

AMIR'S GUILT IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S *THE KITE RUNNER*

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ABSTRACT

This paper emphasizes guilt as the main issue portrayed in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* through its main character, Amir. Guilt discussed in this paper is defined as a feeling produced from a behavior that is related to a failure, a wrong doing, or even a sin. This paper discusses the way Amir deals with his guilt since it needs to be redeemed even through suffering. In this paper, I maintain that Amir bears not only his personal guilt yet also his familial and societal guilt. Amir's personal guilt comes from his failure to become a good friend, his familial guilt comes from his burden to bear the sin of the family, especially his father, and his societal guilt comes from his burden to bear the injustice that happened in the history of his tribe. The analysis also shows that self-sacrifice is the way Amir chooses to deal with his guilt.

Keywords: Guilt, personal, familial, societal, sacrifice

INTRODUCTION

The Kite Runner is Khaled Hosseini's first novel and also the first Afghanistan novel written in English. Through the issues shown in this novel, he feels compelled to tell the world something of the life he had known before his country was consumed by war and dictatorship (Academy of Achievement, 2008, September). The setting of *The Kite Runner* is divided into two by following the life of its main character. First is Amir's childhood in 1970's when Afghanistan was under the occupation of Soviet Union; when it was changed from a Monarchy into a Republic. Second is Amir's adulthood when Afghanistan was under the Taliban dictatorship. *The Kite Runner* tells a story about friendship between Amir, who is a member of a Pashtun the ruling tribe in Afghanistan, and Hassan, who is a Hazara the minority tribe in Afghanistan. Hassan who considers Amir as a true friend puts everything in this friendship while Amir is still confused whether Hassan is his friend or a servant to him. The story of friendship filled with betrayal that will lead to the guilty feeling interests me in discussing this novel.

In this paper, I am interested in discussing what guilt Amir feels and how he deals with them. I wish to show that Amir's guilt is not only personal yet has become the familial and societal guilt. I also want to discuss that self-sacrificing is the way Amir deals with his guilt. To be able to find the answer, I will use the general concept of guilt, to discuss Amir's personal and familial guilt, according to the *Handbook of Emotion* which is "guilt produced when individuals evaluate their behavior as failure but focus on the specific features or actions of the self that led to the failure" (Lewis, Michael, Jones, 2008). The focus is the actions and behaviors of a person which create failures that later produce the guilty feelings. Lewis also mentions that a person with guilt will take "corrective action" in order to "repair the failure" (*Ibid*). A person with guilty feeling will try to make things right with what he/she has done wrong. I will also use the concept of Guilt-Purification-Redemption given by Kenneth Burke: Living in a society offers a complete set of values in which people can find themselves and measure success and failure, or good and evil yet people are incapable in keeping all the commandments so the result is "broken laws, concomitant guilt, and a need of purgation" (Kuypers, 2008, p. 168). I will use this to discuss Amir's societal guilt. Burke emphasis on suffering through mortification by offering oneself as a victim and suffering or what Burke called as "self-victimage resulted a transformation and symbolic rebirth" (Kuypers, 2008, p. 180). This concept will be used to discuss the way Amir deals with his guilt.

AMIR'S GUILT AND THE WAY HE DEALS WITH THEM

In this paper, I planned to discuss Amir's guilt in his friendship with Hassan. It arouse when he was still in Afghanistan. Although later Amir and his father moved to America, the guilty feelings remain in him. His guilt is strengthened by the fact that he found out from his father closest friend, Rahim Khan, about his 'true' relationship with Hassan that will lead Amir to realize

that actually his guilt is not merely a personal yet also has become larger into a familial guilt even societal guilt. Since he cannot stay with the guilty feelings that he has, at last he tried to deal with them. The last part of this analysis will discuss the way Amir deals with the guilt he feels.

The Personal Guilt

Amir's guilt toward Hassan, his childhood playmate who is also his servant, has actually grown since they were children. In their relationship, Hassan gives everything to his friendship with Amir. In this part, I will discuss Amir's personal guilt which comes from the ways he treats Hassan which later brings a failure for him as a good friend. First is his decision to sacrifice Hassan to win his father's attention, second is his betrayal by accusing Hassan for stealing his birthday gift, third is his disloyalty by disowning Hassan as his friend, and the last is his ignorance to Hassan's suffering.

