

I. Hosseini, Seierstad and Look of the First World

While reading Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003) and Asne Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul* (2002), the idea that captivated my mind most was the way almost similar events about Afghan lives are narrated from two different perspectives. Hosseini, the Afghan born and US migrant writer, describes Afghanistan as his homeland and seems sorry to leave his dear nation. On the other hand, Seierstad is a Norwegian journalist and describes Afghanistan from her foreign perspective. Hosseini appears to describe about Afghanistan from subjective line with too much affection about his homeland. Quite contrary, Seierstad describes it from objective way. She seems to stand aloof and look at Afghan society from a distance with detached perspective. Though they have quite different point of views to look at Afghan socio-political scenario, what interests me much is the way they both describe it in almost similar manner. In both novels, they depict Afghanistan as a kind of horrific land, and the suffering of the people is so unbearable there. Being the authors of so contrary origins, both of them describe Afghan society and its historical events in almost similar manner.

The reading of both novels led me to think upon them with several questions in my mind. Does Hosseini depict his homeland out of bad signifiers because he loves his country or are there any other factors working behind such depiction? How does Hosseini's protagonist Amir see and describe his own country and attempt to create the knowledge about it for the world? Being a foreign writer, how does Seierstad construct her narration to describe the situation of Afghanistan for the epistemic service of the world? I thought that there must be some other intentions than normal narration to depict the painful condition of the people of Afghanistan in the novels. It

is the construction of the neocolonial discourse of the West for the stereotyping of the knowledge in the process of "Othering" the Third World.

For the answer of aforementioned questions, in the present dissertation, I want to proceed my study with the assumption that both writers show their love and sympathy for the suffering of Afghani people not because it really helps these people come out of their problems but because it constructs the knowledge about them as degraded people. This construction of knowledge helps to validate the need of outer help, especially Western, for the people of Afghanistan to come out from this pitiable scenario. It is like the situation described by Enrique Galvan Alvarez who says:

It is not only through the construction of exploitative economic links or the control of the politico-military apparatuses that domination is accomplished, but also and, I would argue, most importantly through the construction of epistemic frameworks that legitimize and enshrine those practices of domination. This pattern can be found in many colonial establishments which not only perpetrated epistemic violence but also fabricated the relevant legitimizing frameworks. (12)

As Alvarez points, the West practiced its system of domination over the rest of the world with "exploitative economic links" or with "the control of politico-military apparatuses." But their most important and primary function was "the construction of epistemic frameworks that legitimize and enshrine those practices of domination." For this fabrication of the Third World knowledge as per Western framework, Alvarez calls the perpetration of "epistemic violence." And, in the context of present study, both novelists work with this neocolonial desire to show Afghani People with "lack of agency" that attempts to validate the need of outer (Western) help for them. Both of

them have worked for constructing the "epistemic framework" about Afghanistan by taking their negative practices throughout the novels.

So, examining the concepts of the construction of negative episteme about Third World in both novels will be the main point of analysis in this paper. To support this point in the dissertation, I will primarily deploy the concepts and theories developed by Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak who has developed the concept of "epistemic violence" in the context of *sati* system in British India. Relating her explanation of *sati* and British Raj's politics upon it, I will work upon the issues of Afghanistan and the First World's ways of constructing knowledge about it in terms of violence like *sati*. Along with Spivak, I will work on the concept of Stuart Hall's discussion on "representation," "stereotyping" and "othering." Hall has used it describing black images with negative connotation. By taking the concept of representation, stereotyping and othering, I will study how the novelists have created the images of Afghan people in the case of describing Afghan social lives in the novels. Finally, I will take Ray Chow and other relevant critics to show the concept of "silent natives" and First World's play upon this silence in the process of developing the discourse of the Third World. But before clarifying these issues of this research, I would like to go through a brief review of literature to show what other critics have discussed about these novels, and what is the point I want to make.

Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul* are the novels that describe the painful existence of Afghani people. Both novels explicate the concept that after the fall of king Zahir Shah in 1973 in a bloodless rebellion by his own cousin Daoud Khan, the political turmoil began in Afghanistan. After that, in 1979, Russia interfered there with communist creed. The most tragic, as both novels suggest, was the arrival of the Taliban in 1996 that gave severe pain to its own people

physically and psychologically. The fall of Taliban after 9/11 and the rise of Karzai is almost the ending point of both novels. And around these storylines, the critics have attempted to study these novels.

Commenting on the complexity of the modern Afghan social life in the novel *The Kite Runner*, Masood Ashraf Raja views that the novel "deals with the painful and complex aspects of modern Afghanistan" (35). After the fall of king Zahir Shah, modern Afghanistan started shattering because the different warring groups (local *sardars*) wanted to hold the power as there was no single and well accepted leader like the king. This condition brought the division in the social structure in Afghanistan that led to the seemingly unending conflict over there. Focusing on this view, Raja further comments that "the destruction of Afghan social structure- that made it possible for the Taliban to rise to power" (36). He views that it is because of the prolonged political transition that gave Taliban like forces to empower themselves into power of Afghanistan's mainstream force. It is also because of the destruction of Afghan social structure, in the novel, that Amir and Baba are forced to leave their homeland. They are only the representative characters and symbolize the bearer of tragedy after the political chaos began in Afghanistan.

Almost similar to the view of Raja, Ronny Noor discusses about its historical atrocities that tortured the Afghan people. He asserts that the novel "gives a vivid picture of not only the Russian atrocities but also those of the Northern Alliances and the Taliban" (148). It is because of the Russian encroachment in Afghanistan that displaced Amir and Baba from their native land along with many other native Afghans. It is like the situation asserted by Padmini Mongia who views this type of situation as "the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (6). The Western desire to play upon the third world

nations has created the problems and the novel revolves around this notion of the desire of Western imperial process and the tension created out of it.

The Kite Runner has also been studied in terms of its relationship among family members and other people. Primarily, this is a novel "about the fatal friendship of two Afghani boys in the context of the destruction of their country" (Freud 80). When the country was in peace, the relationship between Amir and Hassan was peaceful. But, after the fall of kingship, the political havoc began and slowly their relationship also broke into tragic separation. It shows how the politics of a nation destroys the spirit of its dwellers thereby separating them from each other physically and psychologically.

Seierstad's novel *The Bookseller of Kabul*, on the other hand, is studied in terms of its close depiction of Afghan family, especially the pathetic condition of women, and the political chaos that caused sufferings in the lives of Afghan people. The depiction of Sultan Khan's family with several ups and downs is one of the facets that has attracted the critics to study this novel. As the title suggests, the bookseller of Kabul, Sultan Khan, is the center of critical attraction who "built and rebuilt his business [of bookselling] after his collection was destroyed successively by the communists, the Mujahedeen, and the Taliban" (Bere 16). The business was almost gone, reading was very scarce, and the life of the people was on the mercy of warring groups while Sultan Khan was struggling to establish his bookselling business amidst such situation.

But, more than this, as Bere further opines, the novel "explores the situation of Afghan women from historical, social and cultural perspectives" (17). The whole Afghan life was in crisis, but the life of the women was even more critical as they were double victimized: one by the political unrest and the other by the male member

of the family and society itself. Commenting on this novel in *Daily Mail*, Michael Arditti opines that this novel is "[a] colorful portrait of people struggling to survive in the most brutal circumstances...[and it] bears witness to the power of literature to withstand even the most repressive regime" (n. pag.). In this way, the depiction of the painful and critical condition of Afghan people has become the main study area in this novel.

Both novels, as above reviews suggest, have been analyzed by the critics with various perspectives: social, cultural, historical, economic, feminist, family and friendship, political and so on along the line of the existing situation of Afghanistan around its political upheavals. In the study of the critics, what I found not fully explored is the point of the why question about the depiction of Afghanistan in negative way, to which I have attempted to analyze as "epistemic violence." Epistemic violence is the lens of the First World upon the rest of the world with the eye of colonial intention. So, unlike these analyses, the present study aims to analyze the novels' characters Amir and the journalist as the product of the First World imagination. In this line, Amir in *The Kite Runner* and the journalist narrator in *The Bookseller of Kabul* appear to be the symbolic representation of the "full" and other characters taken from pure Afghan soil belong to the line of "lack."

The crux of the study is to have the analysis on Hosseini and Seierstad's ways of describing Afghanistan within the discourse of neocolonialism after the end of Second World War. While analyzing the novels, this study draws upon Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak's notion of "epistemic violence" to describe the concept of knowledge creation about Afghanistan. Stuart Hall's concept of "representation," "stereotyping" and "othering" is also central in the focus especially in connection with the process of the way West forms its stereotypical knowledge of the "Other" to

impose its hegemony. In the examination of Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, two different facets of Afghanistan have been depicted there: Afghanistan before the fall of king Zahir Shah in 1973 and the socio-political scenario after that. The novel depicts the time of king as peaceful one because the king was liberal. But, after the ousting of the king, the situation is depicted as degraded one because of the struggle among internal warring groups, and other internal and external coercions and interventions. The major parts of the novel are the description about the painful situation on Afghani people and the desire to rid them from such situation. In this study, such depiction of painful situation itself is assumed as epistemic violence. It is the neocolonial desire of the West to increase its influence in Third World nations like Afghanistan. It is the discourse created against Afghanistan to neocolonize it in indirect way so as to develop the influence and interference over there.

The Western neocolonial desire of the discourse construction about Third World with the definition of negative practices has been taken as epistemic interference. About this concept Spivak explains, "Yet an account of the phased development of the subaltern is thrown out of joint when his cultural macrology is operated, however remotely, by the epistemic interference with legal and disciplinary disciplines accompanying the imperialist project" (270). It is modern imperialism's project to create "disciplinary disciplines," as Spivak explains, to form certain norms that can be termed as good or bad. In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini describes many events like stoning of two lovers to death, the religious police, the activities of Taliban and many others as negative practices which seem to come from the definition of Western imperialism. Yes, they are negative practices for anyone and they should be discouraged. As far as possible these practices should be corrected by correcting them from within their cultural background, and not from external imposition of ideas and

force. But, if these practices are described with vested interest, it creates problem and, for my observation, the novelists have done the same. Primarily they have worked with the interest of West while creating the knowledge about Afghanistan. The historical facts show many positive pictures regarding the reformations and developments done in Afghan socio-political and cultural aspects during the time the novels describe their events. So, in the study, I wish to analyze the negative depiction about Afghanistan as epistemic interference. As the product of the Western knowledge, it is intentional desire of the authors to construct such knowledge. By doing this, I want to show that the West plans to establish its neocolonial dominion over the Third World.

The Bookseller of Kabul, the next novel of the present study, describes about Afghan society from the mouth of a foreign (Norwegian) journalist. Afghan politics, religious practices, different family ceremonies, and many other activities have been observed through the lens of foreign standard in this novel. In this regard, I wish to study the novel in terms of how West constructs the representation of the Third World by defining Afghan social, cultural, economic, political and other norms, or how Seierstad attempts to stereotype different aspects of Afghan lifestyles. The author's attempt to describe Afghan lifestyles can be understood by quoting Stuart Hall who says:

Stereotypes get hold of the few 'simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized' characteristics about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development to eternity.... So the first point is – stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes 'differences.'(258)

Sierstad, as I have observed, has attempted to describe about Afghanistan in stereotypical way with the viewpoint of what West wants to see the rest. For this, as my claim goes, she arrests only those areas that are considered negative practices for the West like the sixteen commandments of Taliban, the child labor for twelve hours, the burning of the books, dowry in marriage and the like. This dissertation, to limit my point, asserts that primarily America and secondarily the Europe are the leaders of neocolonialism, and these novels serve their interests by depicting Western standards as basic norms of social life, thus the Third World's social norms lack the standard. With this, it is the desire of the First World to enter there with epistemic interferences, thus creating, in Spivak terms, "epistemic violence."

To come to the point, thus, in this study, I have limited my analysis on the novel of Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul*. To show the neocolonial intervention of the West to Third World, I have deployed the concepts of Spivak's "epistemic violence" taken from her seminal book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* and is the leading point of my analysis. I have taken the concept of "stereotype" from Stuart Hall's nearly book length article "The Spectacle of the 'Other.'" Along the line of Hall, I will also discuss about the concept of "representation," and "Othering" in the context of the Third World. To strengthen the concepts of Spivak and Hall, I have taken another postcolonial critic Ray Chow and her notion of "silent natives" to deal with the actual situation of the Afghan people. Taking the notions of these writers, this project aims to have the postcolonial reading of the texts: the ways of knowledge formation, distribution and reception. Along with these major theorists, I will take a number of other critics and their theoretical books that are near to their ideas and support my argument. Now, the following section will provide a glimpse of each chapter of this research project.

