



## The Feeling of Eternal Displacement: A Study of Javed's *Ashes, Wine and Dust*

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**Abstract-** This study explores the post-colonial concern of place and displacement in Javed's *Ashes, Wine and Dust* and its consequent identity crisis through textual analysis of the novel. The novel traces the theme of home and homelessness and the paper explores the connection between place and identity. Mariam feels alienated at home and this feeling of displacement unsettles her at each stage of her life.

**Keywords:** displacement, post colonial, identity, hybridity.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Post-colonial experience has disintegrated the relationship between the inseparable self and place as discussed in various post-colonial works. This disintegration results in displacement which leads to an identity crisis. The current study focuses on Kanza Javed's debut novel *Ashes, Wine and Dust* and aims to discuss the eternal feeling of homelessness experienced by different characters and intends to explore the reasons behind this displacement. The paper investigates the role of the nationalistic divide between self and other which contributes to the feeling of displacement. It also aims to compare the consequence of mass displacement as an aftermath of colonial end and the experience of voluntary displacement in an era of neo-colonialism.

Various forms of displacement including exile, migration and hybridity have become central to the postcolonial thought and have been explored extensively in postcolonial writings. As discussed in *Empire Writes Back* (2002), "A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place" (Ashcroft, Griffins and Tiffin, p.8). The protagonist of the novel fails to establish a profound relationship with any single place she inhabits and experiences ambivalence as a consequence.

As a bitter consequence of political upheavals, the past century has witnessed the large-scale dispersal of peoples and displaced populations across the globe. The two great wars and innumerable military conflicts have forced millions to be displaced from their homes and take refuge in foreign lands. This mass displacement has not only personal and economic penalties but has also given rise "to the resurgence of long pent-up ethnic hatreds and conflicts" (Loescher, 1996, p.4). The gory religious divide that formed the basis of newly independent states of India and Pakistan continues to dictate the future of these countries. This religious extremism marginalized those people who belonged to the other religion as seen in *Ashes, Wine and Dust* through the depiction of society's treatment of Prakriti.

The declaration of the division of Indian Subcontinent brought an end to the prolonged British rule in the region. People of India were asked to associate their loyalties with either of the post-independent nations. The journey from foreign to national rule was marked by genocide, vehemence and mass displacement. The realization of independent states left most people uncertain about their place in the world. The termination of one regime and the emergence of two new ones displaced the colonized and labelled them as either Indians or Pakistanis based on their religion. Partition not only entailed displacement but redefined identities as "religion became the major standard for defining identity" (Mansoor, 2012). These redefined identities led to ambivalence as the majority of people found themselves in a dilemma. Many Muslims who considered India their home had to shift to Pakistan because of their religion and vice versa even if they had no affiliation with the land.

The arrival and retreat of British left indelible marks on the history of Subcontinent. The politics of India and Pakistan still revolves around the events of partition. The future of the two countries cannot be separated from their past just like the characters of *Ashes, Wine and Dust*. The characters in the novel are

not able to disassociate themselves from their life in Pakistan yet they feel displaced in their own country. This conflicting relationship between characters and the place they belong to leads to ambivalence as the characters fail to find a home and are remain in a perpetual state of homelessness.

Postcolonial literature explores the power relations between the colonizers and the colonized from the perspective of the colonized. It discusses the aftermath of colonization and reveals the explicit and implicit means employed by the former colonizing countries to keep the colony as a self-perpetuating vassal of the colonizing state. Postcolonial theory and literature want the West to acknowledge the perpetual harm done by them during and after the period of colonization. In this sense, postcolonial literature can be defined as writing which has been “affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft, Griffins and Tiffin, 2002, p.2).

Colonialism did not end with the exit of British from India. It has been replaced by neocolonialism. Neocolonialism involves indirect economic, social and political control of developing countries by the developed countries especially England and America. Svarc (2013) asserts “neocolonialism is a model of indirect subjugation that has been taking place for over fifty years, but it experienced an upswing only in the 1980s with the advent of corporate globalization and its dominant ideology of neoliberal capitalism.”

