

Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*: Some Critical Surveys, Impacts and Suggestions

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Abstract

Khaled Hossieni's *The Kite Runner* (2003) is a multi-dimensional novel, which gives a variety of material for research from diverse angles. The critics and reviewers have explored the thematic, structural, political, denominational and strategic understanding of Afghanistan in their reviews. Their focus on ethnic through political to religious conflicts is revealed through socio-cultural dynamics of the characters. This study aims at focusing on the existing literature on the novel in such a way as to highlight its symbolic/ psychological suggestiveness. The in-depth analysis of the study shows that both the social and psychological sides of the humans are juxtaposed. If one side is balanced, the other will be developed and vice versa. Hence, the fundamental finding of the paper shows that prejudice, lack of cooperation, evils and stereotypes are caused by the psychological imbalance which can be corrected if one works on self-examination, self-criticism and self-improvement.

Keywords: The Kite Runner; Political; Multi-dimensional; Psychological Imbalance; Self-examination.

Introduction

The Kite Runner (2003) portrays many evils through the actions of its major characters: pride, selfishness, cowardliness, jealousy, inequality, betrayals, disloyalty, cheating, and lies. The above evils have their roots in the social backgrounds of the characters, the Shia/Sunni conflict. In the novel, Amir represents the Sunni sect and its beliefs, which he misuses for penalizing his friend, Hassan, coming from the Shia sect. In turn, the religious conflict is aggravated by the ethnic differences between Amir and Hassan. Amir comes from the Pashtun community while Hassan comes from the Hazara one. It means the pictures of evils drawn in the novel are intertwined, making it a complex subject to analyze. The novel deals with many themes of sociological nature and critics have discussed them from different angles. Their focus varies from ethnic through political to religious issues highlighted in the novel through its characters and their perceptions. This study aims at analyzing the reviews and opinions of critics coming from a variety of backgrounds in such a way as to guide the reader to the way the researcher is going to fill in some of the gaps through the recommended approaches, their implications and applications that follow.

The present review aims at providing a glimpse of the inner darkness of the protagonist. It highlights Amir's quest for personal redemption. Amir's redemption is not a mere conventional forgiveness process discussed by the researchers in the past. It is rather a psychological insight through which a process of integration takes place in him. Amir's fear is not merely his fear of Assef, a sociopath, but rather his apprehensions of darker and unacknowledged/undeveloped aspects of his personality. Sending Hassan to Hazarajat and causing the devastation of his family, Amir eventually musters up the courage to return to Afghanistan after twenty six years for saving Sohrab from Assef. In this way, he symbolically

overcomes his shadow. Somewhat, he defeats his cowardice and disloyalty through his bravery/inner goodness when the process of individuation takes place in him. This is what the second part of the paper aims to discuss where the first part only deals with the reviews and comments of the previous researchers on the novel.

Research Methodology

The methodology used for the present research is qualitative in nature. The research follows data-driven approach and is a close textual analysis of the novel, *The Kite Runner* (2003), written by Khalid Hosseini. Some critical surveys and reviews on the novel have been explored in order to highlight their impacts and suggestiveness on human psychology.

Critical Analysis of the Reviews

The Kite Runner (2003) is set in Afghanistan, a war-ridden country in south Asia. Besides external aggressions, the stability of the country has been threatened and disturbed by internal conflicts. Critics have focused on highlighting the social conflicts revealed through the characters and their socio-cultural dynamics. This article focuses on reviewing the available critical literature on the novel, its suggestiveness, findings and applications.

Hill (2003) evaluates *The Kite Runner* (2003) from a socio-historical viewpoint. She highlights the gulf of social differences in Afghan society, depicting the personal struggle of the major characters. She asserts that in Afghan society the poor community is crushed by the affluent class in terms of class superiority. The review further throws light on the “cruel and shameful sacrifice the rich boy [Amir] makes of his humble, adoring alter ego to buy the love of his own distant father” (p. 324). The review gives the description of Afghanistan battered by Soviet occupation, Afghan Mujahedeen and American invasion. The narrative portrays the trauma and tumult the Afghan community passes through when a peaceful country is buckled by the foreigners.

Sadat (2004) also draws our attention to the socio-political backdrop of the ruling classes, the external aggressions and the emergence of extremism in Afghanistan. He focuses on Afghanistan’s internal conflicts which are further aggravated by the external violence. He gives a historical background of kite flying in Afghanistan and regards it as a “mid-air duals between rivals” (p. 1). He provides a description of how the kite flying is banned by the Taliban’s regime, emerged in 1994, and converted the graveyard peace in Afghanistan into a conflict-ridden society (p. 1). Sadat further highlights the socio-economic status of Afghans correlated with their ethnicity. He focuses on the inequality and discriminatory treatment of the lower Hazaras community and asserts that the elite class in Afghanistan dominates the lower class.

