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**Cultural Issues in Refugee Literature: The Kite Runner by Khaled  
Hosseini**

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Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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## **Dedication**

We dedicate this humble work to our parents for their love and support throughout our lives. We are forever indebted to you for giving us strength to reach the stars and chase our dreams

We owe a lot to our whole families " our sisters, brothers, nephews and nieces " for their undying support, their unwavering believe that we can achieve what we aim to. Unfortunately, we cannot list all the names because it would take a life time.

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As Middle school teachers, we have come across numerous challenges in our professional lives. One of the most pressing issues that we have faced is the management of time. Due to our hectic schedules, it often becomes difficult for us to find free time that matches with our mutual availability. Moreover, we are constantly juggling between our professional duties and academic pursuits. Amidst this chaos, we realized that our willingness to work was not enough to overcome these obstacles. We had to take concrete steps to deal with this situation. That is when we decided to create a time table that would allow us to meet and collaborate effectively during the few hours that we could spare. The experience of being under immense pressure and over thinking our schedule made us learn about the importance of time management skills. We realized that by applying these skills, we could overcome all the challenges that came our way. This experience has been a valuable lesson for us in our academic and professional lives.

We would like to take a moment to express our profound gratitude for our esteemed supervisor, Mr. Semmari Tarek, for his invaluable guidance and unwavering support throughout the entire process. His extensive knowledge and expertise in the field have proven to be instrumental in shaping our research project, and we are immensely grateful for his contributions. Furthermore, we cannot emphasize enough the magnitude of his help and patience in steering us towards the right direction. His insight and feedback have been truly invaluable, and we feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work under his tutelage.

## **Abstract**

Refugee literature is an essential field of study that provides an insight into the lives of those who have been forced to flee their country of origin due to persecution or war. Among the most celebrated works of refugee literature is Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, a creative work that has won critics' praise and has been widely read across the globe. This study aims to investigate the cultural issues presented in the novel, providing a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the same cultural issues. The study seeks to bridge the gap between Western perceptions of Afghan culture and the reality on the ground, doing so through a qualitative approach that employs both descriptive and analytical investigation techniques. In order to achieve this, an extensive literature review is conducted, which serves as the foundation for the study's findings which covers complex cultural issues, including but not limited to identity, discrimination, family, tradition, friendship, loyalty, betrayal, redemption, and migration.

***Keywords:*** Cultural Issues, Khaled Hosseini, Refugee Literature, *The Kite Runner*

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# General Introduction

## 1. Background of the Study

During the period of Soviet colonialism, many Afghan people found themselves obliged to leave their homeland and became refugees in other countries. One of the countries Afghan people sought asylum in was America. The fact that they were refugees did not make them lose their identity. Instead, they revived their cultures, evolved a sense of responsibility towards their country, so they wrote their own stories, and narrated the consequences of colonialism on their communities. They also, through their writing, gave the world a realistic view of their culture. This kind of writing is called Afghan American literature, which is a recent area of study and literary works produced by Afghan writers who migrated to America to seek a better life. It emphasizes the depiction of Afghan culture, the effect of war, the history of Afghanistan, and the identity crisis. One of the Afghan immigrant writers who succeeded in changing the world's view of Afghanistan is Khaled Hosseini.

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan writer who left his homeland during the soviet invasion and became a refugee in America. He studied medicine in Los Angeles, yet his studies did not prevent him from becoming one of the best-selling writers. After publishing his first novel *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini carried on the field of writing as a refugee writer whose novels were about Afghanistan. For many people in the west, Afghanistan is synonymous with the Soviet war and Taliban. Hosseini's purpose was to remind people how Afghans had managed to live in total anonymity. He had presented a new idea, very different from other writers who, most of them, talked about displacement and cultural clash. they had challenged the simplistic opposition between the West and the East by building a bridge of understanding to the other cultures, explaining to the West and the rest of the world that Afghanistan was more than rockets and gunshots.

Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* depicts Afghan people living peacefully before the Soviet invasion, and how their lives became worse when Taliban took control. Novelists use different methods of writing and storytelling to convey their messages. Hosseini uses flashbacks and memories to show the reader how Afghanistan was before the invasion. He also tells how people lived in Kabul under Taliban rule, giving them a voice that had been silenced for years. The portrayal of Afghanistan in the novel is the most accurate and complete in English literature. Hosseini's novel is a great example of how to bridge the gap between Western readers and Afghan culture by showing them how Afghans lived before the Soviet invasion and Taliban rule. Its aim was to inform Westerners about the real situation in Afghanistan and show that Afghans are not violent people.

*The Kite Runner* tells the story of two Afghan boys, Amir and Hassan, who grew up together while living in Kabul. The story follows them throughout their childhood until they grow old enough to get separated due to tragic circumstances. Hosseini used the characters' point of view to describe how people lived in Afghanistan. He tried to present the world through their eyes and to tell us how they thought about themselves, their culture and religion.

## **2. Statement of the Argument**

Refugee literature is a vital tool for expressing the cultural background of refugees. One such writer who has made significant contributions to this genre is Khaled Hosseini. His critically acclaimed novel, *The Kite Runner* (2003), stands as a remarkable example of refugee literature that illuminates cultural issues in Afghanistan. Consequently, this dissertation aims to delve deeper into the cultural issues portrayed in Hosseini's literary work by exploring the intricate themes of the novel, this dissertation seeks to unravel the cultural nuances that shape the narrative, providing a comprehensive insight into the cultural issues highlighted in Hosseini's masterpiece.

### 3. Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1/ What do culture, refugee and refugee literature mean?
- 2/ What are the features of Afghanistan's culture?
- 3/ What are the cultural issues portrayed in *The Kite Runner*?

### 4. Literature Review

Many works tackled Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* as a subject of their studies, as it is one of the most popular books in recent years. Many studies analysed the novel's plot and characters.

An analytical study was done about the characters of Amir and Hassan and their cultural identity issues. The research was held by Nina Farlina in her thesis "The Issue of Cultural Identity in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*" (2008). Farlina States that *The Kite Runner* is a story of two young boys, Amir and Hassan, growing up in Afghanistan and facing many obstacles in their lives, including cultural identity issues. *The Kite Runner* shows how much they have been influenced by their family's traditions and culture. The thesis discusses the cultural identity issue; and how it affects the lives of these two characters. The research goal is to find out what kind of cultural identity Amir and Hassan have. The result of the research shows that both characters are influenced by their culture and their environment, which makes them behave the same way other Afghan people do.

In his dissertation "*The Kite Runner: Tale of Hypocrisy and Sacrifice* by Khaled Hosseini" (2017), Wakar Younis highlights the use of religion as a mask to commit crimes. The novel is set in Afghanistan and the United States. It focuses on Amir, a young boy who was born into a wealthy family in Kabul. He has a close relationship with Hassan, his father's servant. When Taliban takes over Kabul, Amir and his father flee to California, where they begin new

lives as exiles. He also points out that the novel explores the issue of cultural identity among Amir, Hassan and their families. He mentions that Amir's father, Baba is a hypocrite who uses religion as a mask to cover his crimes. The writer also highlights how Amir changes as he grows up. He argues that Amir and Hassan are victims of their fathers' hypocrisy. Younis also points out how their social status affects the way they see themselves and others.

Sedkaoui Siham's thesis titled "*The Kite Runner*: Khaled Hosseini's Novel (2003) Vs Marc Forster's Movie (2007)" (2020) is a significant piece of academic work that delves into the critical analysis of the novel *The Kite Runner* and its adaptation into a movie by Marc Forster. The thesis displays the author's extensive research and knowledge in the field of literature, as well as her ability to compare and contrast the different aspects of the novel and the movie. Sedkaoui Siham's thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of the novel and the movie, highlighting their similarities and differences in terms of plot, characters, themes, and literary techniques used. She lays out a detailed examination of the changes made in the movie adaptation and the impact that they had on the story and its characters. Furthermore, the thesis presents a perceptive critique of the movie's adaptation, its strengths and weaknesses; and how it differs from the novel in terms of the portrayal of the characters and their development. Overall, Sedkaoui Siham's thesis is a valuable contribution to the field of literature, providing a detailed analysis of the novel "The Kite Runner" and its adaptation into a movie. Her insights and analysis are a testament to her academic prowess, and her work is sure to be a valuable resource for students and academics alike.

The literary world has been abuzz with the resonant impact of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. As a highly acclaimed author, Hosseini's work has garnered widespread recognition and admiration, and his novel has achieved a remarkable status in world literature. In fact, the comprehensive research process conducted on the book has revealed the extent to which it has left an indelible mark on the literary world. The profundity of the themes and the eloquence of the writing style have been widely appreciated by scholars and readers alike. As such, "The Kite

Runner" has become a cornerstone of contemporary literature, and Hosseini a household name. In the end, the writer's ability to create a story that resonates deeply with readers. It distinguishes Hosseini's work and cements his place as one of the most significant literary voices of our time.

## **5. Aims of the Study**

The aim of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of cultural issues presented by Khaled Hosseini in his novel *The Kite Runner*. The purpose is to highlight these issues by examining the characters and their relationships, as well as the setting.

## **6. Significance of the Study**

Refugee literature has gained significant popularity in recent years, and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* is a prime example of the genre. This novel explores the complex cultural issues that arise from displacement and migration, and therefore, it is worthy of study for anyone interested in understanding the complexities of refugee experiences. In fact, this novel provides many opportunities for analysis and critical reflection. By delving deeper into the cultural issues presented in *The Kite Runner*, researchers can gain a better understanding of the nuances of displacement, cultural identity, and the impact of war on individuals and society as a whole. Therefore, studying Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between culture and displacement, making it a compelling choice for research and academic study.

## **7. Research Methodology**

The present study focuses on the cultural issues depicted in refugee literature, with a specific emphasis on Khaled Hosseini's popular novel, *The Kite Runner*. The nature of the research is qualitative, and as such, a descriptive analytical type of investigation has been undertaken. The study is based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature, which entails the collection and meticulous analysis of data. It is pertinent to mention that secondary data have been employed in this research, which have been sourced from the extensive literature review conducted.

