nativist forces seem to operate with such a whimsical aim of instigating fear in the hearts of so-called natives.

With the arrival of the immigrants, besides the idea of nationhood, the consensus on "nativeness" dwindles among the natives. Such an unprecedented addition of thousands of members to the community redefines the idea of nativeness. Henceforth, nativeness becomes a relative term as so most people claim it. In a sense, it is a next-level dilution of nation-states where the natives struggle to define themselves with skin colour; white skin is considered more akin to natives. However, Hamid does not stop there in the erosion process of nation-states as the politics of colour is also losing vitality and human skin "appeared to be dissolving as they swam in a soup full of other people whose skins were likewise dissolving" (*EW* 110). For the

time being, society is firmly divided into two categories where white and black skins are used as identification marks, and everything else in the middle absorb into the bigger groups. The brown skin is more non-native, whereas those with light skin who looked most like the natives of Britain are the undeclared natives (*EW* 134). To gain the required political leverage, the immigrants support groups that resemble their own skin colour. Because of the simmering conflict, the people supporting the white skin opinion most strongly also join the ranks of light skin, who appear akin to natives of Britain—skin colour becomes an integral part of identity in the host culture. Comparably, the descendants of black slaves support their argument with the history of slavery. They formulate a historical background to the view, and other natives also regenerate their cases in ways that suit them the most.

Nativeness appears to be a relative concept in EW— at once everybody is native and nobody is. With the help of magical realism, it seems a divine intervention, as the geographic boundaries fade, cities join, and so do the other things in the lives of both sides. The narrator mentions: "it seemed to Saeed and Nadia that the whole planet was on the move, much of the global south headed to the global north, but also southerners moving to other southern places and northerners moving to other northern places" (*EW* 117). The future of the immigrants and their reception in the already divided society will be another challenge. Even the nativeness of those whose ancestors were born on the length of territory that extended from the mid-northern Pacific to the mid-northern Atlantic is questioned (*EW* 135). When a consensus develops between the hosts and the guests and the idea of nativeness is neutralized, both parties are at peace. Before such an auspicious moment, the immigrants go through the rage and scrutiny process of the West.

The stereotyped immigrants fear the security apparatus of the states; therefore, they live in constant fear of detention. Living under surveillance dehumanizes their experiences. Hamid treats the arrival of a family on the foreign land under similar circumstances, describing that: "mall quadcopter drone was hovering fifty meters above them now, too quiet to be heard, and relaying its feed to a central monitoring station and also to two different security vehicles" (64). Like a typical western touristic city, the law of the land is reinforced with much vigour and passion, but it is their utmost desire not to disturb the tourists enjoying the sunbath (*EW* 65). On the eve of their first communication with the state, they feel outlawed, which continues to live on with them in their lives in the host environment. The migrants are approached with

brutal force, different from their approach against their citizens involved in the same conflict. The following words highlight the bifurcation:

> Soon there was a vanload more of them, in full riot gear, and then a car with two more who wore white shirts and black vests and were armed with what appeared to be submachine guns, and on their black vests was the word POLICE in white letters, but these two looked to Saeed and Nadia like soldiers. (*EW* 89)

The state machinery is employed to restrain the immigrants' movement and "At night, in the darkness, as drones and helicopters and surveillance balloons prowled intermittently overhead" (*EW* 103). The nativists' anger adds fuel to the conflict and forces the government to take against the migrants; therefore, the city administration prepares a comprehensive plan to wipe out the immigrant communities. Believing that a full-fledged extermination operation will discourage the immigrants' settlement plans and inflow, the state demonstrates its power. Hamid mentions: "EVERY DAY A FLIGHT of fighter aircraft would streak through the sky, screaming a reminder to the people of dark London of the technological superiority of their opponents, of the government and nativist forces" (*EW* 106). Nadia and Saeed observe the movement of war vehicles accompanied by sophisticated robots with agile bodies moving and behaving like animals. The events suggest that the modern states desensitize the natives towards the immigration process by taking human feelings out of the equation. CCTV cameras, drones and tanks frighten the already overpowered immigrants fleeing conflict zones. The inhuman power of the machinery also sketches the modern states in the shape of predators (*EW* 106).

4.1.4 Statelessness, immigrant extremist identity, and camaraderie

The immigrants keep their nations of birth, but they do not intend to return to the fragile shelter of their home countries; instead, they discover themselves in a perpetual condition of *de facto* displacement. As soon as immigrants decide to leave their terror-ridden cosmopolitan, their identity is incorporated into a new world of the reality of namelessness, haplessness and cluelessness. First, Nadia and Saeed somehow change specific individual attributions; they are in a continuous flux of redefinition of personal priorities. Nadia develops into a more independent figure overtime whereas as Saeed clings to his memories. Secondly, anonymous characters are denied human names as if there is a face-off between the robots and settlers. Hamid calls them "a brave man," the "second man" (*EW* 48) and the "dark man" (*EW*13).

They do not have an identity, and they are pretty willing to let go of their past for the galloping desire of a better life and planning on living and doing great things (*EW* 48). For citizenship, Nadia and Saeed are naturalized through a process that demands learning Western skills and a capitalistic routine in life. Though immigrants' methods are different, they resort to a submissive stance after a certain period. Agamben rightly argues that the immigrants are forced to transform from a denizen to a citizen through these trifling but significant stages of naturalization (96). The process, as in the case of Nadia and Saeed, detaches them from their past associations. Under the circumstances, segregation is a heart-breaking experience for the immigrants who have travelled to the idealized western cities for security and better human rights. Formulating an ideal void of unacceptability in migrants' existence, Hamid lays the foundation of migrants' political struggle; more than the story of Saeed and Nadia, the story encapsulates the settlers' community-level longing for recognition. Natalie Friedman argues that contemporary immigrant novels are not confined to the idea of a romantic integration of leading characters; it is somehow the depiction of a consistent struggle between the past and present identities of communities (112). In *EW*, the immigrant community has no option but to stand up and claim a political position, ultimately giving them leverage for a bargain.

The circumstances force the immigrants to assume a position of strength in the host environment; the situation gives stimulus to immigrant politics followed by policymaking in the host society. Different races join hands, formulate a council and initiate a sort of a political struggle to come up with the solutions of existing crises: "In this group, everyone was foreign, and so, in a sense, no one was" (*EW* 74). The immigrants' formation of a political front is a natural outcome of the situation. According to Žižek, after being convinced of society's persistent harsh conduct, the immigrant community acts like a Frankenstein's monster, plays the role of an ultimate victim and takes extreme measures to counter the nativists (60). Though the council is initially limited to mundane decisions such as room disputes, theft, and unneighborly behaviour among the community members (*EW* 102), they initiate a struggle for rights in the latter part of the novel (*EW* 134). When the police start an operation against immigrants, they are resolute in standing against the power show of the state. The narrator mentions: "Other people gathered on the street, other dark- and medium and even light-skinned people, bedraggled, like the people of the camps on Mykonos, and these people formed a crowd. They banged cooking pots with spoons and chanted in

various languages, and soon the police decided to withdraw" (*EW* 90). Thus, the aggressive response of the nativists supported by the state forces results in immigrants' cumulative political consciousness. Politics seems to be the only way out when nation-states fail to ensure the rights of non-natives.

Primarily, the political movement of the refugees is supported by the challenges in the host environment. The immigrants' struggle is a reactionary stance against the aggressive hosts, denying them their fundamental human rights. It takes a violent turn when the police try to use force against a group of immigrants seeking shelter in a house (*EW* 89). Though the mushroom growth of illegal occupants is a matter of concern, governments' failure to devise a sensible plan only makes it worse. It is mainly because, among the other immediate concerns, the most questions include the need for shelter: "REFUGEES HAD OCCUPIED many of the open places in the city, pitching tents in the greenbelts between roads, erecting lean-tos next to the boundary walls of houses, sleeping rough on sidewalks and in the margins of streets" (23). With an immigrant identity, politics appears to be of no value. In the process, the immigrants are forced to acquire an identity that could reaffirm unity and launch a movement against the natives. Meanwhile, Hamid incorporates a mechanism fueled by camaraderie:

> The residents of the house were terrified, most had seen firsthand what the police and soldiers could do, and in their terror they spoke more to one another than they otherwise might, strangers speaking to strangers. A sort of camaraderie evolved, as it might not have had they been on the street, in the open, for then they would likely have scattered, and the devil take the hindmost, but here they were penned in together, and being penned in made them into a grouping, a group. (*EW* 89)

The immigrant group decides to wage a war under the religious pretext. They associate their past predicaments with the present crisis and declare that spiritual teachings provide the best solutions available under the circumstances.

The behaviour of conflict zone immigrants is predominantly defined by past experiences, which surfaces when they face intimidation. In *EW*, the immigrants run away from the disturbance caused by religious fanatics. Though the immigrants consider religious conflicts a futile war in their own country, they are willing to use the aggression of extremists in the host environment. Žižek believes that such a "Fascistization offers them an easy way out of their frustration: an eventful, risky life dressed up in a sacrificial religious dedication, plus material satisfaction (sex, cars, weapons)" (136). Politically, using religion is a conscious move to rely on the strengths

of the immigrants' group as religion functions as forceful idea and helps mobilize the community. They use the fundamental political and religious teachings for a comprehensive rights' seeking adventure. They use a part of their experience to form a resistance in the relatively sophisticated society. The religious concept of martyrdom engulfs the minds of the refugees, and they use it as a potential tool to deal with the nativist aggression. Another bearded immigrant from Saeed's region promotes a movement of migrants propelled by religious doctrines, cutting across divisions of race, and language. The cleric argues that the only divisions that matter now are between those seeking the right of passage and those who would deny them entry (*EW* 152).

