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Conquer of Hegemonic Masculinity Rule from the Novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

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Abstract

Hegemonic masculinity is a sociological concept that refers to the dominant and idealized form of masculinity within a particular cultural context. It represents the socially accepted and reinforced characteristics, behaviours, and roles associated with a man in society. This concept was introduced by an Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell, who acknowledges that all men were adapted to this idealized version, and it can be used to analyse gender relations and the impact on both men and women within a society.

Connell's work has been involved in the development of a various understanding of gender, particularly masculinity, and has contributed to discussions about how social expectations and norms shape individuals' experiences based on their gender identity. The theory encourages academicians to critically examine the complexities of masculinity and its intersection with social structures. The war has profound effects on perceptions of men and masculinity in many countries. Traditional gender roles were often magnified during the conflict when men were expected to fulfill the parts as protectors. These complexities highlight the diverse ways in which the war has shaped the concepts of masculinity in a country.

This paper critically investigates the theory of hegemonic masculinity and marginalisation in the modern literary novel *The Kite Runner* written by Khaled Hosseini. The paper explores controversy on inequality, oppressed group, poverty, social crisis, betrayal, and loss of identity are the common problems faced by marginalised people in Afghanistan. The concept of isolation can involve various dimensions, including economic, social, and political conflict, and addressing these issues requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach. The so-called necessary categories have suppressed the needy people and thus these survival conflicts tend to push them psychologically under position in their country.

Keywords: Hegemony, marginalisation, brutality, racial discrimination, political conflict, humanity.

Introduction

One of the most ancient and wealthiest countries which welcomed many foreigners by its beauty has been destroyed by deceitful humans. The impartial land now turned out as a patriarchal state by cruel and cunning people. Peace was under the control of hegemonies. Irrespective of gender one has been under the control of male domination. Russian invasion, Taliban rules, and local aristocratic people swept back into power against the rights of women, religion, and ethnic communities.

The most popular minority group is called Hazaras who don't have a proper place to live, they struggle to survive in Afghanistan. Hazaras are one of the largest traditional groups that have been abandoned from society, politics, employment, and education in the country. The profession of politics

and frequent outrageous wars in the country dismantled the lives of ethnic people and collapsed the role of the government. Though it is tough to attain the ability to fit into the dominant surrounding they are fighting to hold the human rights.

About the Novel

The chosen novel *The Kite Runner* by Afghan-American writer Khaled Hosseini narrates the two different classes of people's affection, emotion, friendship, loyalty, betrayal, recovery, suffering, patriarchal rules, war, and conflicts. The whole novel is set in the city of Kabul in Afghanistan. It explains the country's supremacy, the true image of the political situation, and perpetual social conditions. Materially the psychological conflict between the main characters overflows emotion to the readers. The novel has a package of racism in inter-religious diversity and cultural identity which clearly shows dependence on livelihood. The struggle of the suppressed people and the grip of the abusive life by the dominator are vividly shown in the book.

Education and Racial Discrimination

The concept of men dominating the survival of ethnic people in a ruling society is richly shown in the novel. The education system has been steadily denied to marginal people like Hazaras. Right from education basic needs like money through employment have also been restricted. A country cannot flourish without a right form of education, here the exclusion of the ethnic community still results in the development of the country. The strength of education was deliberately flicked from marginalised society to push them to corner. The dominant society harasses people who break the barriers and they are subjected to massacres.

The struggle to come out of the barriers is a challenging task for minority people. In the novel, the innocent character Ali doesn't have worldly knowledge but shows loyalty to his master, who takes care of him and his son Hassan. Both Ali and his son Hassan belong to Shia Muslim, the community called Hazaras, whereas their master Baba and his son Amir belong to Sunni Muslim, the community called Pashtuns, there comes a difference in racism. The racial classification implanted in the heart of the aristocratic people in the country is shown by eight-year-old Amir in his narration, "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". (*The Kite Runner*, 22)

Baba and Ali were brought up together after Ali lost his parents in an accident when he was just five years old. Ali was under the care of Baba's father; he gave him food and shelter but didn't offer education to him. Education has been restricted to both Ali and Hassan though they lived in an aristocratic family. The access to education has been denied to the Hazara community in Afghanistan. The secluded students have been facing discrimination and discouragement from peer members in schools. The protesters are raising their voices for the right to equal education irrespective of gender and class variation.

