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Guilt and Atonement in Khalid Housseini's *The Kite Runner*

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Dedication

This humble work is dedicated to my dearest family, my parents whom I love the most, thank you for your emotional, moral and financial support.

To my beloved brother Mehdi, and my lovely two sisters Imen, and Sarra who have been a source of inspiration and motivation, thank you for being in my life.

Also, I want to dedicate this thesis to all my family members; my aunts, my uncles and all my cousins, I love you all.

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Abstract

Guilt is a conscious emotion which results from the inner criticism directed towards the self when it has violated a moral behavior. After committing a transgression, the superego creates feelings of guilt to punish the ego in order to guarantee moral superiority. As a result, individuals succumb to sadism and moral masochism. However, acknowledging one's guilt and engaging in reparative behavior is what researchers refer to, as, atonement. The dichotomy of guilt and atonement has been cleverly used in Khalid Housseini's, debut novel, *The Kite Runner*, produced in 2003. Hence, building on the existing psychoanalytic works, this study aims to analyze the novel. On the one hand, it interprets Amir's guilt by applying Freud's notion of guilt and its negative effects on the psyche of the protagonist. On the other hand, it exhibits the protagonist's moral engagement and approach towards atonement. The results of the analysis indicate that the novel implies the protagonist's psychological change, and how guilt promotes adaptive behaviors in order to achieve atonement and self forgiveness.

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Introduction

Afghan American literature is a recent area of study and a set of literary works produced by Afghan writers who migrated from their homeland to America, escaping the horror of war after the Soviet invasion to seek a better life there. The fictional production in USA was marked by a great emphasis of the depiction of Afghan culture, the effect of the war, history of Afghanistan and identity crisis, living between the two cultures. Despite the fact that those writers were of different groups with different languages and cultures, such as: the Hazara, the Pashtuns, the Tajiks, and the Altaic groups, but the literature produced at that time in USA was unified. All writers felt a powerful attachment and a need to raise culture and identity awareness when depicting life, tradition, and religion in Afghanistan (Sharma and Dwivedy 6-7).

Among the pioneers of the Afghan American writers community is Khalid Housseini. He was born on 4th of March in 1965 in Kabul when he was fifteen years old his family migrated to America because of the war and settled in California. After Housseini's graduation, he worked as a doctor in California. Housseini's talent in writing appeared earlier with him when he was a child as he used to write short stories. However, it came to realization after he published his first novel, *The Kite Runner*, in 2003 the first Afghan American novel, and it was classified in 2006 as a bestselling book according to New York Times. Khalid Housseini's responsibility to represent his country does not cease in his writing; rather, he was appointed as a goodwill ambassador from the United Nation Refugee Agency, plus the Khalid Housseini Foundation which provides humanitarian help for people of Afghanistan (Bouguerra and Maadadi 3).

The Kite Runner was released on 29th of May 2003 by Riverhead books. Later, it was translated into 42 languages. In 2007, the novel was adapted into a movie directed by Marc

Forster and it was nominated for the Oscar. The novel received positive attitudes by Western critics (Agustina 43).

The story of the novel turns around two boys from different ethnic background, Pushtun and Hazara, who have grown up together, Amir and Hassan. The two boys spend most of their childhood moments under the same roof in peaceful Kabul; they share together happy memories as they play under their famous pomegranate tree where Amir used to read old Farsi stories to Hassan. They used to go to the cinema together, and most importantly they used to run the kite, a famous traditional game in Kabul. However, the day of the kite tournament wrecked Amir and Hassan innocent relationship since Amir's longing for his father's attention and his cowardice led him to watch his friend's sexual abuse by a group of bullies and escape without helping him. After this night Amir experiences intensive feelings of guilt and carries it to USA along twenty six years. Yet, when Amir is informed that Hassan was killed by Taliban and his child's life is in danger, Amir finds himself redeeming his guilt through rescuing the child.

The Kite Runner displays different cultural elements of the Afghan society. It represents a cultural profile of the country. First, the novelist equates the plot of his story with the history of Afghanistan; it means that the novel is presented in two times the pre-colonial era when Afghanistan was a monarchy and its people were living in luxury and peace, and the post colonial era where the country was dramatically destroyed and its people were seeking refugee after Taliban governance. Second, the ethnic diversity of Afghan community has been widely shown in the novel through the conflicts between the dominant and privileged group, "the Pashtun" and the oppressed submissive group, "the Hazara". Moreover, different cultural aspects were apparently used in the novel, the title; of the novel itself denotes a very significant element of the Afghan heritage the kite fighting as well the writer have blended his

English with words of Dari, the spoken language in Afghanistan to add cultural linguistic spell to his English (Shamnad 14-8).

The Kite Runner is a story of the protagonist's personal growth; the story of the novel is based on juxtaposing elements like guilt, redemption, loyalty and betrayal to create dramatic impact for the readers. Housseini juxtaposes loyalty and betrayal in the story of Amir and Hassan, Amir and Hassan are meant to be friends though they belong to different ethnic groups one is a master the other is a servant. Hassan has been always loyal to Amir and sacrifices his life to bring him the kite, this costs him to get sexually abused, whereas Amir has never considered Hassan as his friend and when Hassan was defending Amir' kite, he was there and sees everything and escapes without doing anything. The novelist draws juxtaposition of guilt and redemption, Amir commits a sin against Hassan and feelings of guilt appear to torture him, yet those feelings of guilt motivate Amir to redeem his sin by saving Hassan's child (Ahmad 4).

The novel has been immensely discussed with different perspectives. Wilda Norma Yunita in her work, *Hierarchy of Human Needs of Amir in Khalid Houseini's The Kite Runner* (2017) has categorized human needs based on the theory of Abraham Maslaw. She assumes that Amir's safety needs are dominated by fear; it means that he has always been afraid of Assef and tries to avoid him. Thus, to fulfill his safety needs, he condones his friend rape and refuses to help Hassan who was loyal to Amir and grants him love and belonging needs. However, Amir's self actualization needs lead him to overcome his guilt as he goes to Kabul to save Sohrab and grants him new life. Hence, Amir's self actualization needs give him a chance for redemption.

Juan Du in his article entitled "A Journey of Self-Actualization of Amir in *The Kite Runner*", claims that the novel is a journey of Amir self salvation and discovery; at the beginning of the novel, Housseini introduced his protagonist as coward, selfish and lonely boy

with low self esteem. During his childhood Amir escapes and does not help his friend when he was raped this causes him to suffer a psychological torture throughout his whole life.

However, years after, Amir develops his spiritual growth and decides to return to Kabul and confronts his past to save Hassan's child life. This is not only regarded as self actualization journey but return to humanity as it is believed that there is good side inside human beings.

Jeng Pancar Tamara in her thesis, entitled *Amir's Anxiety and Motive in Khalid Hosseini's The Kite Runner* (2013) states that the protagonist Amir has experienced the typology of Freud's anxiety. Realistic anxiety which is an anxiety where someone develops a fear toward external objects, persons or animals existing in the outside world; Amir fears Assef and his group and tries to avoid them. Second, neurotic anxiety is when a person is afraid of the negative consequences that may result from his bad deeds; Amir always fears the imagined day where he would confront Assef alone. Finally, moral anxiety is the fear of the punishment coming from the superego when the ego is following the id; Amir's superego tortures him for his betrayal to Hassan.

This study solely applies the psychoanalytic literary criticism. The latter emerged as a field of study after Freud had associated his theory of human mind to art and exactly to literature. Freud confirmed the association between literature and psychoanalysis in his "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" in which he believed that literary production is analogous to day-dreaming; it means the fantastic nature of literature carries fulfillment of unsatisfied wish. Psychoanalytic literary criticism concentrates on one of four elements; the author focusing on his/her life and literary works, the character justifying his behavior and motivation, the audience to explain their response and the text to analyze the representation of the linguistic elements and their symbolism (Hossain 43). The psychoanalytic literary criticism is used in the present study to provide psychological explanation of Amir's guilt and its effects on his behavior and personality system referring to Freud's division of the human

mind the ego and the superego. Moreover, this research concludes that guilt promotes adaptive behaviors which lead to self forgiveness and atonement.

The current research includes a general introduction which consists of a brief overview of the Afghan American literature, a short biography of the novelist Khalid Housseini followed by a literature review and the methodology applied in the research. The research is composed of three chapters. The first chapter provides theoretical overview of guilt and atonement discussed in the existing literatures. The second chapter discusses the presence of both collective and interpersonal guilt, and then moves to provide a psychoanalytic interpretation of Amir's guilt in the novel by referring to his superego domination and the ego defensive mechanism. The third chapter entitled tackles the protagonist's redemption of his guilt and approach to self forgiveness.

The significance of the present study lies in analyzing the psychological change the protagonist undergoes which takes him towards atonement after experiencing intensive feelings of guilt. The findings of the study indicate that guilt is a result of the conflict between the ego and the superego after the self has violated its internal moral standards. The superego creates feelings of guilt to punish the ego which leads to its split and death. Amir in *The Kite Runner* experiences guilt and feels inconsistent with his self after betraying his friend. However, the novel proves that guilt is a moral emotion that increases adaptive behavior and appears when Amir engages in reconciliatory acts to save Hassan's child from sexual abuse, these acts take him towards atonement and inner peace. The main objective of this research is to analyze Amir's guilt in *The Kite Runner* and its negative effects on his life, and how guilt leads to moral behavior in order to achieve atonement and salvation.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background of Guilt and Atonement

Throughout life, people commit mistakes or transgressions; they may hurt and offend others or even themselves by breaking a moral law and violating the social ethical standard. When transgression takes place, people tend to feel empathy toward their victims seeing the effects of their misconduct; this gives rise to different feelings and emotions like regret, remorse, shame and specially feelings of guilt. This latter is the most painful because it makes them devalue themselves as they lose their positive self image and believe they are no more human. So, their inner peace is threatened and all occurs inside their mind. After committing a mistake, taking the responsibility and confronting one's misconduct is the solution to lessen the feeling of guilt, and this may occur through self forgiveness and atonement because if a person who cannot forgive himself and lives in a conflict within himself. Then how can he make people forgive him?

The emergence of psychoanalytic theories paved the way for researchers to investigate human inner self and emotions. Feelings like guilt, regret, depression, shame and anxiety were highly emphasized in the twentieth century published literature, researchers referred to them as "conscious emotion". This chapter is divided into two sections; the two sections provide theoretical background of guilt and atonement. The first section discusses the meaning of guilt in general and how it is studied, it deals with guilt in psychoanalytic theories based particularly on Freud sense of guilt and how he develops his theory of guilt. Also, it tackles the theme of guilt in literature and its development in fictional works. The second section is devoted solely to "atonement" and its meaning.

I. I. An Overview of Guilt

This section introduces in general the concept of guilt, and provides theoretical frameworks of guilt in psychoanalysis and literature. It spots light on the definition of guilt, its

types and effects, in addition it investigates the meaning of shame to elicit the difference between the two concepts. Then it proceeds to explain guilt in psychoanalytic theories and its evolution in the field, making reference to Freud's analysis of guilty feeling as well to Melanie Klein. Finally, it tackles guilt in literary context, exactly how twentieth century writers reflect guilt in their stories.

I. I. 1. Understanding the Meaning of Guilt

The notion of guilt has been discussed in the twentieth century by different disciplines and field of studies like sociology, anthropology and psychology. However, the psychological findings of guilt were the most prominent and valuable since they have been associated with clinical cases. William. P. Kalosieh, in his book entitled *If You Ask me*, defines guilt:

Guilt is not just a feeling; it is odious, heavy mortifying and wretched. As with any other emotion, it admits not only of varying degrees and shades but also accompanied by other emotion like fear and depression. Guilt can be sharply acute or low grade and chronic whether for something done or neglected (should have done). Guilt can be a thought, word or deed recently enacted or long past. (35)

In this definition, the author defines guilt as a feeling and assumes that the feeling of guilt is always accompanied by other emotions. Also, guilt in this definition can be either for a short period of time or can linger for a life time, and for something happened whether in the past or recently or for something the person wishes to happen. Then the author widens his definition of guilt; not only as a feeling but as a word, thought and deed. Here, it can be said that guilt is a lived experience (Mckenizie 20).

John Flahery in his book, *Guilt Unplugged waking up from the Lie We Live* provides the following definition of guilt:

Guilt is an aspect of consciousness that is residing in us all. Guilt is insidious, destructive, punishing and all-consuming. Guilt turns love into resentment, and then into hatred. It prevents you from experiencing anything that feels good. Guilt tells you that feeling good is wrong. Then it contradicts itself by telling you that you were foolish for not doing what you wanted to do in the first place. Guilt serves only to obliterate from your awareness the natural flow of life that is constant supplying each of us. Until you release guilt falsehood, it will continue to feel completely at “home” in your life. (75)

Guilt in this definition is related to consciousness and exists in all humans. The author, here, believes that guilt causes harm and pain to people and ruin their life, by making them believe that feeling good is wrong, and then it makes them believe that not doing what they want is not wrong. The feeling of guilt leaves and penetrates the person’s life until it goes away and the person comes to believe the falsehood of guilt.

