

**Verma, Raj Gaurav. “Home No/w/here: Study of Diasporic Dilemma in Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*.” *Mapping South Asian Diaspora: Recent Responses and Ruminations*. Edited by Ajay K. Chaubey and Asis De. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publication, 2018. pp 182-194.**

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For me, America was a place to bury my memories.  
For Baba, a place to mourn his. (Hosseini 120)

The idea of displacement has never been new to literature. Right from the time of Chaucer to the postmodern times, we can find incidences and instances based on the displacement of characters. Whether be Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* or *Twelfth Night*, Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*, Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth, the Wanderer*, Hardy’s *The Tess of the D’Urberville*, Rudyard Kipling’s *The Jungle Book* or Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*—almost all of them illustrate the journey of the displaced protagonists. However, in these works there was always a possibility of return—a possibility which seems difficult in the novels of Diaspora. Initially identified with the migration of the Jews in all parts of the world, the term “diaspora” in postmodern times came to be associated with the displacement of any group of people. It is the “displacement” that forms a pivotal point in diasporic works. Displacement here becomes the source of attachment to past, memory, alienation, nostalgia and a hope to return back to the place of origin. In the light of this observation, this paper attempts at exploring the diasporic themes in Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*.

Khaled Hosseini was born in 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan. A diplomat by profession, his father took the family to Tehran and Paris. In 1979, with the Communist takeover of Afghanistan, followed by the invasion of Russia, the Hosseini family was granted political asylum by the U.S. Hosseini took admission in Santa Clara University and graduated from UC

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San Diego School of Medicine. He worked as an internist. He is married and has two children. In 2006 he was named a U.S. goodwill envoy to the United Nations Refugee Agency. *The Kite Runner* (2003), his first novel and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* were international best-sellers, published in thirty-four countries. Recently he has published his third novel *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013).

Hosseini’s background of migration enables him with considerable expression of his own experiences in his work. In his essay “The New Parochialism: Homeland in the Writing of the Indian Diaspora,” Jasbir Jain accentuates: “The narrative of the diaspora is above all a narrative of the “self,” for the very act of migration implies a “bodily” lifting out of the familiar and the

relocation in the new and unfamiliar” (79). This also stands true for Hosseini who writes in the Foreword to *The Kite Runner*:

In March of 2003...I returned to Kabul for the first time in twenty-seven years. Although the first two-thirds of *The Kite Runner* were informed by my own family experiences, first in Afghanistan, then in California, I had written this Afghan homecoming trip for my protagonist before ever actually taking it myself. I had left Afghanistan as eleven-year-old, thin framed seventh grader; I was going back as a thirty-eight-year old physician, writer, husband, and father of the two.

Throwing light on the autobiographical elements in the novel Hosseini adds: “But perhaps nowhere did fiction and life collide more dizzyingly than when I found my father’s old house in Wazir Akbar Khan, the house where I grew up, just as Amir rediscovered his...After all, I had already been through this. I had stood beside Amir at the gates of his father’s house and felt his lost.” This revelation stands true for the diasporic community; though, Hosseini could manage a return to his old home usually diasporas are not able to do so.

*The Kite Runner* is different from other novels of Diaspora because it shows the trauma at home as far more taxing and consuming than the trauma of living outside the country. It thaws the frozen reality of the protagonist and with each layer hidden within “a crumbling mud wall, peeking into the alley near frozen creek,” (Hosseini 1) the reader comes across the wounds that were received by the protagonist and the people around him. Hosseini posits it as the novel about “shame, guilt, regret, friendship, love, forgiveness, atonement.” It is the story of two friends, and through the trajectory of their lives we come to know the plight of Afghanistan: war-ravaged, broken, penurious and plundered. The narrative covers three generations, setting some incidents in 1933 and then ending in 2002. The novel chiefly deals with the theme of sin and redemption. Amir, who had been living in guilt throughout his life, seeks ways to redeem his sins and the only way is going back to Afghanistan.

