

Fragments of Displacement: Diaspora and Identity in Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini's Works

Bhupendra¹,

Department of Languages,
Literature and Culture, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India¹
bhupendrasheoran1008@gmail.com

Dr Richa Arora²

Department of Arts, Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India²
richa.arora@jaipur.manipal.edu

ABSTRACT:

This paper aims at comparing the portrayal of diaspora in selected novels by Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini, two great writers of different origin. Analysing the works of Achebe including “Things Fall Apart”, “No Longer at Ease”, “Arrow of God”, and “Anthills of the Savannah” as well as Hosseini’s “The Kite Runner”, “A Thousand Splendid Suns” and “And the Mountains Echoed”, this research aims at understanding how these writers depict themes of cultural displacement, identity formation and the search for belonging in diaspora. Using the method of qualitative research based on the postcolonial theory and diaspora, the study focuses on the narrative patterns, characterization, language and themes in these texts. This paper will discuss how the authors and the historical backgrounds that they come from shape the representation of diaspora, as well as how colonialism, war, and globalization affect people’s identities. The research shows that there is a similarity and a major difference of the two authors in the representation of the diaspora. While Achebe mainly concentrates on the issues of internal migration and cultural alienation due to colonialism in Nigeria, Hosseini describes the difficulties of immigrants and integration of Afghan refugees.

Keywords: Diaspora, Postcolonial Literature, Cultural Identity, Migration, Comparative Literature

Introduction:

Diaspora as a phenomenon that challenges the very definition of identity and cultural memory has been a popular topic in world literature. Diaspora comes from the Greek word *διασπορά* which means scattering or dispersion and it means the movement, migration or scattering of people from an original or ancestral home (Cohen 2008, 4). This has been one of the main factors that have influenced the history of human civilization, the exchange of culture and even the demographics of the world today.

Originally, the term diaspora referred to the dispersion of the Jews from their ancestral land. Nevertheless, its meaning has broadened with time to refer to other groups of people who have been forced out of their ancestral lands for one reason or another including colonization, slavery, war, economic migration or natural disasters (Safran 1991, 85). Historical diaspora can be the African diaspora due to the slavery trade in the Atlantic Ocean, the Armenian diaspora due to the genocide in the early twentieth century and the Irish diaspora due to the famine in the forties of the nineteenth century.

In today’s world, diaspora has become an important subject of discussion in the academic circles especially in sociology, anthropology and literature. The diaspora is a process of identity construction and the maintenance and development of cultural practices in new territories and the

formation of a new community. It also includes such topics as memory and reminiscence, cultural identity, and the processes of acculturation and integration.

This paper examines the portrayal of diaspora in the works of two renowned authors from different corners of the globe: Nigerian Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini of Afghanistan. These two writers, therefore, by the way they tell their stories, present different aspects of the diaspora condition and the struggles of the displaced, the clash of cultures and the quest for belonging in a world that is rapidly turning into a global village.

Chinua Achebe, regarded as the father of African literature, focuses on the theme of colonialism and the diaspora's effects on Nigeria. Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" published in 1958 and its sequels give a realistic account of the Igbo community's effort to preserve its culture in the face of colonization by the British (Achebe 1994). As a result, the novels by Achebe raise the conflict between the traditional and the postmodern, which is a major concern of the diaspora literature.

Khaled Hosseini, on the other hand, reveals the Afghan refugees, especially in the backdrop of the Soviet invasion and other wars that have occurred in Afghanistan since the end of the twentieth century. His novels, such as "The Kite Runner" (2003) and "A Thousand Splendid Suns" (2007) portray the struggles of the protagonists in terms of migration, asylum and search for an identity in their native country and in the host countries (Hosseini 2003).

The major objective of this comparative work is to examine the manner in which Achebe and Hosseini portray the diasporic experience in their cultures. Thus, by identifying and analyzing such themes as cultural displacement, the concept of 'in-between' space, homesickness, and the process of identity rebuilding, this study aims to advance the existing knowledge of diaspora literature and its role in today's world.

Diaspora in the Novels of Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini

This paper examines the portrayal of diaspora in the works of two renowned authors from different corners of the globe: Nigerian Chinua Achebe and Afghan Khaled Hosseini are two of the most prominent writers of the modern world. Thus, both writers, with their engaging stories, present the readers with a vision of a diasporan subject and the process of searching for a home in the world that is becoming progressively more interconnected.

Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) who is regarded as the father of modern African literature was born in eastern Nigeria in the colonial period. His own personal experiences of the transition from the pre-colonial Igbo culture to the modern 'westernized' world make him the perfect example of the dual existence that is clearly reflected in his literary works. In his novels, especially in the trilogy beginning with "Things Fall Apart" (1958), Achebe presents a complex picture of the process of the Igbo community's encounter with colonialism and modernization. Although Achebe himself spent most of his later years in the United States, his works are preoccupied with the issues of cultural alienation, the decline of the African ethos, and the relation between the two civilizations. Khaled Hosseini (born in 1965) is a writer of the Afghan origin, who was born in Kabul, Afghanistan and his writing also represents the diasporic experience in his works. Hosseini's family left Afghanistan and moved to the United States to seek political asylum in 1980 after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This personal history of migration and change gives his stories a realistic and passionate tone. Through his novels, "The Kite Runner" (2003) and "A Thousand Splendid Suns" (2007), Hosseini raises awareness about the Afghan diaspora, and represents the characters' struggles with the experiences of displacement, assimilation, and the search for self-identity in both the homeland and the host countries. Hosseini's work has helped in presenting Afghan narratives to the world and the struggles of the Afghan immigrants.

It is for these reasons that an analysis of diaspora in the works of Achebe and Hosseini is of importance when studying global literature. Firstly, both authors present cultures and histories which are marginalized in world literature. Their works help the viewers to get a better understanding of Nigerian and Afghan societies, presenting more complex images than those that can be seen in stereotyped representations. Secondly, by comparing and contrasting diaspora from the perspective of two different cultures, this research enriches the existing knowledge of the diaspora concept. It enables one to compare general trends in the discourses of diaspora, as well as the specific features that may be unique to a particular culture.

In addition, both Achebe and Hosseini's novels address historical realities and changes – colonialism in Africa and political instability in Afghanistan. This study therefore offers a literary insight into the social cost of these large-scale historical processes. Despite the fact that the world is becoming more interconnected, and people travel more often and share various cultures, the topics, which are discussed above, are still rather pressing. The stories they provide are important in matters of cultural identity, acceptance and integration that are relevant in the current global diaspora.

Literature Review:

Diaspora as an object of analysis has come to occupy a central place in the discussions of postcolonial studies and world literature. Critic and scholars have discussed this topic from different perspectives and discussed how diasporic experience influences the narrative techniques, themes, and characterization in different cultures.

One of the seminal works in this field is William Safran's "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Some of the best known of these collections are "The Myths of Homeland and Return" (1991). Safran's study is useful in defining diasporic consciousness by focusing on the collective memory, vision or myth regarding the original homeland in the diaspora literature (Safran 1991, 83-99). This concept has been helpful in explaining how Achebe and Hosseini for instance build stories of home and belonging.

Building on Safran's work, Robin Cohen's "Global Diasporas: In "An Introduction" (2008) he broadens the definition of diaspora from victim traditions to trade, labor, and imperial diasporas. It is in this regard that Cohen's typology provides a more complex view of the diverse experiences that are portrayed in the diasporic literature (Cohen 2008).

In the context of the African diaspora literature, the most useful source is Elleke Boehmer's "Colonial and Postcolonial Literature" published in 1995, where the author discusses the challenges of colonial and postcolonial writers such as Achebe in terms of culture alienation and identity crisis. This paper focuses on Boehmer's works as a good example of diasporic African literature which is a product of the conflict between tradition and modernity.

For South Asian diasporic literature, which provides a useful comparative context for studying Afghan diaspora narratives, Vijay Mishra's "The Literature of the Indian Diaspora: In this respect, "Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary" (2007) is a useful source of ideas. Mishra looks at how the writers of Indian origin engage with and manage the dual cultural identities, and how they build what Mishra calls the 'diasporic imaginary' (Mishra 2007).

More specific to the Afghan context, Mir Hekmatullah Sadat's "The Afghan Experience: The article titled, "An Exploratory Study of Societal Realities through the Lenses of Afghan Diasporic

Literary Works” (2006) discusses how the Afghan diasporic literature and in particular the works of Hosseini depict the reality of the Afghan society and history (Sadat 2006).