Based on the article entitled “Guilt and Guiltiness: An Integrative Review” written by Hanyi Xu, Laurent Begue, and Rebecca Shankland, which classifies guilt into two types the first is known as interpersonal guilt while the second is collective (440).

First, the interpersonal guilt is a self-examining emotion that results from the connection between the self and the negative act. As cited in the article, Steel claims that guilt is important because it makes manifestation of the negative aspect of the self. Within this type, the person creates self-conscious emotion that critically assesses his/her stable self representation and compares it with emotions that evoke from the event. Tracy and Robin as well suggest that negative self-conscious emotion comes from the incompatibility between self identity :and the image one wants to achieve, as a result, rejects the negative event to

protect his/her self identity. However, the response of guilty people toward themselves is low self forgiveness, punishment and deprivation (441).

Second, people who belong to the same group affect and influence each other. Based on the self categorization theory belonging to the same community, people tend to construct an intergroup image and consider it as a part of their self image. As a consequence, they raise group based emotions and in turn this will strengthen their behavior, or they may even feel sense of pride when thinking about different aspects of their in-group history. While there are some negative aspects of group history which raise collective guilt; and this occurs, when the members of the group categorize themselves as a part of the group, and desire to lessen the harm. On one hand, collective emotions can be pertinent in time of intergroup conflict, it means that inter-group members can be threatened when they cause harm to another group, as result guilty emotions grow over the group members. On the other hand, in-group members refuse to admit the responsibility of causing harm and consider the act as legitimate in order to protect the in-group image. Thus, researchers affirmed that members with higher identification with their group are less reparative, deny the responsibility and feel superiority; consequently they feel less collective guilt. In contrast, members with lower identification to their group are more responsible and accept the reparation policy (Solomatina and Austers 272-3). So collective guilt comes from the shared responsibility for the unworthy results and injustice made by the intergroup (443).

Early studies have been referring to guilt as shame, believing that the two terms can be used interchangeably. While other studies, assume that the two terms are different. Michael Lewis defines shame, as the result of the cognitive system that tries to find balance between the individual's action in regard to the set of standards, rules and goals of the self. In fact, shame affects negatively human behavior; making people confused with their own thoughts and causing them inability to speak followed by shrinking of the body; a desire to disappear

from others' eyes. Since shame causes pressure on the self, people cannot avoid this emotion but mostly they try to deny the state. (Poulson 6)

According to June Price Tangney, shame and guilt are emotion that evaluate and regulate human behavior. The experience of guilt and shame, can make people revise themselves, review their actions and both influence their relationship with others. Both guilt and shame, are claimed to be self-conscious and moral emotion; self-conscious in the sense it involves assessing one's self, and moral; it serves an important role in strengthening moral behavior (2).

However, different studies attempt to distinguish between shame and guilt. Psychoanalysis theories were the first to make the distinction between the two concepts. At the beginning, psychologists have diagnosed the experience of shame of their patients as experience of guilt; they emphasized on guilt and neglected shame (12). Freud's theory focused only on guilt, claiming that it is the result of the clash between the ego with moral standards of the superego, and shame was almost neglected during this era, Freud associated shame with sexuality and regarded it as a reaction to sexually exhibitionistic impulses. Freud later proposed a distinction between the two; believing that shame is related to disapproval which results from outside or other persons, whereas guilt is the product of the internal or parental values. Also, the psychologist Gerhart Piers in his book *Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and Cultural Study* (2015), he provides a distinction between guilt and shame claiming that shame is related to the unrealized goals and to the inability to live under expectation, while guilt is related to transgression (qtd. in Malinem14). Outside the realm of psychoanalysis, anthropologists for instance state that shame is a public emotion it means that shame comes from public exposure, whereas guilt is private emotion that is the result of human consciousness; it is more secret and nobody knows it (Tangrey14). Furthermore, for Lewis shame is directly associated with the self because it is more about the evaluation. While

in guilt the focus is on the action and the self is negatively evaluated based on the deed or the behavior (qtd. in Poulson 7).

There was debate concerning the effects of guilt on human psychic life. Psychoanalysts were divided in two positions; on one side Freud and his followers affirmed that guilt is pathogenic emotion and negatively affects human's life. On the other side, developmental and social psychology and research on morality and altruism, pointed out that guilt has positive effects and enhance the moral behavior (Etxebarria 104).

Freud proposed different effects and gained support by various empirical studies, claiming that guilt is an antisocial behavior and it leads to aggressive acts and drug consumption. Different studies later, assumed that the transgressor who feels guilty becomes engaged in punitive behavior, and this behavior develops only when his/her transgression has been socially revealed. However, other studies extend that guilt leads to self-punishment without considering others response. Furthermore, some experimental researches revealed that guilt augments submission among individuals not only toward their victims but also among other persons who are away from their guilt. The transgressor in this way; will seek to satisfy others demands and obtain their acceptance in order to silence his guilty emotions as well as, a desire to restore his positive self image. Authors who emphasized the positive effects of guilt, believe that guilty individuals are more inclined and motivated to repair and fix their actions. In this way; guilt motivates and pushes people to do good things not only to their victims but also helping other persons. Moreover, guilty subjects become self corrective in the sense that he/she wishes to recover his/her behavior and free him/her from the burden of guilt in order to regain positive self image. This point was affirmed by Hoffman and supported by Baumeister, Stowell and Heatherton (Etxebarria 105).

I. I.2. The Evolution of Guilt in Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalytic theories were the first to discuss the notion of guilt, and there have been

a struggle to find a plausible explanation for this phenomenon; classifying it as psychic and mental problem related to human consciousness. Different approaches were brought to the field of psychoanalysis and the first to tackle this issue was Freud and many other followed.

I.I.2.1. Freud's Concept of Guilt

Sigmund Freud had never dedicated a full book to “guilt” but he was among the first to approach the problem of guilt, and this was manifested in his books *The Ego and the Id* published in 1923 and in *The Economic Problem of Masochism* (1924) where he provided a clarification to the sense of guilt. However, guilt in Freud's works has been introduced in different formulations. The first formulation was associated with sexual desires and masturbation (1895), then it was associated with parricidal wishes (1912) and the last formulation was linked to the death drive (1930). (Hall 56).

According to Freud's theory of human personality, there are three major parts of human mind the “id”, the “ego”, and the “superego”. The id is the set of internal feelings and desires that is derived from the natural and biological instincts and resides in the unconscious mind. Freud did not associate the id with morality because the id's primitive drives are irrational; as a result human actions would be in this case unexplainable and purposeless. The pleasure principle controls the operations of the id; it means that the id would act in any pleasurable situation (qtd. in Koenane 3). The ego is the mediator between the id and the external world. It is the executive part of the personality, in the sense that it is responsible for the thinking, planning, solving problems and decision making processes. The ego is governed by the reality principle; this latter prevents any fantasy or hallucination produced from the pleasure principle that might harm individuals' psyches, and it works to keep attention on actual objects that exists in real world rather on the potential objects. The superego is the set of societal morals, traditions and standards passed by the parents to the child, if they are

violated, the superego punishes the individual by guilty feelings and if they are reinforced a sense of pride is raised (Mayhall 4).

Freud believed that guilt is based on logic and since he has divided the human mind into the conscious and the unconscious awareness. Accordingly feeling guilty is not only about committing an act and knowing it, but it is more about what we have done in the unconscious mind; this what makes people feel guilty and suffer. In addition, he claims that the conflict that occurs in the unconscious mind exactly between the ego and the superego which results in punishment and even how people unconsciously seek this punishment, is what makes us feel morally.

The origin of guilt in Freudian works is the constant criticism of the superego toward the ego which leads people to feel guilt and they are unaware of this. Those feelings of guilt, make people suffer and they will only seek self punishment. In fact, the superego uses energy from the death instincts to criticize the ego and the deficiencies of the individual vis a vis the standards of the ego ideal; including the positive ones what the ego should do or the negative ones what the ego should not or desire to do. The person then will shift the sadism toward himself instead toward others in the external world, all of this occurs in the process of criticizing the ego and this will result in the sense of guilt (Bocock 77). Freud argues:

How is it that the superego manifests itself essentially as a sense of guilt (or rather, as criticism for the sense of guilt is the perception in the ego answering to this criticism) and moreover develops such extraordinary harshness and severity toward the ego? ... Following our view of sadism, we should say that the destructive component had entrenched itself in the superego and turned against the ego. What is now holding sway in the superego is, as it were, a pure culture of the death instinct, and in fact

it often enough succeeds in driving the ego into death, if the latter does not fend off its tyrant in time by the chance round into mania.

(qtd. in Bocoock 78)

In this quotation, Freud affirms that the superego appears to be the sense of guilt or can be the ego response to the criticism of the superego. In addition, as the superego increases its aggressiveness against the ego, this aggressiveness may shift toward the superego and what only lingers are the death instincts, this leads to the death of the ego. If the latter does not defend itself against this harshness; people will fall into insanity and craziness.

Robert Bocoock explains that according to Freud, guilt is destructive aggressiveness turned on the ego. People display aggressive behaviors toward the external objects specially their parents and more toward themselves, because the superego is in severe conflict with the ego. Thus, the superego uses a destructive energy believing it has violated the moral standards of the external world. So, people become miserable since they are guilty (79).

In addition, Freud assumed that people seek sufferance to reduce feelings of guilt. This idea was presented in the notion of “masochism,” known as the pleasure of suffering; it refers to the self- attacking behavior and self- critical judgments, or; as it was described “an instinct toward internal destruction present in the ego” (qtd. in Hall 108). It entails that the body is kept alive in order to resist and benefit from the suffering and the end of all this will be death. Freud connected the theory of masochism with the death instincts in his work *The Economic Problem of Masochism* produced in 1924. He proposed that guilt can be associated with suffering and sadomasochism. It acts as the initiator of the negative therapeutic reaction like the inability to overcome the illness, and affirmed that guilt is a destructive unconscious mechanism and it increases self- hatred, concluding that all of this occurs because of the tension between the ego and the superego leading to the death of the ego (Goldblatt Superego distortion 94).

I.I.2.2. Melanie Klein's Sense of Guilt

Klein's theory of guilt was related to sadism and later to Freud's death instincts. Klein reported that guilt is the product of phantased attacks against the objects the child made. Those objects the child imagines them to visit him back in the form of persecution; since the child's elementary superego is a "conglomerate of incorporated objects distorted with the child's own aggressive impulses" (Hall 138). What is notable in Klein's theory of guilt, is her belief that people experience guilt in early childhood and that the superego development equates the formation of guilt feelings, all of this takes place in the beginning of their second year, she added that the superego is severe and harsh in its early stages, however it lessens its severity and becomes less punitive as children get older. Also, Klein affirmed that guilt in early childhood is always accompanied with fear and exactly fear of blame and punishment because it is the result of immature ego; children are not able to accept the ambivalence of hate and love as a result they show aggressive behaviors toward the objects. This mechanism, Klein labeled: "immature type of guilt", while the mature type of guilt involves remorse for destroying the loved objects and there should be an act of reparation following (qtd. in Hasui et.al 118).

I. I.2.3. Childhood's Guilt

Recent researches in developmental psychology, agree that the development of guilt in childhood takes place after the child has the cognitive capacity to understand himself as an object for reflection, and acquire the social maturity to comprehend and implement the rules of conduct. However, other developmental researches proposed that the child's ability to imagine himself as an object for contemplation, plus his capacity to imagine others' emotional state is crucial in his development of guilt (Fraser 5).

Guilt in childhood has been explained as the feeling of distress preceding a mistake or transgression. It is believed that, childhood guilt is related to externalizing behaviors like

aggression, anger, hostility and sense of blame (Baker et al 835). Guilt as Hoffman suggests that till self-other distinction takes place in child's life, empathy develops and as well guilt occurs; the child feels empathic towards others' distress and feels responsible for that distress. Moreover, the child can experience guilt when the feelings of the victim are apparent, and he may feel guiltier in response to others' plight- if he considers himself responsible of it-, it means that when the child becomes unable to help others (guilt over inaction) he may experience a sense of guilt. As consequence, Hoffman affirms that the cognitive abilities, as the prerequisites of guilt and the cognition requisites, need not fully develop so that guilt can possibly take place; since the level and the type of situation where guilt occurs may change as the child cognitively develops (qtd. in Barrett 77).