Discussing a long historical clash between the Pashtuns and Hazaras depicted in the novel, Thompson (2008) remarks that the violent older boy, Assef, with fascist sympathies “goads Amir for mixing with Hassan, who is a Hazara, a traditionally presented minority” (par. 4). Further, he discusses the political backdrop of Afghanistan, highlighting the fall of monarchy, the Soviet invasion in 1979, the migration of Afghan refugees to Pakistan, and “coming to power of the Taliban in 1996” (par. 2). Thompson also discusses *The Kite Runner* (2003) as a true depiction of Hosseini’s own personal life, Amir, his mouthpiece, representing his own personal traits. Like Thompson, Ferlina (2008) evaluates the major characters and their cultural identity in *The Kite Runner* (2003), applying a socio-cultural perspective to the novel by highlighting its ethnic and inter-religious controversies. She argues that the ethnic and religious differences in Afghanistan are further aggravated by the civil war between the majority and minority ethnic groups. Ferlina argues that Amir’s cultural and social identity of an Afghan Pashtun makes him

wiping off Hassan's life by creating a gulf between Pashtuns and Hazaras. She signifies the ethical and moral appeal of the novel as well.

Jefferess (2009) argues that the allegorical representation of the characters in the novel highlights multiple global ethics. The depiction of the story of "Rustam and Sohrab" is allegorically correlated to Amir's desire for getting his Baba's love. Assef is described as an "archetype of the sinister and the cruel" (p. 360) in the narrative. In her views, Assef passes through an "irredeemable condition", whereas Ali, Hassan and Sohrab are described as "pure and innocent" (p. 393), and they are praised for their loyalty, love and sacrifices. The novel is evaluated for its ethnographic and political values, humanizing Afghan's cultural, social and ethnic values to the non-Afghan readers. The narrative is also argued as a story of personal redemption. Amir's quest for personal redemption is analyzed from cosmopolitan humanistic approach in which the humanitarian global ethics are examined. Personal redemption is described as a healing power for bringing about peace in Afghanistan.

Unlike Jefferess, Hunt (2009) conducts a comparative analysis of Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Rudyard's Kipling's novel, *Kim*. She analyzes both the novels from socio-political and socio-cultural perspectives. She brings to surface the historical backdrop and cultural identities of Pashtuns and Hazara community in *The Kite Runner*. Highlighting the ethical and social differences between Pashtuns and Hazaras, Hunt brings about the similarities and differences between the two novels. She asserts that in both the novels the protagonists are depicted as foreigners. In Kipling's novel, the protagonist, Kim, lives in India as an orphan son of an Irish soldier, and is marked by his dark skin. In Hunt's views, she is "white – a poor white of the very poorest" and he works between these two identities (p. 49).

In Hunt's views, Amir is represented as a boy who fights for his true identity and "retains part of his Afghan identity even at the very end of the novel" (p. 6). Both Kim and Amir strive for their unique qualities and both reach "a point of maturation" (p. 6) at the end. The technique used in both the novel is bildungsroman which deals with the development of moral, social and ethical process of the protagonists. Hunt is of the view that the term "bildungsroman" focuses on the journey of maturation of a child toward adulthood. This journey is through the acquisition of education, and self-recognition, and propels one to confront his/her past's guilt and betrayals. It accommodates the guilty-conscience in the society after the realization of one's guilt and crimes.

Similar to Hunt's views, Renjie (2011) also applies the technique of bildungsroman to *The Kite Runner*. She asserts that "He [Amir] goes through a roller-coaster ride of emotions as he deals with guilt and redemption, anger and forgiveness, pain and salvation" (p. 7). She proves *The Kite Runner* as a bildungsroman of emotional maturation. She depicts Amir's maturation as a process of psychological change in which Amir is identified in his altering role. Amir's role of Baba's son is converted into his role of Sohrab's father. The next is his change from a betrayer to a savior. He betrays Hassan in his childhood and rescues Sohrab from Assef's atrocities in his adulthood. He undergoes through a successful journey of redemption, maturation process and personal recovery.

