

Beyond Borders: Hybrid Identity and Cultural Blending in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

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Abstract

This article attempts to read Khaled Hosseini's fiction, 'The Kite Runner' through the lens of postcolonialism. The researcher aims to bring out the hybrid attitude of the characters that reflects the effects of colonialism on native subjects. The researcher has employed Homi K. Bhabha's idea of Hybridity as a framework to examine the cultural assimilation process and behavioural patterns of the characters depicted in the text. This study reveals how the characters navigate their identities amidst the remnants of colonial influence, often grappling with conflicting loyalties and cultural expectations. By analysing their interactions and personal struggles, the researcher sheds light on the broader implications of hybridity in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: Hybridity, Mimicry, Ambivalence, Diaspora, and Subaltern.

Introduction

Khaled Hosseini's acclaimed novel, *The Kite Runner*, intricately weaves a compelling narrative that not only delves into the complex relationships between its characters but also offers profound insights into the interplay of cultural identities in a postcolonial context. Set against the backdrop of Afghanistan's socio-political upheavals and foreign interventions, the novel presents a vivid portrayal of hybrid

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identities and cultural blending that emerge when individuals navigate the boundaries between different cultures, histories, and social norms.

The existing body of literature on Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* explores themes of migration, cultural hybridity, and identity formation through varied lenses. Jaitra Bharati's study, "A Critical Study of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* as a Novel of Migration," highlights the novel's nuanced portrayal of the migrant experience, focusing on themes such as memory, identity, and the reformulation of social hierarchies in ambivalent cultural spaces. The narrative strategies—mythology, multilingualism, and cultural tropes—underscore the in-betweenness of migrants, who develop hybrid identities rather than merely longing for a return to their homeland. Similarly, Narendra Raj Subedi's article, "Cultural Hybridity in *The Kite Runner*," examines the challenges faced by Afghan immigrants in navigating cultural differences between Afghan-Muslim and American-Christian societies. Using Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "third space," Subedi explores how cultural hybridity enables immigrants to overcome cultural pain and adjust to new environments. Building on these perspectives, my study, "Beyond Borders: Hybrid Identity and Cultural Blending in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*," adopts a postcolonial lens to delve deeper into the hybrid attitudes of characters in *The Kite Runner*. Employing Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence, it emphasises the transformative power of transcultural encounters and the complexities of identity formation amidst socio-political upheavals. Together, these studies reveal *The Kite Runner* as a profound exploration of hybrid identities, cultural blending, and the resilience of individuals in a shifting world.

This article strives to employ a postcolonial perspective to analyse how the characters in the novel grapple with their multifaceted identities and the impact of cultural syncretism in their lives. Through a meticulous examination of key characters, settings, and narrative elements, the research shed light on how the novel portrays the transformative power of transcultural encounters, the complexities of identity formation, and the resilience of individuals in the face of a changing world.

Racial Conflict

The Kite Runner portrays the theme of racism and colonialism, highlighting the dynamics between the colonizer (Pashtuns) and the colonized (Hazaras) in Afghanistan's postcolonial setting. Amir, the protagonist, is, belongs to the Pashtun community, and Hassan belongs to the Hazara community. Hazaras are considered outsiders by the Pashtun community. Hassan is portrayed as having a "round face, a face like a Chinese doll chiselled from hardwood: his flat, broad nose and slanting, narrow eyes like bamboo leaves, eyes that looked, depending on the light, golden, green, even sapphire" (54). In "Power/Knowledge: A Foucauldian Reading of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*", Garret Raja Immanuel and Siva Ramakrishnan argue that the novel reflects the racial conflict in Afghanistan. They point to the relationship between Baba and Ali as

an example of this conflict by pointing out, "Though Baba and Ali grow together they never consider themselves as friends because of the racial difference between them" (6).

