

**UNVEILING ETHNIC COMPLEXITY:  
EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND  
POLITICAL IDENTITY IN HOSSEINI'S FICTION**

**JUHI SAHARA J**

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## **DECLARATION**

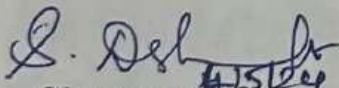
I do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled Unveiling Ethnic Complexity: Exploring the Interplay Between Ethnicity and Political Identity in Hosseini's Fiction submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A.)** is carried out by me **JUHI SAHARA J** during the period from **JANUARY 2024 - MAY 2024** under the guidance of **Mrs. C. KAVITHA M.A., M.Phil.**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

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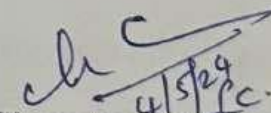
## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **Unveiling Ethnic Complexity:**

**Exploring the Interplay Between Ethnicity and Political Identity in Hosseini's Fiction** submitted to in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A.)** is carried out by **JUHI SAHARA J** during the period from **JANUARY 2024- MAY 2024** under the guidance of **Mrs. C. KAVITHA M.A., M.Phil.**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, or similar titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

  
Signature of the

**Head of the Department**  
Dept. of English  
SF Programmes - Campus - II  
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science  
and Higher Education for Women  
Coimbatore - 641 108

  
Signature of the

**Supervisor with Designation**

  
Signature of the Director

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis investigates the intricate interplay between ethnicity and political identity as portrayed in Khaled Hosseini's seminal works, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Through a nuanced analysis of characters, settings, and thematic elements, this study illuminates the complex relationships between ethnic diversity, personal identity, and socio-political contexts in Afghanistan. In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini navigates the ethnic tensions between Pashtuns and Hazaras, exploring how these divisions shape individual lives and societal structures amidst the backdrop of political turmoil. Similarly, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the narrative delves into the experiences of Afghan women from diverse ethnic backgrounds, shedding light on the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and political oppression. By employing a multidisciplinary approach that integrates literary analysis with socio-political theory, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how ethnicity and political identity intersect and influence individual agency and collective narratives in the Afghan context. Through a comparative exploration of these two seminal works, this thesis seeks to elucidate the complexities of ethnic identity and its ramifications within the broader socio-political landscape of Afghanistan and its Diaspora.

## NOTES

In the text, abbreviation is used for the name of the primary texts in the parenthetical references which are follows:

- *The Kite Runner* TKR
- *A Thousand Splendid Suns* ATSS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

“Literature is where I go to explore the highest and lowest places in human society and in the human spirit, where I hope to find not absolute truth but the truth of the tale, the imagination, and the heart.” - Salman Rushdie.

Literature, in its richest sense, is a vast and vibrant tapestry woven from words. It encompasses factual accounts, narratives that ignite our imagination, poems that stir our emotions and dramas that paint vivid portraits of the human experience. We embark on journeys through these creations to the “highest and lowest places in human society and the human spirit,” as Salman Rushdie describes. Literature does not offer absolute truths but rather the “truth of the tale, the imagination, and the heart.” It allows us to confront the complexities of life, empathize with others, and ultimately gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Literature, a term shimmering with the brilliance of a thousand stories, transcends the mere conveyance of information. It is a kaleidoscopic realm where words morph into luminous prisms, refracting the human experience in all its prismatic glory. Here, we encounter narratives spun with gossamer threads of imagination, poems that ignite constellations of emotions within our souls, and dramas that unveil the very essence of humanity, etched in characters both flawed and magnificent.

As Salman Rushdie eloquently proclaims, Literature beckons us to embark on a grand exploration, a spelunking expedition into the “highest and lowest places in human

society and the human spirit.” It is not a purveyor of cold, hard facts but rather a weaver of truths whispered on the wind, truths borne of the imagination and embraced by the heart. Within its pages, we encounter a prismatic reflection of ourselves, our triumphs and tribulations writ large for all to witness.

Literature is a potent elixir, an alchemical brew that transmutes the mundane into the extraordinary. It possesses the uncanny ability to transport us across continents and centuries, allowing us to inhabit the skin of characters far removed from our own. Through their eyes, we witness the unfolding of sagas steeped in myth and legend or delve into the poignant intimacies of everyday lives. We become privy to the whispers of the lovelorn bard, the anguished cries of the betrayed king, and the quiet wisdom of the wizened sage.

This literary odyssey fosters a profound sense of empathy, enabling us to bridge the chasms that separate us. We learn to navigate the human condition’s labyrinthine complexities, celebrate the spirit’s triumphs, and mourn the depths of despair. We confront the grotesque underbelly of society and ascend to the sunlit peaks of human potential. Literature compels us to grapple with the thorny questions of existence, to wrestle with the enigmas of free will and fate, love and loss, and good and evil.

As we delve deeper into this labyrinthine world, our capacity for introspection expands. We begin to recognize the echoes of our own experiences resonating within the narratives we consume. Literature becomes a mirror, reflecting the fragmented aspects of our souls, urging us to confront the darkness and embrace the light within. It

is a crucible that refines our sensibilities, shaping us into more compassionate, more understanding beings.

Literature's impact extends far beyond mere entertainment. It is a potent force for personal and societal transformation. By encountering diverse narratives and characters, readers develop empathy, learning to see the world through the eyes of others. They confront our biases, challenge ingrained beliefs, and expand our understanding of the human condition.

Literature can also serve as an incentive for social change. Works that expose injustice, inequality, or oppression can spark dialogue and ignite reform movements. Authors act as social commentators, wielding their words as weapons to challenge the status quo and advocate for a more just world.

Furthermore, Literature fosters intellectual curiosity. Engaging narratives and thought-provoking ideas compels us to question the world, seek knowledge, and develop critical thinking skills. By encouraging us to analyze, interpret, and debate, Literature equips us with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of modern life.

The world of Literature is vast and ever evolving. It beckons us to embark on a lifelong discovery journey, continually broaden our horizons, and deepen our understanding of ourselves and others. Whether we seek solace in the lyrical beauty of poetry, thrill to the adventures of a fictional hero, or grapple with the profound questions posed by philosophy, Literature has something to offer everyone.

In conclusion, Literature is not merely a pastime but a portal to a more prosperous, profound existence. It is a banquet spread with the finest delicacies of human experience, a symphony that resonates with the deepest chords of our being. It is an invitation to embark on a lifelong voyage of discovery, a quest for the ever elusive yet ever present truth at the heart of the human story.

“We write in the gaps left by the planes that took us away.” - Laila Lalami.

This quote by Laila Lalami, an Afghan American writer, captures the sense of loss and displacement that fueled the early expressions of Afghan American Literature. Writing became a way for Afghan American writers to fill the void left by their homeland.

Afghan American Literature, a nascent yet vibrant tapestry woven from threads of displacement, resilience, and cultural fusion, offers a unique lens through which to view the literary landscape. Unlike the monolithic narratives often associated with Afghanistan, Afghan American works present a kaleidoscope of experiences, each shard reflecting the intricate interplay between ancestral heritages and adopted homes.

These narratives are not mere chronicles of war and hardship, though such themes undoubtedly leave their mark. They are testaments to the enduring human spirit, its capacity to bloom anew in unfamiliar soil. We encounter characters grappling with the specter of a lost homeland, their memories imbued with the haunting echoes of pomegranate trees and the vibrant tapestry of Kabul bazaars. However, they also navigate the intricacies of American life, confronting societal biases and forging new identities within a cultural melting pot.

Afghan American Literature thrives on the tension between the familiar and the foreign. It compels us to confront the complexities of cultural assimilation, the yearning for tradition often clashing with the demands of a new reality. Through these literary explorations, we gain a nuanced understanding of the Afghan American experience, a journey marked by loss and renewal.

The language becomes a battleground, where Farsi's music intertwines with American English's rhythms. This linguistic alchemy gives rise to a unique voice that resonates with the richness of multiple cultural influences. The resulting narratives are not simply told; they are sung, imbued with the poignant melodies of longing and the triumphant cadences of self discovery.

Afghan American Literature is a bridge, fostering empathy and understanding between cultures that may seem worlds apart. By delving into these narratives, we can step outside our own experiences and witness the world through Afghan American eyes. We learn of the resilience of the human spirit; it is the capacity to rebuild a life shattered by conflict and find solace in embracing a new community.

Ultimately, Afghan American Literature is a testament to the transformative power of storytelling. It is a vibrant tapestry woven from the threads of memory, loss, and unwavering hope for a brighter future. As we delve into these narratives, we are not simply entertained; we are transformed, becoming more aware of the depth and complexity of the human experience.

One incredibly captivating part of Afghan American writing's starting point lies in the one-of-a-kind etymological scene it possesses. Numerous early Afghan American

scholars, removed from their country during the Soviet attack, showed up in the US with restricted English capability. This underlying obstacle turned into an intense wellspring of imagination and development.

Confronted with the test of putting themselves out there in another dialect, these essayists frequently went to a mix of Farsi and English, etymological embroidery reflecting their bicultural encounters. This “code exchanging,” as it is called, was not just a pragmatic arrangement; it turned into a scholarly solid gadget. It permitted scholars to catch the subtleties of Afghan culture and feelings that may not have exact interpretations in English.

Furthermore, it was a sign that the country abandoned an unobtrusive demonstration of rebellion against constrained relocation. This bilingual person of early Afghan American writing not only improved the actual works’ expressive capability but also tested the predominant monolingual account in American writing. It prepared for a more comprehensive scholarly scene that embraced the dynamic embroidery of dialects and societies woven into the texture of American culture.

The beginning of Afghan American writing is a story in the pot of war and removal. Unlike laid-out scholarly practices with roots following hundreds of years, Afghan American writing flaunts a somewhat youthful age inseparably connected to the wild political disturbances that shook Afghanistan during the late twentieth 100 years. To comprehend its development, we should dive into the verifiable setting that impelled Afghan voices onto the American scholarly stage.

The Soviet attack of 1979 denoted a seismic change in Afghan history. This merciless, very long-term war set off a mass departure, with millions escaping their conflict torn country looking for shelter. These early floods of evacuees, dispersed across the US, shaped the core of the Afghan American people group. In any case, their appearance was certainly not a consistent mix into another life. They conveyed with them rich embroidery of stories, customs, and social memory that conflicted with the obvious fundamental factors of they took ashore. Language obstructions posed a potential threat, social contrasts reared disarray, and the well-established injury of removal cast a long shadow.

The early articulations of Afghan American writing came to fruition inside this cauldron of feelings. These early stories wrestled with the significant feeling of misfortune and yearning for a country abandoned. Scholars like Tamim Ansary, in his dimly comical diary "*Destructive Afghans*," investigated the intricacies of exploring another social scene while sticking to valued customs. Deborah Ellis' "*The Provider*," given meetings with Afghan ladies, offered a piercing look into the unforgiving real factors of war torn Afghanistan, seen through according to a little kid compelled to turn into the family's provider.

As the 1990s unfurled, another age of Afghan American authors arose. Many were kids or youthful grown-ups during their departure from Afghanistan, their encounters separated from the perspective of uprooting and a youth shaded by war. Their stories introduced an extraordinary point of view, frequently injected with a feeling of wistfulness for a country they scarcely recollected. Works as Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* resounded with a worldwide crowd, offering an impactful

investigation of Afghan culture, the getting through obligations of companionship, and the overwhelming results of war.

Nonetheless, Afghan American writing is not is not exclusively characterized by subjects of war and injury. While these remain intense and unquestionable powers, contemporary essayists are pushing the limits and investigating a more extensive scope of encounters. Creators like Laila Lalami dig into the complexities of relational peculiarities inside the Afghan American people group. Ruler Fawzia boldly gives voice to the battles of Afghan ladies exploring another world, frequently troubled by man-centric practices. Marouf Abdesalam investigates the quest for dreams and the difficulties of social osmosis in his book *“The Useful Class.”*

Generally, Afghan American writing fills in as a fundamental extension between societies. It cultivates compassion by offering to peruse a window into the existences of Afghans, both in their country and in their embraced country. These stories challenge generalizations, feature the rich social legacy of Afghanistan, and praise the strength of the human soul notwithstanding affliction. Afghan American writing is as yet youthful, yet its voice is consistently earning strength and respect. As this collection of work continues to develop, it vows to improve the woven artwork of American writing and proposition to be much more extravagant and have more different points of view on the Afghan experience over a significant period.

The beginning of Afghan American writing is a demonstration of persevering through the force of memory and the human soul’s capacity to find comfort in narrating even amid upheaval exclamation Dissimilar to laid out scholarly customs with establishes covered somewhere down in hundreds of years, Afghan American writing is

an early power, brought into the world from the turbulent political scene of late twentieth century Afghanistan. To comprehend its development, we should dive into the cauldron of war and removal that pushed Afghan voices onto the American artistic stage.

As the instance of Persian obviously shows, non European written works have had native customs of composing scholarly history. By the by, the underlying undertaking of permeating writing, for example, Persian with “the possibility of public uniqueness” fell, of course, to Western Orientalists, who were prepared in European philological grant yet who likewise concentrated on Persian writing firmly and with interest, expounded on it with power, and, all the more critically, helped outline the resulting disciplinary shapes of Persian scholarly examinations. Despite the Orientalists commitments to Persian abstract historiography, the simultaneous development of Persian writing, both as an academic discipline and a public organization in the central portion of the twentieth hundred years, came about, in addition to other things, in a serious turn towards the investigating and examining of Persian abstract history from a firmly “present day” viewpoint, this time by Persian talking researchers themselves.

Critical undertakings were embraced to deliver far-reaching narratives of Persian writing as a fundamental part of an expansive “public” social legacy. Subsequently, synchronous with the development of a solid public fanciful during this period, insightful creations and gatherings of Persian scholarly history to comprehensively mirror the coherence of “the possibility of public uniqueness” transformed into a task of particular significance. It is essential to bring up that powerful current works of Persian artistic historiography by Iranian researchers (or by Western/Orientalists researchers of

Persian writing) almost consistently applied the expression “Persian” in a confined and prohibitive sense.

Although from contrasting ideological and discursive perspectives, Afghan and Iranian scholars considered literary historiography to epitomize the magnificence and splendor of a culture whose enduring legacies can be successfully and conveniently utilized to institutionalize Literature and literary studies further. The overall efforts (and general success) of Iranian scholars in this respect and in claiming Persian Literature in its entirety as Iranian Literature have been largely acknowledged.

They diminished Persian writing to Iranian writing, with little thought of the way that “Iranian” in its present day delivering has had a spatially restricted, famously broadly bound, definition, while “Persian” has generally alluded to a tremendous etymological and scholarly custom as well regarding a sweeping social legacy that surpass the cutting edge limits of an explicitly separated country state. Definitively for the entanglements engaged with composing Persian scholarly history from a broadly prohibitive viewpoint, current historiography of writing in Afghanistan, as far as concerns its, straightforwardly draws in the ramifications, down to earth etc., of the reasonably tricky utilization of “Persian” and or as “Iranian.”

Though the “patriarchs of the discipline” (to utilize Jauss’ term) in Iran, as well as their Western Iranologist partners, were reliably utilizing of the expressions “Iranian writing” and “Persian writing,” conversely, in Afghanistan elaborate endeavors were embraced to effectively challenge this case and, all things being equal, to deliver narratives of Persian writing that, while in design and strategy shifting little from crafted by their Iranian partners, by the by kept up with the centrality and creativity of

the area that presently is Afghanistan in the production of the fantastic corpus of artistic works in Persian (institutionally named “Dari” in Afghanistan).

Be that as it may, a few significant commitments to Persian artistic historiography by researchers from Afghanistan have remained for the most part neglected. As a critical part during the time spent standardization of writing in Afghanistan, scholarly historiography has needed to handle the subject of the beginnings and early improvement of Persian as a semantic and scholarly custom. All in all, how to manage the subject of the beginning of Persian language and writing has educated the verbose creation regarding the task of abstract historiography in Afghanistan. Be that as it may, this question is appropriate as a lot to see verifiable starting points as to geological and spatial beginnings of Persian writing.

It is critical not exclusively to find when Persian writing, as is expectedly known today, appeared; it means a lot to find out where it began to prosper in any case. Present day abstract history specialists from Afghanistan have created significant all encompassing outlines comprising of compendia of names, titles, styles, classifications, periods, and so on, that are considered significant for their tasks. In such a manner, they vary little from regular works of abstract historiography.

They not entirely settled, consistently, to exhibit and expound the obvious centrality of the land that is Afghanistan in the ascent and development of Persian writing during the developmental initial not many hundreds of years after the appearance of Islam in the district. The ramifications whether political, philosophical, epistemological, or even stylish of such a dispute can be huge, as the current article endeavors to outline. What follows presents a basic point of view on one of the chief

works of Persian scholarly historiography created in Afghanistan: Muhammad Haidar Zhubal's powerful *Tarikh-I Adabiyat-I Afghanistan* [History of writing of Afghanistan]. It manages the early sections of the book, where different components of the lineage of Persian/Dari artistic flowering after the approach of Islam are examined. Zhubal was brought into the world in Kabul and, upon graduation from auxiliary school, went to the then recently settled Workforce of Letters at Kabul College.

He later enrolled in graduate studies courses in the humanities and philosophy at Princeton University. He was a member of the *Aryana Encyclopaedia* [Da'irat al-Ma'arif] and served as the editor-in-chief of such influential journals as 'Irfan and Aryana. His extensive oeuvres included *Adabiyat az khilal-i rawanshinasi* [Literature through [the lens] of Psychology], *Naqd-i adabi wa rawabit-e an ba tarikh-i adabiyat* [Literary criticism and its relation to literary history], *Tarikh-i adabiyat-i Afghanistan* [History of Literature of Afghanistan], the book under consideration here, *Nardban-i asman* [A Ladder to the sky], on the life and poetry of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Balkhi or Rumi, *Nigahi ba adabiyat-i mu'asir-i Afghanistan* [A Glance at contemporary Literature of Afghanistan], *Zaban-i Farsi va rawish-i tardis-i nawin wa music-i an* [The Persian language and new, contemporary methods of teaching it], and several shorter treatises, comparative literary investigations, translations, and short stories. Muhammad Haidar Zhubal was killed in a tragic airplane accident over the skies of Beirut, Lebanon.