First of all, Amir's guilt comes from his decision to sacrifice Hassan to win his father's attention. Winning his father's attention becomes Amir biggest longing. Amir realizes with his inability it is almost impossible for him to win his father's attention. There is only one way, by winning the kite tournament through Hassan, he can make a way possible. By winning the kite tournament he can prove to his father that he is deserved to be called 'the son of Baba'. Through the ability of Hassan who is such a great kite fighter, he can make his kite as the only one that still remains on the sky. Behind the celebration of Amir's victory in the kite tournament, there is a guilt creeping in his heart from his decision in sacrificing Hassan to win his father's attention. Amir sacrifices Hassan by using Hassan's ability to cover his incapability in the kite tournament. Amir gets all the attention and the appreciation from the people, while Hassan chases the blue kite, last kite fallen, to be presented to Amir as a sign of victory (see Hosseini, 2003 p. 56-63). In America, in his adulthood, Amir finally sees all these things as something that left him with guilt to Hassan, as can be seen in one of his thought about his past: "I didn't want to sacrifice for Baba anymore. The last time I had done that, I had damned myself" (Hosseini, 2003). It is the time when his father criticizes his choice to be a writer for making money. Before, in Afghanistan Amir thinks that a good man is the one who can fulfill his father expectation of him, yet in America he learns that a man deserve to chase his own dream. Amir realizes the time when he tries to follow the expectation of his father it ends in sacrificing his own dear friend. This guilt of sacrificing Hassan remains in him since his childhood. Later in America, as an adult, Amir realizes that in the past he had sacrificed not only his dream yet also sacrificed his one and only best friend, Hassan.

The second guilt is Amir's betrayal by accusing Hassan stealing his birthday present. Sacrificing Hassan by using his ability in the kite tournament is not enough for Amir. It is not enough for him to get all the attention from his father that he wants. Considering Hassan as a sacrifice, leads Amir to betray Hassan even more. In order to cope with his inability compared to Hassan in getting his father attention, Amir thinks that "Either way, this much had become clear: One of us had to go" (Hosseini, 2003). Amir thought that the only way he can get Baba's attention is by removing Hassan that he always sees as a boy that Baba expects. This thought leads Amir to betray Hassan by putting his special present, a watch from Baba and some of Afghani bills under Hassan's mattress and says that he loses all of those things. In the disloyalty of Amir in their friendship, Hassan, on the other side, shows his faithfulness by admitting Amir's accusation to protect Amir from Baba's disappointment. If Baba knows the truth that it is Amir who puts all those things under Hassan's mattress, then Baba will be very disappointed and might never forgives Amir for what he does. Rather than admitting the truth that he is the one who puts them under his mattress, Amir tends to keep silence. By saying nothing, Amir betrays Hassan who always showed his faithfulness and loyalty to Amir in every situation. His betrayal leads Amir to feel guilty towards Hassan, as he remembers one day what Baba taught him back then: "*There is only one sin. That is theft. When you tell a lie, you steal a man's right to the truth*" (Hosseini, 2003). By betraying Hassan, Amir hides the truth not only from Hassan, yet also from his father and Ali, Hassan's father. Amir realizes that he is the one who has stolen the truth from everyone. This sin that remains in him strengthens his guilt to Hassan. Not only that he fails to be an honest man as what his father thinks yet once again Amir fails to be such a good friend for Hassan.

Besides sacrificing and betraying Hassan, Amir's guilt is worsened by his disloyalty as a friend. Although Hassan always shows his loyalty and faithfulness in their friendship, Amir