## **8. Structure of the Study**

This paper is divided into two chapters, each with a distinct purpose and approach to the topic at hand. The first chapter, entitled "Culture and Refugee Literature", is designed for a descriptive analysis. It comprises two sections, namely "Defining Terminologies" and "Cultural Background of Afghanistan". The latter offers an insight into Afghanistan's culture. The second chapter entitled "Cultural Issues in *The Kite Runner*," focuses on presenting the findings. This chapter is divided into two sections, the first of which is titled "Results." Thus, the paper offers a comprehensive understanding of the topic with its well-structured and systematic approach. While the second section, titled " Findings " delves into the results and provides a detailed analysis of them. In summary, this chapter provides a practical framework to present and analyse the results obtained through the research.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Culture and Refugee Literature**

## Chapter One: Culture and Refugee Literature

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# **1. Culture and Refugee Literature**

## **Introduction**

People suffer from civil war and colonialism. These conflicts lead them to leave their countries and become refugees. The state of being a refugee did not prevent them from producing art and literature. It encourages them to write about their own cultures and belonging as a way of expressing their nostalgia. Afghanistan is one of the countries which suffered from both civil war and colonialism. This chapter will be divided into two sections. In the first section, the terminologies of culture, cultural issues, refugee and refugee literature will be analysed, while the second section will evaluate the cultural background of Afghanistan culture.

### **1.1. Defining Terminologies**

Cultural differences exist within, and especially between countries. These differences take place between individuals, groups and nations whereas people act, think, and feel differently (Hofstede et al., 2010). People from different backgrounds have different cultures which affect their perceptions and understanding of the same ideas. These differences may result misunderstanding or cultural issues. The majority of people who fall in the trap of cultural issues are refugees who left their countries, abandoned their ideologies, and lived in other countries where they experience a clash of culture that causes cultural issues. In this chapter terminologies of culture, cultural issues, refugee, and refugee literature will be discussed.

#### **1.1.1. What is Culture?**

The way people live varies from one area to another, they differ in the way they speak, eat, dress, believe and in other social aspects of life. These differences are considered as culture. Culture for GTA 21-03-022 is "Culture is all the information passed between generations as people mature and learn the way to live within a particular group of people." (2011, p. 6). It includes language, customs, tradition, literature, science, art and music. In other words, it is people's lifestyle.

For Spencer-Oatey (2008), culture is a shared set of assumptions and values that influence the behavior and interpretations of the behavior of others. Norms, values, shared meaning and structured ways of acting are just a few examples of the phenomena that make up culture. Culture is related to groups of people and contains a wide variety of phenomena. Hofstede et al. (2010) believed that "[Culture] is the collective programming of the mind to distinguish members of one group or category of people from another." (p. 6) which means that culture is a shared social phenomenon. Moreover, it is unique and varies from one group to another. In addition, culture represents a society's lifestyle that includes attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors that are inherited from ancestors, in which Matsumoto (1996) argues that it is "A set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people. ...communicated from one generation to another." (p. 16).

Culture represents the characteristics of a given society that are inherited from one generation to the next. It is a mean used to identify and differentiate groups. Thus, culture consists of shared lifestyles such as feelings, beliefs, costumes of a group of people from generation to another.

### **1.1.2. Cultural Issues**

A social group's common values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and practices serve as the foundation for its members' behavior (or what is called culture ) at a given time.

The misunderstanding of culture and social norms can arise cultural issues between people. Cultural issues can be defined as problems linked with cultural differences. It arises when culture conflicts with systems, goals, or other cultures happens. In other words, people from different backgrounds have different views to the same things. These differences may cause issues among people. The most common issued related to culture are identity, discrimination and racism.

### **1.1.2.1. Cultural Identity Issues**

According to Jenkins (1996) the concept of identity refers to the characteristics that set one individual or group of people apart from another in their social interactions with that other individual or group of people. Each one has a different identity that shapes his or her personality such as religion, beliefs, traditions, and costumes. Cchiaro (2022) defines cultural identity as the following: "Cultural identity refers to identification with, or sense of belonging to, a particular group based on various cultural categories, including nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion." In *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1996), Stuart Hall believes that cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes that provide us with stable, continuous frames of reference and meaning.

### **1.1.2.2. Discrimination**

People are supposed to be treated equally regardless to their skin colour, race, beliefs, gender, origins. Yet, discrimination still exists which is according to the Australian Human Rights Commission(2021): "Racial discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities, as others in a similar situation, because of their race, the country where they were born, their ethnic origin or their skin colour.". In this definition, the Australian Human Rights Commission defines discrimination as the act of treating people unequally and prejudicially on the basis of their race, origin, ethnic group and colour. In addition, The Racial Discrimination Act of 1975 (RDA) prohibits treating someone differently because of their race, colour, descent, nationality, ethnic origin or immigration status.

### **1.1.2.3. Racism**

For George M. Fredrikson (2003), when one ethnic group or "people" feels hostile or negatively toward another, the term "racism" is frequently employed in a broad and unreflective manner. That means racism is the feeling of negativity and prejudice between different racial groups in

which one believes that he or she is superior than the others. In the book "*Dimensions of Racism*" (2005) racism is defined as:

Racism is an ideological construct that assigns a certain race and/or ethnic group to a position of power over others on the basis of physical and cultural attributes, as well as economic wealth, involving hierarchical relations where the 'superior' race exercises domination and control over others. (p. 112)

from this definition one can say that racism is an ideological concept that puts a particular race or ethnic group superior over the others. It allows for the exploitation, exclusion, or even the eradication of those who belong to these so-called "inferior" groups.

#### **1.1.2.4. Race and Ethnicity**

Sometimes people are classified according to their race or ethnicity. When classifying people according to their physical traits', a racial classification is used in which the classification relies on biological traits such as skin colour, hair type, body and nose type. According to Silva Santos et al. (2010): "Race is related to the biological realm. In reference to humans, ... used to identify socially defined human categories. The most common differences refer to skin color, hair type, face and skull shape, and genetic ancestry"(p. 124). Ethnicity is derived from the Greek word "Ethnos" which means foreign people or nation, Silva Santos et al. also state" ethnicity lies within the cultural realm. An ethnic community is determined by linguistic and cultural affinities and genetic similarities. These communities often claim to have a distinct social and political structure, and a territory " (2009, p. 124) that means ethnicity is used when the classification is based on the cultural realm. In another word, the ethnicity refers to the cultural components of group of people such as language, religion, costumes, and traditions.

### **1.1.3. Who is Refugee?**

Wars all around the world are continuously happening causing death, injury, and making the survived people homeless and refugees. In certain war cases such as civil wars, people find themselves obliged to leave their homelands looking for safety. When one leaves his or her own country fleeing from persecution, different terms are used to describe this state; A migrant or a refugee are the most common terms used to describe this lifestyle. A migrant is an individual or a group of people who leave their country to stay in another one by their own choice in order to find better opportunities for their lives unlike refugees who are obliged to flee their lands. A refugee is a displaced person who has been forced to leave their country. According to The UN Refugee Agency website (2019): " A refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their country due to persecution, war or violence." A refugee is someone who has a legitimate fear of persecution because of their ethnicity, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. They are most likely either unable or unwilling to return home. Conflict and violence within ethnic, tribal and religious communities are the main reasons why refugees leave their nations. In addition, the mandate of "The UN High Commission" (2017) applies the term refugee to any person who is outside their country of origin or habitual residence and cannot return there because of a serious and indiscriminate threat to life, physical integrity or freedom as a result of generalized violence or events. In short, crossing an international border is a necessary condition to qualify as a "refugee" according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2017) even though they have many of the same circumstances and difficulties as those who have been forcibly uprooted from their homes (migrants), but are unable or choose not to cross the border, are not considered refugees.

### **1.1.4. What is Refugee Literature?**

To understand the ideas, feelings, emotions, thoughts and experiences of human beings from different cultures throughout history, literature is a key element to comprehend how different

people from different social background express their variety of experiences. Literature is the mirror of society, which means that it is the instrument that is used to depict one's experiences. Refugees who are forced to flee their countries did not abandon their origins and found a way of expressing themselves through literature. They evolved a way of writing which is called Refugee Literature.

Many people find themselves obliged to leave their homelands or countries and became refugees in other countries, yet the state of being refugees did not stop them from expressing themselves in a way that is related to their state. The kind of literature that refugees write is known as Refugees Literature. According to Huber (2018): "Refugee literature [...] refers to texts which are written by, for, or about refugees" (p. 23). What refugees write or what is written for or about them is considered as refugee literature. In other words, refugee literature tries to narrate the experiences of refugees which are different and unique; it also offers a deeper understanding of refugees experiences, thoughts and beliefs.

As a conclusion, culture is a shared set of assumptions and values that influences behavior and interpretations of others behavior. It is related to groups of people and contains a vast range of phenomena. Cultural issues can arise when culture conflicts with systems, goals, or other cultures. Common issues related to culture include identity, values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and practices. People mostly affected by cultural issues are refugees. This influence helps some of them to produce a literature related to their status as refugees called refugee literature which refers to literary texts produced from cultures influenced by refugee culture and asylum's country culture. It provides an image of the experiences refugees go through and revive traditional cultures as a way of self-representation on one hand. On the other hand, it can also be about learning a new culture and the conflict which may occur between tradition and modernisation.

## **1.2. Cultural Background of Afghanistan**

Afghanistan as a country is full of diversity in terms of ethnic groups language and religion sects because of its geographical and historical background. In this section, the main aspects of Afghanistan culture will be analysed.

### **1.2.1. Afghanistan's Culture**

The country of Afghanistan has a long history with colonialism. It was conquered by several foreign invaders such as Greeks, Persian and Mongol. Therefore, the population of Afghanistan has become diverse in terms of race and ethnic groups. This diversity makes Afghanistan a multicultural land. Thus, the culture of Afghanistan is rich in many aspects such as language, religion, customs and ethnic groups.

#### **1.2.1.1. Language**

Culture is an interconnected set of ideas and practices shared among people through writing, behaviour and language. Language is the main tool of communication. Since the people of Afghanistan are a complex mosaic of ethnic and linguistic groups, they speak many different languages.

