



The Kite Runner; A Journey of Growth

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ABSTRACT

The intimate relationship that exists between any ideology and the psychology it produces is what truly defines the main scholarship of the various critical frameworks. Since it cannot exist without an appropriate psychology that sustains it, an ideology as postcolonialism appears not merely as a belief system, but rather as a method of relating to oneself and the other. It involves a complex psychological mode of being to form the identity — the psychology — of both the colonized and the colonizer, and out of this sense springs the concept of ‘Other’ as the official mark on which colonialism depends. The present paper attempts to examine how the ethical and psychological reference of the concept of ‘Other’ participate in the inner growth of the characters of Khaled Hosseini’s novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) in dialogue with Judith Butler’s human interdependence reading of the concept in her book *Prearious Life: the Power of Mourning and Violence*(2004).

Keywords: colonialism, faces, Hazara, Pashtuns, The Kite Runner.



1. Introduction

It is uneasy task to write about the concept of ‘Other’. The difficulty lies in the constant changing nature of the term itself. Though it is defined as “a criterion that allows humanity to be divided into two groups: one that embodies the norm and whose identity is valued and another that is defined by its faults, devalued and susceptible to discrimination”(Staszak,2009,p.1), the question that arises who the ‘Other’ might be. At certain times, we are the ‘Other’ to someone else, and someone else might be the ‘Other’ to us. At the same time, our individual identity, in some degrees, cannot be fully recognized without a relation to the ‘Other’.

The concept of ‘Other’, that historically goes back to postcolonial ideology, derives its difficulty and importance from the very nature of this critical theory. Lois Tyson suggests that the important abilities critical theories can develop lies in the ability to see the connection among the domains of our experience — the psychological, ideological, political, social, intellectual, and aesthetic — in ways that show how inseparable these categories are. In that sense, Postcolonialism’s foundation was based on the colonizer’s assumption of their superiority, which they contrasted with the alleged inferiority of the indigenous people of the lands they invaded. The colonizers believed that only their culture was civilized and sophisticated. Therefore, native people were defined as savages, backward and undeveloped. Their religion, customs and code of behavior were swept aside by those who saw themselves the center of the world, the embodiment of what human being should be , the proper ‘self’; native peoples, on the other hand, were at the margins and considered as ‘Other’, different, and inferior to the point of being less than fully human (2006, p.420).

The overestimation of the European culture known as Eurocentrism enhanced the sharp distinction between the western and the Eastern nations. Edward Said in his theory of Orientalism considered that difference as an elaboration that not only makes the world of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident, but also of a whole chain of ‘interests’ created and maintained by means as scholarly discoveries, philosophical reconstructions, psychological analysis and sociological descriptions. On that matter he contemplates:

It is, above all, a disclosure that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political(as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual(as with reigning science like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural(as with orthodoxies and canons of taste , texts, values), power



moral(as with ideas about what “we” do and what “they” cannot do or understand as “we” do (1979,p.12).

The line that cuts the world into two unequal halves, that Said refers to, represents the same discriminatory line that divides the world into a dominant in-group and a dominated out-group, something affirmed by Staszak:

The creation of otherness (also called *othering*) consists of applying a principle that allows individuals to be classified into two hierarchal groups: them and us. The out-group is only coherent as group as a result of its opposition to the in-group and its lack of identity. This lack is based upon stereotypes that are largely stigmatizing and obviously simplistic. The in-group constructs one or more others, setting itself apart and giving itself an identity. Otherness and identity are two inseparable sides of the same coin. The Other only exists relative to the Self, and vice versa (2009,p. 2).

The close relationship between Otherness and identity, the above extract describes, is also subjected to the steer of power. In other words, when the dominated out-groups become able to prescribe their own norms, escape the violence and oppression imposed on them by the in-group and succeed in earning a positive distinct identity, they would cease to be Other. This is, yet, not always maintainable in a world where political and economic power shape and enhance alterity.