actually never acknowledges their friendship in front of other people. First example is when Amir and Hassan play outside, they meet with Assef and other kids who always bother them. Assef and his friend mock Amir since he plays with a Hazara who is supposed to be his servant. While Hassan stands and protects Amir, Amir stands still and has no courage to even acknowledge Hassan as his friend. As he thought: *“But he is not my friend! I almost blurted. He is my servant!”* (Hosseini, 2003). Due to being ashamed of playing with a Hazara, Amir is not able to call Hassan as his friend. Compared with Hassan, who plays his role very well as a good friend, Amir plays his own role by disowning Hassan as his friend. Another example is described in Amir’s thought: I treated Hassan well, just like a friend, better even, more like a brother. But if so, then why, when Baba’s friends came to visit with their kids, didn’t I ever include Hassan in our games? Why did I play with Hassan only when no one else was around?” (Hosseini, 2003). Amir may play with Hassan, read stories for him, yet he never includes Hassan when he plays with the children of Baba’s friends. Amir never acknowledges Hassan in front of others. Amir and Hassan may be seen as friends from the outside, yet inside Amir still feels the gap between them. He may play with him, yet when he faces the other Afghanistan kids he never mentions Hassan as his friend. Disowning Hassan as his friend creates a guilty feeling in him, especially when Amir realizes that his relationship with Hassan is more than just between master and slave, even more than just friends, yet as brothers from the same father that will be discussed further on the familial guilt.

In his confusion, whether to consider Hassan as a friend or as a servant, Amir’s guilt is strengthened by ignoring Hassan’s suffering. On his way to get the blue kite for Amir, Hassan has to face an obstacle which is Assef and his friends. Amir, who is there, only stands and even hides himself on the edge of the alley where he sees Hassan gets raped by Assef. Rather than jumps in to help Hassan like what he always does when Amir is in trouble, Amir tries to rationalize Hassan’s suffering: “Nothing was free in this world, Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba. Was it a fair price? The answer floated in my conscious mind before I could thwart it: He was just a Hazara, wasn’t he?” (Hosseini, 2003). Not only that Amir is afraid of Assef and his friend who are bigger in size than him, yet Amir also tries to rationalize that Hassan is deserved to get that kind of treatment. Assef is a Pashtun and Hassan is just a Hazara, which means Assef may do whatever he wants to a Hazara, and Hassan are supposed to get any kind of treatment from a Pashtun. His ignorance to Hassan’s suffering later will be the guilt that reminded him of all the ‘sacrifices’ that Hassan did for him. As he said when he went back to Afghanistan after long time leaving for America: “I don’t want to forget anymore” (Hosseini, 2003). It is the time when he remembers his childhood, especially the time when they spend together. He remembers what Hassan does for him. Hassan who always stands for him when other kids bother them, Hassan who admits that he stole Amir’s present while he actually does not, Hassan who helps him winning the kite tournament even runs the last fallen kite for him, Hassan who his suffering he ignores.

Missing a chance to apologize to Hassan became Amir’s biggest failure to sweep away the guilty feelings that he had and also becomes a reason for the guilt to remain in him. As he narrates: “I understood the nature of my new curse: I was going to get away with it” (Hosseini, 2003). Amir takes along his guilty feelings when he and his father have to move to America for safety reason. Yet for Amir, moving to America is not just to keep his family save, yet also to bury his memory and his guilt to Hassan. As he narrates:

“Kabul had become a city of ghosts for me. A city of a hare lipped ghosts. America was different. America was a river, roaring along, unmindful of the past. I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom, let the waters carry me someplace far. Someplace with no ghosts, no memories, and no sins (Hosseini, 2003).”

By leaving Kabul, Amir tries to leave his bad memory about Hassan, a ghost that kept haunting him. He wishes to forget all his guilt to Hassan in the past which he fails to acknowledge. He wishes that by going to a different place far from Kabul, he can also be far from his guilt. Even so, Amir still remembers Hassan as part of him. Amir still remembered Hassan as his dear friend, a dear friend who he owed an apology.

The Familial Guilt

The guilt that Amir feels to Hassan is strengthened by the fact that actually Hassan is his ‘half-brother’, born from the same father. In America, where he thinks as a place to bury all his

past including his guilt, Amir finds out new facts about his true relationship with Hassan. From a phone call from Rahim Khan, his father's closest friend, Amir finds out that Baba, a father that he adores, hides a disgrace from the people, even from him. Baba has an affair with Ali's wife which resulted in having a son that he never acknowledges even to Ali. That son is Hassan, Amir's servant and also his friend (see Hosseini, 2003 p.198-206). That son is, a friend who he owes an apology for his guilt in the past. He feels like the guilt of his father, which never acknowledges Hassan as a son, has become a part of him. Therefore, the guilt that Amir feels to Hassan has become broader into familial guilt. To understand Amir's familial guilt, first I will discuss Baba's affair which created shame to Ali's family, second is Baba's irresponsibility by disowning Hassan, and last is Amir's guilt in his ignorance of Hassan's identity.

