

The Impact of Globalization on Modern Novel Writing: Themes of Displacement and Identity”

تأثير العولمة على الكتابة الروائية الحديثة: موضوعات النزوح والهوية

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الملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة التأثير العميق للعولمة على الكتابة الأدبية الحديثة، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على موضوعي التهجير و الهوية في رواية خالد حسيني العداء مع الرياح (٢٠٠٣) ورواية شيماماندا نجوزي أديتشي أميركانا (٢٠١٣). توفر هاتان الروايتان سردًا غنيًا لشخصيات تكافح مع تعقيدات الانتماء في عالم معولم، موضحة العواقب النفسية والعاطفية والثقافية الناتجة عن التهجير من الوطن. من خلال تطبيق منهج النقد الثقافي، تستعرض الدراسة كيف تجسد الروايتان التشتت النفسي الذي يرافق الهجرة وكيف تتشكل هوية الشخصيات نتيجة لتجاربهما في التكيف الثقافي والتحول.

تكشف التحليلات أن التهجير في كل من الروايتين ليس مجرد انتقال جسدي بل هو أيضًا رحلة نفسية وعاطفية عميقة. في العداء مع الرياح، يرمز تهجير أمير من أفغانستان إلى الولايات المتحدة إلى صراعه مع الشعور بالذنب والعار والحاجة إلى الخلاص، مما يؤدي به في النهاية إلى التوفيق بين ماضيه وهويته الحالية. وبالمثل، في أميركانا، تعيش إفيميلو حالة من التنافر الثقافي أثناء انتقالها من نيجيريا إلى الولايات المتحدة، حيث تتصادم هوياتها العرقية والوطنية. تمر الشخصيتان بأزمات هوية كبيرة، مما يعكس التحديات الأوسع التي يواجهها الأفراد الذين يعيشون بين الثقافات ويسعون إلى التفاوض على هويتهم الذاتية في عالم يتزايد فيه الترابط.

من خلال تحليل الشخصيات، وبنية السرد، والتمثيلات الرمزية، تبرز الدراسة كيف تستخدم هذه الروايات التقنيات الأدبية لاستكشاف مواضيع المنزل و الانتماء و الصراع الثقافي. تشير النتائج إلى أن العولمة تدفع الأفراد إلى التنقل بين طبقات معقدة من الهوية، حيث يتفاعل الماضي والحاضر باستمرار، ويصبح مفهوم الهوية الوطنية الثابت أكثر سائلة. تختتم الدراسة بتوصية بإجراء المزيد من البحوث حول تطور مفهوم الهوية في عالم معولم، خصوصاً من خلال عدسة السرد الرقمي و العابرين للحدود و التهجير الجندري. كما تؤكد على الحاجة إلى المزيد من الاستكشاف لكيفية تشكيل العولمة للتمثيلات الأدبية للهوية والانتماء، خاصة في سياق الحركة المتزايدة للأشخاص والثقافات والأفكار عبر الحدود. الكلمات المفتاحية : العولمة، النزوح، الهوية، النقد الثقافي، الهجرة، التهجين الثقافي، نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار، أزمة الهوية، اكتشاف الذات، الانتماء.

Abstract

The present paper will consider the great influence of globalization on contemporary novel writing, and would particularly concentrate on the categories of displacement as well as identity in *The Kite Runner* (Hosseini, 2003) and *Americanah* (Adichie, 2013). The novels present a rich story disputing the complications of belonging in a globalized world that portrays the emotional, psychological, and cultural effects of being removed out of one home for the other. The enquiry of both novels in expressing the psychological displacement that comes about in with migration is established by using a cultural criticism paradigm and how experiences of cultural adjustment and change influence the inner identity of the characters in both novels. It can be seen during the analysis that the displacement in the two novels is not merely a physical movement but a very much emotional and psychological experience. *The Kite Runner* is a novel whose theme of relief of guilt, shame, and redemption can be traced through the dislocation of Amir in Afghanistan such that he has to move to the United States to settle the scores between the past episode and his present life. It is also known that like *Americanah*, the protagonist Ifemelu is torn between two cultures as she makes the shift from