In chapter one, as one can see upto now, I have tried to clarify the roadmap of this dissertation. It provides a brief review of literature on both *The Kite Runner* and *The Bookseller of Kabul*, and tries to differentiate the point of present research from other critics. Along with this, the beginning chapter also brings the overview of this research with its guiding methodological principles. Briefly this chapter discusses on the concept of epistemic violence and its Western ways of functioning on Third World nations. Along with epistemic violence, this chapter also sheds light a bit on the concept of stereotyping, representation and silences in the process of othering the Third World natives by the First World. This chapter discusses on the use of these methodologies basically developed by Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak, Stuart Hall and Ray Chow in the context of both novels. Furthermore, the chapter also provides a bird's eye view of each coming chapters with a view of making the readers able to follow the track of this research project.

Chapter second of this research discusses on the concept of epistemic violence, an idea developed by a contemporary postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak in her influential book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. This chapter takes the concept of epistemic violence used by Spivak in Indian context of the misuse of *sati* system by the British Raj. It discusses about how British colonialism appropriated *sati* system for the justification of its Raj over there. By taking this concept as a basic methodological tool, this chapter endeavors to develop its point of how contemporary American and European imperialism has worked in both novels to appropriate the Afghan system according to Western understanding. Especially this chapter discusses about the use of violent activities described by Hosseini and Seierstad in their novels. Though both novelists show their sympathy on the setting of Afghan torture and pain,

how they exploit this setting on the verification of Western understanding will be the central point of discussion in this chapter.

Third chapter of this dissertation focuses its description on the use of stereotypes, representations, and the ways of "Othering" the Third World in both novels. As a methodological tool, it takes the idea from Stuart Hall and his description about black's stereotypical representation of images in the process of "Othering" them by creating their knowledge as negative one. By deploying Hall's concept, it talks about how Hosseini and Seierstad both represent Afghanistan in terms of First World's "Other" will be the point of discussion. Stuart Hall explains the creation of negative stereotypes of black images as "symbolic violence." To the same type of negative representation of the image of *sati* system in India, Spivak terms it as "epistemic violence." So, this chapter takes Hall's idea of symbolic violence as a basic methodological tool, and incorporates this idea with Spivak's epistemic violence in the contexts of both novels.

The second last chapter of this research bases its discussion on the silences of natives and the Western play of ideas over these silences. As a basic tool to study about native silence, this chapter takes the concept about it developed by Ray Chow in her article "Where Have All the Natives Gone?" In this article she views that it is because of the silence of the natives that the Westerners get chance to play over there. Taking this point, this chapter discusses on how the natives are presented as silent and how the Western concept imposes its authority by taking the benefit over this silence.

In the last chapter, I have drawn the conclusion developed in earlier analysis which focuses on to prove the idea of how epistemic violence is the main point in both novels. This chapter briefly brings together the concepts developed in earlier chapters and draws the conclusion out of that. It deals basically on the cursory

development of both novels by applying the methodological tools taken from Spivak, Hall and Chow, and finally puts the guiding concept of the thesis as a form of conclusion that the novels commit epistemic violence by supporting Western values while degrading the Third World values and systems.

II. Western Politics on Nonwestern Baddies

In this chapter, I bring upon the concepts of Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak and apply her idea of Western episteme construction process as a theoretical tool to study the novels *The Kite Runner* and *The Bookseller of Kabul* by Khaled Hosseini and Asne Seierstad respectively. While applying Spivak's notion, I particularly follow her concepts such as "epistemic violence," "imperialistic hegemony," and "native informants."

Spivak's influential book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999) has established a wider impact especially about the reading of British colonialism in India. Her study of *sati* system in British India is the core of her study in the book. Her central focus is how British India appropriated the *sati* system in India and utilized it as a tool to authenticate British Raj over there. She has explained that the elite Brahmanic patriarchal Indian social structure always marginalized and suppressed the women there. But, in the name of rescuing women in India, the British could not understand:

the Brahmanical discourse of widow sacrifice ... as an ideological battleground, and construct[ed] the [Indian] woman as an *object* of slaughter, the saving of which can mark the moment Between patriarchal subject-formation and imperialist object-construction, it is the place of the free will or the agency of the sexed subject as female that is successfully effaced. (Spivak 234-35)

Spivak, in her explanation, describes the woman as double marginalized with lack of agency because of the Indian patriarchal suppression and British way of appropriation about them. British could not understand the "Brahmanical discourse of widow sacrifice as an ideological battleground" for Indian woman, and constructed the

negative episteme about woman about the “object for slaughter.” For Spivak, to establish such image was necessary for them because they wanted to create safe ground in the colony of India as savior of the people. With this they thought they could prolong their rule in easier manner.

Epistemic violence, most often, occurs when one tries to appropriate the others by taking their cruel and violent practices with negative connotation. It takes few cruel and violent practices of that society and generalizes it for the embodiment of the whole. In terms of *sati* system in India, it is epistemic violence for Spivak created by British intellectual framework. They created this knowledge as a bad practice not because they really wanted to save the Hindu women (which they said they wanted to do), but because they wanted to authenticate their position as a savior. They wanted to rule there without any obstacles and it was only their strategy, as Sandhya Shetty views, of “‘benevolent’ appropriation of the woman as the object of protection” (36). It is their strategic administrative intellectual plan to spread the knowledge that the Hindu women of the then time needed protection from the brutal force of the same society. They appropriated Indian Hindu women “as the object of protection” and themselves as the supreme protectors. By forming such knowledge, they created binary opposition between the colonizers and colonized: the former as a savior and the latter as the cruel, uncivilized object that needed the lesson of civilization.

Thus, epistemic violence reduces people to a singular negative connotation. It codifies them as naturally or essentially bad, and demands a system that can redeem them from such practice. It uses, most often, the intellectual body to construct such knowledge so that people cannot negate it so easily. Talking about the beginning of the legal codification of epistemic violence, Spivak presents Macaulay’s much

discussed “Minute on Indian Education” that was tabled on British parliament in 1835:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellects. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (qtd. in Spivak 268)

This was the beginning of epistemic violence that British started from its legal system by passing the law from parliament. With this, it started its systematic production of knowledge about colonized world. It used its scholars to codify such knowledge about colonized nations to create the shadow out of them that neither can be raw native nor can be pure Westerner. Among non-educated natives, it was their plan to operate it through “silent programming function” (Spivak 268).

The legal codification of epistemic violence began with Macaulay and later the codification of *sati* is only the continuation of this. In the grand project of imperialism, none knows what is needed when to support their system. When they feel that their moral ground of colonization feels weak, they utilize new techniques by capturing the weaker aspects of colonized nations. They use it either through law or through education so that it can be established for the long run. In her article entitled “Postcolonialism’s Archive Fever” Sandhya Shetty explains the concept of Spivak as:

One question best investigated deconstructively by means of Spivak’s “postcolonial archive” is, what kind of violence are we talking about

when we speak of the historical trauma known as imperialism? For those deeply invested in discourse analysis, the answer would be “epistemic violence:” British law’s recodification of *sati* would serve as a prime example of Foucault’s “epistemic violence” perpetrated by/through the ideological state apparatus of British colonial administration. (31)

With the help of colonial administration, the imperial authority succeeded to implement its idea about *sati* in British India. It became successful to create the knowledge about widow sacrifice as a cruel practice, and at the same time became successful to present itself as the protector of savage action done by savage people. In this way, for Spivak, the British imperialism constructed the knowledge about colonial world with cruel and savage practices, and itself as a savior. This type of knowledge construction is, thus, committing the crime of epistemic violence for her.

In the forthcoming analysis, I will take the aforementioned concepts of Spivak as theoretical tool to analyze the novels. With her concept, I will show how her concept is applicable to the novels of Hosseini and Seierstad. While describing about epistemic violence, I do not mean to conclude that the negative practices described both in *The Kite Runner* and *The Bookseller of Kabul* are either good or bad. Every society contains its own negative and positive practices and qualities. They possess their own historical and cultural backgrounds that affect the functioning of society. My emphasis, in this research, is the way the language is used to show the Afghan socio-political scenario by the novelists. Why the hatred is aroused against Afghan ways of doing politics, and why the sympathy is aroused for the suffering Afghan people will be the focus of my study. So, in this study, I engage myself more to analyze the areas that are depicted negatively as the examples of epistemic violence. It

is the way that the First World (America and Europe) has used to create the shadow from its own image by discarding the concepts that do not match the system of their understanding.

In Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, there are many instances in which Afghanistan is depicted with horrific implication, but very clearly America is praised as the nation of savior. The use of language describing American landscapes and the ideas expressed about it are portrayed in beautiful ways whereas the Afghan scenes are presented in so dismal way. Talking about America, the protagonist of the novel, Amir says:

Baba loved the idea of America I remember the two of us walking through Lake Elizabeth Park in Fremont, a few streets down from our apartment, and watching boys at batting practice, little girls giggling on the swings in the playground "There are only three real men in this world, Amir," he would say. He'd count them off on his fingers: America the brash savior, Britain, and Israel. "The rest of them—" he used to wave his hand and make a phht sound "- they are like gossiping old women." (*KR* 109)

The quote above clearly illustrates that America as a nation is a "savior" country for the characters like Baba and Amir. In America, the description of beautiful park, playing boys and happy giggling girls show that America is a paradise like land. Everyone is happy there and living a free life without any anxiety. In America, Baba and Amir are free to express their views where Baba declares America, Britain and Israel as three real men. But, for him, the rest of other nations are "like gossiping old women" which is just rubbish without having any value.

But, contrary to this, Afghanistan is described as a nation where the life is very difficult. Except the short description of Amir's childhood before the dethroning of King Zahir Shah in 1973, the novel is almost replete with the painful, cruel and sad description of Afghanistan. While forming the notion about epistemic violence in reading of Hosseini's novel, I pondered upon the ways of describing America and Afghanistan. As quoted earlier America is described as a land of savior, but in the following quote Amir depicts his own native soil, Kabul, as a ghost country:

Long before the Roussi army marched into Afghanistan, long before villages were burned and schools destroyed, long before mines were planted like seeds of death and children buried in rock-piled graves, Kabul had become a city of ghost for me. A city of harelipped ghosts. America was different. America was a river, roaring along, unmindful of the past. I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me some place far. Some place with no ghosts, no memories, and no sins. If for nothing else, for that, I embraced America. (*KR* 119)

The use of language that describes America and Afghanistan in above paragraph shows that America is such nation where there is no regretting of the past activities. It is like "a river" that flows always ahead and never looks back to remember what happened in the past. It is a place of "no ghosts" that haunt people in their dream. But, Afghanistan is depicted as a country of "burned houses," "destroyed schools," full of mines "planted like seeds of death," "children buried in rock piled graves," and over all nothing more than "a city of ghost." But, is it always necessary that in America everything is good, and in Afghanistan, everything is bad? While considering on this question, the idea of epistemic violence comes in the front. How

can it be possible to depict a nation only with its negative description whereas the other with only positive? This way of depiction about Third World only in terms of negative connotation is the intentional project of the First World out of which it wants to prove that the Third World is a savage and uncivilized world. With this, the First World aims to justify its invasion over there as a job done to save the people who are suffering there.

After the end of Second World War, the traditional form of colonialism that was led by Europe almost came to an end. With its atomic and economic power, now America is considered as a superpower of the world and the novel also appears to worship this new power. The modern concept of globalization suggests that America is in the interest of creating new form of imperialism by using its atomic and economic threat to other nations. So, the above mentioned quote verifies the idea that America is safe land for the people of the world and other nations lack it. But, how can an Afghan born boy say about his own country as a ghost land thereby appreciating foreign land as a place like heaven? Isn't it the desire of neocolonialism to show Afghanistan as a ghost like country? Isn't it a way of creating knowledge about Third World, especially Muslim countries, as degraded one? Isn't it the epistemic violence, or the intellectual interference to create such knowledge about Third World so that American interest to usurp the Third World nations can be justified intellectually? In this periphery, this novel is an intellectual striving of constructing the knowledge about Third World as debased one. This type of negative depiction of Third World is for Spivak, the epistemic violence orchestrated by the First World. Spivak, depicting about the establishment of truth by imperial power, says:

Attempts to construct the “Third World Woman” as a signifier remind us the hegemonic definition of literature is itself caught within the history of imperialism. A full literary reinscription cannot easily flourish in the imperialist fracture or discontinuity, covered over by an alien ideology established as only Truth, and a set of human sciences busy establishing the “native” as a self-consolidating other. (131)

Spivak presents the example of Third World women which can be applied to almost all Third World nations and their people that are in the grip of modern neocolonial power. So, even the literature is defined according to the standard of Western eye. With this, the intellectuals like Hosseini engage themselves to produce the knowledge where they depict the natives as “self consolidating other.” By describing Afghani people and society in ghostly figures, Hosseini endeavours to establish the binary norms because, in America, he describes his characters living happily.