The loss of cultural identity is one of the symptoms that constitutes what Homi Bhabha considers (as cited in Tyson,2006) the historical trauma. This particular symptom jointly with other dynamics that include slavery, revolutions, civil war, political mass murders, oppressive military regimes and the like offered by global orientation pave the way to study literature in terms of postcolonial topics and in terms of the different ways cultures have experienced historical trauma. In this perspective, world literature can be seen as the study of the ways in which cultures define themselves positively by “Othering” groups whom they demonize and devalue for that purpose, or by examining the representation of people and events that occur across culture boundaries, rather than within them. The center of such studies would neither be the ‘sovereignty’ of national culture, nor the universalism of human culture, but rather the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that hunt the historical present and tell about the personal experience of the disenfranchised, marginalized and unhomed whom history has ignored. In representing the psychological and historical complexities of these characters’ ethical choices, historical reality does not become as something that happen just on the battlefield or in the government offices. It rather comes into the homes and affects the reader personal life in the deepest way. Though it is true almost to everyone, marginalized people are the more aware of that fact



because it is pressed on them by violence and oppression. Time has played a decisive role in programming marginalized people into colonial subjects who did not resist colonial subjugation because they were taught to believe in the colonizer's superiority and their inferiority. Postcolonial theorist often describes colonial subjects as having double consciousness or double vision that perceives the world as divided between two antagonistic cultures: that of the colonizer and that of the indigenous community. This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from the same individual psychology disorder but from trauma of cultural displacement within which one lives is defined as unhomeliness. Being unhomed is to feel not at home even in the person own home because he is not at home himself: the person cultural identity crisis has made him a psychological refugee (p.421-429).

Hence, the marginalized out-groups are doubly seen as others. First, by themselves that believe in their inferiority and the in- groups superiority. Second, they are othered by the in-groups who have considered their inferiority to the extent of dehumanizing them. Judith Butler contemplates on the matter:

If violence is done against those who are unreal, then from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strong way of remaining animated and so must be negated again (and again). They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never "were", and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness. Violence renews itself in the face of the apparent inexhaustibility of its object. The derealization of the "Other" means that it is neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral (2004, p.33).

This perspective of violence legitimizes acts of aggressions in the sense that it is directed against already denied entities. How such de-realization is interpreted, Butler states:

It is one thing to argue that first, on the level of discourse, certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanized, that they fit no dominant frame for the human, and that their dehumanization occurs first, at this level, and that this level then gives rise to a physical violence that in some sense delivers the message of dehumanization that is already at work in culture (2004, p.34).

Answering the theories of dehumanization that presents the Other as inferior, uncivilized, evil and nonhuman, Butler asserts "it is not simply...that there is a discourse of dehumanization that produces these effects, but rather there is a limit to discourse that establishes the limits of human intelligibility"(2004,p.35). As a result,



the death of the Other , any Other Arabs or Afghans , according to Butler is marked as unremarkable.

3. Discussion

Reading through a postcolonial lens, Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) becomes the exemplary text that discusses the concept of Other and the problem of difference out of Afghan's view point, something that represent the psychological ethical operations colonialist ideology depends on. The story presented as a morality tale is divided into three main sections. The first section, which is made of ten chapters, gives an account of the history of Afghanistan in the early to the mid of 1970s through the childhood memories of the book main character and narrator, Amir with his servant and friend Hassan, who, later on, would turn to be his half illegitimate brother. Amir sins by failing to protect Hassan from an assault at the hand of villain of the book, Assef, something that would affect his ethical and psychological growth and the formation of his future conception of the Other. The second section that is made of five chapters begins in 1981, when Amir and his father, Agha Sahib or Baba leave to America during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. It is a stage that announces the end of the old Afghanistan Amir has ever known. The main events of the second section happen in Fremont, California, a city south of San Francisco in the East Bay. This section sketches the life of Amir and his father as Afghan's immigrant. The section ends with the death of Amir's father and his marriage to Soraya Jan, the daughter of General Sahib, Mr. Iqbal Taheri , a former General at the Ministry of Defense in Kabul. The final section made of ten chapters begins in 2001 when Amir at the age of thirty nine receives a phone call from his mentor and Baba's old friend, Rahim Khan, asking to pay him a visit in Pakistan. The phone call brings back the old demons of Amir's past and offers him a chance "to be Good again"(Hosseini,2003,p.177) by liberating Hassan's son ,Sohrab taken as a slave by Taliban after killing his father who dies protecting Amir's old house from marauders.

Despite growing up together, Amir and Hassan are different and their difference, according to David Jefferess "is marked by social marginalization" (2009, p.322). Amir is Pashtun, Sunni, and the son of a wealthy businessman in Kabul. Hassan is Hazara, Shi'a, and a servant. To understand the context of the novel, this pertinent background needs to be discussed out of historical perspective.