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The novel opens with Amir’s recollection of the past. “I became what I am at the age of twelve...Looking back now, I realize I have been peeking into that deserted alley for the last twenty-six years,” begins our narrator (Hosseini 1). These lines become metaphoric at many levels. The growth of the protagonist had stopped after twelve years, that still he stood at the same junction, where he could not find himself capable of moving ahead. It also resonates the idea of stopping at childhood. This becomes very apt if we look at the history of Afghanistan, which saw many moons, and Sun became an eclipsed reality. It had never seen growth despite the change of numerous regimes. From the angle of Diaspora too the moment marks a fixed point where the narrator keeps on returning.

Rushdie has inverted L. P. Hartley’s sentence: “The past is a foreign country.” For a writer of diaspora, he says, “it’s my present that is a foreign country, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mist of lost time” (Rushdie 9). Rushdie strikes at three major elements in the writings of Diaspora—Past, Home and Time. Hosseini too opens the first

chapter of the novel almost striking the same elements. The novel begins with a telephone call: “One day last summer, my friend Rahim Khan called from Pakistan. He asked me to come see him. Standing in the kitchen with the receiver to my ear, I knew it wasn’t just Rahim Khan on the line. It was my past of unatoned sins” (Hosseini 1). The beginning with a telephone call also shows the connectivity of past and present, homeland and “host” country, the prior life and the present life. In his essay “That Third Space: Interrogating the Diasporic Paradigm,” K. Satchidanandan refers to Arjun Appadurai and Anthony Smith, who “have pointed out how large communication networks erode national boundaries...The homeland becomes at once remote and accessible because of the contrary phenomena of migration and cyber communication” (16). There are two things that are to be noted here: Telephone call, which suggests connectivity; and moribund Rahim Khan, who becomes symbolic of the dying and fading past. However old the past is, for a diaspora, it always finds a path to knock at the doors of present.

The second symbol is that of home. Amir narrates: “...looking down on San Francisco, the city I now call home.” This statement discloses the diasporic dilemma and the haziness attached with the idea of home. Despite the fact that Amir has been living in San Francisco he clarifies “the city I now call home,” instead of directly referring it as his home. Over here “the sense of homelessness is accentuated by the recognition that one has not found a new home in the adopted country” (Nayar 191). It stands true for Amir, who was running away from his past, from his homeland and from his memory. The harder Amir had tried, to run away from his past, remove his memories, erase his deeds, the stronger their impression turned onto him.

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The third symbol is memory. “I thought about something Rahim Khan said just before he hung up, almost as an afterthought. *There is a way to be good again.* I looked up at those twin kites. I thought about Hassan. Thought about Baba. Ali. Kabul. I thought of the life I had lived until the winter of 1975” (Hosseini 2). The past is always fragmented and it is never viewed as something that exists as a whole in itself; instead it is presented and reminded in form of images, symbols and memories. As Rushdie points out: “it was precisely the partial nature of these memories, their fragmentation, that made them so evocative for me. The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were remains; fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and mundane acquired numinous qualities” (Rushdie 12). The first half of the novel revolves around the friendship of Amir and Hassan and around Amir’s quest for Baba’s love. The novel opens with the image of “twin kites flying,” which is merely suggestive of the tangled relationship of people in the novel. The beginning of the novel heralds the course of Amir’s and Hassan’s life: “When the sun dropped low behind the hills and we were done playing for the day, Hassan and I parted ways. I went past the rosebushes to Baba’s mansion, Hassan to the mud shack where he had been born, where he’d lived his entire life” (Hosseini 6). Hosseini develops the plot of the novel very gently. With each and every detail he heightens the effect of this divide. On one hand there was Baba’s house, who “had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, a new and affluent neighbourhood in the northern part of

Kabul...A broad entry-way flanked by rosebushes led to the sprawling house of marble floors and wide windows. Intricate mosaic tiles...covered the floors of the four bathrooms. Gold-stitched tapestry...lined the walls...a crystal chandelier hung the vaulted ceiling” (Hosseini 4). In the same boundary stood Hassan’s house: “the servant’s home, a modest little mud hut where Hassan lived with his father” (Hosseini 5). Amir is projected as one of those characters who exhibits Hamletian dilemma of “To be or not to be, that is the question.” His feelings are ambivalent. He loved Hassan but is never able to claim his friendship or love for him. This was precisely because of his jealousy as Baba loved and adored Hassan more than Amir.