All through his brief, however exceptionally useful, time of abstract grants, particularly in the pages of *Tarikh-I Adabiyat-I Afghanistan*, Zhubal depends on verifiable, artistic, and semantic sources, as well as using logical and desultory techniques that describe Afghan abstract grants overall meticulously tried to lay out and state the meaning of the domain of Afghanistan as the support, without a doubt the

starting place, of writing in Persian after the Islamic victory of the tremendous Persian talking milieu.

The Literature created in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is referred to as Afghan Literature or Literature of Afghanistan. Inspired by Literature from Central and South Asia, it is primarily written in Dari, the official language of Afghanistan, and Pashto, the native language of that country. Other regional languages are used in Afghan Literature, including Uzbek, Turkmen, Balochi, and Pashayi. Afghanistan is a multilingual nation; however, its writers typically employ these languages in their written and vocal works and in the curriculum. In addition to Central and South Asia, Persian and Arabic Literature significantly affect its writing.

The historical backdrop of the more extensive Afghan writing traverses among antiquated and present day Afghanistan. The earliest works of writing were orally sent. Its composing framework is generally connected with Arabic content. The most seasoned surviving records of the writing are trusted subsidiaries of the Nabataean variety of the Aramaic letters in order, dating to the fifth and sixth hundreds of years. Nonetheless, it started in the early Islamic hundreds of years.

Archaeological investigations that started around 1922 have shown compelling artwork with pre Islamic contents. The country's writing was initially composed and communicated in Arabic letter set, making it have a rich phonetic tradition of pre Islamic contents, which existed prior to being supplanted by the Arabic letters in order, including Sharada, Kharosthi, Greek, and Brahmi following, by the Islamic victory of Afghanistan. Bactrian language is additionally connected with pre Islamic contents.

Afghanistan's contemporary writing has profound roots in the rich legacy of oral organization and customarily composed texts. The locals of Afghanistan, either living inside the nation or outside, utilize significant dialects, Pashto and Dari. The two dialects are involved by the 32 million individuals in Afghanistan, making the two formally acknowledged dialects cover a significant piece of Afghanistan's writing. Artists and scholars generally record Afghanistan's writing. In 1886, a French creator, James Darmesteter, expounded on the verifiable setting of Afghanistan's writing and writers' job.

It is contended that Pashtun sonnets, including Sher Zaman Taizi's book *The Field* (1988), had a critical impact on writing. In the cutting edge, Afghan writers and brief tale scholars effectively take part in recording as a hard copy verse containing a point by point record of writing.

Afghanistan's writing is generally connected with the developments of Iran, China, and India. The nation saw the advancement of imaginative work during the Ghaznavids line and the Ghurid administration between the tenth and twelfth 100 years. In any case, the Timurid line molded culture and imaginative exercises in the Islamic period.

Since Afghanistan has a rich scholarly personality, old stories, and conventional custom melodies uncover exceptionally old and current Afghan writing. Afghan writing has its foundations in Dari, Pashto, Arabic, and Turkic dialects, as they were widely utilized in the middle Ages. Afghan rulers like the Samanid Domain, the Ghaznavids, the Timurids, and the Mughal Realm were exceptionally impacted by Persian writing.

They energized and upheld scholars like Rumi, Jami, Rudaki, Ferdowsi, and Khwaja Abdullah Ansari for writing on the Persian language.

An awe inspiring sonnet, Shahnameh by Firdawsi, is one of the significant works, while Rumi is viewed as one of the best artists in Afghan writing who formed Persian writing. Be that as it may, his works were subsequently converted into English.

Due to the massive movement to different nations in the sixteenth to eighteenth hundreds of years, the verbalization of beliefs and the early foundation of artistic establishments and learning conditions outside the nation have frequently been viewed as the focal point of early Afghan writing. During those hundreds of years, numerous scholarly figures started in the unified area; however, following the parcel between the Mughal domain and the Safavid line, a few writers, including Khushal Khattak, moved to artistic focuses. Among the Hindu Kush mountain range was where Khattak dwelt. As of the late nineteenth 100 years, Pakhtuns sang verse with music to make it indistinguishable from ghazals, an old style Urdu.

Afghan, Turkic, and Pashto writing share indistinguishable practices and are all perceived as Persian writing. Be that as it may, Afghanistan's writing is unmistakable because of its customs of composing frameworks and oral equation based synthesis.

In the next 100 years, Kabul, the nation's capital, became the middle for artistic figures and distribution. Mahmud Tarzi was the supervisor of Seraj al Akhbar, Kabul's most memorable artistic paper coursed from 1911 to 1919. He is frequently known for his commitment to advancing the present day abstract climate. Afghanistan has delivered a few scholarly figures throughout the last many years, including Khalilullah

Khalili and Sayed Buhaniddin Majruh. Khalili is referred to as a “Renaissance man” for his commitment to current writing.

Mahmud Tarzi effectively advanced Pashto as a public language and gave data and news through the Seraj al Akhbar paper. During that period, through articles, Seraj ul Akhbar assumed a critical part in modernizing Afghan culture. A French writer, Jules Verne, likewise interpreted the work in an unknown dialect. He became the principal essayist who distributed the primary books imprinted in free Afghanistan.

Afghan poetry and culture have a rich history that dates back to the Sufi movement. Poetry was composed in several common tongues, including Pashto, Persian, Dari, and relatively few Urdu poems. English and Turkic poetry, among other foreign languages, has significantly impacted Afghan poetry. The poetry captures the various spiritual traditions that exist in the nation. In particular, spiritual and Sufi experiences have influenced many Afghan writers. The oldest literary genre in Afghanistan is poetry, which has a solid oral and written past. Poetry has been used for ages in Afghanistan. For the entirety of his life, the renowned Afghan poet Rumi wrote in Dari.

A few additional poets were significantly affected by the Persian, Pashto, and Arabic languages, yet others were also composed in Dari. Afghan poetry is traditionally written in two rhymed lines called landay, typically written by modern women.

The majority of Afghan proverbs are ancient, straightforward, and literal. Typically, they convey an understood reality grounded in intuition or personal encounters. Certain proverbs are classified according to actual events that happened or

based on myths that make things, people, and ideas appear momentarily without immediate sensory input.

There are two official languages in which Afghan proverbs are mostly found. Because they are borrowed from foreign or regional languages related to Afghan languages, unacknowledged or anonymous proverbs can be found in more than two languages.

Khaled Hosseini was born on 4, 1965. He is an Afghan American author, UNHCR altruism representative, and previous doctor. His presentation novel *The Kite Runner* (2003) was an essential and business achievement; the book and his resulting books have all been set in Afghanistan and have highlighted an Afghan as the hero. Hosseini's books have illuminated the worldwide crowd about Afghanistan's kin and culture.

When Hosseini was 15, his family applied for refuge in the US, where he later turned into a naturalized resident. Hosseini did not return to Afghanistan until 2003 when he was 38, an encounter like that of the hero in *The Kite Runner*. In later meetings, Hosseini owned up to feeling survivor's culpability for having had the option to pass on the country before the Soviet attack and resulting wars.

After graduating from college, Hosseini compared his time practicing medicine in California to "an arranged marriage." Because of *The Kite Runner*'s success, he could give up medicine and focus only on writing. To varied degrees, his three works have been well-received both critically and economically. On *The New York Times* Best Seller list, *The Kite Runner* peaked at number one for 101 weeks and was number one for three. His third book, *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013), was on the chart for 33

weeks, whereas his second book, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), was on the chart for 103 weeks, with 15 weeks spent at the top. In addition to her writings, Hosseini has advocated for refugees after establishing the Khaled Hosseini Foundation to aid Afghan refugees returning to their homeland.

His parents are from Herat; his mother taught Persian at a girls' high school, and his father was a diplomat for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul. Hosseini said of his ethnicity, "I am not pure anything. I have parts of Tajikistan and Pashtun in me." It is thought that his mother's side of the Pashtun tribe is the Mohammadzai tribe. Hosseini characterizes his childhood as affluent. He was raised in Kabul's affluent Wazir Akbar Khan neighbourhood for eight years. Hosseini describes Kabul as "a growing, thriving, cosmopolitan city" where he frequently flew kites with his relatives and does not remember his sister Raya ever experiencing discrimination because she is a woman.

The family was aware of the circumstances endured by several of their friends and relatives, even though they were far from the unrest in the nation. We have a large family and friend base in Kabul, Hosseini clarified. Furthermore, the communist takeover was genuinely far more brutal than the 1973 coup. Many were arrested, many were put to death, and many more were held in prison. Almost everyone connected to the former government or the royal family faced persecution, imprisonment, execution, kidnapping, or disappearance.

As a result, we would periodically hear about friends, acquaintances, and family members who had experienced it and who were either in jail or, worse, had vanished. No one knew their whereabouts, and a few of them never made it. Famous in Kabul as a singer and composer, my wife's uncle had been loud in his criticism of the communists

and other issues, and then he vanished. Moreover, we still do not know what happened to him. That kind of stuff is how we started to hear about mass killings and other horrific things in Europe. It was, therefore, weird, yet it hit home in a very genuine sense.

Hosseini's debut book, *The Kite Runner*, came out in 2003. It tells the tale of a young child named Amir who is trying to get a stronger bond with his father while also dealing with flashbacks to a tragic incident in his early years. The story takes place in two locations: Fremont in the Bay Area of San Francisco and Afghanistan, specifically between the fall of the monarchy and the Taliban administration. Based on Nielsen Book Scan, the book was the bestselling book in the US in 2005. The author of *The Kite Runner* also recorded an audio version of the book. A film of the same name, titled *The Kite Runner*, was released in December 2007. Hosseini makes a brief cameo appearance as an observer when Amir buys a kite and goes kite flying with Sohrab toward the film's end.

Hosseini's second book, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, was published in 2007 and is set in Afghanistan. From a female perspective, the novella tackles many of the same topics as Hosseini's debut novel. It tells the tale of Mariam and Laila, two women whose lives are intertwined after Mariam's husband marries Laila. The narrative takes place in Afghanistan during the turbulent thirty year period that saw the country go from Soviet occupation to Taliban rule and post Taliban reconstruction. On May 22, 2007, Riverhead Books published the novel along with the Simon & Schuster audio version. Producer Scott Rudin and Columbia Pictures subsequently purchased the adaptation rights to the novel.

On May 21, 2013, Hosseini's third book, *And the Mountains Echoed*, was published. Before it was released, Hosseini said: I am forever drawn to the family as a recurring central theme of my writing. My earlier novels were, at heart, tales of fatherhood and motherhood. My new novel is a multigenerational family story, this time revolving around brothers and sisters and how they love, wound, betray, honor, and sacrifice for each other.

Hosseini is a Goodwill Delegate for the UNHCR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Through the Khaled Hosseini Foundation, he has been trying to help those in need in Afghanistan. Hosseini's 2007 journey to Afghanistan with UNHCR, which raised money to construct homes for refugees returning to their homeland, served as the impetus for the foundation's idea.

Hosseini studied much Persian poetry as a child, particularly poetry by authors like Hafez, Omar Khayyam, Abdul Qadir Bedil, and Rumi, along with translations of books like *Alice in Wonderland*. He has also named a Persian translation of Jack London's *White Fang* a significant influence from his early years. In an interview with BBC Radio 4's Saturday Live, he named Afghan singer Ahmad Zahir "the Afghan Elvis." He said his music was "one of the seminal memories of my time in Afghanistan." Zahir also picked the songs "Madar" and "Aye Padesha Khuban" as his two Inheritance Tracks.

Khaled Hosseini's books, influenced by his life as an Afghan refugee, offer an intimate look at the refugee experience. His narratives provide a window into his journey and capture the natural and emotional path refugee's face, encouraging compassion in us. Empathy is not just a word in the emotive worlds he creates; it is an emotion that seeps into your very being.

In *The Kite Runner*, Amir, a young boy from Afghanistan, has a heartbreaking and inspiring story. Amir's journey takes us from the vibrant streets of Kabul to a new life in the United States. During the Soviet invasion in 1978, the book portrays a nation in devastation.

Amir and his companion Hassan's lives are irrevocably altered by the horrors of war, an accident that happened as children, and a well kept secret. Amir's persona represents the nuanced emotional journey that many refugees must endure. Amir's fight for reconciliation, the lingering effects of his past, and his search for redemption will enthrall readers.

The difficulties migrants now encounter when fleeing their native countries in quest of a better life are reflected in Amir's trip. They must overcome challenging obstacles and disbeliefs that hinder their ability to adjust. By allowing us to view the world through the eyes of a refugee, *The Kite Runner* inspires compassion for people who, like Amir, are trying to start over. Millions of refugee stories are reflected in Amir's story, which is not just one. For this reason, Hosseini, as a writer, will not stop advocating for empathy and consciousness in a world marked by warfare and displacement.

It is a must read for everyone who wants to observe the world from the perspective of a refugee, *The Kite Runner*. It reminds us that although what they previously called home has probably long since been destroyed, what we call home frequently had a terrifying beginning.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam and Laila's lives unfold in war torn Afghanistan. It begins with one major war and leads into another, revealing how war destroys Afghan citizens, their families, and communities. Mariam's journey starts with

loneliness and challenging times, revealing the strength of the human spirit. Laila, in contrast, is full of youthful optimism and determination, representing the dreams of Afghan women. Their lives dramatically turn when they marry the same man without choice, strengthening their unbreakable bond.

Laila and her new family relocated to Pakistan a few years later. However, they eventually returned to Kabul because it was vital for them to return to a location that represented home. Here is an illustration of how deeply saddened refugees are to leave their homeland. They refuse to let go of their beloved childhood dreams, nation, culture, and language. However, what was once a haven is now a land of missiles, tainted with blood and haunting memories, so they are compelled to flee. Many have unending dreams about their native country and want to visit it.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, love and friendship demonstrate their extraordinary resilience in the face of calamities. Mariam and Laila's lasting friendship, developed through adversity, emphasizes the value of interpersonal relationships during trying times. You will see the profound power of their connection as you follow their journey, which gives hope amid desperation, tragedy, and conflict.

A significant number of refugees we come across have experienced the loss of a friend, parent, partner, home, and security. Your compassion and honesty can ease their journey, offering consolation along their challenging walk.

It is essential to read books, watch movies, have open discussions, ask questions, and stay informed about the world we live in today. Knowing is essential to contributing to the answer. Reading a book written by a writer with direct experience of being a refugee, such as Khaled Hosseini, provides an accurate and insightful viewpoint.

Should these stories have touched us and, evoked empathy, and have the ability to put this kindness into practice? Together, we can reshape our world into a more inclusive and harmonious one where compassion and kindness spread across every corner.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **INSIGHTS INTO ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CLASS DISPARITIES**

The concepts of ethnicity, ethnic identity, nationalism, ethnic strife, and ethnic awareness are not novel ideas. Although the term “ethnic” was first used by American sociologist David Riesman in 1953, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan note that it was actually first used in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1972. There is a claim that the word “ethnic” is far older and comes from the Greek word “ethnos,” which is derived from “ethnikos.” Ethnikos originally meant heathen or pagan, according to R. Williams. English speakers employed the word “ethnic” and its variants from the 14th century until the middle of the 19th century.

It was later utilized by a few writers to convey the idea of folk, which led to the discovery of the concept of community. The fact that ethnicity has taken on multiple subtleties across national boundaries make it impossible to ignore the dividing factor, which is one of the main reasons for the current interest in ethnicity among academics. Many social theorists of the early twentieth century thought that nationality and ethnicity would become less significant as a result of modernization and industrialization, and finally disappear. On the other hand, nationalism and ethnicity have gained political significance across the globe and are now topics of specific study.

It has developed and is kept current by people’s responses to the harshness and difficulties of daily life, as well as by continuing social interactions and circumstances.

The definition and perception of ethnic connections by people in different countries can also be studied with great breadth thanks to anthropological investigations. The term “ethnic group” cannot be expressed in a single acceptable word. The term “ethne” has been proposed for technical usage by French anthropologists.

The many interactions that industrialized governments have had with outside groups, such immigrants and indigenous peoples, are reflected in the way ethnic categories are used today. As a result, the term “ethnic” began to be used to denote people with unique cultural identities who, as a result of migration or conquest, found themselves under the rule of a state or nation with a different cultural mainstream. There are numerous instances where authors have attempted to capture the spirit of an ethnic group by letting their words fly and elicit responses from all sides.

Studying the sociological context and outcomes that contributed to this stratification is now essential to advancing the study of ethnicity and ethnic groupings. The societal stratification has many cultural foundations. While certain groups, like caste and class, are stratified vertically, other groupings, like lineage systems, are founded on reciprocal and horizontal definitions. Reciprocal marriage exchange takes place in kinship networks, which function horizontally. Composite societies, where groups of ostensibly distinct cultural or ethnic backgrounds are included, exhibit still another type of division. Across time, ethnic conquest has occasionally led to the emergence of ethnically plural communities. Ethnic interpretation brought about by rising social mobility as a result of human achievement and growing geographic mobility has made it a significant issue in contemporary governments.

The way social and cultural history is recorded has undergone a dramatic shift. Ethnic minorities in the modern era feel compelled to speak out against prejudice, to be heard, to write and rewrite history for positive interpretation, and, in the absence of solid evidence, to develop or reinforce their own enduring myths. It is also evident that social classes which, for the most part, were not mentioned in earlier histories are now emerging as new subjects of study in a larger history of conflict, one that deals more directly with social stratification.

Therefore, ethnic identity can be varied as a continually evolving process, sometimes occurring within a single generation. Moreover, ethnic minorities have been present as long as sovereign political states have existed. Ethnic conflict has been a general tendency within pluralistic societies, and this can be viewed from the standpoint of political, social, economic and cultural struggles. For culture, it may occur when the ethnic minorities are confronted with the compulsion of allegiance to a new leadership, adopting a new religion or acquiring a new language in order to participate in a dominant political society that is ethnically alien. The discussion of ethnicity and societal stratification relates also to internal conflict over the question of priority to be given to past, present or future oriented forms of identity in self consciousness. However, one cannot fully understand the force of ethnicity without examining the intricate features of minority group members.

It would rather be rational to study ethnic group behavior from the vantage point of society, its genesis, its transformation from the culture of associated living to society as an unequal structure. Rousseau's discourse on inequality focuses on the various stages of society. Rousseau examines man's physical and mental characteristics, and finds man to be animal like and motivated by two key principles or rather basic instincts

called pity and self preservation. The only real attribute that separates him from the animals is his perfectibility, a quality that is vitally important in the process.