In the above context, Mohsin (2010) discusses the redemption and self-maturing process of the major characters in the novel. He discusses the themes of unconditional love, testing friendship, personal recovery, haunting fear, and damaging cruelty in the novel. However, his main focus is on the redemption process of the major characters. He describes redemption as a price paid for something done wrong somewhere in one's life. He is of the view that a person

who has seen self-actualization is like one “who has seen the prison” (p. 7), and has gone through long tormenting forces. The essay focuses on Amir and his father’s redemption process and the prices they pay for their sense of guilt: their disloyalty with their childhood friends, Ali and Hassan.

Mohsin (2010) also portrays the social and political upheaval in Afghanistan and presents the calm and peaceful Afghanistan before Soviet invasion and American’s takeover of the country. He states that the pre-and post-war era of Afghanistan gives a clear picture of cultural and civilizational values prevalent in Afghan society. The researcher highlights that the novel portrays the image of “Taliban’s regime to torment an adulterer with stone until she was dead” (p. 6). He asserts that the novel gives a powerful platform for the recognition of human rights like “freedom from discrimination, and slavery, and right to life, liberty and personal security” (p. 10). He condemns the human rights’ violation depicted in the novel.

Shamnad (2010) also gives a very similar idea of human rights’ violation in the novel. Highlighting the socio-cultural dynamics through the depiction of social evils, she argues that the novel portrays the collapse of the civil society, violation of human rights, domination of male community, women’s oppression and resistance, and racial and religious discrimination. The novel is also examined from a socio-political viewpoint by highlighting Afghanistan’s gaining independence from UK in 1919, General Muhammad Daud’s premiership in 1953, Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and its withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, domination and control of Taliban in 1996, attack on the World Trade Center, end of Taliban’s rule in 2001 and the emergence of Hamid Karzai’s government in 2004.

Besides the historical significance, Shamnad (2010) also focuses on the ethnic diversity in Afghanistan. He asserts his point of view that the country is divided into various ethnic-hierarchical systems. Traditionally, Pashtuns are the dominant major community group in Afghanistan having Sunni beliefs, while the other ethnic groups have no voice in the country’s social, political and economic spheres. Hazara community presuming 9% of minority of Afghan’s population has not been given an important role in socio-economic scale. They reside in Hazarajat and have Mongolian features and origins.

Kuntz (2011) also analyzes the novel from socio-historical angle. He asserts that Hosseini’s novel is a historical fiction, highlighting social and cultural backdrop that affect the life of the protagonists in the novel. The characters encounter the real historical events like the “Taliban’s takeover,” Baba and Amir’s escape to Pakistan and America, are the historical representation of the Afghans’ fear of the Russians. In Kuntz’ views, Hassan’s assassination by the “Taliban” represents the atrocity and cruelty (2011, p. 6). He presents his views on Hosseini’s interest in referring to the attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001.

Kuntz (2011) further reads the novel from other social angles. From a feminist perspective, he focuses on the patriarchal role Hosseini’s male characters play in *The Kite Runner* (2011). His close textual analysis brings into surface the lack of female’s role in Afghan society. In his views, no major role is given to the females in the novel rather they are occupied/possessed by the laws of patriarchal social order (p. 25). The novel is also interpreted from a Marxist perspective, where Kuntz focuses on class discrimination and power-struggle between the upper and lower classes in Afghanistan (p. 13).

Janecova (2011) also gives a brief overview of the internal and external, social and cultural structures of the novel with special reference to power-struggle in Afghan society leading the protagonists to the process of redemption. In her views, the ethnic tension is represented in the form of individual and social groups, “experiencing personal fears, challenges, and struggles” (p.

37). Fear and redemption are used as familiar central motifs. She uses the narrative as a manifestation of cultural diversity in the present era, highlighting various inter-ethnic relations of Afghans. Through the motifs of fear and redemption, she examines the critical notions and sensitive social and political issues predominant in Afghan society.

Mishra (2011) like Jefferess also attempts a comparative analysis of the two novels: McEwan's *Atonement* and Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. She argues that the guilt committed by the protagonists in their childhood (Briony in *Atonement* and Amir in *The Kite Runner*) brings about their downfall, and eventually leads them to their search for redemption. Mishra discusses the factors that lead to the conscious and the unconscious contributions of crimes and social evils presented in both the novels. She characterizes Briony and Amir's guilt from the very outset of her article.

Mishra (2011) states that Briny, a thirteen years old girl desperately desires to get recognition from her elders to find her place in society. Her interest in literary pursuits provokes in her the spirit of gaining her parents' love, approval and recognition, for which she enters into the world of crimes. Mishra criticizes Amir and his Baba's class superiority and emotional insecurity. Further, she has discussed guilt as a form of self-torture, both Amir and Briony underwent. She asserts that both the protagonists feel guilty for their crimes because both have the conscience, dictated by a set of moral and ethical values. Their guilty conscience ultimately leads to their crime as a "labyrinth of construction" (as cited in Mishra, p. 75) and both commit one crime after another.