According to GOV.UK: "Afghanistan's principal language is Dari, spoken by an estimated 45% to 50% of the population. Dari is a dialect of Persian (also known as Farsi), the language of Iran." (2008, p. 19). Dari is a form of Persian or Farsi and is considered as the language of the northern Tajik elites while Pashto is the language of Pushtuns spoken in the east and south of Afghanistan. It is the first language of an estimated 35% of the population. Both Pashtu and Dari use the Arabic script and are similar in written form. The two languages are mutually unintelligible, most educated Afghans can speak both languages. Dari is considered the language of urban life and it is the usual medium for business. Schools use language most common for their region and teach others as part curriculum. The Hazaras speak a form of

Persian known as Hazaragi, which is distinguished from Dari by the incorporation of Mongolian terms. In the northern regions of the country, Turkic languages such as Uzbek and Turkmen are spoken. Smaller ethnic groups usually have their own languages, which are often a dialectal variation of one of the main languages (GOV.UK, 2008, p. 20).

#### **1.2.1.2. Religion**

The U.S. government estimates the population of Afghanistan to be 37.5 million, with Sunni Muslims making up 80-85% and Shia making up 10-15%. Other religious groups, mainly Hindus, Sikhs, Baha'is, and Christians, make up less than 0.3% of the population. Hazaras, Ismaili Muslims, Baha'i followers, and Ahmadi Muslims live in Kabul (United States Department of State, 2021, pp. 4-5).

The two major branches of Islam are the Sunni (85%) and the Shia (15%), which originated over a dispute regarding who should succeed Muhammad – peace be upon him- after his death. The Shia maintain that leadership of the Muslim community should remain within the household and lineage of Muhammad– peace be upon him- and that Muhammad – peace be upon him- specifically appointed his son-in-law and cousin, Ali, to be his successor. The Shia started as a protest movement when Abu Bakr was chosen as Caliph by Muhammad's Companions after his death, followed by Umar and then by Uthman. From a Sunni perspective, leadership is primarily a political function and Caliphs were expected to support and protect Islam, but they had no specific religious authority. The Shia view Ali as the first Imam, rejecting the Sunni system of Caliphs (GTA, 2011, p. 22).

Modern conflict between the Sunni and the Shia is often more the result of clashes regarding political power of the groups in an area, rather than primarily over religious beliefs and practices(GTA, 2011, p. 22).

**1.2.1.3. Ethnicity**

Micheal Brooks defines ethnicity as: "an ethnic group is a large group of people with a common racial, national, tribal, religious, or cultural origin or background." (2010, p. 68). In Afghanistan, ethnicity frequently determines how society is organized and serves as an immediate cultural marker. Afghanistan consist of numerous ethnic groups such as shown in **Figure 1**

**Figure 1. Afghan Ethnic groups**

<b>Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders)</b>	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>No. of Seats (Percentage of Total)</b>
Total	102
Pashtun	36 (35%)
Tajik	32 (31%)
Hazara	16 (16%)
Uzbek/Turkmen	8 (8%)
Baluchi	3 (3%)
Nuristani	3 (3%)
Others	4 (3%)

**Note.** *Afghan Ethnic Groups (Afghan Ethnic Groups: A Brief Investigation - Afghanistan, 2011, p. 6)*

According to Civil-Military Fusion Center report, the ethnic groups with the highest number of population in Afghanistan are the Pashtun, the Tajik and the Hazaras. In this paper the focus will be on the Pashtun and the Hazara ethnic groups.

**1.2.1.3.1. Pashtuns**

'Pushtuns, Pakhtuns, Pukhtuns, Pathans' are the names that refer to the Pashtuns, which are the major populated ethnic group in Afghanistan with the largest percentage of the population of Afghanistan. Revenge (badal), hospitality (melmastia) and honor (namus) are the three basic tenets of Pashtuns' code of conduct 'Pushtunwali' which their culture is derived from. They speak Pashto, an Indo-European language, from the Persian language family. Pashtuns authorities have promoted the language as a symbol of Pashtun political domination in

Afghanistan, despite the fact that many Pashtuns may not speak Pashto as their native dialect. Dari, the Afghan dialect of Persian, is spoken natively by a significant portion of the Pashtun population (also known as Farsi). 95 % of Pashtuns are Hanafi Sunni Muslims, while about 5 % of them are Shi'a. The majority of Afghans were - and still are - conservative Muslims. Pashtuns see the Hazaras -the third most known ethnic group - negatively and consider them to be inferior Afghan due to their Shi'a faith and Iranian nationality (Afghanistan Cultural Field Guide, 2003).

#### **1.2.1.3.2. Hazara**

The Hazaras are the third largest Afghan ethnic group . Their name, which is translated to 'thousand' in Farsi, refers to the fact that they are descended from Genghis Khan's army, which invaded Afghanistan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The 'Hazarajat,' their native land, is situated in the center of Afghanistan. Previous Afghan governments divided this region into several provinces to wakening the political power of the Hazaras. They are at the bottom of the Afghan social hierarchy due to a combination of their distinctive facial features, their minority Shi'ite faith, and the poor quality land they occupy. They were held as slaves by succeeding Pashtun monarchies, and they were not freed until the reformist King Amanuallah (1919-1929), whose liberal policies ultimately led to ouster. Even now, in cities, they typically carry out mundane jobs. However, the Hazara people have shown to be fierce and successful opponents of both the Soviet and the Taliban. The Hazaras districts' communist government was overturned early in the Soviet occupation period. Hazara fighters also put the Taliban under constant pressure from bases on the mountains. Nonetheless, the Hazaras have had internal conflict and continue to have a hierarchical leadership structure inside their community, which was a factor in their prior persecution more than any other Afghani tribe. They speak a variety of Farsi called Hazaragi which is distinct from Dari in that it has vocabulary with Mongol roots. Almost all Hazaras are Shi'a Muslims (Afghanistan Cultural Field Guide, 2003).

#### **1.2.1.4. Tradition**

The geographical location of Afghanistan has made it a perpetual battleground for invading armies and conquerors for centuries. This has made the Afghan people unique in certain customs and traditions that they adhere to. The people of Afghanistan are firm believers in the omnipresent God and follow the principles of Islam. They believe that Islamic law permits every 'believer' to maintain arms when directed by the ruler. Afghans are known to display a fierce loyalty to their respective clans and tribes and their identification with Afghanistan as a nation is fragile.(Afghanistan Cultural Field Guide, 2003)

##### **1.2.1.4.1. Greeting**

People in Afghanistan greet one another with the phrase 'Assalamu Alaikum', which means 'Peace be upon you'. Women and men never shake hands or make eye contact in Afghan society. Dining in Afghanistan is a different experience and food is generally shared by everyone from the same dish. It is considered taboo to eat with your left hand and always leave something on your plate, else it will get filled up quickly.( Afghanistan: Cultural Appreciation Booklet, 2007)

##### **1.2.1.4.2. Traditional Games**

Afghan culture is deeply rooted in traditions that hold significant importance even in today's modern society. One of the key aspects of Afghan culture is its emphasis on traditional activities, such as Kite fighting and Buzkashi games. These activities are not just mere pastimes for the Afghan people, but serve as a reflection of their cultural heritage and identity.

###### **1.2.1.4.2.1. Kite Fighting**

Kite fighting is a highly competitive sport in Afghanistan, where the goal is to slice the other kite fighters' string with their own kite. The key to success depends on the quality of the kites' main bamboo skeleton, the strength of paper skin and the string, and the skills of the fliers. It is difficult for an Afghan individual to be the kite fighting champion due to the need to cut

thousands of kites. Kite flying is also dangerous, with many Afghan people getting injured or killed when they fall from roofs or lose concentration during kite fighting.(Zhou, N., & Roberts, E., 2017 )

#### **1.2.1.4.2.2. Buzkashi**

Buzkashi is a traditional and national sport in Afghanistan, played on Fridays and special events, drawing thousands of fans. Which means "goat-grabbing" or "goat-dragging". There are two genres of Buzkashi in Afghanistan today: Tudabarai (traditional game form) and Qarajai (sport form). Both forms share the same essential components: carcass, horses, and riders, and have the same general objective: gaining control of the carcass and carrying it across space until a score is accomplished. In Tudabarai, the aim is to carry the calf free and clear from everyone else before letting it fall uncontested to the ground, while in Qarajai, players seek to carry the calf around a standard and return it to a scoring circle (MCADD, 2022).

Afghanistan was conquered by Arabs. Thus, it became a Muslim country. The Afghan Muslims are divided into two sects Sunni and Shia. Almost all of the population speak Dari or Pashtu, whereas the other minority speak a dialectal variation of one of Dari and Pashtu. Yet, Afghanistan lacks a state-level shared identity that unites the diverse ethnic groups and transcends ethnicity. In Afghanistan, a person's ethnic identity defines who they are as a person.

Understanding ethnicity's role as a way to understanding Afghanistan and its people is only a small part of the process. Although there are many different ethnic groups in Afghanistan, almost all Afghans have a strong feeling of independence and a liberal attitude. Afghans are fervently pro-freedom and unified in their opposition to outside interference in domestic affairs. Ethnic identities lose importance when Afghans believe they are fighting a mutual enemy who wants to rule Afghanistan. Despite Afghanistan's ethnic variety, people from various communities can communicate with one another. There is a large amount of inter-ethnic

marriage among the various ethnic groups. Besides, they share the same traditional games such as kite fighting and Buzkashi.

## **Conclusion**

Culture is a shared set of assumptions and values that influences behavior and interpretations of others. It is the criteria used to differentiate between societies. Common issues related to culture include identity, values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and practices. Refugees, who have been forced to flee their homelands, tend to hold on their culture as a way of nostalgia. Through their writing, they provide an image of the experiences they went through. One of the countries that has cultural issues is Afghanistan. It is a multicultural country because of the various ethnic groups it possesses. It lacks a state-level shared identity that unites the diverse ethnic groups and transcends ethnicity.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Cultural Issues in *The Kite Runner***

## Chapter Two: Cultural Issues in *The Kite Runner*

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## **Introduction**

Afghanistan is a country known for its rich and diverse culture. The culture of Afghanistan is a reflection of its long and complex history, infused with various influences from neighbouring regions. Afghan culture is a vivid tapestry, woven with threads of ancient traditions, customs, and beliefs that have been passed down through generations. It is a culture that celebrates diversity and embraces the beauty of different ethnic groups, languages, and religions coexisting harmoniously. In this research, a qualitative method is used in which an in-depth analytical reading to Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* is done. This chapter aims to analyse the cultural issues used in the novel.