The cleric resembles the religious fanatics of Saeed's town, and Saeed is reminded of them whenever he sees the cleric. Though the cleric does not speak the savage words spoken by the militants back home, the white-marked beard reminded him of the jihadists. Saeed is working under the banner of the militant groups in the host society who killed his mother and presumably his father. He felt something rancid in himself about his support to the group as if he were rotting from the inside. There were firearms in his fellow country folk's house, and more were arriving every day through the doors (*EW* 107). Saeed's case reflects the thought process of the immigrants' dilemma; Saeed reluctantly supports the groups because he understands that the group can be a panacea for the migrants' troubles. Also, the influence of extremist mindset targets young men like Saeed, a man with moderate views on religion in his home city but a vocal member of religious groups abroad.

Fortification of religious ideas on the foreign land relates to the childhood memories. Immigrants like Saeed, who have lost several people in the home country, try to practice moral and religious values, which could create an association with lost loved ones; it is an attempt to reconnect with the past. As Saeed gains a bit of stability, he starts practicing his religious obligations with more zeal and enthusiasm: "prayer sometimes reminded Saeed of his mother, and his parents' bedroom with its slight smell of perfume, and the ceiling fan churning in the heat" (*EW* 139). The more Saeed moves away from his city, the more he includes religious duties to his life. In Marin, California, he prays more frequently (*EW* 139) than he did in his birth city. In his town, Saeed is attracted to unconventional Nadia, different from typical society and traditional ways. However, while in the West, Saeed is drawn to the preacher's daughter; their common meeting point appears to be the religious interests developing

in both characters: “The preacher’s daughter found in Saeed an attitude to faith that intrigued her” (*EW* 150). In Saeed’s personality, such changes also take place in terms of mingling with his cultural fellows. In the earlier days, before he flees his city, he lives more like a cultural outcast. On the foreign land, over time, he is more drawn to the people from his country. Chatting with his people online and attending meetings soon become his pastime. Nadia feels about the changes in Saeed’s character that the “farther they moved from the city of their birth, through space and through time, the more he sought to strengthen his connection to it, tying ropes to the air of an era that for her was unambiguously gone” (*EW* 130). Under these conditions, Nadia firmly adheres to her principles and past practices.

Though burqa or concealing dress is stereotypically associated with Islam, personal preference outweighs religious considerations in Nadia's case. The cultural association in Nadia’s character is demarcated by her black robe, which is also a relic of her past that lives in the present and continues after fifty years (*EW* 159). There is a consistency in her character that lives with her throughout the journey. Arriving in different cities with moderate views on clothing, Nadia is unmoved by the new cultural reinforcements and continues wearing her black robe. She is neither a western character nor an eastern but an independent character whose choices dominate cultural underpinnings. Agamben believes that western liberals are usually irritated by the issues of women’s rights, especially by their style of dressing (82). It mainly happens when a dress is put in a religious context or symbolically refers to religion. To Nadia, clothing is not an attribution to beliefs but a choice of her own. The West deems the Islamic dressing as a symbol of enslavement, subjugation and confinement. She lives with the idea of her dress as her own choice and irrelevant to religious submissions. Though it is self-segregating, the narrator calls it, she continues her black robe (*EW* 147). The writer differentiates between religious and personal choices, which sometimes interconnect owing to their nature and attributions. In Nadia’s case, persistency is remarkable as the hosts take much time to accept her; she is attacked at the workplace, but she sticks to her values. Žižek argues the western standards are threatened when they “see a woman covered by a burka as an attack on their identity” (*EW* 206). Even if the choice of a burqa is considered unsuitable to Nadia’s human status, there is no way to undo it from her character. The law of the host society does not ban her from wearing a burqa, but Nadia is treated with unpleasant looks in the public sphere. Such a problem exists when the modern states declare the freedom to

dress as one wishes but cannot digest the out-and-out differences, especially when the dress contradicts the western style. Žižek calls such perceptions a host culture's dilemma, which is practically a negation of the idea of "universal rights". Therefore, the slogan of "their rights" and "my rights" undo the universality of human rights across the globe. Likewise, in *EW*, the notion of human rights becomes a culturally relative idea; therefore, a fundamental choice of dressing is declared defunct in the host culture as it contradicts the dominant culture's preferences. Along with the skin colour of human beings, Hamid de-stereotypes dressing. Even back home, she wears jeans under the black robe (*EW* 36). Except for Nadia's clothing, culturally, Nadia moves away from the moral foundations of her past, and she associates negative feelings with matters that remind her of the past; therefore, the reader assumes that her integration process is way smoother than her counterpart Saeed. When hearing the call for prayers, she "was alarmed, waking from a dream and thinking for a second that she was back home in their city, with the militants, before recalling where she was, and then she watched, a bit surprised, as Saeed got out of bed and prayed" (*EW* 90). Nadia's choice of clothes marks a tendency of the western communities to stereotype Muslim dressing as a symbol of migrants' extremist ideology. She disregards any dress pigeonholing; hence, Nadia's clothing is a symbol of individuality which she retains —unlike Saeed, she does not change her priorities.

The immigrants, in this case, Saeed and Nadia, quit their home society for a more tolerant culture. With the passage of time, Saeed starts sticking to his past culture more frequently, which refutes past priorities. He is more emphatically driven to the communities and wants "To be among our [his] own kind," as the familiar languages and dialects, as well as the aroma of food, lures him in (*EW* 105). Saeed is more prone to homesickness— this is possible because of a patriarchal relationship with his home city, unlike Nadia who is willing to be an accepted and is welcoming to others in the broader spectrum of host-immigrant relations. The following conversation is an exciting embodiment of two the main characters discussing people from the past.

> "Why would we want to move?" she [Nadia] said.
> "To be among our own kind," Saeed answered.
> "What makes them our kind?"
> "They're from our country."
> "From the country we used to be from."
> "Yes." Saeed tried not to sound annoyed.
> "We've left that place."
> "That doesn't mean we have no connection."
> "They're not like me."
> "You haven't met them." (*EW* 105)

Nadia argues with Saeed and debates over the idea of "our kind". Nadia defines the fine lines between individual and cultural choices by questioning: "what makes them our kind". The concept of a country also becomes a relative term to her as she wants to make Saeed understand the differences between the country they used to be from and the country they are residing in. Once a person leaves a country, she believes not to connect with the people forming unions on cultural grounds.

4.2 Optimism and Hybridity

Different attitudes rule the Western communities: the belief that themigration crisis is not a challenge for the global community—hosts are angry believing that the refugees are a threat to our way of life; consequently, they should be stopped. Žižek believes that the worst part of western behaviour is the excessive focus on denying existence of refugees; accordingly, authorities and the public discern a combination of desperate reactions. Žižek further adds: "What is entirely lacking among these responses, though, is the last of Kübler-Ross's stages: acceptance, which, in this case, means a consistent Europe-wide plan of how to deal with the refugee issue" (7). *EW* goes through all these three stages, but when the time comes, the community accepts the reality of refugees without much deferment. Practically, the hosts' accusation of migrants disturbing their "way of life" negates the fundamental idea of a nation-state. The settlement of the refugees, according to Agamben, radically throws into question the nation-values and the concept of modern nation-states (117). Agamben's perspective is echoed in Hamid's novel, which suggests that massive refugee migrations are a problem not merely for certain states at specific times but for the fundamental notion of nationhood itself. With the arrival of many refugees, the hosts are left in the predicament of the uncertainty of their political affiliation and power dynamics in the everchanging social structure. Even if the concerns are met with a democratic approach, the refugee community outnumbers the native. The maturation of refugee politics and subsequent emergence as a power announces the time for a reassessment of politics on the ground. After going through the stages of resentment, conflict and acceptance, *EW* presents a wishful scripted conclusion on the author's behalf—both communities live in peace.

The denial of fundamental rights in Saeed and Nadia's old city is inextricably linked to a failed state—they are living in the perpetual anarchy of a neo-colonized

society. Once the immigrants leave the country and become aliens to the home culture, they lose their apparently "inalienable rights". The disregard and discontinuation of the policies of a nation-state, as it happens in *EW*, leads to the formation of a hybrid culture. Though the indigenous culture displays a decisive rejection initially, it seems a perfect decision considering the ongoing wide-scale conflicts. Hybridity, according to Bhabha, is a positive by-product of imperialism. It includes a liminal state in which one is identified as "neither the one thing nor the other" (49). A hybrid culture formulates when divergent identities, characteristics of individuality, or cultures meet at the junction of western cities. Hamid portrays a dystopic world with a belief in a social utopia through contact among civilisations. Saeed's father says: "Let us hope," (85) and it is reflected throughout all the stages of assimilation. Finally, they travel to California, where they assist in the construction of a new metropolis. (191) The city has a spirit of at least occasional optimism (192). *EW* disrupts the fundamental structure of time and space. The doors erase any prejudice between the nations, and people can travel without the predicament of nationality. Several passages in the novel demonstrate that migrants going through the gates into wealthy cities are non-whites: a man with "black complexion and dark, woolly hair" and another with "dark skin and dark, woolly hair" (6) and "two Filipina girls, in their late teens" (27) emerge from black doors into Sydney and Tokyo. By eradicating the distinction between those who have and those who cannot travel, everyone may pass through the doors, and the doors can exist in any location, even poor and formerly exploited countries. As a result, the novel imagines a future in which access to both spaces and locations is not restricted to wealthy nations.