In her description, Spivak does not opine that *sati* system was a good practice. Instead she explains the *sati* system as an ideological struggle within the system. It was a battleground within the system for Hindu women. But, the British Raj used it as a tool to legitimize its authority over there. It used *sati* system as a tactic to claim the barbarity of Indians and their presence as a savior from this barbarity. Her objection lies in the point of using the *sati* as a weapon to legitimize the colonial rule by making them as savior of women from cruel and barbaric people. And, in this study, my point is related to Spivak. In Afghanistan, I don't mean to say that the cruelties and other such practices are good (which occur everywhere in the world. Only the ratio can be high or low). I only want to focus my attention on the way Afghanistan is depicted in one-sidedly with almost negative practices. For me, it is the grand design of the First World to show Afghan people as savage and innocent in need of saving by external

hand. This depiction of savagery and innocence is the formation of knowledge for the rest of the world that helps to legitimize external control over there so that the neocolonial US hegemony works smoothly. To this grand project of neocolonialism, Hosseini has worked as a guide to smoothen the road of this project.

The Bookseller of Kabul by Asne Seierstad, on the other hand, also depicts the similar kind of situation in terms of the description of First World (America and Europe) and the Third World (Afghanistan). Hosseini, being an Afghan born US migrant novelist, describes the Afghan scenario as his lost homeland. But, Seierstad is a Norwegian journalist and her perspective of describing about Afghan scenario is somehow different from Hosseini. Hosseini attempts to show himself as a native in his description, but Seierstad's vision is somehow detached because of her foreign look. She tries to judge many events from foreign eyes and this makes her like an open agent of West for neocolonial expansion. From Norway Seierstad came to Afghanistan as a journalist and worked under the shelter and security of Northern Alliance. Her mission was to flash out the barbarity of the savage (Afghan) people for the world through media. She did the job of constructing the knowledge about Orient (Afghanistan) in both ways: from media as a journalist, and from literature as a novelist. Under the security of Western military institute, she worked there and described the world about the savagery and barbarity of what she says she saw, heard and experienced by herself about Afghanistan. To this type of intention of the Westerners, the pioneer of postcolonialism, Edward W. Said asserts:

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident".... Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it

by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (2-3)

In Hosseini's novel, Baba loves the idea of America. He praises Western model of thinking and development. Seierstad's novel also describes the same type of setting where America is praised for its system and Afghanistan is presented as a debased country that lacks any systematic norms needed for a standard society. In the section "The Call from Ali":

[T]he Minister for Education portrays an Afghanistan where weapons give way to the internet. 'Exchange weapons for Computers', he cries. He adds that Afghans must stop discriminating between ethnic groups. 'Look at America, they live in one country, they are all Americans. They co-exist without problems. (*BOK* 150)

In the quote above, one can easily observe how America is highlighted with its science and technology. Seierstad, here, attempts to create the vision that all Americans "co-exist without problems" but in Afghanistan there is too much discrimination "between ethnic groups." Such use of language about First World and Third World itself is problematic. Any layman who is a bit conscious about the history of America knows that America is the world's pioneer country that discriminated blacks by making them slaves. Even after the declaration of the emancipation of slaves, it treated them like slaves. For a long period, it did not provide equal legal rights for the blacks and natives. It tortured blacks and natives by marginalizing them. And still blacks and natives are not in the front of politico-social activities of America because of the discrimination done by whites. But, in the quote

above, America is depicted as a full fledged democratic country that never discriminated anyone, and from which Afghanistan should have to learn the lesson of norms. Here, America is depicted as a model country to follow its norms, whereas Afghanistan is described as a country having only the concept of weapons in their minds and hands. For this purpose the Minister for Education is brought in the frontline to say “exchange weapons for computers.” This line clearly creates the image of Afghani people as weapon bearers all the time and they do not have the knowledge about anything else or the knowledge about modern development. Even though all the systems have their own positive and negative qualities, in the novel, Seierstad attempts to describe the Third World with negative connotations and toils to form the episteme about it as dreadful one. This type of knowledge formation without knowing the inner reality of any society is, for Spivak, the misuse of episteme thus creating "epistemic violence."

In the novel, Seierstad’s narrator, for the purpose of constructing the knowledge about Orient, uses natives as her informants. She describes the learning of English language as a sign of maintaining standard and civilization. In Sultan’s family, she explains:

Sultan had picked up a colourful and verbose form of English while teaching a diplomat his own Dari dialect. His young sister Leila spoke excellent English, having attended Pakistani schools when she was a refugee, and evening classes in Afghanistan. Mansur, Sultan’s oldest son, also spoke fluent English, after several years of schooling in Pakistan. (*BOK 4*)

In her search of finding an appropriate native family, the narrator finds Sultan’s family as perfect native informants. The narrator lives with them, wears dresses with

burka like a Muslim woman, and utilizes the family as a mediator in the process of constructing the episteme about Afghanistan. In the aforementioned extract, Seierstad even creates layers within English language when she uses words like “colourful,” “verbose,” “fluent,” and “excellent.” It means according to the level of the standardness of English language, their qualities are judged. With English language, they have become a step ahead from other common Afghans. As Spivak terms, “[c]ertain members of the ... [Afghan] elite are of course native informants for first world intellectuals interested in the voice of Other” (270). Spivak discusses about Indian elites but the same type of scenes can be observed about Afghan socio-political scenario in the novel. The Westerners utilized them to know about Afghanistan so that the knowledge can be shaped and displayed for the world in the way they wanted to display.

When most of the natives are described as unskilled, uneducated, and worthless, the automatic intention of educating them comes in the front. And, for this, the Westerners are always ahead to teach the lesson of civilization for uncivilized people. Seierstad, while creating the difference between the West and Afghanistan, writes:

‘Karzai is too weak; he is unable to rule the country. The best thing would be to have a government consisting to technocrats appointed by the Europeans. When we Afghans try to appoint leaders, everything goes wrong. Without cooperation the people suffer. And besides, our intellectuals have not returned. There is an empty space where they should have been. (*BOK 275*)

The above lines are expressed by Sultan, an Afghan native who does not believe in the worth of his own people and wants the European intervention in the internal

affairs of the country. While depicting about Afghans the words like “too weak,” “unable to rule,” and “everything goes wrong” are used thus positing the whole Afghan system as inferior and unable to function smoothly. But, for the Europeans, the words like “best” with full knowledge about “technocrats” are mentioned and presented as if they are perfect in each and every field with full expertise. Here, the author does not seem to notice well that everyone possesses some negative and some positive qualities and cannot be observed from only one line of thinking. By showing the Afghans as weak, and the Westerners as skillful, Seierstad aims to solidify her intention of nurturing neocolonialism that aims to rule the rest of the world after the painful demise of the traditional form of colonialism. Asserting this aim of neocolonialism, Pramod K. Nayar views:

However, imperialism often refers to the practice of governance through ‘remote control’ It means that a metropolitan European or American power controls activities (financial, military, political, cultural) in Asian, African, or South American nations That is nominally ‘free’ nation states continue to suffer from economic exploitation by European powers that, therefore, remain imperial

This form of control has been called ‘neocolonialism’, used especially to describe the American control over the rest of the world.

Neocolonialism is a continuing economic exploitation of Asians and American nation-states by Europeans and American powers. (4-5)

In the novel, when the appointment of the leaders by the Europeans are asserted by showing Afghans as weak, it shows the unproclaimed demand of the neocolonial control over the weaker nations that can be handled easily by the “remote control” of the powerful nations. Karzai's government is a puppet government, as

Sultan believes, but he does not seem to consider the fact that the person who is appointed next to him would also be a puppet one as he is also appointed by a foreigner. In this way, with this type of depiction of the Third World, the novelist wants to justify her aim to depict West as best and the rest as worst. So, Nayar further views that “[n]eocolonialism, therefore, may be the more insidious and dangerous form of colonialism” (6). It is dangerous because it operates in hidden way without being seen outwardly like a "remote control." For this purpose, it utilizes the locals who become ready to affirm their notions and works to meet its aim of controlling economy, society, politics, culture and what not.

How the First World’s knowledge system is privileged over other systems can be observed in both Hosseini and Seierstad’s description of communists, Russians, Islam, Taliban, and in many other scenes in the novels. In *The Kite Runner*, in chapter three, Hosseini depicts his character Baba generalizing Islamic practices as idiotic one. According to him, the religious teachers are “self righteous monkeys” and Amir “will never learn anything of value from those bearded idiots” (*KR* 15). The use of scolding words like “monkeys” and “bearded idiots” to religious leaders from the mouth of a Muslim character clearly describes the intention of the author. These negative markers are used to depict Islam as debased religion handled by bad religious leaders. Hosseini does not stop there while mocking his own religion. When Baba, Amir and other people were running away to Pakistan to save themselves from Russian atrocities, Amir describes:

That first night, all the men prayed together. One of the refugees asked Baba why he wasn’t joining them. “God is going to save us all. Why don’t you pray to him?” Baba snorted a pinch of his snuff. Stretched his legs. “What’ll save us is eight cylinders and a good carburetor.”

That silenced the rest of them for good about the matter of God. (*KR* 104)

“Eight cylinders” and “a good carburetor” are Western technologies that overshadow Islamic ritual practices. So, the aforementioned lines depict that Baba is a Westernized modern figure who believes in science and technology rather than unhearing god. Traditionally praying is believed as a matter of solace for the people, and this sense is denied by showing traditional Islamic people as conservative who believe only in fate rather than fact.

As Hosseini’s novel was primarily produced for the consumption of Western readers, the above mentioned lines have deep affecting values. It produces the knowledge about Islam as negative one thereby creating binary opposition between Islamic practices and Western practices, and devalues Islamic practices with negative connotation. It posits Islam as religiously and culturally inferior to the Western culture and religion. In front of Western scientific development, it depicts Third World still lagging far behind where only Baba like characters are Americanized (Westernized) and other Afghans are still "Others." So, this is the project of neoimperialism that produces the knowledge about Third World with such negative attributes, and privileges the knowledge of West. Referring to Spivak and focusing on the intention of First World over Third World, Ilan Kapoor writes:

It is for her, another form of imperialism, the Third World once again providing ‘resources’ for the First World; but unlike classical imperialism, it is ‘extraction of surplus-value without extra-economic coercion’ Seen in this light, Western intellectual production mirrors, and is in many ways complicit with, Western imperialism. Cultural imperialism supplements classical (socioeconomic) imperialism, with

the Third World producing both 'the wealth and the possibility of the cultural self-representation of the "First World."' (632-33)

Kapoor's explanation is about new form of imperialism that is cultural imperialism and Hosseini's novel well suits this point. Baba's acts of rejecting deep rooted Islamic practices and faith on Western values and technologies depict his tilt on them going away from his own cultures and practices. Baba loves "the idea of America." He sees Israel, America and Britain as the "real men in the world." He disagrees upon the stories behind the Muslim religious practices. He mocks religion and its leaders. Once when he praised Israel, some Afghan-Americans "accused him of being pro-Jewish and, de facto, anti-Islam" (*KR* 109). These all examples privilege the Western system of knowledge and sideline the Third World system, especially Muslim, as nonstandard one.

In the novel, the capitalistic notion of the First World is strengthened by opposing communism and communist Russia. The episteme about them is constructed with negative description. The novel describes the attack of Northern Alliance as well but no such harsh comments are made about them. But, the communists and Russians are presented as terror factor. The atrocities of the communists are depicted as horrific one for the society. Amir describes one incident in this way:

You couldn't trust anyone in Kabul anymore- for a fee or under threat, people told on each other, neighbor to neighbor, child on parent, brother on brother, servant on master, friend on friend. I thought of the singer Ahmad Zahir, who had played the accordion at my thirteenth birthday. He had gone for a drive with some friends, and someone had later found his body on the side of the road, a bullet in the back of his head. The *rafiqs*, the comrades, were everywhere and they'd split

Kabul into two groups: those who eavesdropped and those who didn't.

(KR 98)

In the quote, one can see the image about *rafiqs*, the comrades, as the killer if they thought someone as "eavesdropped." It shows that the whole society is in horrible terror because of them. Even the loving singers of the nation are under their attack in the name of eavesdropping. It also shows that killing a man for a communist is as simple as killing a mosquito in a single clap. But, at the same time, the First World's notion of freedom is valorized. Baba, Amir and many other Afghans reach to America, the land of freedom. They feel safe there to stay upon, work and do their business.