He admits: “I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either. Not in the usual sense, anyhow. Never mind that we taught each other to ride a bicycle with no hands, or to build a fully functional homemade camera...Never mind that we spent entire winters flying kites, running kites” (Hosseini 24). The narrator then reveals about his childhood that though Hassan was the only company that he used to have, yet he could not have accepted him as his friend. “Never mind any of those things,” he adds. “Because history isn’t easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was a Sunni and he was a Shi’a, and

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nothing was ever going to change that” (Hosseini 24). With this disclosure we are set on that sad fact related to the society of Afghanistan which has resulted in its demise. Amir and Hassan transform into the symbols of the vast divide in Afghan society existing between Pashtuns and Hazaras. Pashtuns, who have been the natives of Afghanistan and Hazaras, who are immigrants into Afghanistan. The charm of the narrative lies in a mild inclusion of historic events with the life of the protagonist. The narrator reveals: “Never mind that to me, the face of Afghanistan is that of a boy with thin-boned frame, a shaved head, and low-set ears, a boy with a Chinese doll face perpetually lit by a harellipped smile” (Hosseini 24). He makes Hassan’s face metaphoric of Afghanistan and this is of vital importance in the novel. He also acknowledges that despite the obvious differences that were present in them there was something else that tied them together. Both of them had lost their mothers: Amir’s dead and Hassan’s had eloped with an army man. They were fed with milk by the same nurse. Rahim Khan would remind them: “...that there was a brotherhood between people who had fed from the same breast, a kinship that not even time could break” (Hosseini 10). Here is the image that retains in Amir’s mind:

But we were kids who had learned to crawl together, and no history, ethnicity, society or religion was going to change that either. I spent most of the first twelve years of my life playing with Hassan. Sometimes, my entire childhood seems like a long lazy summer day with Hassan, chasing each other between tangles of trees in my father’s yard, playing hide-and-see, cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians, insect torture... (Hosseini 24)

“These images, verbal, auditory and visual play a crucial role in shaping diasporic subjectivities” (Satchidanandan 16). Hassan is not merely a friend who was subjected to negligence. He is not merely a servant representative of the submissive Afghan Hazaras. He is not merely a memory.

Described in Derridean terms he is “already absent present” (Spivak xvii). He is the metaphor of Afghanistan; he is a metaphor for friendship; he is a metaphor for “homeland”; he is a metaphor for memory; he is a metaphor for Amir’s existence. This also become emphatic when Amir goes to Kabul and realizes: “A sadness came over me returning to Kabul was like running into an old, forgotten friend and seeing that life hadn’t been good to him, that he’d become homeless and destitute” (Hosseini 227).

Baba always favoured Hassan over Amir. He tried a lot to transform Amir but fared badly. “With me as a glaring exception, my father molded the world around him to his liking” (Hosseini 15). While other boys bullied Amir, Hassan used to come and protect him; Amir himself lacked courage

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to face those bullies. This was what made Baba say: “There is something that is missing in that boy” (Hosseini 21). While Baba used to address other children as “jan,” he “hardly used the term of endearment *jan* when he addressed” Amir (Hosseini 30). Amidst the cold and tough relationship between the father and the son, the only hope comes from the Kite-Flying Tournament. Amir felt guilty, that because of him Baba lost his beloved wife. Besides, the only thing he could have done was to be like Baba but in which he failed abysmally. “But coming close wasn’t the same as winning, was it? Baba hadn’t *come close*. He had won and everyone else just went home. Baba was used to winning, winning at everything he set to his mind to. Didn’t he have a right to expect the same from his son? And just imagine. If I did win...” (Hosseini 52). When the tournament takes place Amir’s was the only kite that survived in the sky. Hassan, ran for the last cut kite, screaming: “For you a thousand times over” (Hosseini 63). Hassan runs to bring the last cut kite, however, on his way he encounters Assef, the villain and his allies. They ask Hassan to give them the Kite but following his loyalty for his master he refuses to give. Meanwhile, Amir too reaches the same alley where Hassan was surrounded by three boys. He listened their conversation but didn’t interfere. He wanted to have Baba’s love at any cost. “Nothing was free in this world. Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba. Was it a fair price” (Hosseini 73)? While Assef raped Hassan, Amir ran away. He says: “I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what he would do to me. I was afraid getting hurt. That’s what I told myself as I turned my back to the alley, to Hassan” (Hosseini 72-73). Though Amir was able to gain Baba’s affection and attention what he lost was a friend. Most of all, not interfering into the wrong done to him, he develops a guilt which persists throughout his life. This guilt is of essence for a diasporic writer. Though here the guilt is for sacrificing Hassan for Baba’s love, it also becomes a “specter,” meaning ghost of the past in diasporic terminology (Mishra 30).

