

## Perilous Journeys to Peaceful Lands in the Quest for a Better Life: Migration Literature as a Space of Negotiation for New Climate Solidarities

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper investigates Europe's most pressing refugee/asylum seeker/immigrant crisis to bridge the knowledge gap between the host nations' border control, immigration, and integration policies and the human stories of perilous journeys in search of peaceful lands with the help of Nadia Hashmi's novel When the Moon is Low (2015). The paper explores the ways migration literature can help in overcoming the narrative gap in the recent European refugee/asylum seeker/immigrant management policies. Furthermore, by taking an issue with the European detention centers and their living conditions, the paper highlights the disparity in the myth of equal human rights. The study hopes to open debates around the issue that will decolonize the Eurocentric refugee narrative around immigration and integration policy, place it in a relational and global perspective and suggest a human-rights-oriented frame for reimagining an inclusive migration discourse for the twenty-first century. The paper employs Anibal Quijano's 'coloniality of knowledge' framework to fill the knowledge gap in the Eurocentric immigrant discourse through a literary lens to humanize it and locate alternate epistemologies*

**Keywords:** decolonizing knowledge, borders, refugee identity, exploitation, exclusion, peace.

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## **Introduction**

The images of stateless human beings termed Refugees/Asylum Seekers/Immigrants in overcrowded boats that often capsize in the sea with big and small bodies floating to the shore or a few survivors rescued have become a regular media spectacle. This spectacle is televised and used for creating a Eurocentric migration knowledge and dynamics about the destitute people traveling towards Europe from across the world. The spectacle silences and marginalizes the voices capable of explaining the motive behind their dangerous journeys in search of a better life in Europe. This further helps in creating strict policies such as border controls, sea patrols, detention centers and immigrant integration policies in the host countries following asylum.

Moreover, this media projection and knowledge production attains a fascist political dimension too when it is linked to a state's security paradigm that further dehumanizes the refugees. Its prominence in recent political debates has strengthened the right-wing political parties' narrative to win elections in European Union nation-states such as Italy and France. It, further, leads to a racial profiling of all refugees and creates a fear in the minds of officials and public who see them as a threat to their jobs, housing, healthcare, society, culture, and their presence as a weakness of their country. This media projection impacts the immigrant governance negatively and creates hatred, animosity and mistrust towards destitute people in search of a better life.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to engage with immigrant/asylum seekers governance due to its possibilities of raising illegal human trafficking, strengthening the exclusionary racial policies towards refugees further complicating their already challenging integration into host societies and paving ways for their exploitation in European labour market.

The existing immigration literature lacks engagement with the stories of perilous journeys of all those who try to enter Europe through the only means available to them outside the regular immigration system. Moreover, the official immigration narrative at the moment does not cater to the refugee human element as it will make the potential destination countries look soft, indecisive and incapable of securing their borders. This knowledge production has created a dehumanized refugee image and marginalized their desire to dream and live in a place that offers peace by curtailing their mobility. It clashes with UNESCO's One World (2019) concept on the one hand and opens a space for a counter argument about the urgency of refugees' need to leave their homelands on the other. Furthermore, it conveniently ignores the questions about the role of Europe and North America in making refugee homelands unsafe. Hence, there is a need to shift the focus on the refugee

homelands as well through available migration literature. As Hashmi's text has not been studied so far from this perspective, there is an opportunity to build the discussion with its human story.

### **Literature Review**

Gani and Marshall in their article contest the existing literature on refugee knowledge production by identifying the role of International Relations departments in the academia and their failure in creating knowledge beyond the colonial binaries of self and others. They believe the academics have locked themselves in "ivory towers" (2022) that make them create knowledge that maintains the status quo in international relations.

Kaya in "Migration as a Leverage Tool in International Relations: Turkey as a Case Study" explores the problem of using refugees as a tool. Through her case study she shows that in international relations refugees are used as a commodity favoring one particular group of people while ignoring the others in similar circumstances of displacement and destitution (2020). She highlights the fact that the migrations can be engineered instead of being random.