### **2.1. Results**

*The Kite Runner* is a novel that displays Afghan cultural issues. These issues are manifested through experiences and events in the novel. This section will represent *The Kite Runner* as a refugee literature, its synopsis, its criticism and the cultural issues tackled by Khaled Hosseini.

#### **2.1.1. The Kite Runner as a Refugee Literature**

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan-American novelist, writer, and physician. He was born on March 4, 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan. His father, Nasr was a diplomat in the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and his mother, Maimouna, was a Persian and history teacher at a high school in Kabul. The entire family was forced to go to Iran in 1970 because Khaled's father held a position at the Afghan Embassy there. In 1976, the State Department relocated the Hosseini family to Paris. Hosseini's family was prepared to return to Kabul in 1980, but by that time, Afghanistan had already seen a brutal communist takeover and a Soviet invasion. The Hosseini's sought and received political asylum in the United States and moved to San Jose, California in September 1980. In 1984, Khaled was completing his high school education. Hosseini studied at Santa Clara University and finished a bachelor's degree in biology in 1988. He enrolled in the

University of California, San Diego School of Medicine the following year and graduated in 1993. In Los Angeles, at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, he finished his residency. From 1996 to 2004, he worked as an internist (Bio-Khaled Hosseini, 2018).

Hosseini began writing his first novel, *The Kite Runner*, while he was practising medicine in March 2001. This debut launched one of the greatest literary careers of our time. Khaled Hosseini is one of the most respected and best-selling authors in the world today. *The Kite Runner* has been published in 38 countries, translated into 62 languages including, Chinese, French, German etc., and sold worldwide into 12 million copies (Bio-Khaled Hosseini, 2018).

In 2006, Hosseini was chosen as a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency. Inspired by a trip he took with UNHCR to Afghanistan, he later founded The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan. (Bio-Khaled Hosseini, 2018)

### ***2.1.2. The Kite Runner***

*The Kite Runner*, Hosseini's first novel, reflects ethnical differences between the Pashtun and Hazara in Afghanistan, and how the political turbulence from 1973 to 2001 affected them and the country. It is the first novel written in English by an Afghan-American. It focusses on three significant ages in the main protagonist's (Amir) life: life in Kabul before Soviet eruption (1973-1979), the indigenous life in the United States in the 1980s, and the Taliban's governance (1996-2001). The plot revolves around two characters Amir (an ethnical-Pashtun) and Hassan (an ethnical- Hazara). Both boys grow up as good musketeers in the megacity of Kabul. The thread of ethnic difference; opposition, and division spreads throughout the novel. Molestation of Hassan by three Pashtun boys during a Kite-fighting event in Kabul in 1975, is the climax of the story, when Amir betrays his friend, Hassan, when he doesn't intermedate and/ or stand by him. This event changes the whole course of the story. The guilt or treason of Amir follows him throughout his life. In 2001, Rahim Khan ( Baba's friend ), falls sick in

Peshawar and calls Amir to see him before he dies. He reminds Amir to his once guilt and urges him for to redemption by saving Sohrab (Hassan's son) from the inhumanity of the Taliban. Amir follows his advice and goes to Kabul to save Sohrab. Amir fights the Taliban's leader, gets severe physical injuries, rescues Sohrab from the clutches of the Taliban, and takes him to the United States. The immolation gives Amir a feeling of redemption. ("*The Kite Runner*: Khaled Hosseini and *The Kite Runner* Background", n.d.)

### **2.1.3. Criticism of The Kite Runner**

Critics have reacted differently to Hosseini's tale. Some believe that in its an attempt to combat preconceptions, it does more harm than good.

In his article Home No/W/here: Study of Diasporic Dilemma Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*(2003), Verma Raj Gaurav states that *The Kite Runner* differs from other diaspora novels in that it shows the trauma experienced at home as much more difficult and burdensome than the trauma of living outside the country. It melts the frozen reality of the protagonist, and with each layer hidden in "a crumbling mud wall peeking into an alley near a frozen stream" (Hosseini, 2003, p.1), the reader finds the wounds that the protagonist and those around him have received. Hosseini presents it as a novel of "shame, guilt, regret, friendship, love, forgiveness, reconciliation" It is the story of two friends through whose lives we learn about the hardships of Afghanistan: war-torn, broken, poor and robbed. The story spans three generations, with events taking place in 1933 and then ending in 2002. The novel mostly deals with the theme of sin and redemption. Living in guilt all his life, Amir looks for ways to atone for his sins, and the only way is to return to Afghanistan (2018).

In his article To Be Good (Again): *The Kite Runner* as allegory of global ethics, David Jefferess examines Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*; "The novel is really about "finally putting a human face to the Afghans" ... Hence, the novel "humanizes" Afghan culture, providing depth and meaning to the sign "Afghanistan" for the non-Afghan reader, otherwise a mere signifier of post-9/11 conflict"(2009, p. 289). It is the first novel published after the 9/11

events which distorted the image of Afghanistan and accused it of being a barbaric terroristic country. Thus, Hosseini through the novel, gives the reality of his homeland, Afghanistan.

However, Departing from criticism that interprets *The Kite Runner* as an idealization of the West, Hosseini is also criticized by other critics, such as Marc Barry Boucai, who argued that the manner in which the U.S. deliberately sponsored, promoted, funded, and propped up Muslim fundamentalist forces in order to keep the Soviets out of Afghanistan are hardly ever discussed in historical accounts (2013, p. 65 ) such as in Hosseini' s novel. Instead, Hosseini sheds light on portraying the negative sides of Afghan children. Lasmi Laila Fadhila(2017) believed that Khaled Hossieni misrepresented Middle-East children when he involved them in sexual abuse.

Edwards Janatte (2008) evaluates some critiques of critics' views about Hosseini's novel; he claims, "Hosseini, '[didn't] really know the fabric of the society' about which he wrote " (p. 5), in this quote Hosseini is accused for not being authentic in his book because he left Afghanistan when he was a child, and he did not grow up in Afghan society to have the right to write about them. Instead, Edwards (2008) insists that Hosseini deserted the truth "Hosseini 's narrative as confirmation that he is an outsider. 'The more you know about Afghans and Afghan society" (p. 5) Edwards believes that anyone who knows the Afghans and the Afghan society would notice the mis-narrated truths about Afghanistan as when the soldiers tell Hassan that they know his mother who left him since his birth, whereas in fact in that time Afghan soldiers served only for two years.

#### **2.1.4. Cultural Issues in *The Kite Runner***

The novel *The Kite Runner* has tackled many cultural issues which are presented in **Table 2. 1**

**Table 2.1** *Cultural Issues in The Kite Runner*

The cultural Issue		Chapter	Quote
Identity	Cultural Identity	12	"Remember this, "Baba said, pointing at me, "The man is a Pashtun to the root. He has nang and namoos." Nang. Namooos. Honor and Pride. The tenets of Pashtun men. Especially when it came to the chastity of a wife. Or a daughter." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 121)
	Language	7	"I remember the last time. I was in my room, reading an abbreviated Farsi translation of Ivanhoe,"(Hosseini, 2003, p. 73)
		24	" I did not know you spoke Farsi so well," I said in English. "Did you grow up in Kabul? " (Hosseini, 2003, p. 296)
Religion	2	"The following week, after class, I showed the book to my teacher and pointed to the chapter on the Hazaras. He skimmed through a couple of pages, snickered, handed the book back. "That's the one thing Shi'a people do well," he said, picking up his papers, "passing themselves as martyrs." He wrinkled his nose when he said the word Shi'a, like it was some kind of disease."(Hosseini, 2003, p.7)	

		17	"May Allah be with you always" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 185)
<b>Discrimination</b>	Ethnic	5	"His [Assef's] blue eyes flicked to Hassan. "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood." He made a sweeping, grandiose gesture with his hands. "Afghanistan for Pashtuns, I say. That's my vision." (Hosseini, 2003, p.33)
	Racial	2	" They called him [Ali] "flat-nosed" because of Ali and Hassan's characteristic Hazara Mongoloid features. For years, that was all I knew about the Hazaras, that they were Mogul descendants, and that they looked a little like Chinese people." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 6)
	Religious	21	"You come all the way from America for...a Shi'a " (Hosseini, 2003, p. 229)
	father and son relationship	3	"Because the truth of it was, I always felt like Baba hated me a little. And why not? After all, I_ had_ killed his beloved wife, his beautiful princess, hadn't I? The least I could have done

<b>Family</b>			was to have had the decency to have turned out a little more like him." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 14)
	Honor	19	" You are an honorable man, Amir. A true Afghan... I am proud to have you in our home tonight" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 203)."
<b>Tradition</b>	Games	3	"I remember one time Baba took me to the yearly_ Buzkashi_ tournamen.That took place on the first day of spring, New Year's Day. Buzkashi was, and still is, Afghanistan's national passion. A _chapandaz _ , a highly skilled horseman usually patronized by aficionados, has to snatch a goat or cattle carcass from the midst of a melee, carry that carcass with him around the stadium at full gallop, and drop it in a scoring circle while a team of other _chapandaz_ chases him and does everything in its power -- kick, claw, whip, punch -- to snatch the carcass from him. That day, the crowd roared with excitement as the horsemen on the field bellowed their battle cries and jostled for the carcass in a cloud of dust. The earth trembled with the clatter of hooves. We watched from the upper bleachers as riders pounded past us at full gallop, yipping

			and yelling, foam flying from their horses' mouths" ( Hosseini, 2003, p. 15)
		6	" The kite fighting tournament was an old winter tradition in Afghanistan. It started early in the morning on the day of the contest and didn't end until only the winning kite flew in the sky--I remember one year the tournament outlasted daylight. People gathered on sidewalks and roofs to cheer for their kids. The streets filled with kite fighters, jerking and tugging on their lines, squinting up to the sky, trying to gain position to cut the opponent's line. Every kite fighter had an assistant--in my case, Hassan--who held the spool and fed the line." (Hosseini, 2003, p.41)
	Clothes	7	"He wore black rubber snow boots and a bright green chapan over a thick sweater and faded corduroy pants" ( Hosseini, 2003, p. 50)
		7	"Amir agha and I are friends," Hassan said. He looked flushed." (Hosseini, 2003, p .61)

<b>Friendship</b>	17	"I dream that someday you will return to Kabul and revisit the land of our childhood. If you do, you will find an old faithful friend waiting for you." (Hosseini, 2003,p.185)
<b>Loyalty</b>	7	<p>" He [Hassan] was already turning the street corner, his rubber boots kicking up snow. He stopped, turned. He cupped his hands around his mouth. "For you a thousand times over!" he said. " ( Hosseini, 2003, p. 55)</p> <p>"A loyal Hazara. Loyal as a dog," Assef said. Kamal's laugh was a shrill, nervous sound " (Hosseini, 2003, p. 61)</p>
<b>Betrayal</b>	18	"Baba and I were more alike than I'd ever known. We had both betrayed the people who would have given their lives for us. And with that came this realization: that Rahim Khan had summoned me here to atone not just for my sins but for Baba's too." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 192)
<b>Redemption</b>	23	"Also because he [Baba] was a good man, maybe even a great man. And this is what I want you to understand, that good, real good, was born out of your father's remorse.