In postcolonial countries, it is unfortunately common for the colonizers to dehumanize the colonized population and treat them as less than human, often due to perceived physical differences. As Malala Yousafzai writes, "The first step to ending racial injustice is to acknowledge that it exists. Too often, people turn a blind eye to racism, or they deny that it is a problem" (44). Through the representation of racism, Hosseini acknowledges the existence of racism in the East. The dehumanization is a manifestation of deep-seated racism, prejudice, and the legacy of colonialism, where the colonizers historically justified their exploitation and domination by depicting the colonized people as inferior, uncivilized, and subhuman. The Pashtun soldiers treat the Hazara as subalterns. One of the soldiers calls Hassan not by his name but by his race as "You! The Hazara!" (67). He also mocks Hassan's mother by saying, "I knew your mother, did you know that? I knew her real good. I took her from behind by that creek over there" (68). In this way, the coloniser's dehumanising attitude is reflected in the narrative.

The novel portrays the discriminatory practices and oppressive dynamics between the Pashtuns and the Hazaras, stemming from religious differences, which exacerbate the colonizer's perception of the colonized as inferior. As the narrator points out, Pashtuns oppressed the Hazaras because "Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a" (72). In the novel, the author depicts how the colonizer deliberately establishes a national minority among the colonized, perpetuating a perception of the colonized as inferior to the colonizer. This portrayal resonates with the historical context, as the Pashtuns construct an image of themselves as civilized while labelling the Hazaras as barbaric, often referring to them using derogatory terms such as "mice eating, flat-noised, load-carrying donkeys" (73). This constructed imagery reflects the colonizer's strategy of devaluing the colonized, a recurring theme that mirrors historical practices employed to justify and maintain dominance over marginalized populations.

Amir typically read stories aloud, and Hassan listened attentively, never questioning the narratives. However, one particular night, Amir took the initiative to write a short story entirely on his own, which he then shared with Hassan. Unexpectedly, during the narration, Hassan posed a thought-provoking question that left Amir taken aback. Amir was inwardly astonished by Hassan's audacity to ask such a question, thinking to himself, "Hassan, who couldn't read and had never written a single word in his entire life? What does he know, that illiterate Hazara?" (77). Alongside this, Amir grappled with the notion of how Hassan dared to criticize him, prompting a mixture of surprise and inner conflict. Nivedha Liz Gloria and Garret Raja Immanuel, in their article, "Carnavalesque and Subversion of Grotesque Power Structure through Resistance: A Bakhtinian Dissection of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*", articulates the state of Hazara in Afghanistan thus: "Hazara people are not given respect even by the Pashtun Children. Hazara are seen as

‘Others’ and obviously become subalterns in the hands of Pashtuns” (2).

Amir’s father invites the boys to join him for a ride in the car, announcing that it is Hassan’s birthday. As a result, Amir’s facial expression betrays his inner feelings, revealing his displeasure at the idea of Hassan being given preferential treatment. The scene serves as an illustration of Amir’s discomfort with the notion of Hassan’s perceived superiority over him. Amir’s father says, “Amir! Today is Hassan’s birthday. Let him sit in front for today” (82). Amir’s pale expression is displayed in this scenario. It exemplifies how Amir dislikes Hassan’s superiority.

Class Conflict

In the context of colonial countries, a prevailing social structure often consists of three distinct classes: the lumpenproletariat, the bourgeoisie, and the capitalist class. Typically, the colonizers position themselves within the affluent bourgeoisie and capitalist classes, securing positions of wealth and power. This hierarchical ideology is mirrored in Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*, where the Pashtuns, representing the colonizers, assert themselves as the dominant master class, while the Hazaras are cast into servitude, fulfilling the roles of servants or even perceived as slaves. The author depicts the imperialism of Pashtuns through Assef and Amir. Assef says “Hassan is Amir’s little servant”(84). His sayings become true when Amir presents a slingshot to Hassan saying, “It is made in America. I thought if you’re going to be my bodyguard, you’ll need a serious weapon . . . right?” (85). The interaction between Assef, Amir, and Hassan in *The Kite Runner* highlights the theme of imperialism and power dynamics between Pashtuns and Hazaras in Afghanistan. Assef, a Pashtun, asserts his dominance over Hassan, who is a Hazara and Amir’s loyal friend and servant. Assef’s comment, “Hassan is Amir’s little servant,” reflects the deep-rooted prejudice and discrimination that exists between the two ethnic groups in Afghanistan. The Pashtuns, being the dominant ethnic group, often view the Hazaras as inferior and treat them as servants or subordinates.