Aslan in "Securitization of Migration in the EU and Africa" studies the relationship between migration and security using Copenhagen School lens. She focuses upon African migration towards Europe and European Union's immigration policies. She traces the immigration policies starting from 1960's labour migration trends to the incident of 9/11 and the way "migration became the focus of security policies" (154). She also includes women immigrants in search of a better life with men. However, she restricts it to Africa only whereas there is a need to enlarge the scope of inquiry from female immigrants belonging to other regions of the world as well.

Ayse Caglar in her article "The Enigma of Arrival" discusses the need to engage with migration studies with a new decolonial consciousness. She believes it is time to move beyond the theories of migration studies and to align them with the new realities of migrations. Her approach, however, seems quite generalized that might result in strengthening the coloniality of migration knowledge instead of addressing the thematic gaps in it.

Lemberg-Pedersen et al. in "Colonialism, Postcoloniality and the Study of Forced Migration" suggest the need for an interdisciplinary approach while studying forced migrations. They critique the control of colonial legacies in shaping the modern migration discourse. They also rightly warn about the discrimination against decolonial research in Europe. However, they do not present suggestions for incorporating the decolonized knowledge's inclusion into immigration policy making.

Koos and Siebel in “Solidarity with Refugees across Europe: A comparative analysis of public support for helping forced migrants” study the European public perception about the refugees. They highlight the role of the political institutions in improving the political alignment of this behavior. Their research gets limited due to its quantitative data collection methodology that lacks an in depth analysis of the public’s refugee perception.

Kaczmarczyk et al. in “Shifting Migration Flows and Integration Policies in Europe: An overview” have analyzed the changed dynamics of integration policies within the European migration context. They opine that it is dependent on economic situation of the countries and their migrant policies reflect these changes. They relate it to labor demand in the European markets. However, their analyses does not relate to the migrants struggles to reach Europe to access the work opportunities, the socio-political elements in migrant homelands and migrants’ desire for a better life.

Jegen in “Migratising mobility: Coloniality of Knowledge and Externally Funded Migration Capacity Building Projects in Niger” evaluates the efficacy of European Funded Migration Capacity Building Programs in Niger for governance of people’s mobility. He criticizes the limited European definitions of migration that he terms as a reminder of colonial practices of mobility governance. This research is quite relevant to this paper because it helps in understanding the far reach of European migration knowledge production. Jegen terms it as reducing the migrant subject under the colonial gaze in the postcolonial world scenario.

Nafees Ahmed in “Refugees and Algorithmic Humanitarianism: Applying Artificial Intelligence to RSD Procedures and Immigration Decisions and Making Global Human Rights Obligations Relevant to AI Governance” investigates the potential impact of AI on refugees’ rights. He states that “AI lacks anthropogenic sensitivity, critical thinking, and human traits of subjectivity and objectivity” (367) that can reduce the refugees to data without fundamental human rights. He is apprehensive of international humanitarian organizations over reliance upon AI that can further complicate their marginalities and vulnerabilities. He sees it as leading to reduced international commitment in rehabilitating refugees. Furthermore, he raises questions about “technology-driven automated decision mechanisms” (371). However, the study’s suggestions are expenditure intensive that will further cause loss of resources that can actually be used for improving the process of migrant governance.

## **Theoretical Framework**

A review of the existing literature highlights that this issue has so far been studied mostly from the immigrant/ asylum seeker/refugee integration into host nations' lens. Although Giorgio Agamben's concept of homo sacer has been popular amongst scholars to study the issue (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr, 2004 & Ramrath 2021), the framework lacks the space to translate the immigrant/ asylum seeker/refugee agency. Secondly, Agamben assumes them as passive victims of migration circumstances which neglects immigrant/ asylum seeker/refugee resilience and struggle for survival. Thirdly, it is limited as its focus remains on migrant destination countries and their political problems while colonizing the migrant homelands. Hence, there is a literary gap between the existing policies of refugee knowledge production and the realities of international migration especially towards Europe from the Global South. This study analyzes Ferebia and her three children's migration story with the Peruvian sociologist, Anibal Quijano's "coloniality of knowledge" (69) framework. The concept critiques what proponents call the Eurocentric system of knowledge, arguing that the legacy of colonialism survives within the domains of refugee knowledge production.