Hosseini, in the similar manner, depicts the interference of Russia in Afghanistan as terrifying one. When the communist Russia entered in Afghanistan, it came with its creed as well and tried to control the system accordingly. Because of the fear of comrades, many people ran away from the country like Baba and Amir. As they were running away to Pakistan, Amir describes:

The Afghan soldier said something too, in a low, reasoning voice. But the Russian soldier shouted something that made the other two flinch. I could feel Baba tightening up next to me. Karim cleared his throat, dropped his head. Said the soldier wanted a half hour with the lady in the back of the truck The second Russian officer, gray-haired and heavysset, spoke to us in broken Farsi. He apologized for his comrade's behavior. "Russia sends them here to fight," he said. "But they are just boys, and when they come here, they find the pleasure of drug." (KR 101-02)

The above description deals on two points. One is that the Russian armies who are there in Afghanistan engage themselves not more in fight but more in sexual activities and drugs. The next point is that Afghanistan is such a land that produces drugs a lot. The former posits the view that the Russian communist armies are moral less in the land of Afghanistan, whereas the latter depicts Afghanistan as a land of drug which has made Russian armies go astray. It gives us the impression that even the communists who are bad by nature become even worse when they reach to this drug land.

The hatred to communists and Russia reaches in its height when Baba reacts about Russia by sitting in a bar in America. Amir describes, “At one point, Baba stood, raised his beer, spilling it on the sawdust floor, and yelled ‘Fuck the Russia!’” (KR115). And everyone around laughed and enjoyed with him. The selection of the word "fuck" and the setting in American bar denotes the binarism Hosseini wants to create about capitalistic and communist worlds. With this he shows that when communists are there, people have to suffer and the same has happened to Afghan people. But, the setting of America has been depicted with the freedom of expression along with the freedom of earning and spending as one likes. It shows the neocolonial categorization of the world where the First World’s value systems are highlighted as standard one thereby devaluing other value systems.

In terms of the description about Islam Hosseini is a bit harsher than that of Seierstad because Seierstad does not talk directly about religious practices using derogatory words which Hosseini has done. But, in the case of describing about communists and Russians, she is as hard as Hosseini. Similar to Hosseini, Seierstad also asserts strong hatred against communists and Russians. The West, by denying communism, wants to highlight the capitalistic system so that in the name of

globalization, it can expand its market all over the world, and create its influence over there. For this purpose, Seierstad has used a famous leader of Afghanistan,

Burhanuddin Rabbani, as a character and makes him tell these words in his speech:

We forced the Communists out of our country, we can force all invaders out of our holy Afghanistan,' he proclaims. The Russian troops withdrew in 1989. A few months later the Berlin wall fell, an event for which Rabbani takes the credit, in addition to the break-up of the Soviet Union. 'Had it not been for *jihad*, the whole world would still be in the Communist grip. The Berlin wall fell because of the wounds which we inflicted on the Soviet Union, and the inspiration we gave all oppressed people. We broke the Soviet Union up into fifteen parts. We liberated people from Communism. *Jihad* led to a freer world. We saved the world because Communism met its grave here in Afghanistan. (*BOK* 150)

In the extract above, Seierstad posits the communists as "invaders," and the holy Muslim war "*jihad*" became successful to force them out of Afghanistan. Communists generally assert that they always work for the "oppressed people." But, here, Seierstad has shifted the use of these terms into religious war "*jihad*." It means, by taking communist slogan, she has used it as a weapon to strike it back on their own forehead. She also explains that freedom from communism means "liberation" and the communists must "meet its grave" for the benefit of the society. Here, Rabbani also feels happy on the falling of Berlin wall, and breaking of Soviet Union into fifteen parts. But, the most interesting thing is that Rabbani is delivering his speech under the protection of the armies of Northern Alliance. Like Russian communist armies, Northern Alliance has also invaded there, but they are not considered as invaders.

They are protecting him, and they are not invaders for him. With this, Seierstad is creating a discourse about communism as bad, thus people should follow what West follows. And, as West has been following capitalism, the nations of the world should also follow it blindly like Rabbani and Karzai. This discourse attempts to sanction one system of knowledge and tries to legitimize another system. Talking about the literature of postcolonial world and its ways of constructing discourse, Pramod K. Nayar opines:

Discourse, a term used frequently in contemporary critical writing, is the context in which knowledge is produced. It defines the limits of what can be said, and what is prohibited. It sanctions and legitimizes knowledge. It is the context, also, of representation, speech and language Discourse, in contemporary thinking, is about power and regulation because it is the very context of language and expression.

(10)

With language and expression, as Nayar suggests, discourse is created and the novel does the same. By using negative signifiers, it attempts to prohibit one system of knowledge and prefers the other one. When the use of language attempts to nullify the system of communism and supports the same action done by Northern Alliance, it attempts to sanction the communism as a knowledge system and tries to establish West and its activities as legitimate one either it is in peace or in war.

In Seierstad's novel, the communist teaching and the teaching on Mujahedeen and Taliban are compared as similar, and differentiated it from what West teaches. After 9/11 attack in New York's Twin Towers, America started its battle against Afghanistan's Taliban government, and shortly after the attack, the Taliban government fell down. With the arrival of new government after the fall of Taliban, it

opened the bid for the printing of the new schoolbooks for Afghanistan school education. But it was done with the cooperation of West under the financial support of UNESCO. About the rejection of previous schoolbooks and opening bid for the printing of new ones, Seierstad analyzes:

He wants to print Afghanistan's new schoolbooks. When the schools open this spring there will hardly be any textbooks. Books printed by the Mujahedeen government and the Taliban are useless. This is how first-year schoolchildren learn the alphabet: 'J is for Jihad, our aim in life, I is for Israel, our enemy, K is for Kalashnikov, we will overcome, M is for Mujahedeen, our heroes, T is for Taliban...'. War was the central theme in math books too. Schoolboys – because the Taliban printed books solely for the boys – did not calculate in apples or cakes, but in bullets and Kalashnikovs. Something like this: 'Little Omar has a Kalashnikov with three magazines. There are twenty bullets in each magazine. He uses two thirds of the bullets and kills sixty infidels. How many infidels does he kill with each bullet?' Books from the Communist period cannot be used either. Their arithmetic problems deal with land distribution and egalitarian ideals. Red banners and happy collective farmers would guide the children towards Communism. (*BOK 62-63*)

The aforementioned extract clearly explains the views of the author who wants to narrate the Second and Third World's education system as nonstandard one. Not only Mujahedeen and Taliban, but the communist education also lacks the standard format of education for her. The above description of Taliban and Mujahedeen education with the description of "bullets," "magazines" and "Kalashnikovs" depicts that the

topics of their education system is only about battle guided by Taliban and Mujahedeen creed of warfare and terrorism. It says that with this education it produces only the fighters, not intellectuals. Not only this, even the communist education system is described in terms of baddies as it uses the words like “land distribution,” “egalitarian ideals,” “happy collective farmers” and the like that lead the children “towards communism.” This is the reason “UNESCO has promised to finance the country’s new schoolbooks” so that the old ones can be replaced with them (*BOK* 63). It means, by rejecting the former education system, the West, especially America, wants to create and establish Western narrative in Afghanistan so that their aim of establishing new form of imperialism works smoothly. Here, UNESCO is only the mediator of the West because it is primarily handled by the Western nations. And because of this, it does not approve the schoolbooks written by communists, Taliban and Mujahedeen, but finances for such textbooks that meet the norms of Western system.

But, contrary to such depiction in the novels, the historical facts of Afghanistan shows different picture. After the arrival of Russia in 1979, drastic reformations were done in different Afghan socio-cultural sectors. It encouraged women for education, and worked for the abolition of dowry and bride price from traditional Afghan society. Taking such ideas from UNESCO and other such organizations' report, PBS online posts its ideas in this way:

The rise of the Soviet-backed People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan in 1978 brought large-scale literacy programs for men and women, again alongside the abolition of bride price and other reforms beneficial to women. During this period leading up the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, reforms in areas such as education stirred

resentment among religious and tribal leaders in the rural areas.

Although full implementations of these reforms were limited by political exigencies, women were able to experience expanded access to education and also the opportunity to actively participate as university faculty staff. ("Women in Afghanistan" n. pag.)

The above historical record shows that there were plenty of situations where Afghan people got chances to improve their socio-economic and cultural status in their society. But, both novels don't touch these positive aspects of reformations that occurred in Afghanistan while describing the same period of time. The communist government, as the historical record shows, really worked a lot for the improvement of backward Afghan society and to some extent it got success also. Women and men equally came to education, politics, civil service and in other fields of social services. But they were the anticommunist forces like America, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia who supported militant groups "with the goal of overturning all socialist policies such as those governing women's rights in general, and access education in particular" ("Women in Afghanistan" n. pag.). But, both the novelists show that the communists were fully cruel for the Afghan people and they hindered Afghan social development. In fact, it was the direct economic support for the rebels from America and other nations that the communist government in Afghanistan couldn't proceed its reformation works smoothly for the benefit of Afghan people. Even after the removal of Russia from Afghanistan in 1989 until the arrival of Taliban in 1996 that the women got different rights in equal basis to men. It was Taliban that banned all the reformation works done by earlier governments. But while depicting the picture of Afghanistan after the ousting of king Zahir Shah in 1973, both novelists homogenously show only the bleak picture of it, thus commit epistemic violence.

To teach means to make people learn, and to teach from childhood means establish the idea in the mind of children which is like the blank sheet of paper. Here, printing the new schoolbooks with Western financing necessarily includes Western ideals and cultures thereby sidelining the core Afghan system. In this way, the schoolbooks work as the creator of narrative that supports the Western format of knowledge. Arguing about the influence of United States and its construction of master narrative, Rumina Sethi, in her book *The Politics of Postcolonialism*, views, “At the time when manifestoes of decolonization were being written by Fanon, Cesaire, and others who questioned Western representations, the master-narratives of the United States were chauvinistically expressing the necessity of imperialism to the formation of its culture” (88). So, whatever resistance the critics or others do, the present fact is that US neoimperialism is going ahead in linear way without feeling any fear from any angle. It is working by terrifying others from military as well as from intellectual way. By taking every means it has to establish its episteme over other nations and be supreme in the world political scenario. For this purpose, in Seierstad’s novel, one can see United States working on both ways. Militarily it has led Northern Alliance, and intellectually it is helping to design the Afghan curriculum. In both ways, it works to form the system that does not disagree with its own system. So, in the leadership of United States, the West has been working continuously to impose its imperialistic domination over the Third World nations by forming Western episteme as superior and other forms as inferior one.

III. Stereotypical Representation of Violence

The concept of forming idea about the "Other" generally generates when people start creating difference among one another and believe oneself as superior to the "Other." For this, the powerful force uses all its resources like military, cultural, social, religious, political, economic, intellectual and so on to impose its dominion over the "Other." The powerful force, thinking itself as civilized one, describes the activities and social values of weaker forces as uncivilized one. With this description, it endeavours to justify its direct or indirect coercion over there as a necessary action. In modern time, America has been working a lot in the process of imposing its dominion over the rest of the world. Describing this nature of American neoimperial desire, Anne McClintock, in her article "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism'" views:

Since the 1940s, the United States' imperialism-without-colonies has taken a number of distinct forms (military, economic, political and cultural), some concealed, some half-concealed. The power of US finance capital and huge multi-nationals to direct the flows of capital, commodities, armaments and media information around the world can have an impact as massive as any colonial regime.... Permitting thereby a more blatant era of intervening in the Third World affairs.

(407)

In past, Europe colonized the world by depicting rest as uncivilized one, and itself as a sole representative of civilization. World War II paved the way for the unexpected demise of colonialism. But, at the same time, as the aforementioned extract explains, it gave birth to another form of control over the world in the leadership of America. With its atomic, economic and military power, America has

been heading onto the path of the new form of control that does not need direct rule over other nations like earlier European colonialism. It works there being unseen and imposes its power indirectly. It means the traditional form of colonialism died in older form, but has still been functioning in new form in modern postcolonial world. Thus postcolonial “is characterized by the persistence of many of the effects of colonialism ... [hence] ‘the colonial’ is not dead, since it lives on in its ‘after effects’” (Hall 421).