According to Rebecca Stuhr, The Pashtuns are the ethnic majority in Afghanistan that have ruled the country long before the Soviet occupation and the U.S. invasion era (2009, p. 27). Afghanistan is also the country of other ethnic groups including Tajiks, Hazara, and Uzbeks. Before the 16th century, and according to Adamec, Gregorian, and Noelle (as cited in Sadat, 2004) , the Safavids ruled in Western Afghanistan, the



Hazara ethnic group was Sunni, but as a matter of pressure and time , they converted to Shi'a . They are speculated to have descended from the contingents ('hazar' meaning thousand or regiment) left behind by the Mongolian quest into Afghanistan (p.2). They are the minority making up about 9 percent of the population, and are discriminated against by the ruling classes for their different religious practice, a fact that appears in *The Kite Runner* for the first time when Amir finds an entire chapter dedicated to Hassan's people in one of his mother's old books written by an Iranian author named Khorami:

The Pashtuns had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It said the Hazaras had tried rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had "quelled them with unspeakable violence". The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their lands, burned their homes and sold their women. The book said part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a (Hosseini, 2003, p. 9).

Muslim Identity is one of the most problematic issues presented by Muslim writers and a distinctive feature of Diaspora literature that studies literary works of the authors who left their birthplace to another one in search of home, identity, and freedom. One of the characteristics of Muslims identity is the multitude of faces and shades of being Muslim in today's globalized world (Ruzmatova, 2019, p. 70). In his account of the many faces in his story, Amir says that Hassan's mother Sanaubar has "brilliant green eyes and impish face"(Hosseini,2003,p. 7) Hassan's father, Ali, on the other hand has "a congenital paralysis of his lower facial muscles, a condition that rendered him unable to smile and left him perpetually grimfaced"(Hosseini,2003, p.7).This grimfaced Ali , who is known by his trustworthiness and devotion to religion — he has memorized the Koran — chooses to marry his cousin known by her bad reputation to help restore some honor to his family blemished name. He, also, chooses not to answer back people's mockery at his atrophied leg that makes his movement, almost, impossible. Amir elucidates why Ali renders himself from answering back offensiveness: "partly because he could never catch them with that twisted leg dragging behind him. But mostly because Ali was immune to the insults of his assailants; he had found his joy, his antidote, the moment Sanaubar had given birth to Hassan" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 9-10).

Ali's physical appearance and religious orientation, being Hazara and Shi'a, mark his difference as 'Other' to the Sunni Afghans. Judith Butler attributes this non-violent response to injuries:



When we were speaking about the “subject” we were not always speaking about an individual: we were speaking about a model for agency and intelligibility, one that is very often based on notions of sovereign power. At the most intimate levels, we are social; we were comported toward a “you” , we are outside ourselves, constituted in cultural norms that precede and exceed us, given over to a set of cultural norms and field of power that condition us fundamentally (2004, p. 45).

The Afghan cultural norms, that Ali has been enthralled by, depower and strip him off any authorities against his tormentors. He chooses to condition himself to inconsiderate situation and by accepting his cultural norms succeeds in escaping the oppression imposed on him by the in- groups Sunni Pashtuns and acquires himself a positive distinct identity, at least to himself and to those who truly knows him like Amir and Baba. Hence, he accomplishes his journey of identity growth.

The same could not be said about the face of Amir’s teacher of Islam, Mullah Fatiullah Khan. He teaches about Islam and performing the five daily prayers (namaz), lectures about the virtues of charity giving (zakat) and the duty of pilgrimage to Mecca (hadj), and makes his students memorize verses from the Koran stressing on correctly pronouncing the Arabic words so that God would hear them better, yet Amir describes his face as “full of acne scars and a gruff voices”(Hosseini,2003,p.15-16). Amir’s father refers to him and his alike religious men in Afghanistan as “bearded idiots. ...God help us all if Afghanistan ever falls into their hands”(Hosseini,2003,p16) in reference to Taliban that would later rule and becomes the official face of Afghanistan. Taliban are Pashtun-based, but not all Pashtuns supports its ideology. Though Timothy Aubry thinks that Hosseini does not portray Taliban as a historical, sociological, economic modern creation but rather as cartoonish evil (2009,p.34), he manages to describe that face of evil through presenting the faces of opponents. When Amir describes his father, or Baba, as wealthy Pashtuns, he stresses his stony eyes of “black glare that would ‘drop the devil to his knees begging for mercy” (Hosseini,2003, p.12-13). Though it is often mentioned his relationship with King Nadir Shah, yet his authority and popularity essentially comes from his helping many from all levels within the social structure of Kabul, something that provides for his good reputation even after he moves to live in America. The accident in which he defends the honor of the woman, against the Russian soldier, in the truck while they were leaving Afghanistan sports Amir’s and Hosseini’s proposition that Baba and the alike Afghan men are the true face of Afghanistan. In California, Baba works in a gas station and on weekends he and former Afghan doctors, professors and generals sell antiques in flea market only to provide for their living. Here too, Hosseini gives a description of Afghan men who,