The framework will further help in decolonizing the reductive colonial gaze to reinstate asylum seekers/ refugees/ immigrants as human beings with positive values such as resilience and perseverance to survive the worst of circumstances without resorting to all the negative connotations associated with them as terrorists or criminals. It facilitates to scrutinize refugee movement as agency and the uncertainty of their journey to be full of hope and possibility. It further allows for an in-depth analysis of Eurocentric-coloniality informed narrative of upholding human rights by contrasting them to the actual practices of controlling mobility of people who are fleeing persecution. The decolonization of knowledge production creates space for valuing the cultural practices of protecting the women, children and all those in trouble as an alternate knowledge system to the Eurocentric migration apathy.

## **Research Objectives**

The existing literature has not studied the inhuman migrant conditions, detention centers and their exploitation to which migrants are regularly subjected by the European governments and their departments of control during these journeys. This oversight results in the formulation and execution of policies of deterrence even when they result in migrant injuries, poor health or deaths. Furthermore, none of the available studies realize literary texts'

potential for creating an inclusive and tolerant migration discourse and do not recommend them. Whereas the humane conditions that are a requisite for addressing the inequalities and gaps in theory and praxis about migrations can only be found in imaginary literary spaces informed through the lived experiences of populations otherwise silenced or ignored. This study aims to humanize the migration discourse with the help of Waziri family's perilous journey from Kabul to England in the quest for a place to live and work in peace. Their journey is unique because it offers the alternate refugee images of a mother and her adolescent son who search for a peaceful life in England.

### **Research Questions**

This study explores the following research questions:

1. Why it is imperative to incorporate refugee/asylum seeker/immigrant voices as heard in literary texts such as *When the Moon is Low* and how far they humanize migrant-host society discourse?
2. How can migration literature help in overcoming the narrative gap in the recent European refugee/asylum seeker/immigrant's management policies?
3. How far literature can help in decolonizing the European refugee discourse for imagining new climate solidarities between refugees and host societies?

### **Discussion and Analysis**

Europe's association with peace as a place that offers the possibilities of living a better life is a dream that many around the world covet today. Historically after the end of World War II the continent has insulated itself from war, opened its internal borders under the European Union and focused on economic development. The principle of economic development became closely related with human development and better human rights conditions. Hillison (2018) sums it as, "Europe represents the largest and most robust partner in the community of free nations seeking to spread the ideals that John Locke characterized as life, liberty, and estate" (49). The continent's economic development helped in improving the human rights conditions and living standards of people and in many ways becoming a dream destination of people seeking to live an economically better life. This has happened especially for the people whose countries, such as former colonies in Asia, Africa, Middle East, South America, have been subjected to civil unrest, international wars, global wars on terror, economic and environmental crises that so far prevent many of them to ever become peaceful or livable again. This is the case with the Waziri family from Afghanistan in Hashmi's text. They do not have any other choice but to flee their country and seek asylum in England. As Fereiba who "was an

amazing teacher” (371) in a peaceful Kabul before the killing of her husband by the Taliban government, states:

In my youth, Europe was the land of fashion and sophistication...Kabul admired the fair-complexioned imperialists...We batted our eyes at them and blended their refinement with our tribal exoticism...When Kabul crumbled, so did the starry-eyed dreams of my generation. We no longer saw Europe’s frills. We could barely see beyond our own streets, so thick were the plumes of war. By the time my husband and I decided to flee our homeland, Europe’s allure had been reduced to its singular, sexist quality-peace. (1)