Researches on guilt in childhood always associate guilt with fear and anxiety, affirming that fearful infants are more inclined to experience guilt when committing a transgression or a mistake. Since they own an intensive sensitivity to punishment and they are able to retrain a transgression of a moral behavior that is related to punishment. While fearless infants are less willing to learn from the transgression because they are less responding to the fear of punishment, plus they anticipate all of these in the future (Baker et al. 835). Also, guilt is believed to be the product of prohibited wishes, because guilty emotion arouse as a result of whether the infant wished to do this or not to do this or that, and this idea emphasizes that guilt is as a reaction-formation consequent upon action, lack of action or intention (Hall 203). Bertrand Russell postulated that the roots of guilt is hidden in the unconscious and not the conscious, and added that guilt is the set of the codes that is the result of the parent first and next to society which is buried in the child mind. When the child develops, he forgets all the values and the social rules and approximately remembers his limits. So, as he commits a mistake and then realizes it consciously, his conscious pricks him telling that he violates the

moral and social conduct, as Russell declares: “conscious is the voice of God and present everywhere” (qtd. in Tariq 7-8).

I.I.3. The Representation of Guilt in Literature

Philosophers attempted to approach the meaning of guilt over history and to provide a clear explanation to the term. Socrates for instance proved that the right behavior stems from the inner knowledge of one self and people’s search for their souls would guide them to the right decision and prevent them from committing wrongs; here it can be said that people’s commitment of errors is purely related to their knowledge. Aristotle’s pragmatic ethics believed that if people choose to do something wrong then they deserve to be punished (Hall 11). Many other philosophers followed providing different perspectives on guilt but all of them were similar in associating guilt with morality and to people’s freewill. Guilt is a universal phenomenon; it is mainly related to man’s conduct, behavior and everyday life and is part of moral theory including responsibility and obligation (Tariq 2), because if someone who acts wrongly and he is not susceptible to guilt feelings would never be susceptible to morality consequently would lose a moral sense. Since literature as the American poet and critic Mariame More reports that it is “a phase of life” (qtd. in Brown 5), many writers were inspired by philosophical theories and psychological as well to depict and denote the sense of guilt in their characters.

Modern world or, in other words, the twentieth century was the era when different events took place; series of scientific invention and innovations, industrial complex and complicated development, rise of human rights and, most importantly, the first and the second world wars which changed and influenced the Western society. Resulting in loss of morality, faith, and spiritual values. Modern man started to question everything even his existence and religion this led to the emergence of skepticism. Modern writers in turn depicted every aspect of that era as they were conscious of its complexity. In literary production, there was an

emphasis on the psychological dimension of characters and their inner side. Themes like guilt, responsibility and evil were brought into the scene with great deal asserting that man is guilty and it would haunt him till redemption and he is responsible for his guilt and no to blame but him and, finally, the question of human nature and the evolution of evil, all of this were justified and proved by different psychoanalytic theories and philosophical doctrines (Tariq8-9), as Ruth Etchells claimed “There is a sense of guilt in modern writing because what we see around us echoes in ourselves. . . .It is interesting to note what writers are groping their way through an understanding of evil inherent in the heart of man”(qtd. in Tariq 9).In fact, postmodern writers introduced the theme of guilt in their writing to justify the echoes inside human that is the result of the chaos of the modern society in order to understand the evil that exist in the unconscious.

The theme of guilt in twentieth century literature is always accompanied by the sense of responsibility arguing that the guilty character is responsible for his transgression, because responsibility is regarded as an ethical phenomenon which entails duty, obligation, and sense of morality and virtue however its absence leads to guilt. Iris Mardocho was one of the novelists who projected guilt through her characters in the two of her novels *The Unicorn* in 1963 which reflects fantastic world where the characters develop a problematic sense of guilt, and *The Bell* written in 1958 where she introduced her own theory of morality through a collective sense of guilt. In the novel *The Seed and the Sower* written by Lauren Vanter depicts the theme of guilt through the story of an officer who commits a crime against the government and his own brother consequently he spends his life feeling guilty and demands redemption. Modern writers presented the theme of guilt in different layers of implication; political, social and religious.

The theme of guilt is traced in early beginning of English literature, Hamlet, Dr Faustus and Macbeth. The ninetieth century literature was marked by consciousness which spot light

on the inner and psychological side of the character but it was influenced by scientific theories of naturalism where man is presented in relation to society and his environment and the idea of freewill and freedom was totally neglected, he is only a victim of his nature. Themes like feeling guilt and responsibility were not apparent (Tariq 9-13).

According to Lurene Brow in his article "Guilt in Literature" has divided it into four types, as it has been presented in literary texts; private guilt, shared guilt, implied guilt and public guilt.

First, private guilt which remains in novels a private matter, within this type, guilt is kept secret and the character suffers silently and feels responsible of it, plus no one will help and support him and only takes refuge in self punishment or makes excuse for his behavior. In *The Scarlet Letter* written by Nathaniel Hawthorn originally published in 1850 which tells the story of Arthur Dimmesdale and Paul who suffer because of their guilt, the first commits a sin as he was in affair with Hester and impregnates her, and the second feels guilty because only allows Herter to be punished alone of adultery though he know Paul was with her but he keeps silent. The two characters suffer along the novel and seek penance especially physical pain (6-8).

Second, shared guilt, which occurs when a guilty character seeks another person's help or assistance and support to overcome and lessen his guilt, since he can't afford the burden alone. It includes sense of confession. The character shares his guilt with another person, whether the latter guessed his secret or his sin was revealed and has no choice but to share it, or the tow are engaged in the transgression; one is the transgressor and the other participates or witnesses it. The modern drama, *Desire under the Elms*, written by Engene O'Neil performed in 1924, deals at first place with private guilt when Eben bribes his brothers to take their portion of the family farm, however he then betrayed his father and has an affair with with his young new step mother, Abbie becomes pregnant by Eben but makes Eben's father

believe that the child is his to secure her heritage but later she kills the baby Eben decides to turn over his step mother to the sheriff but before realizing that he loves her and confesses his complicity (Brown8-11).

Third is the implied guilt. In this type, guilt is not fully apparent in the novel, but it is implied and the readers who infer and decode it, and constantly blame the guilty character. Within this type; the characters may seem guilty as they may not because it is decision, understanding, feeling, opinion and interpretation. For instance, in Kafka's novel *Metamorphosis* (1915) where Gregor's family seems guilty and responsible for his transformation into an insect and his death; in this way the family may be blamed for the catastrophic change. Other implication found in the play *Hamlet*, where Oedipus is always blamed for killing his father and marrying his mother but looking to the story deeply the events are planned in a way that Oedipus tries to avoid his crime. So, guilt, here, is based upon how a piece of literature makes the reader feels and how he identifies himself in the story which influences his implication (Brown 11-3).

Forth is the public guilt. This type of guilt is the most debasing and deceptive type, since it includes public punishment. However, with good vindication guilty characters become hero or heroine in the eyes of others and may get sympathy of others, or sometimes what is considered as guilt in one generation may be considered as glory in the other (Brown 14-5). For example, in Toni Morrison *Beloved* published in 1987 , introduced in a complex narrative her character Sethe who experiences the agony of guilt after killing her baby girl believing that she saves her and herself from slavery, however, she refuses to admit her responsibility for her baby. This act was justified by her love and caring for her children and she was punished for committing such crime in prison.

I.II. An Overview of Atonement

Committing a transgression and violating a moral law is considered an unethical

behavior. However, being aware and responsible of what someone did and admitting it lead people to feel guilty and ashamed of one's self all of this can make people suffer, feelings of guilt torture people and through time they become a heavy burden, and it sometimes leads to madness. But repairing for a wrong and restoring positive self image is the only way to reconciliation believing a new journey and new beginning is to take place. Atonement is a whole path to peace and relief. This section provides a theoretical ground of atonement; its meaning and components. In addition it introduces the significance of atonement in psychoanalysis.

I.II.1. Understanding the Meaning of Atonement

In Oxford dictionary," to atone" means actions of making amend for an injury or wrong. While in religious connotation it refers to reparation or expiation for sin (10).

Atonement included the transgressor's acknowledgement of his wrongdoing and looking for reparation for the harm caused to the victim; within atonement the transgressor declares "I acknowledge that I have hurt you, I'm sorry for that, I will make amends for my transgression." Atonement lessens the feelings of guilt and develops psychological and physical well being. However, atonement requires personal responsibility to acknowledge the transgression and acceptance for punishment (Carr 255).

In fact atoning one's transgression include feeling empathy toward the victim, the responsibility of committing the transgression and repentance.

Empathy: refers to the cognitive capacity of the transgressor to understand and recognize the cognitive ability of his victim's affective experience, plus to personally experience them. Empathic feelings are the primary step toward atonement and self forgiveness, empathy is the result of strong feeling of guilt and shame but within these intropunitive feelings of guilt and shame; the transgressor may believe that the victim did not forgive him even if he deliberately declares it so he confirms that self forgiveness is not

acceptable. Some empathic transgressor may feel discomfort and distress and develop their feelings of shame and guilt since their victims are still experiencing deprivation (McConnell et al 36).

Repentance: refers to the feeling of remorse and regret for past sin, and asking for forgiveness, it is the first step toward atonement. It includes first, self confrontation which involves believing that a sin is committed. However, it is difficult because people tend to avoid believing and recognizing that they commit misconduct, since it threatens their self image, in order to protect themselves from their faults and conflicting self. Second, self control includes abandoning the sin and engaging in self regaling conducts and moral behavior. Third, self sacrifice entails sense of recompensation, reconciliation and obedience (Bergin1-3).

Acceptance of Responsibility: involves that people admit that they commit a negative behavior, though it is not easy to confirm that one has acted inappropriately because it threatens one's self identity as a good individual. However, this concept shows people's willingness toward change and moral development and a great opportunity to enhance interpersonal relationships and to talk openly about their mistakes so that they may learn from them, also they are more likely to declare statements of regret and apology in order to regain self respect (Schumann; Dweck 1599-1600).

I.II.2. Psychological meaning of Atonement

Atonement in psychology is regarded as the result of conflict and overwhelming feeling of guilt. Erik Erikson believes that people are stuck between the omnipotent control and discomfort of their feelings and emotions of what they should do but not of what they did, because of the extensive feeling of regret when causing harm to others, which create "phantasied atonement". Since people are swinging between their self-awareness and their

unconsciousness, so they caught in a “cycle of usurpation and atonement”. The latter is of strong and coercing nature because atonement is rooted earlier in childhood from the parent (qtd. in Finlan 116).

Sandor Rado, the follower of Freud, affirms that the libido, the ego and the superego are independent entities which are in conflict with each other. Rado assumes that the process of atonement traces back in childhood when the child tries to atone his guilt for his action to “incur the parent’s disapproval”, in a form of psychic plan to regain parental approval (qtd. in Finlan 117).

Rado affirms that melancholia results from self punishment, and it is found in childhood. Melancholic children unconsciously repeat their parents’ punishment inside their mind in order to retain their parents’ love and affection. He concludes that the connection between atonement, forgiveness and guilt is traced in the mind. So, atonement is a self punishing process to win parental love because the child feels threatened if his parents turn against him. As Rado declares:

....His guilty fear of inescapable punishment....is a signal that his security is endangered. It brings into play the reparative procedure of expiatory behavior taught him by his parent: he is reprimanded, must make a confession, take his punishment, promise never to do it again and ask for forgiveness. . . . Parental reproach gives rise to self-reproachparental punishment to self-punishment, parental forgiveness to self-forgiveness. (qtd. in Finlan 118)

Self punishment is the protective way to overcome the feeling of guilt because the child feels unsecure in his environment when committing errors and self punishment triggers the need for forgiveness and atonement.

The cycle of self punishment and perception of forgiveness is as Rado labels it the “pathology of conscious” is a type of moral masochism where the person went through, in order to maintain and guard emotional security, self pride and self respect by making self sacrifice and turning himself into a victim and martyr for atoning not only his sin but for temptation or his imagined sin. However, Rado postulates that self punishment is manipulative strategy made for self protection because the guilty conscious creates desire to punishment in order to regain others’ love and care; the mechanism of atonement and self forgiveness (qtd. in Finlan 119).

To sum up, guilt is an emotional state where people feel they have violated a moral behavior and offended others by their misconduct, it is always followed by feelings of shame disgust and regret, or in psychology it is the result of the conflicting conscious; it means between the ego and the super ego, plus guilt as many psychologists believed is traced in early childhood because the child fears the punishment of his parents. Moreover, guilt was highly tackled in literature exactly in modern literature because many events shaped the era which led writers to believe that guilt is a part of human nature and they justify it by psychological and philosophical theories. However, guilt is not a permanent state unless the individual shows tendency toward forgiveness and atonement, thus atonement is the pathway toward reconciliation and the solution to inner conflict and reestablishment of self image.