After many years, Amir comes to know that Hassan was his brother, through Rahim, who discloses “He lied to both of you” (88). Rahim also reveals to Amir that the Taliban killed Hassan and his wife because “They said he was a thief. A liar, just like all Hazaras” (89). Furthermore, Rahim says that Hassan had a son named “Sohrab is your nephew” (90). Taliban used to fetch out the Hazara children from the orphanage. These children are mentally and physically harassed by them. Sohrab, the Hazara Amir’s nephew is raped by the Taliban official, Assef. Through the rundown, the author exhibits the vigorous attitude of the Taliban toward the innocent Hazaras community and how they are treated.

Hybridity

Hybridity is a term that gained popularity from postcolonial studies. Hybridity refers to the mixing of East and Western cultures interconnected with race, language, and ethnicity. The term Hybridity has its origin in biology. In biology, Hybridity means the intermingling of different species, plants and animals to produce ‘new’ species. It has been used in English since the early seventeenth

century and gained popularity in the nineteenth Century. The notion of Hybrid identity can be seen in the work of Russian literary critic and theorist Mikhail Bakhtin who used the notion in forming the key concepts of Carnavalesque and Dialogism. In the Postcolonial context, the term is closely associated with Homi K. Bhabha, who uses the term to stress the interdependence of coloniser and colonised, and therefore argues that one cannot claim purity of racial or national identity.

The identity which Bhabha talks about is closely associated with the notion of third space which is in between the subject and their idealised other. Critics like Aijaz Ahmad, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Benita Tarry have also talked about the concept. The principal theorists of Hybridity are Homi K. Bhabha, Nestor Garcia Canclini, Stuart Hall, and Raymond Williams. The key text for understanding Hybridity is *Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha. Hybridization takes place in many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, and racial. Bhabha states that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space called "The Third Space of Enunciation" (37).

Hybridity is an enticing idea in postcolonial studies. Hybridity includes terms such as diaspora, metissage, creolization, and transculturation. Hybridity can be argued as a theoretical concept and a political stance and as a social reality with historical specificity. Raymond Williams also describes Culture and the mixing of cultures. Raymond defines culture as "the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life" (68). Williams divides culture into three terms: ideal, documentary and social. The term ideal describes culture as a "state of the process of human perfection" (69). He considers culture to be something that does not stand stable rather it keeps on changing. Raymond describes culture as the body of intellectual and imaginative work. Earlier, human thoughts and experiences were recorded. Social Science labels culture as a particular way of life.

Thus, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall and other critical theorists have discussed the notion of Hybridity. But, Homi Bhabha's concept of Hybridity is slightly different from the rest of the theories. Bhabha, being a postcolonialist, connects culture with Postcolonialism. In the postcolonial context, the term implies "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. The term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, 'hybrid' species." (Ashcroft 108). According to Julian Wolfrey, "the term has been employed in postcolonialism, particularly in the work of Homi Bhabha, to signify a reading of identities which foregrounds the work of difference in identity resistant to the imposition of fixed, unitary identification which is, in turn, a hierarchical location of the colonial or subaltern subject" (51).

As Wolfrey points out, Homi Bhabha uses the term to denote the kind of identity which is resistant to the fixed stable identity which is forced upon the subaltern subject. The subject becomes resilient by assuming a hybrid identity. Pramod K. Nayar also discusses the resistance shown by the hybrid identity thus: "Homi Bhabha sees hybridity as an empowering condition where both cultural purity

and cultural diversity are rejected. Hybridity thus becomes a means of resisting a unitary identity, emphasizing instead multiplicity and plural identities, existing between cultures (native and colonial masters), in what Bhabha has called the Third Space.” (92). Therefore, it is evident that cultural blend creates resistance.