Therefore, the allure of a peaceful life for “the war-ravaged people of Afghanistan” in Europe due to its “sympathy” (176) for them becomes Waziri family’s migration motive. Furthermore, it is based upon the fact that they have known many stories of other Afghanis “who fled to Europe” and “never spoke of returning. Word of their happy, new lives travelled like the scent of ripe peaches in the summer breeze” (176) and gave desperate people hope about places that offer peace with a promise of permanence. Another reason for this choice is that the European standard of peace and good life is not available in the neighboring countries such as “Pakistan, Iran, and India” and besides that they have “grown increasingly fatigued by the burden of Afghan refugees” (176) over the last five decades. Fereiba chooses for her children a peaceful place that will protect their humanity as there is nothing noble about suffering.

### **The “Haunted and Hunted” Migrant**

The refugees’ journey between a dream and its reality is their side of the story missing in the immigrant governance policies. Their desire for a land of peace is perceived by Europe and its North American allies, as potential threat to their security and sovereignty. Hillison calls it Europe’s exposition to the external threat of “migration terrorism” (2018, 3). It is important to notice Hillison’s choice of the word “terrorism” and its association with mobility because it establishes an association amongst the refugees’ desire for peace, their mobility as agency to achieve it and the Eurocentric White philosophy of terrorism for deterring its achievement through migration governance. Therefore, the Europe Fereiba encounters after “crossing mountains, deserts and oceans” in the form of “dank hotel room utterly unsophisticated and unfragrant” is not the “land” that she had “expected” (2). She is also traumatized by the fact that her “senses burn with the foreignness of” her “days” (2). She and her children along with hundreds of other refugees are haunted and hunted by guards and police in Europe because they are undocumented aliens who threaten Europeans’ sense of security. The text materializes the disparity between the dream of peace and

a search for a place they can call home without fear “at a sight of a uniform” (3). It also translates the horrors of desiring peace for migrants.

The Waziris’ quest for a life of peace is in many ways a quest from uncertainty to certainty but it comes at a high price for them both emotionally and financially. They have been forced to displace themselves from their homeland. The continuous war in Afghanistan, like many other war torn regions in the world, has turned the country into “dust” whereas England, where they are headed, after World War II has become “[m]etal” as Ferebia notes, “This world stands strong, and shiny and capable”(279). The Eurocentric knowledge, as she contemplates, has rendered her country a feebleness that makes everything about them worthless. She notes, “From our homes to our families, Afghanistan is made of clay and dust so impermanent that it can be sneezed away. And it has been over and over again” (279). A similar lament is found in *Red Birds* (2018) that Western knowledge and its scientific/technological/ military development needs countries for testing all the new technologies. Whereas, when Afghanistan is viewed from a decolonial lens, it is a country that should also be read with the personal history of the Waziri family to “liberate the production of knowledge, reflection, and communication from the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity” (Quijano, 177). Ghani and Marshal also believe, “A more critical focus on the academic–practitioner nexus renders visible the otherwise unseen ways in which mechanisms of race and imperialism condition not only peoples, but also knowledge and practice” (6-7). The family is just like any other modern family in Europe or in any other developed nation. They are educated, working, studying, in an environment that defines them and their sense of life and belonging. They have stayed in their country until they are threatened and persecuted by the Taliban regime. Mahmood—an engineer by profession, does not flee his country and stays there trying to improve the living conditions of his fellow country-men by working on water supply projects for Kabul until his death. However, the Eurocentric coloniality of knowledge does not let European Union and its nation states to engage with such stories of hope and perseverance. Perhaps Mahmood’s story does not provide solid grounds for letting Afghanistan or other parts of the world live in peace. This indicates Europe’s intention of maintaining and guarding the “metal” and “dust” binaries. It is, also, a refusal to understand human misery beyond its physical and psychological borders of metal.