Neocolonialism propagates euro-centric ideas that prevailed during the colonial era. The definition of culture, civility, education and thinking is derived from the definition given by the colonizers to the colonized. The ideas of the West have been accepted as universal and standard. The superiority of the West is accepted as naturally as the inferiority of the East because of postcolonial experience. Seen in this context, it is not surprising that the people of South-east Asia voluntarily migrate to America to fulfil their American Dream.

The idea of modernization is also a Western one as it has projected itself to be developed in contrast to the rest of the world. West defines itself in contrast to the East and simulates an image of a progressive and civilized world which can never be achieved by the Orient but can only be dreamt of. The deceiving idea of American Dream enchants millions to migrate to America. According to the census conducted in 2014, the total number of immigrants in America is 42.4 million (Camarota, 2013). Those who migrate try their utmost to adapt the lifestyle of this uninviting land where strict division of self and other never lets a foreigner feel at home. The feeling of otherness leads to the feeling of homelessness and displacement. With the loss of connection between home and self, an identity crisis emerges. Identity can be defined in terms of association with place or a group of people with whom one finds some similarity or in opposition to the opposite group. It can be further defined as:

Identity is marked by similarity, that is of the people like us, and by difference, of those who are not. [...] identities are necessarily the product of the society in which we live and our relationship with others. Identity provides a link between individuals and the world in which they live. Identity combines how I see myself and how others see me. Identity involves the subjective, and the external. It is a socially recognized position, recognized by others, not just by me. (Woodward, 2004, p.25).

*Ashes, Wine and Dust*, shortlisted for *The Tibor Jones South Asia Prize* explores the meaningful relationship between one's identity and place. It deals with a range of pertinent topics “from the changing landscape of a city, to the relationships between couples and family members, notions of belonging, the fate of minorities in Pakistan, acts of terrorism, the ‘American Dream’, feelings of longing and the importance of one's history. (Malhotra) Each character's identity is defined or disintegrated because of displacement be it forced or voluntary.

Set in Lahore and Washington, the novel abounds in detailed description of the cities and opens with a picturesque sketch of Lahore. “The imagery of Lahore with its canals, food, colourful bazaars (markets) and the backdrop of Badshahi Mosque in several scenes brings back the love of Lahore for those who have visited the beautiful city and invites those who still haven't” (Abbasi, 2015). The presentation of Lahore is appealing but subjective. In each phase of her life, Lahore takes on a new identity for Mariam. As her identity is always on the change so is the identity of her city. Each character views Lahore according to their relationship with the city. The city of Lahore is not a passive backdrop in the novel but is a dynamic entity which defines the identity of the characters. The cities be it Mariam's village, Lahore or Washington evolve and take on new meanings. The novel “explores the ideas of belonging, fluid definitions of home, and the cyclical nature of memory” (Ahmad, 2016). In one of her interviews, the writer commented on the structure of her novel and said,

In the novel, Mariam, the protagonist, straddles three different worlds – ‘Ashes’ captures Mariam’s childhood [...] ‘Wine’ deals the concept of duality. It focuses on the displacement and disorientation of characters who have migrated to a foreign land. It asks the question, is there such a thing as a perfect balance? Is it possible to shed your skin and become a new person? And Dust takes a full circle and brings us back to Lahore, a new, cosmopolitan city inflicted with political and other external forces that somehow fracture its divinity and old- world charm. (Javed, 2015).

The novel *Ashes, Wine and Dust* abounds in characters who feel displaced despite being at home. Despite their utmost desire to find a home they remain homeless and are unable to find a connection between themselves and the place where they live. In an ever-changing and constantly evolving socio-political environment of the postcolonial world, they find themselves in a conflicting state where they must ascribe their alliance to one country but are unable to decide where their loyalty lies.

Like many other characters of the novel, the protagonist remains displaced throughout the narrative. Lahore and Washington both hold significance for her for distinct reasons but still, she is unable to find a home in any of the two places. She suffers from an identity crisis in both places; which results in her ambivalent relationship with the two countries; in each place, she feels an incomprehensible sense of familiarity and also an unexplainable sense of loss. Since she travels extensively her loyalties change. She tries to remain loyal to her familial city of Lahore and also to Washington D.C which offers her an opportunity of professional fulfilment.