Nigeria to U.S., where racial and national identities conflict. Both are characters in deep identity crises, which echoes the larger problems of living within two cultures and having to negotiate self identity in the world that increasingly becomes connected. Basing the analysis of the literary techniques and choices in these two novels, the study addresses the features of the narrative text, characters, and symbolic values to show how thematic issue, home, belonging and cultural conflict is being addressed through the literary techniques. These results indicate that globalization pushes people to complicate their identity through a set of layers that overlaps and changes with time, and the existing idea of the identity as not being dependent on a country now appears more and more flexible. At the end of the study, the researchers make an assumption about the need to conduct further research on the concept of identity that has been changing with the globalization, especially through the prism of digital storytelling, transnationalism, and gendered displacement. It underlines the necessity of additional studies with the view to define the phenomenon of globalization and its influence on the literary construction of identity and belonging in the light of the growing tendency towards the movement of people, cultures, and ideas throughout the world.

Keywords: Globalization, displacement, identity, cultural criticism, migration, cultural hybridity, postcolonial theory, identity crisis, self-discovery, belonging.

1.1 Introduction:

Globalization is a multidimensional, effective process that has already changed much in the life of mankind and affected economics, politics and culture. It can be defined as the growing process of the intimacy and mutual dependence of the globe economy and societies that have had a great influence on the experience of identity, migration, and the feeling of belonging to a culture in people (Ramesh, 2017). Through the breaking down

of boundaries and consequent blending of cultures, people find themselves charting through complicated identities both regionally and globally influenced identities. This is especially seen in the contemporary literature where globalization has taken serious preoccupation in the modern novels. The most common topics of the novels of the post-globalization age concerns the processes of displacement, migration, and search of identity in the new cultural contexts as characters find it hard to adjust to new realities (Parker, 2019). These are the themes that underscore the emotional, material, and psychological loss the feeling of the homeland and identity are connected with. It is the quest to reconcile the personal culture with the international influences which interests the makers of the contemporary narratives. This problem is particularly vivid in postcolonial literature as well as in immigrant literature where the necessity to maintain the cultural identity on the one hand and meet the challenges of the globalization process on the other is discussed dynamically. The paper will look at the influence of globalization on the recent novels in the context of displacement and identity. Through the analysis of such novels as *The Kite Runner* (Hosseini, 2003) and *Americanah* (Adichie, 2013), the paper will discuss the way of globalization among the characters exploring their senses of belonging and identity. Although the background and writing styles of the two authors are different, both of them uncover the complicated process of the formation of identity within a global world. This analysis is an attempt to discover how these writers react to the conjoined discourses of displacement and identity and provide information on the way that writers in the modern world respond to the issues of the globalized society. This paper will set out to discuss how globalization has influenced the world of contemporary novel writing, especially in terms of the theme of displacement and the search of self. With reconfiguration of worldwide cultures and societies as a result of globalization, the way stories are conveyed in literature has drastically changed. Contemporary novels represent the manifestation of various experiences of people confronted with the issues of modern age and mostly emotional and psychological consequences of displacement and constant search of the identity. In this paper, I will refer to the analysis of the major pieces of the contemporary writers to see how individual lives are affected

by globalization. Via looking at two texts *Golden Runner* by Khaled 1 Houseini and *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi, the paper will study how globalization affects the process of finding oneself and the problem of adjusting to new cultures and the solution of reconciling the self in the globalized world. These two novels illustrate how displacement of people either by migration, exile, or socio-political upheaval has deeply affecting consequences on body and group identity. Finally, this paper is also intended to describe globalization as a critical theme in modern literature and the way it would depict emotional and cultural struggles of characters. In analyzing these novels, the paper shall provide a better insight that will define the transforming nature of identity in a globalized world and how the contemporary novelist is meeting the challenge of cultural hybridity, belonging and transforming the self.

1.2 Interpretation of literary studies about the effect of globalization :

The attempts of the contemporary novels to address the global concerns of migrating, cultural mixing, and evolving identity have been well studied in several scholarly works as factors being strengthened by the phenomenon of globalization. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2013) and Khaled Hosseini (2003) are some of the authors who have made it big because their works have managed to enlighten people not only in the effects of globalization on an individual, but also on a society at large. *The Americanah* by Adichie (2013) is commonly used as the example of a critical approach to contemporary novels addressing the issue of globalization and migration. The novel gives an account of the struggles of Ifemelu who is a Nigerian woman who relocates to the United States and struggles to navigate a novel culture without losing touch with her own country. As defined by scholars, the novel does not only deal with the physical mechanism of moving out of one country to another but also that of emotional, psychological, and cultural uprooting, which are part and parcel of migration. According to (Parker, 2019), Adichie in her literary work has depicted the role of Adichie, the struggles of Ifemelu who takes on a new identity as she cannot resist the forces of assimilation and her homeland roots, which reflect the experience of most people in the globalized world. Integration of culture and conflict among diverse identities are essential in the story and they represent

