



Stepping towards Refugee Integration within Host Culture: An Islamic Ethical Evaluation of Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer* in the Light of Goksel's Framework

Sobia Javed

MPhil, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad

Email: sob1ajavedbutt@gmail.com

Dr. Faiz Sultan

Assistant Professor, National University of Modern Languages,

Islamabad. Email: faizsultan@numl.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Ismail Abbasi

Assistant Professor, Government Graduate College Satellite Town Rawalpindi.

Higher Education Department Punjab. Email: dr.ismail.hed@gmail.com

Abstract:

This paper examines refugee integration into host cultures by synthesizing Gulay Ugur Goksel's theoretical framework—which identifies love, solidarity, and basic rights as essential constituents of integration—with Islamic principles of hospitality, human dignity (*Karamat al-Insan*), and universal brotherhood (*Ukhuwwah*). Refugees often confront multifaceted challenges in host societies, including marginalization, cultural alienation, and denial of identity. While Goksel's framework highlights the human and relational dimensions of integration, Islamic ethical tradition enriches this narrative by framing solidarity and empathy as divine moral imperatives rather than mere social obligations. Drawing upon literary depictions in Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer*, this study illustrates how acts of solidarity enable refugees to negotiate their identities and construct a sense of belonging. By integrating Islamic socio-ethical perspectives on displacement (*Hijrah*) and rights of non-citizens/foreigners, the paper redefines integration not merely as assimilation into the dominant culture, but as a dialogic process grounded in mutual respect, shared moral responsibility, and the affirmation of fundamental human rights.

Keywords: Solidarity, Islamic Ethics, Human Rights, Refugees, Integration, *Karamat al-Insan*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to critically examine Vietnamese writer Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer* (2015), which, underscores "the hardships of refugee life and the inner torment ... upon arriving in the United States ... the harsh reality of poor living conditions and a dangerous social environment" (Chen, 2024). For the analysis of the selected text, the theoretical lens propounded by Turkish theorist Gülay Uğur Göksel in *Integration of Immigrants and the Theory of Recognition: Just Integration*

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(2018), has been employed, which provides a nuanced look for interrogating the integration processes and challenges the refugees confront with within host societies. Additionally, this study aligns Göksel's framework with universal ethical traditions—particularly Islamic socio-ethical principles of human dignity (*Karamat al-Insan*), hospitality, and mutual rights—to evaluate the moral responsibility of host nations.

The major concern of this study is to navigate Nguyen's work in its engagement with the problems of refugee integration into host society. Refugees, predominantly in Western contexts, are forced to cope up with the issues of, recognition, belonging, and adaptability. Therefore, the liberal societies often take them with ambivalence. From the late twentieth to the early twenty-first centuries, the unprecedented movements of displaced populations have surged so high that it has restrained host countries from providing "healthcare, shelter, food, and basic necessities of life" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. (2014), while challenging their testimony of commitment to guarantee their inclusivity and solidarity.

Assimilation and multiculturalism are frequently taken as "solutions to refugees' adjustment", but these approaches remain partial in scope. Assimilationists demand the eradication of ethnic identity, whereas multiculturalists often keep refugees to outer sphere without granting genuine recognition. Integration, however, emerges as a reciprocal and more complex process. It not only tailors refugees to adopt the socio-cultural norms of the host society but also obligates host societies to confer recognition, extend resources, and grant opportunities that make refugees capable to participate fully. Thus, integration process transcends the binary of "host" and "refugee" by accentuating communal adjustment and the possibility of mutual belongingness. Quoting Ager and Strand's definition of integration, Aleksandra Koluviija (2020) conceptualizes "Integration as a concept with three different indicators: the achievement of public outcomes (employment, housing, education, health etc.); a social connection with the community; and a sufficient linguistic competence and knowledge" (Koluviija, 2020, p. 78). Thus, integration appears as a dynamic and multidimensional process with several interconnected indicators. These include the adoption of cultural norms, the attainment of essential public outcomes such as education, housing, employment, and healthcare the acquisition of linguistic competence, and the enhancement of social cohesion. Holistically, these indicators contribute to an inclusive understanding of integration that take into consideration both the material and social spheres of refugees' day to day experiences within host societies.

From an Islamic ethical perspective, this reciprocal integration model closely mirrors the historical paradigm of *Mu'akhat* (fraternal socio-economic integration) and the divine mandate regarding the protection and dignified treatment of foreign asylum seekers (*Musta'minin*).