Mariam Ameen’s journey can be divided into three phases. In each phase of her life, she finds herself in a new place which she considers to be her home and yet remains homeless. Her childhood years are divided between the city of Lahore and her grandfather’s village and this division makes her aware of the absence of a permanent home at an early age. She lives her teenage years in Lahore but longs for her village and remains torn between her present and past. Her adult life is divided between Washington D.C and Lahore and her experience in each city cements her belief that she cannot call either of the city her home. In all three phases of her life, the common denominator is her feeling of being displaced.

Mariam belongs to an ordinary middle-class family settled in Lahore. She had a reasonably comfortable childhood but always feels like a caged bird in her city of birth even though she has the right to movement and education. Since her early years, she is unable to ascribe to the traditional codebook of her society and feels that “an invisible chalk ring of moral and religious confines” (Javed, 2015, p.8) encircle her.

Her profound relationship with her grandfather continues to affect her even after his death. This relationship forms the basis of her relationship with her village where her grandfather resided. Even after his death, Mariam feels her grandfather’s presence in the smells and sights of the village and readily agrees to accompany her grandmother to her village. She finds a sense of security and belonging in the village. The village of her grandfather with its close-knit family system seems more inviting to her than her city. The ease which the village offers to make new connections, the welcoming neighbours and farms allure her away from city life. It is in this place that she finds a purpose, a purpose to look after her ailing grandmother and bring her back to health. The village gives her an identity of a healer and a saviour which she cherishes the most.

In contrast, it is in the village of her grandfather that she realizes her difference from the rest of her family members for the first time. Her attraction towards the song of a Hindu woman highlights this fact. It is also in the village that she realizes that she needs to conceal her true self from others to be accepted by society. The codes of society dictate that she must stay away from the outcast Hindu family so she listens to the song in secrecy to gratify her desire. This being her first act of rebellion sets the stage for her future endeavours.

The significance of her village increases twofold as it provides her with one of the most valuable relationships of her life. Mariam befriends the village thief Karan unaware of the fact that this friendship will not only transcend time but also change her relationship with her grandfather’s village. What connects her to Karan is the fact that he talks about Mariam’s grandfather with the same devotion as she does. In this way, she can find something in common with a Hindu boy. The collective sense of loss connects them overpowering the religious divide between the two.

Mariam feels that she has more in common with the untouchable Hindu boy than her relatives because they are connected through a sense of loss. It is at this moment that she realizes her distance from her relatives who focus on superficial reality and have a limited perception because of conventions. Her encounter with Karan intrigues her young brain to question her religion. She envies Karan as he keeps the ashes of his dead father with him while her grandfather is buried far away from her. Since she is not allowed to question

anything she is unable to find satisfactory answers and feels distant from her religion and finds the custom of burial a punishment. As a child, she just wants to be close to her grandfather and envies Karan for keeping the ashes of his father close with himself.

This episode makes her question her religion and she is attracted towards the religion of the other. She is no longer clear about her spirituality and experiences an identity crisis for the first time. She is unable to associate with her group of people and feels as marginalized as Karan. Being a Muslim she feels guilty to prefer a Hindu practice over that of her religion and undergoes an identity crisis. She is unable to associate completely with her religion and can also not relate to the Hindu religion in its entirety.

She is not allowed to play with Karan as he is a Hindu. The religious divide is implanted in the young minds of children and this ideology leads to the division of the society. Mariam is warned against playing with Karan as her playdates will earn a bad name for the family. Her friendship with Karan would endanger the family's name, integrity and reputation and as a caution, she is told to unfriend the filthy Hindu boy. Her exposure to the religious divide marks the beginning of her alienation from her village.

The second phase of her life begins after the death of her grandmother when she has to bid farewell to her village and move to Lahore. Thus begins a new chapter of her life where she has to live in a new place. With the death of her grandmother, her grandfather's house is reduced to merely a building as it inhabits memories not people. Fourteen years after her grandmother's death, Mariam still revisits her past as the present is not what gives her content. Be it a seasonal rain or an occasional storm, Mariam can only think of her grandfather's *haveli*. Her concern for an empty building confuses and bewilders her. She feels more for that old abandoned piece of land than for her home in Lahore.