Then, how does this new form of control work? Are there any differences in past and present system of imposing power over Others? What are the aspects that the new form of colonialism (neocolonialism) uses to control over the Third World nations in modern scenario? To answer these questions, I begin from this concept that only the time and system has been changed. Only the direct control over other nations by using physical coercion has been erased from the understanding, but all the other systems are almost similar. The system colonialism used, in past, was the civilizing mission that categorized Third World nations as uncivilized and savage ones. Talking about this concept of Western colonialism Lois Tyson explains:

The colonizers believed that only their own Anglo-European culture was civilized, sophisticated, or, as postcolonial critics put it, *metropolitan*. Therefore native peoples were defined as savage, backward and undeveloped. Because their technology was more highly advanced, the colonizers believed that their whole culture was more highly advanced, and they ignored or swept aside the religions, customs, and codes of behavior of the peoples they subjugated. (419)

In past, colonialism was in visible form, and now it is in unseen form (in the sense of past). As the above extract suggests, the tactic of civilizing mission is working even in the leadership of America in the present world. In its leadership, America is

constructing the episteme about Third World nations as uncivilized, debased, bad, chaotic, poor and more. With the formation of such knowledge, America is justifying its control over there. Because of their highly advanced technology, as Hall sees, they utilized it to sweep aside the values of the Third World societies and imposed their own value systems describing it as standard one.

Along this historical development of world colonialism, in this chapter, I discuss upon the concept of how Third World is represented in postcolonial context. How First World constructs the episteme about Third World and causes epistemic violence over there. For the support of my point I take the concept of “representation,” “stereotyping,” and the “Other” developed by postcolonial cultural critic Stuart Hall as a basic theoretical tool and deploy his perspectives in the study of First World. Particularly I focus on American ethnographic discourse that defines Third World (Afghan) socio-political practices. With Hall, I particularly discuss about stereotypical representation of Third World as the “Other,” and connect his ideas with Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak to show such stereotypical representations as epistemic violence.

Stuart Hall, like Spivak who discusses about the subject of *sati* in her analysis, talks about the condition of blacks and the way their images are stereotyped to represent them. He views “stereotyping as a representational practice” and such stereotyping, for him, works in four major ways: “essentializing,” “reductionism,” “naturalization,” and “binary opposition” (277). In his reading of multiple black images, Hall develops his concept of how Western narratives rely heavily on showing blacks as exotic, ugly, primitive, physical, phallic etc. to convey the message about them. With this, it places white norms as the demarcation line of standardization and civilization thus putting blacks below the norms of what they call the civilized

society. The intention to do this is to create the "difference" between blacks and whites thus putting whites in the upper strata of socio-cultural level. It helps keeping blacks in marginal level after their images are created in terms of "Otherness." In such situation Hall suggests for the recoding of black negative images with new meanings so that "a struggle over meaning" can be waged in the "politics of representation" (277). Along this theoretical line, in the forthcoming analysis of *The Kite Runner* and *The Bookseller of Kabul*, I deploy the concept of representation in terms of Muslim culture. Or, how Muslim culture is represented in terms of violence, and how one can call it epistemic violence will be the area of analysis.

Representation of Third World Muslim cultures and societies in terms of baddies such as pollution, violence, corruption, dirt, chaos, poverty, diseases and the like is the neocolonial concept of the West developed to marginalize the rest, especially Islamic culture, as the "Other." In Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, Third World landscapes and bodies are depicted a lot with negative signifiers. To show an example, Amir, the protagonist of the novel, returns to Pakistan from America and finds the city of Peshawar bustling with unwanted noise and smell. Amir describes:

The streets were clogged with bicycle riders, milling pedestrians, and rickshaws popping blue smoke, all weaving through a maze of narrow lanes and alleys. Bearded vendors draped in thin blankets sold animal-skin lampshades, carpets, embroidered shawls, and copper goods from rows of small, tightly jammed stalls. The city was bursting with sounds; the shouts of vendors rang in my ears mingled with the blare of Hindi music, the sputtering of rickshaws, and the jingling bells of horse drawn carts. Rich scents, both pleasant and not so pleasant,

drifted to me through the passenger window, the spicy aroma of *pakora* and the *nihari* Baba had loved so much blended with the sting of diesel fumes, the stench of rot, garbage, and feces [excrements]. (*KR* 170-71)

The aforementioned extract explains the bad quality of life in Muslim societies and expresses about the condition around there which is debased and without any quality. To describe the people and their degraded way of life, Hosseini uses such words like “milling pedestrians,” “popping blue smoke,” “bursting with sounds,” “sputtering of rickshaws,” “jingling bells” etc. It shows that the people are confused, smoke is everywhere, and loud noise on the road nearly deafens the people while walking around there. Amir describes all these negative markers just after landing to Pakistan from America with the clear sense that America is much beautiful. Not only this, to describe Pakistani city, he uses other negative words as well such as “smoke,” “maze of narrow lanes,” “bearded vendors,” “small tightly jammed stalls,” “sting of diesel fumes” and “the stench of rot, garbage, and feces.” Such use of language clearly asserts the idea that Muslim world is still lagging far behind in the path of civilization where everything is backward. And he seems to arrive there to show the savage condition of the Third World people for the Westerners so that these people can be handled ahead in the path of civilization.

The description of Third World landscapes and bodies with confusion, pollution, rot, garbage, excrement etc. shows the idea that they are still uncivilized. Such type of description stereotypes the knowledge about them as inferior and savage one. This is the construction of knowledge about them as degraded one in need of support from external society. This is the "representation" constituted about them in terms of savagery so that the Western civilized hand can be extended over there for

their support with vested interest. Discussing about Stuart Hall's concept of representation and construction of Third World subjectivity, Benita Parry, in her article "Resistance Theory/ Theorizing Resistance or Two Cheers for Nativism," writes, "[Hall] defines subjectivity, as 'a narrative, a story, a history.' Something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found, and identity as an invention 'which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within ... representation'" (87). The quote asserts the concept that native identity is "not simply found," it is "constructed, told, spoken." And in the novel Hosseini constructs Third World Muslim subjectivity in terms of negative connotations. It is "constructed" or "told" knowledge about Muslim landscapes and people. Such telling about them constructs negative episteme and transports the message accordingly to the readers who are unknown about Third World culture and society. But, at the same time, while talking about America, Hosseini posits that it is a country where there is freedom, where one can do his business as one likes, earn and spend according to his desire, and express his ideas as a free citizen. This one way description of First World as positive and Third World as negative is what I want to discuss as problematic one. It is problematic because it privileges the First World knowledge system as authentic and standard one thus negating the values of the Third World causing epistemic violence.

Similar to Hosseini, Seierstad also describes the Third World scenario with abnormal way in her novel *The Bookseller of Kabul*. Seierstad, even being a step ahead in this point from Hosseini, posits that Afghan socio-cultural values are uncivilized so that they need to copy the Western values and systems. In the chapter entitled "A Third-rate Wedding," a character named Mansur comments on the marriage of his own aunt in the family in this way:

‘A third-rate wedding,’ Sultan’s oldest son Mansur whispers back.

‘Bad food, cheap clothes, meatballs and rice, tunics and veils. When I get married I’m going to hire the ballroom at the Intercontinental.

Everyone will have to wear modern clothes and we’ll serve only the best. Imported food,’ he emphasizes. ‘Anyhow, I’m going to get married abroad,’ he adds. (*BOK* 106)

The above quote explains that the Afghan socio-cultural values are of third-rate type, means Western values are of first-rate. The wedding is there in Mansur’s own house and he is saying this as a third-rate wedding with everything bad in terms arrangement. The concept of “ballroom” represents Western value system which Mansur wants to hire in five star Intercontinental Hotel. The use of word “imported” clearly hints to the capitalist market system propounded by the West. He believes in modern expensive clothes, imported foods, serving only the best, and marriage in Western nation. So, in the above lines, Seierstad asserts her neocolonial intention over Third World nations where the West wants to spread its economic, social, political, cultural and other such influences.

Mansur, by thinking about adopting Western socio-cultural values, believes that he will be a standard figure unlike his native Afghans. The Afghans are of third-rate people, and by following Western values, he believes, he will become a first-rate figure. It means, by presenting such images about the West and Afghanistan, Seierstad wants to show that Western imported lifestyles and values are the source of power for Mansur type of people in Afghan scenario. Talking about such understanding of Western influence Philip Darby and A. J. Paolini view that “[w]estern framework of understanding and interests is taken to be the ultimate expression of power Western representations construct meaning and “reality” in

the Third World. Concepts such as “progress,” “civilized” and “modern” powerfully shape the non-European world” (387). So, to do the “progress,” to be “civilized,” and to be “modern,” one has to follow Western norms and values which Mansur asserts in his expression. In her description, Seierstad takes the readers only in such places where she can depict Afghan practices with negative connotation. She describes about Afghan marriage as a kind of buying and selling where “men from both families sign the contract” (*BOK* 104). She describes different Afghan groups “burning books” and ironically depicts the burning as the “fire in the service of God” (17). She describes Taliban atrocities, and the war in Afghanistan. But, she does not take us to such places where people are living happy life or already practicing Westernized values in Afghan societies. She only puts forward such ideas that the West takes as malpractices and devalues them in terms of non-standard one. With this, she gives emphasis on Western value systems by arising hatred against Third World cruel and savage practices, and sympathy for those who are suffering there. But, in both cases, she seems to drag the Western attention over there for their support: teach the lesson of civilization for the savage people, and help those who are in suffering. Doesn’t this show that she wants to create the episteme about the Third World Muslim practices as debased one, thus committing epistemic violence?

Stuart Hall defines the above mentioned type of explanation about First World and Third World in terms of "difference." This is the difference of superiority and inferiority created by power. This is the representation that draws the line between (so-called) positive and negative value systems thereby privileging the positive value systems as their norms. Discussing about the functioning of such representational practices, Hall opines:

However, we have also spoken, of power in *representation*; power to mark, assign and classify; of *symbolic* power, of *ritualized* expulsion. Power, it seems, has to be understood here, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain ‘regime of representation’. It includes the exercise of *symbolic* power through representational practices. Stereotyping is a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence. (259)

For him, the use of power works with “economic exploitation” and “physical coercion” but this is not the end. It also represents in “cultural or symbolic terms.” Here, Hall means to assert the idea that marginalization of one cultural value system by privileging another is the cultural decoding and recoding of marginalized culture. In this system, the marginalized culture is represented in terms of non-standard connotation thereby imposing the values from what they call the standard one. When the marginalized culture is explained with negative stereotypes, people start understanding about it in negative way and start imitating what is represented as standard culture. But, to this, Hall explains as the “exercise of symbolic violence.” And here, Hall is near to Spivak’s concept of epistemic violence. Both critics clearly assert the idea that constructing knowledge about others by imposing the norms of one’s own is the way of representing other, to which Hall claims as “symbolic violence” whereas Spivak terms “epistemic violence.”

Stereotyping of Muslim world with the synonym of terror is the common theme in both *The Kite Runner* and *The Bookseller of Kabul*. Both novels have their primary focus on the description of terror factor in Afghanistan. To discuss about it,

they have taken the idea from Afghan historical development, but focusing primarily on the time when there were different tribal and other atrocities upon Afghan people. In both novels, almost from beginning to end, the description of Afghanistan has been done with the subject of violence, terror, atrocities, pain and the like. But, when the description of the West is done, it is done with almost all positive comments which I have analyzed in earlier sections. And now, in the coming paragraphs, I foreground and analyze some of the horrific events depicted in both novels and show how it has helped to create the episteme about Afghanistan as a nation of terror.

Both the novelists have taken Taliban atrocities as the main point of description along with many other subjects to describe the horror of Afghan society. In Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*, the author narrates a scene (among many) where Taliban cruelty can be observed in its optimum level. In the following description, Hosseini very minutely observes the death of two lovers who are stoned to death because they had the love affair and premarital sex which was a crime in the law of Taliban. He writes:

“Every sinner must be punished in a manner befitting his sin!” the cleric repeated into the mike, lowering his voice, enunciating each word slowly, dramatically. “And what manner of punishment, brothers and sisters, befits the adulterer? How shall we punish those who dishonor the sanctity of marriage? How shall we deal with those who spit in the face of God? How shall we answer those who throw stones at the windows of God’s house? WE SHALL THROW THE STONES BACK!” The Talib, looking absurdly like a baseball pitcher on the mound, hurled the stone at the blindfolded man in the hole. It struck the side of his head. The woman screamed again. The crowd made a

startled “OH” sound The man in the whole was now a mangled mass of blood and shredded rags When it was all over, when the bloodied corpses had been unceremoniously tossed into the backs of red pickup truck – separate ones – a few men with the shovels hurriedly filled the holes. (*KR* 236-37)

In the aforementioned description, the most striking aspect is the strength of depicting stoning scene with the eyewitness authority. In this detail description of murder scene, Hosseini depicts a cleric leading all the affairs. The use of cleric leading such inhuman action hints to the point that Islam itself is such religion that gives priority to violence. And, in his speech, the Taliban cleric confirms that they are punishing the couple because they loved each other and shared a single bed before marriage that he describes as a crime against Islam. For premarital sex, it is described as adultery and shown the couple punished by stoning to death. The intention for the depiction of this scene is clear here. Hosseini, being an American citizen, knows that sex in understanding between the two before marriage is not adultery but the natural right of the concerned couple. By describing the horrific scene, Hosseini wants to assert that Muslim religio-social structure itself is negative that does not count the desire of people and punishes them cruelly. This understanding of Muslim society with cruel nature advocates negating this system. By making a cleric to speak those words, it creates the episteme about Islam as a fundamentalist type of religion that must be corrected to the basic norms of humanity.