As already discussed, Hassans’ face was the face of Afghanistan. Sacrificing of Hassan, was severing the bonds with Afghanistan. Just as Hassan’s presence is perpetual phenomenon in Amir’s memory, Afghanistan too is an incessant reality that gets triggered with thoughts of Hassan. The guilt in Amir, who lives in America, is not only for the wrong done to his friend, but also the wrong done to his country. Amir here becomes representative of entire Pashtun clan who

wanted to have Afghanistan. But even after bloodshed, negligence and inconsideration that Pashtuns showed to Hazaras, Afghanistan becomes a difficult place to survive, just as for Amir Baba's love became a difficult thing to achieve. Not only this, what Amir gets for entire life is a haunting traumatic memory of his friend being raped and which keeps on poking his conscience with guilt. The narrative shows that the silence and acceptance of people of

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Afghanistan yielded them nothing but a wounded homeland, just like Amir got nothing but an injured psyche and an injured friend. He says, "...and I pretended I hadn't heard the crack in his voice. Just like I pretended I hadn't seen the dark stain in the seat of his pants" (Hosseini 74). This is how the "diasporic guilt" builds up, because, though the people leave their homeland thinking they are severing ties from it but in reality they are never drifted away from it. Instead, their distance increases the intensity of longing for the homeland.

In 1978, Daoud Khan was executed by members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a party founded on Marxism. In 1979, Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, partly to support Marxist. Then began the black days in the history of Afghanistan. "You couldn't trust anyone in Kabul anymore—for a fee or under threat, people told on each other, neighbor on neighbor, child on parent, brother on brother, servant on master, friend on friend" (Hosseini 104). Narrator describes Kabul divided into "two groups: those who eavesdropped and those who didn't" (Hosseini 104). A peaceful Afghanistan became a difficult reality. Amir, who had always been an escapist, tries to see his surroundings as a dream.

I should have been in bed, under my blanket, a book with a dog-eared pages at my side. This had to be a dream. Had to be. Tomorrow morning, I'd wake up, peek out the window: No-grim faced Russian soldiers patrolling the sidewalks, no tanks rolling up and down the streets of my city, their turrets swiveling like accusing fingers, no rubble, no curfews, no Russian Army Personnel Carriers weaving the bazaars... This was no dream." (Hosseini 105)

And they were running away from Afghanistan leaving it behind, enmeshed in wars and deaths. People began to migrate in large numbers to Iran and Pakistan. But again they were cheated, tortured and looted during migration. With Baba and Amir's journey to Peshawar ends the first part of the novel and with a remarkable analysis by the narrator about the diasporic psyche: "My eyes returned to the suitcases. They made me sad for Baba. After everything he'd built, planned fought for, fretted over, dreamed of, this was the summation of his life: one disappointing son and two suitcases" (Hosseini 114). A similar notion is presented by Salman Rushdie in *Shame*: "It's the emptiness of one's baggage. We've come unstuck from more than land. We've floated upwards from history, from memory, from Time" (91).

The second part of the novel deals with their stay in Fremont, California (1980). It is in this part of the novel that the reader come across the challenges faced by the Afghan diasporas in America. Pramod K. Nayar points out:

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Writers mapping the diasporic experience in their fiction or poetry are invariably diasporic in their 'real' lives...[in] diasporic writing where much of the experiences of unsettlement, adaptation, language, and longing narrated in the fiction could very well be drawn from the author's own experience of dislocation. It is interesting to note that almost every writer of the diasporic experience has, in her or his interviews, stated their own, personal sense of dislocation. (188)

In consonance with this observation Hosseini too admitted in his Interview by Vik Jolly:

The act of novel writing, especially the first novel, is very difficult without dipping into the pools - emotions, experiences, memories and observations - that make up the writer. The protagonist (Amir) and myself had similar upbringings: We grew up in the Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood, both influenced by Western culture, both precocious writers. (2)

While Amir has always wished to run away from his past, it was Baba who had suffered a real loss. He had problems of adjustment in the new surroundings, with new people and within the skimpy scope of new life.