This phase of her life in Lahore is without the smell of her grandfather's *hookah* and Karan's voice. She finds herself without her two best friends and feels lost. She cannot feel any connection with Lahore because of her connection with her village so she resorts to her memories. Years later when she moves back to the village she is startled to find that the house of her best friend has been washed clean by the villagers. The burnt *tulsi* plants and the ripped off posters of *Ganesha* break her heart. Karan's house defined her relationship with her village but the unidentifiable adobe of Karan makes her question her association with her village. The only place where she found peace is destroyed by the people whom she was related to. All she prays for at this moment is that her memories should not be as fleeting as the mud houses and the rice fields of her village which evolved into concrete houses and rice factories. It dawns on her that the village is not a static entity but is dynamic and continues to change over time. She feels betrayed by the land she once called home. As the village of her grandfather evolves she confesses her desire "to discover new places and learn new things" (Javed, 2015, p.80).

With time things go from being bad to worse. Anika's forced marriage affects her deeply and the city of Lahore seems to be inhabited by wolves who indulge in malicious gossip. After her sister's marriage, she feels alone in her house. Her younger siblings start their own life and the next thing on her mother's to-do list was her marriage. Mariam is not appeased by what she observes in her house and says, "things were falling in predictable patterns and I felt misplaced" (Javed, 2015, p.116). Her life in Pakistan appears ordinary to her and she decides to go to America to experience the extraordinary. The traditional lifestyle of Lahore suffocates her and she feels suffocated. As Bina Shah writes:

the easily identifiable markers of Pakistani identity — race, religion, family ties, social class — have always been sources of security for Pakistanis, but practiced in that peculiar, claustrophobic South Asian manner that involves an overbearing need to interfere in the affairs of others' personal lives, they often constrain and restrict independence and freedom. (Shah, 2014)

Her ambivalent relationship with Lahore keeps her in a state of constant confusion. She is unable to think like the rest of the people. Her views regarding marriage and her grandfather's affair differ than the traditional school of thought. The prospect of studying in America provides her with a chance to be free and to be independent. Her heart burns with a desire to be in another country where the traditional confines cannot suffocate her. In the hope of gaining new friends and new experiences, she embarks on her journey to America. She is fooled by the idea of what America has to offer. Fighting to retain the memories of her grandfather, she decides to pursue her further studies in America, where she tries to mix up with the crowd without losing herself. But encounters with strangers leave her broken heart there also.

In an exhibition organized to portray the Artist's paintings, Mariam realizes her displacement in the foreign land. She empathizes with the portrait of the woman who is shown to be misplaced in her setting. Gradually she forms a bond between herself and the objects in the paintings. She reassures herself that

America is her new home but every little thing makes her realize that she is in a foreign land. The extreme American winter seems threatening to her and she longs for the mild winter of Lahore. Not just the weather but even the smell of Washington D.C reminds her of her outsider status.

Though America offers her freedom from traditions the absence of her grandfather's grave and Karan's ghost makes her feel incomplete. She longs for late-night walks with her Anika. Unconsciously she notices the differences between her two homes. The roads, streets, food, buildings and people are different in Washington. Lubna and Rizwan also appear strangers to her in the foreign land. She tries to be as flexible as water and adapts to the life of America. Slowly and gradually she begins to fit in and can call Lubna's home her new home but it does not take long before she begins to feel like an intruder in Lubna's home and spends more time in her university and decides to settle in a hostel eventually. Mariam is unable to identify with Americans and feels alienated. Commenting on the work of Salman Rushdie, Sonja Lehmann remarks, "the migrant is considered to be neither here nor there. He is alienated from his origins but does not fit in with his new environment either. His sense of belonging to a place is either disturbed or lost altogether and he is not sure of his identity anymore as a result of this" (Reitemeier, 2012, p.284).

Her relationship with Rizwan is synonymous with her relationship with America. Initially, her American cousin appears to be a character from a book who is charming and enchanting just like the country to which he belongs. His inviting mannerism and sweet talk make Mariam think of him as her friend and a confidant. Mariam becomes curious about him and wants to know more about his way of life just as she is curious to know more about America. Her relationship with Rizwan takes on a new dimension because of his unjust demands. Just as her American Dream is shattered so is her relationship with Rizwan. Just like his country of birth, he appears bright and inviting on the outside but is a selfish and hollow being from the inside. Since the time she moves to America, she provides a shoulder to cry and an ear to listen to Rizwan. She makes herself available for her but gets betrayed in response.