		Sometimes, I think everything he did, feeding the poor on the streets, building the orphanage, giving money to friends in need, it was all redeeming himself. And that, I believe, is his true redemption is, Amir jan, when guilt leads to good.(Hosseini, 2003, p. 260 )
	25	"Sohrab, I can't give you your old life back, I wish to God I could. But I can take you with me. That was what I was coming in the bathroom to tell you. You have a visa to go to America, to live with me and my wife. It's true. I promise." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 314)
<b>Migration</b>	11	"I work always. In Afghanistan I work, in America I work. Thank you very much, Mrs. Dobbins, but I don't like it free money " ( Hosseini, 2003, p. 109 )
	15	"Balay!" he said, smiling."I knew Sharif jan in Kabul, long time ago, before he moved to America."( Hosseini, 2003, p. 170)

*The Kite Runner* represents the author's adherence towards his culture and homeland although he is living as a refugee in the USA. The story of the novel relates cultural issues in Afghanistan such as cultural identity, ethnic discrimination and tradition.

## **2.2. Discussion**

The story of *The Kite Runner* represents cultural aspects and issues about Afghan. The main cultural issues that have been depicted are: cultural identity, ethnic discrimination, racial discrimination, betrayal, redemption, and migration.

### **2.2.1. Identity**

#### **2.2.1.1. Cultural Identity**

A person's sense of belonging to a certain culture is referred to as his cultural identity. Part of this process is learning about and accepting cultural customs, heritage, language, religion, lineage, aesthetics, thought patterns and social systems.

Most of the Pashtuns, especially Amir and Baba, flee to America after the Russians had invaded Afghanistan to protect themselves from many foreign invasions. Accordingly, the Pashtuns are the richest ethnic group. Hassan always accepts anything from Pashtuns. He only lives in Afghanistan, where things are very different due to the dangers of living in a remote Afghan village. He understands that all he is Hazara and he belongs to an ethnic minority in Afghanistan. Amir takes a plane to America to leave his old memories and start a new life there. He lives in California, a state that has a large population of Afghan immigrants. Amir and Baba continue to practice their Pashtun ethnic traditions and customs. Even though they live in America, they want their culture to continue. They continue to hold on to their culture while constantly attempting transformational growth. Even though they are in a different nation, they continue to practice their culture and try to constantly transform. As they want to maintain their Pashtun cultural identity but are forced to adopt American customs and other new cultural practices, there seems to be a conflict between the two. It occurs when Baba questions the cashier about the difference in payments between Afghanistan and America, leading to a dispute with the California store owner because they don't trust Baba's check, the business owner

demands to see Baba's ID card: 'It turned out that Baba had had no cash on him for the oranges. He'd written Mr. Nguyen a check and Mr. Nguyen had asked for an ID' (Hosseini, 2003, p. 106). Although this situation is typical in America, Baba feels insulted by the store owner. If an Afghan wants to make a purchase in Kabul, he gives the business owner a wooden stick and has it cut with a knife. At the end of each month, they compensate him for the number of notches on his hockey stick. No ID. In this case, Baba never underwent it in Kabul, where everyone knows and recognizes him. Baba can easily get anything because the Pashtuns are the richest ethnic group in Afghanistan. Baba misses Afghanistan because of this scenario as Hosseini said in the novel: 'For Baba, [America] a place to mourn his [memories]' (Hosseini, 2003, p. 108).

When Amir wants to get married, he chooses the Afghan girl "Soraya" and has an Afghan wedding as an example, emphasizing cultural identity. When Soraya, a member of the Pashtun ethnic group, strikes Amir's fancy. Baba cautions Amir not to humiliate him, since Soraya's father is a true Pashtun who adheres to certain precepts, like nang and namoos, honour, and pride, particularly when it comes to a wife's or daughter's chastity in page 121 in the novel

Remember this, 'Baba said, pointing at me, 'The man is a Pashtun to the root. He has nang and namoos.' Nang. Namooos. Honor and pride. The tenets of Pashtun men. Especially when it came to the chastity of a wife. Or a daughter (Hosseini, 2003, p. 121).

Additionally, Amir marries Soraya according to his customs, including the lafz ("giving word"), nika ("the swearing ceremony"), and Ayena Mashaf. In accordance with Afghan tradition, Soraya's family should host the engagement party, known as the "Shirini-Khori" or "Eating of the Sweets" ceremony, but their families choose not to. Baba's short life expectancy is what's to blame. (Hosseini, 2003, pp. 147–148). Amir and his father visit Soraya's home in "lafz." When "lafz" starts, Soraya is not present at this time. Additionally, Soraya wore a lovely traditional Afghan dress in wine color with long sleeves and gold accents. Additionally,

Amir and Soraya signed the certificates during the nika, the swearing-in ceremony. Then they perform Ayena Masshaf, in which their families give them a mirror and cover their heads with a veil so they can look at each other privately. In addition, Amir followed Afghan tradition after the death of his father, Baba. The people wear dark suits, while the women wear black outfits with traditional white hijabs covering their heads. (Hosseini, 2003, p. 152)

### 2.2.1.2. Language

*The Kite Runner* is originally written in English. Hosseini's choice of language was political, as he wanted to show the culture of Afghanistan to all the world on the one hand, and on the other hand, Hosseini wanted the world to see the reality of his homeland; he wanted to show them that Afghanistan is neither Taliban nor a terrorist country.

Hosseini includes some Farsi (Dari) words in the novel to represent the characters' cultural identity, because in Afghanistan, the Pashtun and the Hazara speak Dari and some dialectical variations of it. Whenever Hosseini uses a Farsi word, he associates it with its equivalent in English (see **Table 2.2**) or with an explanation if the word has to deal with words that exist only in Afghanistan's culture that readers cannot relate to or understand without explanation, as shown in **Table 2.3**.

**Table 2.2** *Dari words and their English equivalent*

Dari words	English	page
Babalu	Boogeyman	6
Toophan-agma	Mr. Hurricane	9
Saratan	Cancer	10

Namaz	Prayers	11
Qiyamat	Judgment Day	11
Sherjangi	Battle of the Poems	15
Chapandaz	highly skilled horseman	15
Kochi	The nomads	20
Jan	Term of endearment	25
Goshkhor	The ear eater	31
Mard to mard	Man to man	32
Watan	Homeland	33
Eid Mubarak	Happy Eid	36
Tashakor	Thank you	38
Tar	The glass-coated cutting line	40
Moochi	A shoe repairman	41
Salam	Hello	116
Bachem	My child	116
Nang	Honour	121
Namoos	Pride	121

Maghbool	Lovely	135
Lafz	The ceremony of "giving word "	142
KhoshtEEP	Handsome	143
Awroussi	The wedding ceremony	145
Nika	Swearing ceremony	145
Shirini-khori	The engagement party	145
Biwa	Window	235
Shahbas	Bravo	240
Jai-namaz	Prayer-rug	306
Sabagh	Lesson	326

**Table 2.3** *Dari Expression and their Meanings in English*

<b>Dari word</b>	<b>English Meaning</b>	<b>Page</b>
Sherjangi	IN SCHOOL, we used to play a game called _Sherjangi_, or "Battle of the Poems." The Farsi teacher moderated it and it went something like this: You recited a verse from a poem and your opponent had sixty seconds to reply with a verse that began with the same letter that ended yours.	15

Buzkashi	<p>Buzkashi_ tournamen. That took place on the first day of spring, New Year's Day. Buzkashi was, and still is, Afghanistan's national passion. A_ chapandaz_ , a highly skilled horseman usually patronized by aficionados, has to snatch a goat or cattle carcass from the midst of a melee, carry that carcass with him around the stadium at full gallop, and drop it in a scoring circle while a team of other _chapandaz_ chases him and does everything in its power -- kick, claw, whip, punch --to snatch the carcass from him. That day, the crowd roared with excitement as the horsemen on the field bellowed their battle cries and jostled for the carcass in a cloud of dust. The earth trembled with the clatter of hooves. We watched from the upper bleachers as riders pounded past us at full gallop, yipping and yelling, foam flying from their horses' mouths</p>	15
Eid	<p>On _Eid_ , the three days of celebration after the holy month of Ramadan, Kabulis dressed in their best and newest clothes and visited their families. People hugged and kissed and greeted each other with" _ Eid Mubarak_ ." Happy Eid. Children opened gifts and played with dyed hard-boiled eggs.</p>	35
Yelda	<p>In Afghanistan, _ yelda_ is the first night of the month of _Jadi_ , the first night of winter and the longest night of</p>	119

	the year	
Zakat	Give the money to someone in need	157
the Sawl-e-Nau-	The first day of spring, had been the Afghan New Year's Day--the Sawl-e-Nau—and Afghans in the Bay Area had planned celebrations throughout the East Bay and the peninsula.	321

### 2.2.1.3. Religion

Islam is an important part of *The Kite Runner*, with Baba, Amir, Hassan, and Assef all practicing it in different ways.