Taking thread from UNHCR's definition of integration, she declares integration as a "dynamic and multifaceted two-way process which requires efforts by all parties concerned" (Koluviija, 2020, p. 78). This defines integration as a reciprocal phenomenon which includes the preparedness of refugees to adapt into the host society without sacrificing their own ethnic identity. The process also demands the readiness of

correspondence on behalf of host communities and social and public institutes to greet refugees and meet the demands of this diverse population.

Refugee literature has emerged as a prominent genre which generally discusses the issues of refugees like, “quest for identity, nostalgia for the roots” (Sarangi, 2015). It not only addresses “the lived realities of forced migration” but also acts as a means of reclaiming identity and voice for marginalized communities” (Cilano & DeLoughrey, 2007, p. 75). Scholars argue that refugee narratives in spite taken as mere victims and simply categorize them have their “own voice, agency, resilience, and capacity for cultural negotiation” (McLeod, 2010, p. 123). Such narratives also demonstrate the emotional and psychological consequences of “exile, including trauma, nostalgia, and the desire for recognition in foreign spaces” (Hassan, 2019). Migration is a natural phenomenon for the human beings and other living things. Humans migrate from one place to the other for various reasons like climate change, natural calamities, war, protection, jobs, pandemics, social and political unrest, to mention a few. Since migration may be willful or forced; this intentional (willful) and nonintentional (forced) migration determine the identity of a migrant – an immigrant or a refugee. A refugee is “a person who has escaped from their own country for political, religious, or economic reasons or because of a war” (“Refugee,” n.d.). The Merriam-Webster online dictionary gives another aspect of the definition of a refugee as “a person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution” (Refugee,” n.d., def. 2). The critical look at the aforementioned understanding about a refugee explicates that refugees leave their country under compulsion, forced by some factors, which are beyond their control including life threat, because of war or some other untoward circumstances that may put their life in danger – political unrest, religious fanaticism or natural calamities.

Viet Thanh Nguyen, a Vietnamese-American novelist, highlights the concerns of suppressed Vietnamese refugees in his works by articulating their struggles and bringing their apprehensions into global literary and scholarly discourse. His works “boldly deals with issues of race, identity, and stereotyping” (Ayaka & Hague, 2015, p. 228). His other works which reflect the issues of refugees are *The Committed*, *A Man of Two Faces*, and *Nothing Ever Dies*; in addition to these, he has written *The Refugees* (A Collection of short stories), *Chicken of the Sea* (Children's literature), *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives*, *Trans-Pacific Studies*, and *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America*.

The previous studies conducted on Nguyen’s works highlights multiple aspects including misrepresentation of Vietnamese and Vietnam War in art and literature, the hardships and trails of refugees, their identity crisis, the problems of freedom, acceptance and stability, America’s biasedness and its hypocrisy, racial discrimination and subjugation, and American imperialistic/colonialist approach towards Vietnamese refugees. Dr. Abdoulaye Ndiaye in his study reveals the misrepresentation of Vietnamese refugees in Hollywood movies and same in *The Sympathizer*. In his study, he states the recurring strategies of American cinema is “how to mute Vietnamese” (p. 2). In Hollywood films it remains a common practice to systematically deprive their voices and agency, as the powerful cinematic narrative deliberately silences them. Furthermore, Ndiaye observes Nguyen’s way to designate a section in *The Sympathizer*

titled "Hamlet" to show how refugees are denied both voice and spatial representation within host societies. According to Ndiaye, these individuals are staged "in a debasing way" (p. 3), reflecting their humiliation and the ultimate erasure of their entities/identities.

The study of Kala and Bernita related to Nguyen's collection of short stories *The Refugees* highlights the issues of diaspora particularly refugees. Diasporic people often face various challenges and sufferings in their efforts to maintain an established position within host societies. They contain individuals "who migrate to an alien land by interest in search of greener pastures" (Kala & Bernita, 2024). When native governments fail to provide adequate means of livelihood, and essential job opportunities to their individuals, despite their resistance, are bound to displace to foreign lands in pursuit of better living standards. Host societies, due to the major concerns regarding cultural cohesion and national security, frequently assumes these refugees as a constant threat and thus do not offer them sufficient space for inclusion. Subsequently, the refugees remain entangled in a continuous struggle for their social acceptance and survival within the host countries.