Their relationship mirrors neocolonialism. She feels abandoned and betrayed at once by the people whom she considered her family. The ease with which they replace people from their life shocks. Amid people who have no time for relationships, she longs for the strong familial ties back in Lahore. She begins to miss all her parents and siblings. She is excited to see Abdullah because he smells like home. He reminds her of her mother's cooking and monsoon.

The equation between Lubna and Mariam paints the profit-based relations of America with developing countries. As long as these countries are a source of profit they are dealt with superficial respect but as soon as the material interest ends, the poor countries are abandoned. Whoever brings no profit is of no value to America and its citizens alike.

Things in Pakistan turn from bad to worse and she hears about the bomb blasts while she is in Washington D.C. The indifference of the people regarding the situation in Pakistan hurts her. The Americans understand Pakistan as a death zone where human bodies are blown up on a daily basis. Where each second citizen is a suicide bomber and where the security of people is minimal. Such observations were completely different from Mariam's Lahore. She wants them to understand that Lahore where she grew up. She wants them to understand that Lahore is more than what the television describes, she wants them to know about the colourful markets, the architecture of Moghul era, the colourful people and their languages, the delicious food and the train station.

It is then that she realizes that she needs those familiar streets of Lahore. She realizes the selfish attitude of people and the fact that none care for the other. The only motive in their life is to progress materialistically. She begins to despise the people and their land but she still is not aware of the heartbreak that she will experience soon. The land makes her question her intelligence. It makes her feel gullible as she was easily fooled by the glistening image of America. Her status in America is that of undesired and unwanted other whose presence is a burden and whose absence will not matter.

The process of othering is also evident in the disappearance of Abdullah which is followed by the selfish inquiry of police. Their first concern being Abdullah's involvement in terrorist activities. They know nothing about him, yet they are sure of his involvement in terrorism. He is a victim of terrorism and will not be a potential terrorist. As Mariam realizes, "The only thing that became clear to me by the end was just how utterly alone I was in all of this" (Javed, 2015, p.215). They were seen "as a marching band of suspects" (Javed, 2015, p.215). She refers to Washington as a habitat which is "unnatural" to her being and longs for the sunny winters of Lahore (Javed, 2015, p.211).

In search of her brother, she comes back to familiar warm winds of Lahore and the known smell of earth. In her imagination, she had pictured Lahore as the Lahore of her childhood. She thinks that stepping foot in Lahore will be magical but it feels ordinary and feels lost in her own country as things have changed drastically. To get some sense of familiarity she goes to visit the graveyard. Grandfather's and Karan's houses were the microcosm of the village for Mariam and with Karan's house gone, the graveyard is the only thread that connects her to her village. She comes back only to find her grandfather's grave is in a dreadful condition. Huge cracks mark the surface of the tomb and the ink on the tombstone has faded. The grave was the link that connected her to her dead grandfather but now that link is fading away. The way she is perceived by people also disturbs her as they gossip about her lifestyle in Washington. For the people, she is an unholy woman who has returned from an unholy land without the brother she was asked to look after. Such hostile reception by the people restricts her within four walls of her house. She is no longer able to visit the graveyard.

It is not only the city of Lahore that has disintegrated but her own family undergoes drastic changes. Her mother looks for her son like a mindless creature. She is unable to find a connection with the city of her birth and says, "The irony was that though Lahore was the city I grew up in, I felt more like an outsider than ever. I needed something familiar in this place full of strangers" (Javed, 2015, p.274). She feels displaced in her own house because she is unable to follow the codebook of her family. The distance between her and her family members increases drastically.

The Lahore of her childhood has vanished and has become the city of angry mobs who burn tires and vandalize buildings. She realizes that the old city of her childhood has long been dead. The city that she visualized during her time in America is lost. It has become a frightening place full of sad stories. Javed never mentions the fall of twin towers and its consequence on the Muslim world explicitly but the implicit indications hold America responsible for the destruction of Mariam's Lahore.