Like Mishra, Tilwani (2013) also examines the novel from a sociological perspective through a comparative analysis of Hosseini's two novels, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and Gosh's novels, *The Hungry Tide* and *The Sea of Poppie*. He associates Spivak's term "subalternity" with the marginalized characters in the novel. Subalternity is described as an effective term for all those people who are marginalized and deprived of the voice to speak. He discusses the predicament of Hosseini and Gosh's characters who are given the "sub" and secondary places in society.

Both the writers, Hosseini and Gosh have analyzed the journey the subalterns go through. Both of them have set the subaltern characters within the multiplicity of caste, gender, race and class. *The Hungry Tide* deals with the subaltern as out-caste refugees who are affected by the religious intolerance and environmental conservation projected upon them while *The sea of Poppies* delineates a variety of subaltern characters whose only required behavior is their "submission and obedience" (p. 400). On the basis of gender, racial and class-difference, Tilwani asserts that the characters are "exposed to experience sati, ship board mutiny, a court case, jails, kidnapping, rapping, beatings, floggings, wretched life as of a dog, criminal justice, etc." (p. 118).

Highlighting the marginalized status of Gosh's characters, Tilwani (2013) further discusses the marginalized status of Hosseini's characters who finally achieve their "authentic existence" (p. 119). He elaborates Hosseini's works by presenting the ethnic differences between Amir and Hassan in *The Kite Runner*, and Jalil and Rasheed in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, respectively. He portrays the lives of Amir and Hassan, fighting against "complexities, anxieties, and contradiction, to come to terms with life and to live life of authentic existence and belonging" (p. 119). Tilwani (2013) argues that like Hassan and Ali in *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini also portrays the lives of Nana, Maryam and Laila, the subaltern characters, marginalized and frustrated by the dominant patriarchal social order in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Puspitasari (2013) draws our attention towards structural and thematic aspect of the novel. He brings about a critical analysis of the major characters, putting forward the ironies through the actions of the major characters in the novel for the true depiction of human evils. He defines the term irony as a situation in which something is said in one way and done in another, contrary to one's thought and feelings. He focuses on the three ironies: verbal, situational and dramatic, discussing them in connection with the thematic viewpoint of the novel. He defines verbal irony as what the character says and what he means. The example of verbal irony is given from *The Kite Runner* when Assef addresses Ali that "Who did you eat? You flat-nosed Babalu" (p. 5)? Ali is ironically depicted as a monster, he is not a monster. People used to call him Babalu because of his physical deformity and features like Chinese doll. An irony of situation is explained through a quote "Because Baba and Ali have been like brothers for their entire life, Baba never expected Ali and Hassan to leave" (p. 70). Baba does not want Ali and Hassan to leave but rather requests them to stay; hence, Baba is helpless to force them to stay in his house as servants, is the presentation of situational irony. The third one is dramatic irony when Amir says "Baba thinks Assef is the greatest because he plays Soccer" and wants Amir and Assef to be friends. The dramatic irony is depicted because in that situation only the readers know that Assef is an evil, a monster, whom Amir hates" (p. 70). Through the above ironies, Puspitasari brings into surface the suggestiveness of the sequential plot and appealing themes.

Rourke (2005) terms *The Kite Runner* as a well acquainted story of an individual's personal struggle and recovery. She has discussed the reasons due to which the westerners have made the novel a part of their "touchstone culture" (par. 1). She argues that the westerners take interest in reading the novel due to the narrative's historical sweep of Afghans' culture. She further states that the novel deals with the political turmoil Afghanistan passes through, the civil war the country goes through in 1978, the invasion of the Soviet Union, the rise of the Taliban regime, and the long lasting tension between the Sunnite Pashtuns and Shiite Hazaras.

Rourke (2005) further argues that the novel is the true depiction of the spiritual recovery, an appealing story of unconditional love. The plot of the story revolves around the childhood cowardice, disloyalty and cruelty. Highlighting the emotional appeal of the major plot, Rourke quotes an amazon reviewer that *The Kite Runner* "reminds us that we all humans are alike, fighting daily and lifelong battles, just in different circumstances" (par. 3). He states that the novel whitewashes savagery, despair, disappointments, brutality, and violence; the plot ultimately leads to an "allegory of redemption and healing, despite the seemingly unmediated realism" (par. 8).