Chapter Two: Interpretation of Guilt in *the Kite Runner*

The Kite Runner, written by Khalid Housseini, is a novel that was released in 2003. It tells the story of the protagonist, Amir, tracing his life from early childhood in Afghanistan, exactly, in the 1970's when Afghanistan was a monarchy, but years later becomes under the Soviet occupation and turns into a republic, to his adulthood when Afghanistan was ruled by the Taliban system. However, Amir spends most of it in USA. The novel belongs to the Afghan-American minority literature; it introduces the Afghan culture, history, and life there in Afghanistan. The novelist, indeed through this piece of writing wants to present the life style and culture of his country describing food, customs, traditions, and even he inserted some words in his native language; it was the first Afghan novel written in English.

Guilt is a constant theme in the novel, and it appears throughout the whole story. Individuals, in this novel, or in literary terms characters, are committing unethical behaviors or in other words they are breaking and violating the moral laws of the society whether by betraying, disappointing, lying and deceiving others intentionally or unintentionally. The feelings that precedes the transgression is what is known as guilt. Guilt in this story differs as the characters and their stories, backgrounds and personality differ, it either takes place out of fear and cowardice or for regarding one's social status or because of betrayal and failure.

This chapter tackles the presence of guilt in *The Kite Runner* and tries to give interpretations and justifications of it through characters found in the novel, and more emphasizing the guilt of the protagonist Amir by using and making reference to psychoanalytical theories. This chapter is divided into two sections; the first section entitled interpersonal guilt vs collective in *The Kite Runner*, while the second deals with psychoanalytic interpretation of Amir's guilt.

Guilt in *The Kite Runner* has multiple layers of implications and Housseini in fact portrays through his characters how guilt changes, affects people's life and shapes their

relationships among others, and proves that even children can experience it.

II.I. Collective Guilt vs Interpersonal Guilt in *the Kite Runner*

The Kite Runner is an evoking novel which displays the cruelty of human nature through the manifestation of guilt that the characters experience in this novel which is known as interpersonal guilt, or through collective guilt which the whole society undergo when oppressing another group.

II.I.1. Collective Guilt in *The Kite Runner*

As it has been mentioned in the previous chapter that collective guilt is a negative inter-group shared emotions attitudes, behaviors and acts against an out group members, and it becomes a part of their self identity, or it stems from the belief that a group has done something that is considered illegitimate to another group. Khalid Housseini in this novel demonstrates two different social groups the Sunni Pashtuns and the Shi'a Hazara, and this latter are being facing discrimination, violence, and injustice and at the same time portrays how the Pashtuns are protective to their in-group image and deny the responsibility for the harm they caused to the Hazara .

Along the novel, the Hazara and Pashtun are in a constant conflict. The Hazara are treated unfairly and regarded as the poorest ethnic group of the society, mainly because of their social structural factors and social psychological factors. First, the Hazara are believed to have a unique physical features and appearance, historically proved the origin of the Hazara are Mongols and the Uygurs of Western China, and this latter shared with the Hazara similar flat nose and Chinese features. While the Pashtuns tend to have a variety of eyed colors, fair skin pointed nose and remarkable cheek bones (Handayani 36-7), as Amir states in *The Kite Runner*: “They called him flat-nosed because of Ali and Hassan's characteristic Hazara Mongoloid features. For years, that was all I knew about the Hazaras, that they were Mogul descendants, and that they looked a little like Chinese people” (Housseini 9).

Second, among the reasons and the social factors that make the Pashtuns guilty as they mistreat the Hazara; are the differences in belief and cultural practices, though both ethnic groups are Muslim, they do not share the same beliefs; Pashtun are sunni while Hazara are syi'a and history revealed the constant conflicts between the two groups (Handayani 38). Though Amir and Hassan are raised together and considered as brothers, the differences between them are apparent and highly affect their relationship as Amir declares in the novel:

... The curious thing was, I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either. Not in the usual sense, anyhow. Never mind that we taught each other to ride a bicycle with no handsBecause history isn't easy to overcome. 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. (Housseini 14)

It can be denoted from this quotation that collective guilt is constant and strong in time of intergroup conflict, and it affects its members' self identity and emotion; here, even Amir and Hassan are best friends and share the same memories. Amir is influenced by his intergroup shared identity and attitude toward the out-group Hazara.

Another factor that increases the Pashtun's collective guilt is the social psychological one, which is manifested in the stick stereotypical and prejudicial images that the Pashtuns built toward the Hazara. The economic and social gap between the Hazara and the Pushtun classified them as the poorest segments of the society; living either in the streets or with rich families as servants. Moreover, the Hazara are prevented from going to schools and have no access to education; thus, the Pashtun always perceive them as stupid and the dirty servant class. In the novel, they are labeled nasty and "mice-eating, flat-nosed, load carrying donkeys" (Hosseini 10). The Hazara are not considered as humans but slaves and the novel

emphasizes this when Amir declares: “But he’s not my friend! I almost blurted. He’s my servant” (Hosseinin 44), and whenever a Pushtun meets a Hazara, he always insults and makes fun of him as it has been mentioned in the novel when Hassan and his father Ali walk in the street, they are always disrespected and insulted as the quotation reveals (Handayani 40-2):

Of all the neighborhood boys who tortured Ali, Assef was the most relentless. He was, in fact, the originator of the Babalu jeer, Hey, Babalu, who did you eat today? Huh? Come on, Babalu, give us a smile! And on days when he felt particularly inspired, he spiced up his badgering a little, Hey, you flat-nosed Babalu, who did you eat today? Tell us, you slanted-eyed donkey. (Hosseini 41-2)

The above quotation manifests how the Hazara are mistreated by the Pashtuns and how even children participate and take part in this societal collective guilt.

When Hassan was raped by a group of Pushtun, the scene represents a collective guilt where all participated in this terrible act. Assef who hates the Hazara and wants Afghanistan to be purified from the existing Hazaras, was the one who raped Hassan saying that Hassan “It’s just a Hazara”(Housseini 83), and his two friends Kamel and Wali were asked to hold him, and Amir is also guilty, since he was there and did nothing to help his friend. Thus, Amir with his silence participated in this act (Zohdi 38).

Based on the article, “Collective Guilt Makes Conflicting Parties More Collaborative: Quasi-experimental Study of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”, written by Inna Solomatina and Ivars Austers, when members of Pashtun feel a strong attachment and sense of belonging to the same social class and the same ethnic group, they formulate a positive self-image, and they construct a unified social identity; as a result, they raise sense of pride to their ethnic group and built powerful connection and association to their group (272). This manifested with

Assef who believes that Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns and Hazara should be excluded from their country and this latter should be cleaned from their traces; as he claims in the novel:

His blue eyes flicked to Hassan. "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood." He made a sweeping, grandiose gesture with his hands. "Afghanistan for Pashtuns", I say. That's my vision. (Hosseini 43-4)

According to these lines, Assef is among the characters that have high degree of identification to his ethnic group. This justifies his feeling of superiority and glorification of his group and social identity, because the more the person identifies himself with his group, the less he experiences or feels collective guilt and assumes the collective responsibility of causing harm to the other group. They are more protective of their in-group image and identity and deny the responsibility of causing harm to the out-group; they rather assert their acts as legitimate.

Researches, however, proved that when members of the in-group feel low or average identification with their group social identity. They are more inclined to feel strong collective guilt and moral responsibility and approve the illegitimacy of their in-group acts. Thus they engage in reparative mechanism (Solomatina and Austers 273).

Amir is a different person. He does not literally follow his cultural and ethnic standards or even desires to be a good Pashtun men; he rather finds himself in reading books and writing. While Afghan boys at his age play basketball and skip stones or do fist fight. Besides, Amir's ethnic group dictates that the Hazara should not be treated equally and they deserve to be dehumanized and offended; however, Amir loves his Hazara servant and even treats Hassan as his best friend. All of this denotes that Amir has a lower identification to his

in-group identity that's why he suffers and feels guilty when the Hazaras are being mistreated or oppressed, he is rather forced to act opposite of his true feeling because he fears his father's and the society's reaction and refusal. Even when Amir kept silent and watched Hassan's rape, was out of fear since he fears Assef and his gang and not because Hassan was a Hazara and there is no problem to sacrifice a Hazara (Wahyukirana 30-4).

Years later, when Amir adopts Hassan's son Sohrab and takes him to America. This shows Amir's tendency toward reparation and acceptance of a Hazara child in his house, even when General Tahiri, Amir's father in law, refers to Sohrab as "Hazara boy" Amir gets angry and says "You will never again refer to him as "Hazara boy", in my presence. He has a name and it's Sohrab"(Hosseini 390).

Collective guilt is group based emotion; it occurs when group members are threatened when they cause harm to another group. As a result, the entire group members feel and experience guilt. However, in *the Kite Runner*, Housseini portrayed one superior group, "the Pashtun", who is committing immoral and illegitimate acts against another minor group the "Hazara". Since the Pashtun are so connected and proud of their ethnic group and desire to protect their group image, they do not experience collective guilt; except Amir who is not really identified with his group, he feels guilty when the Hazara are oppressed.

II.I.2. Interpersonal Guilt in *The Kite Runner*

Interpersonal guilt is another type of guilt arising from the association between the self and the transgression. It implies that the subject believes he has violated a moral standard and causes harm to another person. As a result, he engages in altruistic behavior and moral responsibility. *The Kite Runner* exhibits such type of guilt, and Khalid Housseini questions human nature through his guilty characters and how people face and react to their own subjective guilt differently though they may devalue and hate themselves. Baba and Amir are the characters who experience interpersonal guilt in the novel.

Baba or Agha Sahib is a powerful, respected, and wealthy man in Kabul exactly in Wazir Akbar district. He used to be called in his region as Toophan Agha or Mr. Hurricane because of his physical strength. His wife, Sofia Akrami, died in her giving birth of their first child Amir. After her death Baba never gets married. When Baba was young, his family adopted an orphan called Ali; ironically the child was a Hazara. The two have been raised together in the same house, and Baba considered Ali as his brother and friend as Baba tells Amir "I grew up with Ali,".... "My father took him in, he loved Ali like his own son. Forty years Ali's been with my family". However, years later their relationship turned into master and servant. As Ali was working in Baba's house, Baba never underestimates him. Rather he respects him and at the same time Ali was loyal and honest toward Baba.

Baba is considered as the most honored and respected man in his community though he hides a secret throughout his life and carries a heavy burden of guilt when he betrays his playmate, Ali, as he has an affair with Ali's wife Sanaubar. But what makes the situation worst is that Ali's first child Hassan is not his real son but Baba's child. Besides, Baba's betrayal to his loyal friend, Ali, he never acknowledges Hassan as his child or reveals his secret to anyone else even after his death except to his friend Rahim Khan. As a result, he prevents Hassan from having access to education and good treatment of the society (Lambe and Basuki 112).

Researchers on guilt assume that after committing a transgression; individuals are more likely to emotionally relate to their victim, engage in reparative and restorative behavior, and show tendency to reconcile their misconduct in order to lessen the feeling of guilt. However, Agha Sahib, in *the Kite Runner*, after betraying his servant and sleeping with Sanaubar, he was more feeling ashamed after this act, since he engages in defensive response which leads him to hide his transgression and deny the responsibility to acknowledge Hassan or even apologizes to Ali in order to retain his moral conscious. Thus, Baba was afraid of societal

rejection because in the Afghan community “namous” or honor is precious and valued, and it is not accepted to have sexual relationship with a woman without any bond of marriage and having illegitimate child (Hollink 9-11).

As Baba is a well known and respected among his community members, he feared the exclusion from the society as well as losing his social status. Hence he chooses to protect his positive image, externalize the blame instead of taking the responsibility for his offense to lessen the feelings of guilt. He rather engages in prosocial behavior to appear as a good person outside by “feeding the poor on the streets, building orphanage, giving money to friends in need” (Housseini 316). More importantly treating Hassan in a good manner as Amir or even better, especially when he brings the same nursing woman to feed both Amir and Hassan , taking care of him and never forgetting his birthday, also when Agha Sahib hires an Indian Doctor to fix Hassan’s harelip. In this occasion he shows his affection and kindness toward Hassan: “Patted Hassan on the back. Even he put his arm around his shoulder” (Housseini 14). Furthermore, When Amir accused Hassan for stealing his watch and as Hassan admits that he stole it though he didn’t, Baba immediately declares that he forgives Hassan; “Except Baba stunned me by saying, “I forgive you.” *Forgive?* But theft was the unforgivable sin, the common denominator of all sins” (Housseini 105-6); even though theft or stealing others’ property is considered as the unforgivable sin for Baba, but when Hassan admits that he committed such thing Baba forgives him. Or even before when Amir asks his father if he will bring new servants, Baba immediately becomes angry and blames Amir as he states in the novel “He’s staying right here with us, where he belongs. This is his home and we’re his family. Don’t you ever ask me that question again?” (Housseini 90). This shows his love and affection toward Hassan.

