

An Analysis of Psychological Conflicts in Khaled Hosseini's Novel *The Kite Runner*

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Abstract

The research analyses the psychological conflicts in the novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. It analyses how a man contradicts in narrating his experience with his father and a close friend, observing till the end of his actions. The structural and psychological approach is used to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The structural approach is used to analyze the character, conflict, setting, and plot. The narrator describes a series of contradictory viewpoints and states of mind throughout the whole novel. The paper shows a psychological interpretation of how emotional traumas affect the self-perception, moral development, and planned behaviour of the main character by the pot, conflicts, and point of view. The gathered details are analyzed through Sigmund Freud's Theory. Thus the research brings out how the narrator tells a story that shows the psychological conflicts within the characters. The thematic analysis of the novel helps the arguments to be put forth.

Keywords - Psychological conflicts, guilt, and redemption, the backdrop of Afghanistan, personal growth, parental relationship, religious tolerance.

Introduction

The Kite Runner was the first novel written by Khaled Hosseini, the Afghan-born American writer. In 1999, Hosseini got to know from the news report that the Taliban had banned the activity of kite-flying in Afghanistan. The news reminded him of his childhood in Afghanistan, where he used to play this kind of sport. He thought it was so cruel and unfair for the kids, and this event aroused his interest to write a short story in which two boys loved flying kites. In March 2001 he began to expand this short story to a novel as suggested by one of his friends. Eventually, this novel was published in 2003, since then it has enjoyed great popularity and has been translated into many versions. *The Kite Runner* tells a story between two boys, Amir and his servant, Hassan. In the first half of the novel, Hosseini mainly depicts the friendship between the two boys. The rest half mainly focused on Amir's attempts to amend his guilt by rescuing Hassan's son.

The Types of Psychological Conflict in the *Kite Runner*:

1. Amir against his father:

The psychological conflict experienced by Amir is started by his willingness to get Baba's recognition and respect. Amir wondered when he and his Baba would have a good conversation like what just they did, since Amir always assumed the reason of his Baba was seldom talking with Amir was Amir's Mother's death while she gave birth to Amir. Amir thought of himself as his father's beloved wife's

murderer. Another reason for Amir's opinion about Baba's lack of recognition toward Amir is Baba's shame about Amir's hobby as a bookworm of poetry books. Amir always prefers to bury himself in some poetry books than play soccer like other boys, and real men do.

According to Freud's Theory, people in society have a basic need to feel good about themselves, both in their own eyes that is self-esteem, and in the eyes of others that is esteem from others. When this need is met, it brings feelings of self-confidence, self-worth, strength, and a sense of being capable and important in the world. People who have their self-esteem needs fulfilled are less dependent on others for validation and are motivated to keep growing and reaching for higher goals. However, if this need for self-esteem is not met, it can lead to feelings of inadequacy, weakness, and helplessness. In our story, the main character, Amir, deeply desires the appreciation of his father, Baba. This becomes clear when winter arrives and the kite-fighting tournament approaches. Amir believes that this event is his chance to finally earn Baba's recognition.

2. Amir against Hassan:

Amir's betrayal is caused by his jealousy. He ignores his Ego because tries to fulfill his ambition to get his father's love and attention. However, he sacrifices Hassan based on his Id. Here shows that his id plays a dominant role in fulfilling his ambition. To a further extent, human vanity is being portrayed through his denial of guilt. He puts aside his feelings because he is determined to win his father's love and attention by achieving his ambitions. Sadly, in his pursuit of this goal, he betrays his childhood friend, Hassan. This demonstrates that his inner desires, represented by his Id, take precedence as he prioritizes his own needs over his moral obligations. He avoids facing the truth and chooses to deny his wrongdoing, which reveals the extent to which human pride and ego can cloud one's judgment and sense of responsibility. Seeing Hassan trapped by Assef and his gang made Amir afraid. He realized that he still hadn't breathed. He felt paralyzed because of his fear of the unpleasant situation he faced. Dealing with the explanation above, it can be summed up that the psychological conflicts experienced by Amir are started by his willingness to get Baba's recognition and respect by joining and winning the kite-fighting tournament. Later, the conflict experienced by Amir becomes dominant after he betrayed Hassan by letting Hassan get raped by Assef to save Amir's winning kite. Therefore, most of Amir's psychological conflicts, deal with his guilt for betraying Hassan as his closest person and his illegitimate brother.

