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CONFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND RELATIONSHIP – A STUDY OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S
THE KITE RUNNER

JOSHINA ROZARIO

II MA English Literature, PSGR Krishnammal College for Women, Coimbatore

It is that sense of intense touch between the reader and the book is what makes the writer to be a successful author. Khaled Hosseini is of no exception as he brings the oneness of humanity and human dignity throughout his works no matter how he takes the plot ahead. It is the ardent aspiration of the writer to produce such great novels that include the political scenarios of Afghanistan during his childhood days by portraying the characters reflecting his mentality. Hosseini practiced medicine until the first release of his book *The Kite Runner*. According to the Nielsen Book Scan, the novel was one of the best sellers in 2005. Hosseini is currently a Goodwill Envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He has been working to provide humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan through the Khaled Hosseini Foundation. This Afghan-American writer has moved a step ahead in cherishing his profession as a writer by publishing two more books with then names *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Mountains Echoed*. The novel *The Kite Runner* was also been adapted as a movie in 2007.

“When you kill a man, you steal a life, you steel his wife’s right to a husband, rob his children of a father. When you tell a lie, you steel someone’s right to truth. When you cheat, you steal the right to fairness”,(pg 16) are the words of Baba, Amir’s father. The quote mentioned from the book in fact has the connect to whole of the story. The novel is divided into three parts, where the story has a gradual development and the author has exceptionally altered the minds of the readers to have an involvement in the life of Amir, through is childhood, his adolescence and of him being a man, respectively. The whole of the book has the first person narration, narration done by Amir himself, that brings a direct connect between the reader and the character. The narration is in fact confessional. Besides, the role of Hassan has a subtle psychological effect and it can also be seen from the perspective the self realization of Amir and an interference of the concept of retribution.

Part I of the book, though it starts with the present, Amir recalls his memory of his boyhood days as he yearns for the love of his father where every boy wishes to have or share the rapport of love and care between the father and son, especially at a particular point in the phase of their childhood life. Though he is not totally denied of being loved, Amir is quite insecure when his father shows extra concern to Hassan, the son of the servant maid, Ali. Both Amir and Hassan are more than friends, where Hassan loves Amir so much that he is ready even to give up his life for his “Amir *agha*”, as he calls him fondly and Hassan the successful “kite runner” for Amir, did betray him in front of the boys just because he wanted to show his authority over him forgetting the time he spent with him, the merry time he had, despite being a friend, a brother, whom he thought is loved more by his father than Amir himself.

Part II of the book has a shift in place from Afghanistan to Fremont, California because of the political riots. Though there is a shift in place the mindset of the duo, the father and the son is the same as, Baba in two to three circumstances of the novel recalls the life and the memories of the time well spent with Hassan and his father Ali. Apart from this, as mentioned earlier, the life of Amir in his adolescence and of him being in love with Soraya, a girl from the same religion and how he tries to win his love through nuptial is been told. It is in

this part that Amir develops or equips himself to fight the world as he is given more responsibilities of a son, a husband and a writer. The death of his father and the news that his wife could not deliver a child marks the negative aspects which indeed brings back the sour memories of his past, the life he had with Hassan and the circumstances he created to throw him out of their lives.

Part III of the novel, has incidents that Amir takes boldly in order to face the reality. "There is a way to be good again"(pg 168), the words of Baba's friend Rahim Khan, haunt him badly and it is because of his letter he plans to go to his hometown where he learns that Hassan and his wife are dead and that they have a son named Sohrab. It is the letter of Hassan to his Amir *agha* that makes the readers emotional. Though they are simple words, it carries the love, the respect Hassan had for him. It is only here at his homeland, that Amir learns the exact relationship between him and Hassan and this makes him dumbstruck and he decides to search for Sohrab despite all the negative vibes, he makes it possible to find him, though Amir initially had the intension to leave the little one in the orphanage, the act of disgrace that he did once to Sohrab's father makes him to change his thoughts and take him along to The United States, thereby adopting him.

The novel can be brought under certain common themes such as betrayal, the relation of father and son, redemption and guilt. Apart from this, the novel can also be viewed from the religious and cultural aspects as such. Here, in the novel, there is a difference even between the Muslim community, where Amir belongs to the Sunni Muslims and Hassan to the Shi'a. And again, Amir belongs to the Pashtun and Hassan to the Hazara.

Just because Hassan belongs to the Hazara group of people who are considered to be of the working class, Amir is discriminated by his fellow mates because he shares the bond of brotherhood and friendship with him and Amir in two main events in the novel lets Hassan down in order to show his standard of being a Pashtun and in an envy to drive him out of the house because Hassan is given extra care by Baba. Another important thing to be noted is that, just because Hassan was an illegitimate son of Baba and a Hazara woman, the real identity of Hassan is lost and that Baba plays a silent role unable to reveal the truth having in mind his status in the society.

Collective Constructionist Theory under Cultural Psychological Theory states that, "It is a theory that focuses on the mutual-shaping processes between daily situations and psychological tendencies from the inclusive mutual constitution framework." Taking this statement into consideration the novel can be analyzed in the cultural psychological aspect, where the situations of Amir led him to let Hassan down despite of him being his kinsman just because the other friends from his community mocked him for supporting a Hazara boy and after that terrible incident he refuses to see Hassan. This however affects him psychologically and haunts Amir throughout. The ultimate reason of Amir to do all this is to have the attention of his father who he thought had taken special care for Hassan and the later realizations of Hassan to be his half-brother leads to the adoption of Hassan's son Sohrab. Having in mind of what the others would think of his prestigious status, Baba fails as father in showing his love for Hassan, though he insists his presence with Amir wherever they went, envying Amir.

The alterations of the characters psyche according to the situations in order to maintain the respect owned in the society with regard to their culture is what makes Amir lose his friend and Baba to lose his own son, Hassan. Although after finding Sohrab, Amir is yet to overcome his guilt conscience but his untiring attempts to make things happen between Sohrab and him paves way for new hopes in both their lives. "For you a thousand times over", (pg 323) the words of Amir shows the effort he makes to bring back the attributes of Hassan through his son Sohrab by teaching him the techniques of flying the kite, remembering Hassan, "the kite runner".

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The Kite Runner, 2004.print.