While international leaders have referred to this scenario as "a major global crisis" (62) and nativists have been vocal in their opposition, it is not a downright disastrous scenario in Hamid's fictional world. However, the immigrants are a legitimate force once the natives recognize them. In Agamben's definition, Imogen Tyler claims that immigrants are utilised for their political signification and power and then presented as an indescribable truth (197). Hamid's statement warns of degrading refugees, emptying refugees' distinctive experiences of violence, dispossession, and devastating loss. Lagji believes that Hamid is "well aware of the risks, as well as the rewards, of seeking connection across differentially positioned movements and immobility alike" (Lagji 218–9). *EW* never gets dismal, regardless of the complexity and severity of the nature of the content, and continues to offer an upbeat and colourful

image of a world with an intuitive awareness of human nature and a plentiful supply of amusement.

The author relates to a rigid host culture at the outset of the novel but constitutes a milder approach later on. Saeed is particularly moved by a local teenager who comes to their house, just out of school or possibly in his final year, and gives polio drops. Though several protest, none of them have the heart to deny the child because of his sincerity, empathy, and good intentions (*EW* 98). There is hope in the spirit of a few visionaries who show "migrant compassion" and assist the migrants by displaying badges depicting "a black door within a red heart" (77). Both sides recognize that denying cohabitation would have required one group to fade into oblivion and that the annihilating party would have been transformed in the process. Or possibly, a huge number of rooms with doors (*EW* 146) renders fighting in any of them pointless. Hamid sums up the situation: whatever the reason, decency wins out on this occasion, and bravery too because courage is required not to attack when afraid. The electricity and water are restored, and negotiations ensue. The word of reproachment spreads across the community; Saeed, Nadia and their neighbours celebrate, long into the night (*EW* 115). Although the doors bring conflicts to the surface that were previously suppressed due to so-called political correctness, the sentiments are gradually overpowered, leading to resignation, acceptance, healing, and the potential of long-term transformation. Nevertheless, everyone is foreign in the community. In a sense, no one is (*EW* 100). The universality of fear and subsequent calm announces the dawn of global peace amid a simmering refugee crisis.

EW is not only a reflection of a journey but a retelling of human migration in historical and futuristic settings. The lives of immigrants are changed the way we understand human interaction in time and space driven by technological advancements. Hamid's characters have the power to access almost every region without barriers; it is like modern communication tools that connect the entire world. Like social media and mobile phones, doors outdo partitions and bring the world into the circumference of a global village. Shazia Sadaf in "'We are all migrants through time': History and Geography in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*" argues that the migration crisis in *EW* concludes when a glimpse of a collective future appears, and where "plausible desirable futures began to emerge, unimaginable previously, but not unimaginable now" (216). Marin, where the couple ends their journey, is the picture of an ideal global village as hope replaces the survival journey; in the city, there are

all “kind of ensembles, humans with humans, humans with electronics, dark skin with light skin with gleaming metal with matt plastic, computerized music and unamplified music” (216). Even the spoken languages melt into each other and create a language of all humans: “cacophony that was the languages of the world, what one might hear if one were a communications satellite, or a spymaster tapping into a fibre-optic cable under the sea” (*EW* 100). The Marin village is the centre of human consciousness providing access to unheard immigrants of the world. The city replicates diversity; it mirrors the desire to live in a harmonious world where the characters' past, the politicization of refugees, and differences in beliefs are settled in a democratized society. Nadia and Saeed’s settlement in the host culture represents a picture of the positivity and hopes that can alleviate immigrants' pain in the modern technological world.

By diluting the past into the present, Hamid appeals to the idea of shaming neo-colonization, and he preaches an outright detachment from the old ideals. As living with the past glory may reflect on a grave threat to peace and humanity, Hamid reimagines a future. In “We Are All Migrants’: Mohsin Hamid Talks His New Novel, *EW*,” the author Milo argues that by undoing the past, Hamid wishes change our future perspectives radically (Milo). It is an attempt to work against the desire for imagined histories in contemporary global politics. *EW* analyzes these developments with hope for a more fluid society that effortlessly transits between cultures. So, when Nadia and Saeed reunite after fifty years in the now-peaceful city of their birth and make plans to view the stars in Chile, they are different and yet the same people – echoing real people and their evolution.

4.2.1 Gender roles of immigrants

In *EW*, the gender roles change when the migrants leave their home culture. Nadia and Saeed deal with their past culture and host culture through vastly different standpoints. The fleeing couple initiates the journey from the same point and meets at the end of the novel. Their roles are not defined individually but culturally inculcated. Their journey seems to be emancipating for Nadia but degenerating to Saeed’s patriarchal position in the host culture. Back in her home town, Nadia was an outspoken young lady who lived alone and defied convention in a conservative society. In the article “Reconstruction of Cliché Image of Oriental Woman in Mohsin Hamid’s *Exit West,*” Kuğu Tekin and Zeynep Rana Turgut comment: “Prior to her exit to the

west, Nadia transgresses almost all the man-made prohibitive borders that are drawn to keep women under the strict control of the religious patriarchal society" (Tekin & Turgut 63).

Hamid sketches the cultural approach to physical relations in the lives of the immigrants. Lesthaeghe and Surkyn comment that the immigrants go through a sweeping change on the way to a new place (325). With the geographical changes, they institute different ways to experience their relationships. In this regard, their approach to relationships can be roughly defined in three situations the couple faces throughout the journey. Firstly, Saeed has a superior position in the past city, and he enjoys relative independence, but he lives under the aura of his father, a part of the patriarchal hierarchy. The moment they start their journey, Nadia's opinion about physical relations changes. Nadia's reconsideration of her sexual orientation while keeping her Islamic dressing resolutely outlines her individualism in the face of migration and establishes that Saeed is no more her choice—this is a denial of cultural retention and a reproof of culture playing its role in individual lives.

On the other hand, Saeed is conventional and a well-behaved young man who lives with his parents. Nadia and Saeed connect in an evening class on corporate identity and product branding and form a relationship as the world surrounding them transforms and moves from a relatively tranquil to a violent and conflicted society, finally taking Saeed's mother's life. In the patriarchal city, Nadia is not entirely independent. On her terms, she moves in with Saeed and his father for safety and security, where they grieve his mother and prepare to escape from this country. It is the city where the new administration executes opponents regularly. It is strictly patriarchal and is ruled by religious groups and the mafia. However, the defined roles of immigrants change with the passage of time and change of geographical locations.

Displacement is evocative of Saeed's religious tendencies and Nadia's redefinition of her sexual orientation. They begin to reconsider their love relationship once they leave their home city. The city discards immigrants and tosses them into an idealized global context wherein freedom rules above all after some initial troubles. The couple is encouraged to re-evaluate stances, priorities and tendencies. About Saeed, the narrator mentions, "he prayed fundamentally as a gesture of love for what had gone and would go and could be loved in no other way. When he prayed, he touched his [now dead] parents, who could not otherwise be touched, and he touched

a feeling that we are all children who lose our parents, all of us, every man and woman and boy and girl" (202). Saeed finds it harder to disassociate himself from the past.

The more Saeed links with the past, the more he finds himself isolated in the hybrid host community. Even his relation with Nadia evolves as both of them part their ways. When they arrive in Greece, they enjoy the beautiful landscape alone in each other's presence. Hamid put's it thus: "Saeed went to the top of the hill, and Nadia went to the top of the hill, and there they gazed out over the island, and out to sea, and he stood beside where she stood, and she stood beside where he stood" (*EW* 108). As they feel attracted to new moments, they look around each other and do not feel each other's presence "for she went up before him, and he went up after her, and they were each at the crest of the hill only briefly, and at different times" (*EW* 109). The warmth of their relationship slowly converts into unkindness and grows cold in London (*EW* 132). As the security situation worsens in the city, Nadia and Saeed decide to move to a refugee house. Most of them are from Saeed and Nadia's home state but the influence of home culture does not play a role in restabilising the couple's relationship. Even though the couple has a small distance between them, it exists so forcefully (*EW* 153).

The immigrant couple also sees the differences in finding a place where they can live together peacefully: "[e]very time a couple moves they begin, if their attention is still drawn to one another, to see each other differently, for personalities are not a single immutable colour, like white or blue, but rather illuminated screens, and the shades we reflect depend much on what is around us" (*EW* 186). The eastern reflection of the couple demands submission to each other's wishes and desires without a single trail of doubt. In contrast, in the West, they begin to recognise individuality and celebrate it in many ways. In this context, Nadia is more actively disregarding and reassessing Saeed's compatibility with her and a possible life together. But she starts feeling sibling-like affiliation with him which thoroughly denounces a possible future together as a couple. Though Saeed yearns to reclaim the patriarchal and religious ideals of the past by joining groups from his own country, practically, Nadia "was herself putting barriers" between herself and Saeed (*EW* 196). The couple's life in their home state seems to be an outcome of the social barricades which subside and change when they are out of their home culture's centripetal force.