Man in the state of nature had few needs, with no idea of good and evil, and little contact with other humans, nevertheless, he was happy. He substantiates man's initial behavior of innocence and ignorance. In modern societies, however, inequality derives from a process of human evolution that has corrupted man's nature and thought process, and subjected him to laws and property. And this kind of exposure supports a new unjustifiable kind of inequality, termed as moral inequality. Hence inequality is the crux based on which all operations within the society function. However, as long as this inequality is not perceived, harmony prevails. A glaring fact is that societal stratification was revealed more with the advent of the Industrial Revolution.

For certain populations, ethnicity is based on aesthetic cultural trends. Customs related to food, dress, dancing, and even physical attractiveness are examples of how civilizations distinguish themselves through aesthetic patterns. African American culture, for instance, has unique communication patterns; their vocabulary, gestures, and language serve as a foundation for understanding one another. African Americans use music as a potent medium for expressing their voices and feelings; the "Blues Musique" developed as a distinct genre to represent and validate their position in American culture. There are several artistic cultural traditions in India, and every ethnic group takes delight in preserving them.

The traditional dance traditions of the several tribal communities in southern Rajasthan, for example, have been preserved. One such dance tradition is the "Ghoomar," a ceremonial dance that is exclusively performed by women on important occasions like festivals and weddings. This expression of artistic creation demonstrates

ethnic persistence in preserving forms of art that are unique to a group as opposed to an individual.

Treating the structural features of ethnic groups as a unique sociological phenomenon can help to prevent the early revelation of several structural complexities. But it's clear that structural complexity differs according to ethnic group, geography, history, size, etc. The most basic type of structure is one that resembles folk society, which is typically tribal in form. Examples of such structures are the tribes found in the newly independent nations of Africa and the numerous American tribes. It is evident that the majority of an ethnic group's members are dispersed either inside one country or across several countries, rarely occupying a single area.

When certain individuals within these geographic areas tend to congregate and subsequently become the core of the larger ethnic group, there is a sense of community development. These are most likely to be observed in rural areas where the characteristics of self sufficiency, homogeneity, smallness, and individuality are obviously visible.

For instance, the Pashtun, Uzbek, and Baluch ethnic groups in Afghanistan are dispersed throughout Central Asia and are not limited to the country. An ethnic group known as the Jats inhabits parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan in addition to the northwest of India. They rarely marry outside of their ethnic community since they are naturally conservative. The Jats of a certain hamlet take great pride in their genealogy, believing themselves to be the descendants of the man who established the village with the strength of the sword.

The greater community recognizes an ethnic group's difference when the group asserts its identity as such. This uniqueness designates "they" as the greater society and

“we” as the ethnic group. What each of them views as distinctiveness may or may not be correlated with the definition of the ethnic group at both levels, that is, at the level of the group as a whole and that of the greater society.

The way they each evaluated this individuality is characterized by the disparities in their perceptions. It is frequently observed that whereas the general public views ethnic distinctiveness poorly, the ethnic group values it highly. As a result, the we-ness that the ethnic community values positively is transformed into a negative by the greater society, which sees the group as a they-ness. The ethnic group’s we-ness and they-ness characteristics are in dynamic tension with one another. The ethnic group suffers greatly as a result of the greater society’s attempt to impose and approve its own definition.

The way an ethnic group is viewed influences how they are treated and how important they are in society at large. It has been seen throughout history that society’s perception of an ethnic group is a reaction to an ingrained sense of the community’s identity. These obstacles may benefit the group in the long run by strengthening the bonds among its constituents. But history has also demonstrated how obstacles have shattered ethnic unity, devaluing the ethnic group in the process. The group is more susceptible to ongoing pressure from the greater society as a result of these uncertainties.

For example, the Hazaras in Afghanistan are never treated on par with the Pashtuns, the we and their distinctiveness allows the suppressed Hazaras to lead a restricted life without demanding much from society, while the Pashtuns continue their dominance.

There are patterns exceptionally noticeable when ethnic groups are connected to the possession of territory as a means of maintaining group cohesion. For instance,

minorities such as Jews have been without territory for centuries, and now claim the territory of Palestine based on their historical genesis. In the broader sense, nationality is indistinguishable from ethnicity, but from a narrower perspective, 'nation' and 'nationality' also encompasses diverse groups that have achieved political unification but still claim territorial base. This could either be desired or actual. It is seen that in most cases national identity and subjective cultural identity cannot be distinguished, especially when ethnic identity and national territorial identity have been united historically. But some ethnic minorities for the sake of political independence seek territory either by desire, or to recapture lost national territory. Native American groups are designated as nations, although they lost their territorial base.

The most evident case could be that of the Jewish aspiration to re-establish Israel. However, the intensity of territorial concept to maintain ethnic identity either symbolically or actually is to be considered apart from other distinguishing features of ethnic identity. For example, there is a boundary between the Republic of Ireland and the North imposed by the British in the 1920s. This boundary defines the community as a border community and constitutes a dividing line within the community that underlies the opposition between the two groups: Catholics and Protestants. The former group is constrained to accept the border as a political reality and the latter keen and determined to maintain it.

Just as ethnic features such as language, food, clothing, beliefs become distinctive markers or rather emblems, religion too plays a vital role in making an ethnic group distinct. A useful example for illustration is that of the modern American Jew.

A considerable body of literature has been written by Jewish intellectuals about what it is to be a Jew in a prevailing Christian society throughout their history in Europe

and the United States. It is also feared that contemporary American Jews may soon lose their sense of Jewishness. It is seen that some Jewish youth study Hebrew, visit Israel, join a synagogue and reinstitute their rituals in order to define themselves. This illustrates dramatically the need for a psychological approach to ethnic identity where a sense of belonging through religion becomes a crucial factor. It is also said that ethnicity is determined by what one feels about oneself, and not by what one is expected to behave. Wilson in his work states that many explanations have been proposed over the years to explain the prevalence of religions in human societies, centering over the uncertain possibility that the capacity for religiosity is adaptive. Among these are the possibilities of religion as a group level adaptation reinforcing social cohesion; religion as an individual level adaptation directing human behavior; or religion as a cultural 'parasite' that often evolves at the expense of human individuals and groups.

Religion came to emerge as a group activity with the construction of usually elaborate community buildings and structures for places of worship. Later, developments followed and rather made religion adaptable to accommodate the ownership of land, hierarchy of authority in places of functionality, and more formal behavioral prescriptions. It became one of the defining factors of civilization and the spread of invasion; conversion and trade in the name of religion became justifiable. Conquests of rival cities and states both reinforced and benefited from concepts attributed to religious fervor. Civilizations legitimized their actions claiming that the uncivilized are primitives, barbarians or the like. Jared Diamond in *Guns, Germs and Steel* describes the Sumerian civilization as a kleptocracy in which the citizenry was essentially exploited.

Religious leaders gained in wealth and political control as a result of institutionalizing religion. Similarly, in Afghanistan, with the dominance of the Sunni Muslim culture, major political and economic concerns are managed by people who follow the Sunni sect. Scott Atran elaborates the function of religion: “Emotionally motivated self sacrifice to the supernatural stabilizes in-group moral order, inspiring competition without groups.” Religious devotion can further be described as ‘expensive commitments’ where the extent of sacrifice has no limits. In the Judeo Christian tradition, in the Old Testament this is most broadly exemplified by the myth of Abraham who was commanded by his God to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Despite the price of such an act, or perhaps because of it, others in Abraham’s community presumably saw that Abraham was prepared to put the interests of his God above that of his own. This gesture rationalized the act of self sacrifice so much so that subsequently the community idealized him and thus elevated such an act. The Holy War of most Muslim nations can be accounted as a justified act proposed to gain religious stance; hence the concept of jus ad bellum becomes a rationale for attaining ethnic identity.

This nation has been aptly described as being on the cross roads of Asia which makes it evident how the future of Afghanistan will affect the entire Asian continent. It is said that modern Afghanistan is an accidental geographical unit carved out of the heart of Central Asia by the sword of its conquerors. Afghanistan has historically been the link between Central Asia, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent a nation made up of many different nationalities, the result of innumerable invasions and migrations. In earlier centuries, its geopolitical position led to alternate enrichment and devastation, as armies marched through it on their way to other lands.

Its commercial crossroads became vulnerable for its inhabitants despite the opening of sea lanes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There are at least a dozen major ethnic groups Pashtuns, Baluch, Chahar Aymaq, Turkmen, Hazara, Tajik, Uzbek, Nuristani, Arab, Kirghiz, Pashai and Persian within its current borders. Historically and technically, the Pashtun ethnic group has been the most dominant group. Therefore, the term Afghan is synonymous with the Pashtun community that constitutes 50% of the total population and is generally known for its powerful and heroic ways. The ruling dynasties too have been Pashtun.

Tajiks are the second largest group being 25% of the population and the rest make up considerably smaller percentages. Although there are tiny Hindu, Sikh and Jewish communities, the vast majority of the people are Muslims, and in fact many ethnic groups consider Islam to be one of the defining aspects of their ethnic identity. However, as we progress, it becomes mandatory to study the origin and evolution of the different ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

History reveals that Islam was brought to Afghanistan during the eighth and ninth century with the Arab conquest. Prior to that, the nation was ruled by Persian, Greek, Sassanian and Central Asian empires. Following a subsequent breakdown in the Arab rule, semi independent states began to form, and later these local dynasties and states were crushed during Mongolian invasions of the 1200s. Mongols ruled the land until the 1500s despite much resistance and internal strife.

After the collapse of the Mongol rule, Afghanistan was caught between two great powers, that is, the Mughals of northern India and the Safavids of Iran who fought over the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan to lay siege to Afghanistan. Armies

marched in, devastating the land, killing people, conquering city after city, leaving behind destruction and chaos. Afghanistan was subject to anarchy, and it was not until 1747 that Afghanistan was able to free itself. The death of Nadir Shah, an empire builder from Persia left a vacuum in Central Asia.

It was Ahmed Shah Durrani, a former Afghan bodyguard who was able to fill the vacuum. Ahmad Shah Durrani was a Pashtun, and his Pashtunwali the honor code of the ethnic group allowed the Pashtuns to rule Afghanistan in one form or the other for the next 200 years. Ahmad Shah proved to be an ardent follower of the tenets of Pashtun ethnicity, and was able to unify the different Afghan tribes. He went on to conquer considerable parts around eastern Iran, Pakistan, northern India and Uzbekistan.

His successors proved unable to hold his vast empire together, and within 50 years much of it had been seized by rival regional powers. Within the country there were numerous bloody civil wars; each ethnic group tried to consolidate its position in the nation. Several wars for the throne took place, and for many Afghans, it meant little that their lives were being uprooted and destroyed by ethnic kin as opposed to foreign invaders. Diverse ideologies of each ethnic group led to mayhem adversely impacting the life of the common man. These ethnic and internal conflicts paved the way for the two imperialist powers the British Empire and Czarist Russia to intervene in the 1800s, thereby aggravating the internal mayhem dramatically.

The British with an eye on expanding and consolidating their colonial holdings in the Indian subcontinent were looking at the Hindu Kush Mountains of Afghanistan as a natural barrier to prevent invasion by rival imperialists. The Russians in their expansionist drive towards the south and east were swallowing up several formerly

independent sultanates and emirates in Central Asia. The two great powers essentially engaged in a race for Afghanistan, and their attempts at conquest of land, overthrow of indigenous governments and interference in the affairs of the remaining independent states in the region became known as 'The Great Game.'

The arrival of European imperialism led to wars, poverty and material destruction. In 1900, Abdur Rehman Khan, the 'Iron Amir,' ruled Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901. He described his country's vulnerable position: "How can a small power like Afghanistan which is like a goat between two lions or a grain of wheat between two strong millstones of the grinding mill, stand in the way of the two stones without being ground to dust?" . . . He struggled hard to keep Afghanistan away from the imperial lions, and attain internal stability and fortitude in order to deter any foreign intrusion. The two powers, Russia and Britain realized the advantages that each would bag and perceived the intention of the other. Afghanistan in short became a buffer state and the nation's limitations namely its economic backwardness, subservient military and divided ethnic tribes acted as deterrents against common national goals and national independence.

The subsequent rulers of the nation acted as coadjutors for the imperial lions to entrench themselves in the country with the prospects of building modern military and boosting its economy with the aid of foreign investors.

On two separate occasions, the British army from India invaded Afghanistan in attempts to install puppet governments amenable to British economic interests, and to oppose the economic interests of Czarist Russia. The first invasion is known as the First Anglo Afghan War that took place in 1838. Outraged by the presence of a single Russian diplomat in Kabul, the British demanded a deal that Afghanistan avoids any

contact with Russia or Persia, and that it hand over vast tracts of Pashtun inhabited land to British India. Dost Mohammad Khan the Afghan ruler agreed to these humiliating demands but that did not stop the British from invading the country. The British seized most of the major cities in Afghanistan with little resistance, but their tyranny soon resulted in a popular uprising by the people which resulted in the massacre of the entire British army of 15,000.

The British outrage over the uninvited arrival of a Russian diplomatic envoy in Kabul in 1878, resulted in the Second Anglo Afghan War. Subsequently, the British withdrew, but not before they set up a puppet ruler, and forced the country to hand over control of its foreign affairs to Britain. It was demanded that Afghanistan would remain a British protectorate until 1919. Following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and the wave of popular rebellions that rippled through Asia subsequently, Amanullah the then king of Afghanistan declared his country's independence by signing a treaty of aid and friendship with Lenin, and declaring war on Britain.

After a period of border skirmishes, and the bombing of Kabul by the Royal Air Force, Afghanistan's independence was conceded by the British. In spite of its defeat, Britain conspired with the conservative, religious and landowning elements of the country that were un-happy with Amanullah's attempts to secularize and reform the country. This makes it evident that more than the foreign enemy, internal differences between groups created conflicts time and again. The outbreak of an uprising and civil war forced Amanullah to abdicate in 1929.

Different warlords contested for power until a new king, Muhammad Nadir Shah took power and was assassinated four years later. He was succeeded by Muhammad

Zahir Shah, who was to be Afghanistan's last king, and who would rule for the next 40 years. Zahir Shah's rule was highly autocratic; the word of the king was the law of the land. Official bodies such as advisory councils and assemblies were sometimes called to advise the king; however they had no power, and did not represent the people of Afghanistan.

These bodies consisted of the country's tribal elders, land owners and patriarchs. Though it is said that this period of Afghanistan's history was one where attempts were made to modernize the country, it actually meant newer rifles for the army, the purchase of a few airplanes, the creation of a tiny airline to shuttle the ruling elite around, and some telegraph wires to allow the king to collect his taxes more promptly. Under his rule, political parties were outlawed, and unhappy students were shot and killed when they protested. In 1973, the king was overthrown by Daoud, a prominent member of his own family, and a republic was declared. Daoud, decided to title himself president instead of king, and he brought about some changes.

Daoud seized power with the help of an underground party namely the PDPA People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, a pro-Moscow communist party. Once he had consolidated power, he no longer felt the need for controversial allies, and ordered a crack-down on the party. The PDPA seized power from Daoud in 1978 in a military coup, and began a series of limited reforms in order to unite the diverse ethnic groups. PDPA declared a secular state. The PDPA sought to curtail the practice of purchasing brides, and tried to implement a land reform program and was quickly met with fierce opposition from many sections of the deeply religious population. Soon several rural areas rose in open armed rebellion against the new government. Immediately following

the PDPA coup, the Soviets took an active interest in the so-called socialist revolution unfolding in its backyard.

Utterly dismayed by the clumsiness of the radical faction of the PDPA, the Soviet Union invaded in 1979, and handed power over to a man named Babrak Karmal who was the leader of the more moderate faction of the PDPA. The Soviets found themselves forced to commit more and more troops and material to prop up the unpopular PDPA government. Several Islamic fundamentalist groups sprang up, and began waging guerilla warfare.

The United States government initially paid little attention to the PDPA coup in Afghanistan as its attention was focused on the west where a popular revolution had overthrown their most valuable Middle East ally, the brutal and autocratic Shah of Iran. However, at that point of time, the United States took an active interest in the Islamic fundamentalists' waging war on the PDPA and the Soviets. Mujahedeen was the name given to the Islamic guerillas provided with military training by the CIA. The Soviet military gradually became discouraged in the face of offensive after offensive. Soviet casualties began to mount dramatically as even their control of the air became an expensive affair.

The Mujahedeen's call for 'Jihad' or the holy war against the secular Soviets won favors from thousands of Arabs worldwide. In 1989, the Soviets withdrew and the CIA soon lost interest in its mercenary forces. The Mujahideen factions began fighting as much among themselves as with the PDPA forces resulting in unprecedented suffering and bloodshed. It wasn't until 1992 that Mujahideen fighters were able to topple the remnants of the PDPA government ending the Stalinists' attempts to bring

revolution to the people of Afghanistan. Different Mujahideen warlords occupied different cities and regions of the country.

The collapse of the PDPA government did not mark the end of Afghanistan's civil war. The Mujahideen warlords continued to rain death and destruction upon the country, and sought to enlarge their new fiefdoms at the expense of their neighboring rivals. Pakistani Intelligence aided in the creation of a new Islamic fundamentalist movement the Taliban, which was born in Islamic schools that had sprung up inside Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. Its leadership and the bulk of its initial ranks were made up of young religious Pashtun students motivated by the zeal of religion, and the belief that they were ordained to bring stability and the ways of God back to their war-torn land. They railed against the corruption and greed of contending Mujahideen factions within Afghanistan, and initiated a military thrust to conquer the country. They were initially well received by certain sections of the weary population.

In 1996, they captured the capital city of Kabul, and had forced most of the remaining warlords into a small pocket in the far north of the country. Once in power, the Taliban sought to create a theocratic state based on their interpretations of the Quran making it adapt to their needs. Already severely suppressed by the various Mujahideen warlords, the plight of Afghanistan's women further worsened under the new regime. The veil became the law of the land, and women were forbidden from attending schools or holding employment outside the home. Television was banned and an effort was made to purge the country of any signs or remnants of secular or western influence. The country became politically and diplomatically isolated. This discourse focuses on the mayhem and anarchy that haunted Afghanistan in the face of ethnic conflicts for thousands of years. Invasion and foreign rule are common features in history books but

what needs to be understood is how a particular society reacts to such intrusions wherein newer groups with evolving ideologies emanate, and the 'God market' becomes the order of the nation.