The description of cruelty among Muslim society has another facet of understanding it. This is the understanding of West that wants to spread its cultural values in terms of standard norms by sidelining other cultural values. To do this, the Western imperialism attempts to create other value systems as negative one so that its

own system can be imposed over there. In this sense, what I want to describe here is that cruelties and violence are bad by nature everywhere and we have to reject it either in East or West. But, by showing others' values bad, if any system attempts to impose its own values as the standard norms of human life, it is even worse because it desires to kill the values of those people. Hosseini, in the novel, while talking about the love and sexual relation in Afghanistan, depicts the scene of stoning. But, when he describes the same love and sex scene in America, he presents it differently. Even among Afghan society in America, Hosseini depicts it in different way. Soraya was a daughter of an Afghan general who ran with a man who later turned out to be a drug addict. She stayed with him for a month and then brought back home. The family accepts her and she was married to Amir later (*KR* 143-44). In the same type of cases, Hosseini narrates Afghan issues with violence and death, but American issue with union. This depiction clearly privileges the American culture as civilized one and devalues the Islamic culture in Afghanistan. While narrating, Hosseini does not show any negative consequences that can be found in American society. Unlike this, in Afghanistan, he narrates almost everything in terms of negative connotation. So, this type of negative presentation helps to create negative episteme about Muslim world, thus creating epistemic violence.

There are several instances in the novel where Hosseini depicts Afghanistan in terms of negative signifiers. He presents the cruelties done by Sunni Muslims over S'ha Muslims within the country (*KR* 8), the coup that ousted the monarchy from Afghanistan (32), the Russians who usurped Afghanistan and tortured the people there (98), Afghanistan as a land of drug (102), Taliban torturing and killing its own people in the name of saving religion (237), Taliban massacring Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif (243), and many more. But, at the same time, he openly praises the American system

by giving emphasis over it. He depicts Baba, a Muslim, loving the idea of America (109), and hating the practices practiced in Islamic culture (15), the dream to see Hollywood films among Afghan children and be like a Western hero (23), Amir throwing a book that was about Hitler (85), the successful business Baba, Amir and many other Afghans do in America (119), the wedding in America even of a runaway girl which is considered as a crime in Taliban Afghanistan (149), Amir's chance of being a novelist which was almost impossible in Afghanistan (159), and many more. All these examples show that Hosseini aims to present Afghanistan in terms of baddies and America in terms of goodies. As one line of description about any event stereotypes the ideas, Hosseini wants to create the stereotypical representation of Afghanistan in terms of negative qualifiers, and America in terms of positive qualifiers. With this negative representation in terms of the depiction of Afghanistan, Hosseini attempts to create the demarcation line privileging the American values by Othering Afghan ones. So, by creating the knowledge about Afghanistan only in terms of negative qualifiers, in *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini commits epistemic violence.

To impose authority over other, the powerful force always constructs the discourse of less powerful force by taking negative aspects so that it can create its influence over there. Especially, it is “‘the European [and American] discursive production’ and the ‘the axiomatic of imperialism,’ which continues to influence and instruct our knowledge, culture, economy, literature and pedagogical practices” (Bhattacharjee 1194). As Bhattacharjee suggests, Hosseini's novel supports US imperialism to influence the Third World system by constructing its knowledge from bad figures. So, Fatemeh Keshavarz studies this type of novels from the angle of new Orientalism and explains that such novels create Muslim ghosts for the remaining

world and attempt to justify the modern neo-imperial intention to control over the world. She writes:

Ghosts haunt us by not being there. And the New Orientalism literature has been producing ghosts in abundance. Muslim ghosts are large in number and perfectly wicked, suitable qualities for generating fear. They are old, so their past supplies material for nightmarish readings of history.

The memoirs, travel accounts, novels and journalistic writings whose popular domain is haunted by Muslim ghosts vary in quality.

Thematically, they stay focused on the public phobia: blind faith and cruelty, political underdevelopment, and women's social and sexual repression. They provide a mix of fear and intrigue- the basis for a blank check for the use of force in the region and Western self-affirmation. (71)

Keshavarz believes that *The Kite Runner*, *The Bookseller of Kabul* and other such novels are prone to create Muslim culture as ghostlike and wicked. With this, they figure out demarcation between Western and non-Western cultures by authenticating Western system as the provider of standard norms. So, the formation of non-West as savage and uncivilized is necessary so that the West can use its force over there in the process of neocolonization. And, without any doubt, these types of novels have played very important roles to form such knowledge about the rest of the world.

Husseini's novel mentions the violence without overtly justifying American invasion over there. Unlike this, Seierstad says "I made for Kabul with Northern Alliance" and openly declares that American invasion over there was not wrong (*BOK*

1). The action taken by Northern Alliance in the leadership of America is not studied in terms of violence, because, as they said, it was done to rid Afghan people from the hand of terrorist atrocities. Being a Norwegian journalist, Seierstad presents her narrator to support her Western neocolonial look over Afghanistan. As one can observe modern journalism that, most often, takes the help of “public phobia,” she has also done the same. In the novel, she has primarily raised the issues of violence, cruelty, political instability, suppression etc. to make hot news for the Western media.

Similar to Hosseini who depicts the stoning of lovers to death, Seierstad also presents the murder of a lover in different but even cruel way. In her depiction, Seierstad has endeavoured to show how the love affair between the lovers mars the social prestige of the family. Especially she describes the family members of the daughter in great tension because, Saliqa, their daughter and sister, is in love with a man. The family members conclude that it is a serious crime and she must be punished for this. She mentions:

However, one thing bothers her: the two days of family council when ... [s]he, the mother, it was, who in the end dispatched her three sons to kill her daughter. The brothers entered the room together. Together they put a pillow over her face; together they pushed it down, harder, harder, until life was extinguished. Then they returned to the mother.

(*BOK* 43)

The above quote plainly represents the idea that Muslim society is intolerant to the concept to which its tradition or convention does not permit. And Seierstad has highlighted the point where the mother is depicted as deciding the death of her own daughter, and her sons killing their own sister. Unlike Hosseini, in this case, the daughter only loved a boy, and for this crime she got the punishment of death. Here,

Seierstad, being a European citizen, knows well that this is not a crime in the West or in any liberal society, and if she takes such issues, she can sell such news well there. By selling the news of the misfortune of Muslim society, one can easily understand, Seierstad has improved her personal fortune with the royalty from the selling of the book and the popularity she achieved out of it. In her above depiction, even the mother, who is generally expected as the source of love and care for her children, is presented as cruel and merciless to her own offspring. With such depiction of Muslim society through media, Seierstad helps to develop the stereotype about Muslim culture as being highly conservative. This spreading of knowledge to the Western readers generates the concept about Muslim people having so cruel, uncivilized and conservative. It fills their mind about Muslim with negative episteme, thus causing epistemic violence over Muslim people.

Hall argues that stereotyping works with its “own poetics ... [and] politics ... that this is a particular type of power- a hegemonic and discursive form of power, which operates through culture, the production of knowledge, imagery and representation” (263). And, in *The Bookseller of Kabul*, Seierstad also produces the knowledge about Muslim culture in terms of violent imageries which is done almost from the beginning to the end. In the section entitled “No Admission to Heaven,” Seierstad points out the law with the sixteen commandments issued by Taliban government. She points out the law where there was prohibition against female exposure, music, shaving, rearing of pigeons and bird fighting, kite-flying, reproduction of pictures, gambling, British and American hairstyles, interest on loans, exchange charges and charges on transactions, the washing of clothes by river embankments, music and dancing at wedding, playing drums, tailors sewing women’s clothes or taking measurement of women, witchcraft along with the

mandatory prayer and the like (*BOK* 84-87). Seierstad, in the above synopsis, displays a terrific image of Taliban law over Afghan people. She describes them number by number in the novel because she knows that they are such common systems practiced in the West without any tension from any side in their social structure. Showing the ban on music, dance, playing drums, shaving, sewing women's cloths, Western hairstyle, washing clothes on riverside, kite flying, female exposure and the like, Seierstad attempts to create the image of Taliban as inhuman people in this modern advance world. These activities are normal day-to-day activities for the Westerners to which Taliban has banned on all. With this description, she develops the representation of Muslim world as a debased world that must be taught the lesson of civilization.

By forwarding some of the cruel and violent practices of the Muslim world, neocolonialism always attempts to construct the knowledge about it in connection to negative signifiers. It is the process of the production of "truth" by relating it to the savagery of Muslim people which is "inherent in the institution of epistemological production" of the West (Spivak 141). Seierstad, working directly under the security and shelter of the Northern Alliance, searches and finds such areas of Afghan socio-political events which are forbidden there, but these are proved out to be common practices in the West. Moreover, she highlights on some of the practices that are cruel and violent, and attempts to establish the concept of it as common trends in Muslim society. In *The Bookseller of Kabul*, Seierstad scatters such negative signifiers about Afghanistan throughout her narrative. She narrates the burning of books by the Communists, Mujahedeen and Taliban (*BOK* 2), the buying and selling of daughter in marriage where an over fifty years old man marries a sixteen years old girl (13), the Taliban religious police torturing the people (20), a girl murdered for the crime of

doing love (43), Taliban inhuman laws banning everything (84-87), female wearing burka and disappearing of female faces from the public places (94), a third rate wedding (98), Afghanistan as a land of mines (145), woman never under the sun in so hot Afghanistan and in need of sun and vitamin D (162), the chaos in Afghan administration (189), children not sent to school but to work (199), the local warfare among warlords (249), and many other instances that show Afghanistan as a land of misery, chaos and full of problems. These are only representative examples that depict Afghanistan in terms of negative stereotypes and construct the episteme about it with negative representation, thus causing epistemic violence over the people of Afghanistan.

Contrary to this, while discussing the idea of West, Seierstad uses positive signifiers that are presented as the need for the betterment of the Afghan social structure. In the novel, she describes UNESCO financing for the new Afghan schoolbooks (*BOK* 63), desire of the Western type of marriage as a brand of maintaining standard (106), the Western model of tourism as a source of development and income (142), UN working for the support of Afghanistan's social and economic development (148), a Western type of five star hotel serving the people with high quality service (202), English as a standard language (4), Europeans far ahead in technology and Afghanistan should learn from this (275) etc. Positing good qualities for the Western concept and bad qualities for Afghanistan, Seierstad asserts the point of binarism showing West as a source of norms and values, and the rest as the receiver of those norms and values. It shows the “non-European [and non-American] as exotic ... ‘Other’” and attempts to justify the Western interference as valid for the people of Third World (Barry 187). Seierstad’s depiction of Muslim values with bad qualifiers and Western values with good qualifiers attempts to validate the Western

interference over there as a necessary thing in the mission of elevating them to the level of Westerners. Particularly, when she mentions the role of UN and UNESCO, she endeavours to search the safe ground for the Western entry over there. America was the country where there was the attack on Twin Towers on 9/11, but it also searched its validation with Northern Alliance, a united military institution of the Western nations, for its invasion over Afghanistan. With its activities, one can easily observe the role of UN as such a body that claims to include all the nations in this planet under its unified umbrella, but verifies only those systems that match the Western standard. Seierstad prioritizes the values of the West by including the role of UN and UNESCO over Afghanistan.

In this way both novelists, Hosseini and Seierstad in their novels *The Kite Runner* and *The Bookseller of Kabul*, depict the Afghan society, culture, and politics in terms of negative signifiers. They both have taken, most often, the negative practices and described the Afghan society in terms of that. They depict Afghan Islamic practices from bad understanding for the world, but unlike this they present the Western norms and values having the standard format which can be followed as a basic norm of life and applicable everywhere. Is it always necessary that West is best and rest is worst? One should not think so. Modern psychology tells that people can be happy only in their own cultural background that comes from one's own tradition. The invasion of the culture of foreign nation only mars the culture of the concerned society. And here, as both novelists try to show the Third World practices with negative connotation but First World with positive, they commit the intellectual crime that is epistemic violence.

IV. Silence and Formation of Natives

One of the goals of neocolonialism is to construct and appropriate the Third World values with its own system. With this ideology it enters into the Third World and starts searching the weaknesses where it can have the easy play over there. In the case of *The Kite Runner* and *The Bookseller of Kabul*, one can observe both Hosseini and Seierstad playing upon the lack of voice among common Afghan natives. Many commoners are depicted without having any voice and they are suffering from the cruelties done by their own visionless leaders. Along this line, in this chapter, I will try to analyze the causes behind such depiction of natives. Or why have the natives depicted silent in front of the cruel rulers and gazing foreigners will be the focal point of attention in the coming analysis?

