

Human Relations in “The Kite Runner” by Khaled Hosseini

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Abstract - This article gives information about the writing method of Afghan-born American writer Khaled Hosseini, moreover, discusses the human relations and their importance in the society through his novel “The Kite Runner”. The reasonable contrast between two Afghan ethnic groups Hazara and Pashtun stands alone in the work and this phenomenon can demonstrate the country’s forever customs and traditions. Hosseini as a representative of his nation’s culture and history can fulfill his task successfully considering the acceptable consumption of real, factual, historical and fictional information. The relationship among a reader, the writer and the main characters makes invisible imaginary triangulation while accepting inborn humanistic qualities one asks himself/herself the same question “Who is guilty?” for the fate of the poor country Afghanistan. The writer’s talent lies on his clear cognition that the children who do not possess childhood, the women who cannot feel feminine, the men who never sleeps in peace and the country where a heap of ruins spread, all these unfortunate continuous pictures, are in a hurry and do not know how to stop, where to stop and when to stop. The major theme of the novel is the celebration of humanism/human relations in the bombing country. Hosseini through his main personages Amir, Hassan and Baba can point out that Afghan people are heroes in their blood, and it is shame to blame them for the actions happening in their land.

Keywords - Human Relations, Generation Friendship, Diaspora Literature, Bildungsroman, Künstlerroman, Eclecticism.

The history never forgets the tragic events of September 11, 2001 that destroyed the pure understanding of Islamic belief and famed the notion of terrorism. Since then readers from all over the world search for information related to Islam, terrorism and conflicts in the Middle East. Afghanistan and its population are wrongly accused for the accidents causing bombs by terrorists or other authorities in any part of the world. These innocent guilty people are still paying for the destructive actions happening with their awful conditions and terrified destiny. In reality the inhabitants of this poor country want the peace land and the blue sky more than others do. After the publications of several documentaries on the Taliban, Osama Bin Laden and women's rights in the region, Afghan-born American author Khaled Hosseini stepped onto the fictional world and in 2003 published his first novel “The Kite Runner” in which the writer managed to depict the real life of his people. After the breakthrough of the book among readers, Hosseini created the next two successful fictions “A

Thousand Splendid Suns” and “And the Mountains Echoed” referring to Afghan culture, traditions and manners. All three novels have celebrated the true human relations observing the society from different angles and the author’s major assistant in fulfilling this honorable task to represent the tales he heard and events he witnessed.

Khaled Hosseini was born in 1965 in Kabul and his parents were educated people, his mother taught Farsi and history at a girls’ high school and his father was a diplomat for Afghanistan’s Foreign Ministry. The family moved to Tehran and Paris where father Hosseini conducted his mission. In 1980 they left Paris for a new beginning in San Jose, California, being aware that they might never return to their motherland Afghanistan. In San Jose Khaled Hosseini earned a degree in biology from Santa Clara College, and then continued his education in studying medicine at the University of California, San Diego. Khaled Hosseini practiced medicine for over ten years until a year and a half after the release of “The Kite Runner” he quit this field and

became a full-time writer. He told Tamara Jones of the "Washington Post" that *medicine was like an arranged marriage he grew fond of; writing was the grand romance between high school sweethearts*[1; p.2]. Hosseini's novels have been translated into more than 40 languages of the world and warmly accepted by different nations' readers.

Diaspora literature plays a significant role in Khaled Hosseini's literary career and the writer consciously applies the functions of this type of fiction in his three novels. As is cited *diaspora literature involves an idea of a homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions. Basically diaspora is a minority community living in exile*[3]. Hosseini's personal and literary responsibility is telling others about Afghanistan's culture, traditions, people and what the most deliberated is the truth about his nation and country.

It is better to give the rank of "bildungsroman" and "künstlerroman" to Khaled Hosseini's novels. *The "bildungsroman" is often accepted as the novel of formation, the novel of education or the apprenticeship novel. It shows the development of the protagonist's mind and character through a number of stages and a variety of experiences, often from childhood to early adulthood. He or she encounters conflicts and challenges, often including a spiritual crisis, which enable the protagonist to achieve a mature identity and eventually play his or her proper role in the world. The "künstlerroman", called as the artist novel, is an important subtype of the "bildungsroman". It represents the growth of a writer or other artist into a condition of maturity that is marked by recognition of art as the protagonist's calling and by a mastery of an artistic craft.* [4] In terms of the "künstlerroman", Hosseini mastered his writing skills and considering "bildungsroman", he could evaluate the personality of his protagonist character Amir – they are the intermingled fictional features which compile each other in a parallel way.