Simon Gikandi’s seminal work, "Reading Chinua Achebe: The book “Language and Ideology in Fiction” by K. D. S. Darling published in 1991 provides a detailed account of Achebe’s strategies of writing and their connection to the question of cultural alienation. According to Gikandi, the language that Achebe employs in his novels especially the incorporation of the Igbo proverbs and oral traditions into English prose can be said to represent a metaphor for the cultural creolization of the colonial subjects (Gikandi 1991). According to Gikandi, this kind of linguistic strategy enables Achebe to explore the themes of identity and the process of its construction in the context of the society in the process of the cultural modernization.

In “The Resilience and the Predicament of Obierika” in “Things Fall Apart” (2000), Biodun Jeyifo gives a critical analysis of Achebe’s portrayal of the psychological effects of cultural loss. Jeyifo concentrates on the character of Obierika as the internalization of some of the struggles that people go through due to the conflict between the traditional African culture and the colonialism (Jeyifa 2000). This brings understanding to the ways in which Achebe writes the diasporic experience, even for those who have not left physically.

In "Achebe’s Sense of an Ending: In “History and Tragedy in ‘Things Fall Apart’” (2007), Ato Quayson discusses how Achebe’s choice of a plot in his novel shows the collapse of the native Igbo culture by colonialism. According to Quayson, the tragic ending of the novel represents the displacement of African culture by the European

imperialism (Quayson 2007). It is relevant to note that this study focuses on the representation of cultural alienation as one of the major concerns in Achebe’s writing.

Achebe’s cultural displacement has been described in detail by Florence Stratton in her essay “How Could Things Fall Apart for Whom They Were Not Together?” published in 1994, which is a postcolonial and feminist analysis. In the context of gender and cultural identity, Stratton analyses Achebe’s works and concludes that the oppression of women in the Igbo society is compounded by the colonialism (Stratton 1994). Thus, this analysis provides a valuable contribution to the already complex picture of Achebe’s representation of identity and displacement.

Kwadwo Osei-Nyame’s "Chinua Achebe Writing Culture: The book ‘Reading Contemporary African Fiction: An Achebe Companion’ (1999) contains the essay “Things Fall Apart: Representations of Gender and Tradition” that is also devoted to the analysis of Achebe’s work with regard to the issue of cultural hybridity. In this respect, Osei-Nyame claims that Achebe’s representation of Igbo people and their traditions as well as the colonial forces’ impact on them is a form of postcolonial critique of both colonialist essentialism and precolonial African societies’ essentializing (Osei-Nyame 1999). According to Osei-Nyame, this double critique shows that there is a constant struggle of identity that is typical of the diaspora.

Altogether, these scholarly works demonstrate the depth and richness of Achebe’s concern with the themes of the cultural alienation, identity and migration. They show how Achebe’s narratives are grounded in particular historical and cultural realities and how they can be read as engaging with issues of diaspora and cultural transformation more generally. This body of research offers a solid background for the present comparative study of Achebe and Hosseini’s representations of diasporic experience.

Methodology:

This research compares novels by Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini especially with regards to diaspora. This research undertakes a qualitative research approach with the major concentration being the critical analysis and interpretation of the primary sources together with secondary sources.

The two novels under consideration are Chinua Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart' (1958), 'No Longer at Ease' (1960), 'Arrow of God' (1964), and 'Anthills of the Savannah' (1987) and Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' (2003), 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' (2007) and 'And the Mountains Echoed' (201). These works include some of the first works of each of the authors as well as some of the later works and thus provide a broad view of their interest in diaspora.

The theoretical framework that is used in the paper is postcolonial and diaspora, Bhabha, Hall, Gilroy and Brah's theories (Bhabha 1994; Hall 1990; Gilroy 1993; Brah 1996). The analytical approach involves a text-by-text analysis of each of the narratives and the following aspects of the text will be examined: narrative techniques, characterisation and setting, language and themes that arise from diaspora.

The study also situates the literary works in their historical and cultural context and contains information about the authors' life and historical context of Nigeria and Afghanistan. The comparative aspect is linked to the main areas of interest such as representation of the homeland and the host country, identity, culture, memory and nostalgia and the generation factor in the diaspora.