In both novels common people are suffering a lot whereas the rulers are depicted emotionless on the suffering of their own people. And both novels also present such perspective where the Western eyes are looking on both sides: sympathizing the suffering natives and creating hatred against cruel rulers. What is the politics behind such presentation of images in the novels that are primarily written for the Western readers? The answer for this question is related to the formation of knowledge about the Third World in terms of evil, violence and cruelty. This formation of knowledge helps the neocolonialism justify its interference and control over the Third World nations as a form of savior of the people as their own rulers are cruel for their own subjects.

In Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, there are many instances where the natives are silent. They are voiceless in front of the cruelties done by some powerful people. And the Western gaze is on both of them in the novel where Hosseini arouses sympathy over the voiceless characters and hatred against them who do the wrong. In

the beginning of the novel Hosseini describes Hazaras (Shi'a Muslim) as voiceless in front of Pashtuns (Sunni Muslim). Ali and Hassan are the Hazara Muslim characters and they face the cruelties and domination done by Pashtuns. In one occasion, when Amir wins the game of kite flying, Hassan runs to bring the fallen kite for him. But, on the way, he has to face the terrific obstacle created by Assef, a Pashtun Muslim. Amir describes:

"It's just a Hazara," Assef said. But Kamal kept looking away.

"Fine," Assef snapped. "All I want you weaklings to do is hold him down. Can you manage that?"

Wali and Kamal nodded. They looked relieved.

Assef knelt behind, put his hands on Hassan's hips and lifted his bare buttocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back and undid his own belt buckle with his free hand. He unzipped his jeans. Dropped his underwear. He positioned himself behind Hassan. Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper. (KR 66)

In the extract above, Hassan faces an unwanted and forced homosex from Assef who, in the later part of the novel, is described as the commander of Taliban. Amir sees all this but hides himself away though he describes Hassan as his nearest and dearest friend. Even Amir won this kite flying game with the help of Hassan but could not go to help him in the time of need. How could the novelist show Amir suffering who is from higher race and has to go to America later in the novel? It was after this incident of homosex that the partition between Amir and Hassan began. If one observes these three characters in the novel: Assef becomes Taliban's strong but cruel leader, Amir reaches America, but only Hassan remains there to suffer as a silent native. Amir

reaches America and becomes a published novelist, but later Hassan gets a cruel death along with his wife from the hand of Taliban.

Amir has been living a happy life in America. Why Hassan got a tragic death from Taliban in Afghanistan and why Amir is shown living happily in America. Can there be any intention behind such depiction of some characters facing tragedy and others in happiness? And especially the characters that are in the lower strata of society are depicted as the most tragic one. On deeper thinking one can easily guess the neocolonial intention of the author behind such depiction. With this the author is showing two different worlds at the same time: West as a safe land for any type of people, and the Third World as land of violence, cruelty and even death for those people who don't have any strong voice against such activities. This type of description about the Third World helps the author justify the Western interference over there as valid one. By depicting the silence of natives, the novelist endeavours to create the negative episteme about them and the need of help for those who are suffering there. So, in the forced homosexual scene, "Hassan didn't struggle. Didn't even whimper." How could he struggle as he doesn't have any strong voice? After all he is a silent and obedient native who has to accept what the high strata of people want him to do. So this is the stereotype of the Third World natives created by the Western mind. Discussing about such intention of the West, Pramod K. Nayar writes:

Stereotypes - the ignorance of natives, their effeminacy and indolence, their over-sexed nature, their essential untrustworthiness, the superiority of the European knowledge - helped justify and necessitate Western presence as the masculine, strong and rational protector in various guises and roles - of the protector (police, army), educator

(teacher), administrator (bureaucracy and political presence), and saviour (missionary). (23)

As Nayar quotes, Hassan is ignorant native who has to suffer from the domination and torture from his own people and there is no one to save him. But, Amir goes to America and he is safe there. He becomes able to enjoy the freedom with every chance of expressing his voice. And the natives who are silent, they have been depicted to suffer a lot in their own homeland. They cannot speak even for themselves and there is none to speak for them in their own land. In this native scenario the novel is prone to depict the idea that someone is needed to speak for them. In this point, the Westerners appear in the front. They appear to prove themselves as "rational protector" of the natives from the hands of their own cruel rulers. But, in the name of protection, they try to replace the native system with their Western system which Hosseini does in the novel by valorizing American system as free one and Afghan system as cruel and violent one. Thus, the way the novelist takes the negative ideas to describe Afghanistan by valorizing the West, he causes epistemic violence over the silent natives of the Third World nations.

Instead of using direct force, firstly modern Western neocolonialism creates a discourse about the "Other" by taking some of the weaker aspects of that society. Then it starts convincing the natives by saying that Western system is good because of its democratic freedom, and their own systems are bad as they don't match to what they call democratic system. In this process they never try to correct the existing native system within their format, but instead impose the Western values by saying as good one. In *The Kite Runner* one can observe this when Hosseini describes the Afghan characters facing the cruelties from their own rulers. But, when some of the characters become able to run away to America, everything becomes fine for them.

Only when there is no alternative choice, the use of force is depicted as necessary. In the case of Third World violence, the use of physical force is depicted as necessary to which they describe as the redemption of common suffering natives. It proves the point that contemporary imperialism uses both force and consent on the way of its functioning where creation of the consent of natives becomes primary objective for them. Showing this way of the functioning of modern Western imperialism, Abdel Malek opines:

Contemporary imperialism is, in a real sense, a hegemonic imperialism, exercising to a maximum degree a rationalized violence taken to a higher level than ever before - through fire and sword, but also through the attempts to control hearts and minds. For its content is defined by the combined action of the military - industrial complex and the hegemonic cultural centers of the West, all of them founded on the advanced levels of development attained by monopoly and finance capital, and supported by the benefits of both the scientific and technological revolution and the second industrial revolution itself.

(qtd. in Mohanty 174-75)

As Malek explains, in *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini describes both the use of force and hegemony in Afghanistan. Russia, America and Northern Alliance entered there with "fire and sword" but later they also tried to win the consent of the people with the formation of native discourse according to their ideology. In the process of winning the consent of the natives, primarily they took the fear or violent factors existing among them and utilized it as a tool to convince the natives to support their creed. In Hosseini's novel, thus, he describes his characters loving Western cultures: dress, food, film, love etc. They love to follow it by disliking their own systems. But

they cannot do it openly because of the fear created by their own system. Right to this point the Westerners catch the concept and try to persuade the natives to reject their own system. And for this purpose Hosseini has presented the scene of lovers stoning to death to show how cruel their native system is even for such beautiful concept of loving and caring each other. It is described as a sin in Afghanistan but a matter of happiness of life for the Western concept. But, because of the fear from their own seniors, the natives could not speak against it. This shows the actual reality of the natives as silent one, and validates the need of someone speak for them and lo! the Westerners are ready for this.

In Hosseini's novel, the preference of the West against Afghanistan is seen in the character of Amir. To rid himself from the atrocities of the Russian supported communist government, Amir runs away to Pakistan, and finally to America with his father. He settles his life well there and later returns to Afghanistan in the form of the rescuer of Afghan people. A run away man from the same country acts as if he is a savior because of his American experience. In the final section of the novel, Amir returns to Afghanistan with a mission to rescue the life of Sohrab, Hassan's son (*KR* 238-55). Amir feels sad on hearing the painful and horrific death of Hassan, and determines to save Sohrab from the cruelties of Taliban regime. Like a Western masculine, he goes to Afghanistan and saves the boy. After their arrival to Pakistan, Amir tries to act as if he were the sole savior of Sohrab. But in the part of Sohrab, he is described as always silent figure. He speaks very little or almost nothing. Even asked, he speaks only few words. While describing Sohrab he writes "He didn't answer" (*KR* 279), "his smiles faded" (282), etc. In this description, one can easily find the damage of the speech among Afghan natives explained in the novel. Hosseini's description of natives with silence and Westerners with voice in the form

of savior is itself a clear point of whose knowledge system he privileges. With speech and courage among Westernized people, he wants to show that in Western style you can have voice, but in native you cannot speak. It is similar to what Christie Dotson views that "one method of executing epistemic violence is to damage a given group's ability to speak and be heard" (236). So, by projecting natives as without speech, the novel tries to create the knowledge about them as weak and strengthless and causes epistemic violence upon them.

In the beginning of the novel, Ali and Hassan are silent and marginalized characters. Later, Hassan's son Sohrab is depicted as silent and submissive figure. But, Amir goes to America and returns like the agent of West. His mission is to save the people (Sohrab) who are in pain. And, in this mission, Amir is depicted as successful one. Doesn't this convey the message that the novel aims to highlight the Western form of knowledge as better than other? Doesn't it privilege one system by negating the other? Surely it does. Focusing on this way of using language and creating knowledge, James Paul Gee views that "we can use language to make or construe certain sign systems and beliefs as better or worse than others, as relevant or privileged or not in a given context. We can build privilege or prestige for one sign system over others or for one way of claiming knowledge over other ways" (136). It means Hosseini has used the language in such a way out of which he has become successful to create Western system as better one and the Afghan system as worse one. In the novel, once Sohrab even attempts to commit suicide instead of going to America. But Amir takes him to the hospital, Sohrab is saved, and at last taken to America. In America, now, they don't feel any pressure, threat and tension, but free to act and speak as one likes. But the same people were speechless in their own native soil. In this way, by depicting the violent concepts about the Third World nations, the

novel attempts to create only negative episteme about them thus causing epistemic violence. So, Sohrab's rescue is not the real rescue but robbing him from his original native identity. It is displacing him from his land because of his silence.

Then, what is the problem to anyone when someone speaks for native people? I say there is the problem because in the speech for native only the voice of power is spoken. In reality, the voice of native never comes out. They always remain silent because someone else speaks for them without knowing their actual desire. In our present case, Amir speaks for Sohrab and persuades him to leave his native soil. He acts like a ventriloquist and speaks for Sohrab. Describing this kind of colonizer's intention, Ray Chow describes:

that it is actually the colonizer who feels looked at by the native's gaze. This gaze, which is neither a threat nor a retaliation, makes the colonizer conscious of himself leading to his need to turn this gaze around and look at himself, henceforth 'reflected' in the native object. It is the self reflection of the colonizer that produces the colonizer as subject (potent gaze, source of meaning and action) and the native as his image, with all the pejorative meaning of 'lack' attached to the word 'image.' (139)

As the extract suggests, Amir acts like a colonizer and sees Sohrab from his perspective. He believes that he is the "source of meaning" and Sohrab is a person with "meaning of lack." Amir, a person living in America, takes Sohrab there by discarding the values of Afghan culture. Sohrab, though suspicious to Amir's action, couldn't speak against him because he is a native without any voice. As Spivak claims Sohrab is like "the construction of object, for investigation and control" and Amir works in this process of object construction for "investigation and control" (200). In

this process, Amir has become successful finally to impose his ideas on Sohrab to follow him to America. Sohrab, like an obedient robotic object, at last, accepts what Amir says like the "docile recipient, where the west initiates and the native imitates" and follows him (Parry 89). In this way, Hosseini has become successful to establish the Western concept of its superiority by settling Sohrab in America, and negating the systems and values of Afghan native soil.

In Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, Ali, Hassan, Sohrab etc. are male characters who are depicted with no voice as their own. Unlike him, in Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul*, she describes majority female characters with silence. Not only voice, they even don't have their face as it is covered by veil. In the name of preserving culture, Afghan women are kept inside the periphery of four walls and Seierstad highlights this point as a major focus of her novel. She describes Afghan women who are suffering a lot from "cultural policing [which] begins with first marking and then drawing women 'inside' the community" (Menon 20). Because of this "cultural policing" women are described to have remained not only "inside the community," but only inside their house. Seierstad describes "For a long time, Leila felt dizzy and weak - when she eventually went to see the doctor, he said she needed sun and vitamin D. Paradoxically Kabul is one of the sunniest towns in the world' (*BOK* 163). The extract shows how Afghan women are kept only under the roof and around four walls who are in dire need of the "sun and vitamin D." It means she wants to show that women are in extreme torture and in need of help. As a Western journalist, she believes that it is her duty to uncover this reality from Afghan scenario and display it for the world knowledge. While doing so, she herself wears burka while investigating the insides of Afghan families. She says:

I was spared having to adhere to the Afghan women's strict dress code, and I could go wherever I wanted. Nevertheless, I often dressed in the burka, simply to be left alone. A western woman in the streets of Kabul attracts a lot of unwanted attention. Beneath the burka, I could gaze around to my heart's content without being stared at in return. I could observe the other family members when we were out, without everyone's attention being directed at me. Anonymity became a release I also wore the burka to discover for myself what it is like to be an Afghan woman. (*BOK 6*)

The extract tells her intention of wearing burka in Afghanistan. Being a Western journalist, she wants to study Afghan family with their socio-cultural structures, but more than that, she wants to feel, "what is like to be an Afghan woman." But, in her exploration of Afghan society, she sees only the evils everywhere. Wearing burka by a Western woman for the "gaze around" without the notice of natives affirms to the point of neocolonial intention of knowing Third World. She studies the Third World social, cultural and political structures under the protection of Northern Alliance and finds only the cruelties there. In her description, she says that Northern Alliance also attacked there but it was for the good cause because the local rulers were cruel and the suffering people needed their help. Everyone believes violent activities are bad everywhere. But, she doesn't see any violence on the side of Northern Alliance, and only sees violence among Afghan groups. This type of one sided depiction creates wrong episteme about Third World Muslim nations thus causing epistemic violence.