according to Edward Hower (as cited in Bloom), despite their poverty, they manage to keep their ancient standards of honor and pride (2009, p.52). Yet, Baba is the book old sinner that has demoralized Ali by claiming fatherhood to Hassan, for it was an ordinary thing for slaveholder to fatherhood children with their slave women. Rahim Khan describes his method to be good again: “Sometimes, I think everything he did, feeding the poor on the streets, building the orphanage, giving money to friends in need, it was all his way of redeeming himself. And that, I believe, is what true redemption is, Amir jan, when guilt leads to good” (Hosseini, 2003, p.277).

Soraya’s face, with her thick black eyebrow and hooked nose of “ a princess from old Persia — maybe that of Tahmineh, Rostam’s wife and Sohrab’s mother from Shahnamah”(Hosseini,2003,p.130) predicts the two roles she is to play in Amir’s life, a wife and a mother to Amir or (Rostam) , and a mother to Sohrab, when she and Amir adopt him after Hassan’s assassination at the hand of Taliban. When she confesses before her marriage to Amir her previous relation with a drug man that she lived with for a month, she, a mother like replica, inspires Amir little by little to admit his guilt and, thus, becomes the key figure in Amir’s self – redemption. likewise, her facial aspects make her the descendant of the actual princess of the book, Sofia Akrami , Amir’s mother, the highly educated university teacher and successor of the royal family: “my father playfully rubbed in the skeptics’ faces by referring to her as ‘my princess’ ” (Hosseini,2003,p.15). Though women do not figure mostly in *The Kite Runner*, when depicted they do show the other veiled side of the face of Afghanistan. Soraya wants to be a schoolteacher part of her enthusiasm to teach those who cannot read and write only for elevated moral intentions. On the other hand, her father wants her working with the government back in Kabul. Despite the strict code of behavior required by Afghan women in general, Soraya is presented with high hope concerning her own education and profession. The book’s successor princess and highly ambitious Afghan woman is to be the mother of the Hazara descendant, Sohrab. Throughout Soraya, The author attempts the close relationship between identity and the concept of Other. In other words, when the perceived as Others, the Hazara Sohrab, manages to escape oppression imposed on him , he secures himself a new distinct identity where a princess descendant is his mother and a Pashtun’s descendant is his father.

No face is scrupulously described into *The Kite Runner* than the face of Hassan:

I can still see Hassan up on that tree, sunlight flickering through the leaves on his almost perfectly round face, a face like a Chinese doll chiseled from hardwood: his flat, broad nose and slanting, narrow eyes like bamboo leaves, eyes that looked, depending on the light, gold, green, even sapphire. I can still see his tiny low-set ears and that pointed stub of a chin, a meaty



appendage that looked like it was added as a mere afterthought. And the cleft lip, just left of midline, where the Chinese doll maker's instrument may have slipped, or perhaps he had simply grown tired and careless. (Hosseini, 2003, p.3).