Mariam is not only displaced geographically and but also in time. Her past is an alive entity for her which makes it difficult for her to settle in her present. The novel begins with the funeral of her grandfather but the death is only a physical one as he stays alive in Mariam's life. She thinks of his death as "her first memory of feeling pain" (Javed, 2015, p.3). She is unable to let go of his memories and the continuous trips down the memory lane impede her process of accepting the present. All her best memories include her grandfather and she admits being closer to him than with her father.

As a child, Mariam had a desire to skip her childhood and jump to adulthood. She associated adulthood with freedom and adventure. But as she grows up and faces the challenges of adulthood she wishes to go back to being a child again and enjoy the simple pleasures of her life and to play in the backyard of her grandfather's house. Even in Washington, she cannot let go of her memories as she confesses, "A single petal took me back fifteen years" (Javed, 2015, p.188).

Mariam's displacement in time mirrors the condition of millions of migrants who experience nostalgia. The allure of modernized West tempts them to leave their homeland just as Mariam's idea of freedom associated with adulthood makes her want to jump to her youth. Once the immigrants start living in foreign countries they experience marginalization and start to romanticize their native land. When Mariam grows up she longs to relive her past and wants to be a child again.

The novel abounds in characters who feel displaced despite being at their home. Mariam's childhood friend Karan and his mother live out their days in Pakistan hoping to go back to India. Prakriti, who is born and raised in India, had to move to Pakistan at the time of Partition. Her husband, Dev, could not let go of his ancestral city and so the family decided to stay in Pakistan. Like millions of others who were uprooted from their homeland, Prakriti finds herself in a hostile foreign land which is intolerant of people belonging to Hindu religion as "religion became the determinant of nationality" (Menon & Bhasin, 1998, p.4). Though she tries her best but is never able to settle in the newly created state of Pakistan. She says, "Bharat will always be home" (Javed, 2015, p.51). The novel, through the characterization of Prakriti, shows that the adverse effects of colonialism did not end with the independence of the two nations. The opinion of ordinary people did not count in this process of resettlement and a few powerful people imposed national identities and provoked people in the name of religion.

Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims were all redefined by the process of Partition: as butchers, or as devious others; as untrustworthy and anti-national; but perhaps most fundamentally, as Sikhs and Muslims and Hindus alone...men, women and children belonging to these communities – yet belonging to different castes,

classes, occupations...have been seen in terms of little but their Sikh-ness, their Muslim-ness or their Hinduness. (Pandey, 2001, p.16)

The partition of sub-continent separated relatives from each other. The divide between the two countries was mirrored in the divide between families. There were a lot of women who accompanied their husband to the other state leaving their family behind and Prakriti is one of those. Many of such women suffered after the death of their husbands as they “were left without the resources of kinship for material support within their natal families or social support for remarriage” (Zamindar, 2010, p.211). The Hindu mother and son are not welcomed in a Muslim majority area. They have to adapt to the changing social setting. Prakriti changes her name to Poonam to hide her identity but she soon realizes that changing a name might be easy but feeling at home in a foreign place is not simple. They desire to go back to India to immerse the ashes of their deceased family members but cannot immerse the ashes of their Hindu relatives in Ravi River because the main river of Lahore does not hold the same significance for them as did Ganga. Karan says, “The Ravi is not holy” (Javed, 2015, p.51).

Karan’s idea of providing for his mother further marginalizes the two. In the absence of a bread earner and utter neglect and indifference from the villagers, Karan resorts to thievery. When he is caught red-handed, the villagers in their rage scatter the ashes everywhere. They do not only shatter the urns but in doing so they dishonour Prakriti’s most valuable and perhaps the only prized possession.

This episode not only cements the Hindu family’s foreign and helpless status but makes Mariam question the actions of her fraternity. It is also when she gets to know that Karan is a thief but this detail is overshadowed by the vengeance of the villagers. She thinks, “Who could plot such a revenge for Karan’s indiscretion? Who could be so mindless, inhuman, destructive?” (Javed, 2015, p.63). This episode is described by her as “her second memory of feeling pain” (Javed, 2015, p.63). After losing her grandfather she experiences another loss of losing her friend Karan. The only difference being that this time her people are responsible for this loss. They have robbed her of her reason to feel connected to them. Sajal Nag redefines self and other in her article *Nationhood and Displacement in Indian Subcontinent* where “self” consists of “people who share common cultural characteristics” and defines nationhood as a “narcissist practice where nation-building was all about building walls around the self and distancing from the other” (Nag, 2001). Such a narcissistic attitude of the villagers destroys the life of Karan and his mother who are never accepted as Pakistani despite their nationality.