Focusing on Viet Thanh Nguyen's short story collection *The Refugees*, Dr. Sherine Abdelghafar (2020) interrogates "how it feels and what it means to be a refugee?" (p. 854), and thus complicates the identity formation and relocation of Vietnamese refugees in host societies. Abdelghafar foregrounds the lived experiences of refugees in alienated and unknown spaces entails a vigorous attempt to reserve one's personal and cultural identity. Ensuing the American attacks, the struggles for individuals' identity became even more complex for the Vietnamese, as their country was transmuted by loss and war. Following migration to America, the refugees "carried traumatic vision with them" (p. 855), a psychological disturbance enrooted in the atrocity and devastation of war. Their dislocation was pushed forward with the aspiration of reconstructing their lives and establishing a sense of belonging in the host societies. However, the host country's unwillingness to accept them as an essential part of its social thread resulted in further aligning them as "others" (p. 856). Thus, they experience maltreatment and alienation within the host environment.

The above mentioned reviews on Nguyen's works primarily deal with the challenges/issues the refugees face in the host country and thus neglect integration, a two-way process, which is more holistic, of the Vietnamese refugees in the USA. Moreover, the previous studies provide insufficient evidence regarding the feasible solutions to the challenges faced by refugees within host culture. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap through the careful analysis of the selected literary works.

2. Theoretical Framework

Gulay Ugur Goksel in her book, *Integration of Immigrants and the Theory of Recognition: Just Integration* delineates integration as a "democratic justice issue" and therefore reframes this concept beyond assimilation-multiculturalism debate (Goksel 4). She critiques on the failure of host societies' recognition of refugees and immigrants as full members - giving values to their identities, qualifications, skills, and autonomy. She explains the term as "social cohesion, the unification of a diverse population" (4)

through which the construction of refugees' common identity is framed. Rather than demanding refugees to completely absorb into the host cultures and tolerate diversity, Goksel proposes that being a foreign society it should recognize refugees' equal rights, individual worth, and opportunities—including quality education, access to labour markets, and inclusion of legal participation—so they can openly contribute in civic life.

Generally, “policy strategies for the social and political integration of refugees have congregated around the debate between two opposing poles, namely, assimilation and multiculturalism” (4). On the one hand, assimilationists demand refugees to completely absorb into the host culture, leaving behind their ethno-cultural identities. While multiculturalists argue that “integration of refugees can solely be possible through respecting and tolerating the ethno-cultural identities of refugee” (5). Going beyond the mere concept of assimilation and multiculturalism, where the former demands refugees to leave their ethnicity completely to place in the new society. Whereas, the latter focuses on the integration of the refugees through respecting and tolerating host society's demands. In this regard, Goksel considers integration as a two-way process in which refugees adapt into the host cultures and they also reciprocate them by giving social justice, recognition, and political inclusion. She identifies “three different spheres of recognition, namely love, rights, and solidarity—as necessary for the individual's identity formation, moral independence, and social integration” (46).

For the development of individual's confidence, the paramount sphere—love—lays the foundation of self-formation. “Love and friendship constitute one of the three axes of self-formation” (46). For the close personal relationships, the sphere of love affirms the individual's worth and *existence* through psychological and emotional care. Procuring self-confidence, Goksel claims that love and friendship are the earliest and intimate forms which uphold the individual's integrity and autonomy. Within this sphere, emotional support enables the individuals to relate themselves in a protected and trusting manner. Within this sphere, emotional neglect, abuse, or the withdrawal of care is experienced as moral harm, undermining the subject's ability to perceive themselves as emotionally worthy. Love, thus, is not merely an affective gesture but a condition of *subjective wholeness* and psychological stability.

The second axis of social integration is “the provision of legal rights to every subject on an equal basis” (47). Goksel underscores the importance of basic rights as a necessary element of recognition by laying emphasis that the absence of these rights may deprive refugees of developing self-respect which is “important for individual self-formation because it signals that an individual is an “end in itself and his existence is socially relevant” (47). Self-respect, for Goksel, is fundamental to self-formation because it asserts that an individual whose existence possesses social relevance should be treated equally. The belongingness of rights enables individuals to participate in society on an equal footing and other members of the society also acknowledge their actions as legitimate. On the contrary, denial of recognition and exclusion from rights weakens the individual's honor and challenges their moral position as reliable community within host society.

