

HOME AND HOMELAND A NOSTALGIC CHIMERA IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S 'AND THE MOUNTAINS ECHOED'

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Abstract

Literature has evolved a lot through ages. In earlier days it served as a purpose to instruct the people with the moral preaching by quoting the life of saints and supreme powers. The English people played a vital role in the development of language and literature. Their interest over language and literature swayed the minds of the audience. Thanks to Renaissance as it had created a great impact across globe. The invention of printing press, the spread of intellectual minds across European continent sparkled and ignited the intellectuals to come up with varied subjects. The theme on religion, scripture, lives of saints, kings and queens, their miracles and mysteries been replaced by science and technology, politics, nature and others.

Key Words: colonial powers, refugee, culture, food habits and customs

The writings of the intellectual minds changed with the needs of the audience. The writers of the Age of Elizabeth wrote for the monarch, their power and wealth. The literature of that period was meant only for the elites and the members of the royal family. The best of the literature was enacted later on stage before the audience to entertain them visually. The life of kings, queens, barons, and other higher authorities occupied a major space in literature. This stereotype focused writing was practiced and encouraged by the then patrons of the Golden Age and it existed for several decades. There was a slow and steady transition from the Golden age to the Age of Reason.

The Age of Reason questioned the norms approved by the classical writers. They wrote on varied themes like love, satirizing nature, practice and culture. The Romantic Era made the writers look back to nature. They found plenty of themes around them. The rustic man's life occupied a major part of their writings. With the emergence and development of science and technology the life of common man, his every day problem, consequences of the world war were taken much into consideration by the writers.

The establishment of colonial powers across globe and post colonial independence has affected the writings of the fourth world. The nostalgic reminiscences of the past, their loss of tradition, culture, and slavery occupied a good number of pages penned with a lot of emotions. The emergence of the fourth world literature attracts a good number of readers. The Fourth World Literature has a concern for the suppressed, desperate, desolate, marginalized and the refugees. Refugee Literature is a new genre that gained a global wide attention. Large-scale migrations have occurred throughout the world for varied reasons. Loss of home and homeland is a part of the life of the refugees. They have been displaced and dislocated somewhere in the world and this issue been existed for many and many decades without hope of solutions and settlement.

Kunz theory has categorized refugee into three different groups. There are some refugees who oppose the political and social events of their homeland and leave their homeland addressed as majority identified refugees. There is some group of people who left their homeland having been discriminated actively by a group of people and are addressed as events related refugees. The third type of refugee includes a set of people who want to alienate themselves from the society for various individual reasons. They are addressed as self-alienated refugees. They are not alienated by the advocacy of the state or social policy, but rather by some personal philosophy. In some countries war and violence play an important role resulting in the migration of a large group of people. It is called forced migration.

The refugees in forced migration are the uprooted. They suffer from loss of social identity, place, family, livelihood and social setup. They struggle to find their way one which should not disturb the environment where they adopted to live. They try to adapt themselves with new environment,

language, culture, food habits and customs. The one such nation which has lost its own people of political situation, war, violence and conflicts is Afghanistan.

Afghanistan was once a very beautiful nation with rich land, culture, prosperity, resources, wealth and peace until the invasion of Taliban forces. The Taliban forces are a great threat to the people who live there. The primacy of Taliban destroys the happiness, peace, prosperity of the people of Kabul. The people in Kabul have become the victim of the Taliban forces. Khaleed Hosseini, an Afghan born American settled writer has attracted and influenced much of the readers in the 21st C. The major reason for his success is he shows the realistic picture of the third world nation.

Khaleed Hosseini, a writer from Afghanistan has always a great concern for his home, homeland and his people. His all the three novels focus on the major issues and conflicts faced everyday by the wounded Afghanistan. He is worried much about the collision and deterioration of his culture, traditional values and morality. My article aims to concentrate on the Refugees of Afghanistan who show much affection and attachment towards their home and homeland with a particular reference to one of his novels "And the Mountains Echoed:

And the Mountains Echoed is an emotional novel with a blend of many stories put together and narrated by various characters. The novel gives a clear and realistic picture of the conflicts, controversies, issues, dilemmas encountered by the people of Afghanistan. The impact of colonization and westernization has not left the beautiful Afghanistan. The impact of westernization is explained here clearly by the erotic character Nila Wahdati. Nila is a fashionable and modern girl with no moral constraints and principles. She is a poet who loves to write freely on sex, love and lust. Nila is a fashionable rebel who questions the norms of the patriarchal society in Afghanistan. Her love and marriage with Suleiman create tensions and comments in the streets of Kabul. She tries to move to Paris leaving her husband alone as he suffered from stroke. In Paris she feels alone, desperate, treated an alien. She suffers from cultural dislocation and indifference. To overcome this internal conflict, she tries to mingle others by hosting lavish parties. Afghanistan, though a homeland to Nila, her hands were tied. She couldn't express her love for freedom through writing. But Paris gives enough space, freedom and liberty for Nila to think, act and write. Though a writer, she could express her wish only in words and could not win over the battle of cultural confrontation in her alien world.

In "Myriad Relationships on the Verge of Collapse: Khaled Hosseini's and the Mountains Echoed," D. Bhattacharjee observes thus:

The storyline of And the Mountains Echoed covers long history of Afghanistan; the story spreads across families and many tribes narrating the old tales, fables and tales of the old culture. The strength of the novel is on the multiplicity of human relationships within families. The plot of the novel is unfolded through many speakers who actively participate in the novel. The story line is about the diasporic experience of the migrants who travel from Kabul to Greece, then to Parsi and California and then back to Kabul.

Hosseini lived and experienced the rule of the Taliban regime. He wanted to show the readers why Afghanistan had become the desolated and deserted place. The people in Afghanistan flee across globe as refugees to save their life. But their hopes were lost. They couldn't imagine coming back to their homeland. Their homeland is only a dreamland to them. The characters penned by Hosseini in his novel "And the Mountains Echoed" clearly represents the entire Afghan people who flee away from their country facing cultural collision. They moved to various places like Europe, Greece and California where they confront with the native culture of Kabul and alien culture of France and America.

Hosseini has always a great concern for his land, culture, customs and tradition. The characters of Hosseini too carry their culture, customs and tradition. But they could carry only in their minds and hearts. They cannot take it much forward and practice it in the alien land they live. They do live in the host country as immigrants, confronted with many challenges during their stay. The challenges they face with the reality are that they differ in name, culture, race and appearance.

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