Baba was like a widower who remarries but can't let go of his dead wife. He missed the sugarcane field of Jalalabad, the gardens of Paghman. He missed people milling in and out of his house, missed walking down the bustling aisles of Shor Bazaar and greeting people who knew him and his father, knew his grandfather, people who shared ancestors with him, whose pasts intertwined with his. (Hosseini 120)

Then Amir draws a contrast between Baba and himself: "For me, America was a place to bury my memories. For Baba, a place to mourn his" (Hosseini 120).

The American life became a hard task for Baba because it not only demanded a compromise on part of his health and living, but also on his morals and principles. Amir completes his graduation in 1983. He was trying to settle. Baba was proud on him for his achievements but he says: "I wish Hassan had been with us today" (Hosseini 126). Vijay Mishra gives the concept of "specter" (30) in context of diaspora meaning ghost of the past. Essentially, it is Hassan's ghost that troubled Amir's memory. He is not able to come out of it. The memory of Hassan transcends the "specter of individual" into "specter of nation." He laments: "Long before the Roussi army marched into Afghanistan, long before villages were burned and schools destroyed, long before mines were planted like seeds of death and children buried in rock-piled graves, Kabul had become a city of ghosts for me. A city of thousand hare lipped ghosts" (Hosseini 126). The contradiction of diasporic dilemma becomes evident when Amir is neither able to come out of his past nor able to be the part of his present. His unstable

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state of mind testifies his physical state which is "a dispersal, a scattering, a flight and has to take root elsewhere, especially if it seeks sustenance and growth...by the world which both frightens

and fascinates” (Jain 79). We find the same diasporic tendency when Amir says: “America was different. America was a river, roaring unmindful of the past. I could wade into the river, let my sins drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me someplace far. Someplace with no ghosts, no memories, and no sins. If for nothing else, for that, I embraced America” (Hosseini 126). However, quite contrary to the real nature of rivers which find their destiny in sea or ocean, the river of time in diasporic writing meanders whereby the same incidents tend to repeat itself. In writing the diaspora not only relive those experiences but those experiences also act as a purging. The time takes it cyclic behavior and brings the protagonist back at the same moment where he always stood throughout his life.

Amir soon gets married to Soraya, who is not only loving and caring but in a stark contrast to Amir’s indecisiveness, spinelessness and cowardice. Baba gets an incurable cancer. Amir becomes conscious of losing him and most of all losing a protection. Once again he comes at the same juncture where he began to miss his father—whose love he lost in childhood by death of his mother, and then by his [Baba’s] death in adulthood. Hosseini has shown the trauma of displacement rooted more in Baba than in Amir because Amir was running from his deeds, but Baba resented his deeds, even his leaving of Afghanistan, “I thought of the old story of Baba wrestling a black bear in Baluchistan. Baba had wrestled bears his whole life. Losing his young wife. Raising a son by himself. Leaving his beloved homeland, his watan. Poverty. Indignity. In the end, a bear had come that he couldn’t best. But even then, he had lost on his own terms” (Hosseini 160). Baba throughout his life in America seems to occupy a “third-space.” He becomes a “product of a long history of confrontations,” as Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg clarify, “between unequal cultures and forces, in which the stronger culture struggles to control, remake, or eliminate the subordinate partner” (9).