### **Migration as Alternate Economy**

The refugees’ human desire to seek protection and flee persecution is further thwarted by European policies of border control/walls/fences. This migration deterrence and control apparatus directly promotes smugglers and human traffickers who successfully run and manage alternate migration routes. Hence,



the refugee journeys like them are doubly marginalized. As Ayse Caglar notes, "Making populations worthless through various forms of racialization is intrinsic to the appropriations and displacements, and their legitimization, that lie at the heart of today's migration dynamics and processes" (2021, n.p). Hashmi contrasts refugee worthlessness with their hope of a peaceful existence. Therefore, Hakan, who shelters the Waziris in Intikal, is "concerned by Saleem's rosy view of what life would be like in England. Saleem had talked of attending school and having his mother return to teaching. Hakan knew immigrants...faced misery in Europe... Some would hate the Waziris for trespassing, for sucking at their nation's teats, for looking different" (176). This reality starts to dawn upon Saleem in Greece when he notices that, "Outwardly charming and beautiful, Greece was a hostile place and many of young Afghans Saleem met regretted the money they'd spent to reach her shores"(200).

Moreover, as the text reiterates that the quest for peace is not cheap. All the asylum seekers spend exorbitant amounts of money in Euros to buy fake papers/passports in order to travel, buy food and shelter. It has become more of an alternate income generation source for the continent that contributes to European cities economy. However, the asylum seekers' spending just like them is undocumented and its role, just like the role of illegal human traffickers' economic contribution is conveniently overlooked. Yet, they operate and facilitate refugee transportation into Europe or for that matter into USA each year without fail. Despite all that spending on papers, as Saleem observes, they remain "targets for "them like dogs in the street. Even at some of the churches that give out food, the police may be there. There is no asylum..." (192). Along with official policies even the local populations are not all welcoming towards the refugees as Saleem relates, "The store owner, taking him for a hooligan, took his money scornfully. He shook his head, disappointed in his country for not keeping the trouble makers out" (338). The deep rooted psychological coloniality of the ordinary people towards refugees enables the system of exclusion to operate against them unanimously.

The European coloniality of knowledge makes the refugee journeys harder for them so that they would be appreciative of what little they will get in Europe. "Saleem continued to steal food and staples like soap, but he loathed doing it...It was a calculated risk he had to take if they were to have enough money to get them to England" (193). But the perilous journeys train them to never take anything for granted. For Saleem, a fifteen year old boy who is shouldering his family's responsibility after the death of his father, can "...not risk the family being deported to Turkey, or even worse Afghanistan" (192). For the asylum seekers the journeys drain them financially and emotionally as Fereiba looks at

her bare wrist after selling her gold bangles and realizes that their “pockets are too empty for” them “to brave the rest of” (2) their journey. They are customers without any rights.

### **No Rights No Responsibility**

The significance of decolonizing the migration knowledge becomes all the more essential because of the European migration apparatus role in deterring them to enter Europe. For refugees it is one long travel between hope and despair with a feeling of being lost. They juggle being in “...a new language. ...new people...uniforms, refugees, checkpoints, trains and the sight of food” (320). The entire migration apparatus ensures that a refugee’s life becomes a “makeshift life” that can easily end in a real or symbolic “makeshift grave” (312) due to a tragic accident during a water crossing or a failed attempt to cross the border under a truck or in a fight in a detention centre. This is perhaps the same for South American immigrants as Grande’s protagonist searches for her father who dies at the USA Mexico border and is buried under the stones. Even the boats that refugees take are flimsy as if “cardboard boxes and plywood” (188) have been stitched together instead of metal and wood. In addition to that the smugglers overload them beyond their capacity. Refugees are exploited by the smugglers and these strict border controls boost their illegal human trafficking business. These migrant boats become a grotesque reminder of slave boats where slaves were packed to the maximum in abject conditions. Moreover, they are the faulty “[m]obility technologies” (Neumann, 135) deemed fit for the refugees despite the hefty amounts they pay for these journeys. As one of the refugee boys, Abdullah, in Attiki Square while relating his crossing from Turkey to Greece mentions that a boat that could accommodate “only eight” was overcrowded due to “these bastards” (188) the smugglers. Even the boats for the makeshift lives make “the waves...horrible and the” Mediterranean “waters” that “look beautiful” in the daylight they “eat people alive” (188) in the night due to hostile migration policies that are based upon, in Autin’s words on “exclusion and deterrence even when the cost is death” (2021, n.p.). The worst part of such tragedies is the authorities’ callous indifference despite, what Autin calls their “duty under EU and International Law to respond to boats in distress and ... the protection of life at sea over migration control” (2021, n.p.).