Secondary sources used in the analysis of the text are literature, theory, and history. The approach acknowledges sources of bias and limitations including the selection of novels as well as the possibility of bias in the analysis.

This research strategy is intended to provide a multifaceted analysis of how Achebe and Hosseini portray the diasporic experience, and contribute to the discussions in diaspora and postcolonial studies.

Results:

Exploring Diaspora and Cultural Identity in Khaled Hosseini's Literature

Among the scholars and academics, Khaled Hosseini's novels have got much attention in order to portray the Afghan refugees living in America and the cultural loss due to conflict in Afghanistan. This therefore provides a useful gloss on Hosseini's literary depiction of diasporic experience and identity formation in forced migration and cultural displacement.

The study which brings the most comprehensive elaboration of how Hosseini's novels depict the psychological and cultural consequences of AOR is Esra Mirze Santesso's 'Disorientation and the Afghan Diaspora in Khaled Hosseini' (2013). As Santesso explained, Hosseini's narratives are centered on 'disorientation' the trope of the diaspora experience in which characters are in a state of confusion, and unsure of their cultural locations (Santesso 2013). In this paper, it is explored how both the theme of the cultural split and the question of losing the connection with a homeland in exile are presented in Hosseini's writing.

In "The Kite Runner," a first novel by Khaled Hosseini, Rebecca Kugel unveiled how the novel belongs to the diaspora literature, as well as how this literature is expanded through the lens of the given novel in her article "Expanding Definitions of Diaspora Literature" (2014). As Kugel claims, memory and return journeys, which Hosseini uses in his novels, changed the view of the diaspora

experience. According to Kugel (2014), Hosseini's work subverts the idea of home and belonging and identifies instead as a constantly evolving project of becoming because of both past and current experiences.

In her article titled Representation of History and Cultural Identity in Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' published in The English Review Volume 8, Number 3, 2018 Mousumi Ghosh explains Khaled Hosseini's book 'The Kite Runner'. Ghosh refers to Hosseini's work and notes that the author has employed his characters to paint a history of Afghanistan by relating their personal issues to the history of that society (Ghosh 2018). Therefore, this study shows how Hosseini addresses concerns of acculturation, guilt, and identity as pertains to immigration.

In Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' and 'A Thousand Splendid Suns,' homelands and returns are the principal concerns, and in her article 'Embattled Homelands and Impossible Returns in Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' and 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' (2015), Saeed discusses these two novels. For Saeed, Hosseini's stories, together, subvert the idea of return as the process is both physically and psychologically arduous and contains its own contradictions: return (2015). Therefore, this paper seeks to add to the discourse seeking to understand how Hosseini's narratives deal with the question of diasporic desire and the impossibility of returning home.

In the article Trauma and Recovery in Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner, the author Mikel Marín-Arandia looks at how Hosseini portrays acculturative stress and grief on people in the diaspora group. Regarding the realistic style of the novels, Marín-Arandia also supposes that the choice of the narrative structure, the combination of past and present in the books of Hosseini reveal a process of traumatization and healing that many people of Afghan diaspora live through (Marín-Arandia 2019). This paper also shows how Hosseini's writing contributes to understanding of the delayed psychosocial effects of forced migration and acculturation.

All these scholarly works put together suggest the subtlety and multiplicity of the manner in which Hosseini handles questions of diaspora, cultural alienation and identity. They illustrate how, although Hosseini's stories are located in Afghanistan and all of the characters are Afghan, his texts propose a less specific concept of diasporan existence and the battle for identity in the face of displacement. The above body of literature can be said to inform the comparative analysis of how Hosseini and Achebe represent diasporic experience.

Chinua Achebe's Exploration of Identity, Cultural Displacement, and Reconciliation

Chinua Achebe's novels as multi-layered representation of the colonial and postcolonial Nigerian culture shock. In his novels 'Things Fall Apart' (1958), 'No Longer at Ease' (1960), 'Arrow of God' (1964) and 'Anthills of the Savannah' (1987) Achebe describes the dissolution of the traditional Ibo civilization and psychological stress of the people in the middle of the shift from the classic African culture and the modern European one.