Apart from resistance, the concept, Hybridity refers to the state of being ‘in-between’. Micheal Pyne explains Hybridity as, “the idea of occupying in-between spaces” (339). Bhabha also mentioned hybridity as in-between space. According to Bhabha, Hybridity can be defined in the following manner:

Liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (5)

J. A. Cuddon defines Hybridity as a space where “colonizer and colonized may well adopt (and in many instances be forced to adopt) the cultural practices of the other” (344). Therefore, it is clear that the in-between culture is called Hybridity. As Chris Barker says:

[though] hybridization involves the mixing together of that which is already a hybrid. Nevertheless, the concept of hybridity has enabled us to recognise the production of new identities and cultural forms...the concept of hybridity is acceptable as a device to capture cultural change by way of a strategic cut or temporary stabilization of cultural categories. (90)

Homi Bhabha’s use of the term Hybridity can be distinguished from other theorists with subtle differences. Ian Buchanan’s simple interpretation: “a global state of mixedness, mixedness of culture, race, ethnicities, nation and so on” (237) as well as David Macey’s complicated definition: “hybridity is the margin where cultural differences come into contact and conflict, and unsettle all the stable identities that are constructed around the opposite” (192) can be taken as good explanations of the term. As David Macey says, it is a margin where polarities or binary oppositions meet. The postmodern notion of ‘decentring the centre’ has also crept into postcolonial studies. Therefore, fixed identity is deconstructed and fluid, mixed identity is celebrated. Hybridity is just a simple mixture of two things or two states of being to create a new one, which cannot be categorised under any one category. The reason for celebrating the notion is, it creates resistance in the colonized who cannot be under the categorical polarity given by the colonizer.

The term hybridity also runs alongside Transhumanism, where hybridity is more about the combination of social elements to improve human condition whereas Transhumanism focuses on the improvement of human condition with the use of technology. Tamilmani K. T. and Sridheepika V. S. say that:

Transhumanism aims at surpassing the current limitations of human capabilities while concurrently ameliorating the overall quality of life for all members of society. At its core, this philosophy focuses on harnessing technology to enhance human experience, including enhancements in cognitive faculties, extension of lifespan, and exploration of novel states of consciousness. The ultimate aspiration is the creation of a new breed of humans who are no longer confined by biological constraints or subject to conventional evolutionary processes. (311)

The present article focuses mainly on structure of the text analogies with the concept of hybridity and explicates the hybrid nature that the characters adapt in their encounters and conflicts. *The Kite Runner* exemplifies diasporic literature, frequently showcasing hybrid culture.

Hazara and Pashtun Identities

Khaled Hosseini in *The Kite Runner* has created a Hybrid culture. Hassan *The Kite Runner* belongs to two different identities. Khaled Hosseini has talked about this very clearly. Hassan belongs to Shi'a Muslims as well as ethnic Hazara. And in some parts of the novel, the reader can see clearly that Hassan and Ali belong to the Hazara community whereas Baba and Amir belong to the Pashtun community. Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a. Though they belong to different communities. The love, affection and care shown between the two communities have been described here.

Hosseini has talked about two communities Hazara and Pashtuns. In the novel, the Hazara community has been shown as an inferior community. Ali, the father of Hassan, belongs to the Hazara community and he is attacked by polio in his right leg. Whenever he walks on the street of bazaars or markets, the kids on the street mock him by calling him Babalu, or Boogeyman. "Hey, Babalu, who did you eat today?" they barked to a chorus of laughter. "Who did you eat, you flat-nosed Babalu?" (8) Here, the author has talked about how cruelly the people of inferior communities are treated.

Stuart Hall borrows the concept of hybridity from postcolonial theory to describe the experience of African races which have spread into other cultures and ethnic areas. Hall has used the term in some of his books such as *Minimal Selves* (1988) and *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1990). Bhabha expresses Hybridity as a state of in-betweenness (242), as in a person who stands between two cultures. This concept is applicable to the character Baba, father of Amir, who when left Afghanistan kissed the Afghani dirt and put some in his snuff box to keep next to his heart. "Baba snorted a pinch of his snuff. Stretched his legs. "What'll save us is eight cylinders and a good carburettor." That silenced the rest of them for good about the matter of God." (111). Later, after Baba started to live his life in America he did not completely give up his Afghanistan culture. Before his death, Baba kept the locket of sand with him. This completely shows that even after living his half-life in America. He did not completely give up his birth land. Here, Baba can be taken as a Hybridity.