In the era of globalization, Saeed's individuality is bifurcated between traditionalism at home and progressivism on the new land. While Nadia begins a journey of more freedom on the foreign land and accepts it as her own, Saeed clings

to his memories. The context redefines the gender roles as Saeed turns into a stereotype of eastern suppressed female. When hurt emotionally, he desires "to shout and to huddle in a corner but of course he [does] neither" (*EW* 151). In many ways, Saeed is weakening and sticking to traditional gender roles for solace. Saeed's decomposing patriarchal status is also an outcome of modernization, which is discussed at the outset of the novel when the couple attends a lecture. Nadia gets as many opportunities as Saeed: "Nadia and Saeed were, back then, always in possession of their phones," which were like "wands" waving "in the city's air" (*EW* 39). Hence, technology is not gender biased and helps establish equality. And the "antennas sniffed out an invisible world as if by magic, a world that was all around them, and also nowhere, transporting them to places distant and near, and to places that had never been and would never be" (39). If the magic doors in *EW* are seen as the power of globalization that allows women to access nearly any information in the world, Nadia represents a female during the ideal period of globalization.

Globalization influences Saeed's decision making, but it also plays a pivotal role in the reincarnation of an overwhelmed patriarchal figure. He is not a perfect reflection of his home culture while living there, nor does he acclimatize to the new environment. In his past life, he was not forced to be aggressive by the home circumstances, unlike Nadia. Contrary to the past, on the new land, life is comparatively progressive, and women enjoy a better part in it. Even the immigrant women feel the enabling society while confronting men in the immigrant camp. A Nigerian woman challenges Saeed aggressively when he wants to pass through a close passage (*EW* 150). A chasm that exists in Saeed's character is created by the new culture, challenging past customs. Though he does not celebrate or execute his patriarchal power in his home city, he is a member of the patriarchal hierarchy currently challenged by the host community.

Nadia and Saeed's relationship fluctuates in the process of swapping places and cities. Their passionate love relationship transforms into an intense physical connection in the middle of the voyage; however, the relationship dwindles in the latter part of the text. Though they have the desire to reconstruct their relationship, they fail miserably. The relationship is reassessed: "both of them were filled with hope, hope that they would be able to rekindle their relationship, to reconnect with their relationship" (*EW* 130). In their old city, the relationship is strengthened under social and cultural duress, which is predominantly conservative Islamic. Still, in the so-called

western moderate environment, without much ado, they change their priorities. With the change in surroundings, the physical desires tend to change. The tabooed relationship between a man and a woman appears to lead Nadia and Saeed to gravitate towards each other in their old city and while they are away from their past culture, they feel themselves unsuitable for each other.

However, after reaching London, their desires either fade or lose vitality, and they put their lack of communication down to exhaustion (*EW* 128). Nadia focuses on the drastic emotional changes in their relationship. She feels curiously unaffected by his attractiveness as if he were a rock or a home, something she admires but does not want (*EW* 129). Initially, Nadia's confused state of mind suggests that the couple exhausted the worth of the relationship. But it is not the only hurdle in their romantic relationship. When the dust is settled, and she is attracted to a chef, she has different priorities. The text reads:

> The cook had eyes that seemed an almost inhuman blue, or rather a blue that Nadia had not previously thought of as human, so pale as to suggest, if you looked at them when the cook was looking away, that these eyes might be blind. But when they looked at you there was no doubt that they saw, for this woman gazed so powerfully, she was such a watcher, that her watching hit you like a physical force, and Nadia felt a thrill being seen by her, and seeing her in turn. (*EW* 148)

As Betsy L. Fisher suggests, Nadia yearns for integration and establishes relations with refugees of other nationalities, while Saeed finds solace in the company of his co-nationals (1122). The patriarchal society of Saeed's birth city is in constant contact with him, which is also linked with his religious mentality as religious culture fosters patriarchy. Unlike men, in *EW*, the female immigrants feel liberated in foreign lands. The patriarchy still rules beyond boundaries where the native men are more aggressive against them. Nadia's new life provides her with the opportunity to disconnect herself from the eastern psyche. However, she clings to her conservative dress. She is culturally more flexible, but she also faces the cultural crossfire because of her distinctive appearance. In this regard, Žižek maintains that the political economy penetrates the third world countries social fabric, and the women become the first victim of the discrimination (99). In many third world countries, women are considered the face of culture and they are forced to practice cultural values. Whereas, men can quickly get away with stagnant values such as wearing a particular dress code and a growing long beard. Saeed does not stick to such practices as cultural or religious clothes, but he grows closer to religion when he has the option to move away. Nadia

is at once the perfect picture of individual acceptance of other cultures. Still, she is also the first victim of bigotry when a man intimidates her with a gun after noticing her black robe (*EW* 147).

Nadia's journey is also associated with her choices in her past life; it is a process of slow but comprehensive disassociation from cultural teachings on gender. The fundamentalists rule over the city, so the culture is deemed to be influenced by religious fanaticism. Therefore, in the eastern context of finding a life partner and practising religious teachings, cultural teachings apply devotedly, but she casts them off. Moving away from her past culture, she feels a void in her life later on filled by the girl working as a chef in the same restaurant in the West (148). Same-sex relation is a deemed crime in Pakistani culture which appears to be Nadia's past culture. The reader can deduce that either Western culture enables her to embrace her biological needs or she has a reactionary psychological response to her past life; therefore, she yearns to explore the unexplored regions of her choices with much freedom.

In her past life, Nadia was an atypical eastern character. She lives alone outside the reign of parents' control: "she was moving out on her own, an unmarried woman" (*EW* 20). She decides to live with Saeed outside marriage and goes to live with Saeed and his father when she is threatened by the extremists. As Tekin & Turgut argue: "through the character of Nadia, Mohsin Hamid reconstructs the cliché image of oriental woman. In *EW*, Hamid reverses stereotyped gender roles by attributing his female character all the dominant personality traits attached to the male sex" (Tekin & Turgut 61). While Saeed faces troubles in the integration process, Nadia not only asserts her individuality but also retains and celebrates choices made in her life.

However, Nadia's association with and continuation of her traditional "all concealing black robe" (*EW* 18) is remarkable, considering that she does not pray (*EW* 130). Saeed follows his tradition chauvinistically, but his character weakens moving into the west. On the other hand, it can be regarded as ideological enslavement, which lives on with Nadia on a relatively emancipating journey to the West. She develops her character as "She learned how to dress for self-protection, how best to deal with aggressive men and with the police, and with aggressive men who were the police, and always to trust her instincts about situations to avoid or to exit immediately" (*EW* 22). In the West, she continues to live using all the skills inculcated by her past life. Before fleeing to the West, the condition of the city prohibits wearing dresses of her taste, but she joins underground concerts wearing a burqa. The idea of a burqa is not constraining

her but a source of independence of actions in a conservative culture. The author mentions that Nadia had been seeing a musician for some time. It is oxymoronic that she meets a musician while wearing the black dress:

> They had met at an underground concert, more a jam session really, with perhaps fifty or sixty people crammed into the soundproofed premises of a recording studio that specialized increasingly in audio work for television—the local music business being, for reasons of both security and piracy, in rather difficult straits. She had, as was by then usual for her, been wearing her black robe. (27)

Nadia gains strength with time, whereas Saeed seems to either let go of his vital male aggressiveness or has less opportunity to implement it in the host culture. Nadia grows and shines as she keeps moving: she is "physically dangerous for Saeed besides, and so she had told him not to be an idiot, said it harshly, to protect him rather than to harm him, but he had been shocked by her tone, and while he acquiesced, he wondered if this new way of speaking to one another, this unkindness that was now creeping into their words from time to time, was a sign of where they were headed" (*EW* 93).

Her past city continuously influences her choice of the burqa, as she says, and will "send a signal to the people (*EW* 77). Contrasting to her religious dress, she wears jeans under her burqa, which according to James, Nadia's black dress is a contemporary take on the traditional "monastic practices" (220). The city appears to have an indifferent view to women's rights; in the unnamed city, a woman riding a motorcycle is called: "a whore," (*EW* 32) whereas rampant crimes including drugs, murder and terrorism seem to win the hearts of the people. In the culture selling drugs, killing innocent people and publicly beheading common dissenters (*EW* 29) do not necessarily become dangerous but her riding a motorcycle becomes problematic. Her burqa provides her with an escape route in the corrupt society. In the patriarchal culture of the East, Nadia's character emerges as a strong, well-defined individual. She rebels against patriarchism and misogynistic social practices which make her stronger by facing challenges in her everyday life. In her past city, "She was groped from behind, someone pushing his hand down her buttocks and between her legs, and trying to penetrate her with his finger, failing because he was outside the multiple fabrics of her robe and her jeans and her underclothes" (*EW* 46). Ironically, some bearded men separated the mob into two halves, male and female, and she stayed inside the female zone (*EW* 46). Even the black dress with multiple layers is inadequate to protect her, which is a blatant violation of female space in the former patriarchal society.

Nevertheless, she reinforces her experiences with more vigour and energy in the new places.