Then the narrative shifts back to the beginning with Rahim Khan’s phone call. When Amir goes to meet him, he narrates the sad story of Afghanistan to Amir. Here we come across the parallelism that exist in a diasporic writing. There are two realities which keep on moving side by side. Firstly, of the “host” country where the protagonist is located at present. Secondly, of the “home” country from where the protagonist has been dislocated. The reader witnesses a simultaneous movement in both places, however, while in “home” the time referred becomes a thing of past in comparison to “host” country where the time runs in present. Rahim Khan reveals the pathos of Afghanistan during Amir’s stay in America: “When Taliban rolled in and kicked the Alliance out of Kabul, I actually danced on

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the street...And believe me, I wasn’t alone, People were celebrating...greeting the Taliban in the street...People were so tired of the constant fighting” (Hosseini 185). The change in regime was thought as to bring changes in lives of people but to no use. It appeared that irony had become the fate for Afghanistan—thrown, caught and fought for by the people trying to gain power—which only brought pain and suffering.

Kabul belonged to Massoud, Rabbani and the Mujahedin. The infighting between the factions was fierce and no one knew if they would live to see the end of the



day. Our ears became accustomed to the whistle of falling shells, to the rumble of gunfire, our eyes familiar with the sight of men digging bodies out of piles of rubble. Kabul in those days, Amir Jan, was as close as you could get to that proverbial hell on earth. (Hosseini 196)

The Taliban banned kite-flying. “And two years later in 1998, they massacred the Hazaras in Mazar-i-sharif” (Hosseini 197). While all these bloody events were happening around, Rahim Khan used to live in Baba’s house. He had also gone to search for Hassan, because it became very difficult to live alone in old age. He brought them back. Hassan and his son, Sohrab used to play together in the garden inside the wall of the house. He had taught him slingshot. He wanted Sohrab to become a good and important man like Amir. Hassan had written many letters for Amir, and had hoped that they will be posted to him. But it never happened and Amir gets those letters posthumously. In one of the letters he had written:

Alas the Afghanistan of our youth is long dead. Kindness is gone from the land and you cannot escape the killings. Always the killings. In Kabul, fear is everywhere, in the streets, in the stadium, in the markets, it is a part of our lives here. Amir Agha. The savages who rule our watan don’t care about human decency...Ministry of Vice and Virtue does not allow women to speak loudly...The streets are full enough already of hungry orphans. (Hosseini 200)

Hassan and his wife Farzana were killed by Taliban and their murders were dismissed as a case of self-defense. Rahim Khan discloses his concern for calling Amir to Peshawar. He wanted Amir to save Sohrab. Amir, who has refrained himself from saving Hassan, later goes to save his son. Sohrab is not Hassan, but carries a part of him. And then the twist comes in the novel, when Amir is revealed that Hassan was his half-brother, he was Baba’s illegitimate son. This revelation at once inverts and untangles the jumbled situations. Amir goes to save Sohrab because he was his nephew. Rahim Khan says: “Children are fragile, Amir Jan. Kabul is already full of broken children and I don’t want Sohrab to become another” (Hosseini 204). After an adhering persuasion by Rahim Khan, Amir finally decides to go to Kabul to redeem the sins that his father and he had done. Amir’s journey to Kabul in 2001 projects torn and tortured country. He

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sees: “Now, though, they squatted at every street corner, dressed in shredded burlap rugs, mud-caked hands held out for a coin. And the beggars were mostly children now, thin and grim-faced, some no older than five or six...Hardly any of them sat with an adult male—the war had made fathers a rare commodity in Afghanistan” (Hosseini 226).

Amir goes searching for Sohrab in Kabul. He also visits his old home. His visit to his old home is also a redemption in itself. He says:

I sat against one of the house’s clay walls. The kinship I felt suddenly for the old land... it surprised me. I’d been gone long enough to forget and be forgotten. I had a home in a land that might as well be in another galaxy to the people sleeping on the other side of the wall I leaned against. I thought I had forgotten about this land. But I hadn’t. And under

the bony glow of a half-moon, I sensed Afghanistan hadn't forgotten me either. (Hosseini 222)