*The Kite Runner* is a novel that explores the spiritual values and morality of the protagonist, Baba. Baba's view of a sin is that the only sin is theft and every other significant sin is a variation of theft. "Good," Baba said, but his eyes wondered. "Now, no matter what the mullah teaches, there is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft. Do you understand that?" (Hosseini, 2003, p.13). Baba's attitude towards drinking was that it was a sin and those who did drink did so in private out of regard. Amir's dad did not like the devout religious clerics who enforce their rigorous religious views on others in Afghanistan, so Baba only did kindness in order to relieve his guilt. After his marriage and his father's death, religious beliefs are still a part of Amir's life, but only practiced in a completely private way. When Amir is required to deal with his "sins" of his past, he realises how not having religious beliefs in his life has not allowed him to move on completely from his past.

Then I remember I haven't prayed for over fifteen years. I have long forgotten the words. But it doesn't matter, I will utter those few words I still remember: ?? La iflaha ii\*\* Allah, Muhammad u rasul ullah. There is no God but Allah and Muhammad[peace be upon him] is His messenger. I see now that Baba was wrong ,there is a God, there always had been. I see Him here, in the eyes of the people in this corridor of desperation. This is the real house of God, this is where those who have lost God will find Him, not the white masjid with its bright diamond lights and towering minarets. There is a God, there has to be, and now I will pray, I will pray that He forgive that I have neglected Him all of these years, forgive that I have betrayed, lied, and sinned with impunity only to turn to Him now in my hour of need, I pray that He is as merciful, benevolent, and gracious as His book says He is. I bow to the west and kiss the ground and promise that I will do \_zakat\_, I will do namaz\_, I will fast during Ramadan and when Ramadan has passed I will go on fasting, I will commit to memory every last word of His holy book, and I will set on a pilgrimage to that sweltering city in the desert and bow before the Ka'bah too. (Hossieni, 2003, p. 307)

Also he added that : "I prayed morning \_namaz\_ while Soraya slept--I didn't have to consult the prayer pamphlet I had obtained from the mosque anymore; the verses came naturally now, effortlessly." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 322)

## **2.2.2. Discrimination**

### **2.2.2.1. Ethnic discrimination**

The main reason that makes injustice and inequality among people is the fact that some believe that they are superior to others. This belief leads to ethnic discrimination in multiethnic societies as in Afghanistan where the Pashtuns (the dominating ethnic group) mistreat, kill, oppress and exclude the Hazara (the diminished ethnic group) from many social rights. In *The Kite Runner*,

Hosseini highlights the ethnic discrimination that the Hazara ethnic group suffer from which is apparant in many situations. When Amir asks an old merchant about Hassan ' the Hazara servant ' the old man replied, " His father should get on his knees, sweep the dust at your feet with his eyelashes " ( Hosseini, 2003, p. 58), in this quote the novelist pictures how the Pashtuns believe that the Hazaras should not be treated as humans, and if a Pashtun master treats them kindly, they have to refund it. The Hazaras are described as " People called Hazaras \_mice-eating, flat-nosed, load-carrying donkeys\_ " ( Hosseini, 2003, p. 7). The Hazaras's children in the novel do not have the right to study nor their parents had before. They can only work as servants. In the novel, Baba treats Hassan well because he is his child and never missed one of his birthdays (p. 36), yet he could not offer educational right to him unlike his legitimate child Amir who used to read for Hassan stories, but at the same time he mocked him sometimes because of the fact that he is illiterate, and although Amir has found a book that talks about how Hazara are mistreated by Pashtuns (p.7), he also mistreats Hassan by his own way: he pushes him to eat dirt and to call him Agha. Furthermore, he accused him of stealing. Amir as a Pashtun believes that the Hazaras are not equal to them too. The Hazara also suffer from sexual abuse as a way of discrimination. This is portrayed when Hassan was raped by Assef and his two friends in chapter seven:

Assef knelt behind Hassan, 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. He moved his head slightly and I caught a glimpse of his face. Saw the resignation in it. It was a look I had seen before. It was the look of the lamb. (Hosseini,2003, p. 64)

At a young age, Assef mistreats and oppresses the Hazaras. This feelings of hatred grow up with him to make him become a member of a Taliban and his mission is to purify Afghanistan from the Hazara as he refers to as 'garbage' by killing them "Afghanistan is like a

beautiful mansion littered with garbage, and someone has to take out the garbage." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 244)

#### **2.2.2.2. Racial Discrimination**

People may believe that the racial and ethnic discriminations are the same, but in fact, they are not. Racial discrimination occurs when the act of discrimination is based on biological differences and the ethnic discrimination is based on the culture realms

Khaled Hosseini's novel describes the Hazara people as being descended from the Mongols and being mocked by Pashtuns due to their similarities to Chinese people. Hassan and Ali encountered this multiple times when going outside, since it is stated plainly in the novel: "They called him [Ali] "flat-nosed" because of Ali and Hassan's characteristic Hazara Mongoloid features. For years, that was all I knew about the Hazaras, that they were Mogul descendants, and that they looked a little like Chinese people." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 23)

Hassan has a round face that resembles that of a Chinese person. He has a wide nose, slanting, narrow eyes that resemble bamboo leaves, tiny low-set ears, and eyes that can appear gold, green, or even sapphire depending on the light. His traits are ancestors of the Mogul. The Hazara are believed to share a number of similarities with the Mongols, including family systems, physical characteristics, and language. In addition, the word "Hazara" combines Persian and Mongol words. In addition, the Hazaras have traits that are wholly negative, such as being low socially, destitute, and of low class; having physical flaws like Ali's leg polio and Hassan's harelip; and only working in low-paying jobs like waitress, beggar, and servant (like Ali and Hassan as servant).

#### **2.2.2.3. Religious Discrimination**

Hazara are the majority of Shi'a Muslims in Afghanistan. Conflicts over territory and politics have occurred in the past between the Hazaras and other Afghan ethnic groups. However, rather

than their ethnicity, their religious allegiance to Shi'a is what is most responsible for their persecution.

The Hazaras are thought to be infidels since they practice the Shi'a Islam. They perform different acts and worship in other locations than the Afghan Sunnis. For instance, the Hazara people beat themselves in remembrance of Imam Hussein's sacrifice incident. The Sunni sect is against this practice, which the Taliban authority outlawed.

Hosseini describes this violent assault on the Hazaras, in his book when Assef goes into the specifics details of Mazar shariif massacre to annoy Amir. He describes how killing the Hazara villagers gave him enormous joy and how they fled their abandoned lifeless bodies had been lying around on the streets of Mazar for days. Amir explains Assef's hostile remarks and gesticulations include the following:

He [Assef] stood up, paced around the sofa once, twice. Sat down again. He spoke rapidly. "Door to door we went calling for the men and the boys. We'd shoot them right there in front of their families. Let them see. Let them remember who they were, where they belonged". He was almost panting now. "Sometimes, we broke down their doors and went inside their homes. And...I'd...sweep the barrel of my machine gun around the room and fire and fire until the smoke blinded me". (Hosseini, 2003, p. 237)

Another Talib added:

"Door-to-door. We only rested for food and prayer, " the Talib said. He said it fondly, like a man telling of a great party he'd attended. "We left the bodies in the streets, and if their families tried to sneak out to drag them back into their homes, we'd shoot them too. We left them in the streets for days. We left them for the dogs. Dog meat for dogs."( Hosseini, 2003, p. 237)

Assef harbors unwarranted animosity for the Hazaras that stems from the past. Assef joins the Taliban, who are predominately Pashtuns, in an effort to expel them all from the area of Afghanistan. He murders a lot of Hazaras in Hazarajat, where the Hazaras live. For him it is not sinful to kill Hazaras because they are not true Muslims when he says " 'Hazaras are not Muslim. You can kill them. It is not a sin " ( Hosseini, 2003, p . 237).

### **2.2.3. Family**

#### **2.2.3.1. Father and Son Relationships**

*The Kite Runner* explores the relationship between sons and their father figures. The two main father-son relationships are between Amir, Hassan and Baba, Hassan and Sohrab, and many of the significant events in the novel revolve around the influence of their father figures. This includes the incident in the alley and the personality and nature of Amir and Hassan.

Baba is an important role model for his son Amir, but he does not understand why Amir is not like him. He speaks to Rahim Khan, his best friend and business partner, about his confusion with Amir and why his interests are not similar to his own: "He's always buried in those books or shuffling around the house like he's lost in some dream...I wasn't like that.' Baba sounded frustrated, almost angry" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 16). Baba wants a son to carry on his name, his machismo, and his company, but he will not even take the time to build a relationship with him. As a result, he is truly upset that his kid is not a mirror of himself. He feels that there is no real connection between the two of them other than Amir coming out of Baba's wife. If he had not seen the doctor pull him out of his wife, he would not believe he was his son, in one side. In the other side, Amir fights to win over his father for affection throughout the novel. Amir's early years are very tough on him because he lost his mother during his own birth, blames himself for his mother's death, He feels this sin is the reason behind the confusion between him and Baba.

He decides that the only way to win his father love when he wins the kite in the kite fighting tournament. The relationship between Hassan and his son Sohrab demonstrates the need for an empathetic father, as it illustrates the life a father-son relationship can develop. The relationship between Hassan and his son Sohrab is in stark contrast to that of Amir and Baba, and their family serves as a contrast to Amir's relationship. Hassan listens to his son, plays with him, enjoys spending time with him and really understands him. He considers his son's feelings. While Sohrab has a connection with his father and spends his childhood happily with Hassan, Amir spends his childhood getting his father's attention and being proud of him. Amir devotes his childhood to futile attempts to bond with his father, while Sohrab's bond is nurtured by both his father and himself. While Sohrab enjoys his father's love and continues to go through his life as a good boy who believes in what is right, Amir always fights for his father's love but fails, resulting in a very bad life with great consequences. lead him to malicious deeds. As for their parentage, Hassan is Baba's antagonist and Sohrab is Amir's. Both Hassan and Baba are proud, strong men who work for good and justice in the world. *The kite Runner* is a coming-of-age story that teaches the reader about many themes. It reveals the complexity of the father-son relationship, how redemption is the only way to truly atone for one's wrongdoings, and how the past can never be buried. It also demonstrates that making the right decision is better than making the easy one.