larger changes in the formation of identity in the era of globalization. There is also a similarity by Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003). where the author presents the theme of migration, displacement and identity as they occurred in post-war Afghanistan and the following diaspora. The novel narrates the experiences of Amir, a young boy, who immigrates into the United States after the Soviet invasion of Kabul and his quest to deal with his guilt, identity and belonging, in his new land. According to literary critics (Ramesh, 2017), the novel by Hosseini not only describes the physical displacement that happens due to the Conflict involves not only emotional fragmentation but also cultural fragmentation, that takes place when people are obliged to move to a different country and their homeland stays behind. The novel also brings out the nature of cultural issues, since through the character of Amir, the reader is able to see the discomfort that he experiences in trying to strike a balance between the world in which he has grown up as an Afghan and the new world as a westerner. The issue of exile and identity that Hosseini explores addresses the greater impacts of globalization on the lives of those people who are removed physically but are still emotionally burdened by things in their past. Adichie and Hosseini present a vivid depiction of the characters who pass through a clash of tensions between the basis culture and the globalised world in which they live. Said (1993) notes that these stories give us an insight into the inner struggles of human beings who live between cultures and are thus part of the emotional and psychological consequence of displacement in the increasingly changing and complex world. As such, the works of Adichie and Hosseini would be significant case studies to consider how the field of literature can be used to mirror the larger cultural changes that globalization triggers in society in general, especially in terms of migration, cultural mixtures, and identity and orientation. Also, Appadurai (1996) claims that because of increasing global culture flow involving movement of people, ideas, and media, new spaces where the individual negotiates his/her identities have emerged. This process in literature is mostly exemplified by the characters who face hybridization of their cultural surrounding, thus emerging with new hybrid identities that break common denominators of ethnicity, nationality, and culture. These hybrid identities are mainly low in the books of Adichie and Hosseini where characters keep on changing and forming their identities according to the power of

globalization. Overall, the literary works related to the issue of globalization have proved the involvement of the authors such as Adichie and Hosseini in the matters of migration, identity, and hybridization of cultures. Their writings give important information on how globalization determines the personal story of individuals, whether locally or internationally. The experiences of such characters as Ifemelu and Amir allow scholars to progressively remain more aware of the emotional and cultural changes that happen once individuals have been moved over the border in a globalized world.

1.3 Postcolonial Theory:

Another aspect of this study is the postcolonial theory which is critical of the legacies of colonialism and how they still shape identity formation. In this sense, Edward Said (1993) argues that the colonialism sets up a binary between the colonized and the colonizer, where the latter tends to be marginalized or Othered in the process. This theory is especially useful in interpreting the identities of Amir and Ifemelu since they both have to negotiate their identities in the postcolonial world. Displaced in Afghanistan, Amir, is left with no choice but to consider his Afghan heritage and the greater forces of the world that even touch his own identity in the U.S. The framework proposed by Said assists in examining how the sense of identity of Amir is preconditioned not only by his personal decisions but also by the power dynamics of the world that influences the political situation in Afghanistan and by the personal relations of Amir. The postcolonial identity of a Nigerian immigrant in the U.S. causes the experience of Ifemelu in Americanah where race and cultural assimilation are essential elements shaping the perception of others and her own perception. The theory of Other developed by Said enables to get a better insight into the processes of the self-image of Ifemelu, which is constantly undermined by the fact that she is a black African woman in America.

1.4 Cultural Criticism:

The study also applies cultural criticism, focusing on how literature portrays, reproduces, and critiques cultural ideologies. This has been a very important approach in the perspective of the effect of globalization on identity. According to Stuart Hall (1990), identity is not a predetermined but is always in a

continuous process of negotiation with regard to culture, history and external social forces. This view will be used to discuss the hybridity of the identities of the characters, who have to live through the various cultural influences. The cultural negotiation that Ifemelu undertakes in the move to the U.S. is that of tackling the prickly issues of race and cultural expectations in the American world. On the same note, identity crisis in *The Kite Runner* by Amir depicts a contradiction between his western lifestyle and his heritage as an Afghan. Cultural criticism assists in putting the identity of the two characters into context in the sense that the identities of both are defined by the existence of a conflict between their background histories and their respective cultures where they have relocated themselves.