In the society people need each other more than any kind of materialism, earning money and working thoroughly never replace the importance and the necessity of kith and kin. Khaled Hosseini's works can demonstrate the need for true human relations and prove the reality of our natural contacts. The author's novels can be interpreted and analyzed in terms of various literary aspects such as children and childhood, women and womanhood, diaspora, war and peace, transformation, historical, ethnic, autobiographical, domestic features of the novels and more. However, in this

research, it is intended to study human relations in Hosseini's "The Kite Runner".

The writer dedicated his "The Kite Runner" to celebrate the friendship whereas this friendship never pays attention to race, status, age, religion and interests. It reminds the friendship of different generations such as the relationship between Baba and Hassan, Amir and Hassan, Amir and Sukhrab. Reading the novel, one thing, how Baba (in Dari means "father") – a strong and wealthy man can be too kind to the son of his servant, makes the reader think only about it and portrays "true humanism" until the secrets are released (Baba is Hassan's biological father, Hassan and Amir are brothers). Baba and Hassan are two different people in age, religion and status; however these dimensions cannot be obstacles to their mutual understanding. There is a great difference between them – Baba hates religion, whilst Hassan is very religious, Baba belongs to an honorable ethnic group Pashtun, whereas Hassan is related to the lowest rank of their society Hazara.

The mentioned drawbacks even strengthen the feelings of being close and Baba is proud of Hassan for his male power, talent and even wants him to be his announced son more than Amir. Baba is a successful and prosperous businessman and famous for his charity actions. What is very important in the novel, that he builds an orphanage, demonstrates himself being too kind to the orphan children. However, as for his two sons, their fate is different – one is suffering from his lack of attention and the next one torturing from the society being Hazara, a minority of the numerous Afghan ethnic groups. Baba struggles with his personality through the novel, he tries to do whatever seems to be right to forget and redeem his forever guilt and for his good deed he stays as positive as possible in the perception of the readers.

Baba's friendship towards Hassan transforms into parental duty, he absolutely feels his responsibility and never forgets his illegitimate son's birthday. He has made attentive presents list and tried to make the boy happy with a Japanese toy truck, an electric locomotive and train set, a leather cowboy and the last present summoning a plastic surgeon Dr. Kumar to operate Hassan's cleft lip, fortunately he was operated on successfully. Amir remembers that the nice smile on Hassan's face disappeared and it was the last winter he stopped smiling. Maybe, it is the reason of "Rubble and Beggars" [2; p245] country Afghanistan and untrustworthily abandoning his closest people.

Having positive relationships between Pashtuns and Hazaras was an incredible revolution of the twentieth

century in Afghanistan history. Baba can be called a rebellious character of the novel who fights against the stereotypes of the society. Amir is not warmly accepted according to this humanistic measure, since social condition brings him up as "a superior member" or "an aristocratic person". Amir recalls Hitler –admiring boy and future Taliban Assef and his bully friends criticize him being a friend to Hazara and how he can call Hassan his friend. Probably, getting afraid Amir answers "*But he's not my friend! ... He's my servant!*" [2; p.41]. Although Amir claims that he only plays with Hassan when no one else is around, he does not mention any other friends.

Amir and Hassan can't overcome the problems of national manner and they are the victims of this uncared burden. The rest of his life, Amir comprehends his entire fault in organizing and blaming Hassan for robbing his birthday present watch and money. It is a very depressed task to breathe in the air which is full of Hassan's loyalty.

In the kite flying tournament, Amir can win with the help of Hassan who is the master of being a kite runner. Hassan realizes or feels the exact place of a kite dropping and he never makes a mistake in the orientation. Baba is eager to seeing his son's power as a male being active in physical sports. Amir won in this competition, though poor Hassan was raped by Assef on the way holding a piece of decorated paper – "victoriouskite" for not giving him and adoring, keeping for Amir. Amir was an eyewitness; he never could be brave and loyal as Hassan, instead he ran away. Baba is so proud of his son and boosted him in front of the guests. For the sake of his loyalty Hassan was praised putting the label a robber by Amir. Miserable Hassan never denies Amir's wish and is ready even "*eating dirt*" for him [2; p.154] and repeats by heart "*for you a thousand times over*" [2; pp.2, 67,194,239,305,371].

