



CHILDHOOD, NOSTALGIA AND FLASHBACK IN *THE KITE RUNNER*

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the childhood and nostalgia through flashback in the novel *The Kite Runner*. *The Kite Runner* discloses the problems of war and trauma in Afghanistan and Khaled Hussein questions the idea of ethnicity, motherland and identity through childhood and nostalgia. The childhood is an important memory which collects past and builds the further life. Nostalgia is an individual memory that leads to emotional through flashback. Khaled Hussein is being migrated to America and returning back to his motherland Afghanistan, becomes nostalgic about his childhood. He discourses throughout the novel on his personal incidents during the war period.

Key Words: Childhood, Nostalgia, Flashback. War

Childhood is an important storehouse which retains the early life of every individual. This reconstructs the present and present is also connected to the past. Khaled Hussein in his interview in the Khaled Hussein expresses his views on childhood. He discussed his childhood makes him to write this novel and it is not a happy childhood rather it is disturbed due to his ethnic identity and war. In the novel, Amir represents the narrator who also symbolizes the writer. Amir is a weak character in the novel though; the whole novel is narrated by him. He does not stand with his friend Hassan who dedicates his complete life for his friend. But the novelists regret in the end with the protagonist that he could have been with his friend Hassan at his bad times. But Hassan stands with his friend in all aspects of his life. Amir left his friend Hassan alone in Afghanistan and moved to America with his father. But Hassan struggles to live in the warlike condition in Afghanistan. Khalid Hussein brings the present condition of Afghanistan: poverty, sexual harassment, war and trauma in detail in the novels.

Flashback is an important narrative tool that the novelist uses throughout the novel in order to explore childhood and his nostalgic experiences. The protagonist after return back from America to find his friend and his son, he finds devastated Afghanistan and he does not find his friend and his friend son in the city. He becomes very sad to recollect his days with his friend who was very supportive and kind-hearted. By visiting his hometown and going across the places he spent time with his friend in the Kabul, he becomes nostalgic and he goes to a flashback to reconstruct his memory. He regrets not saved his friend from the Taliban.

The novel sites the transnational travel of the protagonist from Afghanistan to America and Pakistan. At the age of 18, Amir migrated to America with his father and settles in the city. He has grown up in the childhood memory. Amir got a call from his friend Pakistan and he suddenly recollects his childhood.

One day last summer, my friend Rahim Khan called from Pakistan. He asked me to come to see him. Standing in the kitchen with the receiver to my ear, I knew it wasn't just Rahim Khan on the line. It was my past of unadorned sins. After I hung up, I went for a walk along Speckles Lake on the northern edge of Golden Gate Park. The early-afternoon sun sparkled on the water where dozens of miniature boats sailed, propelled by a crisp breeze. (1)

The above passage introduces to the reader how Amir remembers his childhood with his friend and he becomes nostalgic. He continues to reminisce by looking at the kites in San Francisco:

Then I glanced up and saw a pair of kites, red with long blue tails, soaring in the sky. They danced high above the trees on the west end of the park, over the windmills, floating side by side like a pair of eyes looking down on San Francisco, the city I now call home. And suddenly Hassan's voice whispered in my head: For you, a thousand times over. Hassan the hare lipped kite runner. (1)

The kites in San Francisco make Amir become nostalgic and he plans to visit hometown Kabul. But it has been a very long ago he has left the Kabul and now he is looking to visit. He has taken a decision to visit and comes back to Afghanistan. He has many sad things to hear that his friend has been murdered by his Taliban groups and only Hassan's son lives in the orphanage. He visits the orphanage to save Hassan son Sohrab from the clutches of the Taliban. Rahim Khan further narrates the story of the biological father of Hassan. Ali, who believed to be the father of Hassan but Hassan born to Baba. So Baba treats both the children Amir and Hassan equality and hides to the society. But Ali and Baba have also maintained a good relationship. But Baba did not have many options apart from leaving them in traumatic Afghanistan. So the fatherhood is also disturbed in the trauma of war.

Amir also recollects his father childhood which shows the importance of childhood and nostalgic.

In 1933, the year Baba was born and the year Zahir Shah began his forty-year reign of Afghanistan, two brothers, young men from a wealthy and reputable family in Kabul got behind the wheel of their father's Ford roadster. High on hashish and mast on French wine, they struck and killed a Hazara husband and wife on the road to Paghman. The police brought the somewhat contrite young men and the dead couple's five-year-old orphan boy before my grandfather, who was a highly regarded judge and a man of impeccable reputation. (24)

As both Amir and Hassan live without mothers, they are more interested in their fathers. The fatherhood often discussed in the novel.

In a recent interview, the interviewer asks that you earned your medical degree before you began writing fiction. How does being a doctor compare with being a writer? Khalid Hussein replies: I enjoyed practicing medicine and was always honoured that patients put their trust in me to take care of them and their loved ones. But writing had always been my passion, since childhood, much as with Amir in *The Kite Runner*. I feel fortunate and privileged that writing is, at least for the time being, my livelihood. It is a dream realized.(Book Browse). So the novel overall dedication for fatherhood and childhood memory.

Amir always goes back and remembers his friend Hassan and how Hassan was a good and disciplined boy. Hassan is working very hard at home and helping to Amir:

During the school year, we had a daily routine. By the time I dragged myself out of bed and lumbered to the bathroom, Hassan had already washed up, prayed the morning names with Ali, and prepared my breakfast: hot black tea with three sugar cubes and a slice of toasted nana topped with my favourite sour cherry marmalade, all neatly placed on the dining table. While I ate and complained about homework, Hassan made my bed, polished my shoes, ironed my outfit for the day, packed my books. (30)

By going through this passage, one can understand the importance of friendship. But now Amir does not have a friend to spend time with him and repay back to his labour. Amir decides to help Shored, son of Hassan. So he comes back to Kabul. But Shored is in the custody of the Taliban. Amir tries to save Shored, but the situation is more critical as the Taliban is stronger at that time. Amir is in the problem, finally Shored like his father Hassan protects his uncle Amir. Both of them plan to go to America.

The novel succeeds in the narratives of Childhood, friendship and nostalgic through the flashback. It also pictures the situation of war and the post-war period in Afghanistan. Childhood, friendship, and nostalgic equally damage and lost the identity due to war. Khalid Hussein accomplishes himself as a seminal writer with this novel.

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