The word Afghan is originally a synonym for Pashtun, and is symbolic of the physical might and fervor of the people of Afghanistan. Because of this etymology, the Pashtuns are often referred to as 'ethnic Afghans.' Just as Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other countries have been named after their historical majority ethnic group, so was Afghanistan by the predominance of the Pashtuns. Throughout Pashtun history, the warrior has been the most revered member of society. It is said that the term 'Pashto' or 'Pashto' is not merely the name of a language, but the name of an honor code and religion. These people are highly conventional and have strong conviction in the main tenets of 'Pakhto' also known formally as Pashtunwali:

1. Hospitality and asylum to all guests, seeking help and justice being nonnegotiable in any circumstance.
2. Eye for an eye or tooth for a tooth.
3. Protection and defense of "Zan, Zar and Zameen," that is, women or family, treasury and property.

Pashtun men are fiercely independent, extremely protective of their women folk at home, and are undeniably in charge of all family affairs. These men are extremely close to their mothers, and are encouraged by their mothers to espouse the virtues of a chivalrous warrior. To uphold the sanctity of Pashtunwali becomes their primary objective, and the tenets of Pashtunwali are orally transmitted from generation to generation in the form of stories or anecdotes. Mothers are generally very tough on their

male children when it comes to being well-mannered. It is seen that women have the responsibility of guarding and protecting the status of men and the family within the Pashtun community.

A man enquiring about the wife of another man is considered blasphemous and would have serious consequences. Although it is an Islamic duty to observe 'hijab,' Pashtun women do so because it forms a part of their cultural tradition, and not primarily for Islamic purposes. It is said that 'Pashtunwali' has been in existence even before the advent of Islam, and is still going strong. Pashtuns are predominantly a tribal people, although an increasing number of them now dwell in cities and urban settlements. Most decisions in tribal life are made by a 'Jirga' or senate of elected elders and wise men.

A number of ancient groups with eponyms to 'Pukhtun' have been referred to as possible ancestors of modern Pashtuns. The Rigveda (1700–1100 BC) seems to mention a tribe called Paktha and their connection with today's Pashtun people inhabiting eastern Afghanistan. The Greek historian Herodotus also mentioned a people called 'Captains' living in the same area (Achaemenid's empire). The earliest mention of the name Afghan (Abgan) is by Shapur I of the Sassanid Empire in the 3rd century which was later recorded as 'Avagana' in the 6th century by the Indian astronomer Varaha Mihira in his Brihat Samhita. It was used to refer to a common legendary ancestor known as 'Afghana,' propagated as the grandson of King Saul of Israel. George Moore published his famous work *The Lost Tribes* in 1861, where he referred to the origin of the Pashtun tribes. He gave numerous facts to prove that these tribes are traceable to Israel. He gave details of the character of the wandering Israelites, and said:

And we find that the very natural character of Israel reappears in all its life and reality in countries where people call themselves Bani Israel and universally claim to be the descendants of the Lost Tribes. The nomenclature of their tribes and districts, both in ancient Geography, and at the present day, confirms this universal natural tradition. Lastly, we have the route of the Israelites from Media to Afghanistan and India marked by a series of intermediate stations bearing the names of several of the tribes and clearly indicating the stages of their long and arduous journey. (*The Lost Tribes*, 3)

In *The Exiled and the Redeemed*, Itzhak BenZvi, the longest serving President of Israel, wrote that Hebrew migrations into Afghanistan began ‘with a sprinkling of exiles from Samaria who had been transplanted there by Shalmaneser, King of Assyria (719 BC). He says:

The Afghan tribes, among whom the Jews have lived for generations, are Moslems who retain to this day their amazing tradition about their descent from the Ten Tribes. It is an ancient tradition, and one not without some historical plausibility . . . if the Afghan tribes persistently adhere to the tradition that they were once Hebrews and in course of time embraced Islam, and there is not an alternative tradition also existent among them, they are certainly Jewish. (*The Exiled and the Redeemed*, 5)

Shalva Weil, an anthropologist and senior researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem said: “Of all the groups, there is more convincing evidence about the

Pathans than anybody else, but the Pathans are the ones who would reject Israel most ferociously. That is the sweet irony.”

From the anthropologists’ perspective, they lend credence to the oral traditions of the Pashtun tribes. Another book that corresponds with Pashtun historical records *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* states that in the 7th century BCE a people called the Bani Israel settled in the Ghor region of Afghanistan, and from there began migrating southeast.

These references to Bani Israel agree with the commonly held view by Pashtuns that when the ten tribes of Israel were dispersed, the descendants of Joseph, among other Hebrews settled in the Afghanistan region. This oral tradition is widespread among the Pashtun tribes. There have been many legends over the centuries of descent from the Ten Lost Tribes after groups converted to Christianity and Islam.

‘Tajik’ is a word of Turko Mongol origin and literally means Non Turk. Tajik in Central Asia is used to refer to people that still speak an Iranian language, including both the Tajiki speaking Tajiks and Pamiri peoples, also known as the Mountain Tajiks. The origin of the name Tajik has been debatable in twentieth century political disputes about whether Turkic or Iranian peoples were the original inhabitants of Central Asia. The Tajiks form the next major ethnic group in Afghanistan and trace their ancestry to the Eastern Iranian speaking Bactrians, Sogdians, and Parthians. But the Tajiks adoption of the Persian language is believed to be due to the dominance of the Persian Empire during the Achaemenid and Sassanid dynasties. However, the Persian language, particularly Tajiki, contains numerous words from Sogdian, Parthian and other Persian languages of ancient Central Asia.

The Hazara are a people set apart from fellow Afghans by religion, mixed ethnicity and an independent nature. Persecution especially by the Pashtun community

has shaped and defined the Hazara over the last 200 years. Not only do they face ethnic bias for their ancestry, but also discrimination as they are Shi'ite Muslims, a minority among Afghanistan's dominant Sunni Muslims. Their traditional homeland lies in central Afghanistan amid rugged Mountains. Living is not smooth in Hazarajat, a nearly inaccessible region of craggy peaks and gushing rivers. Hazara origins are much debated as their name is from a Persian word meaning 'thousand.' However current theory suggests that they have obvious Asian features, and are descended from Mongol soldiers left behind by Genghis Khan in the 13th century with considerable Turkish admixture.

History reveals that prior to the 19th century; Hazaras were the largest Afghan ethnic group constituting 67% of the total population. 'Ethnic cleansing' saw more than half of their population massacred in 1893 when their autonomy was lost as a result of political action. Later fundamentalist governments including the Taliban attempted to dismiss the Hazaras historically, politically and culturally by labeling them as a mere religious entity and continued to attack them until they were driven from power. During the political and religious turmoil, between 1978-2001 war years, numerous Hazara fled with other Afghans to Pakistan or Iran. Though many of the Hazara refugees who returned, settled in Kabul to work as laborers, market vendors or in salaried employment, a majority returned to their mountain homelands. They comprise half dozen tribes and identify themselves by village location rather than by family ties.

Many pre Taliban Hazara women were highly educated and entered teaching or medical professions; they also served in political roles. And it is important to note that unlike other Afghan women they fought beside their Hazara men in battles. Hazaras are known to be brave, hardworking, trustworthy, friendly and committed.

The Uzbeks are generally indicated to have formed from waves of ancient migrations holding Turkic- Mongoloid ancestry reflected by lighter skin and flat facial features. The name Uzbek is said to mean 'independent' or 'self ruling,' from 'uz' meaning self and 'bek' meaning master. The name seems fitting since the Uzbek in northern Afghanistan has remained a cohesive group, where distance from the capital city Kabul has allowed them some autonomy. As Sunni Muslims, they are Afghanistan's fourth largest ethnic group.

They live simply in small villages, often with Tajik neighbors, but are averse to the Pashtuns who moved into their homelands in large numbers to render them a minority in territory that they once controlled by the 1960s. Afghan culture has been undeniably impacted by the Uzbeks particularly in music, carpet making and sport. Buzkashi, a violent game played by teams on horseback, with a headless goat carcass, and now synonymous with Afghanistan as its national sport, was introduced by Uzbeks.

They are considered to be creative people and are patrons of poetry, music and play unique instruments such as the Uzbek two stringed fretted flute. Their ethnic culture is preserved through folk dances and traditional handicrafts like metal working, wood carving, leather craft and wall or textile painting. Many urban Uzbeks are businessmen, others are skilled craftsmen. Women are noted for weaving exquisite rugs, a significant contribution to Afghanistan's textile heritage. Though their lives are indisputably affected because of their ethnic distinctiveness, they are less affected than some other groups. Medical care is not readily available and economic opportunity meager. Political interests are represented by a single party even when the 2001 allied invasion increased political opportunities for them.

The Baluchis are one of Asia's cross border minorities who are strongly aware of their minority status. The Baluch claim their history to be more than a millennium old. A consensus by eminent scholars was also reached that the Baluch had some nexus with Aleppo in Syria, and their movement towards the southern coast of the Caspian Sea; later they migrated and settled in today's Iranian Balochistan, Pakistani Balochistan and Afghanistan. Hence, they are divided across the countries of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan and across the three nations there has been a strong struggle for self determination with the aim to form an independent Balochistan. However, these demands have gradually wilted under sustained political repression at the hands of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Their demand for autonomy in Afghanistan was not considered as its territorial concentration was lower. The Baluchis practice Sunni Islam, and live in the sparse and arid lands of the nation. Their language is Baluchi although some speak Brahui.

The Baluch People's Liberation Front (PLF) was the strongest organized Baluch group in the quest for independence in the 1970s. Most PLF guerrillas were based in training camps in southern Afghanistan, and were reportedly given sanctuary by Daoud's regime. They are one of the named 'national' ethnic minorities in the new Afghan Constitution, and accordingly enjoy all the rights bestowed on Afghan citizens. However, a lack of information on the situation of Baluchis in post Taliban Afghanistan makes it difficult to ascertain the future of the group within the nation.

Amongst the ethnic groups that impacted the religious and socio political conditions in Afghanistan, the world cannot be oblivious to Mujahideen whose complexity has evoked appreciable response from people across nations. The group consists of people who took up arms against the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of

Afghanistan) and the Soviet forces, and considered themselves as engaged in a Jihad or holy war. The Jihad movement legitimized the large scale exodus of a significant proportion of the population to neighboring Islamic countries, as Afghanistan had been transgressed by a secular force, and therefore ceased to be Islamic. People from Afghanistan migrated to Pakistan, Balochistan, Punjab and Iran and were given aid by the host countries to fight against the Soviet forces. According to Peter Marsden: “The definition of Mujahideen thus encompasses all those who moved to Pakistan and Iran, and engaged in fighting within Afghanistan on the basis of inclusionary movements from these two countries, together with the many people who opted to remain in Afghanistan throughout the war, often fleeing to the sanctuary of the mountains with their families and organizing raids from there. Some of these were affiliated to organized groups. Others acted spontaneously as part of their village or tribal communities.”

The novels chosen chronicle the prevalence of ethnicity and its nuances reflecting the social, political and religious mayhem in Afghanistan. The crisis in Afghanistan began as a struggle for power amongst the different urban elite groups attempting to capture the government in Kabul. This soon led to a civil war as the traditional elite tried to secure its authority against the encroachment of the central government. This acquired an international dimension inviting the intervention of not only neighboring states but also of super powers either in pursuit of their own interests or to manifest their stance to the rival nations. Obscurity and unstable hegemony seem to betray the people here. Social living was impacted by uncertainties, the modern elite attempting to transform Afghanistan into a democratic and socialistic regime on one

hand, while tribal leaders, rigid to any change, considered this to be a threat to their traditional set up.

This intensified the rivalry between the urban elite, the rural traditionalists and the traditional elite inviting support from the external Soviet Union which played a key role in modernizing the nation in its attempt to establish and pursue its political interests. The attempt to modernize the nation by the Soviet forces was however superficial and mainly confined to Kabul and other urban centers, without actually working for political and socio-economic reforms.

The exceedingly resistant tribal population had an autonomous existence, and conducted their affairs as per their tribal codes. The authority of the central government could not accommodate all parties as each party was subject to divisive ideologies and interests. This led to the formation of several semi clandestine groups, and these Islamic groups began advocating their own selfish interests. Urmila Phadnis in her book *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia* has rightfully said, “The existing balance of power between various groups may also change over time, thereby undermining elite cooperation. Furthermore, inter ethnic cohesion achieved through institutionalized control and domination is difficult to maintain if the legitimacy of state authority is itself in doubt.”

The author reinforces that the role of the state is not that of an oppressor, but of a mediator and to play this role effectively, it must reject the exclusivist approach to access power strategically for ethnic balancing. Notwithstanding the political turbulence and instability, people of Afghanistan moved to another country with the hope that they would at least be able to return some time to see their motherland regain its rich

civilization. It was clearly evident that ethnic politics had taken an upper hand over nationalist politics. Although the Soviets left the nation, political turmoil continued with the emergence of a new phase where ethnic politics intertwined with religion. Therefore, religion remained in a state of flux inviting more confusion and chaos. Needless to say, there is void in the hearts of the people, a space that longs to be filled with the assurance of security, love and brotherhood. They have witnessed the vicissitudes of a nation so vulnerable that it captures all the gruesome tales of its people.

Khaled Hosseini portrays the events in Afghanistan, both domestic and national, and the impact they have on people within and outside the nation through the novel *The Kite Runner*. Hosseini is an accomplished writer whose storytelling tradition paves way for bringing out the bestsellers: *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Mountains Echoed*. Born in 1965, in Kabul, where his father was a diplomat and mother was a teacher of Farsi and History. Hosseini had an enriching childhood before the nation was taken over by the colonial conquest. He is a practicing doctor, and lives in California with his wife and children.

The novels by Hosseini seamlessly blend the compelling narratives of the central characters giving an insight into the nation. He makes the readers sail through war prone Afghanistan to comprehend the eventuality of incidents spanning from the reign of Zahir Shah, the Soviet occupation, the occupation by the extremist groups, the time being reflective of his childhood experiences till the days his family takes refuge in the U.S.A Hosseini's versatility is explicit in the manner in which he allows human tendencies of love, friendship and brotherhood to take the high ground rather than the hostilities that drove the characters into extremely formidable situations.

The novel shares much beyond blood relationship; initially, the fathers and sons were chained by the rules of ethnic divisions set by society. Eventually as the novel moves, Hosseini depicts the characters as being subject to the ethnic rules of new groups. Ostensible and blatant are the divisions set for our two heroes Amir and Hassan; Amir is a Pashtun, and Hassan a Hazara. From the beginning till the end, the novel provides the reader with ump-teen instances to show how Hassan, a Hazara, becomes victim to glaring discrimination. Although the lives of Amir and Hassan seem to be like a long summer dream where the two grow and have fun together, rules of the dominating Pashtuns seem to shatter their high soaring dreams.

Hassan is molested by Aseef and his friends for the much coveted blue kite that Hassan wins for Amir after a Kite Fighting Tournament. This incident proves to be the turning point of the novel. Amir is jealous of Hassan because Baba is never pleased by his son Amir as he lags behind in Pashtun conduct. He feels that Hassan is much more courageous and capable. Although Amir is a witness to the physical molestation of Hassan, he does not save him; instead, he wants to prove himself a hero to Baba by winning the kite. He justifies that it's a price paid by Hassan for the last kite as he is a Hazara. Unable to withstand the embarrassment of betrayal, Amir further conspires against Hassan and accuses him of theft to oust him from his life.

Destiny has its own plans, and conjures up situations in a way that makes Amir pay a heavy price for his betrayal. Political turmoil in Afghanistan make Baba and Amir leave the country, and seek refuge in America. Ethnic conflicts subject to foreign ethnic insurgencies and the emergence of several religiously driven ethnic groups shatter their social life. Amir and Baba take refuge in California, and after almost twenty years, Amir

gets a call from Rahim Khan, a close associate of the family, asking Amir to fly to Pakistan. He says “Come. There is a way to be good again”.

Meanwhile Amir gets married to Sorayya, daughter of a Pashtun Army General, and Baba dies after struggling against cancer. Amir learns that Rahim Khan is aware of Amir’s betrayal of Hassan, and hence seizes the opportunity to allow Amir to reconcile with his past. Soon Hassan and his wife become victims of Taliban attacks. Their son Sohrab lives in an orphanage in Kabul, and Rahim Khan convinces Amir to go to Kabul, and take Sohrab to an orphanage in Peshawar which would be a safer place for the child. Amir reaches Kabul and witnesses a ruined Afghanistan. He understands that it is providence for him to adopt Sohrab, and a chance for redemption. He convinces his wife Sorayya, and takes Sohrab to the United States after immense resistance from Pakistan. For Amir and Sorayya, Sohrab’s arrival is a blessing in disguise as Sorayya remains a barren woman till then.

Hassan was called flat nosed because of his mongoloid descent. Though silent, Hassan speaks volumes; he represents thousands of innocent and young children who aspire to go to school, to the market, climb trees and fly kites. Harangued and shattered are the dreams of this young hero whose kite running skill reveals to him the darkest hues of life. At a time when every young child dreams to add splendour to life, and make excitement soar like the flying kite, Hassan and Amir are shackled with the episode of ethnic prejudice. It makes them realize the boundaries that fate had already drawn for them. Amir gets to read about the Hazaras, their suppression and mass killing from one of the history books. He says,

It said the Hazaras had tried to 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. The book said a lot of things I didn’t know, things my teachers hadn’t mentioned. Things Baba hadn’t mentioned either. It also said some things I did know, like that people called Hazaras mice-eating, flat nosed, load-carrying donkeys. I had heard some of the kids in the neighborhood yell those names to Hassan. (TKR, 23)

Although the history books read by Amir give just a glimpse of the status of Hazaras, much unfolds of the oppression by the ethnic Pashtun community in the novel. This marginalization of the Hazara group can be attributed to their following the Shia faith. Since Pashtuns are the controllers, the Hazaras don’t get much space in the official history of the country; their mention in the official school books has been obliterated. There’s also an attempt to cover up the genocide committed by the Pashtuns against the Hazaras in the nineteenth century.