Spangler also examines the plot and thematic structure of the novel by asserting the view that "*The Kite Runner* is a haunting story of friendship and redemption in modern Afghanistan, from the Pre-Russian-Invasion through the reign of Taliban followed by American's occupation. This (the novel) eloquent tale is told through the lives of two boys growing up in Kabul in the same household, but in two starkly different Worlds" (p. 2). It tells the story of a crippled Amir whose return to Afghanistan symbolizes his old atonement for his past sins. He further states that though fate, political situation in Afghanistan, and cowardice, threatens his ability to amend for his past, he overcomes his cowardice and selfishness, and finally gets success in amending for his previous sins which haunted him for years.

Adiguna (2013) also gives a gist of socio-cultural differences, the political upheavals, the historical facts, the author's personal life, and the experiences of the characters under the

chaotic political events in Afghanistan such as the Soviet invasion, the rise of the Taliban and the tragedy of 9/11. Sami (2014), in the above context, examines the narrative as a work which stir the ethnic and sectarian controversy in a war-torn Afghanistan through a tool of ethnic-sectarian imagery. He highlights that Hosseini's aim is not to criticize the Afghan masses but his ethnic and sectarian imageries are susceptible to questioning. Sami focuses on the long historical ethno-religious tension present in Afghan society in the form of Pathans-Hazaras and Shia-Sunni conflicts, and uses the characters as aesthetic subjects who in a war-torn Kabul negotiate and displace the ethnic and sectarian imaginary.

Like Sami, Usman (2014) analyzes the cultural and ethnic values of Afghans in the novel. In his views, Pashtuns are represented as stereotypical characters representing jealousy, hatred, oppression, prejudiced attitude and racism. On the other hand, Hazaras are represented as poor and oppressed minority group, victimized by the Pashtuns, a dominant ethnic community in Afghanistan. He states that anti-Pashtuns propaganda is used against the Pashtun Muslims all over the world against them. Through generalization, the narrative is depicted as a simplified propaganda against the Pashtuns Sunni Muslims. Usman regards this discriminated attitude of Hosseini's as a biased attitude which cannot be verified through a historical record.

Unlike the above researches, Malik, Murtaza and Shah (2014) in their latest research examine the narrative from a linguistic/structural perspective. They have applied Huckin's analytical tools of CDA to the novel, and analyze the linguistics manipulation the author has employed for the achievement of his objectives. The multiple themes like identity, knowledge, power struggle, social relations are analyzed in terms of linguistics devices by contextualizing the text of the novel. Assef is depicted as an antagonist, a true representation of evils, and possessing the negative traits in his personality. Hassan's facial expressions are compared to a lamb, as he is marginalized and powerless against the sinister, Assef. Another most striking feature of the novel is the stoning death of a woman at ghazi stadium caused by the extremists. This event in Shah's opinion, symbolizes the devastation in Afghanistan as a whole, like "the rape of Hassan and Sohrab" (p. 22).

Gaps and Implications

It is evident from the aforementioned papers and critical surveys that *The Kite Runner* highlights the dilemma of the Afghans who are caught and overwhelmed by the external forces, and need integration on individual basis. They lead a complex life in which they are influenced by the outside ruthless world of war and oppression. Most of the aforementioned researchers have highlighted the socio-political, socio-historical, ethno-religious, socio-cultural and humanistic aspects of humans' life; however, none of the researchers has pinpointed the psychological reasons of multiple social issues. They have not focused on the in-depth textual analysis that the social issues stem from the psychological one-sidedness in humans. They have failed to analyze the root cause of the social upheavals in Afghan society.

The gap left by the previous researchers is how to rehabilitate oneself after moral failure, and how to achieve integration through the evils of lies, betrayal and cheating. These are the haunting central questions of the present research, through which the researcher is trying to fill in the gap by recommending the contextualization of the novel from a Jungian perspective. The close-textual analysis of the novel indicates that both the social and psychological sides of a human are juxtaposed in the novel. Both of them go side by side and give a lesson that if the psychological side is balanced, the social side will be developed and vice versa. The psychological sides of most of the characters in the novel are underdeveloped, due to which most

of the social cataclysms crop up. The lop-sidedness in humans can be seen in the novel through its characters and their actions.