Solidarity, the third social integrated axis along with self-esteem, constitutes a healthy self-formation for the individuals in the host societies. To complement the latter, self-esteem is valued with the system of the society because it helps sustaining the worth of the individuals. The similar is discussed by Goksel in a way, "self-esteem is strongly related with the value system of the society" (47). Their abilities, qualities, and active participation are recognized at the broader spectrum of the social fabric. Goksel also suggests that a well-integrated society is a one that holds multiple traits, skills and talents rather than accommodating only a few set of patterns. She supports Honneth's view point about "pluralization of socially defined value horizons" which paves multiple paths of solidarity with the refugees (47). She enforces liberal societies to not only share a single moral compass with refugees instead recognize different social horizons like cultural knowledge, care work, and creativity, so that individuals can feel themselves as meaningful and respected identities within the society. Solidarity intensifies, when a society creates balance between "individualization and equalization" (47). It means that members of the society are able to express their unique qualities (individualization) and also share a sense of belonging and equality within collective. In this way, a society accepts diversity ensuring equal respect for the individuals. Denial of any of these axes may cause disruption in the society, and moral shame to the individuals' self-esteem.

Goksel strengthens her theoretical stance mentioning the role of the liberal societies in recognizing the skills of the individual. She raises some concerns for the refugees' respect and honorable position that is pre-determined by the host societies. If a person is able to demonstrate his skills, "he could get mutual recognition of his esteem" in the host community, otherwise he cannot survive (50). She abandons this notion and states that individuality is pre-requisite than the "certainty of the societal hierarchies" (50). Every person should be judged and valued based on the unique skills he possesses and experiences.

3. Textual Analysis

The novel *The Sympathizer* (2015) written by Pulitzer Prize winner novelist Viet Thanh Nguyen; is a new emerging talent of the century. Its complex narrative, written in the background of Vietnam War, "explores the themes of persecution of war and its aftermath, displacement, and identity crisis" (Herzog, 2017). The narrator of the novel remains unnamed, therefore, he likes to be called with different names, like "SPY", "a sleeper", "a spook", "a man of two faces" and "a man of two minds" (Nguyen *The Sympathizer* 1). The ideology of being anonymous is unspoken from the beginning till end of the novel. This makes the novel more complex in its narrative. Moreover, the text depicts the brutal realities of the American invasion of Vietnam, illustrating the mass killings of Vietnamese civilians and the subjugation of its people. They are forced to move from one place to another with the label of refugees. In this distressing situation, the narrator and his fellow beings help some of the Vietnamese entitled refugees flee from their country to the United States of America. After stepping down on the host society with the refugees tag, the narrator entangled between radical ideas, and the lived realities of assimilation, exile and displacement. Unaccepted by

some section of the host society, the refugees felt themselves more vulnerable, unprotected and incapable. Meanwhile, some segments of political and military establishment provide institutional help by conferring acceptance and extending recognition. These power structures also facilitate the refugees by giving them their social rights namely; love, rights and solidarity. The characters like the Congressman, CIA officer Claude, and Professor Aver Wright Hammer help the subjugated community of Vietnamese refugees in the whole novel.

Goksel's theoretical underpinning accentuates the importance of ensuring refugees' accommodation and granting their due rights within the host country as a crucial element of integration. Taking such measures by the important segments of the society are not only humanitarian actions but systematic requirements that enable refugees to consider themselves as primary members of the social thread. Therefore, certain characters in the novel seem actively practicing in the integration process. The Congressman (an American politician) plays a significant role in accommodating the refugees in the host society. His undaunted and unwavering support helps refugees give their due rights to accelerate the integration process. He welcomes them in South California and assures to give a proper place in America. The Congressman, renowned for his anti-communist ideology, was the only political leader in Southern California who not only greeted the Vietnamese refugees upon their arrival in Los Angeles but also accepted their invitation to participate in a Vietnamese wedding ceremony. "The Congressman, however, had written editorials defending us and welcoming the emigres" (Nguyen *The Sympathizer* 88). The Congressman's positive attitude of writing editorials for emigres demonstrates his political and symbolic act of inclusion. This gesture is an attempt to consider refugees as legitimate members of the American society. The action is a strategic maneuver, reflecting the connection of compassionate rhetoric and politics, where the reception of refugees exhibits ideological opposition between America's democratic ideals and communist system. Thus, the congressman's kind words operate as an act of institutional sovereignty.