The first Amir's familial guilt comes from Baba's affair which brings shame to Ali's family. The relationship between Baba and Ali is mostly the same with the relationship between Amir and Hassan. Ali is an orphan that is taken by Baba's father (Amir's grandfather) to his house. Although at that time the social gap between those tribes has already arisen, still Ali is taken care of well by Baba's family. Yet it cannot be denied that the result of the historical background of Baba's and Ali's tribes make their social status different. On one side, Baba considers Ali as his childhood playmate, on the other side Baba is still the master and Ali is the servant. (see Hosseini, 2003 p.12, 84). However, in all his perfection shown to the society, Baba hides a shameful deed that he never acknowledges even until he died. Baba has an affair with another woman named Sanaubar. To make matter worse, Sanaubar is not only a Hazara woman, yet also a wife of a man. Sanaubar's husband is Ali, who Baba considers as his playmate and also his servant. Behind all the good treatments that Baba does to Ali, actually Baba takes what the Afghanistan called as his *namoos* which means his honor (Hosseini, 2003). Baba's failure to be an honored Pashtun is only known to his friend, Rahim Khan, who later told the truth to Amir.

Having an affair with Ali's wife was not the only wrong doing done by Baba. Even worse is the result of that affair. Baba has a son from Sanaubar that is unknown to other people, even to Ali, except to Rahim Khan. That son is Hassan, Amir's servant and dear friend. To Hassan Baba takes what the Afghanistan called his *nang* which means his identity (Hosseini, 2003). Baba could not acknowledge Hassan as his son due to his fear of getting shame. Yet, by never acknowledging Hassan as his son prevents Hassan from getting what Amir has ever gotten as the son of the greatest man in Kabul. Hassan misses things to which he is entitled to such as a decent education, a good reputation, and a better treatment from the society. An example of a special treatment of the society that Hassan misses and Amir gets is Baba's proposal to General Taheri's daughter for Amir. This proposal is accepted since the General considers the reputation of Baba: "People here marry for love, family name and ancestry never even come into the equation. But we are Afghans" (Hosseini, 2003). The reason the Taheris gives Soraya to Amir so easily is because of Baba's good standing and ancestry. For the Afghans, a family line determines how a person is seen in a society. The acceptance of the society considers the reputation of a member of the family where one belongs. When a person comes from a good reputation of a family he will be appreciated and when a reputation of a family is not as good as expected by the society, he will be treated differently.

On top of Amir's personal guilt, Baba's misconduct to Hassan and his family became his familial burden. The guilt of Baba also influenced the guilty feeling that Amir has. Amir, as the only son, as the only member of the family of Baba takes the responsibility of Baba's guilt. As stated by Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, (1998) and Manstead: "It is argued that people can experience feelings of guilt on behalf of their group when the behavior of others an in-group member is inconsistent with norms or values of the group" (p. 873). In their works on *Guilt by Association*, it is explained that a person who identifies his/herself to certain group and relates themselves with a failure of that group may bears the guilt although he/she does not do the exact act which creates failure. Example given by Baumister and Hastings is "a White American who simply identifies himself as White people and sees slavery as a White crime against African-American then they are guilty" (in Doosje et al, 1998, p. 873). As can be seen in how the familial guilt comes up in Amir, as he mentioned in his reason to go back to Afghanistan:

"As it turned out, Baba and I were more alike than I'd ever known. We had both betrayed the people who would have given their lives for us. And with that came this realization: that Rahim Khan had summoned me here to atone not just for my sins but for Baba's too

(Hosseini, 2003, p. 209).”

Amir realized that his guilt to Hassan is mostly the same with Baba's guilt to Ali, Hassan's father. Both have created guilty feelings to people who devoted themselves for them. Especially, the fact that Hassan is his brother strengthened Amir's guilt. Before, Hassan was just a friend even a servant for him. He never knows that actually Hassan is a part of him. It makes his burden becomes heavier. A person that he betrays, sacrifices, ignores, and even disowns is no other than his own brother. As he realized all these truth, it opened Amir's mind that the only person who can pay for his father's guilt in the past is him. He is the only son of Baba. Before, he may see himself as the part of Baba in his success yet now he has to face that he becomes the part in Baba's guilt in the past.