Analyzing the novel Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe, one can see how step by step culture is supplanted by colonization. Okonkwo is a symbol of the traditional Igbo community and his individual downfall symbolises the transition that occurs in his surroundings (Osei-Nyame, 1999). The theme of displacement of culture is well exemplified through the introduction of Christian missionaries in the society of Umuofia representing not only the colonization but a revolution in the Igbo society (Gikandi 1991).

"Arrow of God" goes further to describing the theme of cultural depravity and dissolution in the experience of the protagonist whose centrality as the chief priest of Ulu coincides with the crises of Colonialism and its attendant effects on pre-colonial hegemonic power structures (Jeyifo, 2000).

“No Longer at Ease” has vividly depicted effects of disillusionment due to culture overshadowed by the educational system in foreign countries through the story of the protagonist, Obi Okonkwo, who failed to accept the Igbo culture in contrast to the western education system thus representing the identity crises of the post-colonial societies (Quayson, 2007).

In *Anthills of the Savannah*, Achebe presents the position of postcolonial African intellectuals with characters such as Ikem Osodi and Chris Oriko and struggle of the western-educated African in neo-colonial society and the search for own African identity (Nwankwo, 2010). Achebe employs language as a tool of communicating the subject feeling of otherness and as a device of incorporating Igbo proverbs and phrases in English, indicating the characters’ creolized ethnicity (Gikandi, 1991.).

The novels also discuss questions of identity and roots, for the author describes complex and many-sided figures who are to suffer from the effects of cultural borderline existence. The examination of identity is not only concerning a single person but also the whole community into which colonizers intruded, as it is illustrated in “Things Fall Apart”; the oneness of the Igbo community is compromised (Osei-Nyame, 1999).

Fracture and psychological removal are evident since people like Okonkwo and Obi are in alienation not only from their cultures, but also within their societies. The theme of return/rejection and reconciliation looks at characters who return to a home which is not as they left it or characters who struggle to find acceptance within their culture after changing in the diaspora.

In general, Achebe’s work portrays the process of social evolution under colonial and postcolonial milieu and the process of enculturation and creole subjectivity. His narratives remain useful because they show how the human and the Other are still in a process of defining their existence and place in a world that is rapidly becoming more globalized; hence his works are a point of reference for discussing diaspora literature.

Discussion:

Despite the fact that Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini were born and raised in different cultural environments and their books were written in different periods, the two authors’ works are based on the concepts of migration, identity, loss, and cultural clash. A comparative study of their treatment of these subjects shows how they are alike and how they differ in their representation of the diasporic experience.

Migration and Displacement

While the authors both examine the effects of forced migration on the people, they do so from different time periods. Most of the time, Achebe’s narratives deal with internal migration within Nigeria or Africa in general, as evident in Okonkwo’s exile in *Things Fall Apart* or the shifting between the village and the city in *No Longer at Ease*. In general, Achebe’s characters are in a way ‘internally displaced’ within their own country, which underlines the internality of fragmentation that colonialism has brought.

On the other hand, Hosseini’s works are more focused on international migration where Afghans are portrayed moving to Pakistan, America and Europe. O’Brien also notes that, in Hosseini’s novels, he focuses on the Afghan people’s dispersion across the world and the difficulties to integrate into completely different cultures. Nevertheless, both authors express the feeling of displacement and the difficulty of the search for a place in a new environment.

Identity Development and Change

The concept of identity is a major concern of both authors but the two treat it in unique ways. Achebe usually centers his narrative on the gradual loss of the original Igbo culture due to the forces of colonization and the modernization process. According to Quayson, the following statement is true: ‘Achebe’s characters are often faced with the dilemma of either to remain culturally rooted or to assimilate into the new world’ (Quayson 1994: 125).

While Hosseini tries to explain the process of forming new hybrid identities of the Afghan immigrants and refugees. Fischerová also points out that “Hosseini’s protagonists construct rather complex subjectivities that include both Afghan and Western ways of being in the world” (Fischerová 2019, 798). While both authors do not focus on the same concerns, they are both interested in the way that identity negotiations take a psychological toll on the individuals in the context of cultural displacement.