By putting his words into concrete form, the Congressman in his speech reaffirms the refugees to legalize their fundamental rights as they are also the integral part of the integration process. "I am truly thankful for the chance to be here tonight and to share in the joy of this occasion" (88). His acceptance to attend the marriage ceremony of the Vietnamese couple and talking to them in a gathering is evidently proven the Congressman's interest in accelerating the integration process. He is grateful for the chance to meet with the Vietnamese refugees' community and share his happiness with them. He does not leave them alone in this prestigious occasion knowing the fact if liberal/Western societies recognize refugees' ethnicities, language and their culture, they will reciprocate and help them mitigate the economic burden. His friendly response and manifestation of gratitude for inviting him creates a sense of recognition among the refugees. Furthermore, offering his felicitation, he reassures the refugees that they have chosen a better place to live. "Let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen... hopes, dreams, and aspirations would be fulfilled in your homeland" (88). He is assuring the community for the provision of legal rights to the refugees which Goksel perpetuates in her theoretical stance. The Congressman's oratorical

approach echoes not only a performative act of persuading the audience but also a systematic attempt to create a communal sense of belonging. He wants to position the Vietnamese refugees as an integrated body, invoking a collective identity rather than individual partialities. Furthermore, his powerful words illustrate how language functions as a tool to naturalize the political schemes. His speech generates an emotional attachment with the politician's rhetoric through which they seek the reassurance of homeland and mitigating the fear of displacement. This aligns with the very idea of Goksel's theoretical perspective of giving socially deployed rights to the refugees.

Love and solidarity, which Goksel capitalizes upon, are the main proponents of social integration. They play a vital role in facilitating refugees to integrate into the host society. In *The Sympathizer*, Nguyen introduces a character of Claude, who is an American CIA officer and has a deep intimacy for the narrator and his people, therefore, he helps them in their evacuation. "Claude was our most trusted friend, our relationship so intimate" (3). Despite his American identity, Claude assists them in their difficult time. Quite ironically, his country invaded Vietnam but he developed a strong relationship with the Vietnamese which reflects his love and solidarity for the Vietnamese. The character of Claude is portrayed not merely as an ordinary military figure for all the refugees, but as a confidant whose honesty inspires self-insurance. His acts appear to encompass practical support, as he vows to provide a form of emotional assistance that contributes to shape the refugees' self-formation. Taking thread from Goksel's framework, solidarity is considered as an essential axis for endorsing inclusive and holistic self-development, enabling refugees to rebuild a sense of belonging and identity. In this regard, Claude's closeness and affection can be inferred as a symbolic assurance of the refugees' entitlement to equal recognition and fundamental rights.

Claude is also an epitome of commitment to ensuring the due rights of the refugees. Since the invasion, Claude observes the people of Vietnam and their skills. His intimacy with the narrator helps him recognize his abilities. Claude, unlike his fellow beings, believes in harmony and solidarity with the oppressed community, enabling them to recognize their concealed abilities. Therefore, the narrator says, "We had known each other for more than two decades, ever since he had spotted me on a refugee barge in '54 and recognized my talents" (3). The time span mentioned here is long enough to recognize each other. The statement delineates that for more than two decades the people of Vietnam have endured America's perilous and barbaric torture. But Claude is the man who instead of captivating them in the detention centers, applauds the talents of the narrator and helps him in shaping his identity. His love and compassion extends further, when there is bomb shelling everywhere, American artilleries hit the Vietnamese territories and torn apart the limbs of the people. In this grave situation, Claude being more ferocious, comes forward to provide his services to the Vietnamese. He vows, "I'll see what I can arrange" (4). He assures the narrator and his fellow refugees of his help in evacuating them from this war-torn country. In some conflicted regions of Vietnam, where American military forces subject the native

population, his practical and verbal assurance demonstrates his empathy and solidarity with the suppressed people of Vietnam.