Throughout the story of the book, Hassan's face passes three important phases. The first of these phases is connected with Amir's childhood's memories in which Hassan's face is repeatedly compared to a Chinese doll, a mannerism of imperfection, inferiority, marginalization, and subjection to ridicule as shi'a Hazara's servant. In this period of time, Hassan, physically, is of a sad face, his hare lip prevents him from smiling and when he gets his lips fixed through a surgery, he is sexually insulted by Assef, and, thus, psychologically, loses any will to smile. Following the story of Amir and Hassan, it is easy to recognize the similarity between the Hazara in Afghanistan and the history of slavery in America. As Rebecca Stuhr suggests black and white children in America may have been nursed by the same woman and might have grown up playing together, but at certain point, it was clear that one of the children would grow up with all the privileges and opportunities, and the other would remain slave, only welcomed through the back door of the house (2009, p.74). Amir narrates that "Baba hired the same nursing women who had fed me to nurse Hassan" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 10). Before knowing that Hassan is his half brother, Amir and Hassan are connected in brotherhood that not even time could break, yet it is Amir who goes to school and Hassan is to stay and help in the household chores "history is not easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was Pashtun and he was Hazara. I was Sunni and he was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 24). Amir and Hassan, Ali and Baba grow up like brothers 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. 24). In a Pashtun-dominated Afghanistan, what truly connects Baba and Ali, Amir and Hassan is a master- servant relationship arrangement and nothing could be done to advance them out of this servitude even if Baba is Hassan's true father. In spite of the affectionate love and appreciation that connects Baba and Amir with Ali and Hassan, power dynamics, according to Rebecca Stuhr, makes it possible to treat them with inferiority. This same power structure allows Assef to abuse Hassan and, later on after a quarter of a century, to de-masculinize his son Sohrab without fearing retaliation(2009,p.42).

The scene in which Assef rapes Hassan allows the second phase of Hassan's face. Amir describes it: "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. 71). Part of the Afghan traditions performed in Eid -Adha, or Eid-e-Qorban, the Muslims



sacrifice lambs, Amir portrays the look in the lamb's face :“ I watch because of that look of acceptance in the animal's eyes. ...I imagine the animal sees that its imminent demise is for a higher purpose. This is the look” (Hosseini, 2003,p. 72). The kite – fighting tournament is an old winter tradition in Afghanistan. It is made of two parts; the first is attempted by the kite fighter who is to cut the opponent kites in the sky. The second part starts when a kite is cut and where the kite fighter's assistant or the kite runner chases the windblown kite drifting through the neighborhood and when he gets it in his hand , it is a custom that no one could take it from him. In the kite fighting of Hosseini's book, Hassan is Amir's kite runner. Amir believes that Baba holds him responsible for the death of his mother during his childbirth. Hassan knows that Amir's winning the kite fighting and bringing the Kite back home would bring him his father lost affection. That is why he does not give Assef the Kite when the latter demands it, and that is why Amir does not stand up for Hassan: “Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay to win Baba. Was it a fair price? The answer floated to my conscious mind before I could thwart it: He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?” (Hosseini,2003, p.73). Hassan as Hazara is dehumanized so that Amir can be human. Yet the intense sympathy Amir feels for Hassan whose ethnicity makes him a tragic hero in Afghan society is what Timothy Aubry considers as a kind of sympathy felt by a person who must be of a position of privilege and superiority, and who may feel for the victim but not be one. Moreover, such felt compassion for Hassan is accompanied by the anxiety that Amir, himself, is Hassan victimizer — a status that would paradoxically endanger his claims to humanity (2009, p. 32-33), which, sequentially, explain Amir's interpretation of Hassan's dream of the monster lurking at the lake: “There is no monster, he'd said, just water. Except he'd been wrong about that. There was a monster in the lake. It had grabbed Hassan by the ankles, dragged him to the murky bottom. I was that monster” (Hosseini, 2003, p.80-81).Despite Letting Hassan down and accusing him of a theft he had not committed, what , ultimately, saves Amir from the status of monster and preserves his humanity is his intense feelings that he is Hassan's true victimizer. Saveing Sohrab from Assef's tyranny is the method Amir follows to face his past and wash his old sins. Juan Du considers Amir's sense of guilt as a journey of self-actualization where his individual's self is maintained and enhanced through a long process of reflection, interpretation of experience, recovering, changing, and growing (2017,p.91-92). According to Rogers (2015) (as cited in Juan Du, 2017), such an actualization comes as a result of:

evaluational interaction with the others where he re-form his self-concept through a positive interaction with the environment and the result the structure of the self is formed — an organized, fluid but consistent conceptual pattern of



perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the “I” or the “me”, together with the values attached to these concepts(p.92).