A glaring instance is that of the reaction of a Pashtun soldier when Hassan and Amir were on their way to the cinema. The soldier made a circle with the thumb and index finger of one hand and poked the middle finger of his other hand through the circle. In and out in and out, he said “I knew your mother, did you know that? I knew her real good. I took her from behind by that creek over there.” As was his nature of not

causing harm to anybody and being extremely tolerant, Hassan's tears rolled down his cheeks at the cinema silently.

Hosseini depicts a realistic image of this young Hazara. It is said that even at the time of his birth, his mother Sanaubar just gave a couple of pushes and out he came smiling. How could anybody imagine that over the years that smile and submission to people around would change and shatter his life forever? It is not just the outside world but Amir, whom Hassan considers as his world, also behaves like a typical Pashtun. When the duo wins the Kite Fighting Tournament, a much-coveted sport of the people of Afghanistan, Hassan goes to run the blue kite for Amir saying, "For you a thousand times over!" But Hassan at the blind end of the alley is gheraoed by Aseef and his friends, to take revenge on Hassan for the slingshot incident, the one that actually saved Amir from Aseef in the recent past. The demand is the blue kite. And Hassan cried out loud,

"Amir Agha won the tournament and I ran this kite for him. I ran it fairly. This is his kite." (TKR, 63)

Despite his cries, he is molested, a price paid heavily for the last coveted kite for his Amir Agha. Added to this, Hassan's loyalty reaches a crescendo when he succumbs to the false allegations of theft levied by Amir. He comes to terms with his fate and without any skirmishes lives the life of a Hazara, rejected from Amir's life.

Amir is the other hero of the novel, who comes across as a split personality, one who observes the Pashtun code like the other members of his community, and the other, a loyal friend who subsequently emerges a hero professing the honor code of the Pashtunwali. Amir has been portrayed as a timid boy in the beginning of the novel,

without many aspirations. He develops a flair for writing and does not display the valiance and the aggression of a Pashtun. He betrays Hassan despite the closeness of their friendship, and is a victim to the rules set by the nation for a Pashtun. He says,

Never mind any of those things. Because history isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was Sunni and he was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing.

But we were kids who had learned to crawl together, and no history, ethnicity, society, or religion was going to change that either. (TKR, 22)

Those first lines of Amir display his fanaticism, a devout allegiance to his Pashtun community, the dictums of which he was made to believe and practice. Beyond this, Amir suffers psychologically as Baba never showed his love for Amir, and at times, he was also overwrought by his stern ways. The ethnic consciousness was vehemently displayed by Aseef who also warned Amir of his involvement with the Hazara boy, and that it troubled Aseef more than anything else. But Amir disowns Hassan instantly, without even being thoughtful of their relationship, saying that Hassan is his servant's son. One cannot blame Amir for the intense display of discrimination towards Hazaras; the fact is that Amir lived his entire life where such ill treatment was observed by every Pashtun.

Amir also refers to all the stories of Baba and Ali (Hassan's father), during their childhood days. On the contrary, he also expresses that no amount of history, ethnicity, society, or religion can change the fact that Amir and Hassan spent all their formative childhood moments together. Amir sounds contradictory here; he manifests the intensity

of his bonding with Hassan on one hand, and on the other, he allows the wall of discrimination to stand between them.

It seems that Amir is confronted with a psychological conflict; his feelings of friendship for Hassan are at a tug-of-war with the incidents that perpetuate his ethnic consciousness.

In the U.S.A, Amir majors in English to pursue his childhood dream of becoming a writer. His transformation as a better individual is gradual. He helps his father sell at the local market, where he meets Sorayya, the daughter of an expatriate Afghan General, and marries her. However, by the end of the novel Amir comes to terms with life; he gets a chance to reckon with his betrayal. It was a Herculean task though; Amir redeems for his sins by visiting the devastated land and by adopting Sohrab, Hassan's son.

Rahim Khan, Baba's close associate, often appreciates Amir's flair for writing. Rahim Khan usually shares few of his secrets with Amir. For Amir, he serves a father figure, often giving Amir the attention he craves for and fulfilling the void left by Baba's emotional distance. He too is bound by the rules of society. He once reveals to Amir the romance that he had had with Homaira, a Hazara woman during his youthful days. The episode took a toll on Homaira's family and their very existence. Homaira's family was put in a lorry, and sent away to Hazarajat. Rahim Khan conforms to social prejudice, and agrees that it was the best thing that had happened to him. His family and the world would never accept a Hazara in a Pashtun's house. Later in the novel, Rahim Khan stands as a conduit between Amir and Hassan to patch things.

He is aware of the sin committed by Amir but never reveals it to Baba. Instead, he waits for the perfect time for Amir to unburden himself of the sin. In fact, he was the

mediator between Baba and Amir, when the father and son had a turbulent relationship. One can consider him as a loyal friend of Baba, safeguarding his image, and not allowing Baba's illegitimate relationship with Sanaubar to come to light. He also did the noblest of acts by bringing Hassan and his family under one roof in Baba's house during the crisis in Afghanistan. In fact, Rahim Khan stands as one who facilitated Amir's distraught past and reconciled present.

Aseef, son of one of Baba's (Amir's father) acquaintances represents all those fanatics who profess ethnocentric beliefs. He is forever claiming the land of Afghanistan as one belonging to the Pashtuns, and no one else. He goes to the extent of treating Hassan and his Hazara group as weeds that pollute the land. In the novel, Aseef is a colossal figure because of whom Amir and Hassan confront the repercussions of ethnic distinction. He shatters the friendship between the two, reminding them of their different ethnic affiliations. He adulates Hitler and his deeds, and justifies his act of public justice. He seeks a rightful and political place in Afghanistan as one fighting for the nation. He claims,

“Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be.

We are the true Afghans, pure Afghans, not this Flat Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood.

Afghanistan for Pashtuns, I say. That's my vision.” (TKR, 35)

He believes that the Hazaras, the Tajiks and other ethnic groups are a disgrace to the nation; they do not belong to Afghanistan. Aseef physically molests Hassan thus violating the Pashtun honor code of “*nang*” and “*namoos*” (honor and pride). Blinded with the extremism that most of the Pashtun Afghan youngsters adhere to, Aseef joins

the ethnic Taliban, and is involved in the massacre of the thousands of Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif. In the name of religion and 'ethnic cleansing,' Aseef commits the most gruesome acts of exploiting children, abandoning people, killing masses and executing the act of public justice. He also threatens Amir with arrest for abandoning the nation when it needed its citizens the most. He also exploits Sohrab, Hassan's son, physically and mentally, and is unwilling to release him displaying his grudge and hatred for Hassan and the Hazaras per se.

Baba is a towering Pashtun, a titanic figure, chivalrous, and so formidable that Hosseini says that the devil would fall to his knees begging for mercy. Hosseini narrates that at parties when all gathered in the room, attention would shift to him like sunflowers turn to the sun. He is reflective of the strength and might of an Afghan. Amir is proud of Baba. He is the epitome of courage and perseverance. Baba enjoyed the Buzkashi, the national game of Afghanistan, a game reflective of the valiance of Pashtun brutal and cold blooded. An incident that can be exemplified at this point is Baba's defense of a young woman when they were on their way to seek refuge in Peshawar during the political mayhem in Afghanistan.

A Russian soldier wanted a married lady for half an hour in the back of the truck in exchange for allowing them to cross the borders. Baba roared like thunder, and said that he'd take a thousand of the soldier's bullets before allowing such an indecency to happen. The Russian mellowed down, and everybody in the truck kissed Baba's hands for standing up against such indecency. He is proud, independent, determined, but sometimes emotionally distant and impatient. We also learn from a note that Rahim Khan wrote to Amir towards the end that Baba was a man torn between two halves, between Amir and Hassan.

Amir never saw Baba's inner conflict because Baba reconciled to the loss. Baba built an orphanage to make up for the loss of not being able to lay claim on Hassan as his son. The novel unfurls several such instances where Baba stands for preserving the honor code of a typical Pashtun. We may also say that he is hypocritical for not only disregarding Hassan as his son but also for exploiting Ali and making society believe that Hassan was Ali's son. Till the end, he does not reveal the truth to Amir from whom he steals the right to know this fact. In his teachings on what it is to be a true Pashtun to Amir, he displays a paradoxical behavior.

The friendship between Amir and Hassan runs smoothly, each one accommodating the other, but there are several episodes that make the social division between them clear. Initially, the novel displays ethnic division in the social fabric of Afghanistan, but as the story unfolds, ethnic consciousness leading to serious over turns is vivid. Childhood for the duo through the lens of Amir and Hassan was like a long summer dream although glimpses of ethnic consciousness are quite evident. As Amir reads stories for Hassan, Hosseini reflects on the fate of all those Hazaras who are deprived of their basic rights.

Amir recalls that Hassan would grow up illiterate like his father Ali and other Hazaras; his fate was decided much before he had been conceived in Sanaubar's unwelcoming womb. Hassan was passionate about the mystery of words, but Amir wondered how education would matter for a servant. Since Amir enjoyed narrating and reading stories and poems for Hassan, Hassan saw the world through Amir, and could go to the extent of eating dirt for his Amir Agha. At times, Amir would play pranks on him, and when Amir's teasing stung Hassan, he would make up for it by giving him one

of his old shirts or a broken toy. Such acts of Amir draw our attention towards two issues.

One, such reconciliation was meant because he was after all a servant, and two, a petty broken toy or an old shirt would pacify an illiterate Hazara. When Amir reads his first written short story to Hassan, Hassan is extremely happy, and says that it is the best story he has read for him. But then, he suggests that Amir could give a better ending to the story. Amir gets offended and can hear the sudden cold whisper in his ears:

“What does he know, that illiterate Hazara? He’ll never be anything but a cook. How dare he criticize you?” (TKR, 30)

Amir in his nature does manifest that prominent wall, a discriminator and jealous oppressor. Baba in the novel represents an ethnic Pashtun whose courage and aggression are noteworthy. But unlike an orthodox Pashtun, he is modern in his views, taking care of Ali and Hassan.

When he speaks about the religious heads, he disregards them saying that they recite prayers in a tongue they don’t understand. On the contrary, he respects the tradition of Eid-e-Qurban, but is liberal enough to make variations in the ritual of sacrifice; he decides to give it only to the poor. Such changes can be contemplated upon for making religion an adaptation at the individual level directing human behavior. At this juncture, we can refer to Durkheim’s views, “That Religious leaders would have gained in wealth and political control as a result of institutionalizing religion is beyond doubt, but the value of large group social cohesion, as for state religions in states or nations, should not be underestimated.”

Emile Durkheim, who talked about social structures in his theories, says that variations for balancing strategically various ethnic groups and for political control are conducive and profitable not just for religious leaders, but also for society at large. But variations made for satiating a particular group's intent may prove detrimental for societal living.

However, Scott Atran, the American French anthropologist reiterates a similar belief when he says that the function of religion as, "Emotionally motivated self sacrifice to the supernatural stabilizes in-group moral order, inspiring competition with out-groups." Many studies have also justified the fact that tribal people viewed only the members of their tribe as human beings, and disparaged all others as inferior. This attitude is in consonance with the religious and cultural practices of one group as against another. The variations in the practices of each of these groups are perpetuated and percolated for concretizing them so that the oppressor enjoys his social stand.

However, the novel reaches a turning point when we talk of self sacrifice. Hassan's sacrifice stands tall and firm, a sacrifice meant for his Amir Agha. Kite Fighting in Afghanistan is like war, it is an honor to win that last kite, and display it like a trophy on the mantle for guests to admire. For kite running, every champion should be astute enough to gauge the place where the last kite would fall. This winter it was more important for Amir to win the tournament to secure a place in Baba's heart. Baba always had complaints that his son never showed the courage and demeanour of a Pashtun.

Finally, Amir wins the Kite Fighting Tournament, and there are celebrations in Kabul after the tournament. Very soon Amir and Hassan would be titled the "Sultans of Kabul," but then Hassan paid heavily for the last and much coveted blue kite. He runs

the kite for Amir proving to be a dutiful friend and servant but how could he ever imagine that he would have to pay so heavily for the last kite, for being a Hazara and for saving his childhood friend from Aseef during the slingshot event. Besieged by Aseef and his friends in the alley, Aseef reminds Hassan that he is just a dispensable plaything in Amir's life, and that he has to acknowledge this fact.

Hassan appears like the lamb that is sacrificed on the day of Eid-e-Qurban. The sheep's eyes match with those of Hassan's when the mullah recites the prayers on the day of sacrifice. Picking up the knife, the mullah slices the throat of the sheep with a knack, and it is done. Like Hassan, the animal understands that his life is being taken for a noble purpose, for the one sitting above us. In the light of ethnicity, Hassan's sacrifice can be viewed in the light of an oppressed Hazara sacrificing for a Pashtun, whereas the Pashtun who has to stand firm for honor and pride is hiding behind the veil of class.

Hassan's loyalty reaches a climax when he succumbs to the false allegations of theft by Amir. He comes to terms with his fate, and without any confrontation, lives rejected from Amir's life. How would Amir be mistaken that his victory in the kite flying competition would be a setback to his conscience, a loss to his Pashtun honor code, a betrayal to friend-ship, a blow to his integrity and his upbringing, a defeat that would haunt him over and over again, for wearing a mask and allowing the disgraceful event to happen? In the U.S.A., Baba was still conceited about his beliefs and never gave up living like a true Afghan following the tenets of Pashtunwali.

When he was working as an assistant at a gas station, He worked for twelve hours without any hesitation so that Amir could get the best education. His beliefs in the tenets of Pashtun code were so firm that he never succumbed to the nuances of a

different culture. He wished that Amir would inherit the same traits. Moreover, when Amir fell in love with General Taheri's daughter Sorayya, Baba warned Amir that the honor and pride of a Pashtun could not be at stake, and in his approaches to Sorayya, Amir had to respect that. He warns Amir against bringing any kind of disgrace to his people and nation. Baba and Amir get friendly with General Taheri's family and enjoy their company, as they are also Pashtuns. Even though General Sahib is a friendly character, we see his nasty side when he jeers at his daughter about what people would say if they knew about Sohrab, a Hazara living with the family. To this Amir responds saying,

You see, General Sahib, my father slept with his servant's wife. She bore him a son named Hassan. Hassan is dead now. The boy sleeping on the couch is Hassan's son. He's my nephew. That's what you tell people when they ask.

You will never again refer to him as a Hazara boy in my presence. He has a name and it's Sohrab. (TKR, 315)

Amir's transformation is reflective of Hosseini's theme of fathers and sons, of love and relationships. By adopting Sohrab, Amir is the winner who gives a happy ending to his remorse, no more bound by the shackles of betrayal and class discrimination. In Afghanistan, it is said that the ending matters the most. After watching any movie in his childhood, Amir remembers that the end would matter, whether the girl in the film found happiness or the guy in the film became "kamyab" or "nahkam," meaning successful or doomed to wallow in failure. "Zendagi Migzara" (life goes on) for most of the people, but for Amir, the canvas of his life has been painted with the brightest of hues with Sohrab filling the gap and allowing him to break the

barrier of social bias. Not just this, Amir proves to be a responsible brother, a responsible father and a dutiful son.

When the manacles of ethnicity bound him, he lived a life that throttled him, choked him but now he can breathe free like an actual Afghan with “nang” and “namoos,” pride that does not wallow in darkness, and honor that is devoid of pretense.

His character and personality gain momentum when he gets connected to his land and his people. He wins the competition of life, and this one is a display of liberation especially for all those who are still over wrought by social discrimination. He has won the hearts of all the people across nations by adopting a Hazara, breaking barriers that have been nurtured for centuries, which shed blood, invited foreign insurgency and evoked base instincts of the oppressor. Amir has freed himself from sin.

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini is a work that spools within it the story of the real Afghanistan from the 1970s to 2000. Through the characters Mariam and Laila, Hosseini draws our attention to the extremely crucial position of women in the nation. The novel is about mothers and daughters, focusing on the victimization of women in the face of societal division and anarchy. Basic rights of men and women have however been affected in the light of the ever emerging socio political changes; the denigrated status of women is alarming and sends a clarion call to people across the globe to respond.

At the same time, this novel is also an answer to all those who profess the belief that Muslim woman have always been the vulnerable section of society, suppressed and denuded of any social and legal stand. It is important to note that Islam believes in gender equality, and women acquiring an inferior status are consequent to the rules set

by the ever emerging hegemonies. To give Hosseini a Suffragist status is not the intention of the work, but an attempt is made to bring the issue of women to the focal point.

This will enable one to understand the discourse from the vantage point of ethnocentrism, and its eventual and malleable position. Through the characters, the inner life of Afghan women is depicted, the veil being a camouflage that conceals the yearning for ordinary humanity amidst anarchy. Each character exhibits traits that are stark, but the tendencies of endurance, will power and love are common and run parallel.

Mariam is a young girl living in a kolba (hut) outside Herat, a small city in Afghanistan. She and her mother live a secluded life divergent from the hullabaloo of a typical Afghan family. Mariam's mother Nana, spiteful and stubborn, has Mariam consequent to her illicit relationship with Jalil, a successful business man. He has three wives and eleven children living in a mansion in Herat, and visits Mariam, his illegitimate child, once a week. Mariam aspires to lead a life beyond the kolba, to enjoy the many hues of life that Jalil introduces to her in his talks.

Mariam resents her limited place, and wants to live with her father and her half-siblings in Herat. She expresses this to Jalil by asking him to take her to see 'Pinocchio' on her fifteenth birthday. Jalil reluctantly agrees, but then the father never shows up to take her to the film. Nana reminds Mariam that since she is a 'harami' (an illegitimate child), she is wrong in expecting anything from Jalil. Rejecting Nana's warnings, Mariam walks to Herat, and finds Jalil's house. He doesn't let her in and hides inside; she sleeps on the street thinking that Jalil would come and take her. The next morning,

Jalil's chauffeur drives Mariam home where she finds her mother hanging herself from a tree.

Mariam is shattered, and eventually taken to Jalil's home after her mother's funeral. Somehow, Jalil's wives want to get rid of the disgrace, and Jalil has no say in their decisions. They compel him to marry Mariam off to Rasheed, a Pashtun, and a widowed shoemaker in Kabul. Mariam longs to see Mullah Faizullah, her Quran teacher for the last time, but she nurtures immense hatred for Jalil, and swears that she would never see him again.

Rasheed treats Mariam decently initially; he is protective about her in the initial years of marriage. He expects Mariam to fill the gap of a lost son that Rasheed had had from his previous marriage. But after she suffers miscarriage after miscarriage, he abuses her both physically and verbally.