The European migration control further operates through regular and irregular detention centers so that it can criminalize people for fleeing persecution and making mobility illegal. Welsch and Schuster explain that the “[t]he routine practice of detaining asylum seekers in the US, the UK, and Continental Europe, worries human rights organizations, especially since it clashes with the United Nations Convention on Refugees” (332). Despite this fact the detention

centers are built and maintained to make refugees lose their sense of human dignity. Saleem's experience of "Greek detainment centre" (235) after being caught in Athens is humiliating and a serious violation of his human "[d]ignity" that he feels "had been lost long ago" (236) on this trail to a peaceful land. At the detainment center, Saleem is "a specimen in a jar. Captivating to his captors" (233) and someone who is available to be gazed at just like an animal in a zoo. The European migration apparatus uses these detainment centers to get rid of the caught refugees and shows a kind of European solidarity among nation states in shifting the refugee responsibility until it is no one's. As Saleem notes during his exchange between Greek and Turk officials: "Not our problem anymore, the expressions on the Greek officers' faces read and "Thanks for nothing, the sarcastic reply on the faces of their Turk counterparts" (234).

In a response to EU Migration Pact, Sunderland (2023) holds that,

The EU hasn't budged in its long-standing shifting of these responsibilities to countries at its external borders, which incentivizes states like Greece, Italy, Malta, and Cyprus to ignore boats in distress at sea and engage in unlawful pushbacks. A new "solidarity mechanism" will allow states to refuse to relocate people and instead pay for border fences, barbed wire, and surveillance" (n.p).

Hence, it is entirely the refugee's responsibility to manage his journey to his destination, without being caught in any country on the way or being killed. The apparatus asks them to become ghosts. As the Turkish officer while releasing him and not deporting him to Afghanistan tells Saleem, "You must not be found again in Turkey. Find a way out and don't come back" (238).

### **Colonization of the 21st Century**

The Eurocentric coloniality of knowledge around migration control policies needs to be investigated through the presence of detention centers in the twenty first century Europe. This text alone refers to three of them. This fact is confirmed by the following UNHCR's statement that reads:

The detention of asylum-seekers and refugees has become commonplace in a number of countries and has serious lasting effects on individuals and families. UNHCR is concerned about the growing use of immigration detention, particularly of children" (n.p).

*When the Moon is Low* highlights Attiki Square where, "young Afghan boys" can be found and every single one of them "is hoping to apply for asylum and be accepted, but this country does not accept refugees" (189). Attiki Square becomes a moment of truth for refugees where they realize, "We're all here, but we aren't supposed to be" (189).

Moreover, Attiki Square highlights the “dark side” of Europe that parallels Athens to Kabul as its “squalor rivalled of Kabul’s worst-hit areas. This was the dark side of Athens, the secret world of people who did not exist. They were neither immigrant nor refugee. They were undocumented and untraceable, shadows that disappeared in the sun” (189-90).

Like Attiki Square there are detention centers such as, “Pagani” which is “

...a detention centre for immigrants on one of Greece’s many idyllic islands. The building was a cage... the biggest cage any of them had ever seen. It teemed with refugees who’d struggled to leave their countries, only to be trapped in Greece. Men, women and children overwhelmed the building’s capacity three times over...at least a hundred people to each toilet. (192).