All of this denotes that Agha Sahib’s feeling guilt is fused with shame, the latter

carries a painful effect leading Baba to defend his ego against the superego to maintain, the self-image and escape the unbearable fear in the unconscious (Unthank 19). Thus, Baba's good deeds were a way to hide his transgression and feeling in order to survive as well as to save his self image and social status in his community. This justifies why Baba never acknowledges his betrayal or the responsibility for his crime (Welz 89). However, events would take another direction if Baba had the courage to confront his guilt, Hassan would not be raped by Assef and his gang, also he would have a chance to leave Afghanistan when it was invaded by the Soviet Union; consequently he won't be killed by Taliban troops.

To sum up what has been said, Agha Sahib's guilt is not apparent till the end of the story which readers are informed that he committed such terrible act. Throughout his life, Baba carries his guilt and avoids it, since he was not able to risk his social status and positive self image to acknowledge Hassan as his child or ask Ali for forgiveness. Rather he chooses to escape his guilt and deny the responsibility, mainly to avoid the exclusion from his ethnic group and negative evaluation.

The other character who experience interpersonal guilt is Amir. Amir is the only child of a rich man, who has expensive and privileged infancy, a spoiled boy who gets all what he wants. He likes reading books and they inspire him to write stories. Amir spends eighteen years of his life in Kabul before they have been forced to leave Afghanistan because of the war. During his first eleven years, Amir shared his almost childhood moments with Hassan who is his servant and his playmate. Amir is a weak and coward boy who cannot defend himself and all the neighborhood boys tease him to take his toys; however, he is always protected by Hassan as this latter is courageous, honest and loyal to Amir.

Amir is a unique boy, his father Agha Sahib is not satisfied with him, because his hobbies and likes are different of those children of his age and in his community; young boys

are inquired to play sport and fight but not read books and write stories. Also, Amir is a weak and unable to fight back children, that's why his father does not devote any time to spend with and speak to him and even doubts that he is his child, as he declares to Rahim Agha "If I had not seen the doctor pull him out of my wife with my own eyes, I'd never believe he's my son"(Hosseini 24). Agha Sahib always treats Amir harshly and never shows the father's care, love and affection.

Amir is aware that his father does not like him and he sees himself not suitable or enough to be the son of such brave man. Amir always blames himself for the death of his mother. "I always felt like Baba hated me a little. And why not? After all, I had killed his beloved wife" (Hosseini 17). Furthermore, when Baba treats Hassan in good way or shows love to him, Amir gets angry and jealous. Thus, Amir throughout his childhood tries to satisfy his father in order to appear as a good boy and this achieved through playing the kite, this latter is a famous sport in Afghanistan, a sign of masculinity and almost every child plays the kite. Playing the kite for Amir was a chance to gain his father's love, appraisal and win his father's attention (Tamara 40-3).

Amir and Hassan are meant to be best friends and brothers, since they have been not only grown together but brought up by the same nursing woman who breastfeed both of them. Their relationship proved to be the most innocent and pure in the novel though the two boys are of a different background; one is of the upper class and the other is of the lower class. Hassan has always been loyal to Amir, always defends him when Amir is teased up and even sacrifices for him. Although Amir and Hassan were raised together under the same roof, Amir has problems with Hassan, he cannot see Hassan as his friend "I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either" (Hosseini 25). Plus, Amir never introduces or plays with Hassan when there are guests in the house because at the end Hassan is only a servant Assef is the half German boy whom Amir and all neighborhood boys are afraid of, when he comes across

Amir and Hassan, Hassan defends Amir and they run away, but Assef impends them to revenge.

Amir is determinant to win the kite tournament to prove that he deserves to be the son of Mr. Hurricane, the price that he has to pay is to sacrifice Hassan. The day of the tournament Amir succeeded to win his father praise and Hassan helped him. At the end of the competition, Hassan runs for the last Kite while screaming to Amir "For you a thousand times over" (Housseini 66). In the alley, Hassan confronts Assef and his gang, Assef asks Hassan to hand him the blue kite otherwise he will forgive him and lets him go. However, Hassan refuses to give them the kite, in return Assef rapes Hassan, meanwhile Amir witnesses and sees everything, but he does nothing to save Hassan (Ahmad 132); as he declares "I realized I still hadn't breathed out. I exhaled, slowly, quietly. I felt paralyzed. I watched them close in on the boy I'd grown up with, the boy whose hare lipped face had been my first memory" (Housseini 71).

After seeing Hassan's rape and failing to save him, Amir realizes that he has committed a terrible act, and experiences an intensive feeling of guilt which shaped his life and behavior latter. Amir has betrayed his best friend and abandoned him in the alley. After that night, Amir starts to feel uncomfortable and unworthy and a need to distance and avoid everything around him, he is not even happy of winning the kite tournament, rather he becomes insomniac and has excessive internal conflict of remorse and regret since he is unable to tell anyone that Hassan was raped "I said to no one. ... A part of me was hoping someone would wake up and hear, so I wouldn't have to live with this lie anymore... That was the night I became an insomniac" (Hosseini 86). Furthermore, the image of Hassan's rape always hunts Amir because he is over thinking of Hassan and his guilt "A wedge of moonlight streamed in through the window. I watched Hassan get rapped" (Housseini 86). Also, Amir fears confronting Hassan and tries to avoid speaking with him, but when they meet and go to the

hill, both of them keep silent and Amir regrets coming with Hassan, especially, when he sees the carved words written on the tree, he feels bad since they remind him of their lost friendship (Neupane 32). The following extract from the novel shows how Amir becomes uncomfortable when he has contact with Hassan and their memories:

We trekked up the hill, our boots squishing in the muddy snow.
Neither one of us said anything. We sat under granate tree and I knew
I'd made a mistake. I shouldn't have come up the hill. The words I'd
carved on the tree trunk with Ali's kitchen knife, *Amir and Hassan:
The Sultans of Kabul* ...I couldn't stand looking at them now.
(Housseini 86-7)

Amir, to put an end to his torture and lessen the burden of guilt, chooses again to sacrifice Hassan, he first tries to convince his father to send Ali and Hassan, but his father refuses to listen to him, than he decides to enter secretly to Hassan and Ali shaft and puts his expensive watch and some Cush in Hassan's room. When Baba brings Ali and Hassan to ask them, Hassan surprises everyone and admits such act and it was the last sacrifice Hassan did for Amir. Amir realizes that Hassan knows how he betrayed him "Hassan knew I'd seen everything in that alley, that I stood there and done nothing" (Housseini 105), and this was last meeting between Amir and Hassan.

Amir and his father have betrayed the people who have been raised with and loyal to them. As a result, interpersonal guilt grows over them and appears to criticize the self and point the negative act. Yet, Amir and his father reject their misconduct to protect their self image, but they develop low self esteem and self blame.

II.II. Psychoanalytical Interpretation of Amir's Guilt

Guilt before was only related to morality and altruism, however after the evolution of Psychoanalysis and exactly Freud's contribution to the field, guilt has different layers of

implication and dimensions. Thus, guilt as the theoretical frame works and clinical researches proved has its roots in the unconscious and is experienced in early childhood. This section provides psychoanalytical explanation and justification of Amir's guilt in *The Kite Runner* and incorporates it into Freudian work. This section is divided into two parts; Amir's superego guilt and Amir's ego defense mechanism.

II.II.1. Amir's Superego Guilt

Freud, in his perception of human personality, has divided it into three agencies id, ego and the superego. Freud believed that guilt is an essential factor in the development the superego. Guilty feelings rise when the ego executes external behavior and actions that are opposite of the internal standards of the superego, hence the superego overwhelms and appears to be punitive and severe. After violating the morals of the superego, this latter becomes hostile and aggressive as a consequence, it punishes the ego and fall in conflict with it in order to guarantee moral superiority (Goldblatt et al 16).

Self punishment emerges constantly after the transgression takes place since the feelings of guilt are so intense. The transgressor seeks sufferance in order to reduce them and the superego takes control over the ego. The latter splits because it feels itself hated and in danger. When the ego is threatened and in an excessive danger as oppressed by the superego, it becomes unable to protect itself and resist the moral superiority; this leads to the death of the ego. In this way, guilt creates self hatred, the self is abandoned and becomes melancholic, and moral masochism appear as a mental relief to reduce the harsh criticism of the superego as the latter has dominated the consciousness (Goldblatt, Suicide 94-5).

In *the Kite Runner*, Amir experiences intensive feelings of guilt in his childhood, which means that he develops a punitive superego and is dominated by it, the latter is severe and strong in childhood. After seeing Hassan's rape and leaving him alone, Amir's overreaction toward his guilt leads him to believe that he is the responsible of what happened to Hassan

and he engages in sadistic behavior. So he wants to distance himself from Hassan and no more desires to play with him; as he replies Hassan “I want you to stop harassing me. I want you to go away” (Housseini 88). Furthermore, Amir’s superego is torturing him as he cannot forget his guilt, and whenever Hassan is around Amir becomes uncomfortable and gets unpleasant feeling since the existence of Hassan reminds him of his betrayal; “Because when he was around, the oxygen seeped out of the room. My chest tightened and I couldn’t draw enough air; I’d stand there, gasping in my own little airless bubble of atmosphere” (Housseini 89). Amir is no more the same boy after his guilt, he is ashamed and no longer enjoys the things he used to do in the past, for example before he used to show off when his father drives him to school as shown in the novel “I should have been beaming with pride when he dropped me off—the old me would have—but all I could muster was a mild form of embarrassment. That and emptiness” (Housseini 90). Also, Amir seeks punishment and wishes Hassan would heat him back in order to have a mental relief and regain his friend “I wished he would. I wished he’d give me the punishment I craved, so maybe I’d finally sleep at night. Maybe then things could return to how they used to be between us” (Housseini 92).

Indeed, Amir after betraying his best friend develops feeling of guilt at an early age, and it highly affects his behavior because it turns him into sadism and extensive fear. Since the more children are fearful, the more likely to feel guilt. It is evident that Amir throughout the novel is presented as fearful boy; he always fears punishment, losing his father and most importantly, he fears Assef the most. Thus, Amir gives up to his superego and this leads to the withdrawal of his ego.

II.II.1.a. Amir’s Anxiety after his Guilt

As it has been mentioned before that Amir is surrendered to his superego, and his ego is punished by guilt feelings. This results Amir to feel anxiety; the latter appears as an emotional response to his guilt. Amir’s anxiety first manifests when he runs after seeing Hassan got

raped. He stands in the alley paralyzed watching his half brother's rape and leaves. While thinking of rescuing Hassan, Amir's ego is defeated by feelings of fear and anxiety of the result of this brave act, i.e., Assef punishment. Amir, then, decides to escape because he is afraid and worried of the imaged punishment of Assef "In the end, I ran. I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what he would do to me. I was afraid of getting hurt. (Hosseini 77). Second, after running and letting Hassan alone, Amir becomes insomniac and unable to reveal his guilt or Hassan's sexual abuse to anyone even to people sleeping besides him, though he wishes someone can hear him in order to reduce his guilt or feels relieved. As Amir says: "so I wouldn't have to live with this lie anymore" (Housseini 86). This shows that he is anxious for hiding such secret. Another scene that manifests Amir's anxiety is when he could not look at the carved words he wrote before in pomegranate's tree, as he claims: "Amir and Hassan: The Sultan of Kabul ... I couldn't stand looking at them now" (Housseini 87), because those words remind him of their friendship and his betrayal (Tamara 98-100). In fact, Amir is anxious because he is unable to face his guilt and afraid of the punishment he may get.

Amir's personality system is imbalanced because his superego has dominated his ego which makes him feel guilty, anxious and fearful. All these internal conflicts that torture Amir after his transgression, lead him to develop ambivalent attitudes toward himself and everything around him. Since, on the one hand he is ashamed to reveal his guilt and, on the other hand he wishes to be punished and no more lives this lie.

. II.II.2. Amir's Ego Defense Mechanism

The ego is the executive agency which is responsible for human's behavior and actions; it is derived by the reality principle. When the ego is oppressed by the superego and unable to face the reality, or have anxious feelings which threaten the self stability. The ego tries to defend and save itself from either internal or external pressures, this process is called the "ego

defense mechanism”. This latter was proposed by Freud in his theory of human mind in 1894; it is an internal psychological process created by the unconscious to deny and divert the reality without conscious awareness. The unconscious refuges to this mechanism for the purpose of retraining and protecting the self from damage (Cramer 8).