Laila is a young, intelligent girl from a loving family, growing up down the street from Rasheed and Mariam's house. The Afghan war against the Soviets disrupts Laila's childhood; both her older brothers leave to join the holy war. Her mother Mammy is highly disturbed; she is neither at peace with herself nor with her family. She never bothers about Laila and her own husband, as she is obsessed with her sons' sacrifice.

Laila seeks comfort from her best friend Tariq, a boy a few years older than her. People in the country seek refuge in Pakistan, but Mammy is reluctant to move saying that it would be a betrayal to the nation. Just before Laila reaches adolescence, her parents receive the news that both their sons have been killed. This becomes a regular feature in the land, and bombs fall on the city unceremoniously and unannounced. Tariq

tells Laila that he and his family are fleeing to Pakistan; the couple makes love for the first time. Somehow a few days later, Laila's parents also decide to leave Afghanistan, but as they are packing, a rocket hits their house and kills Laila's parents and wounds her.

Laila is torn and devastated after having witnessed so many deaths: of her friends, parents and the many people around. Rasheed and Mariam nurse Laila back to health. Rasheed does this with a selfish motive, and after she recovers, a stranger by name Abdul Sharif brings news of Tariq's death. Devastated, and realizing that she's pregnant with Tariq's child, Laila feels that it is safer to marry Rasheed. Mariam is initially hurt and threatened by Laila's presence as Rasheed further belittles Mariam. She despises Laila, and refuses to have anything to do with her.

Laila gives birth to a daughter Aziza, and the two women come close, as they find a reason to be happy. As it's a girl child, Laila also becomes a victim of Rasheed's violence. Both the women perceive themselves as allies against Rasheed's abusive manipulative ways. However, a few years later, Laila gives birth to a son, Zalmai.

Rasheed is more involved with Zalmai, and doesn't care for the others at home. After years of abuse and sadness, Laila is shocked to see Tariq standing at her doorstep. She understands that the Abdul Sharif episode was a trap set by Rasheed, so that Laila wouldn't run away. Tariq and Laila spend the afternoon together, while Rasheed is at work. However, Rasheed comes to know from Zalmai that Tariq had come home; he begins to beat Laila brutally. The two women see death in his eyes. While defending Laila, Mariam kills Rasheed with a shovel. Mariam takes the blame on herself, and turns herself over to the Taliban to bear the consequences. She clears the way for Laila and her children, so that they find sanctuary in Pakistan along with Tariq.

In Pakistan, Tariq and Laila marry and finally begin the life they had always desired. With time, both of Laila's children accept Tariq, and enjoy their new life. Their happiness is overshadowed by the news that the United States has attacked Afghanistan. Laila becomes nostalgic. Conditions in Kabul improve because of the U.S invasion, and Laila insists that her family moves home, so that they can help to rebuild their city.

Laila visits Mariam's old home, and recalls Mariam's talk about her kolba; she comes to terms with her grief over Mariam's execution. Laila and Tariq build a new life in Kabul. Laila becomes a schoolteacher, a respectable woman in Afghanistan, just as her father had dreamt of during her childhood. She works in the orphanage where Aziza had once lived. When Laila conceives, she decides that she would name the baby Mariam if it is a girl. Both Laila and Mariam exhibit contrasting characters. Laila, strong with her indomitable spirit, is assertive and stands against patriarchy whereas Mariam who is weak and submissive yields to life's circumstances.

Mariam is a clumsy little 'harami,' as called by her mother. Though Mariam does not know its meaning, she abides by the rules set for one. She realizes that she is not entitled to love, family, home and acceptance.

The sting with which her mother uttered that word justifies that she was an unwanted thing, an insect, an illegitimate child of a rich businessman Jalil and Nana his maid. The love that she gains in the beginning of the novel is that of Nana alone, whose abandoned life reflects in her treatment of Mariam. She tries educating Mariam about the pretentious love that Jalil Khan showers upon her, about how she was accused by Jalil himself when others in his family got to know of their illicit relationship. She says,

“Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man’s accusing finger always finds a woman.

Always, you remember that, Mariam.” (ATSS, 7)

But Mariam is obsessive in her love for her father, and Jalil makes up for his shame by visiting Mariam every week and buying her small gifts. When Mariam expresses her desire for attaining a formal education to Mullah Faizullah, her Quran teacher, Nana intervenes and says that a childlike Mariam needs only one skill to endure, and it’s not taught in school.

Only one skill. And it’s this: tahamul. Endure. It’s our lot in life, Mariam. Women like us. We endure. It’s all we have. Do you understand? Besides, they’ll laugh at you in school. They will. They’ll call you harami. They’ll say the most terrible things about you. I won’t have it. (ATSS, 18)

It’s pertinent to recognize Mariam’s realization that her life is hard, and yet she bears it all. She longs for Jalil’s love and wishes to live with his family. She visualizes herself going for walks with her father, riding in his car, and people saying: “There goes Jalil Khan with his daughter.” Life gives her a hard knock, and her love for her father is strangled when Jalil Khan disowns her and gets rid of her by marrying her off to Rasheed, a Pashtun in Kabul.

She cherishes her marriage initially, Rasheed’s over protective nature and his talk about ‘nang’ and ‘namoos’ (pride and honor). She is however shocked to see a few magazines with nude women in the drawer of Rasheed’s dresser. She questions herself as to why Rasheed insists that she cover herself with a burqa while her husband looks at the private areas of other women.

She later justifies his act, saying that he is a man after all, and after having lived alone for years, his needs are different from hers. His appetite for sex is fierce and violent. They've always been painful, when he pins her down, his hard squeezes at her breasts, and his hips working hard. Yet, she never resists; she satisfies his lust and succumbs to his seductive ways. This gives an insight into Mariam's nature as being submissive, docile and dutiful.

Mariam's shame at being illegitimate is the primary factor that makes her unable to stand up for herself. She is plagued by guilt that controls much of her life. Rasheed's loss of his son would have been immense and that served as a justification for his sexual intrigues. However, such an exercise would always be heretic for a woman. Rasheed's protectiveness towards Mariam does not last long; their relationship becomes bitter as her presence is meant only to bear a son for Rasheed. Mariam's inability to have children turns her into a resentful, bitter, and fearful woman.

At first, she disapproves of Laila's arrival but soon forms a strong bond with her. She finally finds an opportunity to love and be loved by Laila and her children, Aziza and Zalmi. She is a character who gains admiration because of her devotion to the people whom she comes to love. This helps her understand her own mother better. She also makes Laila understand the commitment that she should have for Aziza and Zalmi. Through her love for Laila and Laila's children, Mariam is able to fulfill her maternal instincts, to finally give and receive love.

Laila is the youngest, the only daughter of Hakim and Fariba. She does not have a happy childhood and is a victim to her mother's mood swings. She therefore shoulders the responsibilities of the house at a young age. But Hakim, her father, a high school

teacher, is confident about Laila. He never misses an opportunity to educate and motivate her about the nation's situation, and her responsibility towards it.

His teachings nurture Laila's personality into a person who feels responsible to contribute to the nation's rebuilding. Hakim always motivated Laila to become an important woman in Afghan society. He boosted her confidence by saying that Afghanistan needs her just as much as its men, as soon as the war would get over. He is contrary to most of the other men of society who believe that marriage is the ultimate destiny for any woman. From her father, Laila imbibes modern thoughts, and believes that Afghanistan needs an educated society. She has a strong desire to use her intelligence and skills to improve the world around her.

Laila is devastated when she loses her family in the blast. Her idealism and independence are challenged when she decides to marry Rasheed, only to give a father to her unborn child by Tariq. Soon, she also becomes a victim to Rasheed's violent ways, and is willing to accept the constraints that she had once openly mocked. She extends her love to Mariam and takes comfort in having a friend and a mother figure. However, she is astute enough to make attempts to free Mariam and herself from Rasheed's clutches. She also begins to understand the sacrifices that are necessary to be a good mother by following Mariam's example. She represents the hope for future Afghanistan, because she is the strong woman who can outlast every evil man.

As a young boy, Tariq was injured in a landmine accident and loses his leg. He is an enthusiastic character always hopeful of living happily with Laila. His physical deformity never weakened his love and enthusiasm for life. He leaves Kabul for the sake of his parents, but never forgets Laila; he promises to come back and lead a happy life with her.

One can say that he has been a victim to the devastation around. He was also sent to prison when he was arrested for carrying 'Hashish' (cannabis) from one city to another. He is innocent as he did not know that the coat that he was carrying had hashish in it. He does the job in order to get his mother out of a refugee camp.

As a childhood friend, he always comforted Laila and is modern in his views. He is unlike most of the chauvinists who make for the majority of the men there. He never gives in to adverse conditions; instead, he comes back from Pakistan and looks forward to spending his life with Laila, despite her marriage with Rasheed. He gives Laila strength when she needs it the most, that is, when Rasheed was killed. He willingly steps into the role of a father to his own child Aziza, and accepts Rasheed's son Zalmai. He accedes to Laila's proposal of returning to their native land to participate in the process of rebuilding the nation, and this perhaps puts his character on the pedestal.

Although Rasheed imposes the behavioral code on Mariam, his lust for watching nude women in magazines exposes him to be a hypocrite. It was as though his permission was required for Mariam to even breathe. As far as Laila is concerned, he slyly marries her after making her believe that Tariq, her lover, died in one of the explosions. He is a conceited man who believes that he had done a favor to Laila by marrying her or else she would have been raped, abducted or tossed into some roadside ditch with her throat slit.

He also convinces Mariam that he had performed a charitable act as far as both of them are concerned. After all, women would die for such an opportunity. He compared the two women of the house adding to their discomfort. It is only after Laila gives birth to a son that Rasheed behaves patiently and lovingly with Zalmai which he

never did with Aziza. During war-torn times, he goes penniless, but his ferocity and bigotry do not abate. He decides to send Aziza to an orphanage against the wishes of Laila. However, by the end of the novel it's Rasheed's cruel and manipulative ways that lead to his death.

Jalil Khan is a man who ill treats the two women in the novel; Nana with whom he has an illicit relationship, and his daughter Mariam whom he deprives a legitimate status. He does not have the courage to accept both the mother and daughter because he doesn't want the shame. However, he tries to make up for his disgraceful act by visiting Mariam, but eventually it is his cowardice that shatters Mariam's life forever. By the end of the novel, he approaches Mariam to confess his guilt, but to no avail. He too is a victim to the nation's devastation. He comes to Mariam to reconcile, and leaves an apology with a small fortune in the hope that Mariam might forgive him. He bequeaths a little fortune to her that she rightfully deserves. Unlike Rasheed, Jalil's character is seen evolving, from being a chauvinist to a responsible father.

Hakim is a school teacher whose ideology is in contrast to the other male members in the novel. He is a person who has endured his sons' departure against his wishes for the cause of the extremist movement. Not just this, he has been a silent spectator, and a sufferer of his wife's debilitating acts. He is not repulsed when Fariba accuses him of their sons' deaths. Instead, he is a visionary and is articulate enough in motivating and shaping the personality of his daughter Laila.

He does not give in to the devastating conditions in Afghanistan; he rather expresses his anguish over the prejudices of the ethnic Mujahideen and Taliban regarding gender. He is unlike the male fanatics who do not believe in women having any rights. He teaches Laila her responsibilities as a citizen towards a land torn between

foreign insurgents and native ethnic groups. He can be viewed as a person with modern thoughts and as a one with faith in his daughter to contribute in rebuilding the nation.

Both the characters in the novel, Mariam and Laila are forced into situations that challenge their strength, and their ability to endure. In the beginning of the novel, Nana was perhaps right in trying to teach Mariam that the most important skill that every woman should have 'tahamul' or endurance. And for women who have been doubly victimized, such endurance seems to be the need of the hour. From the novel, we comprehend that women's rights have been apparently denied, and such repression is not in conformity with the Quran or Islamic traditions. This male elite faction of Afghanistan tries to convince its society that their egotistic and exceedingly subjective notions of culture and society have sacred roots.

It is imperative that such fanatics understand that Islam is not meant to foster egotistic ends. Islam came as a lifeline to people who were subject to civilization's tyranny. History chronicles that since the seventh century absolute power was only legitimated by religion, therefore political forces pushed for the fabrication of false traditions. The 'Hadith,' sacred testimony by the Prophet Muhammad is alleged to have undergone many adaptations; each one legitimated certain privileges and established the authority of vested interests. Not just this, it reached an extent where experts tried to create a scientific bearing for the fabricated traditions.

Al-Jabiri in his book *Nahnuwa al-tharwa* (We and our Heritage) gives historical instances to prove that in Islam, politicians realized that they could authoritatively manage the present by using the past as a sacred standard. According to him, the era of committing religious texts to writing was the beginning of institutionalization of censorship. He states that the system of censorship is the most important heritage

bequeathed to us by our ancestors, as it is so omniscient and efficacious. Politics and religion collaborate so closely that reason is baffled by this censorship.

Therefore, we can understand that even those who struggle against the changes of power do not address or even acknowledge the problems or issues of women. But when we study few of the assumptions from an anthropological perspective, Bachofen and Spencer share that men and women are psychologically different from each other. Society's capitalist social order and the progressive outcome of the struggle for survival infer that family and society are different spheres. Women's psychology incapacitates them from playing extra familial roles, therefore limiting their contribution solely to the future of the species, while the men must rule for the good of the society.

According to Fatema Mernissi, in her book *Women and Islam: A Historical and Theological Enquiry*, the transformation in the status of woman from being the oppressed stratum of society to a status where the Prophet upheld the equality of both sexes is maintained. She says:

The traditional enthronement of woman of her who incarnates the very principle of inequality, the basic element of the hierarchy, the alif, the beginning of being, who only exists in terms of a relation-ship of submission to authority has forced the Muslims in a few decades to face up to what Westerners took centuries to digest (and which they still have difficulty doing): democracy and the equality of the sexes. (Fatema Mernissi, 23)

Because Mariam was born illegitimate, the world turns its back on her. The suffering of Mariam is the outcome of the two fold suppression that Mariam goes

through; firstly, because of the staunch patriarchy practiced by the Pashtun Rasheed; secondly, because of the new ideology set by the extremist.

Actually speaking, the Pashtuns are people who believe in safeguarding the honor and pride of their women; adaptations by them are however situational, denigrating the status of women to being a vulnerable section of society. Kuljit Kaur in her article on *Violence against Women and Preventive Measures* states that violence against women essentially derives from cultural patterns, especially from certain traditional practices and all acts of extremism linked to race, language, sex or religion that perpetuate the lower status of women in the family, workplace and society.

This instills fear and insecurity in women's lives, and limits their access to justice. Contemplating Mariam's condition, it appears that apart from her illegitimate status, Rasheed's abuses and violence further contributed to making her subservient. She submitted herself to the hard facts of life, to her father's injustice, to her husband's derogatory re-marks and violence, and towards the end of her life to the Taliban.

It is seen that men took all the decisions of her life, Jalil Khan, her father married her off to a forty-year-old widower, then Rasheed objectified her for his sexual and chauvinist intrigues, and finally, the Taliban who pronounced the final verdict. Hosseini makes her condition explicit by saying: Seasons had come and gone; presidents in Kabul had been inaugurated and murdered; an empire had been defeated; old wars had ended and new ones had broken out. But Mariam had hardly noticed, hardly cared. She had passed these years in a distant corner of her mind. A dry barren field, out beyond wish and lament, beyond dream and disillusionment. There, the future did not matter. And the past held only

this wisdom: that love was a damaging mistake, and its accomplice, hope a treacherous illusion. And whenever those twin poisonous flowers began to sprout in the parched land of that field, Mariam uprooted them. She uprooted them and ditched them before they took hold. (ATSS, 249-250)

## **CHAPTER III**

### **EFFECTS OF SOCIOPOLITICAL UNREST ON INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY**

In Khaled Hosseini's novels *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, political content intertwines with personal narratives, reflecting the tumultuous history of Afghanistan. Through the protagonists' journeys, Hosseini intricately weaves political allegories illuminating Afghanistan's socio political landscape, offering profound insights into power, oppression, and resistance themes.

Both novels serve as poignant reflections of Afghanistan's political turmoil, spanning from the Soviet invasion to the Taliban regime. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir's guilt ridden narrative encapsulates the consequences of political upheaval on personal relationships, highlighting the displacement and trauma experienced by individuals amidst political strife. Similarly, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* delves into the lives of Mariam and Laila, depicting the brutal realities of life under Taliban rule and the resilience of Afghan women in the face of oppression. Hosseini critiques political systems and ideologies through character development and plot intricacies, offering nuanced perspectives on power dynamics and social injustices.

The kite flying tournaments in *The Kite Runner* symbolize the fleeting moments of freedom amidst political turmoil, while the burqa clad figures in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* symbolize the suppression of women's voices under oppressive regimes. Moreover, Hosseini explores the complexities of identity and belonging against political

upheaval. Characters grapple with questions of loyalty, betrayal, and national identity as they navigate the shifting political landscapes of Afghanistan.

Hosseini's portrayal of the Afghan Diaspora in *The Kite Runner* further underscores the far reaching impacts of political conflict on individuals and communities. Ultimately, Hosseini invites readers to contemplate the enduring legacy of political strife on personal lives and societal structures through his masterful storytelling.

By intertwining political content with intimate narratives, he crafts powerful tales that resonate with readers, urging them to confront the human cost of political turmoil and to envision paths toward resilience and reconciliation in the face of adversity.

Khaled Hosseini's novels, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, serve as literary canvases where the intricate threads of politics are interwoven with the personal narratives of their characters, illuminating the multifaceted socio-political landscape of Afghanistan. Through a comparative analysis of these two works, this thesis aims to delve deeper into the political content embedded within Hosseini's storytelling, exploring themes such as power dynamics, oppression, resistance, and the impact of political upheaval on individuals and society.

Central to both novels is exploring power dynamics within Afghanistan's turbulent history. In *The Kite Runner*, the relationship between Amir and Hassan reflects the stark class divisions and power imbalances that permeate Afghan society, mirroring broader socio-political structures. Similarly, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* delves into the

dynamics of power within the domestic sphere, particularly the oppression of women under the Taliban regime, highlighting the intersectionality of gender and politics.