The Societal Guilt

Moving to America, gives Amir new knowledge about living in a different society from Afghanistan. It is not only that he gains an education from college, yet also he finds many things which are different from what his society has in Afghanistan before. . In discussing Amir's societal guilt, I will apply Burke's concept that a failure in following a standard set by the society will create guilty feeling since a person is incapable in following certain standard (in Kuypers, 2005, p. 168). Different from Baba, Amir tries to adapt well with his new society. In Afghanistan, before, he cannot even say his thought about his own dream but rather tried to fulfill his father expectation. In America, he realizes that everyone is deserved to chase what he wants to be. Even though, Baba wants him to find a job that 'made money', Amir bravely chooses his own dream, to be a writer (see Hosseini, 2003 p. 73, 124). Another thing that Amir finds in America is the equality of every person which he cannot find in his society in Afghanistan. People in Afghanistan are divided into their tribes. One tribe is higher than the others. The higher tribe will always be on the higher position while the lower tribes will be in the lower position. Yet, America is different. Amir finds that in America, every man was equal to find a job, to make money, and to hold a position. Every person has right to make his/her own live better.

All those things will not be found in Afghanistan where each person is seen and defined based on the tribes they belong. With all the norms that Amir learns in America, they makes him realized about his relationship with Hassan. One of the problems in the friendship between Amir and Hassan is the gap created by different tribes where they belong. While Amir belongs to the higher class, Hassan is from the lower class. Amir is a Pashtun, which is the majority and ruling tribe in Afghanistan, and Hassan is a Hazzara, which is a marginalized tribe, even the 'lowest' tribe in Afghanistan. Therefore, Amir and Hassan are also separated by different social statuses. Historically, the relationship between the Pashtun and the Hazara is wounded by a severe conflict. In the past, the Pashtun did an 'ethnic cleansing' toward the Hazara (see Hosseini 2003, p. 68, 261). This conflict also creates different status between those tribes which is resulted that the Pashtun will always be the master and the Hazara will always be the slave. This historical background has given a burden to Amir so that as a member of the Pashtun, he feels guilty. In order to understand Amir societal guilt, I will discuss first the history of the Pashtun and the Hazara, second the result of the history, and third is Amir's guilt to Hassan which is influenced by the result of their tribe history.

First is the history of the Pashtun and the Hazara. The setting of the childhood of Amir and Hassan is around 1970's when the conflict between the Pashtun and the Hazara was rising. In Afghanistan, Pashtun is the majority tribe among all the tribes. Before the invasion of the Soviet Union, 45% of the Afghanistan people are Pashtun. They are banded together due to common language, religion, and traditions. *The Kite Runner* portrays the relationship between the Pashtun, which is the majority tribe among all the tribes in Afghanistan, and the Hazara, which is the 'lowest' among all the tribes, into the relationship between Amir and Hassan. For the Pashtuns, an individual is responsible only to his tribe which makes the loyalty to the clan is obligatory in all circumstances. This loyalty makes the Pashtun to differentiate the world into "We and They" or even makes them hostile toward others (Orakzai, 2009). The pride of being a Pashtun is portrayed clearly in the novel. They consider themselves as the true Afghanistan as shown by a boy named Assef who lives in the same surroundings with Amir "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtun. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our

homeland, our *watan*. They dirty our blood” (Hosseini, 2003). It is not only that the Pashtuns see themselves as the real Afghans yet also shown how they see others different from them. Other than Pashtun are considered not the real Afghanistan or what this boy called as the dirt, something that pollutes their land.