He oscillates between Afghan and American cultures and becomes a Hybrid of the two cultures.

Dominant Culture

Raymond Williams was a decisive influence on the formation of cultural studies. According to Williams, the word culture meant both a whole way of life (culture in the anthropological sense, synonymous with everyday life) and the forms of signification (novels, films, but also advertising and television) that circulate within society. According to William, culture is 'a reaction to changes in the condition of our common life.' (285) Different reactions and cultures have created different cultures. "The idea of culture describes our common inquiry but our conclusions are diverse, as our starting points were diverse. The word, culture, cannot automatically be pressed into service as any kind of social or personal directive." (285)

Raymond Williams writes in *Keywords*, "Culture is ordinary, that is where we must start." (76) Culture starts with the world that surrounds us, social experiences shape us to which group we belong, or to which group we associate. Culture is not static and unified, but there are always tensions among dominant, residual, and emergent. Raymond Williams's essay "Dominant, Residual, and Emergent", talks about how the dominant people maintain their dominance while other groups contradict or subvert those cultures. The term Dominant, Residual, and Emergent are three ideologies of Raymond Williams.

The dominant culture in society refers to language, religion, values, rituals and customs. "The dominant culture is usually in the majority and achieves its dominance by controlling social institutions such as communication systems, educational institutions, artistic expressions, laws, political processes, and businesses" (Williams 250). The dominant perspectives are practised by the ruling class. Usually, dominance occurs between the high class and the low class. The high-class people dominate the low-class. They take rights into their own hands. Due to the dominance between people even cultures and traditions too are dominated. Sometimes, the dominant is successful and sometimes it is not.

The dominant culture has not only affected particular places. Rather, in some parts of the country dominant culture plays a vital role. For example, Africans were dominated by white people. And due to their dominance and the place ruled by them. The African people did not have any chances to escape from the clutches of white people. So, the blacks were forced to follow the white people's cultures and traditions. In some cases, if a particular community has less number of people following their culture then the culture which has the majority number of people rules that community and people tend to follow the culture of the majority number of people.

The dominant culture is the culture practised at the present time. What cannot be expressed or verified in terms of the dominant culture are lived and practised in the residual and what comes out of the dominant culture as new meanings and values, new practices and relationships are called emergent. (223) Khaled Hosseini

has discussed and epitomised dominant culture in *The Kite Runner* through Taliban. The war started to take place in Afghanistan and was ruled by Russian soldiers. The Taliban or Taleban, people who refer to themselves as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), are a Sunni Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Afghanistan currently waging war within that country.

His childhood place of Amir has entirely changed. People use diesel because “the city’s generators are always going down, so electricity is unreliable, and people use diesel fuel.” (227) Earlier, the streets of Kabul smelled of lamb kabob. But, the only people who get to eat lamb now are the Taliban. The Taliban had Kalashnikovs slung on their shoulders. They all wore beards and black turbans. The Taliban official was Assef. It is he who was ruling people and killing poor women in the name of God.

The next section Williams talks about is ‘residual’. Residual is an old cultural practice followed in modern societies consciously or unconsciously. William considers organized religion, rural community, and monarchy as three important residual traits of culture. Residual elements are present within the cultural dominant values. Residual practices may be very old and archaic but still their presence is felt. In other words, residuals are what is left behind from the past. ‘Residual’ can be analogized with the Hybridity of Bhabha. Both concepts talk about the mixing of two cultures.