Moreover, Hosseini's portrayal of political oppression and resistance underscores the resilience of the Afghan people in the face of adversity. Through characters like Amir, Mariam, and Laila, Hosseini illustrates how individuals navigate and resist oppressive political regimes through acts of defiance or quiet acts of courage. The kite flying tournament in *The Kite Runner* and the clandestine women's gatherings in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* symbolize resistance against political oppression. Furthermore, Hosseini's narratives shed light on the human cost of political conflict, exploring themes of displacement, trauma, and the search for identity amidst political turmoil.

Characters in both novels grapple with the consequences of political upheaval on their personal lives and relationships, illustrating the profound impact of politics on individual psyches and collective consciousness.

By examining the political content of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* through a comparative lens, this thesis seeks to offer deeper insights into Hosseini's portrayal of Afghanistan's political landscape and its implications for the lives of its people. Through rich character development, vivid imagery, and nuanced storytelling, Hosseini invites readers to confront political reality's complexities and reckon with the enduring legacies of political strife on personal and societal levels.

Khaled Hosseini's novels, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, intricately weave political themes into their narratives, offering profound insights into the tumultuous landscape of Afghanistan. In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini explores the

political upheaval that ravaged Afghanistan, spanning from the monarchy's fall to the rise of the Taliban regime. Through the lens of friendship, betrayal, and redemption, he depicts the erosion of Afghan society amidst political instability, exposing the consequences of power struggles and the displacement of individuals caught in the crossfire. Similarly, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini delves into the oppressive rule of the Taliban, particularly its impact on women.

Against the backdrop of war and societal upheaval, he portrays the resilience and sacrifices of Afghan women, shedding light on their struggles for autonomy and dignity. Both novels serve as poignant reflections on the profound influence of politics on personal lives, illustrating how individuals navigate through the complexities of power dynamics, societal norms, and historical legacies in the face of adversity. Through richly drawn characters and vivid storytelling, Hosseini paints a vivid portrait of Afghanistan's political landscape, inviting readers to empathize with the human cost of conflict and contemplate the enduring power of hope and redemption amidst the darkest times.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini intertwines political turbulence with personal narrative, exploring Afghanistan's trajectory from monarchy to the Taliban era. The protagonist, Amir, grapples with guilt and redemption against the backdrop of his country's shifting political landscape, symbolized by the fall of Kabul's monarchy, the Soviet invasion, and the rise of the Taliban. Through Amir's journey, readers witness the erosion of traditional Afghan society, the displacement of families, and the pervasive trauma inflicted by war and political unrest. Hosseini deftly illustrates how political forces shape individual destinies, exposing the intricate connections between personal choices and broader historical currents.

Similarly, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini delves into the oppressive regime of the Taliban and its profound impact on Afghan women. Set against the backdrop of Kabul's war-torn streets, the novel follows the intertwined destinies of Mariam and Laila, two women from different generations whose lives converge under the shadow of political oppression.

Hosseini sheds light on the resilience and sacrifices of Afghan women who endure systemic misogyny, violence, and loss under Taliban rule. Through Mariam and Laila's experiences, he offers a searing indictment of the brutality of the Taliban regime and its devastating consequences on women's lives while also celebrating their courage and resilience in the face of adversity.

Both novels serve as powerful testaments to the indelible impact of politics on personal lives, offering nuanced portrayals of human resilience, redemption, and the enduring quest for justice and dignity amidst the chaos of war and oppression. Hosseini's evocative storytelling and deep empathy for his characters invite readers to confront the complexities of Afghanistan's political history while witnessing the enduring power of love, friendship and hope amid despair.

In *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini masterfully navigates the interplay between personal narratives and broader political forces, illuminating how individuals are shaped by and shape the political landscape of Afghanistan. Through the lens of intimate relationships and personal struggles, he reveals how political upheaval permeates every aspect of Afghan society, from family dynamics to societal norms.

In *The Kite Runner*, Amir and Hassan's friendship is a microcosm of Afghanistan's socio-political complexities. Their bond transcends ethnic and class divides, yet it is ultimately fractured by Amir's betrayal and the societal pressures fueled by political unrest. The guilt and redemption Amir seeks are intricately tied to Afghanistan's turbulent history as he grapples with his complicity in the suffering of those around him. Similarly, the character of Baba embodies the contradictions of Afghan society, torn between traditional values and the allure of Western ideals, reflecting the broader clash between tradition and modernity in a nation undergoing profound transformation.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the lives of Mariam and Laila intersect against the backdrop of the Taliban's oppressive rule, highlighting how political forces shape the experiences of Afghan women. Hosseini vividly depicts the patriarchal structures that underpin Afghan society and the devastating impact of political turmoil on women's autonomy and agency. Mariam and Laila's resilience in the face of oppression mirrors the resilience of Afghan women throughout history, who have endured countless hardships yet persist in their quest for freedom and dignity.

Through these interconnected narratives, Hosseini offers a nuanced exploration of the complex interplay between personal lives and political forces, inviting readers to contemplate how individual choices and actions are influenced by and contribute to the broader socio-political context. He underscores the universal human desire for connection, belonging, and meaning, even amid profound upheaval and uncertainty.

In both *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini deftly illustrates how political turmoil reverberates through the fabric of Afghan society,

profoundly impacting the lives of individuals and shaping their destinies. Through his vivid portrayal of characters and their struggles, he delves into the complexities of power dynamics, societal norms, and historical legacies, offering a multifaceted exploration of the interplay between the personal and the political.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini explores the ripple effects of Afghanistan's political upheavals on familial relationships and personal identity. The protagonist, Amir, grapples with guilt and betrayal from his actions and inactions amidst the backdrop of a changing Afghanistan. His journey from Kabul's affluent neighborhoods to the streets of San Francisco reflects the diasporic experience of many Afghans forced to flee their homeland due to political instability. Hosseini skillfully juxtaposes Amir's quest for redemption with the broader context of Afghanistan's tumultuous history, highlighting how individual lives are intricately intertwined with the nation's political trajectory.

Similarly, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini focuses on the resilience of Afghan women in the face of oppressive political regimes. Set against the backdrop of the Taliban's brutal rule, the novel follows the intertwined fates of Mariam and Laila, whose lives are shaped by the political turmoil engulfing their country. Through their experiences, Hosseini sheds light on the systemic oppression faced by Afghan women under Taliban rule, as well as their remarkable strength and resilience in the face of adversity. The personal struggles of Mariam and Laila mirror the broader struggles of Afghan women to assert their rights and reclaim their agency in a patriarchal society ravaged by war and political upheaval.

In both novels, Hosseini masterfully navigates the intricate interplay between personal narratives and the broader socio political context, inviting readers to reflect on how political forces shape individual lives and vice versa. Through his poignant storytelling and richly drawn characters, he profoundly mediates the enduring human capacity for resilience, compassion, and hope in the face of even the direst political circumstances.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini intricately intertwines Amir's narrative with the political turmoil of Afghanistan, particularly during the Soviet invasion and the subsequent rise of the Taliban regime. Through Amir's perspective, readers witness the impact of these events on ordinary Afghan lives, as well as the complexities of ethnicity, class, and religion that contribute to the nation's fractured identity. Hosseini vividly portrays Kabul's transformation from a vibrant cosmopolitan city to a war torn landscape scarred by violence and oppression. The depiction of the Hazara ethnic minority, as seen through Amir's relationship with his loyal friend Hassan, offers a poignant commentary on the deep seated prejudice and discrimination prevalent in Afghan society, exacerbated by political unrest.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini continues to explore the political turmoil in Afghanistan, focusing on the plight of Afghan women under Taliban rule. Through the characters of Mariam and Laila, Hosseini sheds light on the pervasive misogyny and violence that permeate Afghan society, particularly under the oppressive regime of the Taliban. The novel vividly depicts the restrictions on women's freedom and autonomy, from the mandatory burqa to the prohibition of education and employment. Hosseini also exposes the brutalities faced by women, including forced marriages, domestic violence, and public executions, as a result of the Taliban's draconian interpretation of

Islamic law. Through Mariam and Laila's resilience and solidarity, Hosseini offers a powerful testament to the strength and courage of Afghan women in the face of systemic oppression.

Throughout both novels, Hosseini skillfully navigates the complex interplay between personal narratives and broader political forces, inviting readers to empathize with the human cost of conflict and confront the enduring legacy of war and oppression in Afghanistan. By intertwining intimate stories of love, friendship, and redemption with the larger socio political context, Hosseini creates a compelling portrait of a nation grappling with its tumultuous history and striving for a brighter future.

In Khaled Hosseini's novels, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the political content serves as a powerful backdrop against which the personal narratives unfold, intertwining the characters' destinies with the turbulent history of Afghanistan. Hosseini meticulously portrays the socio political landscape of Afghanistan, spanning decades of conflict, foreign intervention, and oppressive regimes, while delving into the intricate complexities of human relationships, identity, and redemption.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini intricately weaves the political turmoil of Afghanistan, including the Soviet invasion and the rise of the Taliban, into the fabric of Amir's journey. Through the lens of Amir's guilt and redemption, readers witness the erosion of Afghan society under the weight of external intervention and internal strife. The portrayal of Baba's struggle to reconcile his past as a wealthy Pashtun with the realities of life as an immigrant in America reflects the broader diasporic experience of many Afghans displaced by political upheaval. Additionally, Hosseini's exploration of

ethnic tensions and class divides, mainly through the friendship of Amir and Hassan, exposes the deep rooted social fissures exacerbated by political instability.

Similarly, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini delves into the oppressive regime of the Taliban and its devastating impact on Afghan women. Against the backdrop of Kabul under Taliban rule, Mariam and Laila's intertwined narratives serve as a poignant portrayal of the resilience and sacrifice of Afghan women in the face of systemic misogyny and violence. Hosseini's depiction of the Taliban's draconian laws, including the repression of women's rights and the enforcement of strict Islamic codes, underscores the pervasive influence of politics on the daily lives of ordinary Afghans, particularly women who bear the brunt of oppression.

Hosseini invites readers to confront the complexities of Afghanistan's tumultuous history and the enduring impact of war, displacement, and oppression on individual lives through his nuanced exploration of the interplay between personal narratives and political forces. By humanizing the consequences of political conflict through richly drawn characters and evocative storytelling, he offers a profound meditation on the universal themes of love, loss, forgiveness, and redemption amidst the backdrop of a nation in turmoil. Hosseini's novels serve as not only a testament to the resilience of the Afghan people but also a poignant reminder of the indelible imprint of politics on the human experience, transcending borders and cultures to resonate with readers worldwide.

In Khaled Hosseini's novels, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the political backdrop of Afghanistan is deeply intertwined with the characters' personal narratives. Hosseini skillfully navigates the intricate dynamics of power, conflict, and

societal upheaval, illuminating how political forces shape individual lives and relationships.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini paints a vivid picture of Afghanistan's tumultuous history, from the monarchy's fall to the Soviet invasion and the rise of the Taliban. Through the lens of Amir's guilt and redemption, readers witness the profound impact of political turmoil on familial bonds, ethnic tensions, and personal identity. The novel's exploration of class divides and the Hazara minority's marginalization offers a searing commentary on the deep rooted social inequalities exacerbated by political unrest.

Similarly, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini delves into the oppressive regime of the Taliban and its devastating effects on Afghan women. Against the backdrop of Kabul under Taliban rule, Mariam and Laila's stories unfold, revealing the resilience and sacrifices of women in the face of systemic misogyny and violence. Hosseini exposes the brutality of the Taliban's laws, including the restriction of women's rights and the imposition of strict Islamic codes, highlighting the profound intersection of politics and gender in shaping individual destinies.

Throughout both novels, Hosseini masterfully captures the intricacies of Afghan society amidst political turmoil, inviting readers to empathize with the human cost of conflict and confront the enduring legacy of war and oppression. By intertwining intimate narratives of love, friendship, and redemption with the broader socio political context, he creates a compelling portrait of a nation grappling with its tumultuous history and striving for a brighter future.

Hosseini's novels serve as a poignant reminder of the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity, transcending borders and cultures to resonate with readers worldwide.

In Khaled Hosseini's novels, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the political backdrop of Afghanistan is intricately woven into the fabric of the narratives, shaping the lives and destinies of the characters in profound ways. Hosseini skillfully navigates the complex interplay between personal stories and broader historical events, offering a multifaceted exploration of the human experience amidst political turmoil.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini transports readers to a kaleidoscopic landscape of Afghanistan, from the opulent streets of pre Soviet Kabul to the war torn alleys under Taliban rule. Through the eyes of protagonist Amir, the novel exposes the fractures within Afghan society wrought by political upheaval, including ethnic tensions, class disparities, and the erosion of traditional values. Hosseini's portrayal of Amir's journey from guilt and betrayal to redemption mirrors Afghanistan's quest for reconciliation and renewal in the face of decades of conflict and foreign intervention.

Likewise, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini immerses readers in the harsh realities of life under the Taliban regime, particularly for Afghan women. Against the backdrop of Kabul's war torn streets, Mariam and Laila's intertwined stories unfold, depicting resilience and sacrifice in the face of oppression. Hosseini lays bare the brutal impact of the Taliban's draconian laws on women's lives, from forced marriages to the denial of education and fundamental rights, underscoring the profoundly gendered dimensions of political power and control.

Throughout both novels, Hosseini's evocative prose and vivid characterizations invite readers to confront the complexities of Afghanistan's tumultuous history and the enduring legacy of war and displacement. By intertwining personal narratives with broader socio-political themes, he crafts a nuanced portrait of a nation grappling with the consequences of its past while striving for a more hopeful future. In doing so, Hosseini illuminates the Afghan people's resilience and offers a universal exploration of love, loss, and redemption amidst the backdrop of political turmoil and upheaval.

"One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs, or the thousand splendid suns that hide behind her walls." - This quote, which serves as the inspiration for the novel's title, describes the beauty and resilience of Afghanistan despite its tumultuous history. It symbolizes the enduring strength and spirit of the Afghan people, particularly women, in the face of oppression and hardship.

"Of all the hardships a person had to face, none was more punishing than the simple act of waiting." - This quote, from Mariam's perspective, reflects the pervasive sense of powerlessness and oppression experienced by Afghan women under the Taliban regime. It captures the theme of endurance in the face of adversity and the longing for freedom and agency.

"For you, a thousand times over." - This iconic quote is spoken by Hassan to Amir during a pivotal moment in the story, symbolizing his unwavering loyalty and devotion to Amir despite their differing social statuses. It reflects the themes of friendship, loyalty, and redemption that permeate the novel.

"It may be unfair, but what happens in a few days, sometimes even a single day, can change the course of a whole lifetime." - This quote, spoken by Amir, encapsulates

the idea of how seemingly insignificant moments or decisions can have profound and lasting consequences. It underscores the themes of guilt, redemption, and the ripple effects of one's actions.

“Mariam wished for so much in those final moments. However, as she closed her eyes, it did not regret any longer but a sensation of abundant peace that washed over her.” - This poignant line, depicting Mariam's final moments, captures her journey towards acceptance and inner peace. It speaks to the themes of forgiveness, redemption, and the possibility of finding solace amidst adversity.

“She remembered Nana saying once that each snowflake was a sigh heaved by an aggrieved woman somewhere in the world.” - This poetic line, from Mariam's childhood memories, reflects the novel's exploration of female suffering and resilience. It conveys the universal experience of hardship and the interconnectedness of women's struggles.

“There are many children in Afghanistan, but little childhood.” - This line, reflecting on the harsh realities faced by Afghan children, captures the stark contrast between innocence and hardship in the war-torn country. It highlights the theme of loss and the impact of conflict on young lives.

“I became what I am today at the age of twelve, on a frigid overcast day in the winter of 1975.” - This opening line sets the tone for the novel and hints at the pivotal events that will shape the protagonist, Amir, life. It introduces themes of guilt, redemption, and self-discovery.

“Mariam knew that life, for the most part, had been unkind to her. However, as she closed her eyes, it was her wrist she felt cutting into, her parched lips she felt the

sting of.” - This line, from Mariam’s perspective, highlights the internal struggles and emotional pain she endures throughout the novel. It speaks to the theme of resilience in the face of adversity.

“Like a compass needle that points north, a man’s accusing finger always finds a woman, Always.” - This line, spoken by Mariam’s mother, reflects the pervasive misogyny and blame directed towards women in Afghan society. It speaks to the theme of gender inequality and the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society.

“She would never leave her mark on Mammy’s heart the way her brothers had because Mammy’s heart was like a pallid beach where Laila’s footprints would forever wash away beneath the waves of sorrow that swelled and crashed.” - This line from Laila’s perspective, illustrates the complex mother daughter relationship and the longing for acceptance and love. It speaks to the theme of familial bonds and the longing for belonging.

The topic concerns the cultural ban and the violation of human rights in Khaled Hosseini’s novels *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. For the first finding, the writer is going to discuss the topic related to Hosseini’s first novel titled *The Kite Runner*, in which the conflict part mentioned the ban of kite fighting and the massacre of Hazara people in the 1990s when the Taliban conquered Afghanistan,

A few weeks later, the Taliban banned kite fighting. Moreover, two years later, in 1998, they massacred the Hazaras in Mazari Sharif. (TKR, 191)

The phrase “banned” in the passage above indicated the precise moment that the custom of kite combat was outlawed, even though Sohrab was never described as having flown a kite until the end of the book. One of the popular youth games in

Afghanistan is kite fighting, in which participants use their kites to battle one another until one is eliminated by having their kite's string severed. The practice of kite fighting was widespread before the Taliban outlawed it in the 1990s because they saw it as an "un-Islamic" custom.

According to the explanation given above, kite fighting was outlawed in Afghanistan for five years until 2001. However, the majority of Afghan youth were still afraid of living under the Taliban, which prevented them from playing at the time because they would face harsh penalties if they broke the law.

The slaughter of the Hazara people, in this case, a violation of human rights, was also featured in the plot of *The Kite Runner*. One of the deadliest incidents to happen in Afghanistan in the late 20th century was the murder and killing of several Hazara people by Taliban extremists, particularly in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Two prominent characters of Hazara descent are introduced in the book itself: Sohrab and Hassan. It is revealed that these people are related; the latter is the former's son, and the story's antagonists mistreat them both. However, according to this script, Sohrab lost his father, Hassan, when the Taliban shot him. "--and shot him in the back of the head."

The word "shot" alludes to the instant when a Taliban member killed Hassan, and if Sohrab learned that his father had been murdered, it would cause him to suffer greatly psychologically.