"Kite", as stated in the title, is the major symbol of the novel and represents the different characteristics. The only object defines "true friendship", "stable relationship between father and son", "dreamed victory", "unlimited pride", "happy children and childhood", "independent country", "peace blue sky", "regained life", "torturing memories", "pure virginity" and more. The author skillfully consumes this symbol in his novel, reading or thinking about it each time, the list of the readers to the attributes of the "kite" in "The Kite Runner" is refreshed and the new approaches appeared in the readers' cognition. One more traditional and cultural fact is that "kite fighting" is/was obviously a significant custom in the history of Afghanistan.

In the novel and in the Afghan traditions a kite fighting sport is defined as following: the traditional Afghan sport of kite fighting or "*gudiparanbazi*" was prohibited in the country under the Taliban. Usually there is a kite flyer (Amir) and his assistant who holds the drum with the wire (Hassan) and who advises the flyer on when to let out more wire (Hassan). The wire is often coated with ground glass. The fight takes place when two kites come into contact. The victor (Amir) in the fight cuts the wire of the opponent. A runner (Hassan) will then chase after the severed kite. The retrieved kite is kept as a trophy. As witnessed not the kite flyer (Amir), yet the kite runner (Hassan) carries much more responsibility in both the novel and traditions.

Humanistic approach of the author towards his characters increases the value of the fiction. Pashtun Amir understands his mistakes and waits for "*a chance to be good again*", "*a way to be good again*" [2; p. 2,192,226,310]. His mentor and friend Rahim Khan informs about Hassan and his wife's death, their orphaned son Sohrab in terrible situation in Afghanistan and reveals the secret that Hassan and Amir are biological brothers. Page after page the readers cannot read the book in one breath, ups and ups of the novel strikes the emotions and the sequence of countless culminations waves the temperament of the work.

As readers expectation Amir comes to his motherland as a "tourist" to save his nephew's life from the Taliban. Sohrab is also excelled in shooting slingshot as his father Hassan and he rescued Amir from the hands of the Taliban Assef putting a metal into his eye. Sohrab is the youngest character in the novel, yet his outlook can stay upper than other personages in the book. He accuses himself for being raped by the Taliban, for the death of his parents and the tragic destiny of his country Afghanistan. In fact, it is not him who should think in this way and the writer's skill coming to this conclusion is very ironic as the grown up people cannot see the reality that little Sohrab can. He asks a question that Amir himself can't manage to answer, he thinks the things that the aged people can't comprehend and he acts in the way that the society can't fulfill.

"Do you miss your parents?" he (Sohrab) asked, resting his cheek on his knees, looking up at me.

"Do I miss my parents? Well, I never met my mother. My father died a few years ago, and, yes, I do miss him. Sometimes a lot." (Amir)

"Do you remember what he looked like?" (Sohrab)
I thought of Baba's thick neck, his black eyes, his unruly brown hair. Sitting on his lap had been like sitting on

a pair of tree trunks. "I remember what he looked like," I said. "What he smelled like too." (Amir)

"I'm starting to forget their faces," Sohrab said. "Is that bad?" [2; p317]

Who can properly respond to this question? Amir, Baba, the society, Afghanistan, the Taliban, politicians... No one.

As Amir claims: "I thought of a line I'd read somewhere or maybe I'd heard someone say it: There are a lot of children in Afghanistan, but little childhood." [2; p.318]

Considering all the facts mentioned above, the "friendship" in the novel directed at three diapacons:

- 1) Baba and Hassan – the friendship between the man who hated religion and the young boy being religious
- 2) Amir and Hassan –true friendship between a Pashtun and a Hazara
- 3) Amir and Sohrab –a suffered person who knows all the secrets and a mature child

Khaled Hosseini's writing method mirrors both eastern and western literary manners and his success lies in the balanced literary platform which is built through eclecticism that draws upon multiple theories, styles, or ideas to gain complementary understanding what is the author's intention and his purpose in demonstrating the Afghan culture. The major theme of the writer's works is human beings, their benefits in the society. Reading between the lines one thanks for goodness living in the peace, flourished country and breathing under the blue sky. Hence, the writer gives a comprehension that it is never late "to be good again" as his narrator-hero Amir experiences in his blessed novel "The Kite Runner".

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