Nadia redefines her space and prohibits men from entering into her zone. Nadia's demeanour has a touch of empowerment when she forewarns Saeed: "I am not saying I want your hands on me." "No. Of course." Saeed's expression had grown traumatized. But Nadia nodded. And while her eyes were warm, she did not smile" (23). The immigration process is empowering an already tried and tested individual. On multiple occasions, she reminds Saeed: “Don’t tell me what I can do” (*EW* 87). She is also a venturer and takes the initiative of leaving the home she built together with Saeed. Not knowing where she would end up, she undertakes multiple challenges, such as looking into the eyes of the man with a gun (*EW* 147). As an immigrant, she is wholly devoted to the call of her heart: “Saeed was certain he was in love. Nadia was not certain what exactly she was feeling, but she was certain it had force” (*EW* 39). Nadia and Saeed have opposing views about physical intimacy before marriage. Nadia is more Western in this regard, whereas Saeed maintains, “I don’t think we should have sex until we’re married” (*EW* 42).

Other female characters belonging to different nationalities also formulate a more devout reflection of challenging male supremacy over the females. They are in a way challenging the male supremacy by establishing a formidable position. The following paragraph describes such an occasion when such a person confronts Saeed:

> Saeed wanted to run but had nowhere to run to, and tried to hide his panic, but then the woman in the leather jacket removed her foot from the wall, and there was space for Saeed to pass, and so he squeezed through, brushing her body with his, and feeling emasculated as he did so, and when he was alone in his and Nadia’s room he sat on the bed, and his heart was racing, and he wanted to shout and to huddle in a corner but of course he did neither. (*EW* 104)

Individually Nadia is a westernized eastern woman; her ideas are western but her outfit is radical Islamic, which will continue to be a paradoxical feature of her character. She will constantly be in contradiction with the liberals of the west. When she confronts the nativists, they beat her up and injure her (*EW* 95).

Nadia and Saeed are poles apart in every possible manner. It takes a long time to reassess their position in terms of integration, but they fail to see each other as feasible life partners. Similarly, having lived and grown mature together do not mould Nadia in the shape of Saeed’s liking. Saeed leans towards the preacher’s daughter, which is symbolic of his sticking to the past culture. The preacher’s daughter reinforces Saeed’s appropriation in the eastern family structure, deifying westernization. Saeed

chooses someone in the colours of his former culture, whereas Nadia moves into the host society graciously with the newly realized choices.

4.2.2 Black holes and emotional and psychological emptiness

Nadia and Saeed's journey spreads through many European countries. The characters seem to change more geographic locations than mental and psychological voyages. Initially, they retain a particular psychological array more absorbed into the idea of survival than any other emotional consideration. The novel focuses on the emotional sides of both named and unnamed characters. Hamid recognises that beyond all the religious, cultural and ideological doctrines, humane passions rule universally. On the same grounds, Žižek argues that "despite political differences, we are all human beings with the same loves and worries" (169). Hamid presents both natives and immigrants as human beings capable of showing affection and wrath.

Hamid's displacement sequence is not a one-way struggle into the lustring world of the West but a continuous battle to fill in the blackholes of emotional, psychological, and physical inaptness. The accountant fills in the gaps of his life created by the boredom in his monotonous life in London. He seeks refuge in the dunes of Namibia; he finds solace, which is technically a reversal of displacement. As he can decide to relax psychologically, the circumstances of his immigration are not urgent compared to Nadia and Saeed. The Western world appears to be annoying some of its residents, but the broader horizon absorbs in the nativists and immigrants are gravitated towards it. The accountant mentions: "he felt something, he felt something for a change, and they might join him, he would be glad if they did, and if they chose to, a door could be found in his flat. With that, he was gone, and his London was gone, and how long he remained in Namibia" (94). It also appears that the immigrants, though in an illegal pattern, slowly converge and replace the emptiness of London, which works like the "blackholes" attracting immigrants into it.

To conclude, *EW* sheds light on a wide range of perspectives, including immigrants' creation, journey to a host culture, and settlement process. The world setting is presumably dystopian, where the creation of immigrants is inevitable. The author deals with the immigration crisis with the tools of magical realism, dilution of time and space and establishment of doors that make the world easily accessible to all the human beings across the globe without considering race, belief, colour and region. Though the journey is simple, the immigrants' new place reflects a ghetto. Legitimacy

and rights are reflective of nation-states' uncompromising stance on immigration. Meanwhile, refugees are subject to homesickness and nostalgia, which helps them form a rights' movement on religious grounds. The campaign leads to a political uplift of the immigrants when the natives begin to accept them as a reality. The natives, on the other hand, accept immigrants' status, which creates a hybrid society. Though problematic, Hamid's consideration of the entire humanity caught in a cycle of immigration through space and time concludes the novel on a positive note when the city conquered by the fundamentalist is peaceful, and the new generation is enjoying a peaceful life.

CONCLUSION

The research aimed to identify literary responses to the contemporary migration crises by focusing on the selected texts, namely *Little Bee*, *Shooting Kabul*, and *Exit West*. The dissertation established theoretical ground on two ideas: firstly, the argument accentuates Slavoj Žižek's work *Refugees, Terror and Other Troubles with the Neighbours: Against the Double Blackmail.* Žižek's notions helped ascertain a statement against the consumerist world, which plays a vital role in the formation of migrants across the globe. Secondly, Giorgio Agamben's work "Beyond the Human Rights" assists the debate over the immigrants' post-migration life in the host culture; the article discusses the concepts of "denizens" and "citizens" and the dilemmas of immigrants in the nation-state. The dissertation divides the immigration crises into three major segments; the creation of immigrants and their past, the journey of immigration in present times, and the prospects of rights. Essentially, the texts are presented as literary responses to refugees' birth and their rights and hurdles in Western culture's integration and assimilation process. The novels are a cumulative and realistic representation of the refugees' cultural psychology while living in a different culture.

All selected novels have a powerful voice that portrays the refugees' miseries as an outcome of the global power struggle. Different authors' perspectives helped create a multipronged argument on the thesis statement. Though the novels have migration as the central theme, the authors' understanding of and response to the crisis varies in many ways. Cleave's perspective of a native British author gives more room for discussion involving British sentiments. Saeed Hamid's dealing with the migrant crisis through the tool of magical realism enables the world to imagine a boundaryless Europe. Though the argument goes against the theoretical basis, which recommends better policing of the European borders, it gives space for a literary response to the outright acceptance of migrants. Nevertheless, as Žižek warns the West, the migrants create a law-and-order situation which is resolved later on. Similarly, the context presented in SK differs from the other two perspectives as the migrants are US return afghans, and they try to go back to the US after they fail to settle in Afghanistan.

On the way to forming a hybrid culture through identity dilution, the integration process is equally confronted by immigrants' past, present and future prospects. Based on the argument, in literature, like the real world, culture is a dynamic sphere that can

be swayed and modified by diverse factors. Thus, it can be concluded that when the immigrants travel, their cultural nuances also travel with them, resulting in a cultural conflict in the host society. The hosts show cultural resistance and force them to accept specific changes in their lives to be accepted in a modern state or a nation-state. As the settlement process yields a comprehensive and long-lasting influence on the host culture, hosts challenge the unprecedented invasion of a foreign culture. The three novels are intrinsically linked with an intricate yet logical representation of cultural challenges that the hosts and immigrants face when they try to settle in a distinct culture. *LB, SK* and *EW* contribute to the idea of the naturalization process as a complex phenomenon that needs a humanitarian outlook and an all-inclusive settlement plan. The host society will build a better temperament to deal with the crises through education and positive politicization.

The three novels contribute to the fact that the refugees' backgrounds, colonization, neo-colonization, violence and terrorism play a vital role in creating immigrants. The immigrants' journey is precarious, and it demands courage to cross boundaries. When they reach a safer place, the aggressive hosts threaten them, who are victims of a narrative that the refugees disturb "our way of life". The politicization and securitization of immigration duly fuel the fear. In reaction, the immigrants form unions and groups to deal with the burning question of non-legitimacy.

LB, SK and *EW* initiate a discussion on the immigrants' proper reception and settlement in the globalized world. Cleave's experiences portray the events through the lens of a native British writer describing his feelings and some of the actual incidents. The author associates the shades of a black girl's mental and physical struggle to reach the UK. Her subsequent deportation revitalizes Žižek's notion of the acrimonious relationship of the modern states with the refugees—there is some positivity in her short period spent in the UK. Still, Bee's immigration voyage ends at the point where she started it. Senzai cultivates a parallel framework through which the immigrants are created and forced to leave their home states. Though the author establishes a realistic attitude to the events, which she articulates are based on her husband's experiences, her cycle of immigration accuses the so-called globalized world of multiple wrongdoings. Though *EW* portrays a similar stance to the issues, the author distances himself from describing the names of the disturbed cities. He establishes floating geographical identities and discusses cities that can be attributed to any conflict zone in the world. Besides, his use of magical realism contributes to

fluidity in the philosophy of immigration, society, culture and physicality of geography.

Though all three novels have a miscellaneous representation of events, they agree on the immigrants' cultural bereavement mainly affected by their past somehow connected with the refugees' host cultures. The novels not only create settings that accuse the modern world of the creation of the cycle of migration, but they also hold a mirror to the great powers' gross violation of human rights on a grand scale. Therefore, refugees are not simply out for a blissful economic life in the west, but they are survivors of their states, corrupt politicians and mafia. *EW* is different from *LB* and *SK* in its treatment of time, space, geography, identity, and nationality. However, at the outset of the novel, the cyclic representation of the city turning into a home to extremist refugees shares a realistic approach to the existing threats the immigrants carry with them. The author's symbolic reference to Pakistan's internal conflicts and external policies yields a broader picture of an imminent threat of migrants overrunning the local population. The hosts and refugees can mutually agree on solution to such issues by adopting a proper mechanism. *EW* takes two lead characters into account and, through them, establishes a series of images concerning the crises of a global scale and, in the end, recommends a line of action for the appeasement of people.