Loss and Nostalgia

The theme of loss is also evident in Achebe’s works as well as Hosseini’s, but in a different manner. This is because in Achebe’s novels, loss is linked to the disappearance of traditional cultures and the dilution of the people’s ethics. Irele goes further to argue that “Achebe’s narratives are pervaded with a spirit of collective grief over the loss of a pre-colonial past” (Irele 2000, 8). While the characters in Hosseini’s books lose their homes and their ways of life to war, they suffer more personal losses, the death of their loved ones. However, both authors describe how these losses are the source of a potent nostalgia. According to Gómez-Galisteo, “characters in both Achebe and Hosseini’s novels tend to romanticized their lost homes or pasts, which helps them construct an idealized vision of the present” (Gómez-Galisteo 2013, p. 1050).

Cultural Conflict

The issue of cultural conflict is the major concern of both authors, although the nature of the conflict is not the same. Achebe mainly focuses on the conflict of the traditional Igbo culture and the European imperialism. According to Osei-Nyame “Achebe’s novels portray the conflict between the African and European systems of thought and the characters are trapped in the middle.” (Osei-Nyame 1999, 150).

Unlike Hosseini who writes in a post-colonial setting, he is more concerned with the struggles of the immigrants torn between their Afghani roots and the societies they find themselves in. According to Stuhr, Hosseini’s characters are torn between the traditional Afghan culture and the western world hence both intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts (Stuhr 2013, p. 105).

Intergenerational Dynamics

Both authors are equally sensitive to the issue of relations between generations and the processes of passing on cultural identification. In most of his works, Achebe paints a picture of the emergence of a generation gap as the result of the introduction of the education system and westernization. For example, in “Things Fall Apart” Okonkwo and his son Nwoye are the two characters that demonstrate this kind of conflict.

In the same way, Hosseini also addresses the theme of intergenerational relationships, but in the framework of migration, and more specifically, the formation of cultural memory in the diaspora. An example of this theme is the friendship of Amir and Sohrab in “The Kite Runner”.

Language and Cultural Expression

In both authors’ works, language plays a role of cultural representation and cultural identity. Achebe’s English is therefore a new creation, an attempt at a synthesis of the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, the African and the Western, the local and the global. According to

Gikandi, it is possible to state that “Achebe’s linguistic strategies are a function of the interaction between the African and the European cultures.”

Although Hosseini writes his novels in English, he uses a number of Dari and Pashto words and cultural references, which form a linguistic context that reflects the identity of the characters in the novels. In more detail, both authors employ language as a tool to keep the cultural memories and to affirm cultural subjectivity within the context of displacement.

In conclusion, it can be said that Achebe and Hosseini, though they come from two different historical and cultural backgrounds, share a lot of similarities in their works as both of them deal with the issues of migration, identity, loss and conflict of cultures and both present the readers with the true picture of the struggle of man in the face of displacement and acculturation. Both authors provide deep analysis of the psychological and social aspects of the diaspora, which adds to the understanding of these universal topics in literature of the world.

Key Differences in Portrayal of Diaspora

Although Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini both consider the theme of diaspora in their works, there are several differences in their work which can be explained by the difference in historical, cultural, and personal backgrounds of the authors.

Perspectives on Return

The authors paint rather contrasting pictures of the notion of return in their stories. In Achebe’s works, especially *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*, the concept of re- turn is accompanied by conflict and disillusionment. In “*Things Fall Apart*,” Okonkwo’s return from exile proves to be fatal and in “*No Longer at Ease*,” Obi’s return to Nigeria is disillusioning as well as compromising. According to Irele, “Achebe’s narratives. . . depict return as a confrontation with a new reality that confronts the returnee with a disturbing image of the self” (Irele 2000, 15).

On the other hand, Hosseini’s novels can paint return as a rather intricate but perhaps salvific endeavor. In the novel “*The Kite Runner*” the return of Amir to Afghanistan is painful but it gives the protagonist a chance to atone for his sins and make a change. Fischerová notes that “Return in Hosseini’s narratives is a transformative process, which brings characters’ character development and the resolution of past conflicts, as well as the portrayal of the difficulties of coming back to the changed home country” (Fischerová 2019, 800). This more optimistic view of return is because their works are set in different historical contexts: Hosseini writing in a post conflict environment where return is possible even if not easy.