Analysis and Discussion

The evils and conflicts sketched in the present research give us enough material to study the characters and their actions from a psychological/Jungian perspective. In Jungian psychology, human evils are usually explained as shadow projections. Shadow projections are driven by the repressed/undeveloped/underdeveloped/unacknowledged aspects of our personality. In the novel, Amir's and Baba's activities stem from the shadow side of their personalities. Being brought up in a one-sided environment, they turn back on the positive side of the messages coming from what Jung and Jungians call and explain as collective unconscious. Hence, the study aims at analyzing Amir's fight with his ego and self in such a way as to guide the people to bring transformation in their repressed inner-self through symbolic dreams, haunting memories and wise mentors.

From a psychological perspective, Baba's love for Amir is a symbol of power which he desires to gain at any cost. Amir even loses Hassan, his close friend, in gaining the power. However, the critical analysis of the novel reveals that Amir's aspiring love for Baba symbolizes a black shadow on his part, because for the attainment of Baba's love he sacrifices Hassan's love and makes a scapegoat of him. Hassan's face becomes an archetype of a lamb/innocence while Amir's friendship with Hassan is "a complex tapestry of love, loss, privilege and shame" (p. 6) as viewed by County (2009). Amir starts wearing masks and constantly represses his shadow and vents them onto others around him. Blaming Hassan for lying, cheating, theft and disloyalty is the shadow-projection he vents upon Hassan by making him an archetypal scapegoat.

Amir receives a message from his unconscious at the time of Hassan's rape, which is criticized by his conscious-ego, "I opened my mouth, and almost said something... But I didn't. I just watched. Paralyzed" (p. 64). He does not move forward to save Hassan from Assef's cruel and shameful treatment of him. His fight against Hassan may be explained as his fight against his own insecurity/weaknesses/ethnic and sectarian supremacy. Though Amir is not courageous to fight back with the neighborhood boys, he has a "mean streak thing" (p. 20), which he vents out on Hassan and Ali. He "snapped at him [Hassan], told him to mind his own business" (p. 20), and thus satisfies his thinking side. He makes fun of Ali's physical deformity, and teases Hassan for being an illiterate, "when we used to play insect torture" (p. 47).

The second part of the study aims at providing a glimpse of the inner darkness of the protagonist. It highlights Amir's quest for personal redemption. Amir's redemption is not a mere conventional forgiveness process discussed by the researchers in the past. It is rather a psychological insight through which a process of integration takes place in him. Amir's fear is not merely his fear of Assef, a sociopath, but rather his apprehensions of darker and unacknowledged/undeveloped aspects of his personality. Sending Hassan to Hazarajat and causing the devastation of his family, Amir eventually musters up the courage to return to Afghanistan after twenty six years for saving Sohrab from Assef. In this way, he symbolically overcomes his shadow. Somewhat, he defeats his cowardice and disloyalty through his bravery/inner goodness when the process of individuation takes place in him.

Somewhat, with the help of moral awareness, Amir feels a sense of transformation in his attitude. Stein is of the view that during the process of integration, "Moral awareness is brought to bear upon an area of attitude, thought, or behavior that had before lain in darkness" (p. 21). This positive attitude leads him to visit Pakistan where Rahim Khan narrates to him the story of the extremists and their taking over of Afghanistan. He further tells him about Hassan's and his

wife's brutal killing by the extremists at the cost of their actions of safeguarding Amir's house in Wazir Akbar Khan.

Amir's heart bleeds after hearing the tragic news that Sohrab, Hassan's son, is in an orphanage in Kabul. He requests Amir to go to Kabul for bringing Sohrab with him, and keeping him in a "clean and safe" orphanage in Peshawar (p. 193). Rahim Khan's request makes Amir reluctant and hard on himself once again; hence, he encourages the latter, "I think we both know why it has to be you, don't we" (p. 194). Rahim Khan makes him realize that in this way he would be able to pay for his guilt and betrayal of Hassan. Amir represses his feeling side once again for Hassan and his family and listens to his dominant thinking faculty.

Amir recalls his past and thinks that he has caused Hassan's death by driving, "Hassan and Ali out of the house." He thinks that had he not sent them to Hazarjat, "Baba would have brought them along to America" (p. 198). At this point, he overcomes his ethnic superiority by making a decision of rescuing Sohrab. He utters the words in retrospection, "I wished Rahim Khan hadn't called me. I wished he had let me live on in my oblivion. But he had called me. And what Rahim Khan revealed to me changed things." He starts listening to his unconscious which shows him his faults. He realizes that his whole life "had been a cycle of lies, betrayals, and secrets" (p. 198).