#### **2.2.3.2. Honour**

Honour in Afghan culture is defined as the reputation and worth of a person and the people they are associated with. It is derived from behavior such as protection of women, dress code, social interaction, and education. If one's honor is questioned, they feel shamed and seek revenge for themselves and their group and family. Hosseini represents these concepts in his first novel as a part of their culture.

*The Kite Runner* explores how honour is tested when characters are placed in conflictive situations. Baba, Amir's father, is honorable and willing to take a bullet for a stranger. "Tell him I'll take a thousand of his bullets before I let this indecency take place," Baba said (Hosseini ,2003, p. 97). However, Amir acts dishonorably and displays a lack of integrity by not intervening when Hassan is raped. This shows that Amir's level of honor is not as selfless as Baba's.

## **2.2.4. Traditions**

### **2.2.4.1. Traditional Games**

*The Kite Runner* is an eye- opener on the traditions and customs in Afghanistan. Khaled Hosseini titles the novel with the name of the fighter of one of the most famous traditional games in his homeland the kite fighting and gives the details about this game when, where, how they play it : "kite fighting tournament was an old winter tradition in Afghanistan. It started early in the morning on the day of the contest and didn't end until only the winning kite flew in the sky" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 41).

The novel follows by the role of the kite fighter as shows in this corpus, chapter six

For kite runners, the most coveted prize was the last fallen kite of a winter tournament. It was a trophy of honor, something to be displayed on a mantle for guests to admire. When the sky cleared of kites and only the final two remained, every kite runner readied himself for the chance to land this prize. He positioned himself at a spot that he thought would give him a head start. Tense muscles readied themselves to uncoil. Necks craned. Eyes crinkled. Fights broke out. And when the last kite was cut, all hell broke loose." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 42)

*The Kite Runner* is portrayed as a form of religious expression and a way of displaying the culture of Afghanistan. When the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, they forbade the flying of

kites, stripping away a cultural identity that Afghans had. Similar to Amir and Hassan's friendship, kites have a long history in Afghanistan. When Amir returned to Afghanistan, he was able to successfully rescue Hassan's child and teach him how to fly kites.

In addition to kite fighting game, Amir talked about the Buzkashi game which is another traditional game in Afghanistan in page 18

Buzkashi is a national sport in Afghanistan that is similar to polo and played by the horsemen into two teams, each trying to grab and hold of a goat carcass. It takes place on the first day of spring, New Year's Day. In this moment, Baba ever took Amir to watch *Buzkashi* from the upper bleacher. "Buzkashi was, and still is, Afghanistan's national passion. (Hosseini, 2003, p. 18)

Moreover, when they were kids, they would frequently engage in traditional Afghan pastimes like sprinting through Baba's yard's maze of trees while playing hide-and-seek, cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians, torturing insects, and flying and running kites. They played panjpar while seated beneath the kursi before the kite competition while the wind shook the tree branches outside and pounded on the glass.

#### **2.2.4.2. Clothing**

The cultural contextual issues presented in *The Kite Runner* include the significance of clothing, where the novelist describes their traditional clothes in different cases and events .

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini mentioned traditional clothes called Pirhan-tumban and chapan in many cases to show their culture through describing what Afghanistan people wear and how much he cherishes with his country and culture. Men in Afghanistan typically wear long dresses that reach their knees and baggy pants known as "Perahan Tunban" or "Kamiz Shalwar." A long-sleeved, calf-length Chapan is also worn by men. This long coat often comes

in striped versions and is made of silk, green, black, and other colors, etc. Only powerful or wealthy people can afford to wear a well-made Chapan, which is typically worn over the Perahan Tunban, whereas women were required to wear long dresses with trouser bottoms and a Burqa (Chadari) on top to cover them from the head to the ankle during the Taliban era. The burqa's rear length is to the ankle, while the front length is to the knee. ("Afghanistan clothing", nd).

### **2.2.5. Friendship**

The Kite Runner explores the concept of friendship between different social classes and castes, particularly between Baba and Amir as Pashtun and Ali and Hassan as Hazara. Baba's father's adoption of Ali meant they grew up together, and Amir and Hassan shared their childhoods in the same house: "Hassan and I [Amir] fed from the same breasts. We took our First steps on the same lawn in the same yard. And, under the same roof, we spoke our first words. Mine was Baba. His was Amir. My name" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 8). Amir constantly reflects on the question of friendship, noting that Baba never refers to Ali as his friend, and that he never thought of Hassan as his friend either as mentioned in the novel; "Ali and Baba grew up together as childhood playmates... But in none of his stories did Baba ever refer to Ali as his friend. The curious thing was, I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either" (Hosseini, 2003, p.19).

Additionally, when questioned by Assef about his friendship with a Hazara, Amir admits that he is not his friend, but a servant. The following quote highlights the idea: "But he's not my friend! I almost blurted. He's my servant!" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 33 )

In the contrary, Hassan regards Amir as his friend and shows it by his unfailing loyalty. Amir is bothered by Hassan's loyalty and self-denial on his behalf. Assef's remarks before he assaults him show Hassan's loyalty. The retrieved kite symbolises the strength of Hassan's loyalty, in contrast to the cowardice and disloyalty that Amir is about to show. Hassan never ceases to regard Amir as his friend, as his letter confirms.

## 2.2.6. Loyalty

A key topic regarding loyalty is presented in Khaled Hosseini's book *The Kite Runner*. The author demonstrates to us throughout the narrative how being devoted to one's family and friends is a virtue. First of all, Hassan demonstrates his honorability by demonstrating that he is devoted to Amir. For instance, chapter six shows an early example of Hassan's loyalty when he stops Assef from punching Amir by aiming his slingshot in his direction. This is a powerful illustration because Hassan insults and threatens his safety in order to protect Amir, and Assef later targets Hassan as a result. When Hassan runs Amir's kite for him later on the kite fighting tournament and exclaims, "For you a thousand times over," (Hosseini, 2003, p. 55 ) he is expressing how faithful he has been to Amir no matter how poorly he has treated him. On page 90, Hassan commits one of his greatest acts of loyalty when he chooses not to tell Baba that Amir had falsely accused him of stealing the watch and money. Hassan is seen by Amir as "pleading [Ali] not to give him [Amir] away"(Hosseini, 2003 p. 90). These instances throughout the book demonstrate how solid and constant Hassan's loyalty is. When Amir resolves to go save Hassan's son in a highly dangerous country, he demonstrates his loyalty to Hassan as well. He demonstrates that he will do whatever to prove that he is truly devoted to Hassan after betraying him all those years ago by carrying out the assignment even though he is aware of how risky it is. Additionally, by telling Soraya everything, he demonstrates his loyalty to her " Then I did what I hadn't done in fifteen years of marriage: I told my wife everything. Everything. I had dreaded this particular moment and had often visualized it, yet as I spoke, I felt something leave my chest " (Hosseini, 2003, p. 284).

He is willing to tell her anything. Additionally, he demonstrates his loyalty to Sohrab by flying the kite for him at the end of the novel. He shouts, "For you a thousand times over,"(Hosseini, 2003, p. 328) as he races to grab it. Through these actions, Amir demonstrates his loyalty, and one can infer his loyalty from the way he changed and how he displayed his loyalty.

### 2.2.7. Betrayal

Amir betrayed his best friend Hassan and later in his life he tries to seek redemption for his past actions. Later, he returns to Afghanistan to redeem himself, but he has not achieved full redemption. Amir cannot fully redeem himself as he watches his best friend Hassan rape and does nothing. Amir lets Assef rob Hassan of his childhood and innocence, and that's something that isn't easily redeemed. At the beginning of the book the novelist introduces Rahim Khan, a close friend of Baba, who calls out to Amir and says, "There is a way to be good again" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 2). Amir wants to seek the redemption that has haunted him for years, but to attempt redemption, he must first return to his war-torn homeland. Amir had been afraid to go back to Kabul, but he is told that he must save Sohrab, Hassan's son, who has been placed in an orphanage after his father and wife Farzana were shot. In an effort to atone for what happened to Hassan, Amir chooses to go back to Afghanistan and try to rescue his nephew from the orphanage. The story's minor incidents add up to Amir's betrayal. He was raised by a rich father and felt that he did not receive much affection. Amir feels envious of Hassan when Baba gives him a kite since Hassan is receiving a father's affection.. Amir finds that the way to win his father's love is to get rid of Hassan. Amir thought that if he brought the kite to his father, he would have a father's love. Amir thought that doing nothing when Hassan was raped was the price he had to pay to bring the dragon back. Within the main betrayal of the story, there are more betrayals by other characters. Baba's failure to tell Amir that Hassan is his half-brother cost most of the novel's trouble. Amir spent most of his childhood trying to get Hassan into trouble and sent him away. Rahim Khan tells Baba, "Children are not coloring books. You cannot fill them with your favorite colors." (Hosseini, 2003,p. 21). Baba tries to make Amir a man who can stand up for himself and others. Because of this, Amir was afraid to tell Baba that Hassan was raped and he just watched. If Baba had told Amir about Hassan being his half-brother, Amir might have stood up for his brother instead of trying to get rid of him to get all of Baba's attention and love. Even though Amir went to save Hassan's son, it didn't redeem him. The fact

that Amir lied to Hassan that nothing happened when he pushed him away ruined Hassan's life.

As Baba said:

When you kill a man, you steal a life. You steal his wife's right to a husband, you rob his children of a father. When you lie, you steal someone's right to the truth.

When you cheat, you steal honesty. See? (Hosseini, 2003,p. 18).

Baba was a bit hypocritical with that statement because he himself deprived the child of a brother and a better life. Amir also kept the secret to himself and never told Hassan the truth. Since Amir never confronted Hassan, he could never redeem himself. The fact that Hassan died before Amir could reconnect with him prevented Amir from the redemption he sought. Amir did good deeds to become a good man again. Saving Sohrab made Amir feel better about himself and tried to accept the fact that he made mistakes in the past because he was a coward.