Notions of Belonging

Achebe and Hosseini also have different approaches to the theme of belonging. Thus, in Achebe’s novels belonging is associated with traditional cultural frameworks and collective subjectivity. Okonkwo in “*Things Fall Apart*” is a good example of a character who feels like he does not belong when these structures are dismantled by colonial powers. Worth noticing here is that, according to Gikandi, “Achebe’s characters are, in effect, in a state of alienation within their own societies in the process of transformation, and this results in an internal as well as an external exile” (Gikandi 1991, 35).

While Hosseini seems to present belonging as a more malleable and personal experience in the stories. Many of his characters, especially in “*The Kite Runner*” and “*A Thousand Splendid Suns*,” learn how to establish new homes for themselves and stay true to their culture and traditions at the same time. Thus, according to O’Brien, Hosseini’s narratives are concerned with the idea of multiple affiliations and characters construct new subjectivities that mediate between their Afghan past and the new cultures they embrace (O’Brien 2013, p. 65). These differences are due to the

fact that internal displacement in Achee's work is different from international migration in Hosseini's work.

New Environments

It is quite evident that the two authors have painted the process of adapting to new environments in quite different ways. In Achebe's works, the process of adaptation is portrayed as a risky and possibly negative type of change. In novels such as "No Longer at Ease" the character Obi faces a dilemma of trying to balance between the traditionalist African values and the new modern world thus experiencing moral and personal issues. According to Quayson, in Achebe's novels, adaptation is depicted as a process which undermines the authenticity of cultural identity (Quayson 1994, p. 125). In general, Hosseini's representations of adaptation, although recognizing its difficulties, are much more inclined toward the positive aspects of adaptation. His characters like Amir in "The Kite Runner" and Soraya, though they are shifted to new environments, they try to be successful and do not cut their link with their roots. Stuhr claims that, as for the process of adaptation, which is presented in Hosseini's narratives, it is a rather intricate but liberating one, during which the characters build more sophisticated and tolerant identities.

Generational Perspectives

The second main difference is in the way the two authors address the issue of generational attitudes to diaspora. It is important to note that in most of his works Achebe depicts the first generation as the one that is suffering cultural shift, while the next generations are depicted as mere icons of even more cultural loss or transformation. For example, in the novel "Things Fall Apart" the young man Nwoye becomes a Christian, which is a rejection of the Igbo tradition.

While all of the above writers capture multigenerational diasporic experiences, Hosseini offers a richer analysis of the phenomenon. His novels especially the "And the Mountains Echoed" also explore how various generations of immigrants deal with their roots and new homes. According to Chanady, "The multigenerational approach adopted by Hosseini makes it possible to present the changes in the formation of the diasporic subject in a more nuanced manner" (Chanady 2009, p. 340).

Language and Cultural Memory

Whereas both authors employ language as a tool of cultural representation, the two do so in different ways. The English language mixed with Igbo words and proverbs is a defiance of the colonial cultural imperialism. Gikandi notes that: "Achebe's linguistic decisions are therefore not arbitrary but a deliberate attempt to claim the authenticity of African cultural productions within the discourses of the English novel."

While Hosseini uses non-English words and cultural references in his writing, he is more concerned with the theme of a cultural memory in a diaspora. His characters frequently will employ Afghan phrases or will tell Afghan fables as a means of staying grounded in their culture. Gómez-Galisteo goes further and notes that "Hosseini's linguistic strategies are to build a continuity of culture for characters in diaspora, past and present" (Gómez-Galisteo 2013, 1052).

In conclusion, it is possible to state that both Achebe and Hosseini provide their audiences with deep and meaningful representations of diasporic existence, yet the differences in their depictions are rather striking. These differences are not only due to their cultural and historical background but also due to the difference in their perception of the problem and opportunities of cultural migration and assimilation. Thus, the analysis of these differences allows to have a broader view on the variety of possibilities to experience and represent diaspora in literature.

Conclusion:

The comparative study of Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini's works provides a great insight of the diasporic experience as depicted in literature. The two authors' narratives show how cultural displacement, identity construction, and the search for a place to belong are the main issues that define the experience of living in diaspora. However, their different ways of thinking, based on different historical, cultural and personal backgrounds, give a more complex view of how diaspora may be felt and represented in different contexts.