Similarly, Pagani, another detention camp the text refers to, has been created to stop refugees from entering other European states. There are even “[U]naccompanied minors” who have “...dreamed of going to Germany where they’d heard refugees were granted asylum, given housing and fed. But in Greece police officers stopped them and asked for papers” (192). Such policies of keeping refugees and asylum seekers in detention centers with inhuman living conditions is in sharp contrast to EU human rights agendas. The detained refugees do not have any access to rights and services except for the occasional support by local humanitarian organizations that distribute food, water and medicine to them. It is not that the world and organizations such as United Nations Human Rights Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) also called the UN Refugee Agency is unaware of this situation. It has a “Global Strategy - Beyond Detention 2014-2019 framework for addressing the human rights abuse of the asylum-seekers and aims to “support governments to make the detention of asylum-seekers an exceptional rather than routine practice”(n.p).

The third European detention centre is in Calais, France, called The Jungle. It resonates with the Red Cross refugee camp in Malaysia documented in Ru (2009) with miserable living conditions that test the illegal immigrants’ desire for survival beyond measure. Both the camps have deplorable living conditions yet immigration governance does not address this human aspect. As the texts indicate that the refugees living in the detention centers eat “discarded food” (190), or “church handout” (191) so that they could save every single Euro to reach their destination. The Jungle is:

...a wasteland within walking distance of the coast. From its limits, one could make out England and its pre-historic looking sheer white cliffs. The refugees of the Jungle languished, their eyes fixed on the horizon and the promise of a better life. The Jungle was not a place to take root” (359).

The refugees strive to survive there so that they can have the opportunities to live a life that are not available for them in their homelands. Had their homelands not being destroyed through war or global wars on terrorism or made unlivable due to global intervention they would not have fled them in the first place.

Moreover, there are always official threats of closure to these hideouts without any serious, dedicated and sincere effort on the part of the city council intentionally or under the country's official policy to engage with the problem and offer refuge to people languishing there except deporting them to their home countries.

The Eurocentric coloniality of knowledge, despite making refugees' journeys miserable needs them to come up with a compelling story that the immigration can accept as a valid ground for asylum. Their lives become "a story" that could buy them asylum. As Frebeia wishes, "Somewhere in the world, there must be a place where we will be welcomed as a long-last sister, not stoned away like an unwanted snake in the garden"(223). In the shelter where she has been sent with her children has "other refugees there, all in the same process. People of all different colors and tongues. Unable to communicate, we eyed one another with cautious distrust...We wondered who had the most compelling story. Who amongst us was most worthy of this country's sympathy?" (317). They have to prove their story by telling it again and again but once in England she is hopeful as she says, "I dare to imagine a perfect world...I dream that we receive a letter declaring that we will not be sent away and that we will be allowed to work and go to school and stay in this country where the air is clear and the life is more like metal than dust" (319). So, their lives have become the stories as if no longer real. The distance between their present and their past is a tool of resistance to convince the world of their desire to live in peace to survive.

### **Empathy and Solidarity**

The text attempts to decolonize the refugee knowledge and balances the official lack of empathy with human solidarities that operate in these journeys and restores hope for humanity. Hakam and Hayal in Turkey and Roksana in Greece help The Waziri family because they can recognize the power of their dream for peace and their need to regain their confidence. They are the kind of people who will use their gifts for improving human lives wherever they will make a home. Saleem can save his mother and siblings from deportation and they make it to England safely. He bears hardships but he can help Mimi, the East European sex slave and protect her from her violent captors. The text reinforces the concept of human gifts in the form of human values of solidarity