Muslim women have been following the practice of wearing burka from long past. But, the question of depicting it so violent a practice after the fall of Twin Towers in September 11, 2001, makes people feel doubt on the intention of the West.

Why it became so debated question only after that. By showing burka as evil thing, the West wants to show that it has made Muslim women with lack of voice as there is absence of mouth covered by veil, and itself as the savior of these women. This homogenous portrayal of Muslim women for Western readers negates the diversity among Muslim women community. And with this America has waged the war on terrorism in the name of saving these women.

The narrator says that she was free from "Afghan women's strict dress code." This line shows the binary opposition between two different worlds. As a Westerner she is free in her activities of wearing and doing different activities. But, in Afghanistan there is no freedom like West because of their "strict dress code" along with many other restrictions for women. This depiction automatically valorizes the Western system with positive one and degrades the Afghan system. In her description about Afghan women, she explains about them always sitting inside the house and working like slaves where sometimes they even need the rays of "the sun and vitamin D." Discussing about such representation of Afghan women Kavin J. Ayotte and Mary E. Hussain view that "representation of the women of Afghanistan as gendered slaves in need of 'saving' by the West constitute epistemic violence Especially problematic is the ventriloquism of Afghan women by discourses speaking for (both 'on behalf of ' and 'in place of ') them" (113-16). It means the description of Afghan women with burka around the four walls represents Afghan women like "gendered slaves." And this type of representation shows that they are "in need of saving by the west." So it is the epistemic violence which Seierstad commits in her novel with such depiction. By showing Afghan women in pathetic condition Seierstad creates a discourse about them where she presents herself "speaking for them." So it is the

problem of Western mind in which they see themselves only as savior and others in strong problems.

In the novel, while describing about women, silence is the major category she explains throughout. Sultan is over 50 years and wants to marry a new wife because his first wife "Sharifa was getting old" (*BOK* 12). The man, Sultan, is free to do what he likes in the family but Sharifa has to remain silent on the choice of her husband. In this second marriage "Sultan's first candidate was sixteen-year old Sonya" (12). Sultan keeps the proposal of this marriage and "[t]he parents agreed within the hour." Sonya's uncle, after the agreement, came to her "Uncle Sultan is your wooer' he said. 'Do you consent?'" (14). But Sonya knew that she had to remain silent. "Not a sound escaped Sonya's lips. With tearful eyes and bowed head she hid behind her long shawl"(14).

In all above quotes one can observe the description of Afghan marriage system where women have to remain silent and accept what their men say. It makes the people understand that multiple marriages are common in Afghanistan, age factor does not keep any meaning, and the women never have any voice even in the case of selecting their life partner. So, it is a postcolonial guideline where "epistemic violence results when in (post)colonial discourse the subaltern is silenced by both the colonial and indigenous patriarchal power" (Khatun n. pag). As a male chauvinist Sultan silences his women and does as he likes. And, as a colonial representative, the narrator depicts this scenario and creates the discourse about them with negative connotation. Out of both of these activities, the Afghan women have to suffer from epistemic violence.

As Hosseini does, Seierstad also revolves her narrative around the description of historical development from after the ousting of king Zahir Shah in 1973 till around

the American attack after 9/11. But, in almost all her description, she describes women nowhere coming out of their houses for public services and outer works. But the historical record shows different facts:

In the decades that preceded the rule of the Taliban, Afghan woman and girls enjoyed increasing access to education, political participation, and the professional world. Women were appointed to top levels of government and taught in prestigious intellectual institutions, and by 1996, when the Taliban reached Kabul, about 50 percent of the country's civil servants were women. ("Women in Afghanistan" n. pag.)

The above historical fact clearly shows the reforming condition of women in Afghanistan before the arrival of Taliban in 1996. Women were participating in politics, getting better education, and also appointed in top levels of government and other prestigious institutions. But, in their descriptions, both novelists homogenously depict the horrendous picture of Afghanistan without making any difference in any historical period of time. This fact of their description shows that their writing supports the intention of neocolonial West, and prioritizes the Western values disregarding many positive factors occurred in the historical development of Afghanistan. By disregarding the positive side of Afghan history, both novelists take only the violent and fear factors so as to create the knowledge about Third World in terms of negative epistemology. Because of this difference between the historical facts and the novels, I have seen the problems in negative representations in both novels which led me to conclude that they are committing epistemic violence.

Northern Alliance attacked Afghanistan supporting America's war on terrorism and saving tortured people from the hands of those terrorists. Seierstad's

narrator says, "when the Taliban fell, I made for Kabul with Northern Alliance . . . [and] spent weeks amongst gunpowder and rubble, where conversations centered on the tactics of war and military advance (*BOK 1*). About the depiction of Taliban, both Hosseini and Seierstad explain about them as the cruelest figures in the world. So, Seierstad's description of above extract indicates the Western arrival in Afghanistan for good purpose. She seems to view the idea that Western invasion is necessary for the rescuing of suffering Afghan people. Her expression reminds one the concept expressed by French colonial administrator Albert Sarraut who says:

Without us, without our intervention . . . these indigenous populations would still be abandoned to misery and abjection; epidemics, massive endemic diseases, and famine would continue to decimate them; infant mortality would still wipe out half of their offspring; petty kings and corrupt chiefs would still sacrifice them to vicious caprice; their mind would still be degraded by the practice of base superstition and barbarous custom; and they would perish from misery in the midst of unexpected wealth. (qtd. in Ranabhat 43)

It shows that they have interfered in the internal matter of Third World nations not because they had their own problems to solve, but because they wanted to save the life of voiceless people from the hands of some cruel rulers. But, in reality with this creation of negative discourse about Third World people, they also force to make them silent out of war so that they can have the play over there with their creed. In the case of Northern Alliance's attack they wanted the life of either Osama Bin Laden or Mullah Omar as revenge against Twin Towers attack. But they advertise their attack by connecting it to the mission of saving Afghan women from the evils of their own

rulers. In fact, this attack silenced the women even more because of the fear of both colonial and patriarchal domination.

In the case of the description of Taliban with its funniest action she mocks at them in this way: "The Taliban forbade nail-varnish and introduced an import embargo. A few unlucky women had the tip of a finger or a toe cut off because they had committed an offence against the legal system" (*BOK* 12). With this depiction one can understand about the way of silencing their own people by the bad rulers of Afghanistan. But, at the same time, it objectifies Afghan women without having any voice even in such cruel activities. And this is the desire of neoconialism that makes colonized people "utterly silenced by being made into the objectives of Western system of knowledge (Boehmer 351). According to Western system, to punish for just varnishing nail is the sheer violation of human right and the "unlucky women" are in fact the victims of the unjust law made by funny Taliban government. This image of the women portrays that in Afghanistan the condition of women is nothing more than a common object according to the "Western system of knowledge." By depicting Afghan women in such silent condition the novel forms the knowledge about them as silent objects in need of saving by external hand and thus commits epistemic violence on silent natives. It is like the "process of discursive homogenization and systematization of the oppression of women in the third world" and the novel is well ahead to meet this path (Mohanty 174).

In this way, both Hosseini and Seierstad have foregrounded the silences of natives in their novels for the reader and created the episteme about Afghanistan in terms of negative qualifiers. But, at the same time, they have inserted Western ideals in the novels as enlightening one. They don't find any negative understanding on Western value systems and describe the same in the novels. Hosseini finds American

system as free one and explains his characters trying to go to America for freedom. Seierstad supports Northern Alliance and describes the Afghan values as cruel and demonic one. I believe, no society can run fully with one sided nature: either fully bad or fully good. But, as both authors try to depict Third World systems and values with full of negative signifiers, and First World with positive, they commit epistemic violence upon the people of Third World nations.

V. Colonial Lens on Negative representation as Epistemic Violence

In its statement of problem this research project highlighted on the intention of describing the issues of Afghanistan in terms of negative practices in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Asne Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul*. After this it anticipated the hypothesis that both novels are the products of First World's imagination so that they are prone to create the knowledge about Third World in such manner. Now after going through the detailed analysis of both novels, I consider, I have become successful to establish my points of hypothesis in this dissertation that both novels are full with the description of violent activities about Afghanistan and thus have created the knowledge about it in terms of negative connotation. Being the product of First World's imagination both novelists have done this to foreground the point that the gaze of natives is full of pathos, pains and silence thus need the help and protection from outer hands.

Primarily I have taken Spivak, Hall and Chow to support my hypothesis and with them I have tried to prove that silent natives are represented in negative stereotypes as the "Other" by taking their violent practices so it is "epistemic violence." In this point, now, I believe, I have given the validation to this idea with my analysis of the novel. In the analysis, I have discussed that both Hosseini and Seierstad have described about Afghanistan by taking many Afghan bad practices. Here I didn't mean to support or oppose these malpractices, but to describe why the authors have taken many of these bad practices to talk about Afghanistan while at the same time when they talk about America in terms of positive connotation.

By taking Spivak, in the research, I have argued that both Hosseini and Seierstad have described about Afghanistan from First World's look or concept. They have approved only such activities that match the values of West. As Afghan values

and practices don't match the Western system they have presented it in pejorative way. In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini's protagonist Amir is a US migrant from Afghanistan. The novel is described from his perspective. Being the person having the knowledge of two different nations, Amir describes the novel where he develops sympathy over suffering Afghan people, but with this, he attempts to validate the Western interference over there. To take Spivak, she thought that taking the concept of *sati* was the Western way to validate British Raj over India. In the same way, Amir's description of tortured and painful Afghanistan validates the need of outer (Western) help for suffering Afghan people and validates the neocolonial desire to rule over the Third World in modern context.

Hosseini describes Third World landscapes, its people, social, cultural and religious activities and many other ideas in terms of negative signifiers. It is, as Hall suggests, the formation of knowledge about Third world in terms of negative representation. It is the process to create the "Other" about them and a way of marginalizing them from the centre of Western so-called standard concept. So, in the novel, the Western ideas are depicted with freedom, equality, happiness and the like, whereas the Third World is described with violence, bloodshed, poverty, smoke and so on. But, most importantly, as the natives are silent, the Westerners don't feel any threat from them and work freely on their path of imposing their values over them. The burning example of this in *The Kite Runner* is Amir's return from America to Afghanistan who becomes successful to take silent Sohrab from there. With this Hosseini has become successful to express his ideas about Third World in terms of negative signifiers thus committing epistemic violence over there.

Likewise, Seierstad also describes the Afghan socio-political scenario from Western perspective. Her journalist narrator working under the shelter of NATO has

her look full of Western perspective. Unlike Amir who was born in Afghanistan and migrated to America, the journalist narrator is herself a Western woman and her judgment over Afghan scenario is based on her Western perspective. She presents Sultan's family with full of Muslim conservative ideals. She presents the situation of Afghan women like the condition of slaves. She describes Afghan marriage like a commodity market where goods are sold on bargaining basis, she describes Afghan internal affairs as a way of torture for the people there. But she sees the invasion of NATO as a rescue operation for those suffering silent people and she herself is working for them. So, similar to Hosseini, Seierstad also constructs the episteme about Third World in terms of negative stereotypes or representation thus commits epistemic violence.

In this way, in the study, Spivak's concepts of epistemic violence and imperialistic hegemony, Hall's notions of stereotypical representation of the "Other" and Chow's arguments about silent natives were brought together to show how the suffering Afghan people are represented in bad qualifiers and how the West has committed epistemic violence over them. Out of my analysis, taking help of these methodologies and from historical records, it is my conclusion that Hosseini and Seierstad's sympathy over silent and suffering Afghan natives comes from colonial framework of knowledge thus causes epistemic violence over them.

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