The cultural conflict plays a major role in the country by banning basic rights for minorities in Afghanistan. Since they have a good bond and have done mischief in their childhood, Baba never considered Ali as his friend. Racism and socialism are two intertwined concepts exposed in the novel. These two concepts have handcuffed the Hazara community, who are loyal and truthful to their master and in their works. Nevertheless, the racial people get close to Pashtun, there is a streak of marginalisation inbuilt in their minds. This is expressed in the novel says, "But in none of his stories did Baba ever refer to Ali as his friend". (*The Kite Runner*, 22)

Racial discrimination prevails in the two generations' relationship. Baba being a rich man who could build a restaurant and an orphanage didn't think to educate poor Hassan or to build a decent home for their residing. He kept them as a servant, they worked every morning after Namaz. Hassan and Ali do all household courses from cooking to ironing, from polishing Amir's shoes. Though they have bonded like brothers, Amir always treats them with class variance. However, the practice of hegemonic masculinity still exists in twenty-first-century society the result of this exhibition would certainly affect the growth of a nation and kill humanity from its roots.

Baba is a wealthy man from a reputed family in society who had an affair with Hassan's mother Sanaubar. Sanaubar is young and happened to marry Ali unfortunately as a cause of her fate. There on the other side, Baba's wife Sofia Akrami died during her pregnancy as a result of internal bleeding. Without womanhood, he manages to bring up his child as a single parent. Socially Baba has a good name and

respect but on the other side, his projection of his pride has ruined Ali's life by having an illicit relationship with his wife and he has also spoiled innocent Hassan's future by hiding that he is his half-son. Without knowing his original identity Hassan has gone through a lot of hurdles from his childhood to his death.

The hardship that he had gone through in his life is intolerable. The psychological conflict in harassing him both mentally and physically crushed the mind of the pure soul. Personally, and politically, Hassan has only received injustices throughout his life journey. His mother abandoned him as soon as after his birth and then he was brutally killed by the Taliban for suspecting him as a thief. "The Talibs said he was a liar and a thief like all Hazaras..." (*The Kite Runner*, 192)

The Russian invaders in 1981 had occupied the country and not only started to rule the land but also the emotions of Afghans. Local people begin to immigrate to other lands in search of a peaceful life. Humanity is nowhere in the country when the Russian soldier asks a lady passenger to sleep with him. He added, that it was a gate pass for them to cross the border. He includes saying, "He says this is war. There is no shame in the war." (*The Kite Runner*, 100)

This incident clearly explains that ethnic people have been discriminated by the hegemonic society. The rich people use the poor people for their needs and welfare when they are untouchable, weak, voiceless, and don't have the ruling power to live in radicalism. If the high-class people require the manpower of Hazaras then what is the need to suppress them? Breaking the barriers of caste, race, and gender difference would answer this. The acceptance of humanity with difference is the reply to such questions.

Political conflict

Decades of conflicts, including the Soviet-Afghan War, civil wars, and the ongoing conflict with the Taliban, have led to the displacement of millions from Afghans. Civics often face challenges in accessing basic services like security, food rationing, healthcare, and economic opportunities. The internal war struggle and its prolonged conflict have resulted in a humanitarian crisis such as genocide.

The above reasons for political conflict affect the Afghan people mentally and constantly affect the secluded lives of people. The Soviet war in Afghanistan forced the public to immigrate to various places. After the USSR's decline, Taliban took the control, captured the capital, and imposed a new culture called the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in the city of Kabul. There is not much difference in the Taliban reign, they made the situation even worse by establishing new rules that hold the public's neck tighter.

A parallel allegation is depicted in the novel by stating, "For next couple of years, the words economic development and reform danced on a lot of lips in Kabul. The constitutional monarchy had been abolished, replaced by a republic, led by a president of the republic". (*The Kite Runner*, 38)

The new rules were strict on the survival possibility. Taliban announced a new culture irrespective of age, gender, and religion which is very new to local citizens. The cultural hegemony and the identity crisis violently governed the country. The unstable patriarchal politics crush the civilian's life. It is the Taliban that gave the power to their followers to control the people cruelly. The situation was flavourful to such a sadist like Assef, who is waiting for a chance to take revenge on past incidents.