### **2.2.8. Redemption**

Amir, the protagonist of *The Kite Runner*, is no stranger to making errors. All of Amir's life, he has been working toward redemption.

Amir was constantly learning new things about himself that he would have to atone for, whether it was him speaking the wrong things or lying. It all began when Amir was a young child and he believed that his father did not love him the same way since he was to blame for the loss of his mother. Because Amir views Baba as a superior being to whom he could never measure up, he is constantly looking for methods fences with him. For instance, Amir competes in the well-known kite competition that is held every year in Afghanistan with the goal of winning his father's approval and love. Even if Amir takes first place, something went wrong that will haunt him always. Amir won the contest thanks to his close buddy Hassan ,who also was his servant and a neighbour since he was a baby. Amir's winning kite was an alley where three other bigger lads were also looking for it when Hassan ran after it. Hassan resisted giving it to them and continued to be faithful to Amir as he had been from the moment they first met. The

older boys, led by a mean, nasty guy Assef, would not give up and eventually raped Hassan for defying him and keeping the kite. The saddest aspect of this is that Amir was immobilized at the site and witnessed everything that happened. By refusing to intervene and making no attempt to save Hassan, Amir stabbed him in the back.

As a result, Amir struggles to live a quiet life because of his persistent guilt. He knows in his heart that he should have taken action and regrets his decision to do nothing. As he matures, Amir's sense of remorse and his pressing need for atonement remain constants in his life. When Hassan is raped, Amir makes the decision to be a coward. Amir already feels guilty and resentful a few days later, and you can hear the emotion in his narration.

Amir can solve his problem by departing for Afghanistan. He departs for Afghanistan while the situation is dangerous because many foreign countries and militants enter to Afghanistan. He wants to bring a son of Hassan in the orphanage in Afghanistan. His return to Afghanistan which the dangerous condition shows that Amir has internal conflict deeply, so, he wants to sacrifice himself to escape from his problems.

### **2.2.9. Migration**

*The Kite Runner* powerfully illustrates how trying to leave one's native country is the first sign that one's journey as an immigrant will be tough. Baba and Amir are two of many Afghans who make an effort to flee while it is still dark, uncertain of their future route, and taking calculated risks. Of course, some immigrants pass away even before they get to their new places. The immigrants must contend with how those who stayed behind view them, in addition to the challenges of living in a new country. When Amir returns to Afghanistan, he understands this. Finally, retaining traditions and some aspects of your own culture is important while adjusting to a new nation. This goes beyond simply learning the language. Baba loses his position but keeps his beliefs about the old world, highlighting the delicate balance between the old and new.

Soraya and her mother also show what a challenge it is for women to strike a balance between the standards of an antiquated society and the realities of the modern world.

Immigration in *The Kite Runner* is an issue that immigrants must face when they move to a new foreign country. One of the biggest challenges is language barriers, which can be difficult and stressful. Baba found himself in a dispute with an elderly Vietnamese couple. Baba has had difficulty adjusting to life in the U.S. One day, in a convenience store he often shops at, he overturns a magazine rack because the manager asks for ID when Baba tries to pay with a check. Amir, who fluently spoke English, comes to interpret for his father to resolve the issue. Immigrants feel overwhelmed and frustrated at their own inability to hold a conversation with someone else. However, those immigrants who move to a new country to make up a better life for their family are not offered many forms of social assistance, and must pay up front for health care bills and food. Social and cultural barriers are also a challenge for foreigners, as they must adapt to changes to show consideration of the customs and religious beliefs of others. Baba and Amir had to wait for their visa and begin interacting with both other Afghans and Americans to meet their basic needs. This allowed them to successfully immerse themselves in their new lives, while still retaining their own culture. This can lead them to eventually getting well-paying.

Khaled Hosseini's literary masterpiece, *The Kite Runner*, is an eloquent depiction of the cultural issues prevalent in Afghanistan. Through the protagonist, Amir's journey of migration and his struggles, Hosseini has skillfully integrated themes of friendship, loyalty, betrayal, and redemption. The author's portrayal of characters such as Baba, Hassan, and Assef, have added depth and authenticity to the story. Hosseini's astute portrayal of the discrimination faced by the Hazaras through the character of Hassan and his father is a powerful commentary on the social divide in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the author has successfully depicted some aspects of Afghanistan's tradition, such as its cultural identity, traditional games, and clothes. Hosseini's

literary prowess is evident in the way he has interwoven these themes into the narrative, making *The Kite Runner* a timeless literary masterpiece that is sure to leave a lasting impression on its readers.

### **Conclusion**

The research conducted on Khaled Hosseini's novel, *The Kite Runner*, sheds light on the main cultural issues portrayed in the book. The results highlight the discrimination faced by the Hazara ethnic group by the Pashtuns, which is a prevalent issue in Afghanistan. The discrimination based on ethnicity, race, and religion is an unfortunate reality for many minorities in the country. Additionally, the novel touches upon various identity-related issues such as cultural identity, language, and religion, which are given significant importance.

Hosseini, in his masterpiece, vividly depicts the cultural aspects of the Afghan people and their traditions, such as their games and clothing. Furthermore, the characters Amir (Pashtun) and Hassan (Hazara) are used to portray the issues of friendship, family, and loyalty. The ups and downs of their relationship provide a powerful insight into the complexities of friendship in the context of cultural differences.

It is noteworthy that Hosseini does not forget to address the topic of immigration in his book. This factor has a significant impact on the lives of the characters and is woven into the storyline seamlessly. The literary genius of Hosseini has enabled him to handle these sensitive topics with utmost sensitivity and cultural understanding. Overall, the research findings reaffirm the immense value of *The Kite Runner* in highlighting significant cultural issues and providing crucial commentary on the country's social fabric.

## General Conclusion

Refugee literature and culture have gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in academia, where scholars have explored the various aspects of the refugee experience through literature and cultural expressions. The cultural aspect of refugee literature not only highlights the refugees' migration journey but also opens up discussions about identity and belonging. Through their writings, refugee writers often grapple with questions about their cultural heritage, and how it fits into their new environment. In addition, refugee writers and their literature can also serve as powerful tools for promoting cross-cultural understanding and dialogue. By sharing their stories and perspectives, refugees can help to break down cultural barriers and foster greater empathy and understanding between different communities. This is particularly important in today's increasingly globalized world, where cultural differences can often be a source of tension and conflict. Khaled Hosseini's novel, *The Kite Runner*, is a significant example of refugee literature that sheds light on cultural issues in Afghanistan. This dissertation aims to examine the cultural nuances depicted in the novel, providing a comprehensive insight into its intricate themes. Hosseini's work is an essential tool used by refugee writers to express their cultural background.

The novel explores the complexities of cultural identity through the protagonist Amir's struggles to reconcile his Afghan heritage with his life in the United States. The depiction of the cultural differences between Afghanistan and the United States is vivid and nuanced. Through Amir's eyes, one can see the beauty of Afghanistan's culture, as well as its flaws and challenges. Hosseini's portrayal of the cultural issues faced by refugees is both poignant and powerful. The novel provides a window into the lives of those who have been forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in unfamiliar lands. Through his writing, Hossieni highlights the importance of cultural understanding and acceptance .Overall, Khaled Hossieni's *The Kite*

*Runner* is a remarkable work of refugee literature that sheds light on the cultural issues faced by refugees. The author's personal experience as a refugee from Afghanistan lends authenticity and depth to the narrative, and his exploration of cultural identity is both thought-provoking and moving.

The study seeks to analyze the novel's portrayal of the cultural complexities of being a refugee, the dynamics of cultural identity, and the ways in which cultural traditions shape personal and collective experiences. The nature of the research is qualitative, and as such, a descriptive-analytical type of investigation has been undertaken. The study is based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature, which entails the collection and meticulous analysis of data. It is pertinent to mention that secondary data has been employed in this research, which has been sourced from the extensive literature review conducted.

The research findings indicate that the primary cultural concern depicted in the novel is the discriminatory treatment of the Hazara ethnic group by the Pashtuns. The author sheds light on the prevalent ethnic, racial, and religious biases toward this minority group. Additionally, identity-related issues such as cultural identity, language, and religion are underscored. Hosseini portrays these cultural aspects of Afghan people along with traditional Afghan practices such as their attire and games like kite fighting and buzkashi. The characters of Amir and Hassan, representing the Pashtun and Hazara ethnic groups, respectively, explore themes of friendship, loyalty, betrayal, and redemption, which overlap to shape their identities. Hosseini also vividly portrays the experiences of migration, which he himself has undergone due to wars. The journey of Amir and his father to America is a testament to this aspect.

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## ملخص

أدب اللاجئين هو مجال أساسي للدراسة يقدم نظرة ثاقبة على حياة أولئك الذين أُجبروا على الفرار من بلدهم الأصلي بسبب الاضطهاد أو الحرب. من بين الأعمال الأكثر شهرة في أدب اللاجئين ، رواية خالد حسيني عذّاء الطّائرة الورقية ، وهو عمل إبداعي نال ثناء النقاد وتمت قراءته على نطاق واسع في جميع أنحاء العالم. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على القضايا الثقافية المعروضة في الرواية ، وتقديم تحليل منهجي وشامل لها. تسعى الدراسة إلى سد الفجوة بين التصورات الغربية للثقافة الأفغانية والواقع الممثل في الرواية ، وذلك من خلال نهج نوعي يستخدم تقنيات التحقيق الوصفي والتحليلي. من أجل تحقيق ذلك ، يتم إجراء مراجعة شاملة للأدبيات ، والتي تعمل كأساس لنتائج الدراسة التي تشمل مجموعة من القضايا الثقافية المعقدة ، بما في ذلك على سبيل المثال الهوية ، والتميز ، والأسرة ، والتقاليد ، والصدقة ، والولاء ، والخيانة ، سداد الدين و الهجرة.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** القضايا الثقافية ، خالد حسيني ، أدب اللاجئين ، عذّاء الطّائرة الورقية