1.5 Transnationalism and Migration Studies:

Migration studies and transnationalism are also valuable theoretical perspectives of this study. Saskia Sassen (1998) addresses the issue of new identities emerging in the process of migration and being not confined to national borders, but being formed in accordance with the transnational relations. This paradigm is essential in explaining the manner in which globalization has brought about a world where people can be divided between their mother countries and their adopted ones. Displacement in *The Kite Runner* is not an incident of spatial relocation alone, but also of Amir as he tries to move on emotionally and see his past as Amir and his new life in the U.S as Amir. In the same light, the story of Ifemelu in *Americanah* shows how she becomes more transnational as she tries to live her life in both Nigeria and the U.S., keeping her connections to her Nigerian heritage and her new, mostly conflicting, American cultural identity that she has gained. Diaspora and transnationalism theories emphasize the permeability of identity and the complicated manner in which migration and globalisation influence individual and group identities of belonging.

1.6 Literary Techniques:

The analysis will commence by discussing the employments of literary techniques by the authors that they used to describe consequences of globalization. It involves the discussion of plot, point of view, and the use of

symbols. Such methods are crucial to the interpretation of the ways in which authors show the complex concepts like displacement and identity. As such, I could use as an example how an author formats a narrative that could resemble a fragmented sense of self through a character living in various cultural dimensions. The internal conflict in which characters divided into several identities find themselves can also be pointed out by such symbolism found within the text as the common motif of a journey or home.

1.7 Character Development:

Character development is another point that will be the attention of this study. At the core of analyzing how globalization affects identity is the character change in reaction to the changing cultural environments they have to face. It will examine their character, which develops or transforms as they are torn away or forced to deal with the realities of modern society where people live in a global world. The identities of characters, which are undergoing shift, the conflict of their personal heritage and the global influences will be addressed in details. The Kite Runner (Hosseini, 2003) and Americanah (Adichie, 2013).by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie are two novels about protagonists whose identity is created by the conflict between the aspects of their past, as a specific culture, and the present they live in which is the globalized world.

1.8 Thematic Elements:

The paper will concentrate on topics of the novels, especially those of displacement and identity. Cultural conflict, home and belonging will be critically analysed. The experience of alienation/hybridity among characters in the cultural movements between cultures: how does it occur? What do they do with their domestic identities to realize new global identities? The researcher will specifically be interested in how these authors reveal the interplay of the twin act of tradition and modernity, the local and the global as the prevailing issue within their work that affects the characters with regard to their sense of self. The analysis will help in giving a better understanding of the experience of displacement in the face of globalization emotionally and psychologically.

1.8 Strategy and Methods of Research:

This research will employ close reading as the central way of textual analysis to be able to analyse the novels. The phenomenon of globalization and the development of the theme of displacement and identity will be considered thoroughly and the texts will be studied through close reading. In this method, emphasis will be laid on the style of narrative choice, characterization, and use of language that will expose the forces in the society. Also, secondary sources like articles, books, and essays on globalization and literature in relation to literature will be used to complement the study. These sources will be the theoretical foundation that will allow contextualizing the findings in the totality of academic discourse. Further, the comparative method is going to be used to establish similarities and disparities that exist between two main texts, *The Kite Runner* and *Americanah*, especially in their dislocation and identity issues applied within globalization. This method of comparison shall also be used to point out the manner in which other authors who have other cultural backgrounds reflect similar issues.

1.9 Character Analysis:

This paper shall focus on a critical analysis of the characters. The analysis of the evolution of such characters as Amir in *The Kite Runner* (Hosseini, 2003) and Ifemelu in *Americanah* (Adichie, 2013) will be used to discuss the influences of globalization and displacement to shape their identities. According to Ramesh (2017), the progress of the character in the postcolonial and diasporic literature is usually linked to the emotional and psychological consequences of migration and cultural adjustment. It will be a pivotal tool to comprehend both the inner and outer struggles the characters have to face, trying to walk through their transforming roles between their home country and their newfound nations.