In a later chapter, Sohrab is kidnapped by the Taliban and made to serve as a "bacha bazi," or dancing boy.

Assef, the primary adversary of *The Kite Runner*, turns out to be one of the Taliban members who sold the youngster into slavery. The novel contains a few

passages that reveal Sohrab's story; this is the first one that reveals his status as a bacha bazi.

Besides his status as a bacha bazi, Sohrab is also a victim of sexual abuse as Assef also touched and harassed him in an abusive manner, as cited from this scene,

“The Taliban spun the boy around, so he faced me. He locked his arms around Sohrab's belly and rested his chin on the boy's shoulder. Sohrab looked down at his feet but kept stealing shy, furtive glances at me. The man's hand slid up and down the boy's belly. Up and down, slowly, gently.” (TKR, 246)

Being a Pashtun supremacist, Assef's motivation in joining the Taliban is actually to express his hatred toward Hazaras, as he only saw them as the most inferior group in Afghanistan. Ever since he was younger, he would show his hatred for Sohrab's father, Hassan, even to the point of abusing and raping the latter in the earlier part,

“Assef knelt behind Hassan, put his hands on Hassan's hips, and lifted his bare buttocks. He kept one hand on Hassan's back and undid his belt buckle with his free hand. He unzipped his jeans. He dropped his underwear. He positioned himself behind Hassan ...” (TKR, 61).

This evidence revealed that Assef did not only use physical and verbal methods to bully Hassan but also used sexual harassment when raping the latter, and he would also commit another abuse as an adult when capturing Sohrab. However, it is unknown whether he or the member who killed Sohrab's father, but he is still counted as an antagonist of the story.

In this text, Assef did not only force Sohrab to dance. He also touched and groped him in an abusive manner. The word “He locked his arms around Sohrab's

belly” refers to Assef’s action of groping, which has something to do with sexual harassment. Being a child, Sohrab would easily remember what happened to him in this story, and his psychological development will only be worsened as he is somehow traumatized by Assef’s abusive demeanor. What happened to Sohrab in *The Kite Runner* also represented the reality where many children also became the victims of the Taliban’s atrocity, especially in the case of sexual abuse.

Discussing the topic of the relationship between the Taliban and Hazara, Hasrat (2019) explained that the conflict between both factions would only lead the Hazaras to persecution, as well as genocide, where most of the Hazara people were killed. The novel also mentioned the Mazar-i-Sharif massacre incident, which implied that the officials of the Taliban had committed a severe violation of human rights as they killed a large number of the Hazaras out of hatred. Being a group of Pashtun supremacists, the Taliban considered the Hazara people the most inferior ethnic group in Afghanistan, and they would mistreat them due to their lowest social status, as well as eradicate them under the reason of “ethnic cleanse.”

On the other side, Hazaras are believed to be Shia, which is also the other reason why the Taliban despise them. In this case, the Taliban’s “anti-Shia” doctrine would also lead them to slay Hazara people, and this is also another violation as they recklessly killed people whose faith was different from theirs.

The reality of how the Taliban persecuted and massacred Hazaras in Afghanistan is somehow related to how Hassan and Sohrab deal with Assef, the tormentor while developing their psychological condition. Hassan as a child is told to be traumatized by the moment when Assef harassed and raped him, which caused severe trauma to his memory. At the same time, his future son Sohrab also shares a similar experience when

he was forced to become a bacha bazi and dance in front of Assef, who has become a member of the Taliban in the further chapter. The plot also reveals that Sohrab is embarrassed and terrified by Assef's mistreatment, especially when the latter groped him in an abusive way.

For the following finding, the writer would move to Hosseini's second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and analyze the story of the main protagonist, Mariam, and the impact of the cultural ban and violation of human rights on the character's psychological development.

In this novel, Mariam is introduced as an illegitimate child, which leads her to be ignored by people in her society. Her status also prevented her from gaining her right to live a better life, and she had to struggle and deal with the harsh conditions. Much like *The Kite Runner*, the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* also mentions cases of cultural bans and human rights violations, especially for women, as their problems are the most discussed topics within the plot. The case of cultural ban in this novel occurred in the moment when the Taliban conquered Afghanistan in the 1990s.

In the case of a cultural ban, several texts serve as evidence. The first is the ban on music and dance, "Singing is forbidden. Dancing is forbidden ..."

The website Salaam Times (2021) recorded an answer from someone where the Taliban officials once punished him and his friends for playing a musical instrument, and one of them had the fingers cut off.

On the other side, ABC News (2012) also reported that the Taliban killed and beheaded some singers and dancers at a party, which eventually traumatized people who witnessed the incident. As a result, most of the Afghan people will be traumatized when

hearing the words “music” and “dance,” as they would only remember the moment when the Taliban brutally killed the musicians and dancers.

Next, the other cases that are still related to the cultural ban in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are also the ban on artwork and literature, with the former having a connection to the figurines and the depictions of living beings as cited from this text,

“Writing books, watching films, and painting pictures are forbidden.”

(ATSS, 177)

It is implied in the novel that the Taliban also banned art and literature related things and activities because they found such things deviated from Islamic values. In reality, there are various fatwa related to artworks and depictions of living beings where the moderate ulama allowed them with some regulations, and the fundamentalist ones would strictly forbid the things.

Meanwhile, on the side of literature, the Taliban also prohibited the locals from writing and publishing various books unless religious as they only demanded people to live the “Islamic” lifestyle and avoid the corruption from the outsiders’ media.

However, what the Taliban expected violated the truth that people needed books to improve their literary knowledge. The website Fair Observer (2014) reported that the Taliban had burned many books and other printed media due to their “awareness” of foreign threats, especially toward religion.

Although the Taliban expected an Islamic method as a way to establish a better life, what they did to people has gone too far as they recklessly declared their idealism and policies without discussing them with the local inhabitants and the authorities. Their prohibition of art and literature would only cause a stigma where Islam will only be labeled as an “art unfriendly” religion. At the same time, there are various fatwa from

the ulama, depending on the condition in the different locations and the schools, known as mazhab. What the Taliban did only reflected the extremism in expressing opinions.

Regarding the violation of human rights and the negative impacts, the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* did mention some cases in the plot, either during the normal situation or the Taliban Regime era. The first example is in the story where Mariam marries a man named Rasheed, who is introduced as a temperamental and abusive man. As implied in the quote below, Mariam has to deal with his rage and her stress simultaneously.

“Over the years, Mariam had learned to harden herself against his scorn and Reproach, his ridiculing and reprimanding. However, this fear she had no control over ...” (ATSS, 151)

The words “reprimanding” and “fear” in this text refer to how Rasheed’s wrath affected Mariam’s psychological development, triggering her fear. Despite being a verbal action, Rasheed’s anger would also suppress Mariam and prevent her from expressing her feelings and rights as his wife and a woman in general.

Domestic violence itself also violates the law of human rights as a family member. Usually, the husband or father should not express his aggressive personality before others. Should a man commit some violent actions such as beating or insulting his wife or children, the actions are just the same as stealing the family’s rights.

Jewkes et al. (2019) also stated that the patriarchy in a family is the main factor that often causes domestic violence, which is related to the relationship between couples. An abusive man will not hesitate to abuse his wife either in a physical or verbal method, which directly affects her psychological condition as she develops fear and

stress. The parents-in-law can also do the same thing towards the wife, which worsens the household.

The household problem between Mariam and Rasheed reflected the case of domestic violence in which the former, who is unable to defy the latter, is affected by his mistreatment, bothering her psychological condition in the process. As Mariam is unable to fight back, she will only become stressed by the verbal insults while dealing with her problems at the same time.

In *The Kite Runner* novel Khalid Hosseini said:

“... As I turned out, they had not shot much of anything that night of July 1, 1973. Kabul awoke the next morning to find that monarchy was a thing of the past. The king, Zahir Shah, was away in Italy. In his absence, his cousin Daoud Khan had ended the king’s forty-year reign with a bloodless coup.” (TKR, 34)

In the *A Thousand Splendid Suns* book also this issue is the same:

“ He was the one who told her in the summer of 1973, when Mariam was fourteen, that King Zahir Shah, who had ruled from Kabul for forty years, had been overthrown in a bloodless coup. His cousin Daoud Khan did it while the king was in Italy getting medical treatment. His cousin Daoud Khan did it while the king was in Italy getting medical treatment. You remember Daoud Khan, right? I told you about him. He was prime minister in Kabul when you were born. Anyway, Afghanistan is no longer a monarchy, Mariam. It is a republic now, and Daoud Khan is the president. There are rumors that the socialists in Kabul helped him take

power. Not that he is a socialist himself, mind you, but that they helped him. That is the rumor anyway.” (ATSS, 21- 22)

Khaled Hosseini, in his novels (*The Kite Runner*) and (*A Thousand Splendid Suns*), called this coup a bloodless coup:

“... The king, Zahir Shah, was away in Italy. In his absence, his cousin Daoud Khan had ended the king’s forty-year reign with a bloodless coup.” (Hosseini, 2003, 34)

Also, in another one:

“... That king Zahir Shah, who had ruled from Kabul for forty years, had been overthrown in a bloodless coup...” (Hosseini, 2007, 21)

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Khaled Hosseini masterfully navigates the intricate intersection of ethnicity and politics within the rich tapestry of Afghanistan's tumultuous history, as vividly portrayed in his seminal works, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Through the lens of his characters' experiences, Hosseini artfully unveils the complex dynamics that define Afghan society, shedding light on the enduring legacy of ethnic divisions and the profound impact of political upheaval on individual lives.

Central to Hosseini's exploration is the portrayal of ethnic tensions that have long plagued Afghan society, most notably between the Pashtun majority and the marginalized Hazara minority. In *The Kite Runner*, this tension is epitomized in the relationship between Amir, a privileged Pashtun, and Hassan, his loyal Hazara servant. Their bond is a microcosm of broader societal dynamics, wherein power and privilege are intricately linked to ethnic identity. The discrimination faced by Hazaras, depicted through Hassan's experiences of marginalization and abuse, serves as a poignant commentary on the systemic injustices entrenched within Afghan culture.

Moreover, Hosseini delves into the impact of political turmoil on ethnic relations, particularly in the backdrop of Afghanistan's tumultuous recent history. The Soviet invasion, followed by the rise of the Taliban regime, amplifies existing ethnic divisions and exacerbates the plight of marginalized communities.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam, a Pashtun, and Laila, a Tajik, forge an unlikely bond in the face of oppression under Taliban rule. Their shared experiences of

loss, sacrifice, and resilience transcend ethnic boundaries, underscoring the universal human desire for dignity and freedom in the face of tyranny.

Furthermore, Hosseini's narrative exposes the intricate web of power dynamics that underpin Afghan politics, where ethnicity often serves as a tool for manipulation and control. In both novels, characters navigate a landscape fraught with political intrigue, where alliances and allegiances are forged and broken along ethnic lines. The Hazara community, historically marginalized and disenfranchised, becomes a pawn in the power struggles of the elite, exploited and discarded at the whims of those in positions of authority.

However, amidst the backdrop of ethnic strife and political turmoil, there emerges a nuanced portrayal of resilience and solidarity that transcends ethnic boundaries. Through acts of courage and compassion, characters defy the constraints of societal expectations and forge genuine connections rooted in shared humanity. Amir's journey of redemption in *The Kite Runner* and Mariam and Laila's bond in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* exemplify the transformative power of empathy and forgiveness in bridging ethnic divides and healing the wounds of the past.

In conclusion, Khaled Hosseini's exploration of ethnicity and politics in *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* offers a profound insight into the complexities of Afghan society. Through richly drawn characters and evocative storytelling, he illuminates the enduring impact of ethnic divisions and political upheaval on individual lives, while also celebrating the resilience and humanity that transcend the barriers of ethnicity.

Hosseini's work serves as a poignant reminder of the universal desire for justice, dignity, and belonging, resonating with readers across cultures and generations. By engaging with themes of identity, power, and redemption, his novels invite us to confront the complexities of our shared humanity and the transformative potential of empathy and compassion. Ultimately, Hosseini's exploration of ethnicity and politics serves as both a mirror reflecting the realities of Afghan society and a beacon of hope, urging us to strive for a more inclusive and equitable world.

Khaled Hosseini's profound examination of ethnicity and politics within Afghanistan, as depicted in *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, intricately weaves together the threads of societal complexities. Through his meticulously crafted characters and compelling narrative arcs, he unveils the enduring impact of ethnic divisions and political turbulence on individual lives.

While delving into the depths of human suffering and injustice, he also illuminates the resilience and inherent humanity that transcend cultural boundaries. These narratives serve not only as a reflection of Afghan society but also as a universal exploration of the human condition, resonating deeply with readers across diverse backgrounds. By confronting themes of identity, power dynamics, and the quest for redemption, Hosseini's works compel us to contemplate our shared humanity and the imperative of empathy and understanding in fostering a more just and compassionate world.

Through his storytelling prowess, Hosseini offers both a stark portrayal of the challenges faced by marginalized communities and a hopeful vision of the transformative potential inherent in acts of solidarity and compassion. Thus, his

exploration of ethnicity and politics stands as a testament to the enduring power of literature to provoke thought, evoke empathy, and inspire positive change in society.

Khaled Hosseini's exploration of ethnicity and politics in *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* provides a deeply insightful and poignant portrayal of Afghan society's complexities. Through his masterful storytelling, Hosseini illuminates the intricate interplay between ethnic identity, political turmoil, and individual experiences, inviting readers to delve into the heart of Afghanistan's tumultuous history and its enduring impact on its people.

Central to Hosseini's narrative is the exploration of ethnic tensions within Afghan society, particularly between the Pashtun majority and the marginalized Hazara minority. This dynamic is epitomized in the relationship between Amir and Hassan in *The Kite Runner*, where the stark divide between privilege and oppression mirrors broader societal inequalities rooted in ethnic identity. Through Hassan's experiences of discrimination and abuse, Hosseini shines a spotlight on the pervasive injustices faced by Hazaras, highlighting the entrenched nature of ethnic prejudice within Afghan culture.

Moreover, Hosseini delves into the profound impact of political upheaval on ethnic relations, as exemplified by the Soviet invasion and the rise of the Taliban regime. These tumultuous events amplify existing ethnic divisions and exacerbate the plight of marginalized communities, leaving a trail of devastation in their wake.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam and Laila's unlikely bond transcends ethnic boundaries, offering a glimpse into the resilience and solidarity that emerge

amidst oppression and adversity. Their shared experiences underscore the universal human desire for dignity and freedom, even in the face of oppressive regimes.

Furthermore, Hosseini's narrative exposes the intricate web of power dynamics that shape Afghan politics, where ethnicity often serves as a tool for manipulation and control. Characters navigate a landscape fraught with political intrigue, where alliances and allegiances are forged and broken along ethnic lines. The Hazara community, historically marginalized and disenfranchised, becomes a pawn in the power struggles of the elite, exploited and discarded at the whims of those in positions of authority.

However, amidst the backdrop of ethnic strife and political turmoil, there emerges a nuanced portrayal of resilience and solidarity that transcends ethnic boundaries. Through acts of courage and compassion, characters defy the constraints of societal expectations and forge genuine connections rooted in shared humanity. Amir's journey of redemption in *The Kite Runner* and Mariam and Laila's bond in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* exemplify the transformative power of empathy and forgiveness in bridging ethnic divides and healing the wounds of the past.

In conclusion, Khaled Hosseini's exploration of ethnicity and politics in *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* offers a compelling insight into the complexities of Afghan society. Through richly drawn characters and evocative storytelling, he illuminates the enduring impact of ethnic divisions and political upheaval on individual lives, while also celebrating the resilience and humanity that transcend the barriers of ethnicity.

Hosseini's work serves as a poignant reminder of the universal desire for justice, dignity, and belonging, resonating with readers across cultures and generations.

By engaging with themes of identity, power, and redemption, his novels invite us to confront the complexities of our shared humanity and the transformative potential of empathy and compassion.

Ultimately, Hosseini's exploration of ethnicity and politics serves as both a mirror reflecting the realities of Afghan society and a beacon of hope, urging us to strive for a more inclusive and equitable world. Through his nuanced and compassionate storytelling, Hosseini offers a profound meditation on the power of literature to provoke thought, evoke empathy, and inspire positive change in society.

Readers who delve into Khaled Hosseini's novels *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are exposed to a rich tapestry of Afghan society, history, and human experience. Through the vividly drawn characters and evocative storytelling, readers come to understand the complexities of ethnicity, politics, and identity in Afghanistan, as well as the universal themes of love, betrayal, redemption, and resilience.

First and foremost, readers gain insight into the enduring impact of ethnic divisions on Afghan society. Hosseini's portrayal of the strained relationship between Pashtuns and Hazaras in *The Kite Runner* sheds light on the deep-rooted prejudices and injustices that have long plagued Afghan culture. Similarly, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* offers a poignant exploration of the complexities of ethnic identity, particularly in the context of the Taliban regime's oppression of marginalized communities.

Moreover, readers come to appreciate the profound influence of political turmoil on individual lives. Through the characters' experiences of war, displacement, and oppression, Hosseini vividly depicts the devastating consequences of conflict and

political instability on Afghan families and communities. From the Soviet invasion to the rise of the Taliban, readers witness the ways in which political upheaval shapes the course of history and leaves an indelible mark on the lives of ordinary people.

In addition, readers are introduced to the resilience and strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity. Through acts of courage, compassion, and sacrifice, characters like Amir, Hassan, Mariam, and Laila demonstrate the capacity for love and redemption even in the darkest of times. Their stories serve as a powerful testament to the indomitable nature of the human will and the transformative power of empathy and forgiveness.

Furthermore, readers are confronted with the complexities of moral ambiguity and the consequences of choices. Hosseini's characters grapple with guilt, shame, and the consequences of their actions, forcing readers to confront their own ethical dilemmas and moral convictions. Through Amir's journey of redemption and Mariam and Laila's quest for freedom, readers are reminded of the importance of taking responsibility for one's actions and striving to right the wrongs of the past.

Overall, by reading Hosseini's novels, readers gain not only a deeper understanding of Afghan culture and history but also a profound appreciation for the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity. Through the universal themes of love, redemption, and forgiveness, readers are invited to empathize with characters from diverse backgrounds and cultures, fostering a greater sense of compassion, understanding, and interconnectedness in an increasingly globalized world.

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