In *The Kite Runner*, Amir is disturbed by the internal conflicts that he goes through after his guilt, and as his superego dominates him he becomes anxious and afraid of dealing with his guilt. In order to solve the conflicting unconscious, he engages in defense mechanism which works to reduce his guilt.

Denial: is a type of the defense mechanism, a mental strategy which occurs when the person refuses to accept the reality and removes his attention from the external impulse in order to avoid the internal pain (Cramer 44). Amir makes a mistake and lives a blend of feelings; guilty, anxious and fearful which lead to psychological conflict and pain. In order to overcome this entire, Amir ignores the reality and pretends that nothing happens as stated in the novel when Ali asks Amir about Hassan:

Did something happen to him, Amir agha? Something he is not telling me?

I shrugged. “How should I know?”

“You would tell me, nay? *Inshallah*, you would tell me if something had happened?”

“Like I said, how should I know what’s wrong with him?” I snapped.

“Maybe he’s sick. People get sick all the time, Ali. Now, am I going to freeze to death or are you planning on lighting the stove today?”

(Housseini 81)

The above quotation shows how Amir is unable to inform Hassan’s father what happened to his son, he rather chooses to deny the reality and hide it in order to protect his self. Though Amir

is aware that what Hassan faced is dangerous and big, he uses the defense mechanism to avoid psychological upset (Cholifah 756-7).

Displacement is a type of defense mechanism which takes place when the individual shifts his emotions and feelings that are addressed to a person or an object, and directing them to another person or object. This defense mechanism implies that the person is unable to express or reveal his/her true feeling to the target or may be the target is not available. Amir is angry and unable to control his feeling after the night of the tournament, thus, he witnesses terrible conflicting ideas and emotions; instead of confronting Hassan, telling him the truth and apologizing, he shifts his anger toward Hassan, denies and makes a distance between them. Amir is a coward and everyone knows that, he is incapable of defending himself, however when they climbed the hill, Amir takes a pomegranate hits Hassan and curses him “as I pelted him again and again. “You’re so coward! I said. Nothing but a goddamn coward!” (Housseini 92). The words Amir declare to Hassan represent him, since he assumes that he is the coward who could not help his friend, when Amir confronts Hassan instead of confessing to his friend that he is coward and was not able to save him, he directs those words to Hassan and chooses to escape the reality (Cholifah 758).

Amir’s superego is so demanding and dominates him since he has broken the moral standards of the superego. As a consequence, Amir develops an imbalanced ego and this latter is entrapped by the superego and the reality, hence, he defends itself by denial mechanism refusing to accept the reality and displacement shifting his anger toward Hassan.

Khalid Housseini, in his novel *The Kite Runner*, presents guilt throughout the novel as the curse that his characters live with. Both collective and interpersonal guilt are introduced in the story. The first occurs when the Pashtun, a wealthy ethnic group, who exists centuries in Afghanistan, oppresses another ethnic group called the Hazara believing that they do not deserve to live with them and that they are the owner of the land. The second is a

interpersonal guilt, a result of a person's maladaptive behavior against another person, both Amir and his father experience guilt since they have betrayed their friends. However, this chapter spots light on Amir's guilt, since he is the protagonist of the story and his guilt is deep and is traced from his childhood. The way Amir responds to his guilt is very complicated because he was unable to reveal his guilt to anyone and, at the same time, he wants to free himself from this burden. Amir is unable to solve his guilt mainly because he is a child and has psychological problems during his childhood specially the absence of the mother figure and father support.

Chapter Three: Amir's Atonement in *The Kite Runner* "To be Good Again"

Amir has committed a terrible act when he was a child; he develops intensive feelings of guilt and regret plus an internal psychological conflict. Amir thinks that moving Hassan out of home might be the solution to get over his guilt because whenever Hassan is around, he gets unpleasant feeling, and remembers his betrayal. So, he decides to sacrifice Hassan accusing him for stealing his expensive watch and a sum of money. After Hassan and his father departure, the narrative moves into Amir and his father's illegal migration to USA escaping the war, when the Soviet attacked Afghanistan. The setting shifts to San Francisco, where Amir establishes new life with his father and fixes their relationship. Though life there is not easy since they have to work hard to live, they succeed to cope with their new life and Amir continues his education in America. Amir could not forget his past guilt, whenever he hears Hassan's name, he becomes uncomfortable, even though Amir is a grown and his guilt is too old. However, after Rahim Khan's call from Afghanistan, Amir has a chance to atone his guilt.

This chapter implies Amir's psychological change and approach towards inner peace; it is composed of two sections. The first section tackles how Amir moves from guilt to atonement, emphasizing his empathetic feeling, responsibility to rescue Sohrab and retain his conscious. The second section deals with Amir's journey to redemption and self forgiveness as well it provides an interpretation of the kite at the beginning and at the end.

III.I. Moving from Guilt to Atonement

This section introduces how guilt promotes prosocial behaviour and motivation toward atonement. It reflects Amir psychological change i.e. from an immature guilty child to responsible adult who saves his nephew's life. It brings the psychoanalytic views on

reparative behaviour after committing misconduct and moving toward reconciliation and repentance.

Amir is forced to leave Afghanistan and everything behind him without making Hassan forgive him. Amir, along twenty six years, has repressed his guilt in a corner of the unconscious in order to continue his life as a normal person believing that he can forget what happened in the winter of 1975. Hence, he consciously rejects his guilt and inhibits it in the unconscious to prevent the painful and traumatic memories of Hassan's rape from reaching the conscious mind. Amir succeeds to an extent to forget Hassan and his guilt (Boag 78-9). However, researchers proved that memories of emotional significance and emotional pain which are buried in the unconscious are easily retrieved since they have intensive effect, and the possibility to reactivate them through stressful stimuli is very frequent (Leveine 93-4). Amir, whenever hears Hassan's name, remembers his guilt. Thus, Amir has never forgotten Hassan or his guilt, and it is obvious from the very first lines of the novel:

I became what I am today at the age of twelve, on a frigid overcast day in the winter of 1975. I remember the precise moment, crouching behind a crumbling mud wall, peeking into the alley near the frozen creek. That was a long time ago, but it's wrong what they say about the past, I've learned, about how you can bury it. Because the past claws its way out. Looking back now, I realize I have been peeking into that deserted alley for the last twenty-six years.

(Housseini 1)

From the above quotation, it is apparent that what happened in the winter of 1975 has shaped Amir's life and defined who become after twenty six years. Even though years have passed, Amir could not forget his guilt because as it is argued that strong feelings may seem that are repressed but they are easily reactivated (M Hammer and B Hammer 2).

Amir is no more the same coward little boy who is not capable of controlling his guilt feeling. When he receives a call from Pakistan, Amir realizes that Rahim Khan knows everything when he tells him “Come. There is a way to be good again” (Housseini 193). Amir, after this call confirms that his past is calling him. These words “to be good again” appear, on the one hand as stimulus to reactivate his memory to remember Hassan, since after the telephone call, Amir dreams of Hassan running in the snow screaming “for you, a thousand times over” (Houssin 194). On the other hand, the moral significance of these words change Amir’s life into the best; taking him out of the darkness and hidden side of his mind into self forgiveness and peace. Amir, after years of regret, guilt, and shame, engages in reparative behaviour. Developmental psychology argues that people who act inappropriately and develop feelings of guilt, work to alleviate these feelings by engaging in prosocial behaviour and providing help to others not only the victim. Thus, guilt promotes self regulation; this latter takes place when the ego is determined to change and adopt the self toward moral standard. The willingness of the ego to execute such reparative behaviour is known as “the ego depletion”, it occurs when the ego is exhausted from the excessive demands of either the superego or the id; here the ego is left in charge to decide. As a result, it exhibits willingness to have control over the self and of course over the behaviour (Baumeister 129-32).

Amir in the past experienced high level of guilt and gave up to it; his ego was defeated by his superego. However, years later, when Rahim Khan summons Amir and informs him that Hassan and his wife were killed by Talban, and their child Sohrab is left alone in an orphanage in Kabul. Amir, here, is asked to save the child’s life. At the beginning, Amir refuses arguing that he cannot leave his life in USA and his wife, plus Afghanistan is not safe. Yet, after knowing that Hassan is his half brother, Amir decides to go to Kabul, this decision comes from his ego because he no more wants to be dominated by his superego; as it

produces intensive guilt to punish the ego. Hence, his ego executes self regulation and control over the self. This process is labelled “ego depletion”. These lines reveal how Amir is determined to change Sohrab’s life and his life as well:

I looked at the round face in the Polaroid again, the way the sun fell on it. My brother’s face. Hassan had loved me once, loved me in a way that no one ever had or ever would again. He was gone now, but a little part of him lived on. It was in Kabul. Waiting.... Then I told him I was going to Kabul. Told him to call the Caldwells in the morning. ‘I ‘ll pray for you, Amir Jan,’ he said. (Housseini 238)

From this quotation, it is understood that Amir decides to take new path and step toward forgiveness. He is determined to save Sohrab because Hassan is no more his friend and servant; he is his brother whose life was stolen by his father to guard his honor and reputation.

III.I.A. Amir’s Psychological Development and Change

The Kite Runner is a bildungsroman novel; the story of Amir is presented in two stages childhood and adulthood. Despite the physical development that all humans witness in their life, psychological development is most influential and complicated because it shapes humans’ life and interpersonal relationship.

Housseini in the novel portrays and reflects the protagonist’s psychological development. During his childhood, Amir did not get enough parental love, since his mother passed away in his birth plus his father was all the time occupied and did not devote time for him. Absence of mother figure and his father’s ignorance cause Amir lack of confidence and low self esteem. Lack of father care makes Amir believe that his father does not love him and blames himself for his mother’s death. Besides, Amir’s and his father’s different orientations

and likes influence Amir's identity construction negatively, he developed self-doubt; this leads him to feel that he does not deserve to be the son of his father, and makes him irresponsible and dependent child in a way unable to defend and speak up for his own, plus all his bad actions associate them to Hassan. In addition, Amir throughout his childhood was keen to obtain his father attention and love; whenever, his father treats Hassan in good way Amir becomes jealous and angry because he sees Hassan just a servant and does not deserve too much interest. Therefore, playing the kite is an opportunity for Amir to get his father's pride and love, however this day costs Amir to lose his friend and his conscious as he leaves Hassan alone and runs to his father arms to see him satisfied. After this day, Amir lives guilt and self accusation as he declares: "I was the snack in the grass, the monster in the lack" (Housseini 105). Amir in this stage developed immature aggressive guilt fearing the other judgment because he was incapable to reveal his guilt to anyone, tries to forget and distance himself from Hassan, as it is mentioned in the novel: "What had I had done, other than take my guilt out on the very same people I had betrayed, and then try to forget it all? What had I done other than become an insomniac? What had I ever done to right things?" (Housseini 303).

According to the theory of cognitive development of the ego created by Loevinger, this stage is known as "self protective ego" which is primary level in the ego formation. In this stage, the agent's primary interest is pursuit of pleasure, avoiding punishment and pain (Einstein and Lanning 558). This justifies Amir's acts toward Hassan; running away after seeing him get raped because he was afraid of Assef and his father punishment. Thus, in his internal world, Amir lives different conflicting ideas and feelings that influence his psychological development and throughout his maturity carry all this burden as it turns him inconsistent with his self (Kaifu 190-2). Amir grows peeking with him the image of Hassan's rape; it means his guilt grows with him and could not defeat it. However, Amir in his

adulthood shows more acceptance and willingness to adopt with his self and his past. As a result Amir develops moral conscious who guides his behavior. This stage is called “conscientious stage”, the person in this stage is more responsible and shows tendency to detain his pleasure and gratification, it implies moral development and internalization of social convention (Eeintein and Lanning 559-60). The psychological development affects identity construction since as it is known that the latter does not stand alone, but rather it is the product of integrated aspects like moral emotions. As it was mentioned in the theoretical part that guilt is a moral emotion; it can be elicited that the effect of guilt as moral emotion at conscientious stage of the ego development reinforce the internal drive to generate moral action (Septiana 248).

Amir’s psychological development paves the way for his guilt to become an adaptive emotion which inhibits his selfish impulses and stimulates prosocial action, as well as motivates to become responsible (Hooge et al 462-3). Amir travels to Kabul to save Sohrab and decides to take him to USA. This costs Amir weeks being distant of his family and his work plus a terrible health state after the fight with Assef: “I thought about what has happened to me. Ruptures spleen. Broken teeth. Punctured lung. Busted eye socket” (Housseini 295).

The prosocial behaviors are the result of Amir psychological development and mature conscious guilt. This lead him to sacrifice himself for the sake of saving his nephew Sohrab and open the way for the journey of self forgiveness.