The domination of the Pashtun of the land of Afghanistan has made the other tribes to live not only the different region of the area yet also the different way of living. As a result of Pashtun expansionism, which was fueled by the different sects of Islam that they practice, in the late 18th and the early 19th centuries the Hazaras were driven to the barren dry mountain that later became Hazarajat, a place of the Hazaras. This expansionism also made the Hazaras to occupy the lowest economic rungs as portrays in the relationship between Amir’s family and Hassan’s family. Although Baba considers Hassan and Ali as the part of their family, yet their positions are still between the master and the servant. Baba and Amir live in the house while Hassan and his father live in the mud shack in the yard and sleep on the mattress on the floor. Baba runs a big business in selling carpet while Ali cleans the house and prepares for his clothes and food (see Hosseini, 2003 p. 4-6, 15). The word Afghanistan itself means the “Land of Afghan”. In order to differentiate them with other tribes near that area such as the Iranian and the Chinese, since the year of 1000, the Pashtuns as the majority tribe has used the word “Afghan” as their identity, their pride.

The Way Amir Deals with the Guilt

Living with the guilt that he never deals with makes life never been easy for Amir. Although he has moved for years to where his guilt arouse, those feelings still remain in him. In every experience that he goes through in America, never once he forgets about his memory in Afghanistan, especially with Hassan, his childhood playmate. He remembers his guilt to Hassan in his misfortune in his effort to have children: “...that perhaps something, someone, somewhere, had decided to deny my fatherhood for the things I had done. Maybe this was my punishment and perhaps justly so” (Hosseini, 2003). Amir remembers his guilt to Hassan that he never tries to deal with. He considers his misfortune in having children as the result of his guilt in denying Hassan’s misfortune before.

Here, I will discuss the way Amir deals with his guilt according to a concept that a person with guilt needs to do a “corrective action” in order to “repair the failure” (Lewis, et al 2008). Since the feeling of guilt remains in him, later on Amir realizes that he needs to take an action in order to pay for his guilt in the past. Burke introduces the term purification, where guilt is removed: “The process of removing a guilty feeling, may lead a person to go through suffering which Burke called as mortification in order to redeem his/her guilt” (Kuypers, 2005). Although, his moving to America is considered as the way to forget about his past, yet still he cannot run away from those feelings. Amir needs to do something to deal with his guilt which is a sacrifice just like he sacrificed Hassan before through saving a part of Hassan’s that is still exists. Amir sacrifices, first by his choice to go back to Afghanistan, and second by his decision to save Hassan’s child by adopting him.

Going back to Afghanistan is Amir’s first sacrifice to Hassan in order to redeem his guilt. With the condition of Afghanistan at that time, it is not a wise decision to travel back there. With the Taliban conquered Afghanistan, it is no longer a safe place for anybody. Dead body is found everywhere. On the corner of the street, a man sells his foot for living is just an ordinary view. Broken buildings and public places are the only things seen to stand in the land of Kabul as signs of poverty. There is no more laughter from the kids who chase the kite since the Taliban banned the kite tournament. Afghanistan is no more than a dangerous place to visit (see Hosseini, 2003, p. 224-230, 241). Yet, for Amir going back there is the only way he can take away his guilty feelings to Hassan. As he narrates: “I was afraid I’d change my mind... I was afraid that I’d let the waters carry me away from what I had to do. From Hassan. From the past that had come calling. And from this last chance of redemption. So I left before there was any possibility of that happening” (Hosseini, 2003). By going back to Afghanistan, he may lose his comfortable life in America, a wife, and his carrier in writing. He realizes that the only way to redeem his guilt is by going back to where Hassan is. Apologizing becomes nothing when Amir found out that actually Hassan is dead. He has missed his only opportunity to redeem his guilt by apologizing in person to Hassan. Since he cannot live with the guilt for the rest of his life, Amir takes a last chance to free from those

feelings. He takes a chance to save Hassan's son, the only part of Hassan that is left, in Kabul and moved him to a safer place.