Amir thinks that he is "thirty eight now" and "old enough" to redeem for his past betrayals. He thinks "Hassan has loved me once... He was gone now, but a little part of him lived on. It was in Kabul. Waiting" (pp. 198-199). He goes to Rahim Khan and gives him the news that he wants to leave for Kabul as soon as possible. He thinks, "I was afraid I'd change my mind. I was afraid I'd deliberate, ruminate, agonize, rationalize, and talk myself into not going. I was afraid the appeal of my life in America would draw me back... From Hassan... And from this one last chance at redemption" (p. 202). His journey to Kabul starts the next morning, representing Amir as an archetypal outsider/outcast.

In his journey to Kabul, Amir wears the persona of a religious extremist for the purpose that he may not be recognized as an outsider. He wears a "pakol and garment" and says that "the most important item: an artificial beard, black and chest length, Shari'a friendly--or at least the Taliban version" (p. 201). He shows the photo of Sohrab to Farid and his family by telling that he has arrived to Kabul for finding him in the orphanage. When they ask "what does he meant to [him]?" He replies that his "father meant a lot to [him]" (p. 208). He goes through a test of courage, and defeats his denominational and ethnic superiority by confessing, "He [Hassan] was my half-brother...My illegitimate half-brother. He courageously confesses Baba's sin, thinking that "there had been enough lies already" (p.208)

After disclosing Baba's secret and his own purpose of visiting a war-torn Afghanistan, he spends a night at Farid's residence. At dinner time, he observes how Wahid's kids observe him while eating meat. He comes to know that poverty has stricken every home in Afghanistan. He asserts that "Earlier that morning, when I was certain no one was looking, I did something I had done twenty-six years earlier: I planted a fistful of crumpled money under a mattress" (212) for the kids before leaving Wahid's place. He recalls that how twenty six years ago he hid some money and a watch under Hassan's mattress, and caused Hassan's exile to Hazarajat. However, this time his similar action shows the positivity of his personality, and his shadow reveals the productivity and humanitarian actions. Sharp is of the view that "The shadow is potentially both creative and destructive: creative in that it represents aspects of oneself that have been buried or that might yet be realized" (p. 95). He realizes his evil-sidedness, and starts searching

for Sohrab in different orphanages which symbolically represents his journeying into unconscious.

Assef tries to abuse Sohrab sexually in front of Amir and asks him to take Sohrab if he can. When Amir holds Sohrab's hand, Assef tells him that he cannot do it for free. He reminds Amir of some unfinished business with each other. Amir recalls his past memory that how once Assef blocked Amir's and Hassan's path when they were going to the mountains. Amir remembers how Assef threatened him to death when Hassan saved him with the help of his sling shot. Amir remembers "how envious [he] had been of Hassan's bravery, Assef had backed down, promised that in the end he'd get [them] both. He'd kept that promise with Hassan. Now it was [Amir's] turn" (p. 250). Symbolically, he thinks about his cowardice that how he remained a silent spectator at the time of Hassan's rape. He bears the brunt of Assef's beating and thinks that he can do what Baba always wanted him to do. He thinks about Rahim Khan's advice that there is a room for him to be turned good again.

He sees Baba in his dream, "sitting on the bear's chest, his fingers digging in its snout. He looks up at me and I see. He's me. I am wrestling the bear" (p. 258). The dream is symbolic of the battle he has had with Assef, symbolizing his strength of conquering the powerful beast. The dream on the one hand symbolizes the beast/darker self/shadow/Assef which Amir has conquered, while on the other hand, the partial transformation of his past betrayal and lies.

When Farid hands over Rahim Khan's letter to him, another symbolic token in Amir's way of self-salvation. Rahim Khan discloses to him that he knew about his betrayal of Hassan because Hassan told him about it. He instructs Amir that whatever he did in his childhood was bad and undesirable by remaining a dumb spectator at the time of need by a sincere friend like Hassan. However, he guides him by saying, "A man who has no conscience, no goodness, does not suffer. I hope your suffering comes to an end with this journey to Afghanistan" (p. 263).

In Rahim Khan's views, Amir also has an evil side which needs to be pondered and individuated. Jung presents a very similar viewpoint in this connection in his *Collected Works*, "Evil needs to be pondered just as much as good, for good and evil are ultimately nothing but ideal extensions and abstractions of doing, and both belong to chairoscuro of life. In the last resort there is no good that cannot produce evil and no evil that cannot produce good" (12, 36). Moreover, he brings into surface the evil of his Baba along with his on-going process of transformation till his death. In a way, Baba commits guilt and tries to compensate for it in Rahim Khan's viewpoint. Amir realizes the reality about Baba's shadow-ridden personality and concludes that they "had both sinned and betrayed. But Baba had found a way to create good out of his remorse" (p. 264).