William states that residual “has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only as an element of the past but as an effective element of the person.” (122) A residual culture is different from the dominant culture. Some people tend to mix both cultures and bring out a new culture. Mixed of two cultures. Raymond Williams defines Residual thus:

Residual does not exist within or alongside the dominant culture. It operates in a process of continual tension, which can take the form of both incorporation and opposition within it, thus proving to be residual. Residual forms are different from archaic ones in that they are still alive; they have use and relevance within contemporary culture. (201)

Residual takes two roles. The first role corresponds to the dominant culture and acts alongside the dominant and accepts its rules. The second role takes action against the dominant. Amir Jan, the central character of the novel after living in America, started to follow the lifestyle of America. But his father was not completely involved in the culture of America. Though he was living in America he still sometimes follows Afghanistan culture.

Amir Jan’s marriage with Soraya takes place in America but the marriage follows Afghan culture. “According to tradition, Soraya’s family would have thrown the engagement party, the Shirini-khori or Eating of the sweets ceremony.” (156) In 1983, Amir got graduated from high school at the age of twenty. With a view to celebrating this, Baba took Amir to an Afghan Kabob house in Hayward that night and ordered too much of food. After dinner, Baba took Amir to a bar across the

street from the restaurant. Where he bought drinks for other patrons also. This is the American lifestyle. Raymond Williams' residual and Homi Bhabha's hybridity can be analogised.

Raymond Williams 'emergent' are "neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses or even cannot recognize." (124) 'Emergent' means new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships are continually being created. In other words, emergent means new culture. Emergent comes between dominant and residual. Here, emergent culture is not stable. It keeps on changing. In the novel, Baba neither follows Afghanistan culture nor American culture. According to Islam, drinking is considered to be a terrible sin; those who drink would answer for their sin on the day of Qiyamat, Judgement Day. A Muslim should do namaz-prayer five times a day. When Amir says to Baba that his teacher Mullah Fatiullah Khan had taught in class that drinking is a sin. Baba says to Amir with his eyes wandered. "Now, no matter what the Mullah teaches, there is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft. Do you understand that" (17).

Discussion and Analysis

The notion of hybridity can be even found from the beginning of the novel itself. Hassan embodies hybridity by being a servant as well as a friend of Aamir. Here, Hassan is in the liminal space where he possesses two identities. When Aamir is asked about Hassan, Aamir says: "But he's not my friend! I almost blurted. He's my servant! Had I really thought that? Of course I hadn't. I hadn't. I treated Hassan well, just like a friend, better even, more like a brother." (33). Hassan also says "Aamir Agha and I are friends" (58), when Assef asks about Aamir. Here, Hassan is a hybrid, who is a friend as well as a Servant. Hassan's father Ali also forms a hybrid by being a friend of Baba as well as being a servant of the house. Hosseini mentions that "Ali and Baba grew up together as childhood playmates. Baba would laugh and throw his arm around Ali." (21), yet Baba is a servant of Baba's family. Therefore, he takes up a hybrid identity.

The idea of hybridity frequently repeats in their culture, tradition, customs and religion. In Afghanistan the people used to wear hijab, chador, pakul and patkay. But during Amir's birthday and wedding, the well-wishers and relatives have worn modern dresses like a coat, gowns and so on. This dress code resembles how the Western culture has blended with their culture. The official languages of Afghanistan were Dari and Pashto. At the beginning of the movie, the native used to talk in their mother tongue. Due to the invasion by the Soviets, Amir and his father migrate to America where they speak the English language with everybody, including Assef while Amir encounters him in Afghan. In Islamic marriages, dancing and drinking alcohol was prohibited. But in Amir's wedding ceremony, all the men celebrate that moment by drinking liquor and dancing. The movie displays that the wedding album is seen by Amir and his wife.

Ali and Hassan become hybrids by having two different identities. Moreover, Hassan is racial hybridity because of his birth. His mother is a Hazara and his father

is Pashtun; therefore, he has two racial identities. Apart from race, he is the son and servant of Baba, thus he possesses two identities. He oscillates between being a son and being a servant and comes to a hybrid space. Hassan and Amir have mixed identities. Hassan is the half-brother of Amir; here, being half-brother forms hybrids. Hassan is a half-brother and half-stranger. When Wahid asks about Hassan, Amir reveals that "He was my half-brother . . . My illegitimate half-brother" (210).