In *LB*, the author is more interested in describing the immigrant world through the female narrators' eyes. The psychological description of the displaced people is greater in-depth because of the narrators' involvement in the crisis concerning migration. The murder of Bee's sister ascertains a more animated picture of Bee's emotional anguishes. Her continuous living with the feelings of her dead sister accompanying her describe the anxieties of a modern refugee. At different points, she refers to the capitalist world's involvement in Nigerian internal affairs. At the same time, her exposure to a developed society gives space to her resentment towards western policies. Bee's character develops sensuousness that she uses to smell the aroma of Nigerian tea, food and even relate the gushing sound of petrol as it resembles the shrieks of displaced people from her village. So, a sort of disgust develops at the first encounter with the sophisticated society. It can be assumed that, had Bee been kept in her village, she would not have understood the exploitation mechanisms of the neo-colonizers. Therefore, her cultural memories combined with the present conditions establish a theory for the current times. Bee's looking at Andrew's murder

reflects her mental coarseness because of her own experiences; it supports the argument that memories shape migrants' mentality and behaviour in the host culture.

More or less on *LB'*s grounds, *SK* connects an emotional thread of past events to the leading character. The pangs of Fadi's lost sister develop a pattern of seclusion; he faces the native children's bullying mainly because of his detachment from the host society. Reflecting a formidable member of Afghan society, Fadi resorts to feelings of aggression. Even when he is bullied, he, along with other Afghan children, fights the skirmish in Afghan guerilla-style—it is also the main cause of the banishment from Afghanistan. Time and time again, Fadi's father mentions the involvement of the global powers in Afghan politics, especially after the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan. The creation of the Afghan Taliban reflects a global agenda that served its purpose against the USSR but devastated the Afghan culture and heritage.

In *LB,* Andrew pursues refuge in death, and the accountant in *EW* seeks refuge in a less developed country— Hamid and Cleave sum up every modern-day individual in the context of a refugee; both writers reflect the idea that humans are refugees within time and space. Andrew in *LB* confronts the agonizing memory of the murder of Bee's sister; he accuses himself of the murder. *EW* alters the limitations of boundaries which result in a gross rejection of refugees as a universal reality. The refugees in Saeed and Nadia's city represent a congregation of other people, like the accountant who tends to find some way into Africa for mental peace. Therefore, there is some sort of stigma associated with the capitalistic society, and it forces its inhabitants to seek consolation in the less developed regions. By doing so, the authors establish a reversal of immigration in the contemporary world.

Memories contribute to the present times of the refugees living in the host societies. The refugees in the selected novels suffer the torment of a family member lost in their journey to a new land. The loss of a sibling in *SK* appears to be a reoccurring picture of young Fadi's life; it is like relinquishing a part of his existence in search of a better life—this factor urges Fadi to go back to his country and find his sister. Fadi's existence in the United States is only a physical presence. Emotionally, he cannot connect with the host community; it is a constant estrangement because of his bitter experience. More or less on the same grounds, *LB* devises a murder of the lead character's sister on the Nigerian beach. Neither character can dissociate their life with the siblings, and somehow, they accuse themselves of the loss and sufferings of siblings. *EW* has familiar anguish in the minds of refugees as Saeed and Nadia leave

behind Saeed's father in the war-torn region. Hamid calls such desertion a killing of one's relatives; once the refugees decide to go, others are practically dead for them as it will be near impossible to meet or see them again. All three novels base their main characters' journey on wars and conflicts that force them to leave behind one of their relatives. The memory of that person continues to influence the present times of these characters while living in the host culture.

While the contemporary world is engrossed in neo-colonization, forcing the people out of the third countries as immigrants, the dissertation argues that refugees also suffer from the colonized memories. The oil mafia represents the neocolonial approach of the west in *LB*, but Bee's insistence on the English language and culture reflects her colonized past. The people from the oil-rich states are searching for shelter—the Nigerian town suffers a blow from the capitalistic world. It is a commonly used approach toward oil-rich but infrastructurally and administratively impoverished governments. Residents of the hamlet have been denied the royalty right, and they are forced to abandon their houses and allow oil companies to conduct oil expeditions in the region. The western powers support multinational companies to search for natural resources to fuel western economies. The colonizers' cities are not better either, for they are engrossed in the negative cycle of capitalist life. London life is presented as an undeclared cage that forces an individual like Andrew to commit suicide; the brief moments and financial status determine the relationships. Compared to Bee's past life, close to her family members, her life is much simpler than the so-called developed world. The text argues on the oxymoronic nature of the developed world, which is eroding essential human feelings from the inside. There is also a sort of reincarnation of colonialism in terms of its influences on the colonized cultures; Bee, the leading character, suffers from a glorified version of the English lifestyle, English language and the Queen of the British empire. While such factors seem minute, the refugees have an idealized version in their minds before they even start the journey—it resultantly develops the non-British as a cultural copy of the British lifestyle. Therefore, she has the natural right to claim at least the refugee status in the host culture as a member of the British commonwealth.

EW also includes the historically significant role of the British Empire in creating the religious state of Pakistan based on the divide and rule policy. The division of India leads to a vicious cycle of the state identity and consequent religious upsurges in the shape of *Tehreek Taliban Pakistan*. While TTP continues to haunt the Pakistani

state, its mantra is not unpopular in the context of Pakistani society and its dream of Islamic jurisprudence ruling the state. Hamid refers to the extremists' support from the common people. It also suggests the jihadi mindsets created during the west-USSR conflict in the 1980s—it was a western venture to deal with the emerging communist regimes across the globe. After a successful venture in Afghanistan, with the help of the Pakistani military establishment, the allies left both countries with fragile economies on the verge of collapse. The worst part is that the members of jihadi groups were radicalized fighters armed with the latest weapons of that era. Pakistani jihadi's in her backyard soon developed the narrative of fighting Pakistani military and political establishment—the *jihadis* had support within the radicalized army and society, resulting in a backlash between 2003-13. As a result, millions of individuals were internally displaced or fled the country searching for a better life. Hamid's *EW* provides a backdrop to the political instability, administrative and weakening social culture forcing young people to leave their home countries and reside in the west. Nonetheless, eventually, the text mentions a peaceful place previously controlled by the extremists—the people live a quiet life, which means there will not be more refugees coming to Europe. *EW* endorses that if the people are not disturbed by neo-colonial and colonial tugs-of-war, they will not leave home cultures.

Talibanization also plays a crucial role in the lives of the families in *SK*. It is set in the backdrop of Taliban's extremist policies that force the immigrants out of the country. As mentioned earlier, Taliban are an offshoot of the western war against socialism. The characters are aware of the political and military interferences that the west has developed in underdeveloped countries. In *SK*, Fadi's family feels the west supported the Taliban-like minds to face the USSR. Unlike *EW*'s vague description of extremists, *SK* portrays the extremists as the Taliban currently active in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

When the immigrants leave their homes and try to settle in a new society, their gender roles go through a redefinition. *EW* has a similar consideration representing immigrant women as a commodified version of the culture—Nadia lives a life submerged by the feelings of protecting herself from the social predators with a black robe. She continues her black dressing in the host culture as she is threatened by men there. But over time, Nadia develops an utterly upbeat personality in the host culture; her acclimatization to the new society represents her comfort after leaving the male-controlled society. On the contrary, the male characters go through a process of

reclaiming their past culture. Saeed is homesick, and he desires to be united with the contemplations of his life spent in his city (most likely Lahore). His meeting with the people from his culture, listening to religious sermons, and attending jihadi lectures became a regularity. In fact, on the foreign land, Saeed lives a life dedicated to the values which forced him to leave his society and lose his parents. After a certain period, he evades his male trademark of aggression and behaves like a teenage girl—the change in his personality also develops a desire for home culture which is supportive to his gender.

In *LB*, the author is practically putting the female protagonist through acid tests all the way through; in Nigeria, she is hunted by the local mafia and politicization as she witnesses brutal murders of a village. Bee's sister is raped and murdered by a local gang—Bee's stay in the UK is not safe either, where she has to offer sex for her release from the confinement. Though Bee is deported eventually, her thoughts are also somehow reflective of emancipation as long as she lives in the English society—on several occasions, she feels the thrill of being free from the mafia's realm.

In *SK*, though Fadi is a young male character, like a mature man, he pledges to reclaim his lost cultural values. Culturally, he behaves like a grown man and works on forming Afghan children's squad to tackle the native youngsters' belligerence. It is a practice of patriarchal mindset which controls Fadi's considerations—Mariam works as Fad's lost cultural hallmark, which he wants to attain at all costs. The gender relations and siblings' relation also come across as a powerful symbol in the text. To the females, the cultural reinforcements tend to apply more vigorously than the male counterparts. Mariam in *SK* represents the *Pashtunwali* codes of Afghan culture. The text portrays a journey to regain the lost family values, which are called *namus* and *ghaiyrat.* Fadi's focus is to reclaim the lost dignity of the family as he believes that a man who cannot secure the family's females is not a "man" in the true sense. The female is culturally weakened by the dominant patriarchy, as Marxist feminists would argue—a similar contrast can be perceived in the siblings' relation in *SK*.