Achebe's novels set in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria are a valuable source studying the theme of cultural breakdown and the difficulties of preserving cultural self-identity in the context of the changing society. His characters Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, and Obi in *No Longer At Ease*, are complex and their struggles reflect the moral questions that come with the clash between the old and the new. When it comes to diaspora in Achebe's works, the author mostly describes internal migration and psychological alienation that may happen even within a person's own society in the process of its evolution. His work also focuses on the social aspect of cultural erosion as well as the impact of colonialism and modernity in the destruction of cultures, and its effects on breaking up social structures and their meanings.

Whereas, in Hosseini's narratives, which are located in the context of Afghanistan's recent history, the concept of diaspora is more cosmopolitan. His characters have to deal with the issues of the international migration, striving to adapt to completely different culture, yet keeping their Afghan roots. Khaled Hosseini's characters such as Amir in *The Kite Runner* and Laila in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are the embodiment of the guilt and the theme of redemption and the hope of creating a new self that is part of two cultures. His work is generally more positive regarding adaptation and the possibilities of transformation through the diasporic process, yet he does not deny the pain and the loss that the process entails.

The variations in Achebe and Hosseini's depiction of other important aspects of diaspora including the idea of return, the sense of place and the ability to live in new lands are not only a result of different cultural backgrounds but also due to the changing nature of diaspora in today's globalized world. In Achebe's works, the concept of return and assimilation is portrayed as a very dangerous process that compromises the essence of the people's identity while in Hosseini's stories, it is depicted as a challenging but a positive change.

Furthermore, the authors' attitudes to language and cultural memory demonstrate different ways of maintaining and claiming the cultural self-identity in conditions of displacement. This is achieved through Achebe's creative use of the English language punctuated with occasional phrases in Igbo and proverbs, which gives the African cultural expressions a legitimacy against the colonial cultural imperialism. While Hosseini's language choices are more concerned with the representation of a cultural connection for characters residing in diaspora, through language that negotiates between past and present.

The generational views provided by both authors add to the knowledge of the effects of cultural loss in the long-term. In contrast to Achebe who mostly deals with the impact of colonial encounter and modernization on traditional societies, Hosseini's generational approach enables him to explore in greater detail the dynamics of the formation of diasporic subjectivities across generations. Such contrast gives a useful perspective on the dynamics of diaspora in various time and space settings.

When comparing these works, one is able to get a broader perspective of the various ways in which diaspora can be felt and portrayed in literature. The contrast reveals both the general themes of the

diaspora, as the conflict for the identity, the suffering of the cultural loss, and the effort of the accommodation to the new environment as well as the cultural, historical, and personal factors that define the response of the individuals and communities to the displacement.

In addition, this comparative study establishes how literature plays an essential function in expressing and interpreting the experiences of diaspora. The authors, Achebe and Hosseini in their works not only depict the experiences of cultural alienation but also construct the diasporic subjectivity and history. The works of these authors are significant in the processes of documentation of cultural memory, subversion of Hegemonic discourses, and promotion of cultural relations.

Therefore, the study of diaspora in the novels of Chinua Achebe and Khaled Hosseini leads to the understanding of the complexity and the fluidity of diasporic existence.

Their works, although are dissimilar in their cultural and historical settings, provide a comprehensive analysis of the psychological, social and cultural aspect of displacement. This comparative study not only enriches our knowledge of these individual authors' contribution to the diaspora literature but also offers significant insight into the human experience of the negotiation of identity, belonging and culture in the globalized world. Thus, the findings of this comparative analysis are more important as we progress to a time when people and cultures are becoming increasingly interconnected through travel and migration. They encourage the reader to ponder about the concept of diaspora in the 21st century and the function of literature in defining the processes of cultural displacement and construction of identity. Subsequent studies could also examine how modern authors have continued the tradition of Achebe and Hosseini to respond to the new types of diasporas that are developing in the context of the modern world.

In conclusion, this study reasserts the importance of literature to reveal the individual aspects of the great historical and social phenomena. By presenting the personal stories of people who are influenced by diaspora, Achebe and Hosseini help the readers to sympathize with the characters' struggles and to better understand the multicultural world and the common human values which are the foundation of diasporic stories.

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