III.I.2. Seeking Self Forgiveness

When Amir receives the call from Rahim Khan, he thinks that he will meet Hassan, but when he is informed that Hassan passed away, Amir feels sad. So, Amir’s journey toward self forgiveness implements him to remove his guilt feelings and conflicts, by adopting moral behaviours in order to satisfy his self and regain self esteem. Self forgiveness involves acknowledging one’s transgression; in this way the transgressor is consciously aware that he

has violated his internal moral standards by causing harm to others, plus an initiation to overcome the negative feeling i.e. feelings of guilt, in order to be able to ensure internal acceptance of the self and experience moral development. Guilt as a conscious emotion generates negative evaluation of the self; however, it motivates the self toward adaptive behaviours such as helping others and apologizing. This latter have the role to ease the transgressor, lesson the feelings of guilt and develop self forgiveness. Regulative behaviours mediate between self forgiveness and guilt, the intensity of guilt feelings determine the amount of reparative behaviour; the more the person experiences guilt the more engages in prosocial behaviour (Ranganadhan and Todorov 3-4).

Amir chooses to save Sohrab and decides to go to Kabul to bring him from the orphanage, though life there is so dangerous and the city is almost devastated since Taliban destroyed Afghanistan. When Amir describes the city, he senses the old days with Hassan as it is mentioned in the novel:

I looked westward and marvelled that, somewhere over those mountains, Kabul still existed. It really existed, not just as an old memory, or as the heading of an AP story on page 15 of the San Francisco Chronicle. Somewhere over those mountains in the west slept the city where my harelipped brother and I had run kites. Somewhere over there, the blindfolded man from my dream had died a needless death. Once, over those mountains, I had made a choice. And now, a quarter of a century later, that choice had landed me right back on this soil. (Housseini 241)

These lines explain that after long years of absence and distress, Amir feels relief in his land especially when he remembers Hassan. He recalls the good thing they did together which is running the kites. This shows how Amir starts to feel internal peace because saving Hassan's

child means regaining his self; in this way, returning to Afghanistan no more reminds him of his guilt. As it is mentioned before that conciliatory behaviours promote self forgiveness. In the novel, Amir promises Rahim Khan to save Sohrab, this act enhances Amir self forgiveness and gives him a chance to get over his guilt that lived with him along his almost entire life.

Amir's self forgiveness reaches the summit when he confronts Assef and fights with him to take Sohrab. Amir, when Assef was beating him, remembers all his past; how he betrayed Hassan and beats him in the hill. Amir is happy and laughs because he believes this is the punishment he deserves for a long time and finally gets it:

For the first time since the winter of 1975, I felt at peace. I laughed because I saw that, in some hidden nook in a corner of my mind, I'd even been looking forward to this. I remembered the day on the hill I had pelted Hassan with pomegranates and tried to provoke him. He'd just stood there, doing nothing, red juice soaking through his shirt like blood. Then he'd taken the pomegranate from my hand, crushed it against his forehead. Are you satisfied now? he'd hissed. Do you feel better? I hadn't been happy and I hadn't felt better, not at all. . . . I felt healed. Healed at last. I laughed. (Housseini 289)

In this scene, Amir for the first time feels internal healing. This takes place when confronting Assef and getting the deserved punishment as he believes. Though the physical injuries and pain Amir gets after the fight cause him to sleep in the hospital for few days, it takes him back to 1975 and remembers all the harm he causes to Hassan. It is said that physical pain acts as a way to reduce the emotional pain, so letting himself experience the emotional pain he gets like fear when confronting Assef, without escaping all of this make Amir feels better (B Hammer and M Hammer 2).

Amir self forgiveness is a whole path to alleviate the feeling of guilt and atone his sin in order to live internal peace. Yet, he needs to be responsible enough and feels empathy to achieve self forgiveness.

Amir's Responsibility after leaving Hassan alone, escaping and accusing him for stealing his stuff. Amir realizes that he has committed a terrible act; realization of one's offense is the first step toward responsibility, plus the feeling of guilt and regret that follow are the result of this realization (Schumann and Dewck 1600). Although Amir tries along his life to deny and displace himself from Hassan and his transgression; this justifies all the internal conflicts he faces. While his approval to return to Kabul after Rahim Khan's call is purely an act of responsibility, since the trip to Afghanistan is so risky and may cause his death. Also, when Amir is told that Hassan's child is in an orphanage and he must bring him to Pakistan, he accepts because he feels responsible for the child after knowing that Hassan is his half brother and that the children in that orphanage are living miserable situation as well as they are facing sexual abuse, as Amir declares to the director of the orphanage "I would not leave Afghanistan without finding Sohrab" (Housseini 255). Moreover, after finding Sohrab in a house of a one of the leader of Taliban who sexually abuses children, Amir risks and enters to negotiate him to take Sohrab, ironically the man was Assef whom Amir fears. Assef did not accept to hand him Sohrab for free, but rather asks him to fight together and the one who wins takes Sohrab. Amir's responsible attitude to fight Assef is a sign of sacrifice since he is not only a bad fighter but also a coward who never fought before in his life. Amir did not have the chance to apologize to Hassan since when he arrived to Kabul, Hassan was already gone. But his responsibility to save Sohrab is enough to promote his self forgiveness. Furthermore, acknowledging one's transgression is a sign of responsibility, when Amir confesses to his wife his secret he feels relieved because this secret has shaped his life. This shows Amir's responsibility of accepting his transgression as it shown in the novel "Then I did what I hadn't

done in fifteen years of marriage: I told my wife everything. Everything. I had pictured this moment so many times, dreaded it, but, as I spoke, I felt something lifting off my chest” (Housseini 325). Also, when Amir informs Sohrab that he is his uncle he confesses that in the past he had betrayed his father “So one day the bad man hurt your father instead. He hurt him in a very bad way, and I ...I couldn’t save your father the way he had saved me” (Housseini 319). This denotes that Amir admits that he has committed transgression, he is responsible for this act and his guilt must find its way to leave his unconscious in order to achieve internal peace.

Amir’s Empathy towards Sohrab It is believed that empathic feelings rise after a person feels high level of guilt assuming that he causes harm to another person. Those empathic feelings play an important role in achieving self forgiveness, since as it is known that empathy is feeling of other’s pain so engaging in conciliatory behavior to help others is frequent. Thus, it strengthens self forgiveness. In fact, Amir develops empathic feelings earlier before when he was just child; he feels for Hassan state after being raped, but Amir was unable to help Hassan because the intensive feeling of guilt Amir experiences lead him to distance, deny, and avoid Hassan. Yet, years later when Amir sees Hassan’s child, he identifies him with his father, since the story of both father and son is similar; experiencing sexual abuse at an early stage by the same person. Hence, Amir’s response to Sohrab situation is too different from that of Hassan; he urges to help him by offering him new life with better conditions. The empathic feelings Amir develops toward Sohrab stem from the torturing guilt his conscious creates to punish him for betraying Hassan, thus, Amir is seeing Hassan in Sohrab as he describes him when they were playing panjpar in the hospital: “He was his father in so many ways: the way he fanned out his cards with both hands, the way he squinted while reading them, the way he rarely looked a person in the eye” (Housseini 306). It can be understood that Amir has his empathy toward Sohrab specially when he finds that there is no one in Pakistan

to take care for Sohrab as Rahim Khan promised. Amir after knowing the news decides to take Sohrab with him to the USA to save him and grants him a new life because children are suffering in Afghanistan from sexual abuse and child labor, plus they have no access to education as Amir says: “There are a lot of children in Afghanistan, but little childhood”(Housseini 318), the miserable situation of the Afghan children is what makes Amir empathic toward Sohrab and helps him.

Self forgiveness is a whole process toward atonement; it takes place after Amir has developed his ego to promote adaptive behaviors. Amir’s Empathic feelings after his guilt and ability to sympathize with Sohrab, as well as his responsibility to help him and confess his guilt to both Sohrab and his wife Soraya, reinforce self forgiveness and increase his self acceptance.

III.II. Amir’s Journey to Atonement

The Kite Runner is a humanistic novel which implies moral and psychological development of the protagonist Amir. The journey toward atonement is how Khalid Housseini ends up his novel, proving that atonement is the only solution for Amir to forgive himself and start a new life. This section introduces the way and the motives that help Amir to atone his sin. In addition, it provides an interpretation of the significance of the kite in the novel as a cultural element, as well as its different symbolic imagery in beginning and the end of the novel.

Rahim Khan’s call from Pakistan is a turning point in Amir’s life, it turns him into a man who is able to stand for his own actions and atone his sin. Rahim Khan represents a connecting point between Amir and his past; he takes part in Amir’s atonement. He is the one who reassociates him with his homeland Afghanistan and the struggling memories of betraying Hassan which takes him into a path of self forgiveness and alleviating his guilt. Moreover, Rahim Khan is the one who tells Amir the truth about his father’s shameful secret,

makes him realize that Hassan the loyal servant is actually his half brother, and months earlier Hassan and his wife were shot by Taliban. Thus the only way for Amir to atone his guilt is saving Sohrab's life (Walia 39).

Sacrifice and punishment have always been related to atonement in the theological meaning of the term, assuming that cleansing one's soul from sin is crucial for spiritual healing. Khalid Housseini exhibits such connotation in his novel, since when Amir was beaten by Assef, he believes that this is the punishment he deserved for a long time as he replies to Farid when he asks him: "What happened in that house? What happened between you and the Talib? Let's say we both got what we deserved, I said" (298). When Aseef beats Amir, he laughs despite all the pain he feels; because at this moment he senses relief and redemption "I felt healed" (Housseini 289). Sacrifice as well is a part of Amir's path towards atonement; when Amir decides to bring Sohrab from Kabul, he is aware that the trip is risky but ventures despite all the condition and goes to Kabul to rescue Sohrab. Moreover, the scene where Amir confronts Assef is the most symbolic of Amir moral development and sacrifice for his half brother's son; Amir in fact in this scene is not only facing Assef but also his guilt, his fear and his past (Helen 279-80). The proof is that when Assef tells Amir that they have an unfinished work from the past, Amir remembers how Hassan sacrifices and points the slingshot to Assef and confirms that it is his turn:

My entire adult life, whenever I heard Daoud Khan's name, what I saw was Hassan with his sling- shot pointed at Assef's face, Hassan saying that they'd have to start calling him One-Eyed Assef instead of Assef Goshkhor. I remember how envious I'd been of Hassan's bravery. Assef had backed down, promised that in the end he'd get us both. He'd kept that promise with Hassan. Now it was my turn. All right, I said, not knowing what there was to say. (Housseini 286)

From this quote, it can be said that Hassan has sacrificed in the past for Amir and stood for him against Assef. Amir after twenty six years pays the debt with Sohrab as he sacrifices for the child at the price of his life.

When Amir was taken to the hospital after his fighting with Assef and rescuing Sohrab, Amir dreams of his father fighting a bear. Amir in this dream sees his father, the young powerful man confronting a bear, the latter symbolizes evil thing. At the end the dream, Amir sees himself and realizes that he is the one who fights the bear; this means that Amir achieves to save Sohrab and reaches his atonement (Kalpakli 84). The following quotation shows Amir's dream:

They roll over a patch of green grass, man and beast, Baba's curly brown hair flying. The bear roars, or maybe it's Baba. Spittle and blood fly; claw and hand swipe. They fall to the ground with a loud thud and Baba is sitting on the bear's chest, his fingers digging in its snout. He looks up at me and I see. He's me. I am wrestling the bear. (Housseini 295)

It can be suggested from this dream that Amir's fight with bear is, in fact, his fight with his past guilt since seeing his father the young who used to be called Mr. Hurricane referring to his powerful physique struggling with the bear which represents the evil. Also, seeing this dream after confronting Assef and taking Sohrab with him, Amir finally regains his self and defeats his past guilt, thus, he redeems his sin.

The journey of Amir to atonement is full of obstacles since after taking Sohrab from the talib's office, Amir finds himself alone with the boy, so he promises to take him to America and grants him new life. However, it is not that easy to adopt a boy from Afghanistan and take him to USA because of the war and 9/11 event. Hence, when Amir informs Sohrab that he has to stay in an orphanage in Pakistan for a while before he is allowed to travel with

him, Sohrab's reaction was crying and begging Amir to not leave him in the orphanage since the boy has traumatic memories of such place. However, in the evening, Sohrab closes the bathroom and slits his wrist trying to commit suicide. When Amir sees Sohrab in the bathtub he starts screaming and gets panic. This scene represents the ultimate despair and the tragic moment in the novel because seeing Sohrab dying means killing him after killing his father as he declares in the novel: "My hands are stained with Hassan's blood; I pray God doesn't let them get stained with the blood of his boy too... I pray that my sins have not caught up with me the way I'd always feared they would" (Housseini 346).

