

"AESTHETIC AFGHAN CULTURE AND HAVOC CAUSED BY CIVIL WAR IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY" IN 'THE KITE RUNNER' BY: KHALED HOSSEINI

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Abstract—The largest continent on Earth holds in its centre the country of Afghanistan with its rich, unique, proud culture. A land that almost got crushed of its original form due to Taliban militia and civil war followed by insurgency after a decade of its rise. The paper aims at zooming into the pride of Afghans, unsmooth political history in the Islamic Republic country. Also, in bringing out the non-public cries of exiled community in political asylums and the aftermath of immigrants in USA. Thereby resulting in the study of culture and civil clashes in a place eluded of visit, the emotional strife of abandoned aborigines and the result of being stripped of one's soul honour which is independence.

"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their colour" - Maya Angelou

What is culture but the code of conduct in disciplines such as beliefs, values, festivals, costumes, food and attitude. Though the senior citizens are keen on preserving the culture, the future generation considers that the most dangerous phrase in any language is 'We have always done it this way'. Still the indispensable fact is that the beauty of the world lies in culture and diversity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Kite Runner is an English novel by the San Francisco based Afghan-American writer Khaled Hosseini. Published in 2003 by Riverhead Books, it is Hosseini's first novel which has sold over 3 million copies worldwide. This is the novel that made Afghanistan the talking point of every book group reported *Guardian* and listed it among the fifty books that Defined the Decade. The novel is a beautiful-bitter intense ride from its pre-invasion of Russia, the glorious times; through the Taliban terror to the evolution of modern Afghanistan. Spanning from before 1979 Soviet invasion until the reconstruction following the fall of Taliban. It takes place in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States of America.

2. CHARACTERISATION

The protagonist Amir is the narrator who moves to the United States and tries to leave his past behind him. He doesn't come to help his friend Hassan, while he is in trouble. At the age of 18, he and his father flees to America following the soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Hassan is Amir's best friend, during his childhood. He is described as having a china doll face, green eyes and a harelip. Hassan is actually the son of Baba and half brother of Amir. But he does not realize this during his lifetime. He is later killed by Taliban.

3. SETTING

The story is set Amir's home in California and various setting in Afghanistan. The story moves on during summer of 2001 in California and the early 1970's in Kabul. Baba is member of the wealthy upper class, and Ali isa Hazara and a servant because of his race. In Afghanistan and caused wealthy citizen of escape.

4. AFGHANISTAN CULTURE

The Afghan culture is aesthetic indeed but also borrows grim looks from readers of Kite Runner. The honour and pride of Pashtuns, their true hatred for Russians who stole their soul-love independence is a little overwhelming. Afghans considered death over ill-honour. 'Lost her to a fate most Afghans considered far worse than death. She ran off with a clan of travelling singers and dancers.' (p.6) 'In Afghanistan religion plays a very important role. The girls get very little education. In America religion is not very important. Everyone gets plenty of education. So very little students attend school in Afghan and a majority of students attend college in the United States.' you'll study years to earn a

degree, then you'll get a job like mine, one you could just as easily land today, on the small chance that your degree might someday help you get...discovered" (p.134) 'We may be hard-headed and I know we're far too proud, but, in the hour of need, believe me that there's no one you'd rather have at your side than a Pashtun.' Amir recalls what Baba had once said. (p. 147) Hosseini also puts in that, 'Afghan tendency to exaggerate- sadly, almost a national affliction; if someone bragged about his son was a doctor, chances were the kid had once passed a biology test in high school.' And, "I don't care where he was born, he's *Roussi*. His parents were *Roussi*, his grandparents were *Roussi*. I swear on your mother's face I'll break his arm if he tries to touch me." Baba screams at Amir refusing to let the Russian doctor treat him at the hospital after what his fellow people had done to his native land. (p.143). There's also another place where Baba stands up for not his honour but for a woman, being protective of his fellow passenger at the cost of his own life. "Ask him where his shame is. Tell him he's wrong. War doesn't negate decency. It demands it, even more than in times of peace." (p.107) Their refined ways of living, their passionate games like Kite Flying tournament, resuming their cultural life in the States: at the flea market, following *khistegari* tradition are the beautiful aspects. "I want you to go *khistegari*. I want you to ask General Taheri for his daughter's hand." Amir asks shortly after Baba gets discharged from the hospital to which Baba gladly approves. (p.148,149) Again, the dark side of its beauty is also evidently high-lighted in Hosseini's words. "Oh, they're just men having fun! I make one mistake and suddenly everyone is talking *nang* and *namoos*, and I have my face rubbed in it for the rest of my life." Soraya, Amir's wife breaks down complaining about how Afghans treat women unequally. (p.164) "*Bachem*, this adoption ... thing, I'm not so sure it's for us Afghans. For one thing, they grow up and want to know who their natural parents are. Nor can you blame them. Sometimes, they leave the home in which you laboured for years to provide for them so they can find the people who gave them life. Blood is a powerful thing, *Bachem*, never forget that." Soraya's father says to her. (p.172)

5. POLITICAL CONFLICTS

The true nature of the political conflicts in Afghanistan that the world was unaware of is revealed in the novel. In the foreword to his tenth anniversary edition of *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini wrote, "As an Afghan I am honoured when readers tell me that this book helped make Afghanistan a real place for them. That it isn't just the caves of Tora Bora and poppy fields and Bin Laden for them anymore. It's quite an honour when readers tell me that this novel helped put a personal face on Afghanistan for them, and that they now see my homeland as more than just another unhappy, chronically troubled, afflicted land." It is true and compulsive. Afghanistan was ruled for half a century by King Zahir Shah. The king was on a trip in 1973 when his cousin Mohammad Daoud Khan seized power and remained president for six years. He was shamefully

defeated by the People's Democratic party of Afghanistan in 1978 and their tie-ups with the Soviet Union disturbed the peace of the country once and for all. They made life in Afghanistan worse than ever before as Rahim Khan, Baba's business partner says, "The infighting between the factions was fierce and no one knew if they would live to see the end of the day. Our ears became accustomed to the whistle of falling shells, to the rumble of gunfire, our eyes familiar with the sight of men digging bodies out of piles of rubble. Kabul in those days, Amir jan, was as close as you could get to that proverbial hell on earth." (p. 196)

6. ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

This book was a spectacular rollercoaster ride of twist and turns that leaves me hooked. This book is very well written and it is a perfect example of cultural studies especially when it moves on to the USA from Afghanistan.

Thus having learnt the beauty and the dark side of a culture of an Asian country, it would be inappropriate to support or oppose the traditions that had been practised for ages. Any culture for that matter is just like a black and white photograph. Without either of them it is nothing more than a plain card. The meaning is put in spotlight only when both the colours coexist. It is only advisable to embrace culture and wear it as a pride as far as it does not destroy humanity.

The Kite Runner is a good example of multiculturalism and also for father son relationship. The author Hosseini has wonderfully returned the book with Afghanistan cultural. It is an eye opener to the harsh realities of what life can be in Afghanistan and realistic approach is what makes the novel so moving. Its full of suspense and heart-warming scenes.

7. IMPACT OF THE STORY

In story in Afghanistan and united states we follow our protagonist Amir, as he struggles to gain the approval of his father Baba that is told through a series of flashbacks mixed with events in the present. We accompany Amir on his quest for his approval and a way to make peace with internal conflict he faces. Much of his conflict comes from the relationship he has with his father and his close friend, Hassan. Amir and Hassan are friends even though they are from different social classes, and throughout the novel, we also see the cultural important of friendship, family and the division of classes in society. The emotions are far more intriguing even after turning the final pages of the book.

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