Baba is a Muslim but he is against the Muslim mullahs. Baba is both Muslim and non-Muslim. He drinks, smokes, spends money on gambling, and does a lot against Muslim doctrine, yet he is a Muslim. Thus Baba is oscillating between being a Muslim and a non-Muslim and that forms a hybrid identity. When Baba talks about Mullahs, he says, "First understand this and understand it now, Amir: You'll never learn anything of value from those bearded idiots." (15). Consequently, Baba behaves as a hybrid. He is both a Muslim and the one who criticizes Muslims. Thus he forms a hybrid identity.

The novel talks about the past history of Afghanistan and the Hazara race, it is a hybrid Mongolian race, which formulates hybridity in race. Moreover, when Amir demands that Hassan should be sent out of the house, his father says, Hassan is also part of their family; therefore, he becomes a relation here. Hassan is a servant as well as part of the family. Thus, he forms hybrids. The lifestyle of Afghanistan is already hybrid. Assef is a symbol of a hybrid, who has German and Afghan parents. Amir narrates that Assef was "Born to a German mother and Afghan father (31). Assef, like Hassan, is a Hybrid. Moreover, the children play volleyball and soccer, the games of Western countries. Mixed cultural practices and customs can also be taken as a hybrid. The culture of Afghanistan is not pure but already the culture of Western countries has crept into Afghanistan. The way people speak, dress, eat, celebrate party culture, and their ideologies exemplify the mix of cultures in Afghanistan. Though the Taliban tried to decolonize and purify the culture by imposing traditional ways of dressing and lifestyle they themselves follow the culture of the West. Thus, the whole setting is a hybrid.

The General, the father of Soraya, is a hybrid, who is living in Afghanistan; he has the residual quality of Afghanistan in him. General had migrated to America but he always had a dream to return to Afghanistan. He is both an Afghani and an American. Soraya is also a hybrid being because Soraya is actually from Afghanistan but she has adopted the culture of America. Amir also has adopted the culture of America. Thus Amir and Soraya are hybrid in nature. They have both Afghani and American cultures within them. Baba feels difficult, at first, to adapt himself to the culture of America. It is evident that by adopting the culture of America, Baba takes Amir to the bar after his graduation. Celebrating happy moments in bars is a part of American culture. Despite being an Afghani he follows American culture. Baba becomes a hybrid by doing what Americans would do. The General scolds Amir for talking with his daughter in the open area. Though he is living in America, he ideologically follows the tradition of Afghanistan. Thus the General epitomizes hybrid identity. Amir has been brought up in America but he

asks his father to talk with the General asking Soraya's hand. Through this, it is revealed that, though Aamir is in America, he follows the customs of Afghanistan. Soraya has two different cultures in her, she is racially a Pashtun and nationally an Afghani, but she follows American culture and elopes with a boy in America. Soraya, by following both American and Afghan cultures forms a hybrid identity.

The Taliban soldiers also follow a hybrid culture. Though the Taliban soldiers want to purify Afghanistan by decolonizing the culture of the West, they follow the culture of the West without knowing it. Taliban rebels have radio and Americanized forms of weapons made by Western countries. Therefore, they are blending with the culture of the West. The marriage of Aamir and Soraya is also a hybrid one. They are in America, but they follow the traditional custom of Afghanistan in marriage. Baba, as a hybrid character, oscillates between American culture and the culture of Afghanistan. Baba has the residual quality of Afghanistan. For instance, Baba has the soil of Afghanistan with him though he is in America. The quality makes Baba a hybrid. Thus, Hosseini exemplified Hybridity throughout the novel.

Conclusion

In *The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini artfully explores the concept of hybridity, where Afghan and Western cultures intersect and blend. Through diverse characters and settings, the novel portrays the fluidity of identity, with characters embodying multiple affiliations and cultural influences. The story captures how traditions, language, and customs intertwine, exemplifying the coexistence of heritage and modernity. *The Kite Runner* serves as a compelling reflection of the ever-evolving nature of human identity, offering a poignant portrayal of how individuals adapt and navigate the complexities of a globalized world where cultural boundaries are porous.

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