1.0 Symbolic Representations:

Symbolism will also be used significantly in explicating the themes of displacement and identity. Both authors Hosseini and Adichie portray the inner conflicts of their characters through symbolism. The Kite Runner, the theme of the kite also played in the novel served to illustrate not only innocence of

yesteryear but the burden of guilt and atonement as the story charts the course of self-discovery and reconciliation of Amir (Hosseini, 2003). In *Americanah*, the blog, *The Non-American Black*, authored by Ifemelu provides a metaphorical platform on which the author explores the identity crisis facing an African who, as an immigrant, lives in the United States and attempts to cope with it by trying to find a way unifying her African identity with the new competing cultures that form her new environment (Adichie, 2013). Said (1993) argues that literature is mainly used as literatures because most of the time they are used to represent the actual social and political circumstances that define individual lives and hence they become an important kit in highlighting the complicated processes of identity transformations in the face of globalization. In combination, these analytical tools will enable a complete look into the ways in which displacement and identity are presented in the novels, and especially through the perspective of globalization. By comparing and contrasting how characters accommodate and are changed by the new worlds, how narrative form and symbolism shapes and influences the development of these themes, this paper will provide worthwhile insights not only to the emotional and cultural intricacies of being in a globalized society, but also to how the art of story telling can be used to explore these issues.

1.11 Conclusion

As discussed in this paper, globalization has been shown to have profoundly influenced the modern-day novel writing especially in the matters of displacement and identity. Through the reading of the novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, it is clear that both books identify the multidimensional emotional and psychological consequences of adult life as a citizen in the globalized society. Both authors do this through the stories that refer to the status of characters that are outsiders in their new location without a certain country and out of place with new cultures, and having the challenge to somehow integrate the duality of their identities facing the new life. The two novels have the theme of emotional and

psychological burden of displacement. The situation in *The Kite Runner* is a symbolism of something more than physical evacuation of Afghanistan by Amir at that time; it is an internal conflict of mind exploited by guilt, betrayal, and finding redemption. His emigration to the United States is not a comfort but further alienates him in his emotional fragmentation since he is persistently haunted by the experiences of his past. In the same fashion, in *Americanah*, Ifemelu is culminated with the danger of cultural alienation that occurs later when she relocates to the U.S. She juggles through an intricate racial landscape and has a messy identity crisis, as she tries to fit in American life. Her loss is more than just physical of losing her motherland since she feels displaced culturally and the problem is that she does not fit in the new pattern. The two characters are good examples of psychological displacement as they are caught between their roots and the demands of the culture of origin which can in most cases be contrary to another. Another theme that is specifically portrayed in both novels is the search of identity. In *Americanah*, Ifemelu fears an identity crisis that is imported by her relocation to the U.S. Her blog, The Non-American Black, shows that she is dealing with the inner struggle of her African identity with the racial identity thrust on her in America. In *The Kite Runner*, the identity crisis of Amir relates to the lack of values and the way his character is seeking redemption when he goes back to Afghanistan. This development of self, full of guilty and shame, only ends with Amir coming to peace with his past and his heritage. According to Ramesh (2017), the identity in an age of globalization is complicated and fluid, not only defined by national roots, but also reactions to other cultures and societies. Both novels discuss the theme of belonging which is closely connected to the theme of displacement as well as identity. In *the Kite Runner*, the fact that Amir visits Afghanistan defines his nostalgia towards his home, however, he realizes that he cannot recover the past. The trip to home is

full of alienation since he understands that his life has changed beyond recognition. The issue of belonging to the U.S is also complicated in *Americanah* as Ifemelu tries to fit into the new world. She is struggling to balance her cultural heritage and the American society and this represents the experience of immigrants at large. Using the experiences of Ifemelu as a jumping point, Adichie (2013) manages to highlight the general concepts of immigrant identity and the long-term processes of compromise between the individual heritage and the requirements of society. Lastly, Hosseini and Adichie also show the tremendous consequences of globalization on the identity of their characters, which make them reconsider their belonging to a specific place in the world. Those main heroes of these novels are struggling with the tension between the memory and the present facts in their lives and they can find the peace in the world destroying the physical and cultural boundaries all the time. These stories give a glimpse of crisis experienced by refugees and displaced groups of people and how globalization may have established fluidity, a dynamically changing sense of identity.

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