Individuals like Saeed in *EW* miss their past life in a foreign state. Memories work as the foundation of showing the unwillingness to go back to their home country. Still, the stark memories also contribute to their banishment and consequent decision to stay in a foreign society. Saeed's life with his parents concludes when he leaves his father in the middle of a conflict between the government forces and the extremists. To his anguish, his father wants to stay because he wants to visit Saeed's mother's

grave daily. Also, in Saeed's character, his feelings of past life restructure his individuality and responses to predicaments. His yearning to take the religious preaching as the passage to a peaceful life also reflects his strengthening of the bond to his cultural values. On the other hand, Nadia discards her association with the culture—She even denies Saeed's offer to be among the people of their town. Nadia's disassociation from her memories strengthens her character.

In *SK*, Fadi's scar of his sister's memories propels most of his actions. Not only does he polish his photography talent with the remembrance of his sister, but he also connects to his fading cultural memories. Bee, in *LB*, misses almost every moment she lived with her sister. The memories of her sister's death formulate her subconscious, absorbed in the Nigerian beach incident. The first-person narration of the story enables the reader to look deep into Bee's traumatized psychology. Occasionally, she finds herself in a relatively comfortable position to pour out her skewed feelings—But her desire to stay in London and stay away from Nigeria is purely based on her fearful memories.

The stigma of illegitimacy lives with most of the characters in these novels. The nation-states are unwilling to accept refugees' rights. Bee's entire journey is based on the struggle to seek refuge through a proper legal process. Though she witnesses the events of her past and the murder of her sister, she cannot get the refugee status and subsequently, she is sent back to Nigeria. The author Cleave not only questions the neo-colonization of countries like Nigeria, but he also brings the loopholes in the refugee policies of the UK. With all the proof of a threat lurking in Nigeria, Bee is sent back to her country. In Saeed and Nadia's case, they go through a process that proves to be a source of solace for the refugees. They seek their rights through the barrel of the gun after a successful fight against the natives. *EW* is a magical realist novel, and the story's outcome seems magical in reality. Though it is objectionable to go through a conflict for the refugees' rights, with all these possibilities of legitimization, the novel ultimately portrays an ideal picture. Even the idea of rights turns out to be a relative term when Nadia's *burqa* becomes a concern for the host community, as it is unusual for them.

Politicization and securitization of migration appear as constant threats to the refugees' integration chances in the host culture. Chanting the catchphrase that the refugees will overrun their civilisation, many Western political parties draw leverage from the anti-immigration narrative. In *SK*, the post-9/11 scenario sets a proper ground

for political parties. The anti-immigrant narrative grows violent when the natives burn down the shops and markets of immigrants—the immigrants in *SK* are victims of extremist politics at home and in the US. Even the immigrant children feel so hassled by the circumstances that they form a gang to fight off the natives' aggressive children. Cleave, in *LB*, portrays how the western world is indifferent to the crises prevailing in the countries like Nigeria, and the only western focus is to get rid of the natives and exploit the land. The host society's internal politics is primarily driven by the fear instilled in the hearts and minds of natives, primarily based on the notion that the immigrants will be parasites to the economy and culture. On similar grounds, Hamid describes a full-scale war waged by the nativists. Again, in this case, the writer focuses on the immature response of the nativists to the crises. However, the negative politicization of the refugees' case eventually cannot negate the sanity prevailing between the conflicting parties. Politics has a positive outcome in this context, leading to the democratization of global crises. The novel is a reaction to the worldwide migration crisis and relative insensitivity across the globe.

The respective authors in *LB* and *EW* describe their protagonists as "new born" on the new land after arrival; however, the struggle for rights is the first main confrontation in refugees' life. Since their all-embracing integration is virtually impossible because of their cultural education, the catchphrase for rights is thus reduced to relative expression. In *EW*, besides cultural relativism, the slogan of "rights" in the framework of modern states is problematized. Hamid has a poignant description of Nadia's rights on the foreign land—Nadia wears a black robe to keep herself guarded against the sexual harassment in her past life. However, in the host culture, she is targeted for her choice of clothing. Hamid's description of a burqa not undoes the cultural segregation, but it is a rejection of individual rights of something like a dress. Nadia's outfit choice seriously undermines the condition of immigrants' rights and the underlying concerns. In *LB*, a similar issue arises during Bee's early days in the host culture when she attends a funeral in the UK while dressed in an "unfuneral" attire. The dissertation focuses on the concept of rights through Žižek 's notion of rights as a dynamic reality.

The cultural dressing of the lead characters is debated in all the works. *EW*'s leading character has an overwhelming association with her burqa; she leads a life with her past in the image of the burqa. In *SK*, the author portrays the dressings of the doll, which is somewhat parallel to Nadia's cultural inclinations and her covered body in

EW. In Cleave's work, Bee's ambiguous relationship to her clothing fundamentally disqualifies her for British citizenship when she fails to wear it correctly, suiting the day of Andrew's funeral. Bee's response to dressing is different from Nadia's approach owing to her religious background.

Apart from the implications of intangible cultural sabotage, the hosts are outraged to encounter someone doing something contradictory to social norms. The native culture bemuses Bee and tends to somehow link to her dream of reaching the UK. It is partly because immigrants from the non-colonized globe carry a permanent imprint of the colonists' education and culture. Hence, to an extent, the knowledge of the host culture helps the non-natives claim rights for themselves. Besides emotional bereavement, the immigrants have pathetic conditions in the immigrant camps. In all three novels, the respective authors have a detailed description of the refugees' human rights violations on the way to a new culture. In *LB*, a concentration camp-like place hosts many immigrants living in inhuman conditions where they offer sex for a favour by the officials.

SK displays a more desirable place for the immigrants when they reach the new country. However, they face the threat of the religious extremists. *EW* is reflecting modern state supporting the nativists to stop the hundreds of thousands of people. The immigrants are denied fundamental rights like electricity, food, water and shelter. However, the ideal form of a modern state leads to a reproachment between the two conflicting parties; the nation-state translates into a more relative phenomenon of universal brotherhood. Though dismal in the present, Hamid's work contains much hope for future generations; eventually a heaven on earth is prophesied. The people are free to travel with the rights promised by imaginative nations. Magic realism works like a conjurer by making human movement easy through doors, and sanity prevails after some initial troubles.

Pigeonholing of immigrants emerges as an unsurprising episode while living in the host culture. The authors' natives generalize refugees as terrorists, parasites, black, and *musilamans*. The immigrants' arrival is an unprecedented arrival of millions of multicultural immigrants; therefore, natives mostly limit them to a particular category. In *SK*, Osama Bin Laden is a presumed godfather to the immigrant community and everyone who has a beard. The businesses of such community members are targeted whenever there is a terrorist attack in the host culture. Even a man from the Sikh community faces the wrath of natives because he resembles

Muslims. Fadi is called “Osama” whenever he confronts the local students. Hamid has a more detailed description of immigrants' inconveniences in the host culture regarding their typecasting and subsequent seclusion and confinement away from the mainstream society. Black and brown skin colours are supposed to represent non-natives, whereas those with pale-faces are considered more akin to natives. Likewise, they have the right to declare themselves more admirable than others. However, as soon as the immigrants emerge as a potent political section of the society, they move swiftly into the host community. Hamid’s reference to the hosts lifts them from the limiting cultural phenomenon. It bestows them with the divine power of forgetting their past and accepting the present because the immigrant’s departure is no more a viable option. The author of *LB* describes a particular sentimental approach to the immigrants’ plight; Cleave’s work has the derogatory statement on the refugees’ existence, declaring them weak, therefore unable to defend themselves. Though the text is pro-immigrant and debunks neo-colonization, it fails to embrace the slogan for equal rights in the host society on human grounds; instead, it conveys a substantial argument on sympathizing with immigrants; thus, at times, he considers the immigrants’ help through this crisis an emotional matter subsiding the rational aspects. In his context, the African lead character has to be soft like a Bee; and she speaks a language reflecting a Bee’s humming.

Immigrants’ formation of unions, political groups and pressure groups is thoroughly instigated by a certain pattern involving the resentment of immigrants after the repudiation of rights. The texts insinuate that the refugees’ tilt the immigrant politics is a positive step to stick within the political sphere of the host society. In *EW*, as discussed above, the politicization of immigration results in a conflict between the hosts and the refugees—it appears as the most suitable way to deal with the crises as without immigrants’ political awareness, there will not be any reformation. The refugees tend to use power politics as the only viable option available to deal with the crises. The refugees react to the current situation by using extremist ideological ideas; as a result, the reader can expect a formation of a hybrid political culture which is partially immigrants’ and partially natives’ political stance. Though Hamid does not provide the details of the aftermath of the reproachment, the reader can determine from Nadia and Saeed’s viewpoints that they are in contact with the past culture. It is no more a land of fanatics but a peaceful place inhabited by nonviolent generation. The writer sees the amalgamation of ideas as a positive step, concluding with an optimistic

outlook when the world is at peace. Otherwise, with the discontinuation of cultural interaction, the world essentially loses its essential elements, and the call for globalization will be impractical.