The second way Amir deals with his guilt is by sacrificing to save Hassan's child in Kabul. There are two sacrifices that Amir does in order to save Sohrab. First deals with the tribes he belongs and Sohrab's belongs. By saving Sohrab, who is a Hazara, Amir deals with his familial and societal guilt. To suffer for a Hazara is a shame for a Pashtun. Amir has to bear all the mocks, the questions, even the rejection that he may get from his society. As seen from his father-in-law's reaction: "People will ask. They will want to know why there is a Hazara boy living with our daughter. What do I tell them?" (Hosseini, 2003). The general could not easily accept the existence of a Hazara in their family. The shame of having a Hazara as their member, is not an easy way to deal with. Bearing the shame becomes the way Amir deals with his guilty feeling. Amir bears the shame of taking risks for saving Hassan's son yet most of all bearing the shame of acknowledging him as a part of him. Amir finally acknowledges Hassan as his half-brother. Not only that he acknowledges his guilt, yet also his familial guilt. He acknowledges Hassan as the son of Baba. Amir takes the shame of being a 'disgrace Pashtun' who has a family-line with a Hazara. Amir takes the shame which is created by his father before by having an affair with a Hazara woman.

By suffering physically from a fight to exchange that with Sohrab, Amir find a true healed for his guilt. As he narrates in the middle of the fight: "What was so funny was that, for the first time since the winter of 1975, I felt at peace. ... My body was broken-just how badly I wouldn't find out until later- but I felt *healed*. Healed at last. I laughed (Hosseini, 2003). Amir feels healed from his guilty feeling. From his pain, he felt healed. By giving himself as a sacrifice just like what he did before in sacrificing Hassan, Amir finally gets the true purification for his guilt in the past. Considering the fact that actually Hassan is his 'half-brother', saving Hassan's son is also saving the last descent in his family line. Since Amir, the one and only son of Baba, cannot having children, by adopting Sohrab he continues the descent of their family. By saving Sohrab, Amir gives him a chance of a better life, the life that Hassan was deserved yet he never had.

CONCLUSION

This paper dealt with the issue of guilt portrayed in the character of Amir in *The Kite Runner*. Through this study I wanted to find out the guilt that Amir feels and the way he deals with them. I would like to show that Amir's guilt arouse since his childhood. From a relationship that he has with a Hazara named Hassan who was his servant and also his play mate. The difference in their social status was the problem in their friendship. Amir is a Pashtun and Hassan is a Hazara. I wanted to show that Amir's guilt is influenced by his surroundings which are his family and his society. Later on, this will broaden Amir's guilt, not only as personal guilt, yet has become the familial and the societal guilt. I also wanted to show the way Amir deals with his guilty feelings by turning himself as a sacrifice. In order to purify his guilt, Amir goes through mortification. To be able to find the answer, I used the general concept of guilt which is a feeling that comes from failures, sin, or wrong doing. I also used the concept of guilt-purification-redemption by Kenneth Burke to discuss Amir's guilt and the way he deals with them. A guilty feeling arouses since one cannot follow the standard set by the society where he belongs. A person with guilty feelings needs to deal with them. In order to deal with the guilt ones may go through suffering or even victimizing himself to find the true redemption.

To Hassan, Amir bears not only his personal guilt yet also the familial and societal guilt. His personal guilt grows from his failure to treat Hassan well as a friend. First, Amir sacrificed Hassan to win his father attention by using Hassan's ability to cover his inability in the kite tournament. Second, Amir betrays Hassan by accusing him stealing his birthday gift. He betrays Hassan, a friend who always stands for him in every situation. Third, Amir disowns Hassan as a friend due to their differences in their social status. Last, Amir ignores Hassan's suffering. Rather than trying to help Hassan, Amir rationalized it as Hassan's sacrifice and that he is deserved to get that since he was Hazara, a member of the lowest tribe. Amir's familial guilt comes from his father's misconduct to Hassan and his family. Being the only part of Baba, gives Amir new responsibility of the sin of his father. Amir societal guilt comes from the influence of his tribe and Hassan's tribe history in their relationship. Due to the difference in their social status, Amir treats

Hassan badly. due to gap between those tribes, his family never acknowledges Hassan as their member which creates Amir's familial guilt.

In order to deal with his guilt, Amir goes through mortification by sacrificing himself to save Hassan's son Sohrab. His choice to go back to Afghanistan risks his life in America to face the dangerous situation in Afghanistan. Since Hassan is dead, Amir has no choice to redeem his guilt besides saving the only part of Hassan that still exists. Although in his way of saving Hassan's son, he has to feel the physical pain yet Amir find the true healed from all his guilt to Hassan. In the end, Amir adopts Hassan's son not only to give him a better life which Hassan never had, yet also to continue the descent of his family.

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