The realization and acceptance of this kinship with one's home, with one's home country is purgation of "diasporic guilt." Amir's reality of being inextricably tied with Sohrab itself becomes metaphoric of this fact. Facing his country was like facing Sohrab. He inquires in one of the orphanages and comes to know that one of the Taliban had taken him along with him. He reveals that he often takes away young girls and sometimes young boys too. Amir fixes a meeting with Taliban, where he finds Sohrab dressed in the clothes of a dancer. It turns out that the Taliban is Assef, who wanted to get even with Amir. He puts the condition that if he wants Sohrab he has to face his beatings. Amir agrees and faces the assault. He is saved by Sohrab using his slingshot like his father Hassan. Amir takes Sohrab to Peshawar and there he tries to befriend him. Sohrab missed his family but he did not want them to see him. When Amir asks why, he replies: "Because...because I don't want them to see me... I am so dirty." And then he speaks about his traumatic experience: "—they did things...the bad man and the other two...they did things...they did things to me" (Hosseini 293). When he had left Afghanistan with Baba, it was like leaving Hassan to be raped by Assef. It was the same situation once again, Sohrab was being raped. But this time Amir dares to save him. This time he is ready to face the blooded Afghanistan from which he had run away earlier.

As part of migration, Sohrab's Afghan descent became a problem. Amir tried to persuade Sohrab to stay in an orphanage for a month or two till he made arrangements. But this appears a betrayal to Sohrab and he tries to commit suicide. He recovers, but the bond that was established between Amir and Sohrab remains severed. Finally, Amir takes Sohrab to America. Soraya treated him like her son but Sohrab was so broken that he lived a non-existent life in Amir's house. "Sohrab had entered the room, had sat across from me, and I hadn't noticed. He walked like he was afraid

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to leave behind footprints. He moved as if not to stir the air around him. Mostly, he slept" (Hosseini 331). Amir clarifies in the end: "If someone were to ask me today whether the story of Hassan, Sohrab, and me ends with happiness, I wouldn't know what to say" (Hosseini 327). The novel ends with Amir running a kite for Sohrab, hailing "For you a thousand times over." *The Kite Runner* shows that the trauma of being "placed" in case of Afghanistan was far more intense and violent than the trauma of being "displaced." In the end Amir accepts Sohrab as he is, and in a way he accepts and understands his "home" as it is. He does not run away from it anymore but accepts it as a part of his life that silently keeps on thriving around him (like Sohrab).

What's then the "diasporic dilemma?" The displacement in the diasporic writing is neither linear, nor two-fold, rather it tries to concentrate on the fact that "being displaced" is being dispossessed, disowned and disempowered. This displacement does not occur only in being displaced from a territory called "deterritorialization" (Nayar 189). Instead, from the very onset of the novel, the narrator displaces the reader beginning at one place and shifting to

another. This transition for the reader is the same as for a diasporic writer because in the middle of the narrative the reader finds that the information about the “first” place has been left incomplete and at the same time the opening of the “second” place has not completely taken place. The reader too is neither confident about the former nor about the latter. S/he (reader) too is left between the gaps—the “gaps” (Iser 169) and spaces in the text, which leaves the reader in the same “third-space.” Freud’s idea of “displacement” reinforces this concept. He says: “a displacement occurs- let us say, of the psychic accent- until ideas of feeble potential, by taking over the charge from ideas which have a stronger initial potential, reach a degree of intensity which enables them to force their way into consciousness” (150). In diasporic writing the “home” or the “home country” may be substituted by more direct symbols and motifs that are attached personally and psychologically (as we see in case of Amir). “The narratives of diaspora are framed by memory and distance and motivated by a desire to construct their own reality” (Jain 87). Therefore, the reality of present is superseded by memory of the past. The present is displaced by the past, but significantly, it is not only the present that is created out of past, but it is also the future. Therefore, for a diaspora past is not only the present but also the future. The next generation seems to reach the same junction as the former, ironically or metaphorically. This also implies a displacement of the next generation. Vijay Mishra has already talked about, the linkage of Freudian Id, Ego and super ego as ‘home country’, ‘host country’ and ‘as balance between the two.’ But the idea of dream displacement also acquires its own conspicuousness because the text becomes a dream where a diasporic writer is able

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to go back, at least psychologically if not physically, and find his/her home. The text transfers the abstractness of “third space” into itself. Diasporic dilemma then is the concretization of the third-space. Realizing and understanding the consequence of having lost one’s home. Their attempt to acquire new home in the host country and simultaneously, retaining the old home in their writings show that “the old place has not yet released its hold—that some roots still cling to be transplanted” (Nayar 193).

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