and sharing because the Eurocentric refugee image associates them with darkness, crime and threat only. Hakan advises Saleem to “use” his “gifts and dreams for good” (190). Although the efforts are small, poorly funded and individual, they restore refugees’ human dignity and give them hope to pursue their dreams of finding a space to make a home for themselves. Sometimes they also protest against their governments due to their violation of refugees human rights. As Hashmi narrates, “The situation was odd. The police were here because of the protesters. And the protesters were here for the Jungle...Their own people shouting for us” (377). Bauder and Juffs identify the complexity and non-linearity of solidarity that according to them can have “different philosophical underpinnings” (1). However, the power of individual solidarities might not seem enough to make a significant change in the official discourse and mechanisms of exclusion. Nonetheless, these human gestures of solidarity protect the refugees from entirely losing hope. Roksana makes Saleem “feel human again, and he” is “not willing to pass that up” (281). He loathes himself because of what his life has become as a miserable refugee on the streets, stealing food for his family. He keeps thinking “what he would have been had he had a life like Roksana’s. Two parents, school, a peaceful country. He would not have been this Saleem...a series of dreadful moments” (353). Saleem’s encounter with an old man from Kabul at The Jungle camp restores his faith in himself because he comes to know of his father as a selfless man. As the old man tells him,

It is possible that if your father has led his family out of Kabul earlier, may be your story would be different. Perhaps you would be living somewhere in Europe, accepted as asylum seekers...Hundreds of people were able to survive because of him...Other people looked for their own interests, money and guns fattening their bellies instead of helping to feed the people of Kabul. This is the difference that your father made. He changed people’s lives. He never knew their names. He never saw their faces. (366)

Maru et al. suggest to study refugees beyond “risk-based prediction and control” (5) policies of and to benefit from them just like ancient pastoralists’ international migration patterns (2022). The host nations have read the migrant stories as they like the old man from the text telling Saleem about his mother says that “when she was young the world treated her callously. But she did not let an unjust beginning spoil her” (367). The text challenges gender relations by balancing out Taliban with men like Mahmood and Saleem, father and son, taking responsibility and fulfilling it despite the worst of circumstances. Their homeland has lost them and they have lost their chance to contribute to its progress.

## Conclusion

This research suggests the need to see migrants, refugees beyond their exclusionary racial status and to study the refugee problem beyond the victim/burden/trouble lens. In the times when the climate catastrophes are bringing the world together where it is no longer affordable to think in binaries and losing human potential that can contribute towards climate solutions. In addition to that the search for a climate resilient model of living needs all the practices and solutions through human solidarities and collaborations to survive. Moreover, the nature of climate catastrophes indicates world's need for peace to find interdisciplinary approach outside the exclusionary science/technology/AI boxes beyond national boundaries.

Literature has a lasting role to play in the formation of these climate solutions due to its preservation of the human stories for regaining a place on planet Earth to practice peace and re-establish the human values of love. Furthermore, literary texts overcome the difficulty involved in defining the individual human-self outside the normative gender, racial, ethnic, feminine studies that impact policies of control. It is the decolonizing of European mental space about asylum-seekers/migrants/refugees (development, war, climate) because migration literature provides data in English, explains the refugees' world sense, ways of life, shares people's stories, subjectivities so that the knowledge about them cannot be distorted. Moreover, literature takes the asylum seekers/refugees debate to their homelands to initiate an action-oriented discourse around the restoration of conditions of peace there so that people are not forced to migrate. As Touraine explaining UNESCO's One World concept writes, "Any solution that calls for the world to be rebuilt around the individual, around the economy or around cultures, is destined to fail and can only end in disaster. In the world of today, the objectivity of markets is completely dissociated from the plurality of individual consciousnesses and cultures" (2019, n.p). This condition is reflected upon only in the literary texts built around human resilience.

Hence, finding a common ground, beyond the Global South and North divide, and working towards achieving a human sensibility that respects everyone's right to peace, work, education, health and potential to contribute to a healthy natural environment is imperative. It also means building an inclusive climate discourse that has room for all races, colors, ethnicities, and languages. This decoloniality of knowledge production can lead towards a synthesis between traditional indigenous/local knowledge systems and modern technologies for building climate resilience.

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