In *SK*, the immigrants do not represent a political pressure group, but they are in the early days of defining a cultural difference and a partisan attitude for a future movement. When 9/11 occurs, the natives' politics on immigrants take an upsurge, forcing the non-natives to limit themselves in the community. The Afghan community in *SK* is essentially the birth of a political consideration for the upcoming challenges. Since nativists' political paradigm shift is based on political parties, divide and rule policy, the political leaders feed them with the trepidations of immigrants' arrival. Vice versa, the immigrants base their politics on the fear of the natives' rallies, protests, and agitation. Nevertheless, the political discontent on both sides is a byproduct of ill-advised immigrant policies. The immigrants' detention, for instance, in *LB*, forces the inmates to leave the place illegal by offering sex to a detention centre official. When they begin their journey towards the city, they debate the options for a union of refugees or an association that could raise their voices. The refugees call such a union, United Nations, for it contains people from different nations.

Identity crisis is addressed in various ways in the works chosen for the study. Age groups, genders, and regional differences respond differently to the identity crisis in the host culture. *SK* portrays a more comprehensive response to the classification of immigrants in terms of their stages of life. The refugees are migrants with three generations currently present in the US. Fadi's grandparents, father, and he portray three ways of seeing one's past identity in different cultures. The grandparents are more into discussing the old days in their town; they live in cultural nostalgia. The second-generation, including Fadi's father, lives a life engrossed in the capitalistic world, though after 9/11, they are more gravitated towards each other as an Afghan community. However, typically, they retain a particular distance from each other. They keep cultural expectations such as hospitability in considerations of preserving identity. Fadi and his companions symbolize the Afghan's third generation. The younger generation appears to be more enthusiastically attached to their past. The past, which is responsible for their refugee status, is visualized as an ideal land—the behaviour of children in *SK* is somehow linked to Saeed's concept of identity, which is based on a romantic version of home culture. The quest for identity in *SK* is predominantly Afghan identity supported by religious-cultural tendencies.

As a whole, *EW* represents a universal concept of refugeehood; even it surmises immigrants' religious and extremist rightful movement to face the native's aggression. On a grand scale, Hamid's focus is to erode the description of nation-states, borders, and the martial supremacy of the host states. Through a political dialogue, the members of both host and refugee communities shed their aggressive stance on differences. When immigrants' identity is no more a challenge for the hosts, they give up their struggle. Hamid's demolition of borders between nations nullifies the ideology of the nation-state, which is based on the idea of conserving their race, language, and culture from the outsiders' threat.

Like *EW*, Cleave's some characters have no names—the characters in *LB* have some of the identity marks that can be associated with their pasts as scars and a source of identification. Bee does not use her real name until the last phase because of her fear of imprisonment; she calls her mother tongue uncivilized and savage. Bee's learning English language, behaving like the natives, and cramming British history do not help her with the case for a refugee status in the UK. Cleave makes her past a birthmark that will not fade with time; her birth identity is the most crucial aspect of her life.

Hybridity and multiculturalism appear to be a recurring image in *EW* and *SK*. Though *LB* does not directly address the questions of multiculturalism, it paves the way for a comprehensive plan to hold the mirror to the capitalist world; millions of Africans have been displaced because of exploitation in the name of development. As discussed in the dissertation, these works portray hybridity as a positive outcome of globalization and the global capitalistic system. In the first place, capitalism is the actual offender in the mass exodus from these regions. Cleave believes that while the British natives are immersed in their capitalist life, Africa's exploited regions are left at the mercy of oil drilling companies and warmongering mafias.

EW emerges to be quite a propaganda sheet in favour of diversity, as well as a statement of facts opposing nation-states and their refugee policies. Since a hybrid culture is a byproduct of globalization, Hamid establishes it through a comprehensive political process. Technically, the asylum seekers participate in active politics and create a sphere for themselves in the host culture—nevertheless, it comes at a cost. *SK* portrays the life of immigrants who are the victims of geopolitics—again; it is an after-effect of neo-colonial policies on the weaker states. Still, the eventual realization of a multicultural USA is an optimistic conclusion.

Practising past culture in a foreign country turns out to be a routine in the immigrants' life. In *EW*, Saeed practices Islamic teaching and obligations more vigorously than his routine in his birth city. Though Hamid processes both Saeed and Nadia through the same circumstances, Nadia does not venture to stick to her culture. Nadia's reaction is because of her depiction as a victim of a patriarchal and religious society that is a part of the class system—she continues her old life with slight bemusement from the host's cultural tendencies. Nadia is opposed to Bee, who is engrossed in awe of British life and culture—she speaks fluent Queen's English and adopts specific cultural nuances to acclimatize to the new culture. Bee's character becomes a cultural freak by undoing the past culture hoping to be accepted in contemporary society; practically, she is unacceptable in both countries. Therefore, the authors recommend a natural acclimatization process, which will ultimately help create an ideal community.

The dissertation concentrated on a wide range of aspects of the selected texts, but it also focused not to derail from the theoretical boundaries and text-theory analysis. Therefore, there is scope for future study of the texts from different perspectives. For instance, the dissertation mentions hybridity as a by-product of colonialism which can be further discussed in the context of Homi K. Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity. Immigrants gender roles also provide much room for future discussion on the novels as male and female genders' reaction to migration is different. The authors' cultural background and their response to the migration crisis give birth to another opportunity to analyse the literary representation of regions in the migration crisis. Similarly, native and non-native authors have a difference of opinion regarding migration. The authors' cultural affiliation and the migrants' affiliation to different regions, i.e., Africa, the British sub-continent and Afghanistan, provide ample space for a comprehensive analysis of geography and migration.

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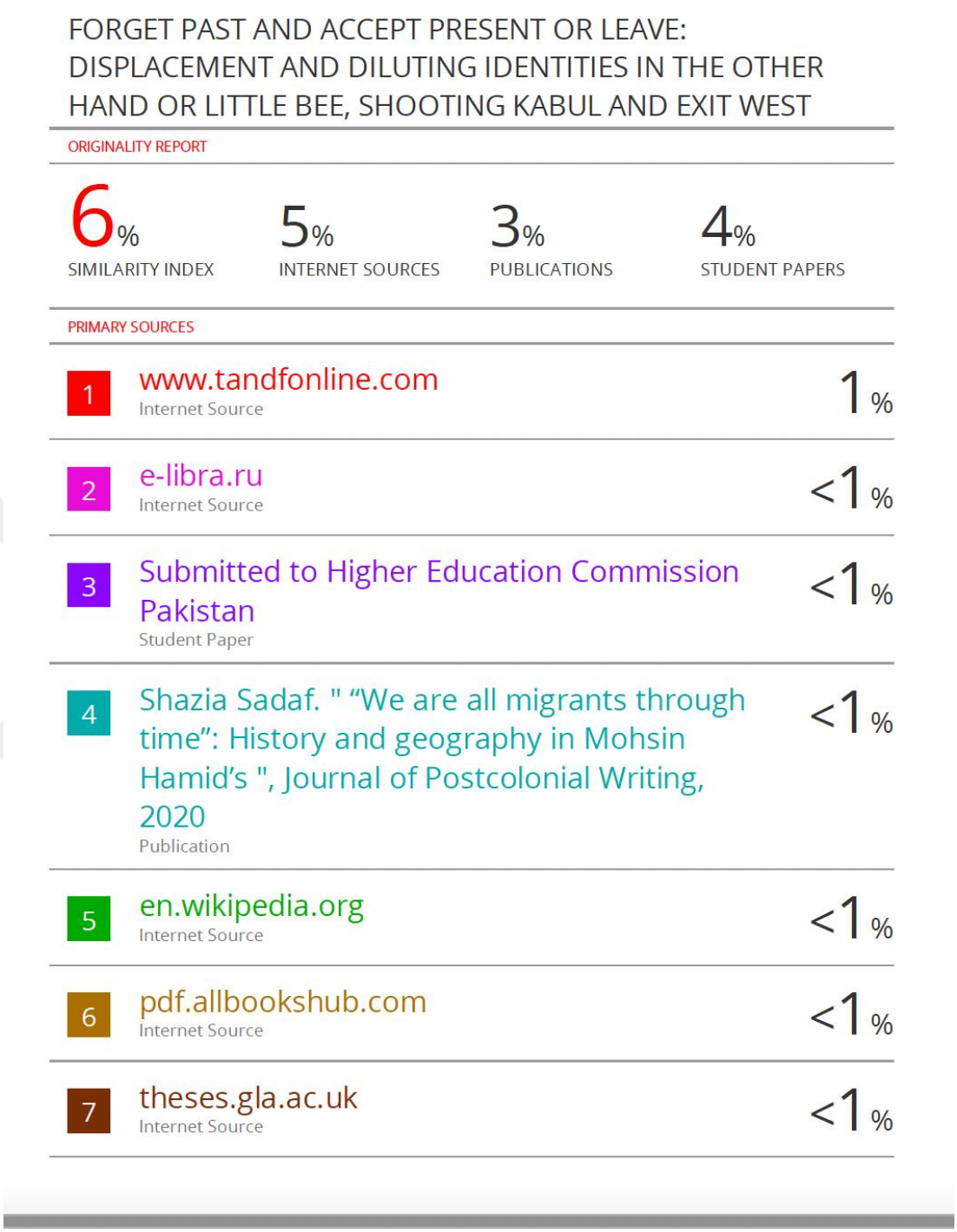

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