Amir's extreme fear of losing Sohrab is associated with his past guilt because when he sees the blood of Sohrab, he directly remembers Hassan. Sohrab is the only left chance for Amir to redeem his guilt, so, in the hospital, everything becomes gloomy and dark in his eyes as he states in the novel "A starless, black night falls over Islamabad... The floor beneath me begins to feel like part of my body, and my breathing is growing heavier"(Housseini 346-7). Amir, after Sohrab regains his health, asks him to forgive him for breaking his promise, but Sohrab's reply is that he misses his old life; here, Amir realizes that it is hard to fix their relationship again because Sohrab no more trusts him. While speaking with Sohrab Amir's memory flashes to one day he teases Hassan:

As I waited for his reply, my mind flashed back to a winter day from long ago, Hassan and I sitting on the snow beneath a leafless sour cherry tree. I had played a cruel game with Hassan that day, toyed with him, asked him if he would chew dirt to prove his loyalty to me. Now I was the one under the microscope, the one who had to prove my worthiness. I deserved this. (Housseini 355)

The story of Amir, Hassan, and Sohrab is built upon circular narrative, Hassan represents Amir's mistakes and past when he was mean to Hassan and betrayed him out of act of cowardice

as result experiences guilt and regret. However, Sohrab stands for Amir's courage, redemption, moral engagement, sacrifice love, and the deserved punishment he gets for his deeds against Hassan as it is illustrated in the above quotation.

III.II.A. The Significance of the Kite in the Novel

Khalid Housseini in his novel, *The Kite Runne*, presents the culture of his homeland and depicts it through different aspects of the daily life of his characters; the kite flying is one of the famous game and cultural element in Afghanistan. Hence, the novelist reflects several connotations for this traditional game.

Housseini utilizes this game at the beginning of the novel as a cultural allegory because it represents the Afghan cultural heritage, since nearly every young boy in Kabul plays this game and must participate in the competition. The competition is to be held in the winter season as Amir declares: "every winter, districts in Kabul held a kite-fighting tournament. And if you were a boy living in Kabul, the day of the tournament was undeniably the highlight of the cold season. I never slept the night before the tournament" (Housseini 49-50). The previous quote shows the cultural significance and importance of this game for Afghani boys, also the competition starts at the early morning of the day and finishes until seeing the winning remained kite in the sky. Moreover, the kite stands for masculinity and honor in the Afghan society because the writer describes this game as a war "In Kabul, Flying the kite was a little like going to the war" (Housseini 50). Winning this game for boys is like saving one's honor and pride, every kite fighter has his own assistant, Hassan was Amir's assistant and the kite runner, he was the best kite runner in Kabul. This game was for Amir the only chance to gain his father's attention and to save his reputation in the district of Wazir Akbar Khan. So, the first imagery the kite represents Afghanistan in the old days before it was destroyed after the Soviet invasion and banned the kite running. Thus, Housseini associates the kite running with cultural heritage of Afghanistan as well as to the freedom of his country.

As it was mentioned that Hassan is the assistant of Amir who runs the kite and since winning the kite is crucial for Amir to enter in his father eye. So, Amir determines to win and considers it as matter of survival; “I was going to win and I was going to run that last kite. Then I would bring it home and show it to Baba. Show once and for all that his son was worthy” (Housseini 56). Amir, at the end, achieves to win the kite tournament as his father was proud of him and all people were clapping; in this way, the flying kite symbolizes Amir’s happiness “All I saw was the blue kite. All I smelled was victory. Salvation” (Housseini 65). However, when Hassan runs for Amir to bring him the kite and faces Assef with his friends threatening him either to give them the kite or he will be punished. Hassan refuses to give them the kite as consequence Assef rapes him. Though Amir was there and sees everything happens to Hassan, he just watches and escapes. The kite, in this scene, symbolizes betrayal guilt and sacrifice because after this tournament Amir and Hassan’s relationship has taken another direction and highly affects both their lives:

He had the blue kite in his hands; that was the first thing I saw.
And I can’t lie now and say my eyes didn’t scan it for any rips. His
chapan had mud smudges down the front and his shirt was ripped just
below the collar. He stopped. Swayed on his feet like he was going to
collapse. Then he steadied himself. Handed me the kite. (Housseini
78)

This quotation shows the significance of the kite for both Amir and Hassan. For Amir it signifies guilt and betrayal, while for Hassan it means loyalty and sacrifice.

The kite flying appears, at the end of the novel after it has been banned and forbidden flying the kite in the sky of Kabul. Yet, Housseini refers to the kite flying after Afghanistan was liberated from the Soviet Union, USA bombing Taliban and most importantly after Amir has redeemed his guilt as he saves Sohrab and takes him to America. In fact, the kite

manifests as a common point between Amir and Sohrab, since after arriving in USA Sohrab becomes salient, but the final scene where Amir and his family are celebrating the opening of the new hospital Amir invests with another man. Amir sees a kite in the sky and buys for him and Sohrab one, and flies it in the sky as it is mentioned in the novel:

The last time I had felt a rush like this was that day in the winter of 1975, just after I had cut the last kite, when I spotted Baba on our rooftop, clapping, beaming. I looked down at Sohrab. One corner of his mouth had curled up just so. A smile. (Housseni 370)

Here, in this quote the kite symbolizes hope and atonement; since for a long time Sohrab has been silent and isolated, it is the first time he reacts to others. Actually, Housseini different utilization of the kite represent the history of Afghanistan and the story of Amir and Hassan. Also the kite runner was Hassan at the beginning of the novel who runs behind the kite and screams to Amir "For a thousand times over", however at the end of the novel Amir runs for Sohrab screaming "For you, a thousand times over" (Housseini 371).

The story of *The Kite Runner* is a heartbreaking. It is a story of self realization and redeeming one's guilt. Amir's journey to atonement is notably his path toward self forgiveness and regaining his conscious. Returning to Kabul and rescuing Hassan's child is an act of moral engagement because Amir sacrifices his life to save Sohrab as he faces Assef whom he fears the most and fights with him. Fortunately, Amir achieves to redeem his guilt and takes Sohrab with him granting him new life in America. Khalid Housseini ends up his novel with hope and implicates it for Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The twentieth century marked a great innovation in the field of psychoanalysis. During this era, different issues were brought under discussion; one of the issues that have attracted psychoanalyst was the notion of guilt. Guilt refers to the aftermath conscious feelings of committing a transgression or violating a moral behavior. In fact, there are two types of guilt collective guilt and interpersonal guilt. The former is an intergroup based emotion; it takes place when members of a group commit terrible acts against another group as result, they raise feeling of guilt. However, if members of the group develop strong attachment to their group identity, executing immoral acts towards another group may seem legitimate and feelings of guilt are less frequent. While the latter researchers have associated it to the self; it means when a person conducts immoral behavior towards another person, interpersonal guilt appears criticizing the self. Interpersonal guilt generates negative assessment of the self since it is the result of the inconsistency between the self and the image the individual wants to achieve.

Researchers on guilt have been using guilt and shame interchangeably; since the two are considered as self conscious emotions which are created after one had violated a moral behavior in order to regulate the human behavior. But, studies later have shown differences between the two emotions. Guilt is action based emotion whereas shame is self based emotion. Further studies proved that guilt generates adaptive behavior, whereas other studies referred to guilt as a negative emotion which affects negatively humans' lives like causing depression.

Before the contribution of Freud in the field of psychoanalysis, guilt was related only to morality and altruism as the philosophical works indicated. However, Freud in his early works, tackles the concept of guilt relating it to his trilogy of human personality the id, the ego, and the superego, assuming that guilt is the result of the conflict between the ego and the

superego. Later, psychoanalytic literature approved that guilt is experienced in early childhood and is related to children's fear of punishment.

After experiencing the feeling of guilt, atonement is the whole path towards inner peace and promotes self forgiveness. Atonement becomes effective when the individual feels responsibility over their action, plus empathy towards their victims, as well acknowledgement of one's transgression and engagement in reparative behaviors. Thus, atonement works to lessen the feelings of guilt and develop psychological and physical well being.

The fictional production was influenced by the psychoanalytic findings of the twentieth century. During this period, writers start to question human nature through the depiction of their character's psyche. Thus, guilt as a theme was incorporated in several novels projecting guilty characters who, throughout the novel, are tortured by feelings of regret and shame, after causing to other characters. Hence, guilt in literary production was accompanied by sense of responsibility to alleviate their guilt.

Khalid Housseini has skillfully embodied guilt in his novel, *The Kite Runner*, through the story of Amir, who experiences guilt in his infancy after betraying his friend Hassan as he attests his rape and escapes without helping him. The novel includes the two mentioned types of guilt; collective guilt between the Pashtun a privileged ethnic group in Afghanistan which oppresses another ethnic group called the Hazara. However, members of the Pashtun do not experience collective guilt because they have strong attachment to their in group identity, so they consider their immoral acts legitimate. The interpersonal guilt that appears in the novel is found in the two characters, Amir and his father who both of them betray the people who have been raised with and are loyal to them. Baba experiences guilt after he has an affair with Ali's wife and fathered Hassan. Baba hides his guilt throughout the novel to protect his self image. As a result, he develops a guilt feelings fused with shame since he is afraid of societal exclusion.

Amir undergoes intensive feelings of guilt, which are the product of his superego oppression of the ego and domination over his conscious. This affects highly his life as he becomes insomniac and seeks punishment to reduce those feeling, plus he develops anxiety and fear. However, after Amir has been surrendered by his superego, his ego defends itself by denying his guilt and refuses to accept the reality in order to forget his betrayal. The other defense his ego executes is the displacement when Amir shifts his anger towards Hassan and he tries to distance himself from Hassan.

After twenty six years, Amir has repressed his guilt in the corner of the unconscious in order to prevent it from reaching the conscious. Yet, memories of emotional pain are easily reactivated, this justifies Amir's inability to forget his guilt. However, Rahim khan's call from Afghanistan to save Sohrab has influenced Amir's life because it opens the door for atonement and self forgiveness. Amir's tendency to alleviate his guilt leads him to engage in prosocial behaviors, raise his empathy towards Sohrab plus responsibility and sacrifice to help Sohrab to save his life by taking him to America. All of these have promoted and reinforced his journey towards atonement.

The kite, the traditional game played in Afghanistan symbolizes Amir's guilt and atonement in the novel. Since, at the beginning of the novel, Housseini uses the kite as symbol of Amir's guilt as he betrays his friend after winning the kite tournament. While, at the end of the novel, flying the kite with Sohrab denotes atonement and hope.

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Résumé

La culpabilité est une émotion consciente émanant de l'auto critique, qu'une personne subit lorsqu'elle viole un comportement moral. Donc afin de garantir une supériorité morale, le surmoi crée des sentiments de culpabilités pour but de punir le moi qui est à l'origine d'une transgression. Ce qui fait que la personne succombe au sadisme et au masochisme moral. Toutefois admettre sa culpabilité pousse l'individu à s'engager dans un comportement réparateur, ce qui est connu chez les chercheurs par l'expiation. Dans son roman « Le cerf volant de Kaboul » écrit en 2003, Khalid Houseini a bien su appliquer la dichotomie de la culpabilité et de l'expiation. En se basant sur les travaux psychanalytique, cette analyse vise à étudier le roman, d'une part elle interprète la culpabilité de « Amir » notre protagoniste en appliquant les notions de Freud dans ce domaine. D'une autre part elle expose l'engagement moral d'Amir et son approche vers l'expiation. Le résultat de cette analyse indique que le roman implique le changement psychologique de notre protagoniste et comment la culpabilité promeut un comportement afin d'atteindre l'expiation et la réconciliation avec soi-même.

المخلص

الذنب هو شعور إرادي ينبع من النقد الذاتي للنفس. و يحدث عند اختراق السلوك الأخلاقي عند ارتكاب الخطيئة, يخلق الأنا الأعلى شعورا بالذنب لمعاقبة الأنا من أجل ضمان التفوق الأخلاقي. والذي ينتج عنه استسلام الذات إلى السادية و إلى التلذذ بالاضطهاد الأخلاقي. مع ذلك إقرار الذات بالذنب يدفعها إلى اتخاذ سلوك تصحيحي ما يعرف عند العلماء بالصفح. في سنة 2003 ألف خالد حسيني رواية "عداء الطائفة الورقية" التي يتطرق فيها إلى تجسيد ازدواجية الصفح و الذنب التي تتجلى في شخصيته الرئيسية "أمير".

بناء على دراسات التحليل النفسي تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل الرواية, فمن ناحية تفسر ذنب أمير انطلاقا من مفاهيم الذنب الخاصة بفرويد. و من ناحية أخرى فهي تعرض ميول "أمير" إلى ما يعرف بالصفح. أخيرا نستخلص من تحليل الرواية أنها تشير إلى تغير حالة أمير النفسية, وكيف أن الذنب يعزز السلوك التكيفي بغاية الصفح و التسامح الذات