Jung says in his book, *Psychological Types* (2016) that integration is the process which differentiates and forms humans "as being distant from the general" and hence, individuation is "a process of differentiation having for its goal the development of the individual personality" (p. 757). Amir differentiates himself from his other ethnocentric Pashtun fellows. He starts giving time, love and care to Sohrab, and lets him win the game the way Hassan used to do with him in his childhood. He tells Sohrab in *The Kite Runner* (2003) while playing soccer, "You're as good as your father, maybe even better...I used to beat him some times, but I think he let me win" (p. 267). Sohrab says how his father has told that Amir was the best friend he ever had. It makes Amir ashamed of his past and he replies, "I wasn't such a good friend, I'm afraid," he tries to recollect his conscience and says, "But I'd like to be your friend. I think I could be a good friend to you" (p. 267). His religious conviction opens his eyes and he confesses in *The Kite Runner*

(2003): I throw my makeshift jai-namaz, my prayer rug, on the floor and get on my knees, lower my forehead to the ground, my tears soaking through the sheet. I bow to the west. Then I remember I haven't prayed over fifteen years. I have long forgotten the words. But it doesn't matter I will utter those few words I still remember: La illaha il Allah, Muhammad urasul ullah. There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger...my hands are stained with Hassan's blood; I pray God doesn't let them get stained with the blood of his boy too (301).

The above quote shows a significant change in Amir's religious beliefs, making him recalling his past denominational superiority. Twenty six years ago, on the day of the kite tournament, Hassan encourages him in winning the tournament. Hassan prays to Allah for Amir's success and at that point Amir finds himself "caught between Baba and the mullahs at school, [he] still hadn't made up [his] mind about God" (*The Kite Runner*, 2003, p. 55). He gets determined by saying, "I will do zakat, I will do namaz, I will fast during Ramadan... I pray that my sins have not caught up with me the way I'd always feared they would" (p. 302). Symbolically, Amir's above realization of God proves to be the only solution to a myriad of his social/psychological problems. Further, keeping in mind the post-US withdrawal, the study has also its thematic link to the reformation of Afghan society after decades of wars and bloodsheds.

He succeeds in his process of individuation, which means the growth of personality and adaptation of the inner-self to the outer world. Amir first undergoes the chaotic state where he sees some sparks of the unconscious in his consciousness, then he enters into the monarchic or monistic state, where he starts taking interest in his conscious-ego, then he comes to the dualistic state. In this stage, he thinks about the reasons of his inner and outer tension and this awareness makes him acknowledge the undeveloped sides of his personality.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study highlights how to bring productive changes in one's personality. Amir succeeds in transforming himself, eventually. The fragmented sides of his unconscious strive to be united. His broken relationships in the past now yearn for completeness, and his neglected sides are brought forth for soul making. Ultimately, his center of personality shifts from ego to self, keeping balance in the flow of energy between the conscious and the unconscious for productive transformation. Eventually, his sorrow is converted into laughter; shade into sun and inner darkness into light.

One may not think of oneself to be completely good or bad, rather one ought to keep balance between the conscious and the unconscious, and which is a continuous process of auditing of what one says and what one does. The humans are not angels/perfect and they are prone to commit mistakes, but the best lesson is to learn from their mistakes and act according to the proverbial statement "once bitten twice shy." The Muslims, have to forget about the sectarian divisions and to bring unification among the Muslim community irrespective of the sectarian and the ethnic differences. Everyone has the shadow aspects in our personalities and we need to integrate them through self-examination and proper guidance for soul making.

Keeping in mind the post-US withdrawal, the study may help in framing for peaceful mutual co-existence, cooperation, trust and respect in a war-torn society. Further, this study opens new horizons for further research from a psychological perspective from a new angle. The researcher has analyzed the individuation process in Amir, and slightly worked on his underdeveloped/overdeveloped anima in connection to his process of individuation which may be recommended for further discussion and psychological analysis. What we infer from the critical survey and its implication on the novel is that *The Kite Runner* is a multi-dimensional

novel, interpreted from diverse angles. We have learnt that the novel manifests power-struggle, marginalization, religious and cultural diversity in today's world. It is a symbolic novel, full of recurring and haunting images, evil representation, and archetypes. Therefore, the present survey is an attempt to bring into surface the psychological/Jungian reading of the novel. It recommends contextualizing Amir's shadow-projections, which, in a way, lead him towards the path of transformation from a Jungian perspective.

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