After successfully making arrangements of evacuation from Vietnam, Claude helps the narrator and his comrades settle in America. His assistance did not resonate for solely refugee community, instead it was directed towards individuals. Maintaining self-respect for the refugees, which fosters the idea of self-formation, Claude supports narrator for taking admission in the University. Later, the narrator claims, “I earned not only my bachelor’s but my master’s degree, becoming expert in all manner of American studies” (16). The statement delineates narrator’s self-transformation, his complete adoption of American studies and culture, and assimilation into the host society. Claude’s solidarity enables the narrator to get American education, proving his abilities worthy of belonging. Earning the highest degrees become symbolic demonstrations of the narrator’s inclusion into the host society, presenting how refugee solidarity often depends on conventional set parameters of the host cultures, rather than genuine recognition of difference.

Claude’s love and affection extend after getting narrator’s graduation degree. “The rucksack was a gift from Claude, given in honour of my college graduation” (17). The gift symbolizes more than a material asset, it expresses Claude’s love and familial bond with him. The rucksack serves dual function as a valise and backpack-metaphorically reveals his urge to equip the narrator with the resilience and adaptability as he is going to face the challenges of alienation and belonging. The handsome gift also demonstrates a form of Claude’s affection that surpasses sentimentality, adjoining instead with noticeable support for the narrator’s academic achievement. This small gesture elucidates a strong bond with the narrator and distinguishes Claude with other military personnel who often do not give their consent to assist refugees. Thus, the gift operates as a token of tangible asset of Claude’s adoration and also a symbol of his faith, solidarity, and his sentimental investment in the narrator’s intellectual, academic and personal journey.

After the Congressman and Claude, another prominent figure Professor Avery Wright Hammer, an epitome of solidarity and love comes to provide his services to the narrator. He is Claude’s roommate and has deep friendship with him. When they reach San Diego, Claude writes a letter to Professor, seeking his help for leaving the camp and also tells him about the promising young Vietnamese refugee who desperately needs a scholarship to study in America. Without arguing, “Not only did Professor Hammer find that scholarship for me, he also became my most important teacher after Claude and Man” (50).

Along with political institution and military establishment, the people from educational institution have also come forward to show their solidarity with the refugees to speed up the integration process. The narrator’s strong belief in Professor Hammer’s efforts represents a nuanced sphere of love and solidarity within his personal and academic journey. By acquiring that scholarship, Professor’s help extends more than educational support; he shows his solidarity that upholds the narrator’s value in a place where refugees are often relegated. This act of self-respect helps individual’s self-formation. It also signifies love in its institutional and altruistic form, where the

educators find their potential and invest them in right dimension, exceeding the boundaries of professional requirements. Hammer's love and solidarity for refugees is further evident when he willingly guides narrator in his academic development, not only in his American studies but also in venturing the thesis write up. His expertise reflects in his empathetic act for accommodating the narrator's cognitive development rather than restraining him to prescribed norms by the host society.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the daily lived experiences of displaced populations demonstrate that successful integration transcends the mere provision of material relief; it is deeply rooted in emotional solidarity, social empathy, and the active preservation of fundamental human rights. As Gülay Uğur Göksel argues, true integration relies on love, mutual respect, solidarity, and rights recognition, allowing both refugees and host communities to adapt without forfeiting their core identities. In *The Sympathizer*, characters like Claude embody this human-centric approach by offering personal support and solidarity during times of crisis. By looking beyond official mandates to form genuine human connections, Claude's actions show that effective integration requires personal empathy and moral commitment alongside institutional policy.

Similarly, the political elites in host societies play a crucial role in validating refugee identities. In the novel, the Congressman facilitates integration by offering a welcoming presence, engaging with Vietnamese refugees in Los Angeles, and respecting their heritage through active participation in their cultural ceremonies. This aligns with Göksel's assertion that political figures in liberal democracies bear an ethical responsibility to foster social inclusion and open dialogue. Furthermore, Professor Hammer represents the academic community's capacity to support marginalized voices. By offering mentorship and intellectual space to the narrator, he bridges cultural divides and challenges exclusionary narratives. His approach demonstrates that genuine social cohesion is built on empathy, shared humanity, and mutual respect.

Ultimately, these interpersonal dynamics align closely with universal human values and Islamic ethical traditions—such as *Karamat al-Insan* (human dignity) and *Ukhuwwah* (fraternal solidarity)—which mandate the protection and honorable treatment of foreign asylum seekers (*Musta'minin*). Nguyen's narrative confirms that long-term refugee integration cannot succeed through legal status or financial aid alone; it demands a shared ethical commitment to dignity, mutual recognition, and social justice.

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