Speaking of true monstrosity, one cannot avoid mentioning Assef’s face. He represents the atrocity the second’s phase of Hassan’s face permits to come into sight. Assef is the only character created with no sense of guilt for his crimes. His hate for Hassan as Hazaran is illustrated not only through his German origin, but also through his admiration of Hitler’s vision, something that makes his Pashtuns – oriented disdain for the Hazara similar to Hitler’s anti-Semitic nationalism to which he is a great admirer: “Afghanistan is the land of the Pashtuns. It always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our *watan*”(Hosseini,2003, p. 38). Assef’s scorn for Hazara extends to include Amir and his Father: “You are part of the problem, Amir. If idiots like you and your father didn’t take these people in, we’d be rid of them by now. ... You’re a disgrace to Afghanistan”(Hosseini,2003,p. 39). His later appearance twenty five years later as a victimizer Taliban Official is the author’s insinuation that Taliban does not belong neither to Afghanistan nor to Islam. What is as interesting of Assef’s face as inhuman character is that his face is depicted only through parts. At School, Amir describes Assef’s eyes while hitting one of the schoolboys: “I will never forget how Assef’s eyes blue eyes glinted with a light not entirely sane and how he grinned...as he pummeled that poor kid unconscious”(p. 36). His savagery earned him names suit his ruthless sociopathic nature. Being the hyperbolic absorption of evil into the face, Judith Butler indicates that the face of evil is exposed through the eyes (2004,p. 143).When Amir enters the fight with him to win Sohrab, Assef’s eyes are bloodshot like and his face as a representative of the face of evil that ceases to be a face at all: “The face ...whose meaning is portrayed as captured by evil is precisely the one that is not human”(Butler,2004.p.145).

Amir describes the third phase of Hassan’s face in Polaroid photograph he sees quarter of century of their last meeting: “sunlight slanted in from the left, casting a shadow on half of his rotund face. He was squinting and smiling at the camera, showing a pair of missing front teeth”(Hosseini,2003,p.199) , and when he sees Sohrab as captured as slave by Assef, it is the familiarity found in his face that reminds Amir of Hassan: “The resemblance was breathtaking. ...The boy had his father’s round moon face... It was the Chinese doll face of my childhood,... His head was shaved, his eyes darkened with mascara”(p. 257). It is not only the resemblance of the face but rather the likeness of the look that enthralls to all Amir’s’ ethical obligation to redeem himself: “ Sohrab’s eyes flicked to me. They were slaughter sheep eyes. They even had the mascara — I remembered how, on the day of Eid of qorban, the mullah in our backyard used to apply mascara to the eyes of the sheep and



feed it a cube of sugar before slicing its throat”(Hosseini,2003,p.262). Butler in her book considers the moral claims the other makes upon us, the ones that cannot easily be cast away: “address moral demands to us, ones that we do not ask for, ones that we are not free to refuse.... To respond to the face, to understand its meaning, means to be awake to what is precarious in another life, or, rather, the precariousness of life itself” (2004, p. 131-134).

4. Conclusion

Applying Judith Butler’s reading of the concept of Other on Khaled Hosseini’s novel *The Kite Runner* (2003), the following could, thus, concluded:

First, through the three phases of Hassan’s face Khaled Hosseini defines the concept of Other out of Afghan’s view point. The element of familiarity Amir finds in The face of Sohrab is what consolidates his redeeming will and obligatory desires to fulfill his moral duties. Familiarity, as the distinguishing characteristic of third phase of Hassan’ face, is what helps to restore justice, and, most importantly, to exorcise Amir’s old demons of the past and renders him guiltless of any mischief. Moreover, the look of the lamb in Sohrab’s eyes that brings back that of Hassan, together with the Chinese doll face and flat nose is what define Amir’s childhood memories of a country, memories that reflect the true face of Afghanistan. Familiarity of face and the transcendence of definite situations in Afghanistan’s history are Hosseini’s means to humanize Afghanistan.

Second, in *The Kite Runner*, Afghanistan does not belong to one but to all different ethnic groups, and uprightness empowers what is justly redeemable and truly human. Amir’s journey from Kabul to America back to Kabul represents his journey from sin and guilt to redemption and good. It is journey that sums up the ways of discovering sins whitewashing other than taking guilt on the very same people betrayed. Amir’s journey of growth from kite fighter to a kite runner to return back the good he received could be read not only as Afghanistan’s remedial of violence and destruction, but also as an arena of transformation that understand and accept any concept of differences between the East and the West, an arena of established global standards for shaping and ratifying responsibilities for the Other.



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