The strict government rules draw a boundary in the development of minority growth. The ruling men thought that the Hazaras were a sin for their land. Assef, an antagonist from a rich family bullies Hassan with his friends from his childhood. Later in the future he joined in Taliban group and took advantage of harassing minority people. He took Sohrab from a trench and sexually assaulted the child mercilessly. He makes the child disguised in girly attire and rapes him like once he did to his father in the past. This shows cruelty at its peak and explains the war and the radicalism didn't have the humanity to owe. The crude consent of violation has been pictured by legitimate power.

Literary review

The specific novel is considered as a contemporary classic book. It is a revelation of the concerned manliness environment with the clear ideology of hegemonic masculinity in multiple areas. Hosseini's detailed writing and the development of the characters explain social psychology with the

impact of the war surrounding. Critics and reviewers have appreciated the author's debut novel and commented on it as the events are not about the past but it is happening in the present day.

Edward Hower from *The York Times* has reviewed the social conflicts from the book *The Kite Runner*, he describes Khaled Hosseini's depiction of pre-revolutionary Afghanistan as infused with heat and temper, yet troubled with tension arising from the friction between the nation's diverse ethnic groups. Hower mentions Hosseini for presenting a vivid and appealing narrative that serves as an emotional reminder of the enduring struggle of the Afghan people against the forces of violence, a struggle that persists even in contemporary times.

Pamela Constable, a reviewer has given her review in *The Washington Post* about the book *The Kite Runner* as, a book that causes raw and painful emotions in parts, yet is overall sympathetically crafted. She notes that characters, despite physical deformities, possess endearing nobility. While the narrative addresses uncontrolled homosexual rape, it delivers the conditions of hypocrisy and the abuse of power. She emphasizes that Khaled Hosseini's love for his country is evident, alongside a deep dissatisfaction with its current state in Kabul. Constable characterizes the novel not as closely textured sociology but as a tale narrated with simple brush strokes.

Conclusion

This thesis explains the manner of dominance as expressed by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist thinker. He established the cultural hegemony to explain the structure of social control and construction in society. He alleged that authorised people can dominate the bourgeoisie by establishing division in religion and culture which always have their peculiar values in the society. Supremacy power undertakes others' rights in compulsion as shown by the explanation of the characters Assef, Amir, and Baba. An individual need to fight for their rights. Amir for instance collected his brevity to fight with his rival at the climax of this novel to rescue Sohrab from the Taliban.

Due to a lack of courage, Amir breaks down to save his half-brother from their opponent. As a result of his cowardliness Hassan was brutally raped by Assef and his friends in the ally. In vice versa Hassan being brave and well-equipped to use a slingshot fails to protect himself from his opponent when

he dares to save his beloved friend from all the hurdles throughout his lifetime. Amir's incapability would be an act of revenge for receiving his father's affection. Baba loves and trusts Hassan a step ahead of Amir, his possessiveness of Baba's love is one of the main reasons to discriminate against him.

His brevity is shown when he raises his slingshot to Assef by expressing his agony, "If you make a move, they'll have to change your nickname from Assef 'the Ear Eater' to 'One-Eyed Assef', because I have this rock pointed at your left eye." (*The Kite Runner*, 37)

By accepting suppression marginals allow the dominant group to overtake the rights they deserve. This happened in Hassan's and Sohrab's lives, they accepted the saddest reality but didn't try to overcome it. Amir started to look at Hassan as a muddy insect after the terrible incident. He couldn't tolerate the brutality that happened to Hassan, as a result, he deliberately betrayed his loyal friend by pretending that he had stolen his birthday gift. There are two reasons for his disloyalty first, his jealousy of Hassan's talent, and second, he is dirt because he was raped by his enemies. Life always has twists and turns, Amir felt guilty when he came to know the hidden secret from his father's friend Rahim Kahn that Hassan is his half-brother.

Baba has taught religious faith and good deeds to Amir. The good deeds help him to resolve his mistake by saving Sohrab from the Taliban trap. Amir is not a bad apple; he lives according to the moral values he has learned from his father. He couldn't believe and stand up for his dad when he came to know that his father had an illicit relationship with Hassan's mother. Situation decides a human's life and they offer a chance to recover from guiltiness. Amir gets a chance to rectify his mistake by safeguarding Hassan's son Sohrab from their enemy like how Hassam did years before. After decades destiny persists Amir, he gets a chance to be good again by accepting Sohrab as his adopted son and he proves that humanity wins.

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