By the end of the novel, Amir has maturity and his superego has gained strength. Amir even agrees to get Sohrab from Kabul putting his life in more danger. Amir chooses to do this for Hassan and Sohrab. Amir's caring toward Hassan can be seen when Amir tries to calm Hassan down who is crying beside Amir. Slinging his arm around Hassan pulling Hassan close and letting Hassan rest his head on Amir's shoulder are the body gestures Amir makes that show his affection and concern toward Hassan. So it can be concluded that Amir is a caring person

3. Amir's Id, Ego, and Superego:

A person's Id is essentially the primitive instincts that cause an individual to act immediately upon pleasurable experiences. The Id is not affected by reality and operates unconsciously. A person's Id is impulsive, illogical, and selfish. When Amir is very young, he tends to run away from situations that he cannot handle and decides that only benefit himself. He is governed by what is called the "pleasure principle". In Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality, the pleasure principle is the driving force of the Id that seeks immediate gratification of all needs, wants, and urges. This "pleasure principle" is

obvious during the rape scene when he hides and does not stand up for Hassan simply because he is afraid. Furthermore, after the rape incident, Amir decides he is unable to handle the pain of dealing with Hassan every day. Rather than admitting that he did not stand up for Hassan, he hides his money under Hassan's mattress in an attempt to get him and Ali dismissed. This shows Amir has a weak superego and a strong Id. Amir knows that hiding his money with Hassan will get Hassan in trouble, but he does it anyways for his own good. Later in the novel, while living in America, Amir's ego is more at work than his id or superego. Amir still thinks about what will benefit him, but he keeps the lives of others in mind when making decisions. This change is obvious when Amir suggests that he and Baba go back to Peshawar. Amir knows Baba is happier there and does not have to work as hard, but Amir also recognizes that he must stay in America for his future. Although Amir is thinking about what is good for Baba, he knows he has to stay in America for his education. Even after high school.

By the end of the novel, Amir has maturity and his superego has gained strength. Amir even agrees to get Sohrab from Kabul putting his life in more danger. Amir chooses to do this for Hassan and Sohrab. When he fights Assefto get back Sohrab, it shows his superego strength. Amir puts himself in harm's way for Sohrab's safety although it provides him no direct benefit; he is doing it for the wellbeing of Sohrab.

Conclusion:

After analyzing *The Kite Runner* through a deep investigation, I can conclude that there are some conclusions related with this research. First, the psychological conflicts happened to Amir are connected to Amir's id or Amir's ambition. In other words, he has ambition to fulfill which is not easy to achieve due to the consideration in his life. As a result, what he gets can be called as a final result named superego. The result of the study shows that Amir's ego would be considered the strongest part of his psyche because he attempts to make rational decisions that are selfish throughout the majority of the novel. In conclusion, when viewed through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* takes on a profound dimension in its exploration of the intricate web of psychological conflicts that shape the lives of its characters. Freud's framework of the id, ego, and superego provides a compelling framework through which to dissect the inner turmoil and motivations of the novel's protagonists. Amir's internal struggles, particularly his guilt and shame, can be understood as battles between his id, driven by his instinctual desires and self-preservation, and his superego, which represents the societal and moral values that condemn his past actions. This internal conflict is further exacerbated by the ego's attempt to mediate between these opposing forces, as Amir grapples with his desire for redemption while navigating the weight of his transgressions.

Moreover, Freud's concept of repression is prominently manifested in the novel, as Amir represses the traumatic events of his childhood, particularly his betrayal of Hassan, deep into his unconscious mind. These repressed memories and emotions resurface later in the narrative, leading to emotional turmoil and a profound sense of guilt. This Freudian interpretation underscores the power of the unconscious mind to influence an individual's behaviour and the lasting impact of unresolved psychological conflicts.

Amir's anxiety and motive are the extrinsic elements analyzed using a psychological approach. Realistic, neurotic, and moral anxiety is anxiety experienced by Amir. The sources of Amir's realistic anxiety are Assef and Sohrab. Meanwhile, the source of Amir's neurotic anxiety is his imagination toward Assef punishment. The source of Amir's moral anxiety is his superego which punished his ego which already followed his immoral id to betray Hassan. In this part, the researcher wants to give several suggestions for the next researcher, especially in the concept of analysis and psychological conflict theory. This research

is expected to be useful for the next researcher who will research the analysis of psychological conflict. In this research, the researcher found different types of psychological changes, the two divisions of conflicts and major emotions that are related to the theory of Sigmund Freud in Khaled Hosseini's novel entitled *The Kite Runner*. This research suggests that the next researcher find a rich source that may cover more complete types of psycho-analytical theory.

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