Mariam’s grandfather, Muhammad Askar Ameen, finds himself torn between the newly created states of India and Pakistan. His newly wedded wife and his family are settled in Pakistan but the woman he loves resides in India. This division which separates the two geographically keeps both of them torn between the two countries. His reasons dictate his relationship towards India as he romanticizes the land of his beloved and refuses to accept the ideas and beliefs propagated by the state. It is this sense of displacement that deceives him into thinking of a utopian land where questions of identity do not matter.

Mariam’s uncle whom she refers to as the artist abandons his home town and moves to America. He is remembered as a “man who went astray” by his family members (Javed, 2015, 81). His move to The United States of America is a voluntary action and is an opportunity for him to pursue his passion. He settles there with his wife and starts a new chapter of his life in the foreign land. Despite his American nationality, his ties with Pakistan cannot be undone. His ancestral home, local women and landscape unconsciously appear in his paintings. The home he left so long ago to find a new home makes its presence felt in his artwork.

Since his decision to move to America was an act of rebellion he cannot think of coming back to Pakistan. His return to Pakistan will prove his failure and the ideals that he stood for. Also, his family will not agree with his idea of moving to Pakistan. To avoid the bitter reality, he locks himself in his room and paints his childhood home. He is exiled away from his home and realizes that to be an exile is to be alive. His character mirrors the fate of millions of immigrants who long to go back to their country of birth but cannot leave their adopted home.

Abdullah, Mariam’s younger brother, experiences both internal and external displacement. Unlike Mariam had a strong connection with Lahore which deteriorates owing to a brutal bomb blast. In a blast, Abdullah loses his best friend and is unable to recover from the traumatic experience. The healer who nurses wounded pigeons suffers silently. Her mother arranges for him to go to America with the hope that change in environment will benefit him and so he joins Mariam in a land of foreigners. Her mother’s decision

of sending him to America highlights the notion of superiority that post-colonial countries associated with the West.

Unlike his sister, Abdullah is not brave enough to accept changes and is frightened by the change in his surroundings. The only reason he decides to stay in America is not to disappoint his family. To save his family from the anger of Arbaz's political family he decides never to visit home. Abdullah is displaced twice and both times he did not have a say in the decision. He is sent away from home to experience a peaceful environment which he is unable to find at home. His return from America is not by choice but by force and because of his friendship with Arbaz he cannot risk going back to his home. He lives and dies without a definite home as he writes in his last letter, "No one can imagine the pain of living without a definite home" (Javed, 2015, p.365).

Kanza Javed's novel *Ashes, Wine and Dust* explores the relationship between self and place and how this relationship defines a post-colonial subject who is always displaced despite being at home. Displacement, be it voluntary or forced, leads to an identity crisis. The novel gives personality to the cities of Lahore and Washington which evolves with the change in socio-political circumstances. These changes in the places disrupt the harmony between the characters and the place that they call home. The city of Lahore is perceived by Mariam to be too traditional for her liking. She is unable to identify with the suffocating traditional environment and feels dislocated. Her feeling of displacement makes her search for a new home and this desire takes her to America. The country of her dreams fails to accept her and Mariam is again left homeless. Her return to Lahore is not a pleasant experience either as she is unable to accept the changes in the city.

The novel abounds in characters who seek to find a home but are never successful in their futile search. Religion, place and nationality form the basis of a person's identity and a person's failure to ascribe to these elements results in a displacement. A politically divided world defines individuals based on nationality and race. Such restrictive divisions define "self" and "other". The "other" is in total contrast to the self is never accepted. Prakriti's status of the "other" in Pakistan and Mariam's status of the "other" in U.S highlight that the colonial biases prevail in the post-colonial world which leads to the feeling of displacement and dislocation. The novel covers the period from the time of independence of Pakistan to the present era and despite the many changes that take place in the physical setting, the feeling of displacement remains constant.

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